

West Wicklow Chamber Music Festival



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Welcome all to the West Wicklow Chamber Music Festival!

Last year's inaugural Winter Weekend was such a success that we decided it's here to stay. We will have four wonderful concerts for you to enjoy over the weekend.

On Friday we see a revival of the Westland Piano Trio of Róisín Verity Walters (violin), Paul Grennan (cello) and myself (piano). We formed the trio 10 years ago to perform at the West Cork Chamber Music Festival in the summer of 2012. Living in three different cities made having a continuous long-term trio at the time unworkable, so I'm thrilled that we're bringing the band back together for this very special performance! The programme features iconic works for piano trio by Schumann, Shostakovich, Schubert and a particularly special offering is a world premiere of Amanda Feeny's *The Grip* (commissioned by the festival and part 2 of Ceiliúradh to celebrate the diversity of Irishness in 2022).

On Saturday our youngest ever Rising Star lunchtime recital will be given by 15 year old Peter Ryan (violin) alongside his brother Liam Ryan (piano). I first heard Peter perform at the Irish Cultural Centre in Hammersmith, London earlier this year and my takeaway feeling after that concert was of a young guy with a big future ahead. Peter has a rare talent and the joy and enthusiasm he plays with is infectious. The Ryan brothers will perform a selection of favourites for violin and piano.

The evening concert on Saturday features American virtuoso violinist Tai Murray and German pianist Silke Avenhaus. Tai and Silke were due to perform at the festival in May 2020 (we all know what happened there) and it's been a long time coming to finally get this dynamic duo here. Their recital will begin and end with two of the most loved sonatas by Beethoven, 'Spring' and the monumental 'Kreutzer'. Complimenting these masterworks will be Szymanowski's *Myths* inspired by the composer's travels to North Africa and Sicily; and Irish composer Ian Wilson's *Spilliaert's Beach* which was inspired by the painting "Moonlit Beach".

On Sunday we welcome star British soprano Elizabeth Llewellyn and fellow British pianist Simon Lepper, for an afternoon of songs by Finzi, Chausson, Hahn, Verdi, Coleridge-Taylor and Richard Strauss. The music of Coleridge-Taylor is particularly special to the duo who have recently released a complete album of his music for Orchid Classics. I'm sure you'll be as delighted as I was to learn that Elizabeth has family living in Wicklow, making this concert even more special!

Without funding from the Arts Council, Wicklow County Council and the Apollo Foundation; staging our festival would not be possible. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to all of our loyal supporters and donors for their generosity and continued enthusiasm for the festival. All donations the festival receives directly supports artists and arts practitioners.

On behalf of our festival manager Muireann and I, we hope you all have a wonderful experience at festival.

Fiachra Garvey
Founder & Artistic Director

Fri 11 Nov 8pm Programme Notes

Róisín Verity Walters / violin
Paul Grennan / cello
Fiachra Garvey / piano

Schumann Fantasiestücke in A Minor, Op. 88

Amanda Feery The Grip (Ceiliúradh: Part 2, world premiere)

Shostakovich Piano Trio No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 8

INTERVAL

Schubert Piano Trio No. 2 in Eb Major, Op. 100 D. 929

ROBERT SCHUMANN
(1810-1856)

Fantasiestücke in A Minor, Op. 88

- i Romanze
- ii Humoreske
- iii Duett
- iv Finale

This attractive music is more a suite of short pieces than a formal trio as such. Schumann wrote them in December 1842 but reworked them eight years later when they were being published. The opening Romanze

is quite brief, a kind of prelude. It is a dreamy creation with the piano presenting the melody accompanied by swooning strings. The Humoreske is the longest movement and employs a lively tune which is actually a faster version of the Romanze melody. The piano is in boisterous marching mood with staccato sequences interspersed by string comments. A more flowing central section provides a contrast before Schumann returns to his opening march-like theme and develops it further, with some delightful sequences and a rather sudden ending.

The Duett concentrates on the two stringed instruments with the piano providing a floating background accompaniment. The cello takes the lead, soon copied by the violin and this canon-like style is used extensively throughout the movement. It is a short rhapsody of great lyrical charm.

The Finale sets off at a brisk pace with a feisty march. This is extended with flowing piano lines and a repetitive staccato motif on the piano. Sudden changes of mood and tempo follow as Schumann explores the potential of his themes. The opening march returns for further expansion before the work ends with references to the other themes and a short, exhilarating coda.

AMANDA FEERY (b. 1984)

The Grip (Ceiliúradh: Part 2, world premiere)

Composer's Note:

"The Grip" is an Irish phrase that does not exist, I made it up. It's inspired by Irish people's poetic way with words to express various situations. I like to imagine "the grip" could be a conversational expression that refers to the power that superstition and religious doctrine has held over generations of Irish people.

I did not intend for the control the Catholic church has had over Ireland to be the focus of my piece. Instead, The Grip is a celebration of a loosening of religious repression in Irish society. We are not completely free of this grip, but we are certainly in a different place from 100 years ago, or even 30 years ago.

There is a rigidity and resistance to break away in the piece's material, particularly in the piano part. There are other moments of isolation in the strings when this resistant piano material comes undone, and the strings are left unsupported. Harmonically, I wanted to create a sense of opening, of curtains being drawn open to the light. It takes a little while for the material to reflect this, as this grip is never fully released.

DIMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

(1906-1975)

Piano Trio No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 8

At the age of 13 Shostakovich was admitted to the Petrograd Conservatory, as the famous music school in Leningrad was then called by the new Soviet government. He was interested in both composition and piano playing, and achieved early success with both. His First Symphony was written as a graduation piece and had its première in 1927, the same year as he won honourable mention as a pianist at the Chopin Competition in Warsaw. This Trio, only recently published, dates from 1923 and had its first performance at the Moscow Conservatory on March 20th 1925, the pianist being the young Lev Oborin, who would soon become one of Russia's finest players. The Trio is in one movement with many tempi and melodic changes, starting with an Andante introduction, reaching Prestissimo Fantastico in the central part and ending in an impressive Allegro. The music is very fine and belies the youthful age of its 17-year-old composer.

FRANZ SCHUBERT

(1797-1828)

Piano Trio No. 2 in Eb Major, Op. 100, D. 929

- i Allegro
- ii Andante con moto
- iii Scherzo (Allegro moderato)
- iv Allegro moderato

This Trio dates from November 1827. It was published late in 1828 and at least two performances of it are known, including one at the great all-Schubert concert of March 1828 in Vienna. It was after this performance Schubert asked his publisher to remove some 99 bars from the Finale, though he probably did not see the finished, printed edition before his death.

The first movement is dominated by a dramatic, Beethoven-like theme heard right at the start. The second main theme is in total contrast, almost a ghost of an idea. The most significant theme, a poignant melody, first appears in the development section, where the piano has some rapid passages reminiscent of the Moments Musicaux. The second movement is most unusual. It sounds very much like a Schubert melody in an instrumental arrangement. However the tune is not Schubert's but a Swedish song "The sun is setting" ("Se solen sjunker") which he heard the Swedish tenor Isaak Albert

Berg sing on a visit to Vienna. Schubert treats it to a dramatic development with sudden explosive outbursts between the appearances of the song or his variations on it.

The Scherzo is based around a graceful canon between the strings and the piano. It is a light, playful idea, not employing any dramatic style. By way of contrast the central "trio" section provides the missing excitement with its sudden sforzandi and thunderous piano chords. The Finale is a most unusual creation. It employs three principal melodies: the opening, gentle sequence with its folksy 3/4 time melody in the style of country laendler, the precursor to the Viennese waltz. Then comes a section dominated by the piano; until the Swedish tune from the second movement returns in a funereal mood. All three ideas are developed and the three themes are repeated in full. The Swedish tune is given the task of rounding off this extended sequence and the Trio as a whole.

PROGRAMME NOTES © IAN FOX 2022

Sat 12 Nov 12pm Programme Notes

Rising Star Concert

Peter Ryan / violin
Liam Ryan / piano

Mozart Sonata for Piano and Violin in G Major, K301

Wieniawski Polonaise de concert in D Major, Op. 4

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64: II. Andante

Sarasate Zigeunerweisen, Op. 20

Massenet Meditation from Thais

The Coulin (Traditional Irish Air)

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

Sonata for Piano and Violin in G Major, K301

- i Allegro con spirito
- ii Allegro

In October 1777 Mozart left his home in Salzburg and, in the company of his mother set out on a fatal trip that would end up in Paris where his hoped-for recognition was never achieved. Also, his mother died there, adding tragedy to failure. On the way, they spent some time in Munich and then Mannheim, famous at that time for its splendid orchestra. In Munich

he came across interesting new violin sonatas inspiring him to write his own works – four when in Mannheim and three more when they reached Paris. Six were published in Paris and have become known as the Palatine Sonatas because Mozart dedicated them to the Electoress of Palatine. K301 is the first of the set and in many ways the finest. In particular, these works present the violin as the lead instrument instead of the piano, as had been the fashion at the time.

The Sonata opens with a tune played on the violin, soon copied by the piano. The structure is sonata form with the opening statement of the two themes, called the exposition, repeated before the melodies are expanded on in the development section which follows; the movement ends with repeats of the main themes. As was often the case at the time there are only two movements. The second is in ternary or ABA format. It starts with a perky melody on the piano, almost waltz-like, echoed by the violin. When this idea has been presented the music moves to the minor for the central section. Then there is a return to the opening theme to complete the three-part structure, ending in a short coda.

HENRYK WIENIAWSKI (1838–1880)

Polonaise de concert in D Major, Op. 4

A Polish musician from Lublin, Wieniawski was a child prodigy, being accepted by the Paris Conservatory when only 8 and graduating at 12. This Polonaise was originally written during his student years with the finished version being composed in 1853 when he was still only 15. He also composed a version for violin and orchestra. He went on to become an international virtuoso, being considered by many as the successor to Paganini. He often played this Polonaise and its companion piece, the Polonaise Brillante Opus 21, in his concerts. The structure of the Opus 4 Polonaise is simple. It begins with a delightful and lively dance tune which is followed by a contrasting idea, which gives way to a return of the polonaise. A second new tune is added until the work concludes with a third and final presentation of the main melody.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809 – 1847)

Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64: II. Andante

Mendelssohn intended his Violin Concerto for his friend Ferdinand David who was the

leader of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, which Mendelssohn directed. When his health began to fail, David took over the direction of the Gewandhaus Orchestra at the composer's behest. He had long talked about providing David with a Concerto but with many other pressures on him he did not get around to serious work on it until 1844. That summer he took a break from his punishing schedule as conductor and performer and spend some time with his family in Frankfurt where he found time to work on the Concerto, its sunny disposition clearly reflecting his own happy mood. The Concerto is in three movements which are played without a break. We hear just the slow movement today, in a version for violin and piano. The soloist introduces a dreamy melody high on the instrument, like one of his "Songs without Words". This is spun out delectably and is contrasted with a central section in a more minor colouring.

PABLO SARASATE (1844-1908)

Zigeunerweisen, Op. 20

Pablo Sarasate was greatly admired by George Bernard Shaw who said he would be as happy to hear him play "Pop goes the Weasel" as any classic masterpiece; he described him as

a performer who “never interprets anything: he plays it beautifully and that is all. He is always alert, swift, clear, refined, certain, scrupulously attentive and quite unaffected”.

Born in Pamplona, Spain, the son of a military bandmaster, Sarasate took up the violin at five and gave his first concert when eight. Such was his talent he received private tuition in Madrid and Queen Isabella arranged for a scholarship to the Paris Conservatory. He took the première prix in 1857 and completed his studies by the age of fifteen. He started his constant international tours, bringing him throughout Europe and North and South America. He even succeeded in winning the Viennese audiences, despite the success there of Joachim, a player of a quite different musical school. The great violinist and teacher Carl Flesch recalled his playing as featuring “aesthetic moderation, and technical perfection ... he represented a completely new type of violinist”.

Sarasate wrote a number of works, mainly encore pieces to demonstrate his phenomenal technique, and his *Zigeunerweisen* (Gypsy Airs) remains his most famous; he recorded it in 1904 and even such an early disc demonstrates a rich and deep tone, almost viola-like,

marvellously rapid fingering, perfect pitch and great elan. With its sultry opening and concluding fireworks, the work remains today in most the violinists’ repertoire as an ideal virtuoso showpiece.

JULES MASSENET (1842–1912)

“Thais” *Méditation religieuse*

Jules Massenet was one of the most successful opera composers of the second half of the 19th century, producing over thirty operas. Two have remained in the repertoire *Manon* (1884) and *Werther* (1892). Wexford Festival Opera has played an important role in reviving interest in his other operas, having staged nine to date. “Thais” was first produced in Paris in 1894 and is based on a novel by Anatole France. It is the story of Coenobite monks in fourth century Egypt, well suited Massenet’s love for the exotic and sensual. Essentially, the courtesan Thais successfully seduces the young monk Athanaël; remorseful at her actions, she enters a convent where she dies. He is left lamenting his lost love. At the end of the first scene of Act Two, Massenet placed a bridging orchestral passage, the *Méditation religieuse*, a charming creation with a violin solo which has become a popular piece in its own right.

TRADITIONAL IRISH AIR

The Coulin

This is one of the finest Irish airs with its origins going back over the centuries. Various attributions have been made to its source without any real substantiation – to the 13th century, to the time of Henry VIII (1491 – 1547) and to the 17th century. A number of texts exist both in Irish and English and even Tom Moore provided a new poem for the melody: “Though the last glimpse of Erin”. The Czech composer Jan Václav Voříšek (1791 – 1825) wrote a fine set of variations on the melody and more recently, in 1942, Samuel Barber made a version for unaccompanied chorus.

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Sat 12 Nov 8pm Programme Notes

Tai Murray / violin
Silke Avenhaus / piano

Beethoven Violin Sonata No. 5 in F Major, Op. 24 “Spring”

Szymanowski Mythes, Op. 30

INTERVAL

Ian Wilson Spilliaert's Beach
Beethoven Violin Sonata No. 9 in A Major, Op. 47 “Kreutzer”

LUDWIG VAN
BEETHOVEN (1779 – 1827)

**Violin Sonata No. 5 in F Major,
Op. 24 “Spring”**

- i Allegro
- ii Adagio molto espressivo
- iii Scherzo: Allegro ma non troppo
- iv Rondo: Allegro ma no troppo

Beethoven began sketching his Fifth Violin Sonata around 1799. It was published by Mollo as one of a pair, Opus 23 and Opus 24, both dedicated: “A Monsieur le Comte Maurice de Fries”, the said nobleman being a keen supporter of the composer. The sketch books suggest they were written at the same period and were originally both intended as Opus 23 but they were published under two Opus numbers because the

printer had already produced the violin parts in different sizes and the publisher wanted to avoid the cost of re-engraving. The source of the nickname of “Spring” is unknown, though the fresh, surging opening theme certainly has a lively, seasonal feel about it. Many commentators regard the Sonata as the first work of Beethoven’s “middle” period, where he breaks away from strict classical practice and starts writing highly personalised works. It also is the start of the “Romantic” era when composers openly put personal expression above an adherence to academic structures.

The first movement, however, is fairly conventional, employing sonata form. There is a relaxed elegance about the famous opening melody, a tune closely linked to a melody by Clementi, published in 1790. This delectable theme is given out immediately by the violin and then copied by the piano, the order favoured by Beethoven in his middle period. The second main theme is more dramatic, reversing the usual sequence of tempi in the classical sonata of “slow-fast”, and starts with a series of repeated sforzandi or emphatic notes followed by a descending phrase. A full repeat of the themes is marked. The development section ensues, as Beethoven spins beguiling variations around

his two contrasting tunes. The original melodies return for their recapitulation, in proper classical style, and a short coda heralds a fortissimo end.

The main theme of the slow movement sounds, as French composer Vincent d’Indy put it, as though an aria had escaped from a Mozart opera. The movement is in ternary or A - B - A form with the piano presenting the melody with brief violin comments before it takes up the tune. The music is developed at leisure, there seems to be all the time in the world to savour it. The central section maintains the relaxed mood and when the aria returns it is treated to further decorations by the violin.

The Scherzo is an elfin delight of just over a minute’s length, with the piano launching the little staccato theme and the violin *ppp* echoing parts of it. This is followed by a rushing theme on the violin and then a return to the opening melody with the violin again adding syncopated comments. The Finale is a lively Rondo with a flowing theme presented by piano and violin in turn. The first episode presents a new theme, while the second involves a dramatic new melody with flashing contrasts and sudden sforzandi. There is a delightful false start to the next return of the Rondo theme, at first it seems Beethoven is moving on to a slow sequence until suddenly

the music accelerates into the main tune. The next episode is an extended variation on the theme itself which is treated to imaginative reworkings until the violin brings back a jaunty version of the main theme. For the Coda, the piano introduces a more sombre new melody which the violin repeats and they decorate the idea vivaciously as the movement comes to its conclusion.

KAROL SZYMANOWSKI
(1882 – 1937)

Mythes, Op. 30

- i La Fontaine d’Aréthuse
- ii Narcisse
- iii Dryades et Pan

Szymanowski was born into a wealthy land-owning Polish family in an area which is now part of the Ukraine. His musical talent was soon noticed and he was sent to music school and then on to the Warsaw Conservatory. Musical opportunities were scarce in Russian-dominated Poland and he spent many years travelling around Europe as a popular virtuoso pianist. He finally settled back in Warsaw in 1919 where he became director of the Conservatory. However he had to retire when he contracted tuberculosis and spent time in Switzerland. Eventually he settled in Zakopane in Poland and

devoted his time to composing, producing a wide range of music including operas and chamber works. Gradually in the 1930s his music began to gain international recognition and he was hailed as the most important Polish composer since Chopin. He was posthumously awarded Poland's highest honour, the Order of the White Eagle.

Mythes was written in the spring of 1915; he dedicated it to the violinist Zofia Kochanska with whom he gave the first performance in 1916. He devised a remarkable new violin style using the higher strings to create a rhapsodic flow of music. "A new form of expression in violin playing" he wrote "something of epoch-making significance in that respect". The first poem depicts the ancient Greek legend of Alpheus, the river god, who fell in love with a beautiful nymph, Arethusa. She fled from him to an island where Artemis turned her into a fountain. The distraught Alpheus travelled under the sea to be reunited with his beloved. The piano provides a fast-flowing commentary depicting the sparkling fountain while the violin adds long slow high phrases. The music gathers speed until the slow theme returns while the piano's depiction of the bubbling fountain continues unabated. The second poem recalls the beautiful youth Narcissus who

saw his reflection in another fountain and leaning over to make contact with the image, fell in and drowned. When nymphs came to bury him they only found a lovely flower which was named after him. Szymanowski chooses a slow, reflective pace for this tale with soaring violin lines and a gentle piano accompaniment. In the final poem the dryads were the tree spirits of mythology who were desired by the lusty god Pan. Rapid, fleeing phrases suggest a chase through woodlands. A slower sequence brings dreamy echoes of Pan's flute but before long the chase recommences, culminating in a short coda.

IAN WILSON (b. 1964)

Spilliaert's Beach

Ian Wilson was born in Belfast and obtained the first D.Phil in composition to be awarded by the University of Ulster which, in 1993, commissioned his orchestral work *Rise* in celebration of the tenth anniversary of its foundation. His music has been performed and broadcast across the world. His works have been performed at many festivals including the BBC Proms, the Venice Biennale and the ISCM World Music Days, as well as the Cheltenham, Spitalfields and Bath Festivals and the Ultima Festival in Oslo, where *Running, Thinking, Finding*

for orchestra received the composition prize in 1991.

In 1992 Ian Wilson was awarded the Macaulay Fellowship administered by the Arts Council, and in 1998 he was elected to Aosdána. From 2000 to 2003 he was AHRB Research Fellow in Creative and Performing Arts at the University of Ulster. From 2003 to 2011 he was director of the Sligo New Music Festival, and from 2006-2009 he was Composer-in-Association with California's Camerata Pacifica ensemble and the Ulster Orchestra. He has written many works including chamber operas, concertos string quartets., piano trios and vocal works. There are over fifty pieces available as commercial recordings.

Written in 1999, this piece was inspired by Belgian artist Leon Spilliaert's painting 'Moonlit Beach' (1908). The composer explains: "This is a dark, almost abstract work, with a single shining focus, and these characteristics were what I wanted to echo in my work". It has been recorded by Catherine Leonard on the Riverrun Records CD: *From the Book of Longing*.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1779 – 1827)

Violin Sonata No. 9 in A Major, Op. 47 "Kreutzer"

- i Adagio sostenuto: Presto
- ii Andante con variazioni
- iii Presto

Beethoven's best known Violin Sonata was dedicated to Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766-1831), a famous French violinist of that era. He had visited Beethoven in Vienna in 1798 with Count Bernadotte and greatly impressed the young composer. In an 1803 sketchbook Beethoven wrote: "Sonata scritta in un stile molto concertante quasi come d'un Concerto", and at a later stage added "Brillante", which he subsequently scratched out. His usual publisher Simrock was hesitant about issuing this unconventional work and Beethoven wrote him an angry letter in October 1804 claiming: "this Kreutzer is a dear good fellow who during his stay here gave me much pleasure" and requested Simrock to provide him with a copy he could forward to Paris.

It appears that Beethoven had originally intended to dedicate the work to the first violist to play it: the brilliant Afro-European violinist, George Bridgetower (1779-1860). He was in Vienna

in 1803 and gave the première, probably on May 24th., at one of Prince Lichnowsky's famous soirées. In fact the composer was so late in completing his work that he borrowed a discarded finale, originally intended for the earlier Op. 30 No. 1 Sonata. Bridgetower apparently had to play the work virtually at sight, no mean feat, but a subsequent quarrel led Beethoven to change the dedication to his Parisian friend, Kreutzer, who thought so little of the music that he never played the Sonata.

The "concerto style" Beethoven refers to is quite evident in the Sonata with the piano being given considerable prominence. This was the same period as the mould-breaking "Eroica" Symphony and the "Kreutzer" shares something of the scale and daring of that great composition. Its construction and content certainly are exceptional for that period. It is his only Violin Sonata with a slow introduction: a stately prelude which the violin starts solo before the piano adds tense chords. There are tentative hints of the main theme of the movement before it suddenly bursts forward. The fiery first theme is contrasted by two secondary ideas: a hymn-like melody followed by a bold tune launched by the piano with violin pizzicati (plucked notes). This latter idea provides most

of the material for the dramatic development section. The brilliant interplay between violin and piano, acting as orchestra, provides one of Beethoven's most exciting movements. It could so easily be a transcription of a fully-fledged concerto piece and is one of the most thrilling and original creations in all of Beethoven's scores.

The slow movement provides the necessary repose after such a hectic battle. An elegant theme is presented and treated to four variations with plenty of opportunities for the violin to demonstrate a fine, lyrical line and subtle bowing. The Finale may not deliver quite the same frisson as the opening movement but its whirlwind pace results in an exhilarating conclusion. It employs sonata form but the two themes are very close in style, imparting a feeling of a "perpetual motion" study rather than a movement of classical construction. A contrasting theme does provide some momentary repose but the high spirits soon take over and bring this remarkable work to a dashing conclusion.

PROGRAMME NOTES © IAN FOX 2022

Sun 13 Nov 3pm Programme Notes

Elizabeth Llewellyn / soprano
Simon Lepper / piano

Finzi Till Earth Outwears, Op. 19a
Chausson Les Papillons & Le Colibri from Sept melodies, Op. 2
Hahn Le Rossignol des Lilas
Verdi Stornello, Perduta ho la pace, Ad una stella & La Zingara

INTERVAL

Coleridge-Taylor Elëonor, Canoe Song, Minguillo, If Thou Art Sleeping & Tears
R. Strauss Four Last Songs

GERALD FINZI (1901-1956)

Till Earth Outwears, Op. 19a
Song cycle to words by Thomas Hardy

- i Let me enjoy the Earth
- ii In years defaced
- iii The Market Girl
- iv I look into my glass
- v It never looks like summer
- vi At a lunar eclipse
- vii Life laughs onward

London born Finzi studied with various teachers, eventually taking up a teaching post himself at the Royal Academy of Music. His own music was largely elegiac

in tone and he was deeply moved by Thomas Hardy, setting his verse frequently. His musical style derived from Elgar and Vaughan Williams but had its own distinct timbre. He was a champion of his fellow composer Ivor Gurney. After his marriage in 1934 he moved to the country and enjoyed his solitude there, collecting unusual books and growing rare apples. He wrote mainly choral works though his Cello Concerto was performed just prior to his early death. An attack of shingles led to complications and a severe brain inflammation, causing his unexpected demise. This cycle was put together from his manuscripts by friends after his death and was first performed in 1956.

ERNEST CHAUSSON
(1855-1899)

Two songs:
Les Papillons, Op. 2 No. 3
Le Colibri, Op. 2 No. 7

Although he qualified as a barrister, Chausson never practiced, deciding to concentrate on music. He attended the Paris Conservatory where he was taught by Massenet and Franck. He visited Bayreuth and became entranced by Wagner's music which greatly influenced him. Just when his reputation was growing, he had a fatal accident when cycling in the French countryside,

cutting short a promising career. He was greatly impressed by the work of the poet Théophile Gautier and set a number of poems from *La comédie de la mort* (1838), a collection which also inspired other French composers including Berlioz and Gounod. In *Les Papillons* the poet admires snow-coloured butterflies and links them to his beloved. *Le Colibri* is a setting of a poem by Leconte de Lisle; the hummingbird of the title is pictured among exotic flowers where he dies, the poet likens it to his kiss on his beloved's lips.

REYNALDO HAHN (1874–1947)

Le Rossignol des Lilas

Venezuelan-born Hahn studied in Paris where he became a leading conductor and later director of the Paris Opera. A leading figure in Parisian society and friend of Proust, he also composed operettas and over a hundred songs. He was a successful performer of his own compositions and wrote extensively on music. 'Le Rossignol des Lilas' appeared in a collection of 1921 and is one of his most charming creations. The poem is by Léopold Dauphin and welcomes the first nightingale to appear in April.

GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813–1901)

Four Songs: Stornello; Perduta ho la pace; Ad un stella; La Zingara

Verdi wrote songs throughout his career, indeed his first published material comprised Six Romances, printed in Milan in 1838 when he was 25. 'Stornello' (A Little Rhyme) is taken from this collection; the author of the words is unknown. The singer has been informed she is not loved and reciprocates the view: "Constancy in love is crazy... I myself am free and I'll sing the whole night long", she states. 'Perduta ho la pace' was written in the same year, two years after he had his first big success with *Nabucco*. It employs the same words from Goethe's *Faust* (1790) as does 'Gretchen am Spinnrade' – best known in Schubert's famous setting of 1814. 'Ad un stella' is the third of Six Romances published in 1845 and is a setting of a poem in praise of the evening star by Andrea Maffei (1798 – 1885). 'La Zingara' comes from the same collection of romances and is a lively depiction of a carefree gypsy girl; the text is by the Italian poet and language professor S. Manfredo Maggioni (c. 1810–c. 1870).

SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR (1875–1912)

Five songs: Elëanor; Canoe Song; Minguillo; If thou art sleeping; Tears

Born in London to a father who was a doctor from Sierra Leone and an English mother, Coleridge-Taylor had a complex upbringing, as his father left the family to work in West Africa. Taylor's grandfather spotted his musical talent and he was accepted by the Royal College of Music, where he was a pupil of Charles Villiers Stanford. He became a conductor and composer. "Coleridge" was actually his middle name but due to a printers' error the hyphenated version appeared and he kept it thereafter. He is best remembered today for his choral work 'Hiawatha's Wedding Feast', (1898) one of three cantatas he composed on the Longfellow poem which he sold to a publisher for a small sum and never benefited from the huge revenue it would earn from frequent performances over the following years; it is frequently performed at the Three Choirs Festivals and still turns up regularly at The Proms.

The first two songs are from his Op. 37 collection of six songs published in 1899. 'Elëanor' is a love song to words by Eric Mackay 1835-1898). A minor Victorian

poet, he is now remembered as the sponging brother of the successful writer Marie Corelli. 'Canoe Song' was written by one of Canada's first successful poets, Isabella Valancy Crawford (1846 – 1887), who was born in Dublin and moved with her family to North America when she was ten. In it the canoe glides peacefully under jewelled skies. 'Minguillo' is taken from *Southern Love Songs* Op. 12. It is subtitled "ancient Spanish" and the words are by John Gibson Lockhart, the Scottish writer best known for his biography of his father-in-law, Sir Walter Scott. It is a cheeky little piece as a young man tries to hide his interest in a young lady from his mother. 'If thou art sleeping' is from a play by Longfellow written in 1843 and has a Portuguese setting. Finally 'Tears' is also taken from the *Southern Love Songs*. It is a lament, a setting of an anonymous poem.

RICHARD STRAUSS

(1864-1949)

Vier letzte Lieder

- i Fröling
- ii September
- iii Beim schlafengehen
- iv Im Abendrot

The Four Last Songs is Strauss's final work and has all the indications of being an intentional farewell to the world. Indeed he left unfinished the opening bars of a fifth song for the cycle and the title of the work was added by his publisher. The idea of the cycle began with a setting of 'Im Abendrot' by the German romantic poet and novelist, Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857). However, Strauss had been reading a new edition of the works of his friend Herman Hesse (1877-1962) and decided to continue with three of his poems. Their overall theme of a longing for death fits in with the depressed state of mind from which he must have been suffering during this unpleasant time. In June 1948 his Nazi clearance was approved and he could return to his beloved house in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in the Alps near Munich, but his health deteriorated and he passed away in his sleep on the afternoon of September 8th, 1949.

He had hoped to conduct the first performance, having requested

that the great Norwegian soprano Kirsten Flagstad should be the soloist. Unfortunately his death intervened and the première took place in the Royal Albert Hall, London, on May 22nd, 1950, with Flagstad and the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler.

Given the situation, the magnificently valedictory mood of the Songs is easy to appreciate. The first, 'Fröling', displays the warm sweep of Strauss's mature orchestral colouration with a ravishing vocal line. September is in a similar mood but with a more chamber-music style of orchestration and a glorious horn solo in the orchestral postlude. Beim Schlafengehen opens in a dark mysterious mood, with a lovely violin solo after the second verse which is crowned by the soaring phrases of the final stanza. Im Abendrot provides a wonderfully saturated sunset in its opening. The music sinks lower and lower in its closing lines, a superb farewell to such a long and distinguished career.

PROGRAMME NOTES © IAN FOX 2022

Róisín Verity Walters *violin*

Irish violinist Róisín Verity Walters has been described as displaying "passion and ravishing tonal qualities" her playing "had a gorgeously honeyed, heart-melting quality" (*Irish Times*). She made her concerto debut at the age of twelve at the National Concert Hall in Dublin and since then has regularly appeared as soloist with many orchestras in a wide range of repertoire. Her performance of *The Lark Ascending* with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra was broadcast live on RTÉ Lyric fm, and her self-directed tour of America playing Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* with the RIAM chamber orchestra culminated in performances at Carnegie Hall and the Metropolitan Club in New York.



As a chamber musician, Róisín enjoys an exciting schedule of recordings and performances as first violinist of the Liverpool String Quartet. Their debut CD was featured as 'CD of the week' on Classic FM and they will soon be releasing their newest recording featuring Piazzolla's *Four Seasons*. The quartet are very much looking forward to their upcoming tour of Ireland in November 2022. Róisín also holds the assistant Concertmaster chair with pioneering chamber orchestra Britten Sinfonia, with whom she has performed in many noteworthy venues from London's Wigmore Hall to the Lincoln Centre in New York as well as regular performances at the BBC Proms.

Róisín works regularly as a guest principal in orchestras throughout the UK. She has performed as guest Concertmaster with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Welsh National Opera Orchestra, the Orchestra of Opera North, Manchester Camerata and Britten Sinfonia. Róisín is based in Cardiff, Wales where she works with the Welsh National Opera Orchestra and enjoys learning the language and discovering the beautiful scenery of Wales. Her violin is a Van Hoof copy of the Kathleen Parlowe Del Gesu.

Paul Grennan *cello*



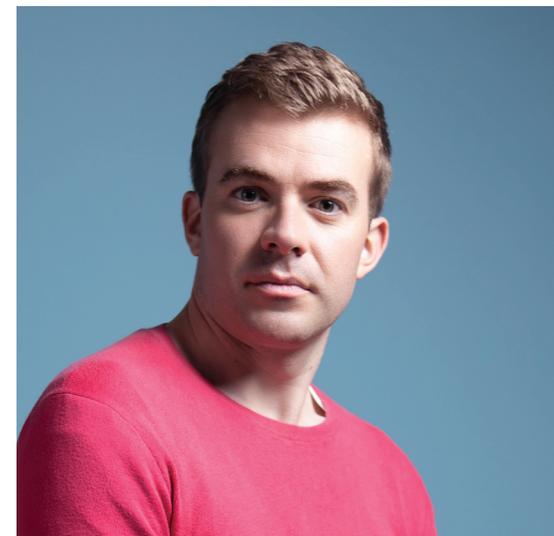
Irish cellist, Paul Grennan, spent his childhood roaming the fields and beaches of County Wicklow. After studying at the Royal Irish Academy of Music with Aisling Drury Byrne he was accepted to the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester following a personal reference from the world renowned cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. Whilst at the RNCM, Paul won the prestigious John Barbirolli Cello Prize. Paul has given chamber music recitals throughout Europe and worked on a personal basis with composers such as Kurt Schwertsik, James MacMillan and Colin Matthews.

He has also performed at the Wigmore Hall as a soloist and as part of Quartets in works by James MacMillan, Alexander Goehr and others.

Paul won a coveted place with the Halle Orchestra in 2015 but also freelances with orchestras throughout the UK and Ireland including the The BBC Philharmonic, RLPO, Irish Chamber Orchestra, RSNO, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Manchester Camerata and more. In 2021 Paul will be acting Principal Cello of Manchester Camerata for their tour to Hungary. He is currently on trial for Principal Cello with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra.

With a keen interest in contemporary music, Paul regularly performs with the renowned ensemble Psappha. As well as a diverse career in classical music, Paul has toured America, Asia, and Australia with various popular ensembles and bands. Amongst numerous engagements as a soloist, notable performances include The Stockhausen Festival and Minimalist Festival at the Onassis Cultural Centre in Athens, Greece, as well as performing as soloist with the BBC Symphony Orchestra in a production of Max Richter's *Memoryhouse* at the Barbican in London.

Fiachra Garvey *piano*



Wicklow born pianist Fiachra Garvey is possessed of a maturity and profound understanding of his art, which when combined with his infectious enthusiasm for music-making, has already captivated audiences in concert halls across Europe and beyond.

First prize-winner at the 2012 Jaques Samuel Competition, London, Fiachra has performed in venues from the Fazioli Auditorium in Italy to London's Wigmore Hall. He has also been a prize-winner at AXA Dublin International Piano Competition, EU Prague and the Soirees-Concours Internationales de Piano a Collioure, France. The NCH awarded Fiachra the "Rising Star" prize in 2011, which subsequently led to a series of concerto and solo debuts.

Concerto appearances include the Janáček Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, RTÉ Concert Orchestra, Irish Chamber Orchestra, Cambridge Symphony Orchestra, UCD Symphony Orchestra, RIAM Symphony Orchestra and the Hibernian Orchestra working with eminent conductors including John Wilson, Theodore Kuchar, Stephen Bell, Mihhail Gerts and Duncan Ward to name a few.

Fiachra has recorded and broadcast for BBC and RTÉ television and radio and has released two solo albums, "For the Piano" (RTE Lyric fm label) and a Live from Wigmore Hall disc.

As a keen entrepreneur Fiachra is the Founder and Artistic Director of both the West Wicklow Chamber Music Festival and Classical Vauxhall.

When not performing, Fiachra loves nothing more than returning home to help on the family farm with the yearly lambing, dipping, shearing, harvesting and all the other elegant and refined activities on the farm! Fiachra feels this makes him a more inspired and fulfilled musician.

Amanda Feery *composer*



Amanda Feery is a composer working with acoustic, electronic, and improvised music, having written for chamber and vocal ensembles, film, theatre, installation, and multimedia.

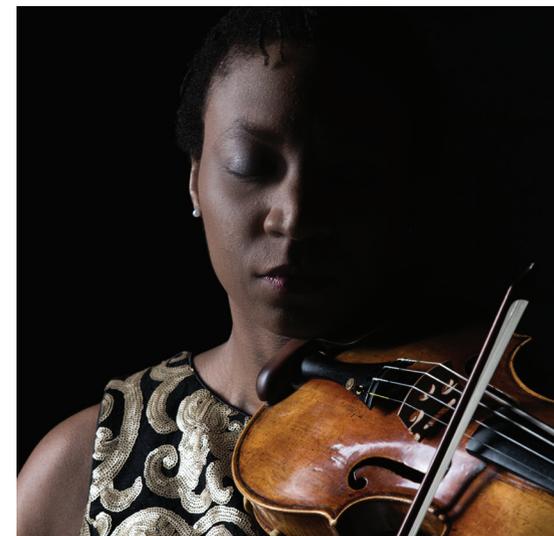
Graduating from Trinity College Dublin with a degree in Music in 2006, she continued her studies in Music and Media Technologies at Trinity College Dublin, completing an M.Phil in 2009. Amanda was the Mark Nelson Fellow in Music at Princeton University, completing her PhD in Music Composition in 2019.

Her research focused on Kate Bush's song suite, *The Ninth Wave*. Whilst in the US, she formed collaborative relationships with a number of ensembles and musicians including Alarm Will Sound, Third Coast Percussion, Ensemble Mise-en, Bearthoven, Quince Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, and cellist Amanda Gookin. Closer to home, past collaborators include Crash Ensemble, RTÉ ConTempo Quartet, the National Symphony Orchestra, Bangers and Crash Percussion, Chamber Choir Ireland, Dublin Guitar Quartet, Paul Roe, Michelle O'Rourke, and Lina Andonovska.

Her work has featured at New Music Dublin, First Fortnight Festival and Dublin Fringe Festival, among others, and she has been composer-in-residence at Bang on a Can Summer Festival, SOUNDscape and Greywood Arts. Her 2019 residency at Centre Culturel Irlandais focused on recording piano improvisations on public pianos in Paris.

Recent projects include *A Thing I Cannot Name*, a 20-minute opera film commissioned by Irish National Opera, a score for Tadhg O'Sullivan's film *To the Moon*, and the piece *Longwave*, commissioned by Cork International Choral Festival and Chamber Choir Ireland. Future projects include a work for orchestra, and a work for Dublin International Chamber Music Festival.

Tai Murray *violin*



Described as "superb" by *The New York Times*, violinist Tai Murray has established herself a musical voice of a generation. "Technically flawless... vivacious and scintillating... It is without doubt that Murray's style of playing is more mature than that of many seasoned players..." (*Muso Magazine*). Appreciated for her elegance and effortless ability, Murray creates a special bond with listeners through her personal phrasing and subtle sweetness. Her programming reveals musical intelligence.

Her sound, sophisticated bowing and choice of vibrato, remind us of her musical background and influences, principally, Yuval Yaron (a student of Gingold & Heifetz) and Franco Gulli. Winner of an Avery Fisher Career Grant in 2004, Tai Murray was named a BBC New Generation Artist (2008 through 2010). As a chamber musician, she was a member of Lincoln Center's Chamber Music Society II (2004-2006).

She has performed as guest soloist on the main stages worldwide, performing with leading ensembles such as the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Symphony Orchestra, and all the BBC Symphony Orchestras. She is also a dedicated advocate of contemporary works. Among others, she performed the world premiere of Malcolm Hayes' Violin Concerto at the BBC Proms, in the Royal Albert Hall.

Tai Murray's critically acclaimed debut recording for Harmonia Mundi of Ysaye's six sonatas for solo violin was released in February 2012. Her second recording with works by American Composers of the 20th Century was released by the Berlin-based label eaSonus and her third disc with the Bernstein Serenade on the French label mirare.

Tai Murray plays a violin by Tomaso Balestrieri fecit Mantua ca. 1765, on generous loan from a private collection.

Silke Avenhaus *piano*



Numerous solo concerts and appearances in chamber music ensembles have taken Silke Avenhaus throughout Europe, the USA and South East Asia. She regularly appears in venues such as the Wigmore Hall in London, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Salle Gaveau in Paris, the Brahms-Saal of the Wiener Musikverein, the Philharmonie in Cologne, Munich and Berlin as well as the Carnegie Recital Hall, New York. She has accepted invitations to the Marlboro Music Festival, to the Chamber Music Festivals in Prussia Cove and Moritzburg,

to the Berliner Festwochen and the Rheingau Music Festival, the Salzburg Festspiele, the Lucerne Festival, the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, the Klavier-Festival Ruhr and the Beethovenfest in Bonn. Silke Avenhaus has worked with orchestras such as the NDR Symphony Orchestra Hamburg, the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, the German Radiophilharmonie and the Munich Chamber Orchestra.

In her most recent recording, Avenhaus has arranged piano works by Wagner, Liszt and Rossini within a “Salon Chromatique et Harmonique”, thus putting them into a surprisingly new context. Her approach to piano and chamber music, characterised by joy and creativity, has led to numerous distinctions by music critics such as the Diapason d’Or, the Supraphon Award, as well as earning a nomination for the Grammy Award. Silke holds an honorary professorship at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Munich and is a regular lecturer at the Villa Musica Music Academy. Bringing classical music to children and young people is of special importance to Silke, whether it be with audio books for children, via workshops or taking part in the “Rhapsody in School” project initiated by Lars Vogt. She is part of “artists for a better future”, a group of artists who engage in welfare projects around the world, and is a co-founder of “Sounds and Science”, a concert series running at Konzerthaus Wien for several years.

Elizabeth Llewellyn *soprano*



Known for her vivid portrayals of Puccini heroines and for her full, distinctive voice, London-born soprano Elizabeth Llewellyn has quickly risen through the ranks since making her debut as Mimi in *La bohème* at English National Opera, establishing herself internationally as an artist of distinction.

Elizabeth begins the 22/23 season with the first instalment of her upcoming trilogy recital series at the Wigmore Hall, focussing on the music of British composer Samuel-Coleridge Taylor. This series continues Elizabeth’s exploration of the composer’s work following the release of her 2021 debut solo album *Heart & Hereafter* - a collection of songs by Coleridge-Taylor. Further highlights this season include her role and house debut as Ariadne in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Opera North, a performance of Strauss’ *Four Last Songs* with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and a recital at this year’s Oxford Lieder Festival.

In recent years, Elizabeth has established herself as a notable lyric spinto soprano, singing the title roles in Verdi’s *Luisa Miller* for English National Opera, *Aida* at the Theater Bielefeld and *Manon Lescaut* with Opera Holland Park. Further recent notable debuts include her role and company debut as Jenůfa at Welsh National Opera, Desdemona in *Otello* for Grange Park Opera, and Alice Ford in *Falstaff*, directed by Sir David McVicar with Scottish Opera.

On the concert platform recent highlights include the world premiere of James MacMillan’s *When Soft Voices Die* at the first night of the BBC Proms 2021, and Mozart’s Requiem for ENO’s first public performance since lockdown, broadcast live to audiences on BBC 2.

Simon Lepper *piano*



Simon read music at King's College, Cambridge before studying piano accompaniment with Michael Dussek at the Royal Academy of Music and later with Ruben Lifschitz at the Fondation Royaumont. He is a currently professor of collaborative piano and a vocal repertoire coach at the Royal College of Music, London where he also in charge of the collaborative piano course. Since 2003 he has been an official accompanist for the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition. He has given masterclasses at the Mozarteum, Fondation Royaumont and La Chappelle, Belgium.

Performance highlights have included an invitation from the Wigmore Hall, London to present a three concert project on the songs of Joseph Marx; recital tours with Stéphane Degout which have included the Ravinia and Edinburgh Festivals and the opera houses of Bordeaux, Dijon, La Monnaie, Lausanne and Lyon; recitals at Carnegie Hall, New York with Karen Cargill and Sally Matthews and at the Frick Collection with Christopher Purves; performances of the Schubert song cycles with Gerald Finley and Mark Padmore including at the Schubertiade, Hohenhems, recitals with Christiane Karg at Frankfurt Opera and the Rheingau Festival and recitals with Angelika Kirchschrager in Verbier and at the Wigmore Hall. Future highlights include a European tour with Stéphane Degout, a performance of Schubert's Schwanengesang with Gerald Finley and recitals with Christiane Karg and with Ilker Arcayürek at the Hohenhems and Schwarzenverg Schubertiade.

Recent releases include the songs of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor with Elizabeth Llewellyn, a CD of Schubert songs with tenor Ilker Arcayürek, a disc of Ballads with Stéphane Degout as well as recital disc "Poèmes d'un jour" which was a *Gramophone* magazine editor's choice.

Peter & Liam Ryan *violin & piano*



Brothers Liam and Peter Ryan thrilled television audiences with their exciting *Late Late Show* performance in 2020. Liam is 18 and studying for his leaving certificate in C.U.S, Dublin, while Peter is 15 and studying for his GCSEs in the Yehudi Menuhin School in the UK. Both are multiple Feis Ceoil prize-winners as well as winning TU Dublin Conservatoire, Newpark, Epta and Sutton Park music festivals and Peter has also won various international competitions as well. Liam recently played in the NCH as winner of Newpark Festival's Baroque Coakley Fuller Cup.

Liam studies piano with Dr David Mooney in TU Dublin Conservatoire and Peter studies violin with Akiko Ono in the Menuhin School. Liam is also an accomplished prizewinning cellist, as is Peter on piano. Both have enjoyed many masterclasses with pedagogues including Maxim Vengerov, Kirill Troussov, Elly Suh, Darragh Morgan, Dr Gwendolyn Masin, Dr Rebekah Angervo, Hilary Coates and Tazmin Little.

Previous festival performances have included Boyle Arts Festival, Chamber Music on Valentia and Mozarteum Summer Academy Festival. Peter is delighted to have been involved recently with Irish



Heritage where he performed in both the Irish Cultural Centre and Rudolph Steiner House. Peter is thankful to play a Gary Leahy bow on loan from an anonymous donor and also wishes to express his gratitude to Mr Ciaran Mulligan for his previous financial donation.

Acknowledgements

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next time!*

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for West Wicklow Chamber
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westwicklowfestival.com