

NEW MUS DUB

ALL THAT IS SOLID MELTS INTO...

22nd April 2023, 10pm | Mercy International Centre, Dublin

Open Form Pavilion of Air series – Aria 1 (NMD commission, world premiere)

Unstable Steady States (A/B/C) (Richard Thomas Foundation Commission, world premiere)

Tailte Cré-Umha (Bronze Lands) Part 1

Open Form Pavilion of Air series – Aria 2 (NMD commission, world premiere)

Robert Curgenvén composer/performer, pipe organ & electronics

PROGRAMME NOTES

This programme of works maintains an abiding connection to the movement and behaviour of the alluded-to materiality in the concert's title – that thing which 'all that is solid' will 'melt into' – namely that of 'air'. Borne on the medium of air, sound provides context often missing from the visual hegemony of perception: we can hear around corners, hear outside the frame, our ears can apprehend where our eyes cannot. Equally, sound, as we hear it – relative to our corporeal, embodied existence – is very dependent on air, as are we. Our bodies require it. Air is vitality: it is essential to our selves, both individually and collectively. Moreover, the context of air itself is mutable: shifts in its qualities – such as pressure, humidity and temperature – give rise to changes in the propagation of sound at a given location over a given duration.

The specific material qualities of air continue to inform these commissioned works for New Music Dublin: fluctuations and disturbances in the air's behaviour and movement, not only as a medium for sound but as the fundamental source for and from the pipe organ, underscore the ephemeral acoustic architectures into which the audience are absorbed, within which the audience can physically sense through listening as a specific and tactile apprehension of sound and air.

The Mercy chapel pipe organ's unmodernised mechanical action offers precise and delicate possibilities for the control of the air through the pipes—a manipulation of sound pressure amid an unfolding time pressure. This places the instrument at the nexus of both extended techniques and nuance of timbre, vespers and cyphers, revealing a sound-world formed upon eddying turbulences and vortices.

Fundamentally, listening is to hear not only sound but also disturbances in the air in a given location: this engenders an embodied and physical experience, where even quiet disturbances in air are heard as the tip beneath whose emergent surfaces lie a much deeper topology of sound. This kind of listening is equally about being attendant to the specificities of the air – these changes in pressure, temperature and humidity – their effect on of the chapel's air, which during the concert we will all share, our bodies' contribution to changes in these specificities and together their impact on the sound itself conducted by the pipe organ's movements and heard as unseen columns of air.

The *Open Form Pavilion of Air* series of audio works, of which a New Music Dublin iteration can be encountered extending across Merrion Square, uses sound activated by an app via GPS to engage a specific location, conjuring from the air the impression of an invisible yet audible roof. Each Pavilion uses sound and site-mapping to offer a playful renewal and reframing of public space as an essential place of engagement for the community. The first and last pieces presented in the programme, commissioned by New Music Dublin, draw from the sounds forming the heart of the Pavilion series. Forming and framing the processional movement of angles, gradients, curves and hyperbolic paraboloids—each and together described by the heterogeneous, gentle glissandi of sine-tones which moiré with and against one another, together suggest a suspension of gravity and impossible architectural forms. These electronics are rendered via a four-channel diffusion which, within the audible fluttering of the pipe organ's sculpting of air, micro-sound melds into macro-movements, creating a pellucid, harmonic centre pervading a microtonal vortex of turbulences, singing overtones, architectural resonances and body shuddering bass.

— Robert Curgenvén

New work *Unstable Steady States* acknowledges the support of the Arts Council of Ireland's Music Commission Award, APRA AMCOS Art Music Fund (Australia) and the Dublin City Council Arts Office residency



APRA
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Comhairle Cathrach
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Dublin City Council



BIOGRAPHY

Robert Curgenven

Robert Curgenven produces albums, performances and installations emphasising physicality, our embodied response to sound and its correspondence to location, air, weather and architecture. His work employs complex overtones and manipulations of sound pressure amid an unfolding time pressure – articulated via pipe organ, turntables, dubplates and custom-made oscillators – including *SIRÈNE & Tailte Cré-Umha*, pipe organ works, and *Climata*, recorded in 15 of James Turrell's Skyspaces across 9 countries. Curgenven has produced works for National Gallery of Australia, National Museum of Poland (Krakow), Palazzo Grassi (Venice), Transmediale (DE), National Sculpture Factory (IRL) and National Film & Sound Archive (AUS), as well as presenting performances at festivals including Sydney Festival (Sydney Town Hall), Maerzmusik (Kraftwerk Berlin), TodaysArt (The Hague), Insomnia (Tromsø), Sonic Acts (Amsterdam), Cork Midsummer and Cork Film Festival. The Wire magazine surmises that 'behind the music lurk such [disparate] presences as Alvin Lucier, King Tubby, Murray Schafer and Eliane Radigue.'

NEW MUSIC DUBLIN 2023

A very warm welcome to New Music Dublin 2023!

In order to try to keep up with the times, I was seriously considering asking an AI bot to write my introductory spiel this year. I reckoned it would be interesting to see what a dispassionate artificial intelligence has to say about New Music Dublin—but I also wanted to know what an introduction to the festival in the style of Donald Trump would be like. In the end, however, I decided against it—and not just because the idea was just a little bit silly.

In truth, I felt that getting an anonymous bot to write my words for me was counter to the spirit of the festival. New Music Dublin is a supportive, anti-anonymous celebration of individuality, originality and creative human endeavour. The final work in this year's festival (by Andrew Hamilton) is entitled *Friendly Piece*—and if that doesn't say it all, I don't know what does.

As always, we have new musical ideas in abundance – over 18 world premieres from internationally recognised Irish composers including Donnacha Dennehy, Ann Cleare, Andrew Hamilton, David Fennessy, Kevin Volans, Karen Power, Brian Irvine, Amanda Feery, Áine Mallon, Susan Geaney and Jenn Kirby, and many others – alongside multiple premieres of works new to Ireland across multiple genres from electronic music to choral music, and solo performance to symphony orchestras. Perhaps most importantly, alongside all the new musical ideas, this is a festival where coming together to make new music is as encouraged as listening to it – from the 'any age, any instrument, any ability' Totally Made-Up Orchestra sharing the stage with the National Symphony Orchestra on Saturday – through to Ensemble Modern side-by-side with instrumentalists from across Ireland on Sunday, and Cór na nÓg, Cór Linn and the National Symphony Chorus taking their places over the weekend in premiere after premiere. There's even a chance for the very youngest to make new music together in the Natural Creators workshop on Saturday morning.

The festival café/bar in the John Field Room will also be open for meeting up with friends, family and colleagues throughout—so this is also the ideal time to tell you that all tickets give a discount of 10% off your food and drink purchases whilst you are socialising and connecting.

New music is important for the connections it makes – not only with friends, families and colleagues, but also musically – to others' lives and thoughts and experiences. And so it is with New Music Dublin: this a-livest of live festivals is every year a broad, sprawling and terribly incomplete snapshot of new music from the island of Ireland and beyond—but it is also a buzzing hive of real-life connections with the composers, music creators and all the performers who are presenting here. Nothing here is anonymous.

Do not be a stranger! You – and everyone – are very warmly welcome (as yourself!) at New Music Dublin 2023.

John Harris

Festival Director, New Music Dublin (definitely not a bot)

NEW MUSIC DUBLIN

Thursday 20 April 2023

CHORAL SKETCHES: Chamber Choir Ireland

ANDREW ZOLINSKY

GREAT WOMEN AT RICHMOND BARRACKS: Elizabeth Hilliard

LIMINA: Crash Ensemble

CANTO OSTINATO: Jurgen Simpson

Friday 21 April 2023

NATURAL WORLD: Juliet Fraser & Mark Knoop

YOU HEARD IT FIRST: Crash Ensemble

BODLEY, FEERY & CLEARE:
National Symphony Orchestra and
National Symphony Chorus

SCENES FROM iGIRL: Roger Doyle

Saturday 22 April 2023

NATURAL CREATORS with Karen Power

FAT CHAIR I: The Totally Made Up
Orchestra and National Symphony
Orchestra

MÉADÚ: Evlana

CONSIDERING MATTHEW SHEPARD:
Cór na nÓg and Cór Linn

POETS, PASSION AND PEACE: Chamber
Choir Ireland

ALL THAT IS SOLID MELTS INTO...:
Robert Curgenven

Sunday 23 April 2023

**ACTS OF BALANCING AND
UNBALANCING:** Quiet Music Ensemble

OPEN GROUNDS: Ensemble Modern

...ANTARCTICA CALLING...LISTEN...:
RTÉ Concert Orchestra

CAN MUSIC BE KIND?: Crash Ensemble

Throughout the festival:

BAN BAM film screenings

CRAIG CARRY EXHIBITION

OPEN FORM PAVILION OF AIR at
Merrion Square

NMDX (hosted by The Contemporary
Music Centre, Ireland and New Music
Dublin)

New Music Dublin is a partnership between:

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