

**West Wicklow
Chamber Music
Festival**



14 - 16 NOV

WCF



westwicklowfestival.com



Welcome everyone to the 2025 Winter Weekend edition of the West Wicklow Chamber Music Festival.

It's a great pleasure to be back at Tulfarris and a special thank you to the management and all the staff at the hotel for making us feel so welcome. We hope you enjoy your experience at the concerts, as well as the wonderful facilities the hotel has to offer!

For the opening concert on Friday 14th November, I'm delighted to be joined by 3 exceptional artists, Irish / Dutch violinist Gwendolyn Masin, Spanish violist Sara Ferrández and Irish cellist Brian O Kane. Our programme features Mozart's *G minor piano quartet*, famously considered "too difficult" by the work's commissioner; Mahler's haunting *piano quartet in A minor*, a one movement work which Mahler abandoned after the first movement and his sole surviving work of instrumental chamber music; *Undercurrent* by Irish composer Rhona Clarke, depicting both the frenetic energy and calmness of the sea and Brahms' *G minor piano quartet*, one of the composer's most adored works, a tour de force taking audiences on an emotional roller-coaster and featuring the iconic *Gypsy Rondo* firework finale to finish!

The festival's Rising Star this November is violist Fiachra de hOra who will be joined by his duo partner, Spanish pianist Claudia Fernández Parrondo for a Saturday morning coffee concert on 15th November. The duo will present a programme of Schumann's evocative *Märchenbilder* (Fairytales), Garth Knox's experimental *Fuga Libre* for solo viola and Rebecca

Clarke's much celebrated *Sonata*, a work which has become a real staple work of the viola/piano repertoire. This concert will also feature *Where Now? Who Now? When Now?* by Dylan Murphy, the winner of the festival's Composition Competition in partnership with the Contemporary Music Centre.

Saturday afternoon's concert offers a dream-team pairing as leading Dutch violinist of her generation, Rosanne Philippens, teams up with celebrated Irish pianist Finghin Collins. Rosanne performed as part of the festival's online offering in 2021 and it is a great pleasure for the festival to finally welcome her to Wicklow. Finghin Collins is no stranger of course to any music lover on this island! The duo's programme commences with Mozart's most adored *Sonata for Violin and Piano in E minor K 304*, written in Paris at the time of his mother's passing. From a nostalgic opening the duo move to the brio and charm of Stravinsky's dance inspired *Suite Italienne*, depicting the composer's ballet *Pulcinella*. The first half concludes with Bartók's energetic *Romanian Dances*, full of spirited folk tunes. The second half offers Brahms' lively *Scherzo* from the *FAE Sonata*; *The Whitening* by Siobhán Cleary, inspired by W.B.Yeats' poem *Cap and Bell*, and to finish arguably the greatest of Brahms' violin sonatas, the monumental *Sonata No.3 in D minor*.

A late-night fusion concert on Saturday night is bound to thrill audiences. Versatile Irish violinist Aoife Ní Bhriain and Welsh harpist Catrin Finch have formed an award-winning duo and will perform selected works from their hugely successful debut duo album *Double You*. Traditional, classical and contemporary styles are married together by two exceptional artists of great skill and creativity.

On Sunday 16th November, the Winter Weekend finale concert offers popular Irish and international songs as well as opera arias and well-known musical numbers from the *Sound of Music*, *The King and I* and much more! I'll be joined by star Irish mezzo-soprano and BBC New Generation Artist, Niamh O'Sullivan, for an afternoon of pure ecstasy. Fresh from starring in *Carmen* for English National Opera, Niamh has been described as "one of the most sheerly beautiful lyric mezzos" (Opera Traveller).

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, volunteers and donors for their generosity and continued enthusiasm for the festival. All donations to the festival charity supports artists and arts practitioners.

Thank you for supporting live music. I look forward to speaking with you during the festival. Do say hello!

Fiachra Garvey
Founder and Artistic Director

Fri 14th Nov, 8pm, The Manor House, Tulfarris

Gwendolyn Masin / violin
Sara Ferrández / viola
Brian O’Kane / cello
Fiachra Garvey / piano

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756 – 1791)

Piano Quartet in G minor, K 478

i *Allegro*
ii *Andante*
iii *Rondo: Allegro moderato*

In many ways Mozart can be considered as the inventor of the Piano Quartet. Up to that time the Piano Trio was the favoured keyboard and string combination. But with his two fine works, he established a new sound and style, taken up by such later composers as Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Dvořák and Brahms. The addition of the viola adds a noticeable depth to the group sound, and may have come from his great love for the instrument, providing further opportunities for him to participate in music-making. In his own Catalogue he dates the work as July 1785, but the manuscript states October 16th 1785, so maybe the former date was when he started work on the Quartet. On December 1st that year, his father in Salzburg received a parcel of music from Vienna, including the manuscript of the Quartet and the first engraving of the parts by the publisher Hoffmeister. It is thought that the publisher had commissioned three Piano Quartets, but withdrew after the first, perhaps finding the music rather too difficult to sell to the paying public. The second Quartet was written in 1786 and later issued by Artaria. The intended third Quartet appears never to have been put on paper.

The opening movement is in sonata form and opens with a powerful six-note staccato phrase, followed by a piano flourish, immediately repeated.

This dominates proceedings and is given extended treatment. The second theme is rather subservient, but complements the vigour of the opening motto. The material is developed with a dramatic impulse, creating a lively and exciting movement. The slow movement opens with a graceful melody on the piano. This is soon taken up by the group and given a flowing development. A second slower theme emerges later, with soft piano chords and is expanded leisurely. This leads back to the opening sequence and a gentle conclusion. The *Rondo* finale is also moderately paced. A jaunty tune launches it on the piano, soon developed by the full group. The first episode is a charming little staccato ditty, widely expanded until a stately flourish brings back the main theme. It is given some witty treatment and leads to a dramatic, concerto-like sequence for the piano supported by emphatic string chords, followed by a quieter variant of the main theme. Another more lyrical episode follows before, with a dramatic modulation, the short coda provides a sprightly conclusion.

GUSTAV MAHLER (1860 – 1912)

Piano Quartet in A minor

Nicht zu schnell

This work should be described as “Quartet movement”, as it is a single piece and apart from 24 bars of a sketch for a *Scherzo*, the work is unfinished. It was written during Mahler’s time as a student at the Vienna Conservatory when he was 16 and given its first performance by Mahler and fellow students probably in 1876. It was never published and was forgotten until his widow Alma found it among his papers in New York years later. The first public performance took place in New York in February 1964 with pianist Peter Serkin and the Galimir Quartet. A number of efforts to complete the Quartet have subsequently been made, including an orchestral version. The Movement was used by Martin Scorsese in his 2010 film “*Shutter Island*”. In 1988, the Russian composer Alfred Schnittke wrote a completion of the *Scherzo* draft.

The movement lasts about twelve minutes and

is marked “not too quickly”. The mood is dark and opens with a sombre theme which Mahler develops fluently, displaying a strong musical line. A second faster theme is introduced and given extensive treatment, reaching a dramatic sequence which eventually calms down, leading to a peaceful coda.

INTERVAL

RHONA CLARKE (b. 1958)

Undercurrent: Piano Quartet No. 1

Rhona Clarke is a Dubliner and studied music at University College, Dublin, and took her doctorate in Queen’s University Belfast in 1996. She is now an associate professor at the School of Theology, Philosophy and Music at Dublin City University. She has written extensively for choral groups, but in the last decade has moved to composing chamber music and a selection of her pieces have been issued on the Métier label. A further CD of choral music was issued in 2022. She is a member of Aosdána.

Note from composer Rhona Clarke:

As with the sea, when outward calmness can mask deep threats, or when wildness can be followed by complete stillness, this piece concerns itself with similar alternation and contrast in mood. Frenetic energy gives way to calmness; dissonant passages dissolve into traditional harmonic processes; complex, layered textures alternate with simple chordal progressions. As the extremity of each state is experienced, the opposite is more fully appreciated and understood.

Undercurrent was commissioned by the National Concert Hall, Dublin, for the ‘Composers’ Choice’ series.

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833 - 1897)

Quartet for Piano and Strings No. 1 in G minor,

Opus 25

i *Allegro*
ii *Intermezzo (Allegro, ma non troppo); Trio (Animato)*
iii *Andante con moto; Animato*
iv *Rondo alla zingarese (Presto)*

In 1863, Brahms made his home in Vienna and remained there for the rest of his life. The success of his two Piano Quartets during the previous two years had done much to establish his name in the capital and encouraged him to make the move. The first performance of the G minor Quartet took place in his native Hamburg on November 16, 1861 with Clara Schumann as pianist. The next year he was pianist at the Viennese première of both Piano Quartets with members of the Hellmesberger Quartet. It was his debut in the city which meant that more attention was given to his fine talents as a pianist rather than the exceptional music he had composed. The great musicologist, Sir Donald Tovey, described the first movement of the G minor Quartet as “one of the most original and impressive tragic compositions since the first movement of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony” and the Quartet has a breadth of vision and grandeur of style that heralds the mature work of the composer.

The Quartet opens with the expansive *Allegro*, the first subject involves two broad melodies, one in the tonic key and the other in the relative major (B flat). This is an example of a favourite device of the composer: placing two themes together instead of just one, helping to create a longer architectural span to a movement. Some excited pages lead to the proper second subject with the theme on the cello and a countermelody on the piano, again Brahms adds a further theme to this second group, a jubilant rising tune, then after a sudden calm, a final new figure emerges, also with an expansive counterstatement. So, Brahms has introduced a wealth of melodic material in his exposition, allowing him to create a movement of considerable scale and wide-ranging imagination. The exposition is not repeated and Brahms moves straight into the development of his rich ingredients. In particular, the themes from the “second subject” group are given enormous prominence, with almost three-quarters of the development devoted to variants of these themes.

Instead of a scherzo, Brahms wrote an *Intermezzo*. Again, two lively themes are presented in a bustling 9/8 rhythm. A faster Trio or central section follows before the opening material returns for further exciting elaboration. The slow movement is placed third and is traditionally regarded as being a tribute to the memory of his friend and champion, Robert Schumann, who had died tragically in 1856. However, in a letter to Schumann's widow, Clara, Brahms wrote that he had been thinking of her in every bar and she replied that the piece was after her own heart: "I can dream so gently; it's as if my soul were rocked to sleep on the sounds". Like the *Intermezzo* it is written in ternary or A - B - A form, though the material is developed far more fully. Again, a pair of themes is employed and Brahms creates the first of his many wonderfully romantic slow movements. The central section is more animated with a march-like theme; this leads back to a freshly ornamented presentation of the opening material.

The *Rondo* finale is marked "in Gypsy style" and opens with a strongly marked theme which could have come from the composer's Hungarian Dances, with a second, slightly lighter theme following immediately. The first of the contrasting episodes is a running melody on the piano with pizzicato accompaniment. The second is a stately, triumphant tune with strong piano chords, as might accompany some grand procession. Then, without bringing back the rondo theme, Brahms adds a slower romantic episode, again in a distinctly Hungarian mood, followed by a return to the fast piano theme in a modified version and a reappearance of the triumphant melody. Now, all the themes come tumbling in for a cadenza-like sequence for all four instruments. This provides the heart of the movement and is a structure of considerable imagination. Finally, when the music seems to have abandoned the rondo theme it returns, *molto presto*, to bring this exhilarating movement to a brilliant conclusion.

Sat 15th Nov, 11.30am, The Manor House, Tulfarris

Rising Stars Concert

Fiachra de hOra / viola
Claudia Fernández Parrondo / piano

ROBERT SCHUMANN
(1810 – 1856)

Märchenbilder Opus 113

i Night schnell
ii Lebhaft
iii Rasch
iv Langsam, mit melancholischem

Schuman took up a post in Dresden in 1843, remaining there for seven years, then moving to Düsseldorf where he was awarded a new appointment. He had initial success with his own music, including the *Third Symphony* or "Rhenish", in February 1851. The following month, he wrote his *Märchenbilder* or *Fairy Tales*, four short pieces for viola and piano. He left nothing to explain what the four tales were that he had in mind, so one can imagine one's own ideas.

The first Tale is marked Not fast and presents a slow, melancholic melody on the viola. The second Tale opens with a rapid tune marked Lively, featuring a three-note motto. This is followed by a quicker middle section. The third Tale is marked Quick and introduces dramatic chords and a bustling viola line. A slower middle section follows before a return to the opening pace is renewed. Finally comes the longest Tale, lasting some five minutes, the instruction states "slow, with melancholic expression" and features a slow, sad melody on the viola with a simple piano accompaniment. Again, it offers the opportunity to devise one's own story to fit the "Tale".

GARTH KNOX
(b. 1956)

Fuga libre

Knox was born in Dublin, but the family moved to Scotland when he was young. Both parents and their four children were very musical and all played stringed instruments. Garth's ability was outstanding and he went to the Royal College of Music in London. In 1983, he joined Pierre Boulez's famous Ensemble Intercontemporain in Paris and then in 1990 moved to the Arditti Quartet for a further seven years. Since then he has pursued a busy career as viola player and composer, as well as exploring the viola d'amore and other stringed instruments. He has made a number of recordings of his own and other composers' works. Today, he gives concerts and teaches all over the world, always performing contemporary music works. He lives in Paris. Knox begins his *Fuga libre* in Baroque musical patterns based on Bach. In several attempts, the music gradually, yet increasingly, moves away from the style of the beginning towards contemporary forms and sounds. The work is about ten minutes long.

Note from composer Garth Knox:

This title could be taken to be a light-hearted reference to a famous cocktail (Cuba Libre) but in fact my real aim was to explore the two meanings of the word "Fuga". In music, this usually refers to a sophisticated musical form extensively explored by Bach and his contemporaries, but in the Latin languages it also has the meaning of running away from something. The musical material here repeatedly complexifies, like a fugue, in an attempt to run away from its own initial simplicity. This eventually leads to a kind of catastrophe, the music grinds to a halt and the player is invited to make a personal creative contribution to the piece, that is, to invent a free cadenza. Time briefly stands still while the player improvises, playing whatever seems appropriate to them. There follows a slow movement, where high harmonics alternate and co-exist with the lowest notes of the viola. After a second free cadenza the high notes and the low notes merge again to "run away" together in a playful manner till the end of the piece in kind of perpetual motion. The meaning of the title is thus

seen to be something to do with running away and being free – literally, "free flight". *Fuga libre* was commissioned by the Tokyo International Viola Competition 2009.

DYLAN MURPHY
(b. 1995)

Where Now? Who Now? When Now?

Winning work of the West Wicklow Festival & Contemporary Music Centre's Composition Competition Prize

Dylan Murphy is a contemporary classical composer and performer from Galway, Ireland, currently completing a PhD in composition at Maynooth University. His work merges contemporary classical and jazz traditions, creating rich, textural soundscapes influenced by Xenakis, Saariaho, Miles Davis, and John Coltrane. His music has been performed by Xenia Pestova, Adrian Mantu and others. Recent works include *Stone*, *Grass*, *Silence* (string quartet), *Between Two Tones* (magnetic resonator piano), and *the silence, the end, the beginning* (solo cello). Upcoming premieres include *riverrun II* (electric guitar, Sept 2025) and a new work for the Éire Guitar Duo (Jan 2026).

'*Where Now? Who Now? When Now?*' explores the aesthetics of Beckett's '*The Unnamable*', whilst also trying to distill the techniques I have used within '*the silence, the end, the beginning*' – for solo cello into a more condensed form. Reversibility is key to this, which can be heard within; but I found engaging with this aspect in a more free way to open my compositional style to more options.



REBECCA CLARKE
(1886 – 1979)

Sonata for Viola and Piano

- i Impetuoso*
- ii Vivace*
- iii Adagio*

Born in Harrow, London, to an American father and a German mother, Clarke studied at the London Royal conservatories, as well as in the United States, where she eventually settled at the start of World War II. Her music was widely appreciated during her lifetime, at a time when women composers were not properly acknowledged. The *Viola Sonata* had its premiere at the Berkshire Music Festival in 1919 and was published in 1921.

She placed a quotation from a poem by the French poet Alfred de Musset at the head of her score:

*Poet, take your lute, theine of youth
The wine is fermenting in the veins of God.*

The opening movement is marked Impetuously and is in three-part or ternary form. The viola launches the music with a fanfare followed by a passionate theme which the two instruments develop energetically. Matters then become quieter for the central section before returning to the livelier opening material; matters conclude quietly. The second movement features a jolly, pastoral melody. The pace slows for a while before returning to its opening merriment. The finale is a double movement, starting with a simple, relaxed melody and featuring quiet musings. Then the pace picks up, *Allegro*, with an agitated new theme and a fresh fantasy is developed. The pastoral sequence is recalled before the music ends in a fine flourish.

Sat 15th Nov, 5pm,
The Manor House,
Tulfarris

Rosanne Philippens / violin
Finghin Collins / piano

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
(1756 – 1791)

Sonata for Piano and Violin in E minor K 304

- i Allegro*
- ii Tempo di menuetto*

Mozart arrived in Paris with his mother in the spring of 1778. It was part of a tour which was supposed to open new opportunities for the twenty-two-year-old composer. He had been there as a child prodigy in 1764, when he and his sister had been fêted at Versailles, but there was little interest in the adult composer and work was scarce. Then tragedy struck with the sudden death of his mother on July 3rd. It is easy to hear echoes of this terrible event in this Sonata written shortly afterwards. The great Mozart scholar Alfred Einstein describes it as one of the miracles of Mozart: "It springs from the most profound depths of emotion... (and knocks) at those gates of the great world of drama which Beethoven was to fling wide open".

The first movement is a passionate affair right from the start, with its sudden outbursts and sinuously creeping themes. All the material is based around the opening phrases, creating a strongly coherent structure. Although Mozart marks the second movement as a minuet, it is a long distance from any courtly dance. The tune is elegant, but with a hint of pathos in its limpid lines. It is developed in rondo style with some superb writing in the episodes between the repeat of the principal melody.

IGOR STRAVINSKY
(1882 - 1971)

Suite Italienne for Violin and Piano

- i Introduzione*
- ii Serenata*
- iii Tarantella*
- iv Gavotta con due variazioni*
- v Scherzino*
- vi Minuetto e Finale*

Before World War One, Stravinsky scored great successes with his large-scale ballets for the Diaghilev company. However, 1914 changed everything including Stravinsky's views on big orchestras. He had been disappointed with the failure of theatre musicians to play his complex ballet scores like *Firebird*, *Petrouchka* and *The Rite of Spring* successfully. At first Diaghilev tried tempting him back for more of the same but, failing to get a response, he switched his offer to an idea needing smaller resources, based on the success he had had with a ballet in Rome in 1917, *The Good Humoured Ladies*, for which Vincenzo Tommasini had reworked Scarlatti's music as the score for the ballet. During a walk in the Place de la Concorde, Diaghilev asked the composer not to "protest at what I am about to say...but I have an idea I think will amuse you...I want you to look at some delightful eighteenth-century music with the idea of orchestrating it for a ballet". He provided Stravinsky with copies of music by Giovanni Pergolesi (1710-1736). The composer loved the music and was quickly hooked on the idea. His most recent creation had been *The Soldier's Tale*, employing a small chamber orchestra, and he was already developing his concept of "neo-classical" music, in which leaner, 18th century styles were being re-interpreted in 20th century terms.

For the plot they chose an old Neapolitan tale about the clown Pulcinella in which the local lads are jealous of his way with the girls and decide to dispose of him. They dress up as Pulcinellas and pay court to their girls. The real Pulcinella uses a friend who pretends to submit to their blows and then reappears intact himself. He arranges marriages all round, taking Pimpinella for himself. Stravinsky used music from Pergolesi's sonatas, instrumental works and operas for

his score, retaining the original melodies but re-orchestrating the music wittily for a modest orchestra and three singers. "Pulcinella was my discovery of the past, the epiphany through which the whole of my late work became possible" Stravinsky later commented. It is the spring-board for his neo-classical style, soon taken up by many other composers in the 1920s.

The ballet had its première at the Paris Opera on May 15th 1920, with Ansermet conducting, choreographer Leonide Massine in the title role and Karsavina as Pimpinella; it was a great success. The triumph of the original presentation encouraged Stravinsky to arrange a number of suites using music from the score. The original *Suite Italienne* was prepared for cellist Gregor Piatigorsky in 1932 and the following year Stravinsky created another version for violin and piano for his friend, the violinist Samuel Dushkin, to play. The Overture is taken from Pergolesi's Trio Sonata I and the Serenata, originally for the tenor, comes from the opera *Il Flaminio*. The Tarantella is borrowed from Trio Sonata VII while the Gavotte comes from Pergolesi's Harpsichord Lessons. The *Scherzino* is from *Trio Sonata II*, while the Minuet comes from the opera *Lo Frate 'nnamorato* and the *Finale* from *Trio Sonata XII*.

BÉLA BARTÓK
(1881 - 1945)

Romanian Folk Dances Sz56

Bartók spent much of his life travelling around middle Europe, collecting the folk music of Romania, Hungary and the neighbouring countries. In 1915, he published a short set of six of the Romanian dances he had taken down. Later, in 1917, he orchestrated them for a small ensemble. Other enthusiasts for Bartók's music have made various arrangements including this one for violin and piano by Zoltán Székely. He maintained the spirit of the originals, but made some minor modifications. Bartók stated that the whole six should take less than five minutes to perform, each one being under a minute in length.

The first is a Stick Dance which Bartók heard played by two gypsy fiddlers in Transylvania. Second is a Sash Dance which uses a sash or

waistband; this one comes from Igris. The third dance is called *On the spot*, it is a darker piece than the Sash Dance and is also from Igris. The fourth dance is from Bucsum, now in modern Romania. Next comes a traditional polka from the Hungarian/Romanian border. Finally a Fast Dance employing two melodies. In some versions the fifth and sixth dances are played *attaca*, that is without a break between them.

INTERVAL

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833 – 1897)

F.A.E Sonata Scherzo

In 1853, the twenty-year-old Brahms visited the Schumanns in Duesseldorf where he was made warmly welcome. Schumann called him “the young eagle” and was most impressed by the maturity of his early compositions. Another visitor was a slightly older musician, Albert Dietrich, who soon became a close friend. When Joachim, the great violinist, announced he was to visit the house, the trio decided to surprise him with a new sonata, each contributing to the score - Dietrich composed the First Movement, Schumann the *Intermezzo* and *Finale* and Brahms the *Scherzo*. They called the work the *F.A.E. Sonata*, after Joachim’s motto “*Frei aber einsam*” - free but solitary. Schumann later reused his movements in his own Third Violin Sonata, but Brahms’s contribution was not published until 1906. It displays a considerable maturity for such a youthful composer, yet it was over 25 years before Brahms actually published his own full First Violin Sonata, *Opus 78*.

SIOBHÁN CLEARY (b. 1970)

The Whitening

DUBLINER Siobhán Cleary studied at Maynooth University and a number of other colleges and quickly established a reputation as an impressive composer, being appointed to Aosdána in 2008. *The Whitening* dates from 2012 and is written for

violin and piano. It lasts about five minutes and was inspired by the W. B. Yeats poem *The Cap and Bells*. It is a surreal fantasy about a jester who woos a young lady before vanishing. The music is dark and sombre; deep growling chords well up from a distant rumbling which becomes an insistent pulse. A more clearly etched phrase appears on the violin then fades until everything vanishes. The whitening refers to dawn as the dejected jester sends her his cap and bells and disappears.

Note from composer Siobhán Cleary:

‘I have cap and bells,’ he pondered, ‘I will send them to her and die; And when the morning whitened He left them where she went by. (The Cap and Bells by W.B. Yeats)

In *Alchemy*, the whitening stage (*albedo*) was a purification which followed from the harrowing, dark material of the chaotic first stage (*nigredo*). Psychologist Carl Jung equated the albedo as one of the stages of the process of human individuation, comparing the *Whitening* to the coming of dawn after a long night. Yeats foreshadowed Jung’s texts on alchemy with his short prose romance *rosa alcemica* in 1896. For Yeats, alchemy expressed the symbolist desire for a “*world made entirely of essences*”. Yeats poem *Cap and Bells* abounds with alchemical symbolism; most significant of which is the jester himself (corresponding with Jung’s archetype of the trickster). *The Cap and Bells* was written in 1899. Yeats writes of its conception; “*I dreamed this story exactly as I have written it, and dreamed another long dream after it, trying to make out its meaning, and whether I was to write it in prose or verse. The first dream was more a vision than a dream, for it was beautiful and coherent, and gave me the sense of illumination and exaltation that one gets from visions, while the second dream was confused and meaningless. The poem has always meant a great deal to me, though, as is the way with symbolic poems, it has not always meant quite the same thing. Blake would have said, “the authors are in eternity,” and I am quite sure they can only be questioned in dreams.*” -1899. This piece is dedicated to the memory of a much-missed friend; composer/pianist Frédéric Lagnau, 1967-2010).

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833 – 1897)

Sonata for Piano and Violin No. 3 in D minor, Opus 108

i Allegro

ii Adagio

iii Un poco presto e con sentimento

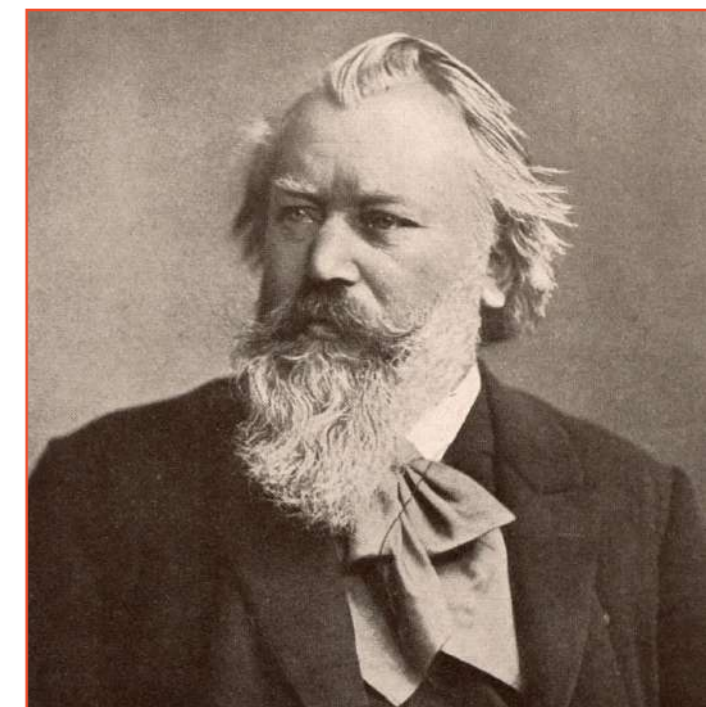
iv Presto agitato

Brahms composed three important Violin Sonatas. The Third Sonata was written in 1888 during a summer holiday at Thun in Switzerland and was dedicated to the conductor Hans von Bülow. It was first performed by the great violinist Josef Joachim and the composer in Vienna the following February. It is one of his most eloquent chamber works, longer by a whole movement than the other two Violin Sonatas. It contains much more besides, providing a profound and moving communication to its listeners.

The opening page is marked *sotto voce*, but drama is never far away and soon the music is singing out with a fiery theme. The development is quite extraordinary, employing a repeated A on the piano over the violin’s dark mutterings, while a low A softly beats out the rhythm throughout the sequence. The effect is heard again in the coda, this time over a low D. The glorious slow movement presents a beautiful, contented theme, not unlike the slow movement of his Violin Concerto; Brahms employs a ternary or three-part structure, with a gypsy-like contrasting central section or *Trio*, followed by a return of the opening material.

The third movement is not a full-blooded scherzo, as might be expected at this point, but more of an intermezzo, a choice he also made in his *Symphonies*. The piano launches the repeat-note theme which is taken up rather tentatively by the violin over a rippling accompaniment. This leads to a more aggressive version with thunderous piano and violin chords. Calmer comments lead to a hesitant return of the opening motif and a gentle relaxing of the tempo, leading to the final wistful chords. There is no time in this short movement for the usual *trio* or central section.

The finale opens with a tremendous bustle: a savage dance in 6/8 time starts the proceedings while the piano introduces the second theme, or subject, with a chorale-like timbre, closely related to one of the composer’s early Piano Sonatas (*Opus 5*), as the violin delivers sailing legato phrases. At first, it appears Brahms will repeat his opening material, as would be the usual case in a classically-constructed sonata. Instead, before completing the restatement, he moves on into the development of his themes, at first gently employing the violin’s part of the second subject. The tension soon mounts in exciting passages with strong accents and an unswerving passion. The chorale theme is allowed to return in a calmer sequence and the violin elaborates on its part of this theme in some fine, soaring phrases. Soon the opening dance thunders back, but after this development, Brahms returns to the opening material, just where he had broken off at the start, as though the whole development section was some kind of parenthetical sequence. Much of the writing is stormy with virtuoso power in the brilliant closing bars, where the minor key maintains dominance. This is the mature Brahms at his most dynamic, passionate and enjoyable.



Sat 15th Nov, 9pm, The Manor House, Tulfarris

Aoife Ní Bhriain / violin
Catrin Finch / harp

Featuring works from their award-winning debut album Double You including:

Wonder
Whispers
Wandering
Woven
Caerdroea an Cheoil
Wings
Bright Lights
Why?
Wish

Notes by Andy Morgan

Why hexagons? Why not squares or triangles? Mathematicians call it the 'honeycomb conjecture'. It took them centuries of geometrical analysis and equation hacking to work out the answer. But the bees knew it all along: a hexagonal structure affords the most efficient use of their precious wax. It's one of the most beautiful examples of how the logic and precision of mathematics can manifest in nature to produce something magical, emotional and full of wonder.

'B' like Bach. His 1,128 known compositions abound in note patterns that echo the golden ratio, Fibonacci sequence and other logical structures. Their delicate balance of precision, grace and beauty is manna to both mathematicians and ordinary music loving mortals. Change one note and the whole is diminished. No wonder Bach was Einstein's favourite composer.

Aoife: *"He definitely had a formula for what he did. But there's something so emotional in his music. That's the magic. Everything he did was for God, for his own afterlife and for the greater good."* The first time Catrin and Aoife met, deep in the wintry lockdown of January 2021, they began their

collaboration with a piece by Bach. The plan was to film a musical union of Wales and Ireland at the National Museum of Wales for a virtual edition of the Other Voices Festival, which is normally held in Dingle and Cardigan. When Aoife got the call, she went off and discovered Catrin's music, and the more she listened, she thought to herself *"this is going to be amazing. This is going to be so important!"*

Striking parallels began to emerge. Both had been through the most rigorous classical training imaginable, closer to 20,000 than the 10,000 hours of Malcolm Gladwell's famous dictum. And yet both were acutely aware of the creative strictures of the classical world and the need for hearts and ears to roam free. In the case of Aoife, who was born into a family steeped in Irish traditional music, it was in the worlds of folk and 'no genre' acoustic experimentalism. And in the case of Catrin, it was Latin America and Africa, both initially challenging to her classical rigour, but gradually assimilated to produce award-winning collaborations with Cimarrón and Seckou Keita.

And there was more. Both were recognised virtuosi of their instruments with a healthy awareness of virtuosity's limitations when deployed merely for its own sake. Both were fluent speakers of their land's native tongue. Both were young women who had battled hard for recognition and respect. Both were recent cancer survivors. Both were hungry for new musical adventures. Both of them thought Bach was King. In other words, there was a deep and multifaceted affinity, just like the one that still exists between their respective countries, with their shared Celtic identity, their centuries old struggles for self governance, their bullying Anglo-Saxon neighbour, their carousel of early Christian saints, their visceral desire to bring their native cultures and identities out of the shadows and their love of music. No surprise really when on a clear day you can see the peaks of Eryri from Howth Head, across a mere 140 kilometres of open sea.

There are discrepancies and minor envies of course. Wales regards with longing the rude health and international reach of Irish traditional music, the global furore of St Patrick's day, the hugely attractive and marketable draw of the 'craic'. Ireland eyes the perceived health of the Welsh

language - a rare success story in the fight to bring minority languages back from the brink - and the fierce pride and confidence of Wales's Welsh-speaking population with awe. But there have been shared gifts a-plenty, gifts of blood, music and the holy spirit. St Patrick almost certainly grew up speaking Welsh in a villa somewhere near the modern town of Llantwit Major.

Dublin-born Gruffydd ap Cynan, King of Gwynedd, is purported to have imported Irish bards to overhaul the Welsh bardic tradition and lay down its ground rules sometime in the 11th century. And let's not forget the bees. If W B Yeats could dream of living alone in his *"bee-loud glade"* at Innisfree, it was thanks to St Modomnoc who brought the bees back from his monastery at Menevia (modern St Davids in Pembrokeshire) in the 6th century. Scion of the royal O'Neill clan of Ulster, Modomnoc is fondly eulogised in the chronicles for his gentle loving nature. He was so adored by the bees whose hives he tended at Menevia, that when he decided to return to his native Ireland, they followed him, wandering over the waves, buzzing around his head. The sailors asked Modomnoc to command his 'flock' not to sting anyone while they were on board and, dutifully, they obeyed.

Pure legend? The Roman geographer Solinus noted the lack of bees in Ireland back in the 3rd century. The Bechbretha, a tract of old Irish laws relating to bee-keeping dating back to the 7th century, uses bee-related words that are very close to their early-Welsh equivalent (that the 'brehons' or old Irish judges deemed bees so important they warranted their own set of laws is a lesson to the benighted lawmakers of today). Honey and beeswax were essential ingredients in many traditional Irish potions and medicines, and honey speckles the Irish language with words denoting plenty, sweetness, eloquence and feminine beauty.

Bees with their poppy-seed sized brains continue to amaze. The way they buzz and whisper with a music all of their own. It seems you can measure the health of a hive purely by its throb or hum. And as pollinators, they have developed this humbling mental capacity to spread their wings and reconnoitre the landscape, parsing it for the best floral opportunities and communicating their intel

to their fellow workers by means of their famous waggle dance. Centuries of intuitive veneration, man to bee, has recently been supplemented with hard scientific research that has discovered evidence of stress, happiness, frustration, fear, playfulness and even PTSD in bees. They are part of that scientific trend which continually undermines human arrogance and the old belief that we are somehow special and above the rest of nature.

Catrin: *"When you're thinking of something to inspire you, these tiny little things appear. We don't appreciate their ability to build their hives, to find pollen, to follow each other, speak to other."*

Aoife: *"And it's reflective of our musical journey. In the same way the bees spread out and collect pollen, we've been collecting these musical ideas and feelings, generating musical momentum, and now we're gathering together and creating something completely new. It's like something's always being created, never resting. We're constantly gathering and sharing."*

And beyond the amazement, the veneration, the scientific affirmation, lurks one apocalyptic fact.

One fact that the modern world seems desperate to ignore:

Catrin: *"Without the bees we're in big trouble."*

The ancients knew that instinctively. They appreciated the intelligence and sensitivity of bees, their capacity to communicate, to act as the barometer of nature's moods and the agents of its annual resurrection. Hence the widespread tradition of telling the bees about any important event in the life of a household—a birth, a death, a marriage—either by clothing the hive in red or black cloth or leaving a slice of wedding-cake or a funeral biscuit as appropriate and saying a few words along the lines of *"So and so is dead, but don't you go. Your new master or mistress will be good to you."* This tradition was not only common in Ireland and Wales, but throughout Europe and the Middle East.

A happy bee is a happy human, it's as simple as that. And as with bees, so with music. Both are essential to our human existence. Both involve a

painstaking unpredictable process of wandering, whispering, weaving, waggling, wishing and spreading wings, just to produce something rich, healing, magical.

Sun 16th Nov, 3pm, The Manor House, Tulfarris

Niamh O'Sullivan / mezzo-soprano
Fiachra Garvey / piano

REYNALDO HAHN
(1874 – 1947)

À Chloris/ Offrande/ Fêtes Galantes

Born in Venezuela into a very musical family, the Hahns moved to Paris when he was a small child. He proved to be a musical prodigy, giving his first recital in Paris at the age of 8 and later studying at the Paris Conservatory where he was a star pupil of the composer Massenet. On graduation he began a busy career as a pianist, conductor and composer. He was noted for his colourful French songs but also wrote operas, operettas, symphonies and much instrumental music, eventually running the Paris Opera after World War II. À Chloris uses one of his favourite devices where the accompaniment is a piano piece with its own momentum; over this the voice embroiders an inspired overlay which seems half sung and half spoken, moving with conversational grace between whispered confidences and declarations of love in full voice. Offrande is one of Hahn's great melodies; it stands as a proud alternative to the settings of Debussy (1888) and Fauré (1891), both of which use Verlaine's original title Green. Fêtes galantes is another Verlaine poem which many a French composer has felt obliged to set. In Hahn's setting, there is something perhaps deliberately banal about these exchanges of courtly pleasantries. These three songs are an example of his considerable lyrical skills.

ROBERT SCHUMANN
(1810 – 1856)

Song Cycle: "Frauen liebe und leben" Opus 42

Please do not applaud until the end of the cycle, thank you.

It was Schubert who raised the "song cycle", a set of linked songs on a particular theme or using verses by a certain poet, to an exalted art-form with his "Die schöne Müllerin" and "Winterreise". Schumann followed with three important song cycles himself, including this one, written between May and July of 1840. He had finally won his court case permitting him to marry his beloved Clara. Then over 50 songs flowed from his happy pen, in an extraordinary outburst of creativity and they were wed on September 12th that year.

Adalbert von Chamisso (1781-1838) was a German poet, novelist and naturalist. His verses belonged to the emotionally-charged mood of German romanticism, perhaps appearing naive today, but perfectly suited to that era and Schumann's own excitable temperament. Chamisso was forty when he married his bride, a girl of eighteen, and the poems were dedicated to her. Schumann's Clara was a teenager when he fell for her and he invested the poems with a musical passion, well above the poet's modest verses.

There is a clear narrative: a youthful innocence illuminates the first song, "since first I saw him I've been blind", while the second, probably the finest, radiates a shining passion. True to the romantic style, a dream sends her confirmation of his love to her delight. In the fourth song the ring has been placed on her finger and a new maturity enters her spirit. A wedding march sets the mood for the fifth song, as she calls on her sisters to support her on the great day. Song six is glowing with contentment while the seventh celebrates the birth of their child. However the happiness is not to continue and in the eighth song she grieves over his death, with one of Schumann's marvellous piano postludes bringing the cycle to its tragic close. Chamisso wrote a ninth poem, about her becoming a grandmother, but Schumann did not set it.

INTERVAL

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
(1756 - 1791)

Ah scostati, Smanie Implacabeli (Cosi fan tutte)

In Mozart's opera *Cosi fan tutte*, one of the two sisters Dorabella laments at being left on her own "Implacable pains torment me;...I will furnish a wretched example of tragic love". *Cosi fan tutte* is the third work to result from the composer's collaboration with the brilliant librettist Lorenzo da Ponte (the other two being *Don Giovanni* and *The Marriage of Figaro*). *Cosi* is an opera buffa (comedy) which was commissioned by Emperor Joseph II, known as a great patron of the arts. The plot is convoluted and silly, and in short, revolves around two couples and an instigator. *Cosi fan tutte* premiered on January 26, 1790 in Vienna. It was immediately successful, but only had five performances before the death of Joseph II.

GEORGE BIZET
(1838 – 1875)

Près des remparts de Séville (Carmen)

On the other hand, Bizet's *Carmen* is enticing a young officer to meet her in a local café "under the ramparts of Seville". The opera *Carmen* was based on a novella of the same title written in 1846 by Prosper Mérimée. It was premiered on 3 March 1875 and was not initially well-received by the critics. The subject matter was considered improper, particularly the idea of a soldier deserting the army to join a criminal band of smugglers. Sadly, Bizet did not live to see *Carmen's* success. He died from a heart attack at the age of 36 exactly three months after the première, on his sixth wedding anniversary. The opera did however quickly gain admirers. Praise for it came from well-known contemporaries including Saint-Saëns and Tchaikovsky. *Carmen's* success is due to a number of factors. On the surface it is written in a popular style with strong melodic ideas inflected with Spanish and Latin American idioms. More significantly it has very subtle musical characterisation.



JULES MASSENET (1842 – 1912)

Werther, Werther qui m'aurait dit la place (Werther)

Charlotte, Massenet's heroine in his opera *Werther* (1892), is re-reading her love letters after her relationship with a young poet has ended "I go though them again and again... what sadness". In Massenet's masterpiece, based on Goethe's *Sorrows of the Young Werther*, tears never cease to flow from the very moment the moonlit set is revealed and closed. "My whole being cries at it" says Werther. We are a long way from opera's usual tears, be they furtive or violent. These tears flow slowly and inexorably, one by one. Patient tears as Charlotte puts it. Massenet completed the opera in 1887, but Léon Carvalho, director of the Opéra-Comique, turned it down as too depressing. The theater burned down shortly thereafter, and, though there was a possibility of a premiere in 1889, Massenet's next opera, *Esclarmonde*, was performed instead. Eventually, the premiere took place on February 16, 1892, sung in German, at the Vienna Hofoper.

RICHARD RODGERS & OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II (1902 – 1979) / (1895 – 1960)

Something Wonderful (The King and I)

I Cain't Say No (Oklahoma)

The Hills Are Alive (The Sound of Music)

Rogers and Hammerstein had a string of Broadway hits in over three decades of the 20th century. Their exotic production *The King and I* opened on March 29th 1951 and starred Gertrude Lawrence and Yul Brynner. It is based on the true encounter between the King of Thailand and his English school teacher. *Something Wonderful* is sung by the King's chief wife, praising the monarch, despite his autocratic ways. The first success for the Rogers and Hammerstein team had been *Oklahoma!*, which opened on Broadway on March 31st 1943. It was so different to the current style of musical

comedy that some critics predicted disaster, writing *No Girls, No Gags, No Chance* to which the company soon replied: "No Girls, No Gags, No Tickets!". Ado Annie is a comic character who is introduced with a delightful song *I can't say no*. Of all their collaborations the most successful was their last one, based on the Von Trapp family story, *The Sound of Music* was first produced in 1959, with Mary Martin as Maria, a rather rascally postulant in an Austrian nunnery in 1938 who is enjoying the beautiful Alpine scenery and its musical effects.

THE SHERMAN BROTHERS (ROBERT SHERMAN / RICHARD SHERMAN) (1925 – 2012) / (1928 – 2024)

Feed The Birds (Mary Poppins)

Mary Poppins first appeared in a series of eight children's books by P L Travers s between 1934 and 1988. She became even more famous when Disney produced its film version starring Julie Andrews in 1964 with its attractive songs. It was one of Walt Disney's greatest successes and won five Academy Awards (out of thirteen nominations) as well as successes at the Golden Globe Awards and Grammy Awards. The character Mary Poppins has received little critical attention in the past fifty years; however, Poppins can be viewed as a leading female figure who comes to save the family. Through the song *Feed the Birds*, readers receive the powerful message of charity, which serves as the foundational message.

PERCY FRENCH (1854 – 1920)

Gortnamona

Finally, three Irish songs. Percy French was a highly popular entertainer and a multi-talented composer, poet and artist. Hailing from Roscommon, he wrote about and painted that often neglected part of the island. He often visited Gortnamona House in County Galway with its beautiful woods, the inspiration for this charming song.

HERBERT HUGHES (1882-1937)

The Stuttering Lovers

Belfast-born Herbert Hughes was a composer, he is best remembered today as a leading arranger of Irish traditional songs. The very first song he took down was *The Stuttering Lovers* during a trip to Donegal and it remains his most popular arrangement. This old Irish song depicts a young couple sent into the cornfield to scare off the birds. The appetites of both birds and lovers found happy fulfillment much to the wrath of the frustrated farmer.

JOHN STEVENSON (1761 – 1833)

The Last Rose of Summer

Sir John Stevenson was a leading figure in Irish music. He was closely involved in the music in both Dublin cathedrals and the Chapel Royal in Dublin Castle, being awarded an honorary doctorate by Trinity College. Today he is mainly remembered for his work as the arranger for voice and piano of the melodies Thomas Moore employed for his poems and the Moore's Melodies. They completed ten volumes of songs together, the *Last Rose* perhaps being the most famous.

Programme Notes Ian Fox © 2025



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Artists

In order of their appearance
in the festival

Gwendolyn Masin

"A daring and exciting performer who ventures courageously into unknown territory with relish." – The Irish Times

Gwendolyn Masin is one of today's significant concert violinists and an innovator in classical music. She performs internationally as a soloist, and in collaboration with musicians, artists, and orchestras. Tours and live recordings include performances with all the Irish Symphony and Concert orchestras, many of the Hungarian Symphony and Chamber Orchestras, numerous Swiss Orchestras such as the Bernese Symphony Orchestra, the Slovak State Philharmonic, and orchestras of the Americas such as Orquesta Filarmónica de la UNAM, Savannah and Georgia Philharmonic Orchestras. Concerts and masterclasses take her all over Europe and the United States, as well as Asia, South Africa, and the Middle East.

Masin is a recording artist for Naxos and Orchid Classics and a commissioner for contemporary music. She has premiered works by, amongst others, Thorsten Encke, Ákos Hoffman, Don Li, Daniel Schnyder, Dobrinka Tabakova and John Buckley. The latter dedicated his first violin concerto to her.

Her discography covers a wide spectrum of repertoire including neglected works by Irene Wieniawska or Zara Levina and much-loved favourites such as Leonard Bernstein's West Side Story. The latter was voted amongst the top five releases of 2020 by Art Muse London.

Violin in hand, she has been a keynote speaker at platforms as diverse as international conferences of the European String Teachers Association, TEDxBern, TU Dublin's Conservatory of Music and Drama, the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Conservatório de Música da Metropolitana Lisbon, Swiss Fundraising, a string of

colleges in North America including Princeton University, Berklee College of Music, Georgia Southern University Armstrong Campus, as well as major institutes in South Korea, Hong Kong, and Israel.

Masin is founding artistic director of GAIA Music Festival. The festival takes place annually since 2006 and is recognised as one of Switzerland's chamber music centres. Notable artistic partnerships include her own series for Casino Bern for which Masin created elaborate, one-off productions involving classical music and other music genres and art disciplines from 2018 to 2023. Masin is artistic director of the International Chamber Music Series, and artistic director and faculty member of the International Master Course at Dublin's National Concert Hall. Faculty members of the NCH IMC summer festival academy have included Gilles Apap, Frans Helmerson, Gary Hoffman, Kim Kashkashian, Mihaela Martin, and Lars Anders Tomter. She is a director of the Music Instrument Fund of Ireland which celebrates 30 years in 2025 and is a member of the Cultural Commission of Berne.

In 2009, the award-winning, Michaela's Music House, The Magic of the Violin, was published. It marked her as the youngest female violinist to have penned her own études and compositions and is available in English and German as part of the ESTA Edition collection available via Swiss music publisher house Müller & Schade. Masin's articles have been published in The Strad Magazine, The Journal of Music, and other trade journals. From 2013 to 2020, Masin was professor and researcher of violin studies at the Haute École de Musique de Genève, Switzerland.

In 2020, as a response to COVID-19, Masin brought her in-person retreat, The Exhale, online. The Exhale provides professional courses and holistic masterclasses to musicians, practitioners, and artists from across the globe. During its two-year online



presence, a team of 90 artists created more than 1,000 hours of classes, attracting more than 2,000 participants.

Masin holds degrees with highest honours from the Royal Schools of Music London; the Hochschule der Künste Berne; the Musikhochschule Lübeck, and a PhD from Trinity College. Her teachers included Herman Krebbers, Igor Ozim, Ana Chumachenco, Zakhar Bron and Shmuel Ashkenasi. She studies conducting in the class of Florian Ziemann since 2024.

She is the first Licensed Body Mapping Educator (Association for Body Mapping Education) in Switzerland. The violinist has Dutch, Hungarian, Czech, Irish, South African, and Swiss background, and speaks five languages.



Sara Ferrández

Widely acclaimed for her warm, effortless and impeccable sound, Sara Ferrández is fast emerging as one of the most exciting violinists of her generation.

Recent and forthcoming highlights for her include performing with the Spanish National Symphony Orchestra/ Kazuki Yamada, the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra/ Cristian Macelaru, Radio Television Orchestra in Madrid/ Chloe Van Soeterstède, the Impossible Orchestra/ Alondra de la Parra and OSPA Symphony Orchestra/ Nuno Coelho. As well as her debuts with Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Marseille Philharmonic, Israel Camerata, Antalya Devlet Symphony Orchestra, Jyväskylä Sinfonia, Mikkeli City Orchestra and National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica.

Chamber music has always held a special

place in Ferrández's musical life. She is frequently invited to play in several international festivals, including Sion Festival, Bergen International Festival, Pau Casals International Music Festival, Jerusalem Chamber Music Festival and Nouveaux Horizons Music Festival where she has the pleasure of collaborating with highly esteemed artists such as Janine Jansen, Beatrice Rana, Renaud Capuçon, Pablo Ferrández, Vilde Frang, Elena Bashkirova or Pinchas Zukerman, amongst others.

Sara collaborates frequently with the ensemble "Mutter's Virtuosi", performing alongside world-class violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter. She is also a former member of the Karajan Academy of the Berlin Philharmonic (2019-2022), and she still collaborates on several chamber music projects with members of the orchestra as well. From 2025 onwards, Sara will also be part of the Orpheum Foundation in Switzerland.

Born in Madrid in 1995, Sara grew up in a family of musicians, and started playing viola at 3 years-old before attending the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía in Madrid aged 13. She continued her studies in the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler, under internationally renowned violist Tabea Zimmermann, where she obtained both her bachelor's and master's degree. Afterwards, she finished her studies with Professor Nobuko Imai at the Kronberg Academy.

Sara plays on a David Tecchler viola (1730), the third of 3 Violas and a bow from Nicolas Léonard Tourte - both generously loaned by Stephan Jansen on behalf and as a member of the Stretton Society.

Brian O'Kane

Irish cellist Brian O'Kane enjoys a busy career as both soloist and chamber musician. Since winning first prize at the Windsor International String Competition in 2008, he has made his debuts with the RTE National Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra under Ashkenazy and in recital at the Wigmore Hall. Brian is a former "Rising Star" of Ireland's National Concert Hall and he recently recorded his debut CD for the Champs Hill label.

An avid chamber musician, Brian enjoys playing as a member of the Cappa Ensemble and Navarra Quartet. He has collaborated with a wide variety of artists such as Michael Collins, Aleksandar Madzar, Anthony Marwood, Pekka Kuusisto, Lawrence Power, Antoine Tamestit and Sir James Galway. Brian has also performed at concert halls and festivals throughout the world such as Sydney Opera House, Suntory Hall Tokyo, Seoul Arts Centre, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, West Cork, Radio France-Montpellier, Lockenhaus and the Weesp Chamber Music Festival, Holland of which his quartet are the artistic directors.

A graduate of both the Royal Academy of Music and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, Brian's biggest influences have come from Louise Hopkins and at Prussia Cove, Aldeburgh & Chamber Studio from studies with Ralph Kirshbaum, Steven Isserlis, Ferenc Rados and Eberhard Feltz. Brian currently plays on a Rugieri cello made in Cremona c.1690.





Fiachra Garvey

Leading Irish 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.

1st prizewinner at the prestigious Jaques Samuel Competition (2012), London, Fiachra made his Fazioli Auditorium (Italy) and Wigmore Hall debuts in 2013. Other notable international competition successes including prizes at AXA Dublin International Piano Competition (Brennan Prize and McCullough Bursary), EU Piano Competition Prague (concerto finalist), 3rd Soirees-Concours Internationales de Piano a Collioure, France (Audience award) and Feis Ceoil Dublin (Morris Grant Bursary and Mabel Swainson award). The National Concert Hall Dublin awarded Fiachra the

coveted “Rising Star” prize in 2011, which led to a number of solo and concerto debuts.

Fiachra graduated from the Royal Academy of Music, London in 2013 with 1st class honours and distinction in the M.A. in Music Performance. This follows a 1st class honours B.A. in Music Performance from the Royal Irish Academy of Music in 2011 and a 1st class honours DipMus (performance and teaching) from the RIAM in 2008.

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

Recent highlights include Google Dublin (first classical artist to be invited), Spoleto Italy, Wigmore Hall, Bridgewater Hall Manchester, NCH Dublin, Snape Maltings Aldeburgh, Petworth Festival, New Ross Piano Festival, St Martin in the Fields, Kilkenny Arts Festival, Brighton Festival, Geneva Festival Switzerland, West Cork Music, St Magnus Festival Orkney, Wexford Opera House, Ortús Chamber Music Festival, Killaloe Chamber Music Festival, Drogheda Classical Music, Clifden Arts Festival, a series of solo and two piano recitals in Japan and a tour of China.

Fiachra’s debut CD “For the Piano”, under the Lyric FM label, was released in 2012: “brings a deep and infectious enthusiasm, combined with insight and technical comfort.” (Sunday times). His second cd, a live performance from Wigmore Hall was released in 2014.

Fiachra is the founder and artistic director of the West Wicklow Chamber Music Festival (Ireland) described as “One of the best classical music festival in Europe” (BBC Music Magazine) and Classical Vauxhall

(London) described as “Everything the classical concert in the 21st Century should be” (iNews).

Fiachra was awarded an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music, London (ARAM) in 2018, served on the Board of Directors of the Dublin International Piano Competition from 2016- 2022 and was made a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Musicians in 2021 and a Freeman of the City of London in 2022.

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.

Claudia Ferrández

Claudia Fernández Parrondo is a Spanish pianist born in 1997 in Manzanares (Ciudad-Real), whose musical career includes concerts in halls such as Zaragoza’s Auditorium, “Palau de la Música” in Valencia, “Fundación Juan March” in Madrid, “Rathauslaube” in Schaffhausen (Switzerland) and “Schloss Wildon” (Austria). She is a prizewinner of several piano competitions, and she has been invited to participate in Aurora Music Festival 2018 (Stockholm), in the International Festival “Piano Meeting 2019” (Ourense) and in the Festival Arte Classica (Austria).

Claudia began her music education at the age of 2. She studied her Bachelor at “Conservatorio Superior de Música de Aragón” in Zaragoza, Spain, with professor Miguel Ángel Ortega Chavaldas, finishing in June of 2019 with first class honours. She subsequently studied a Master in piano performance and a Master in Pedagogy at the Hochschule für Musik Basel under the tutelage of Tobias Schabenberger and



Zoltán Fejérvári. She further took part in a specialisation course in chamber music with Professors Anton Kernjak and Anna Gebert in 2024-2025.



Fiachra de hOra

Born in Dublin, Ireland, Fiachra de hOra received his bachelor degree from the Conservatory of Amsterdam in 2023 studying with Nobuko Imai and Marjolein Dispa. He continues his studies at the Musik Akademie Basel with Silvia Simionescu, and joins the Sinfonieorchester Basel as an Academist for the 2025-2026 season.

He has appeared at the Westport and Ortús Chamber Music Festivals, and was invited to take part in the Clandeboye Festival in 2021. He has taken part in the Prussia Cove Masterclasses and Open Chamber Music sessions in recent years.

He has performed solo with the Ulster Orchestra, Camerata Ireland, CvA Symphony Orchestra and the orchestra of the AKSS Music Academy in Greece, and gave a sold-out recital at Ireland's National Concert Hall.

He won 3rd prize and the audience prize at the 5th National Dutch Viola Competition. He was also awarded a special prize at the Irish Heritage Music Bursary in 2024.

Rosanne Philippens

Rosanne Philippens is an extraordinary communicator, with an innate musicality and an infectious joy yet sincere approach to music-making. Her playing is refined, exuberant and profound, and was described by the Dutch daily paper De Telegraaf as "energetic, sensitive and flawless." She performs widely across Europe with a particular focus on twentieth century concerti. A strong believer in breaking down barriers in classical music, she is the founder of 'The Amsterdam Salon', which presents high-quality concerts in Amsterdam in carefully sought-out and unusual locations in an intimate salon atmosphere.

In 24/25 highlights include debuts with the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra in the Elbphilharmonie, the Halle Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and returns to BBC Scottish and Ulster Orchestras. Play/direct programmes will include her debut in Canada with Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal and a return to Japan to appear with the Kobe City Chamber Orchestra. Highlights of Philippens' recent seasons have included performances with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra at Suntory Hall., City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Norrköping Symphony, Real Filharmonia de Galicia, Barcelona Symphony Orchestra at the Palau de la Música as part of the Mozart Festival 2021, in Stuttgart and Munich with the Munich Symphony Orchestra and on tour across Germany with the SWR Konstanz. She has play/directed programmes with the Orchestre National de Lyon, Orchestre d'Auvergne and the Orchestre National d'Île de France on a

national tour including a performance at the Paris Philharmonie.

In her native Netherlands, Philippens has performed with the Rotterdam Philharmonic at De Doelen, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic in the prestigious Zaterdag Matinee series and the Residentie Orkest both in The Hague and at the Concertgebouw Hall, Amsterdam. Conductors with whom she has worked include Nézet-Séguin, Foster, Tausk, de Vriend, Wigglesworth, Hermus, Brönnimann, Weilerstein, Collon, Equilbey and Edusei. During the darkest moments of the Covid pandemic, Philippens channelled her energies into the creation of a new ensemble, the Vondel Strings, with whom she worked intensely and which led to a performance at the Concertgebouw and a recording of Haydn and Stravinsky, which was very warmly critiqued by Gramophone magazine amongst others.

In recital and chamber music, Philippens plays regularly with artists such as Kian Soltani, István Vardai, Vilde Frang, Julien Quentin, Víkingur Ólafsson, Amihai Grosz, Camille Thomas and Zoltán Fejérvári in halls and festivals across Europe. In 24, she made her recital debut in Tokyo in a performance which was televised by NHK. Alongside Fejérvári, Philippens will make her Wigmore Hall debut in June 2025.

Philippens records exclusively for Channel Classics and all her recordings have received glowing praise. The Strad described her Insight CD as being "both softly spoken and intensely powerful" and Philippens as a "dazzling performer". Earlier albums include Dedications, featuring works by Kreisler, Fauré and Ysaye, and a recording of Prokofiev's 2nd Concerto, described by BBC Magazine as "a triumph".

Taught from an early age by Anneke Schilt at the Amstelveen music school, she continued her studies at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague and the Hanns Eisler Academy in Berlin with Coosje



Wijzenbeek, Vera Beths, Anner Bylisma and Ulf Wallin, receiving the highest distinction from both institutes. Philippens won first prize at the Dutch National Violin Competition in 2009 and the Freiburg International Violin Competition in 2014. Philippens plays on the 1727 Barrere Stradivarius, thanks to the generous support of the Elise Mathilde Foundation.



Finghin Collins

“He was both a subtle tonal aesthete and a thundering piano lion, and in between he reigns over the entire range of pianistic expression” - Ostsee Zeitung, September 2022

One of Ireland’s most successful musicians, Finghin Collins was born in Dublin in 1977 and, following initial lessons with his sister Mary, studied piano at the Royal Irish Academy of Music with John O’Conor and at the Geneva Conservatoire with Dominique Merlet. Winner of the RTÉ Musician of the Future Competition in 1994 and the Classical Category at the National Entertainment Awards in Ireland in 1998, he went on to take first prize at the Clara Haskil Competition in Switzerland in 1999. Since then, he has continued to enjoy a flourishing international career that takes him all over Europe and the United States, as well to the Far East and Australia.

Collins has performed with such orchestras as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Houston Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Gulbenkian Orchestra, Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, garnering consistent praise from critics and public alike. Conductors with whom he has collaborated include Frans Brüggen, Myung-Whun Chung, Christoph Eschenbach, Hans Graf, Emmanuel Krivine, Nicholas McGegan, Gianandrea Noseda, Sakari Oramo, Tadaaki Otaka, Heinrich Schiff, Vassily Sinaisky, Leonard Slatkin and Gábor Tákacs-Nagy.

Performances across Europe have included such prestigious venues as Symphony Hall Birmingham, Royal Albert Hall, Wigmore Hall, The Barbican and Cadogan Hall, London, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam (both halls), De Doelen Rotterdam (both halls), Théâtre du Châtelet and Salle Cortot Paris, Salle Molière Lyon, Liederhalle Stuttgart, Auditorio Nacional Madrid, Palao de la Musica Valencia, Gulbenkian Hall Lisbon, Sala Verdi Milan, Teatro Manzoni Bologna, Konzerthaus Berlin, Konzerthaus Vienna, Franz Liszt Academy Budapest, Philharmonic Hall Warsaw and the Auditorium Stravinski Montreux. He has also performed at Carnegie Hall, New York and the Kennedy Center, Washington DC, as well as at both Ravinia and Gilmore Festivals in the USA. Further festival appearances include the Piano Festival at La Roque d’Anthéron (France), Klavier-Festival Ruhr and Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival (Germany), Lockenhaus Festival (Austria), Delft International Chamber Music Festival and Storioni Festival (The Netherlands), Chopin Festival (Poland), Musical Olympus Festival (Russia), Sommets Musicaux de Gstaad (Switzerland), the

Wuhan International Piano Festival (China) as well as the Mostly Mozart Festival and Ryedale Festival (UK).

Chamber music plays a significant role in his musical life and he has collaborated with London Winds and the Aviv, Callino, Chilingirian, ConTempo, Cremona, Ebène, Goldner, Navarra, Shanghai, Skampa, St Petersburg, Vanbrugh, Vertavo and Vogler String Quartets. Chamber music partners have included violinists Tasmin Little, Kristóf Bárati and Ilya Gringolts, cellists Han-Na Chang, Marc Coppey, István Várdai, Miklós Perényi, clarinetists Emma Johnson, Michael Collins, Sharon Kam and Romain Guyot, sopranos Ailish Tynan and Lenneke Ruiten, tenor James Gilchrist and baritone Jochen Kupfer as well as his sister pianist Dearbhla Collins and many others.

In July 2022 Collins made his début at the Verbier Festival, replacing András Schiff at short notice. During the 2022/23 season he performs at the Piano aux Jacobins Festival in Toulouse, the Festival de Zermatt, the Piano Biennale in the Netherlands, the National Concert Hall in Dublin with the Quatuor Ebène and at the Seoul Arts Center in Korea with cellist Mikós Perényi. He also performs concertos with the National Symphony Orchestra in Galway and Dublin, with the Nexus Orchestra in Lausanne, Switzerland and with the Philharmonisches Orchester Vorpommern in Germany. In November 2022 he undertook a ten-concert tour of Ireland with Sharon Carty (mezzo-soprano) and John Finucane (clarinet).

Over the past two decades Collins has developed a close relationship with Claves Records in Switzerland, recording two double CDs of Schumann’s piano music (which won numerous awards including Gramophone’s Editor’s Choice in 2006), followed by a recording of works for piano and orchestra by Charles V. Stanford with the RTÉ NSO / Kenneth Montgomery (Editor’s Choice, May 2011). In May 2013 RTÉ lyric fm launched his latest recording of four Mozart piano concertos directed from the keyboard with the RTÉ National

Symphony Orchestra. A Chopin recital CD was released in 2017, a co-production between RTÉ lyric fm and Claves Records, while in spring 2020 Claves released Collins’ latest release: a recording of the Mozart Piano Quartets with Rosanne Philippens (violin), Máté Szücs (viola) and István Várdai (cello). In September 2022 a new solo CD “The Bright Day is Done” was released, featuring a variety of works inspired by different times of the day.

Finghin Collins makes a significant contribution to the musical landscape of his native Ireland, where he resides. Since 2013, he has been Artistic Director of Music for Galway, while he is also the founding Artistic Director, since 2006, of the New Ross Piano Festival in Wexford. In March 2023 he was appointed Artistic Director of the Dublin International Piano Competition.

Collins was a member of the jury of the Clara Haskil Competition in Switzerland in 2021. He will chair the jury of the Clara Haskil Competition in 2023 and 2025.

In 2017, the National University of Ireland conferred on him an honorary Degree of Doctor of Music.



Aoife Ní Bhriain

Born in Dublin to a family of musicians, Aoife Ní Bhriain has established herself as one of the most versatile and gifted violinists of her generation. Her Irish traditional musical heritage joined with classical studies and Aoife began studying classical violin at an early age. After a concert debut at the age of 9 with the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra, Aoife has gone on to perform as a soloist and record with numerous orchestras across Europe and Asia, winning multiple prizes for both Irish traditional music and classical music, including All Ireland titles, and has performed with musicians from all genres including Oscar winner Tim Robbins and his Band of Rogues, Declan O'Rourke, Kris Drever, Martin Hayes and Denis Cahill, Julie Fowlis and John Sheahan of Dubliners fame.

Aoife Ní Bhriain has performed as soloist and recorded with numerous orchestras

including the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, Korean Chamber Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Esker Festival Orchestra, l'Orchestre de Chambre Ariège, MuKo Orchester Leipzig and HMT Felix Mendelssohn Symphony Orchestra. She performs regularly with the Goodman Trio, Crash Ensemble, Neil O Loughlin's Cuar, Concorde Ensemble and the newly formed Wooden Elephant String Quintet.

Aoife has won prizes for both Irish traditional music and classical music, including All Ireland Titles at the Fleadh Cheoil, Bonn Óir Sheáin Uí Riada, The Fiddler of Dooney, a TG4 Gradam Ceoil Award, Camerata Ireland Young Musician of the Year Award, the Campus Internazionale da Musica, Pontino Festival Young Musician Award, 2nd Prize at the Concours International du Violon Marie Cantagrill as well as 3rd Prize at the Vasco Abadjiev International Violin Competition. Other awards include the Bill Whelan Bursary for exceptional musicians, the Prix d'Or from the Conservatoire de Pays de La

Loire, Nantes, an award from Music Network Ireland for the purchase of a violin bow, a Leipzig Live Music Now Scholarship with the Osmosis Quartet and a scholarship awarded by Herr Dr. Bunge for further studies in Leipzig. Aoife is also honoured to have been nominated/elected onto the board of Directors of the Irish Traditional Music Archives in 2016.

Aoife has performed at many festivals, including Podium Festival Esslingen, Hitzacker Festival (both Germany), Crosslinks Festival, Explore the North Festival (both Holland), Gregynog Festival Wales, Kilkenny Arts Festival, Bantry Masters of Tradition Festival, Sligo Chamber Music Festival, Galway Jazz Festival (All Ireland), Festival Due Mondi Spoleto, Ravello Festival (both Italy) and the Camden Folk Festival (London).

Catrin Finch

Catrin Finch, from Llanon on the west coast of Wales, is the most gifted classical harp virtuoso of her generation, grounded in prodigious early achievements and intense classical training, and serving as Royal Harpist to H.R.H. The Prince of Wales in her early twenties. Like Aoife, Catrin has performed with many of the world's leading orchestras; she has also achieved chart success with her number 1 rendition of Bach's Goldberg Variations, and has recorded for the world's leading classical labels. Catrin's boundless curiosity and adventurous spirit has led her into a parallel universe of musical success, most notably through her collaboration with kora virtuoso Seckou Keita with whom she won Best Group at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards 2019.

In her classical career, Catrin Finch has performed with many of the world's leading orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, the Royal Philharmonic, the Boston Pops, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields and the English Chamber Orchestra. She has graced the stages of

A-list classical music festivals, including Salzburg, Edinburgh, Spoleto and MDR Musiksommer in Leipzig and toured throughout Europe, north and south America and the Middle East.



Niamh O'Sullivan

Irish mezzo-soprano Niamh O'Sullivan is praised for her 'bewitchingly beautiful, dark vibrant voice' (SüddeutscheZeitung). A 2023-2025 BBC New Generation Artist and former studio member of the Bayerische Staatsoper, O'Sullivan has quickly established herself as one of the most exciting mezzos today.

The 2024/25 season sees O'Sullivan make a series of house and role debuts, including her house and role debut as Ino Semele and her role debut as Octavian in Strauss' Der Rosenkavalier for Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Ino Semele in her return to the Royal Opera House, and role debuts as Ursule Béatrice et Bénédicte and Maddalena Rigoletto for Irish National Opera.

O'Sullivan continues as a 2023-2025 BBC New Generation Artist, with plans to include

a gala concert with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and recitals at the Wigmore Hall with pianist Gary Beecher & St George's, Bristol, alongside her recital work in the UK and at home in Ireland. In the 2023/24 season, O'Sullivan made her role debut as Wellgunde in a new Barrie Kosky production of Das Rheingold at the Royal Opera House, Wellgunde in Das Rheingold and Götterdämmerung and Mercédès Carmen for Opernhaus Zürich, and her role debut as Carmen La tragédie de Carmen at the Buxton Festival.

Other recent plans have included Meg Page Falstaff at Opernhaus Zürich, Mercédès Carmen at English National Opera, Mirza Lalla-Roukh and Paulina Ein Wintermärchen with Wexford Festival Opera. O'Sullivan's close association with Irish National Opera has seen her sing Charlotte Werther, Mercédès Carmen, Tisbe La Cenerentola, Third Maid Elektra, Asteria Bajazet and Alva in the world premiere of The First Child for the company.

In concert, O'Sullivan has performed Elgar Sea Pictures at the Prinzregententheater for the Munich Festspiele, Mozart Requiem and Handel Messiah with the MüncherHofkantorei, the main role of Cain in Scarlatti Il primo omicidio with The Jakobsplatz Orchester cond. Daniel Grossmann, Cousser The Applause of Mount Parnassus at the Wigmore Hall with Ensemble Marsyas cond. Peter Whelan, The Messiah with the Ulster Orchestra, Second harlot in Handel Solomon with the English Concert and Mahler Symphony No.2 with the Irish National Symphony Orchestra cond. Anja Bihlmaier.

As a member of the Opera Studio at the Bayerische Staatsoper from 2016 to 2018, O'Sullivan's roles included Hänsel Hänsel und Gretel, Kate Pinkerton Madama Butterfly, the Secretary in Menotti The Consul, Flora La traviata, Barena Jenůfa and a concert performance of Der Rosenkavalier at Carnegie Hall conducted by Kirill Petrenko.

O'Sullivan studied at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin and was a participant of the Académie du Festival d'Aix-en-Provence in 2023.



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Education

It has been an exciting year for the West Wicklow Festival Education programme, featuring two Rising Stars concerts with outstanding emerging artists, two West Wicklow Festival and Contemporary Music Centre Ireland composition competition winners and consequent world premieres, four workshops with award-winning children's poet Lucinda Jacob in local Blessington schools, an inspiring viola masterclass with acclaimed violist Ruth Gibson in the National Concert Hall and an innovative new commission *Farmyard Carnival* written for two exhilarating family concerts featuring Festival Director Fiachra Garvey, fellow pianist Soo-Jung Ann and the Irish Chamber Orchestra, which brought the May festival to a close.

May's Rising Stars concert featured Irish saxophonist Robert Finegan alongside French soprano Clara Barbier Serrano and Polish pianist Joanna Kacpersek as they showcased Finegan's imaginative *Paris Chapters* project to a very appreciative audience in the beautiful surrounds of St Mary's Church of Ireland, Blessington.

This concert also saw the premiere of the May composition competition winning work by Aran O'Grady, a Wicklow native, whose winning work *Columns* is artfully inspired by the grand facade of Russborough House, and its juxtaposition with the wild Irish landscape.

The November Rising Stars concert sees Irish violist Fiachra de hOra take to the stage alongside Spanish pianist Claudia Fernández Parrondo for a magical Saturday morning coffee concert on the 15th November in the grand surrounds of the Manor House, Tulfarris. Their eclectic programme will feature Schumann's evocative *Märchenbilder (Fairytale)*, Garth Knox's experimental *Fuga Libre* for solo viola and Rebecca Clarke's much celebrated *Sonata*, as well as the November composition competition winning work *Where Now? Who Now? When Now?* by Dylan Murphy.

Where Now? Who Now? When Now? explores the aesthetics of Beckett's *The Unnamable* whilst also trying to distil the techniques I have used within "the silence, the end, the beginning" – for solo

cello into a more condensed form. Reversibility is key to this, which can be heard within; but I found engaging with this aspect in a more free way to open my compositional style to more options". - Dylan Murphy

The composition competition continues to go from strength to strength and we were delighted to receive 19 entries for the November edition, with the works being adjudicated by acclaimed Irish composer Finola Merivale and violist Fiachra de hOra, who will be performing the work, with the panel chaired by Stephanie Ford from the Contemporary Music Centre Ireland. We are grateful for the ongoing collaboration with CMC Ireland and the festival team are very much looking forward to hearing Dylan Murphy's work premiered at the Winter Festival's Rising Stars concert by violist Fiachra de hOra.

"It was wonderful to see such a large number of applications for the competition, and the overall quality was extremely high. It made the panel's job very difficult! "Where Now? Who Now? When Now?" stood out due to its excellent execution of an imaginative concept and its rich timbral palette." - Finola Merivale

We're very excited about our 2026 programme which will feature our Opera Magic family concert, introducing young children and families to the magical world of Opera. It is a strong part of our educational mission to bring music to young people in an accessible and enjoyable way, and we are very much looking forward to this next chapter!

It has been a pleasure to work on the festival's varied Education Programme this year and to help to deliver the May and November festivals with Festival Director Fiachra Garvey. We hope you enjoy the Winter Weekend and I very much look forward to meeting you over the course of the festival!

Tara Viscardi
Festival Manager
(Education and Communication)

 Irish National Opera

22 NOVEMBER –
6 DECEMBER 2025
NATIONAL TOUR
ALL NEW VENUES



THE BARTERED BRIDE Smetana

31 JANUARY –
22 FEBRUARY 2026
NATIONAL TOUR



JANÁČEK'S
THE CUNNING LITTLE
VIXEN

22–28 MARCH 2026
BORD GÁIS ENERGY
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Dvořák



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The Festival would also like to acknowledge the significant contribution made by the following, whose donations to the festival charity are vital in supporting our work as a platform for the arts:

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Cliona Burke

A further thank you to everyone who has donated any amount to the festival over the past year. Donations of all sizes are hugely appreciated.

West Wicklow Festival is a registered charity no. 20155179, CHY21955.

DUBLIN PIANO SERIES 2026

Whyte Recital Hall at RIAM

RIAM
Royal Irish
Academy of Music

Sonatas

Sunday, 25th January 2026, 4.00 pm

Bach/Bartók

Sunday, 8th February 2026, 4.00 pm

2 Pianos, 4 Hands And A Little Know Tune!

Sunday, 22nd February 2026, 4.00 pm

International Women's Day

Sunday, 8th March 2026, 4.00 pm

Chopin Encore

Sunday, 22nd March 2026, 4.00 pm

Featuring David Adams, Alexander Bernstein, Dearbhla Brosnan, Anthony Byrne, Lance Coburn, Dearbhla Collins, Brian Dungan, Márta Erdei, Thérèse Fahy, Réamonn Keary, Richard O'Donnell and Peter Tuite.



WIGMORE SERIES DUBLIN

Whyte Recital Hall at RIAM

RIAM
Royal Irish
Academy of Music

Belcea Quartet

Sunday, 23rd November 2025, 7.30 pm

Sean Shibe, lute and guitar

Wednesday, 7th January 2026, 7.30 pm

Isabelle Faust, violin & Anna Prohaska, soprano

Sunday, 15th February 2026, 7.30 pm

Wigmore Soloists

Thursday, 5th March 2026, 7.30 pm

Steven Isserlis, cello & Connie Shih, piano

Sunday, 12th April 2026, 7.30 pm *(SOLD OUT)*

Tickets from riam.ie/whats-on



**West Wicklow
Chamber Music
Festival**



Programme
May, 2026

**Bechstein Trio / Marmen Quartet / China
Moses / Opera Magic family concert /
Fiachra Garvey / Jennifer Davis / Nicky
Spence and more!**

westwicklowfestival.com



20 - 24 MAY

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