

West Wicklow Chamber Music Festival



Programme
May, 2025

Julian Bliss Septet / Voces 8 / Quatuor Van Kuijk
/ Sean Shibe / United Strings of Europe / Trio Isimsiz
/ Ruth Gibson / Fiachra Garvey / Cassiopeia Winds
/ Irish Chamber Orchestra - and more!

westwicklowfestival.com

8-18 MAY
WVCF

West Wicklow
Chamber Music
Festival

FARMYARD CARNIVAL

Family Concert
Irish Chamber Orchestra

Fiachra Garvey & Soo-Jung Ann (pianos)
A new festival commission by poet Lucinda Jacob
and composer Paul Rissmann

Sunday, 18th May 2025,
11am & 1pm / Tramway Theatre,
Blessington

ballymore.

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WICKLOW

Welcome everyone to the May 2025 edition of the West Wicklow Chamber Music Festival - our largest and most ambitious festival to date!

Over the course of two long weekends, the festival will deliver an inspired and varied selection of concerts at our home venues of Russborough House, St Mary's Church and the Tramway Theatre, Blessington, Co. Wicklow.

For the opening concert on Thursday 8th May I'm thrilled to be joined by Ireland's leading violist of her generation, Ruth Gibson. Principal viola of the world-renowned Aurora Orchestra, Ruth and I have collaborated for over 20 years, having first met as pupils of St Mac Dara's Community College many moons ago! This latest reunion will feature some of the most iconic works for viola and piano, as well as some lesser-known jewels in the repertoire. Alongside the mighty pillars of the programme, Sonatas by Rebecca Clarke and César Franck, will be the rarely heard and stunningly beautiful Phantasy by pioneering Wicklow composer Ina Boyle, as well as works by Brahms and Kodály.

Trio Isimsiz, former recipients of both the First Prize and the Audience Prize at the prestigious Trondheim Competition, Norway, perform on Friday 9th May. I first met Pablo (violinist of the trio) at the West Cork Chamber Music Festival in 2012 and I have great memories of hearing the trio for the first time at the prestigious IMS Prussia Cove. Schubert and Beethoven wrote some of the most celebrated piano trios in the repertoire, and for their debut Irish performance the trio offer Schubert's greatly adored Piano Trio No. 1 (written in the last year of the composer's life), alongside Beethoven's Piano Trio Op. 70. No. 2, considered to be an awakening into a new world of sonic and instrumental expression.

The festival's Rising Star this May is Robert Finegan, one of the most exciting Irish saxophonists in a generation. He will be joined for a lunchtime recital on 10th May by his colleagues; soprano Clara Barbier Serrano and pianist Joanna Kacperek, for a recital entitled Paris Chapters. Featuring the poetry of Yeats, Joyce and Wilde, all of whom spent significant time in Paris; and music by the greatest exponents of Parisian café culture including Poulenc and Josephine Baker. This recital will also feature the winning work from the festival's Composition Competition in partnership with the Contemporary Music Centre, as well as a new commission by Irish composer Gráinne Mulvey.

The United Strings of Europe is shaped by a multi-cultural background and a drive to develop experimental and engaging programming. Continually seeking ways to re-imagine string playing and the concert experience, their inter-disciplinary projects inspire the ensemble to move beyond their training, to stretch their thinking, and to find new ways to engage and enthral audiences. On Saturday 10th May they will deliver Spring Ascending, an inspired



programme in collaboration with members of the masterful contemporary circus company Gandini Juggling. Music and juggling, what could be better on a Saturday night!

Multi-GRAMMY nominee, former BBC New Generation artist and recipient of the coveted Leonard Bernstein Award, Sean Shibe continues to prove himself as a truly original mind at the frontier of contemporary classical music. The diversity of his abilities will be reflected in his programme on Sunday 11th May featuring both acoustic and electric guitar sets. The intimacy of solo Bach's Suite No. 1 in G major, BWV 1007, alongside Irish composer David Fennessy's Rosewood in the first half, provides a perfect complement to a second half of electric guitar featuring works by Steve Reich, Sasha Scott and Meredith Monk's Nightfall.

Cassiopeia Winds, Ireland's leading wind quintet, take to the stage on Thursday 15th May. Comprised of principal players from the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, their performances are marked by sensitivity and virtuosity. Their passion, idiosyncratic humour and sheer joy of performing together is shared with audiences. Their programme spans the classical era to the present day, including Briccialdi's ode to Rossini's popular The Barber of Seville, French and Spanish flavours by Milhaud and Márquez, the jazzy inflections of Irish composer Ronan Guilfoyle and playful mischievousness by Joan Trimble and Adele O'Dwyer.

Quatuor Van Kuijk, First Prize winners of the Wigmore Hall International String Quartet competition, have been hailed for their "Style, energy and sense of risk" (The Guardian). On Friday 16th May festival audiences will experience their artistry in a Franco-German alliance, featuring songs by Poulenc and Fauré arranged for string quartet, before two of the greatest string quartets of all time, Ravel's String Quartet, considered his first great masterpiece and Beethoven's tumultuous String Quartet No. 8.

The Julian Bliss Septet have become widely known for their trademark inspiring jazz-fuelled shows which have captivated audiences across the globe. Their dazzling virtuosity, extraordinary musicianship and charming humour shines through their programmes of swing, Latin, American and jazz music. They have appeared at iconic venues including The Lincoln Centre (New York) and Ronnie Scott's (London) and their next stop is the Tramway Theatre, Blessington on Saturday 17th May! Their programme, celebrating The Sound of

Film – Music in Hollywood, is a must see this festival. Starting with the silent film and the early 'talkies' in The Great Depression years, the Septet also plays music from wartime movies, musicals and even the classic Disney blockbusters. Including Cheek to Cheek, As Time Goes By, Sing Sing Sing, Days of Wine and Roses, and When you Wish upon a Star, be tempted to dance and sing along to this much-loved music, played by one of the most sparkling and talented jazz ensembles of our day.

The festival's commitment to commissioning and education sees the delivery of a new, colourful and enthralling family friendly work this festival, Farmyard Carnival. Collaborating in the creation of this new commission are award-winning Irish children's poet Lucinda Jacob (recipient of the 2023 Irish Children's Book of the Year Award) and British composer Paul Rissmann (prize-winner at the British Composer Awards). Through descriptive poetry narration and enchanting music, audience's favourite farm and domestic animals, from the cat to the cow, will come to life and delight listeners of all ages.

I can't describe in words how excited I am about this new commission, and I can't wait for our audiences to experience the world premiere in Wicklow! I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Ballymore, 3RE Capital Ventures, The Sunflower Charitable Foundation, The John Pollard Foundation, Vauxhall One and Stephen Hubbard for their generous philanthropic support of Farmyard Carnival. A further thank you to the Wicklow Arts Office for supporting this commission via their Strategic Project Award.

The 2023 GRAMMY-nominated vocal ensemble VOCES8 inspires audiences through the joy of singing. Touring globally, the group performs an extensive repertoire in its a cappella concerts, delivering enormous variety in their musical programmes. On Sunday 18th May their programme celebrates 20 years of VOCES8 featuring their favourite songs, from Mendelssohn to Nat "King" Cole and Simon and Garfunkel. The perfect festival finale!

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 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 festival. Do say hello!

Fiachra Garvey

Founder and Artistic Director

Thurs 8th May, 8pm, Russborough House

*This concert is kindly supported by
Roger Phillimore.*

*Ruth Gibson / Viola
Fiachra Garvey / Piano*

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 published his own full First Violin Sonata, Opus 78.

INA BOYLE (1889 – 1967)

Phantasy for Viola and Piano

Born in the village of Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow, where her father was the Church of Ireland curate, Ina Boyle showed an early talent for music and studied cello and composition in Dublin and later in London under Ralph Vaughan Williams, who had a high regard for her work. The Second World War put an end to her London visits and she retired to

the lovely family home in Enniskerry, becoming a reclusive. Vaughan Williams tried to encourage her to return to his London classes, but she refused to travel again. She spent her time looking after her parents and sister, and writing a wide range of music, but did not seek to have it performed or published, leading to a considerable neglect of her music. In recent years some family members and music lovers formed the Ina Boyle Society which has led to a considerable fresh interest in her music, which is now being played and recorded with increasing frequency. It is proving to be most attractive.

The Phantasy dates from 1918 and is an eight-minute, single movement piece in a late romantic style with a strong personal colouration. It opens slowly, Lento quasi recit, as a theme is heard on both instruments and developed gently. The pace quickens as a livelier tune is introduced and expanded quite merrily. The music returns to the opening Lento and comes to a quiet, melancholy conclusion.

The Phantasy’s handwritten score, held in Trinity College Dublin’s collection, is signed June 25, 1918. The piece has a real strength, and is characterized by sweeping piano arpeggios and bold, forte quadruple stops on the viola. These give way to a counter-play of dramatic, triumphant leaps in the violas upper range juxtaposed against soulful melodies which allow the viola’s natural, warm character to shine through.

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.

INTERVAL

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY (1882 – 1967)

Adagio for Viola and Piano

A star graduate of Budapest University and the Franz Liszt Academy, in that city, Kodály became a close friend of fellow student Belá Bartók and they spent considerable time on trips collecting Hungarian folk music. Later he became a leading teacher, providing extensive music for children, still much in use today. He wrote the Adagio in 1905 for violin and five years later produced versions for viola and cello. The work is in three-part or ternary form, opening with a languid melody which has a simple chordal accompaniment. The central section is livelier, più andante, and reflects a Hungarian folk melody. The third section returns to the opening theme and is given further treatment before a sudden flourish brings it to its conclusion.

CAESAR FRANCK (1822 – 1890)

Sonata for Violin and Piano in A major (arr. for viola)

- i. Allegretto ben moderato
- ii. Allegro
- iii. Recitativo Fantasia
- iv. Allegretto poco mosso

It is believed that Franck intended to dedicate his Sonata to Cosima, Liszt's daughter who was married to the distinguished pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow, whom she later divorced in favour of Wagner. Whatever Franck's first intentions might have been, the final dedicatee was also the original performer of the work, his fellow Belgian, the great violinist Eugene Ysaÿe (1858 – 1931). It is also inextricably linked to Proust, who is reputed to have used the opening notes of the first movement as the little "birdsong" motto which the narrator hears at a concert in "À la recherche du temps perdu" and cannot get out of his head. The theme certainly is damnably haunting.

Franck had originally intended that the first movement should be played slowly, but when he heard Ysaÿe's chosen tempo he revised his opinion to Allegretto with a "very moderate" warning. The rising and falling arpeggios are typical of the composer and emphasise the interval of a third; they reappear later in the work and possess a memorability making them really stick in the mind. The piano moves the music forward in a Chopin-like passage but, rather than any formal development, Franck builds the movement on rhapsodic flights, launched by repeats of the main motto. The second movement begins with a flurry of piano passagework over which a driving theme is announced by the violin. The thematic material is closely linked to the first movement and binds the musical structure together with a remarkable cohesion. The tempo slackens for a ruminative sequence led by the violin, the pace becomes Quasi lento and then, having lulled us into a reflective mood, it takes off again in a brilliant and surging third section, featuring the initial material once more.

The third movement is regarded as a homage to Bach; it is an unusual movement, looking back to the Baroque era in the middle of an archetypal late Romantic sonata. The piano provides a broody opening until the violin enters with a recitative-like

Fri 9th May, 8pm, Russborough House

*This concert is kindly supported by
Howard Gatiss*

Trio Isimsiz

*Pablo Hernán Benedí / Violin
Edvard Pogossian / Cello
Erdem Misirlioglu / Piano*

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797 – 1828)

Trio: Adagio in E flat major, D. 897 “Notturmo”

Few of Schubert's biographers find favour with this pleasant, if innocuous single-movement work. It is likely that the composer originally intended it as the slow movement for his great B flat Piano Trio and then changed his mind, “one can only be thankful that Schubert rejected it” Prof. Jack Westrup rather unfairly comments in his authoritative study of the composer's chamber music. The movement has something of the mood of the marvellous Andante un poco mosso that took its place. However, the piece is not without a certain haunting grace that, in the right hands, can make a striking effect. It dates from the autumn of 1827, at the time the composer was completing his second great song-cycle “Winterreise” and the Second Piano Trio. The music coasts along charmingly, moving to E flat for the central section; while it makes no demands on the listener, its nocturnal mood is pleasantly entertaining.

LUDIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770 – 1827)

Piano Trio in E flat major, Opus 70 No. 2

*i. Poco sostenuto - Allegro ma non troppo
ii. Allegretto iii. Allegretto ma non troppo iv.
Finale: Allegro*

*iv. Three Dances
v. The Devil's Dance*

In the summer of 1808 Beethoven spent some time with his friend the Countess Erdödy at her house in Heiligenstadt, outside Vienna. He wrote his Fifth Symphony during his stay and two Piano Trios. The first has become known as the “Ghost” Trio because of the spooky effects in its first movement. The Second is a substantial work of some thirty minutes and is among Beethoven's finest chamber music compositions. He dedicated the two Trios to the Countess as a thanks for her hospitality, he was going through a precarious financial period at the time, and they were published the following year.

The second Trio is one of Beethoven's most impressive creations. The first movement opens with a slow introduction in a dark, rather mysterious mood. It soon gathers speed, and the first movement picks up momentum, launching a forthright tune. A second theme or subject is soon added in a waltz-like mood.

Beethoven plays with his material in a most attractive way, by using unusual key changes and introducing unexpected fresh ideas. Even part of the opening prelude reappears in the coda at the end. The second movement is launched with a whimsical little piano tune, quite fun. A second contrasting melody is introduced and each is subjected to its own set of variations, two per melody.

One might expect a scherzo or minuet for the third movement, but Beethoven has other ideas. He delivers a very gentle, tender theme which one would be forgiven for mistaking as something by Schubert: quite charming. The finale bursts into life with a brilliant opening on the piano, in a mood of excitement and fun which is sustained throughout, bringing this remarkable and delightful Trio to a spectacular and happy conclusion.

INTERVAL

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797 – 1828)

Piano Trio No. 1 in B flat major, D. 898, Opus 99

- i. Allegro moderato
- ii. Andante moderato
- iii. Scherzo (Allegro)
- iv. Rondo (Allegro vivace)

Dating this Trio is difficult, as the manuscript is lost and Schubert does not mention it by name in any of his correspondence. Various commentators place it between 1825 and the start of 1828. Present research seems to suggest that the period September – October 1827 is most likely, just before he wrote the Second Trio. It is known that one of them, probably this Trio, was performed at the last “Schubertiade”, those marvellous parties when Schubert’s music would be played and sung. The final gathering was on January 28th, 1828, at a friend’s engagement party. “Altogether 50 people. We nearly all got tipsy”, as one guest later reported. The Trio was not published until 1836, eight years after Schubert’s early death. Schumann was particularly enamoured of both of Schubert’s Piano Trios, praising them highly, but commenting about the B flat: “One glance at it and the troubles of our human existence disappear and the whole world is fresh and bright again”.

The opening movement employs two themes, the first has a jaunty swing about it and the second provides a lyrical response. Schubert develops the material with his customary assurance, one almost wishes the music did not have to end. However, an even finer experience awaits us, as the glorious melody of the slow movement gently sails into existence on the cello. Schubert uses ternary, or three-part, form. The central section is in the minor and more agitated, providing an imaginative contrast, until the graceful main theme returns, in fresh arrangements and wanders through several keys before its conclusion.

The Scherzo has an impish vivacity and is also in ternary form. Here the central section employs a waltz-like theme of endearing simplicity. The Trio ends with a Rondo, in which the main theme is played several times with contrasting sequences or “episodes” between each return. The linking melody is a pert little tune on the violin, and it leads into a series of episodes mainly based on the theme itself, in delectable variations; one section provides a witty imitation of a village “pipe and drum” band.

Sat 10th May, 1pm, St Mary's Church, Blessington

*This concert is kindly supported by
Stephen Hubbard.*

Rising Stars Concert

*Robert Finegan / Saxophone
Clara Barbier-Serrano / Soprano
Joanna Kacperek / Piano*

Paris Chapters

"There is an atmosphere of spiritual effort here. No other city is quite like it. I wake early, often at 5 o'clock, and start writing at once."

James Joyce, letter to a friend, October 1921

"Paris Chapters explores the rich cultural ties between France and Ireland by tracing the footsteps of Irish writers in Paris, bringing their literary world to life through music. This concept naturally evolved into a project that merges specially commissioned compositions with songs that influenced these writers throughout their lives and creative processes."

Structured in four sections, the programme imagines a day in the life of one such writer — beginning with waking moments filled with memories of home and past journeys, followed by reflective walks through Parisian gardens, and culminating, as so often happened, in the warm glow of a cabaret, surrounded by fellow writers and artists after a long day of work". – Robert Finegan

ARAN O'GRADY
(b. 1993)

Columns

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

"Columns is inspired by the Palladian facade of Russborough House, a place I first discovered a few years ago while out with family visiting the nearby lake. The house and its architecture left a profound impression on me, particularly as I've always been fascinated by Neoclassical design - and how examples of it in Ireland often feel so at odds with their surroundings."

In Columns, the music imagines the Doric and Corinthians columns of Russborough bathed in sunlight. Repeated arpeggiated sequences reflect the clean, unadorned features of Doric order columns. The light, in this musical rendering, dances around the structures, illuminating the dull, moss and lichen-covered granite and transfiguring it to almost appear like the marble that would have been used in ancient times." – Aran O'Grady

KENNETH EDGE
(b. 1965)

I of whom I know nothing (After Samuel Beckett's The Unnamable)

1. So many prospects
2. Were I not devoid of feeling
3. I know my eyes are open because of the tears that pour from them
4. If I have warm place it is not in their hearts

"...you must say words, as long as there are any, until they find me, until they say me, strange pain, strange sin, you must go on, perhaps it's done already, perhaps they have said me already, perhaps they have carried me to the threshold of my story, before the door that opens on my story, that would surprise me, if it opens, it will be I, it will be the silence, where I am, I don't know, I'll never know, in the silence you don't know, you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on." – Samuel Beckett

LISE BOREL
(b. 1993)

Le Jardin des Tuileries

"The idea here is to recreate the different atmospheres of the Tuileries Garden where Oscar Wilde used to come, sit and watch. The poem is

like an active contemplation, where there are a lot of movements, colours, textures, and sounds... I wanted to find the innocence and fresh look of children playing in the park. There are a lot of games with words, melodies and pronunciations. But I wanted the poem to be legible, then, play with it, like a ball, like some nursery rhymes.

The sax and the voice are linked, as if the sax also has words, we don't know any more who is singing. I like the idea of the two voices mixing together giving us the impression of one, three or even four voices! I wanted to not put a piano because two voices let the imagination work, and as we will only have two notes at the same time, we can hear harmonies, chords, and sometimes a whole orchestra" - Lise Borel

GRÁINNE MULVEY (b. 1966)

Leafy Speafing

"The text of Leafy speafing is drawn from Anna Livia Plurabelle's final monologue from Joyce's Finnegans Wake. ALP, Anna Livia, Anna Liffey, the feminine archetype, here finally speaks directly at length for herself—up to now she has been more spoken about, or her words reported by various avatars: the gossiping washerwomen, her daughter Issy, even the "original hen", Belinda of the Dorans. It is thus a direct counterpart to Molly Bloom's soliloquy in Ulysses, but where the earlier work used stream of consciousness, Finnegans Wake is a stream of the unconscious—the dreaming mind.

In keeping with the cyclic world view presented in the novel—think of the different connotations of "waking the dead"—the speech is both memoir and prophecy, greeting and valediction. The new day dawns, but every day the "cast" is created anew:

Now a younger's there. [...] And let her rain now if she likes. Gently or strongly as she likes. Anyway let her rain for my time is come. I done me best when I was let.

The river flows out to the salt sea ("O bitter ending!") to rise as a cloud and fall again as rain and become the river's source. The last sentence is incomplete; its conclusion is the opening of the first chapter." - Gráinne Mulvey

RHONA CLARKE (b. 1958)

Sirensong

"Sirensong is a setting of selected text from the 'Sirens' episode of James Joyce's Ulysses. The idea was to return to the original story Ulysses and the legend of the sirens who lure sailors their death by means of their song. In Joyce's work, the 'sirens' appear in the form of Miss Lydia Douce and Miss Mina Kennedy, referred to initially by the colour of their hair: bronze and gold. By their conversation throughout this chapter, the two characters seem to me to be anything but seductive, but clearly this is not the case for Boylan, Lenihan, and others who frequent the Ormond Bar, especially as the two barmaids seem to be the only female company present." - Rhona Clarke

Sat 10th May, 8pm, Tramway Theatre, Blessington

*This concert is kindly supported by
Julia and Piers Hedley*

*United Strings of Europe with
members of Gandini Juggling*

Julian Azkoul / Violin & Director

Marie Schreer / Violin

Kay Stephen / Viola

*Raphael Lang & Ben Michaels /
Cello*

Marianne Schofield / Bass

Valeria Jauregui, Owen Reynolds,

Lynn Scott & Hannah George /

Jugglers

Sean Gandini & Hannah George /

Choreography

OSVALDO GOLIJOV

(b. 1960)

Tenebrae

Born into an immigrant Jewish family in La Plata, Argentina, where his father was a physician and his mother a piano teacher, Golijov studied in his home city as well as in Jerusalem and the University of Pennsylvania. He has composed a wide range of music, in particular vocal works, including a number of film scores. However, he has run into problems with late delivery of some of his commissions and his work for the Metropolitan Opera, New York, was cancelled because it was not ready in time. There also have been controversies over some scores in which he was accused of copying material from other composers. *Tenebrae* is for string quartet and lasts about 12 minutes. It was composed in 2002.

"I wrote Tenebrae as a consequence of witnessing two contrasting realities in a short period of time in September 2000. I was in Israel at the start of the new wave of violence that is still continuing today, and a week later I took my son to the new planetarium in New York, where we could see the Earth as a beautiful blue dot in space. I wanted to write a piece that could be listened to from different perspectives. That is, if one chooses to listen to it "from afar", the music would probably offer a "beautiful" surface but, from a metaphorically closer distance, one could hear that, beneath that surface, the music is full of pain. I lifted some of the haunting melismas from Couperin's Troisième Leçon de Tenebrae, using them as sources for loops, and wrote new interludes between them, always within a pulsating, vibrating, aerial texture. The compositional challenge was to write music that would sound as an orbiting spaceship that never touches ground. After finishing the composition, I realized that Tenebrae could be heard as the slow, quiet reading of an illuminated medieval manuscript in which the appearances of the voice singing the letters of the Hebrew Alphabet (from Yod to Nun, as in Couperin) signal the beginning of new chapters, leading to the ending section, built around a single, repeated word: Jerusalem." – Osvaldo Golijov

CAROLINE SHAW

(b. 1982)

Entr'acte

Caroline Shaw is an American born composer, violinist and singer. Hailing from North Carolina she was brought up in a musical family, her mother was a violinist and singer, and began composing at the age of ten. She studied at Rice, Yale and Pinetown Universities and was the youngest winner of a Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2013. She has written a wide range of music, including works for the Baltimore Symphony and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestras.

"Entr'act was composed in 2011 for string quartet and lasts some eleven minutes; there is also a version for string quintet. It was first performed by the Brentano Quartet at Princeton University on April 20th that year. The composer has noted that she wrote it "after hearing the Brentano Quartet play Haydn's Op. 77 No. 2 -with their spare and

soulful shift to the D-flat major trio in the minuet. It is structured like a minuet and trio, riffing on that classical form but taking it a little further. I love the way some music (like the minuets of Op. 77) suddenly takes you to the other side of Alice's looking glass, in a kind of absurd, subtle, technicolour transition". – Caroline Shaw

INTERVAL

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872 – 1958)

The Lark Ascending

Arranged by Martin Gerigk

"He rises and begins to round. He drops the silver chain of sound. Of many links without a break. In chirrup, whistle slur and shake".

The opening lines of George Meredith's poem which inspired Vaughan William's wonderful sound picture of the bird. The verses are inscribed on his manuscript. He wrote it in 1914 for violin and piano but, with the problems of the First World War looming, it was not actually performed until 1920. It proved so successful that he soon orchestrated it, and this version had its first performance in London on June 14th, 1921. The music reflects the poem, with the solo violin acting as the trilling bird. It opens with slow, hazy music and quickens to a livelier, folk-style tune before returning to its dreamy beginnings, with the violin trilling and spiralling above the music and providing the final lines alone.

Tonight's version has been arranged by German composer Martin Gerigk (b. 1972). As a teenager he won some top youth musical prizes and has gone on to become one of Germany's leading contemporary composers. He is also a noted arranger of musical works, and his version of The Lark Ascending was created in 2012.

JOANNA MARSH (b. 1970)

Another Eden

Born in England, Joanna Marsh is an award-winning composer who has been living in Dubai since 2007. Joanna was Composer in Residence at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge from 2015 through to 2020. During that time, she wrote a number of works for the college's choir and organ. She is a Co-Founder of Choir Fest in Dubai, an annual celebration of the region's choral music scene that reached its tenth anniversary in March 2020. She is also Founder of the Dubai Opera Festival Chorus: a large body of singers set up for the BBC Proms in Dubai that continues to undertake concert performances of various types across the UAE.

Another Eden is part of the United Strings of Europe's new work Apollo Resurrected, a contemporary re-staging of Stravinsky's ballet Apollo and His Muses which explores the essential role art has to play in a world recovering from tragedy and isolation. Composed in the structure of a passacaglia, Another Eden reflects on a number of contemporary themes that revolve around a sense of the gradual erosion of the organic beauty of our world, and reflect a deeply held wish to recover it. With deep resonances and equality between each string voice, the work uses the possibilities of string sound to reflect both beauty and darkness.

Another Eden (United String of Europe commission)

Described as “one of today’s leading composers for the voice” (The Guardian 2019), British composer Joanna Marsh divides her time between Dubai and the UK. The inspiration for Joanna’s compositions often comes from the past. She has a strong interest in Tudor and Elizabethan choral music which is reflected in some of her choral output. Her 2021 choral piece All Shall Be Well, commissioned for the ORA Singers, won the choral section of the Ivors Composer Awards 2022

The United Strings of Europe recorded Joanna’s In Winter’s House in a string arrangement by Julian Azkoul for their second album Renewal (BIS Records 2022). The arrangement has proven popular with several ensembles programming it, most notably the London Mozart Players and the Scottish Ensemble.

Another Eden, commissioned by United Strings of Europe in 2022, is a work inspired by the idea of a perfect world which we have somehow lost. Musically, it is based on a 4-bar ground with its revolutions building to much longer and larger structures. Often these are disrupted or held in a ‘holding pattern’ before the repeating harmony is restored. It was written as a response to the idea that as we came out of the pandemic, we wanted to regain or rebuild the beauty that we had eroded: we wanted another chance. The piece is dedicated to Joanna’s godson Apollo Cosimo Vardag Bence.

Sun 11th May, 3:30pm, St Mary's Church of Ireland, Blessington

*This concert is kindly supported by
Niamh Ní Ghairbhia.*

*Sean Shibe / Acoustic & Electric
Guitars*

DAVID FENNESSY
(b. 1976)

Rosewood

David Fennessy was born in Maynooth in 1976 and studied guitar at the Dublin DIT College of Music before taking his Master's Degree at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow. In 2005 he was invited to join the staff there, where he still teaches. His music has been performed widely, and he has won many prizes. *Rosewood* is for solo guitar and was composed for the 2011 St Magnus Festival on Orkney Island. There are five short pieces in the suite. The fingerboard on a guitar is usually made of rosewood, lending a particular aroma to the instrument.

*"The knowledge that this piece would be premiered at the Italian Chapel in Orkney and my vivid memories of visiting there a few years ago guided me during the composition of *Rosewood*. Without wishing to somehow create a musical evocation of the place, notions of calm, reflection, open spaces, echoes and resonances permeate the music. The title refers to the type of wood often used in the construction of the fingerboard of the guitar. It has a distinct aroma and when I smell it, I am immediately and vividly reminded of the once close relationship I had with that instrument." – David Fennessy*

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
(1685 – 1750)

Suite No. 1 in G major, BWV 1007

- i. Prelude
- ii. Allemande
- iii. Courante
- iv. Sarabande
- v. Minuets I & II
- vi. Gigue

Köthen was a small principality in the countryside southwest of Berlin, where Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen (1694 – 1728) held a famous court, being an excellent violinist himself. The Prince also employed Bach from 1717 to 1723 and it is quite likely that the Six Cello Suites were composed for performance at the court. The exact date of composition is not certain, but about 1721 seems most likely.

As with much of Bach's music, the manuscripts of the Suites virtually disappeared for some 150 years. It was when looking through a second-hand bookstore in Barcelona in 1889 that the thirteen-year-old Pablo Casals (1876 – 1973) found the scores and decided to study them. His promotion of the Suites led to their revival and their place among the greatest of Baroque compositions.

The opening Prelude is one of the best-known movements among the Suites and is frequently heard in films and on tv. Its deceptively simple, undulating phrases rise to an impassioned climax through the use of arpeggiated chords. The ensuing Allemande is a grave affair, again depending on repetitive, rolling phrases for its effect. The first Courante of the series is a busy creation with a fast-flowing melody, while the Sarabande presents a dignified two-part theme.

The opening pair of Minuets begins with a sprightly dance, while the second one involves an elegantly serpentine melody and is the first movement in which no chords appear. The concluding Gigue has a muscular bounce to it; it is the equivalent of the jig, so familiar through Irish traditional music.

INTERVAL

SASHA SCOTT
(b. 2022)

PROGRAMME NOTES © IAN FOX 2024

Rush

From an interview with the composer by Zygmund de Somogyi for PRXLUDS (January 2024)

Tell me more about the piece you worked on with Sean Shibe.

It was called 'Rush'. It was inspired by the feeling of being overwhelmed with emotion - almost like a headrush. I wanted the guitar and the electronics to sometimes feel like they're fighting with each other; but I wanted them to be as important as each other. I didn't want it to [feel] like the electronics are this "backing", and they're going to sit quietly. I was really inspired by metal bands, that side of things for the guitar. I wanted to give him [Sean] a kind of rockstar moment. I remember seeing him play David Lang's 'Killer'; the piece was amazing, but the energy, the stage presence that he had... I was so inspired [that] I wanted to make him a piece where he could feel like "this is my rockstar moment!"

On this idea of energy, and presence — was that more embedded in the structure, or was that more of a performative thing in the piece?

I think it was more a performative thing. I'm usually quite a control freak, and I'm very particular with scores; I wouldn't say "go wild", or just go free, or give a brief for the effects, I'd usually just write it out. But with this piece, there was a bit at the end where he has these harmonic squeals. When I first wrote it for him, I had actually written it very particularly; but reflecting after the concert, and now if he does it again, I'll just rewrite that bit to give him more freedom and write instructions along the lines of "just go wild, scream on the guitar — go mad for this duration!" I think I came to the realisation that with those kinds of musical ideas, it's better to trust the performer with the vision and give them more control, it makes it freer and a bit more rockstar.

From what you've said, 'Rush' is quite an emotional piece. Would you say your compositional practice is becoming more emotionally-driven?

I think in all the work [I've done] in the past few years, I'm very inspired by the state of being in a trance, or being dragged into a spiral — which is what *Spiral* is inspired by, also. The feeling of being

lost and transported to a different world, or when you're in a really immersive art exhibition or in a club, and you just forget where you are. That's what I'm chasing to achieve in my music, recently. Maybe that comes from the fact that that's the feeling I get when I compose.

STEVE REICH (b. 1936)

Electric Counterpoint

Electric Counterpoint (1987) was commissioned by the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival for guitarist Pat Metheny. It was composed during the summer of 1987. The duration is about 15 minutes. It is the third in a series of pieces (first Vermont Counterpoint in 1982 for flutist Ransom Wilson followed by New York Counterpoint in 1985 for clarinetist Richard Stolzman) all dealing with a soloist playing against a pre-recorded tape of themselves. In Electric Counterpoint the soloist pre-records as many as 10 guitars and 2 electric bass parts and then plays the final 11th guitar part live against the tape. I would like to thank Pat Metheny for showing me how to improve the piece in terms of making it more idiomatic for the guitar.

Electric Counterpoint is in three movements; fast, slow, fast, played one after the other without pause. The first movement, after an introductory pulsing section where the harmonies of the movement are stated, uses a theme derived from Central African horn music that I became aware of through the ethnomusicologist Simha Arom. That theme is built up in eight voice canon and while the remaining two guitars and bass play pulsing harmonies the soloist plays melodic patterns that result from the contrapuntal interlocking of those eight pre-recorded guitars.

The second movement cuts the tempo in half, changes key and introduces a new theme, which is then slowly built up in nine guitars in canon. Once again two other guitars and bass supply harmony while the soloist brings out melodic patterns that result from the overall contrapuntal web.

The third movement returns to the original tempo and key and introduces a new pattern in triple meter. After building up a four guitar canon two

bass guitars enter suddenly to further stress the triple meter. The soloist then introduces a new series of strummed chords that are then built up in three guitar canon. When these are complete the soloist returns to melodic patterns that result from the overall counterpoint when suddenly the basses begin to change both key and meter back and forth between E minor and C minor and between 3/2 and 12/8 so that one hears first 3 groups of 4 eighth notes and then 4 groups of 3 eighth notes. These rhythmic and tonal changes speed up more and more rapidly until at the end the basses slowly fade out and the ambiguities are finally resolved in 12/8 and E minor. – Steve Reich

MEREDITH MONK
(b. 1942)

Nightfall

Nightfall should be sung without vibrato so that the vocal colours and their translucent quality remain pure and clear. Recalling Baroque passacaglia procedure, the bass line underpins the entire work. Nightfall is an incantatory piece inspired by how light changes at the end of a day: the adding and subtracting of colour and shadow; the slowly building and diminishing dynamics; the shifting texture as the sun intensifies and then disappears over the horizon. Nightfall was composed for and performed by Musica Sacra in 1995.

In this arrangement for solo guitar by the performer himself, Shibe offers a fresh and innovative perspective, where the intentions of the composer are explored and reinvented through utilising the instrument's broad range of tone and colour, ultimately making the guitar sing.

Thursday 15th May, 8pm, Russborough House

*This concert is kindly supported by
Charlotte Richardson & Eelco Van
Solkema.*

Cassiopeia Winds

Catriona Ryan / Flute

Matthew Manning / Oboe

Deirdre O'Leary / Clarinet

John Hearne / Bassoon

Cormac Ó hAodáin / French Horn

FRANZ DANZI (1763 – 1826)

Wind Quintet in G minor Opus 56 No. 2

i. Allegretto

ii. Andante

iii. Menuetto: Allegretto

iv. Allegretto

Although born in Germany, Danzi's father was Italian and a leading cellist in the famous Mannheim Orchestra; even Mozart praised his playing. Franz became a noted cellist and conductor himself, and was a busy and successful composer, particularly noted for his lightful wind quintets. The idea of a wind quintet was new in his day, mainly promoted by the Czech composer Antonin Reicha, to whom Danzi dedicated his three Opus 56 compositions, published in 1821. He composed nine in all, and they were very popular in his day, mainly due to his ability to produce memorable tunes. This Quintet is in four movements and is composed for flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn and bassoon. It is a light-hearted creation full of enjoyable tunes and witty ideas.

Tarantella is borrowed from Trio Sonata No. 7, and the Gavotta from Pergolesi's Harpsichord Lessons.

The *Scherzino* is from *Trio Sonata No. 2*, while the *Minuetto* is from the opera *Lo frate 'nnamorato*, and the *Finale* from *Trio Sonata No. 12*. The score was published in 1933.

JOAN TRIMBLE (1915 – 2000)

Three Diversions for Wind Quintet

i. Preamble

ii. Pastoral

iii. Burlesque

Born in Enniskillen, Joan Trimble studied at the Royal Irish Academy of Music and Trinity College, Dublin, before attending the Royal College of Music London, where she studied piano and composition with Vaughan Williams. She first came to attention when she created a piano duo with her sister Valerie and they became popular performers in London, with their own BBC radio programmes. By the 1940s the sisters were among the best-known musicians on these islands. She also began composing with short works and a full-length opera *Blind Rafferty* commissioned by the BBC and televised in 1957. Following a brilliant performance career she retired from music in 1967, taking over control of the family newspaper *The Impartial Reporter* in Enniskillen. She also continued to research Irish folk music and for a while taught piano at the Royal College. The *Diversions* date from 1990 and demonstrate her witty and tuneful style, with strong Irish elements in the third movement.

ARTURO MÁRQUEZ (b. 1950)

Danza de Mediodia

A native of the Mexican state of Sonora, Márquez is known for his adroit incorporation of Mexican musical forms and styles into his compositions. One of Mexico's eminent contemporary composers, he is widely popular with Latin Americans for the accessibility and attractiveness of his compositions. Recipient of an impressive list of honours, his recent works include a commission from the San Antonio Symphony, a cello concerto, and an homage to Emiliano Zapata,

PROGRAMME NOTES © IAN FOX 2024

the Mexican revolutionary.

After early musical training on trombone, violin, and piano, he became a student at the Conservatorio Nacional in the early nineteen seventies. He then went on to study in Europe with the eminent French composer, Jacques Castérède. He subsequently was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to the California Institute of the Arts, where he studied with the well-known American composer Morton Subotnick. Under the influence of the latter composer, he was active in a compositional style that featured mixed media excursions in dance, theatre, and film. Computers, tape, electro-acoustic devices, unusual percussion instruments and actors, all contributed to an avant-garde reputation. But all has not been on the cutting edge, for he is also known for his interest in popular urban musical styles, expressed in more conventional ensembles. His later move to a personal idiom made full use of traditional Mexican urban music - but not necessarily "folk" music.

Noon Dance dates from 1996 and is one of his most famous creations lasting some ten minutes. The mood switches between slow and *con fuoco* (with fire) in a most attractive manner.

DARIUS MILHAUD (1892 – 1974)

La Cheminée du roi René

- i. Cortège
- ii. Aubade
- iii. Jongleurs
- iv. La maousinglade
- v. Joutes sur l'Arc
- vi. Chasse à Valabre
- vii. Madrigal nocturne

One of the most prolific French composers of the 20th century, Milhaud wrote some 440 works in a wide range of instrumental and vocal combinations. He spent some time with the French foreign service in Brazil in 1916, where the local music would provide valuable elements and harmonies which he used throughout his life. This Suite in seven short movements, none more than three minutes in length. It is adapted from music he wrote for a 1939 film portraying three love stories

set in three different time periods. The title refers to a Provençal legend, the word "Cheminée" not only means "chimney" but can also mean "fireplace" or indeed "to go on a walk or promenade". The 15th century King of Sicily, René d'Anjou, was reputed to enjoy long walks. Milhaud adapted his film score to this seven-movement suite, which was among his most popular successes.

The movements alternate slow and fast, starting with a Procession and followed by a Dawn Song. Then we have Jugglers and next a slow Sarabande played by the oboe. A scene of jousting at the River Arc follows and then hunting at Valabre, complete with hunting horn. The Suite ends with a Nocturnal Madrigal.

RONAN GUILFOYLE (b. 1958)

Groove Merchants

Guitarist Ronan Guilfoyle has been a leading figure in jazz in Ireland as performer, composer and educator. He established the Newpark Music Centre in 1989 and has appeared across the world as a performer, appearing with many of the world's top jazz musicians. He is director of jazz performance at the Dublin City University. He has written music for theatre, television, film and numerous jazz ensembles. In 20023 he was elected to Aosdána, the national academy for the creative arts.

Groove Merchants was written in 2000 and as the composer says "straddles classical and jazz music, that uses elements of both traditions."

GUIULIO BRICCALDI (1818 – 1881)

Potpourri Fantastico on Rossini's "Barber of Seville"

Known as the "Paganini of the Flute", Briccialdi was an Italian virtuoso musician, a flute teacher to Royalty and an innovator for his instrument, becoming professor of the flute in Florence from 1870. This ten-minute potpourri presents a number of the melodies from Rossini's 1814 opera, cleverly arranged for wind quintet.

ADELE O'DWYER
(b. 1959)

The Cynical Clown

American-born composer and cellist Adele O'Dwyer was trained in the USA where she studied with Leonard Chausow, Zara Nelsova, Antony Cooke, Raya Garbousova and Martha Gerschefski. She also participated in masterclasses with Janos Starker and Lynn Harrell as well as the Juilliard Quartet Seminars (USA), Aspen Summer Music School (USA), Britten-Pears School for Advanced Musical Study (UK), Kodály Institute International School (Hungary), Dalcroze Institute (USA) and the International Jazz Summer School (Northern Ireland).

She studied composition in the Ennis/IMRO Composition Summer School in Ireland and has recently received a number of awards from the Screen Training Ireland-University of California Los Angeles joint programme in film scoring.

The Cynical Clown, until now, existed as a standalone work, but has been re-worked by the composer into a set of Three Chromatic Miniatures for the Cassiopeia Winds, of which the Cynical Clown forms the central movement.

Friday 16th May, 8pm, Russborough House

*This concert is kindly supported by
Margaret Downes.*

Quatuor Van Kuijk

*Nicolas Van Kuijk / Violin
Sylvain Favre-Bulle / Violin
Emmanuel François / Viola
Anthony Kondo / Cello*

FRANCIS POULENC (1899 – 1963)

C; Fêtes Galantes; Les Chemins de l'Amour,

Poulenc was one of the leading French composers of the first half of the 20th century. Coming from a wealthy industrial family, he had the time to compose in a wide range of musical styles including a large number of delightful songs. A fine pianist himself, he provided some 170 songs including a number of all-time favorites. Some have been arranged for string quartet by Jean Christophe Masson.

The bridges of C, sometimes called Ce, are the four "Caesar Bridges" near Angiers. In 51 B.C.E., the Gauls were defeated there by the Romans. In 1940, the Germans invaded at the same spot, and the French were again defeated. Louis Aragon, the poet, speaks of the ancient defeat, and the tales of glory that followed. Then he speaks of the present time and the ill-concealed tears for his beloved, abandoned France.

While Aragon consciously evoked a period of France's past in the C, in *Fêtes Galantes* he ironically applies a title Watteau used in painting and Verlaine in poetry. But whereas these two creative artists of earlier times were celebrating grace and beauty, Aragon points out the ugliness, and the absurdity of the ugliness, of the period of Occupation.

Les chemins de l'amour is one of Poulenc's most popular songs. When writing incidental music for Jean Anouilh's play *Léocadia*, Poulenc wrote to Nora Auric that the composition of this work lifted his spirits from the "menace of the occupation which weighs on my house, what a sad epoch is ours, and when and how will it all finish up". Poulenc here effortlessly writes a valse chantée, which had captivated him since his youth in shows and reviews by composers like Messager, Hahn, Christiné, Yvain. It is a genre piece with a memorable tune composed affectionately and with taste. the Finale from Trio Sonata No. 12. The score was published in 1933.

GABRIEL FAURÉ (1845 – 1924)

Les berceaux; Mandoline

Fauré is recognized as one of France's leading 20th century composers with a special talent for song writing. He composed over a hundred of them. Here are two arranged for string quartet.

In *Les berceaux* "Men must work, and women must weep", a play of words and thoughts between the vessels ('vaisseaux') in which sailors go off to sea, and the smaller yet similarly shaped cradles ('berceaux') in which mothers nurse the children who may never know their fathers. Fauré has written a combination of a berceuse and a barcarolle in the key of B flat minor, one of his very special tonalities. At first the song seems suitably intimate for the rocking of cradles (the accompaniment in triplets undulating between the hands is a masterful invention); in the climactic central section the music takes on a heightened dramatic tone rare in this composer's *mélodies* – we suddenly hear the heartbreak of the women left behind, as well as their anger at the sea, the sailors' perpetual mistress. This explosion of feeling subsides as suddenly as it has occurred.

Fauré sketched *Mandoline* in Venice and the composer regarded these *mélodies* as being 'of Venice', the fruit of a much-needed rest where he relaxed in beautiful surroundings, 'au bord de l'eau'. This association is celebrated by the songs' first editions which feature a charming illustration of a gondola on a lagoon with the Campanile and the

San Marco basilica in the background.

MAURICE RAVEL (1875 – 1937)

String Quartet in F

- i. Moderato tres doux
- ii. Assez vif - tres rythme
- iii. Tres lent
- iv. Vif et agite

“My String Quartet represents a conception of musical construction, imperfectly realised no doubt, but laid out much more precisely than in my earlier compositions”.

Despite the composer’s usual self-assurance, he was concerned about the quality of the work when he had completed it and asked various friends and colleagues about it, in particular the dedicatee, Fauré, who had harsh words to say about it, particularly the last movement which he deemed a failure. Dubois, the Conservatoire Director (later replaced by Fauré), felt the work did not deserve a Conservatoire prize and even had Ravel banned from his classes. However,

Debussy was far more supportive and wrote: “In the name of the gods of music, and in mine, do not touch a single note of what you have written”. Composed in 1902, the same year as the premiere of Debussy’s *Pelleas et Melisande*, the Quartet is clearly influenced by his new Impressionistic style. It was given its première in Paris on March 5th 1904 by the Heymann Quartet.

Each movement begins on the note of A natural and this links the tonic F major to his other keys, mainly D minor and A minor. Ravel, like Franck and Debussy, uses a cyclical form throughout the work, with the two themes of the first movement reappearing in various guises later in the music. The opening movement is beautifully constructed in sonata form and uses “antique” modes and whole-tone scales however the themes are clearly melodic and quite delightful. The violin presents the important first theme (*très calme*) immediately, it is an elegantly soaring melody. The second theme is in much the same mood, giving the mood a tight aural panorama. Ravel develops his material

with an easy confidence, providing a particularly memorable coda.

Like Debussy, Ravel places his Scherzo second and makes extensive use of pizzicato. The two themes use modes – the first is Aeolian (the same as the white keys on the piano from A to A) and played pizzicato while the second is Dorian (a scale from D) on the white keys. The cello opens the central section and there is a hint of the main theme from the first movement about its phrasing. This is more evident in the opening theme of the slow movement, with the theme appearing an octave down. The influence of Borodin on the young French composers of that day is clearly evident in this sumptuous fantasy, with sudden soft frissons of trills peeking through the slow-moving patterns of the main discussion. The movement ends with a crescendo and an acceleration into a splendidly passionate climax of almost orchestral colouring.

The Finale returns to the triple rhythms of the Scherzo set against a quirky 5/8 count. The music opens aggressively and is followed by a more lyrical high melody on first violin that is clearly linked to the theme from the first movement. Other recollections follow in the swift moving tapestry of sound, some more clearly recognisable than others. The music alternates between storm and calm and ends on a rising phrase that suggests more ought to follow. To modern ears, however, much less concerned with classic form, there is a fine outdoor freshness to the end, as though the wind has whipped away the music.

The bubbling Scherzo is an exercise in pizzicato technique while the trio provides a tuneful contrast. A rhapsodic slow movement, which has an almost orchestral expansiveness, follows. The finale is based on a 5/8 rhythm which is set against passages in 3/4 as it swings between excitement and peace.

INTERVAL

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770 – 1827)

Quartet No. 8 Opus 59 No. 2 in E minor

PROGRAMME NOTES © IAN FOX 2024

i. Allegro

ii. Molto adagio. Si tratta questo pezzo con molto di sentiment

iii. Allegretto

iv. Finale: Presto

Beethoven was commissioned by the Russian ambassador to Vienna, Count Razumovsky to provide three Quartets, this being the second of them. It is full of interesting new directions for Beethoven. It opens with two grand chords leading into a short motif presented between pauses. This is extended and moves into a powerful sequence leading to another lyrical tune, high on the first violin. This mixture of moods and tempi provides material for a short development section which Beethoven asks to be repeated, an unusual idea but it is quite brief. The slow movement is almost a try-out for the great Adagio in Quartet Opus 132 and is headed "to be played with the utmost feeling". According to his pupil Czerny, Beethoven derived his inspiration from gazing at a starry sky. A long thoughtful theme launches the movement which is immediately repeated with staccato decorations from the first violin. Sudden loud chords break into the contemplative mood but their effect does not last long and the opening mood returns for further treatment. Beethoven now adds a repetitive four-note motto below the principal tune which viola and cello maintain under lazy sinuous lines from the violins. An emotional climax is reached and gradually fades away with occasional sudden fortissimo chords breaking the calm. A further slow-moving climax is built up before the movement gradually comes to its serene ending.

The Scherzo bursts into life with a perky little tune, first on a sole violin then in richly harmonised version for the quartet. The central Trio is fascinating for its use of an 18th century Russian folk-song Glory to the Sun, presumably given to Beethoven by Razumovsky. It would also be used by Mussorgsky in his opera Boris Godunov, as well as turning up in works by Arensky and Rachmaninov. Beethoven gives it a vigorous treatment before going back to the scherzo theme, da capo. There is a delightful jauntiness about the opening theme of the finale. Beethoven brings it back a number of times, creating a kind of Rondo, with splendidly vigorous episodes in between the recurrence of the theme itself. An extra spurt, più presto, provides for an uplifting coda.

Saturday 17th May, 8pm, Tramway Theatre, Blessington

*This concert is kindly supported by
Stephen Allcock and Hitesh Batavia.*

Julian Bliss Septet

Julian Bliss / Clarinet

Rob Barron / Piano

Martin Shaw / Trumpet

Dan Higham / Trombone

Nick Costley-White / Guitar

Ferg Ireland / Bass

Ed Richardson / Drums

The sound of film – Jazz in Hollywood

Born in 1989, Julian Bliss is one of the leading British jazz clarinetists of today, with a wide range of work in the jazz and classical fields in Europe and America. He created the Septet in 2010 to promote the music of Benny Goodman and the group has since extended its range of activities around the world, giving concerts on many topics.

With their irrepressible, jazz-infused energy, the Julian Bliss Septet tonight presents some of the great music that has come out of Hollywood. Starting with the silent film and the early 'talkies' of the Great Depression years, the Septet also plays music from wartime movies, musicals and even the classic Disney blockbusters. Including Cheek to Cheek, As Time Goes By, Sing Sing Sing, Days of Wine and Roses, and When you Wish upon a Star, be tempted to dance and sing along to this much-loved music, played by one of the most sparkling and talented jazz ensembles of our day.

On a Clear Day

Such Sweet Thunder

Si Tu Vois Ma Mere

Bistro Fada

Pure Imagination

Sheik of Araby

Sing Sing Sing

—

Blues in the Night

Alice in Wonderland

When you wish upon a star

Una Noche con Francis

Alfie's Theme

Jazz Autographs

They Can't take that Away from Me

Caravan

Julian Bliss has provided the following comments:

"When we started to discuss this programme, we quickly realised that there is a seemingly endless amount of great tunes that have been used in film over the years. We wanted to create a programme that showcased this eclectic and rich mix of jazz, but with a modern twist. Tonight's programme has a mix of styles, sounds and even instrumentations. We start our concert with a tune called 'On a clear day' which was used in the 1970 film with the same name, starring Barbra Streisand. Like a number of films from that era, this was a film adaptation of a Broadway Musical. Another notable tune from our first half is 'Cheek to Cheek' which was written for Fred Astaire. Cheek to Cheek was named the number 1 song of 1935, spent 5 weeks and number 1 and finished number 15 in the top 100 songs in American cinema. We also feature two songs from the film 'Round Midnight', the very well-known Si Tu Vois Ma Mere by Sidney Bechet and a great trio arrangement of Bistro Fada. Sidney Bechet was one of the pioneers in early jazz, and actually one of the first to really develop the swing style of Jazz. With his characteristic big sound with lots of vibrato, you cannot mistake him."

PROGRAMME NOTES © IAN FOX 2024

"No concert celebrating Jazz in film would be complete without some Disney. Tonight, we are going to feature the main title from Alice in Wonderland as well as the beautiful song, 'When you wish upon a star'. Alongside some tunes from classic films, we also have a number that have been used in more contemporary cinema. One of my personal favourites in this programme has to be 'Jazz Autographs' which was written by John Williams for the film 'The Terminal'. To finish our evening we're going to play Caravan which has been used in a variety of films, but most recently in Whiplash. It has been a lot of fun to create this programme with Lewis and I hope you all enjoy it too!"

{Please note that there may be some alterations to the programme or running order. Julian will announce the individual items during the performance.}

Sunday 18th May, 11am & 1pm, Tramway Theatre, Blessington

Farmyard Carnival (West Wicklow Festival commission)

Paul Rissmann / Composer
Lucinda Jacob / Poet
Irish Chamber Orchestra
Soo-Jung Ann & Fiachra Garvey /
Pianos

*This commission is kindly supported
by Stephen Hubbard, Ballymore,
3RE Capital Ventures, John Pollard
Foundation, Sunflower Charitable
Foundation, Vauxhall One, Wicklow
Arts Office Strategic Funding Award.*

A note from our Artistic Director, Fiachra Garvey:

Growing up as a pianist and farmer in West Wicklow and living in London for the past 10 years, for quite some time I have wanted to commission a new work inspired by the wonderful flora and fauna the Irish and UK countryside has to offer. Having performed Saint Saens' much-loved Carnival of the Animals on many occasions, which celebrates exotic animals like lions, elephants, kangaroos etc. I felt it would be of enormous value to commission a work celebrating animals that children in Ireland and the UK have more direct experience of.

In Farmyard Carnival, Paul Rissmann has composed music for the same instrumentation as Saint Saëns' Carnival (for Chamber Orchestra with the ability for the work to upscale to include a full symphony orchestra). Carnival of the Animals is often a child's first introduction to programmatic music, offering a playful yet profound way to explore key musical elements such as pitch, timbre, and rhythm, while sparking their imagination through its vivid characterisations of animals. Saint Saëns' work has

14 movements, and our Farmyard Carnival will also have 14 exciting movements, each accompanied by stunning new poetry from Lucinda Jacob.

Farmyard Carnival will be a vital new addition to the currently very limited, family-friendly concert repertoire. I can't describe in words how excited I am about this new commission, and I can't wait for our audiences to experience the world premiere in Wicklow! Enjoy!

A note from composer Paul Rissmann:

140 years ago, Saint-Saëns created a 'Zoological Fantasy' which was so brilliant and full of character, it became the blueprint for all future music composed for young listeners. No pressure then, when Fiachra Garvey invited me to create a sequel.

While the original Carnival favoured the exotic, Fiachra wanted a piece that celebrated domestic farmyard animals. We'd supersede the Kangaroo and Elephant with the good-old Irish Horse and Cow. My challenge was to do that using exactly the same instruments, though I have to confess, I completely failed. While Saint-Saëns uses only two percussion instruments in his score, I've written for 13.

What a treat, to be able to write for two virtuosic pianists. Throughout the process, I was acutely aware of what a luxury that is. Once the sound world of each animal was established in my imagination, my task was to 'upscale' that music to keep our pianists' fingers as busy as possible. Not being much of a piano player myself, that was really quite terrifying. I quickly had to learn basic things like: how fast is too fast? However, collaborating with artists as accomplished as Fiachra and Soo-Jung was a joy, and I am happy to confirm, they can play just about anything.

As a composer who specialises in turning children's literature into symphonic scores, this commission was unlike any other I've fulfilled. I usually have a book to set to music and while those words fuel my creativity, they also tightly control it. My job has always been to find the sounds that fit with someone else's story. Though not here.

Farmyard Carnival was written simply to showcase the majesty of each of our creatures. It would be trivial to focus just on the sounds the animals make,

PROGRAMME NOTES © IAN FOX 2024

and so I concentrated more on expressing feelings associated with them. My music aspires to conjure images such as the swiftness of a galloping horse, the towering presence of a cow or the unbelievable cuteness of wee piglet.

It has been such an honour, to witness this music transform into stunning poetry by Lucinda Jacob. The moment I read her elegant prose I immediately felt its connectedness to my score. So much so, I decided to weave her words through some of the music.

I am well-aware that it's an impossible task to make anything as beautiful as Saint-Saëns' Swan, however I hope he would enjoy spending time on our Irish Farmyard. I've loved it.

A note from poet Lucinda Jacob:

The creation of the Farmyard Carnival with Paul Rissmann and Fiachra Garvey has been a truly joyful experience. As we worked on the various animals, Paul and I sent our work back and forth to each other over the internet. Sometimes he would write the music for an animal and my poem would follow and sometimes it was the other way around. It was a new way to work for me and so inspiring. I love the way the sounds of our music and words work so well together. I had high hopes for the piece from the moment Fiachra told me of his vision for it, but the way our collaboration worked exceeded all my expectations. And it has been fun!

Sunday 18th May, 3.30pm, St Mary's Church of Ireland, Blessington

*This concert is kindly supported by
Bernie O'Callaghan and Prof. Patrick
Plunkett.*

Voces8

*Andrea Haines / Soprano
Eleonora Poignant / Soprano
Katie Jeffries-Harris / Alto
Barnaby Smith / Countertenor
Blake Morgan / Tenor
Euan Williamson / Tenor
Christopher Moore / Baritone
Dominic Carver / Bass*

{Voces8 prefer to introduce the works they sing to their audiences directly, rather than via programme notes. We've taken this opportunity to ask the group some questions, giving a personal insight into the group and their creative process.}

Questions 1-3 were answered by Katie Jeffries-Harris (alto), 4-6 by Christopher Moore (baritone), and 7-8 by Euan Williamson (tenor).

1. We're very excited to have VOCES8 perform at the festival this year! Are you looking forward to performing in Wicklow? We're really looking forward to performing in Wicklow! We don't often get the opportunity to travel to Ireland, so it's a real joy when it makes it into our diary.

2. Do you have a favourite work in the programme, and why? It's a real treat to perform this programme — honestly, my favourite piece changes weekly! At the moment, I'm particularly enjoying Jake Runestad's 'Let My Love Be Heard'. We first came across this piece whilst programming our album 'Enchanted Isle'. The text is a heartfelt plea — that

the love we still hold for those we've lost might be carried by angels and felt in heaven. In the middle of the piece there's a gorgeous, long, tumbling crescendo depicting the journey of the angels flying upwards and I find it truly thrilling to perform.

3. Your programmes are wonderfully diverse and innovative; how do you approach programming as a group? Our programming is shaped by a mix of tradition, inspiration, and collaboration. Some pieces have been staples since the group began — they suit us so well and have become audience favourites that are nearly impossible to replace. New music comes into our programmes by suggestions from group members, requests from particular festivals, overarching programme themes or the development of new CD playlists. The group also commissions repertoire and works regularly with composers. We take pride in the diversity of our repertoire and hope that there's something in there for everyone.

4. What are the benefits of singing as an ensemble versus as a soloist? As anyone who sings in any sort of choir knows, the best thing is being able to create something that is bigger than the sum of its individual parts. We all come to VOCES8 with various experiences of choral and solo singing, and of other genres of music, which makes for an incredibly rewarding exchange of ideas within the group. The key is that everyone takes the same level of musical responsibility as a soloist, while listening and adapting to the needs of the group. To exercise the expressive skill of the soloist within the teamwork of an ensemble - it's why chamber music is so addictive for me.

5. What is your favourite genre to arrange for this consortium of voices? As a composer and arranger myself, I have huge admiration for a number of arrangers who regularly write jazz and swing charts for us. Personally, I have really enjoyed adapting some classical and folk pieces recently, both for VOCES8 and for our sister group Apollo5. The key with any arrangement is deciding how to take someone else's ideas and present them in a different and interesting way. Sometimes simplicity is the answer - other times, a complex arrangement can open up worlds you would never have imagined from the original.
PROGRAMME NOTES © IAN FOX 2024

Artists

In order of their appearance
in the festival

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 Feeman 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.

www.fiachragarvey.com





Ruth Gibson

Ruth Gibson is a violist whose artistry bridges classical tradition and contemporary innovation. Known for her expressive performances and commanding presence, she made her Proms debut in 2021 with the Manchester Collective and Mahan Esfahani, performing Dobrinka Tabakova's Suite in Old Style.

A champion of modern repertoire, Ruth's performances have earned critical acclaim. Her recent recording of Caroline Shaw's In Manus Tuas received a five-star review from Gramophone Magazine, highlighting her ability to blend technical brilliance with emotional depth. Equally lauded was her recent performance of Vijay Iyer's Song for Flint at Wigmore Hall. This dedication to contemporary music extends to her collaboration with SANSARA where she toured Morton Feldman's Rothko Chapel across the UK and Europe earlier this year.

Ruth's chamber music career is equally distinguished. As a former member of the Castalian String Quartet and Ensemble 360, she performed widely across major European concert halls, earning recognition for her versatility and sensitivity. She now holds the position of principal violist with Aurora Orchestra, celebrated for its innovative, theatrical approach to performance. She continues to thrive in spaces of improvised music and cross genre in her musical collaboration with Abel Selaocoe and Manchester collective, Sirocco. Such projects have cemented her reputation as a musician who thrives in boundary-pushing environments.

Beyond the concert stage, Ruth is a passionate advocate for her instrument and its repertoire. Her three-part BBC Radio 4 series, The Unsung Hero, brought the viola's rich history and unique voice to wider audiences.

Now a dedicated educator, Ruth teaches viola at the Royal Northern College of Music, where she inspires young musicians with her experience and expertise. Her career continues to demonstrate the viola's versatility and beauty, bringing its sound to life in ways that captivate audiences around the world.

Trio Isimsiz

Formed in 2009 at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, in 2015 the Trio Isimsiz won 1st Prize and the Audience Prize at the Trondheim Competition, and in 2017 2nd Prize at the Haydn International Competition in Vienna. They were selected for representation by Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) in 2013 and were awarded a fellowship from the Borletti-Buitoni Trust (BBT) in 2018.

The Trio has performed widely in Europe, highlights including recitals at the Stavanger, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Peasmarsh and Gower Festivals (broadcast by Radio 3), the Tivoli Concert Hall, Snape Maltings, Fundacion Juan March in Madrid and Marianischer-Saal in Lucerne. Further afield they have undertaken tours in China and Argentina.

In 2017 the Trio returned to the Aldeburgh Festival and completed their first CD due for release on the Rubicon label in November. Future engagements include an all Beethoven programme at the Théâtre des Abbesses in Paris, concerts at the Köln Philharmonie, Trondheim Chamber Music Festival and recitals at Wigmore Hall, Brighton Dome and Saffron Hall.

The Trio Isimsiz are currently Fellows at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. They have collaborated with Anthony Marwood, Krzysztof Chorzelski, Richard Lester and Aleksander Madzar and attended IMS Prussia Cove working with Ferenc Rados.

During their studies the Trio undertook residencies at the Banff Centre in Canada, Jeunnesse Musicales Chamber Music, Germany and Mozarteum, Salzburg, and participated in masterclasses with András Schiff, Steven Isserlis, Menahem Pressler, Thomas Riebl, Wolfgang Reddick, the Gould Piano Trio, Belcea and Takács Quartet.



Robert Finegan

Robert Finegan has been hailed as “one of the most exciting Irish saxophonists of his generation.” Known for his passion for contemporary music, Robert collaborates with composers worldwide to create new works, leading to acclaimed performances across Europe. Alongside his solo and chamber work, Robert has performed with prominent ensembles including the National Symphony Orchestra, the Ulster Orchestra, and the Britten-Shostakovich Festival Orchestra.

Clara Barbier Serrano

Specialising in the interpretation of new music, Clara Barbier-Serrano collaborates with numerous composers and ensembles. She has received awards at the Concours de Béziers, the Int. Student Lied Duo competition, Lies Askonas competition and ASAO Nuevas Voces. On the opera stage, she has appeared at Oper Leipzig, Verbier Festival Academy, British Youth Opera, Oxford Opera Company, Montpellier and Nice Opera. She was an Académie Jaroussky young artist and from 2024 joined Paris-based company “Opera Fuoco”.

Joanna Kacperek

Joanna Kacperek is highly celebrated for being a multi-faceted pianist both as a soloist and a collaborative pianist. She has performed in major concert halls in Europe, Canada and Japan and is a prize winner of Grieg International Piano Competition and finalist of Royal Overseas League Competition. Joanna's debut solo album was released in September last year with Rubicon Classics label.

As a duo, Clara and Joanna were Oxford Lieder Young Artists, received the Liedinnovation Prize 2023, the Jean Meikle Prize for a Duo at the Wigmore Hall Song Competition and 2nd Prize at the Hugo Wolf int. Song Competition 2024.



United Strings of Europe

The United Strings of Europe (USE) creates musical experiences that celebrate diversity and bridge cultural divides. Praised for its original programming and 'virtuosically expressive' playing (The Times), the London-based ensemble commissions and arranges music from a variety of cultural backgrounds and performs regularly in Europe and the Middle East. USE's acclaimed recordings for BIS Records include *Renewal* - Editor's Choice at Presto Music and one of Apple Music's '10 Albums You Must Hear', and Tchaikovsky - BBC Music Magazine's Orchestral Choice in February 2023. Through the Night showcased the world premiere recording of Daniel Kidane's *Be Still* alongside new arrangements of works by Maddalena Casulana, Carlo Gesualdo, and Richard Strauss, and garnered them further critical acclaim for 'dissolving a lot of conventions in both programming and performance. (Gramophone.) Spring 2025 will see the release of *Hommages*: an album bringing together composers from Europe and the Americas (Golijov, Stravinsky, Tabakova, Mustonen), inspired by dreams and recollections of the past.

Recent and upcoming performance highlights include the ensemble's debuts at Summer at Snape, the Cambridge Music Festival and Arts Keele; as well as a return to the Barbican's Milton Court alongside regular collaborators SANSARA, and the Wigmore Hall for a concert broadcasted by BBC Radio 3.

United Strings of Europe works across a range of media, collaborating with innovative artists from the world of music and beyond. The ensemble's lockdown film *send back the echo* commissioned from composer/director Jasmin Kent Rodgman featured actor Vilma Jackson and explored themes of disability and social alienation. It was released on BBC Arts and selected for



the London Short Film Festival 2021.

In 2022 USE partnered with director Bill Barclay and choreographer Sean Gandini to create the show *Apollo Resurrected* featuring a bespoke arrangement of Stravinsky's ballet *Apollon musagète* for strings and jugglers, alongside a new commission from Joanna Marsh. Armed with the conviction that music and ensemble playing can enrich people's lives and promote cross-cultural understanding, the ensemble is committed to reaching new audiences through educational work and initiatives that engage young people, refugees and marginalised groups.

www.unitedstringseurope.com



Sean Shibe

Sean Shibe continues to prove himself a truly original mind at the frontier of contemporary classical music.

2024/25 season highlights include a residency at Wigmore Hall with four concerts across the season, including a special programme dedicated to Pierre Boulez's centenary performing the chamber cantata *Le Marteau sans maître*. He tours the UK with folk fiddler Aidan O'Rourke; across the UK and Europe with mezzo-soprano Ema Nikolovska, exploring the many iterations of the Orlando myth through electronics, melodica, protest song and recitation; and with Karim Sulayman for a US tour of their breathtaking duo programme *Broken Branches*. Other notable engagements include debuts in Shanghai

and Hong Kong, and a debut tour with the Australian Chamber Orchestra performing Cassandra Miller's new guitar concerto *Chanter* in thirteen performances across the country.

Recent engagements include solo performances at venues including Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Philharmonie de Paris, Konzerthaus Wien, Southbank Centre, Konzerthaus Dortmund and Alte Oper Frankfurt. Shibe has also appeared at 92NY, Musashino City Hall, Herbst Theatre, The Phillips Collection, and regularly at Wigmore Hall. He has played at numerous festivals such as the La Jolla SummerFest, Aldeburgh Festival, BBC Proms, Heidelberger Frühling, Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Mozartfest Würzburg and Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival.

Ever-keen to explore new cooperative dynamics, Shibe regularly collaborates with soloists and ensembles alike. In recent years, he has worked with the Hallé, Britten Sinfonia, BBC Singers, Manchester Collective, Dunedin Consort, Quatuor Van Kujik, Danish String Quartet, LUDWIG, and conductors Thomas Adès, Krzysztof Urbanski, Christoph Eschenbach, Taavi Oramo, Catherine Larsen-Maguire, flautist Adam Walker, singers Allan Clayton, Ben Johnson, Robert Murray and Robin Tritschler, and performance artist Marina Abramović.

Shibe is an ardent supporter of contemporary music, taking a hands-on approach to new commissions and working with composers to experiment with and expand the guitar repertoire. Premieres to date include works by Thomas Adès, Oliver Leith, Cassandra Miller, Sasha Scott, Daniel Kidane, David Fennessy, Shiva Feshareki, David Lang, Julia Wolfe and Freya Waley-Cohen. He is equally committed to the canon, regularly pairing bold, new pieces with his own transcriptions of J.S. Bach's lute suites and seventeenth-century Scottish lute manuscripts.

Often praised for his original programming, Shibe's discography continues to garner recognition from critics and audiences alike. Recording exclusively for Pentatone, his latest solo album *Profesión* was awarded the 2024 BBC Music Magazine Award. Released the same year, his album with tenor Karim Sulayman - *Broken Branches* - was nominated for the 2024 GRAMMY Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album, and his solo album *Lost & Found* was awarded the OPUS Klassik 2023 Award for Solo Instrument, adding to an OPUS Klassik 2021 Award for Chamber Music Recording, a 2019 Gramophone Concept Album of the Year Award and a 2021 Gramophone Instrumental Award for softLOUD and Bach respectively.

Born in Edinburgh in 1992, Shibe studied at Royal Conservatoire of Scotland under Allan Neave, with further studies at Kunst-Universität Graz in Austria and in Italy under Paolo Pegoraro. He is now a Guitar Professor at Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Shibe is a former BBC New Generation Artist, a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship 2012 winner, a Royal Philharmonic Society 2018 Young Artist Award winner, a multi-GRAMMY nominee, and the recipient of the 2022 Leonard Bernstein Award.



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Cassiopeia Winds

Cassiopeia Winds is a group of five of Ireland's top wind players committed to sharing their passion for the superb wind quintet repertoire with audiences throughout Ireland. The players inspire and refresh their audiences by their infectious enthusiasm for the music they are playing. Member of the group introduce each piece in the programme, engaging with and developing a rapport with their audience, drawing them in so that they feel almost like a sixth member of the group.

Cassiopeia Winds was formed in 2010 by five friends with a passion for wind music. Though the ensemble has the capacity to expand or contract to suit its innovative programming, at its core is a quintet of players whose members are among the finest in the country, including players from the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra. Cassiopeia also has a great interest in contemporary music and in supporting the work of Irish composers and have commissioned,

premiered and toured new wind quintets from John Buckley and Jonathan Nangle, as well as premiering and touring a new quintet written for them by Adele O'Dwyer. In 2022, with funding from the Arts Council, they commissioned a new work from Raymond Deane which they premiered in the NCH in March 2023.

The ensemble aims with each performance to run the full and varied gamut of the wind repertoire from 19th-century to contemporary works. They have a dedication to bringing the lesser-known works of this repertoire into the Irish and international concert halls and festivals. Their concerts represent the startling originality and exoticism and the inimitable palette of tone colours of the wind ensemble. Cassiopeia Winds has had the great pleasure of collaborating with well-loved and renowned musicians Finghin Collins, ConTempo Quartet, Melvin Tan, and Lise de la Salle, among others. They have performed at the Galway Midwinter Festival, the New Ross Piano Festival, the Sligo International Chamber Music Festival, the Castleconnell Autumn Series, the Joan Trimble Centenary Celebration, Music for Galway and have recorded three pieces at a live performance of the long running RTÉ Radio 1 programme Sunday Miscellany. They have been regular performers at Dublin's Kaleidoscope Night and have toured Ireland four times with the generous support of the Arts Council.

Catriona Ryan / Flute

Matthew Manning / Oboe

Deirdre O'Leary / Clarinet

John Hearne / Bassoon

Hannah Miller / French Horn

Quatuor Van Kuijk

Quatuor Van Kuijk is an established international presence performing regularly at venues including the Wigmore Hall in London, Sage Gateshead, and Snape Maltings; Philharmonie de Paris, Auditorium du Louvre, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and Salle Gaveau in Paris; Tonhalle, Zurich; Wiener Konzerthaus and Musikverein, Vienna; Het Concertgebouw and Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ Amsterdam; Berliner Philharmonie and Konzerthaus; Kölner Philharmonie; Elbphilharmonie, Hamburg; Gulbenkian, Lisbon; Tivoli Concert Series, Denmark; Konserthuset Stockholm; and at festivals including the BBC Proms, Aldeburgh, Edinburgh International, Cheltenham, Heidelberg, Fredriksvaerk, Lockenhaus, Davos, Verbier, Aix-en-Provence, Montpellier/Radio France, Evian, Auvers-sur-Oise, Stavanger and Trondheim (Norway), Conventus Moraviae (Czech Republic), Haydn/Esterházy (Hungary), and Eilat (Israel).

The quartet embarks on substantial international tours each season. 2023-24 saw them return to North America, for a tour which included their Carnegie Hall debut, as well as to Asia, where highlights included concerts at Shanghai's Symphony Hall and Tokyo's Hamari-kyu Asahi Hall. Upcoming tours include a return to Belgium in December, as well as another visit to North America in Spring 2025 alongside harpist Parker Ramsay. Collaborators include guitarist Sean Shibe, mezzo soprano Anne Sofie von Otter, harpist Parker Ramsay, clarinetist Annelien Van Wauwe, Quatuor Danel, and composers Baptiste Trotignon and Benjamin Attahir.

Recording exclusively for Alpha Classics, the ensemble's debut recording, Mozart, was released to outstanding critical acclaim - CHOC de Classica, DIAPASON D'OR DECOUVERTE. Following celebrated discs of Debussy and Ravel, and Schubert, they continued their ongoing exploration of Mozart with two further releases across

2020. The complete cycle of Mendelssohn's quartets was released across 2022 – 2023 (the second volume of which winning the 'Quarterly Critic's Choice' Prize of the Deutschen Schallplattenkritik). This season they present 'Impressions Parisiennes' – a collection of French melody transcriptions alongside a new work by Baptiste Trotignon – in homage to the composers of those melodies.

Quatuor Van Kuijk's international accolades boast First, Best Beethoven, and Best Haydn Prizes at the 2015 Wigmore Hall International String Quartet competition; First Prize, and an Audience Award at the Trondheim International Chamber Music Competition; as well as becoming laureates of the Aix-en-Provence Festival Academy. They were BBC New Generation Artists from 2015-17, as well as ECHO Rising Stars for the 2017-18 season. The ensemble was resident at ProQuartet, Paris, where they studied with members of the Alban Berg, Artemis, and Hagen quartets. Originally students of the Ysaye Quartet, they went on to work with Günter Pichler at the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía in Madrid, supported generously by the International Institute of Chamber Music, Madrid. The Quartet is supported by Pirastro and SPEDIDAM and is grateful to the Centre National de La Musique and Mécénat Musical Société Générale for their sponsorship.





Julian Bliss Septet

Formed in 2010, The Julian Bliss Septet quickly became widely known for their trademark inspiring jazz-fuelled shows which have captivated audiences across the globe. Their dazzling virtuosity, extraordinary musicianship and charming humour shines through their programmes of swing, Latin, American and jazz music. The band has played at some of the most prestigious venues and festivals around the world, including the Wigmore Hall in London, Snape Maltings in Suffolk, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Bermuda Jazz Festival and venues across the United States. On the jazz circuit, the group has played Dizzy's Club at Jazz at Lincoln Center (New York) and Ronnie Scott's (London).

Their early shows were inspired by the great Benny Goodman whose iconic music captivated Julian Bliss as a young musician. Taking a fresh, modern approach to Goodman's work, the Septet's first album 'The King of Swing' and live performances of that repertoire gained widespread critical and popular acclaim and this programme remains in great demand today.

Expanding their repertoire and working with new genres of music, the group used their mastery of Western classical, swing and jazz to complement the rich heritage of Latin and wider American traditions. Co-founder Neal Thornton (piano) created a programme of new arrangements of the instantly recognizable style of Gershwin and his contemporaries ('Celebrating Gershwin'). Including music from 'Porgy and Bess', 'Rhapsody in Blue' and popular favourites – 'I Got Rhythm', 'Embraceable You' and 'Lady Be Good': timeless classics.

A recording of the Gershwin programme 'I got rhythm' released in 2021 received rave reviews: "impressive recording by talented clarinetist Julian Bliss and his excellent Septet ... Bliss's quick-fire clarinet starts weaving free-flowing improvisational lines around the tune from the very outset ... jaw-dropping, side-stepping vibes solo ... the whole ensemble is on fire" – Gramophone.

'The Sound of Film – Jazz in Hollywood' showcases some of the greatest music from the movies. Starting with silent film and the early talkies, the band echoes music from wartime & Fred Astaire films, musicals and even the classic Disney blockbusters. Toe-tapping, glorious nostalgia with great tunes such as 'Cheek to Cheek', 'As Time Goes By', 'Sing Sing Sing', 'Days of Wine and Roses' and 'My Favourite Things'.

Soo-Jung Ann

Soo-Jung Ann has consistently pushed the boundaries of classical music throughout her career as a concert pianist. Her exceptional artistry has earned her international acclaim, including numerous prestigious awards such as first prize at the 5th International Telekom Beethoven Competition in Bonn (2013), the Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli Prize from the Piano Academy in Eppan (2013), and first prize at the Concurs Maria Canals in Barcelona (2012). These accolades have solidified her status as one of the foremost pianists of her generation.

Ann's academic journey is equally impressive. She holds a Doctoral Degree in Music Performance from the Royal Irish Academy of Music, where she studied under the tutelage of renowned professors John O'Connor and Thérèse Fahy. She later refined her skills under Pavel Gililov at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg, completing a Postgraduate Course that enriched her technical and interpretative abilities. Her dedication to her craft is further reflected in her acclaimed recording of Soler's 12 Keyboard Sonatas No. 75-86 with Naxos, which highlights her mature musical sensibility and technical virtuosity.

Known for her captivating performances that combine technical precision with deep emotional resonance, Soo-Jung Ann continues to engage audiences worldwide. Her interpretations consistently push the limits of piano repertoire, offering fresh perspectives on well-established works.

Ann remains active as both a soloist and collaborator with various orchestras worldwide. Beyond her performances, Ann is deeply committed to music education, frequently offering masterclasses to nurture and inspire young musicians.





Irish Chamber Orchestra

We're the orchestra that invites you in. That saves you a seat. That wants you to feel the same heart-stirring, hair-raising, on-the-edge-of-your-seat feelings that we feel. We do so by pouring heart, soul, and no small measure of skill into our art. By playing old, by playing new, by playing everything with guts and fire.

You'll find us each season in Limerick and Dublin, touring regularly in the far corners of Ireland, as well as at some of the most prestigious halls in the world. From playing the classics, to performing with theatres, operas, DJs, or dance companies, we forge new pathways to bring you unforgettable experiences, whoever you are, wherever you are.

Led by the incredible Katherine Hunka, we aren't afraid to push the boundaries of classical music.

We have performed trailblazing new commissions from some of Ireland's finest composers and explored wonderful new ways of seeing and understanding the classics. Principal Conductor and Artistic Partner Thomas Zehetmair (2022-2025) has completed his final chapter with us, as we proudly announce the appointment of Henning Kraggerud (2025-2028), who will leave his brilliant mark on our repertoire.

Most importantly, we believe that music is for everyone. That's why we're also a charity, with a series of successful community engagement programmes. After 17 years, our ICO Schools initiative continues to provide valuable free music lessons to children and young people in Limerick City while our ICO Youth provides an orchestral platform for teenagers. ICO Teach, our online tutorial website gives tutors and children access to free, outstanding music education, worldwide. We are also deeply immersed in the MA Classical Strings Programme at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick, where we are proud to be orchestra-in-residence.

It's our rich creative musical heritage that inspires us. It's our unstoppable enthusiasm for what we do, and the people we do it with. As Ireland's national chamber orchestra, we are lucky to call the University of Limerick home and are funded by The Arts Council of Ireland/An Chomhairle Ealaíon.

Whether it's your first time or your hundredth time, we are the Irish Chamber Orchestra, and you are in for a treat.

VOCES8

The 2023 Grammy-nominated British vocal ensemble VOCES8 is proud to inspire people through music and share the joy of singing. Touring globally, the group performs an extensive repertoire both in its a cappella concerts and in collaborations with leading musicians, orchestras and conductors. Versatility and a celebration of diverse musical expression are central to the ensemble's performance and education ethos which is shared both online and in person. They are the world's top-streaming classical vocal group. VOCES8 is passionate about music education and is the flagship ensemble of the VOCES8 Foundation which actively promotes 'Music Education For All', reaching up to 40,000 people annually.

VOCES8 has performed at many notable venues since its inception in 2005 including Wigmore Hall, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Berlin Philharmonie, Cité de la Musique Paris, Vienna Konzerthaus, Tokyo Opera City, NCPA Beijing, Sydney Opera House, Mariinsky Theatre Concert Hall, Victoria Concert Hall Singapore, Palacio de Bellas Artes Mexico City amongst many others. This season they perform over 100 concerts around the world, their 20th Anniversary season, including a birthday celebration concert at the Barbican, London.

The pandemic provided the impetus for 2 continuing initiatives: the VOCES8 Digital Academy, an online choral programme and the LIVE From London digital festival which has broadcast over 150 concerts with over 250,000 tickets sold.

VOCES8 is a Decca Classics artist, also releasing on the VOCES8 Records label. The recording of Christopher Tin's "The Lost Birds" was nominated for a Grammy-Award in 2023. Their new album is "Nightfall", a collection of reflective and transcendent music inspired by the night. Recent releases are "A Choral Christmas"; "Home" conducted by Eric Whitacre,



featuring his work "The Sacred Veil"; and "Seven Psalms" by Paul Simon.

VOCES8 is proud to be working with Ken Burton as Composer-in-Residence and Jim Clements as Arranger-in-Residence. They publish arrangements of its music, original compositions and educational material with the new digital VOCES8 Publishing house, as well as E.C. Schirmer with whom they curate the VOCES8 Foundation Choral Series, and with Edition Peters with whom they have published two anthologies and a series of single octavos.

www.voces8.com

www.voces8.foundation

Acknowledgements

Founder and Artistic Director

Fiachra Garvey

ballymore.

Festival Managers

Tara Viscardi & Jenny Wall

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Thank you to all our funders, supporters and donors.

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 W I C K L O W

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:

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.

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W I C K L O W

We are delighted to announce that the West Wicklow Chamber Music Festival has been awarded funding through the 2025 Strategic Project Awards from Wicklow County Council!

This support will allow us to bring even more exciting music and arts experiences to local families, schools, and the wider community.

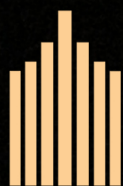
Stay up-to-date with all our education initiatives - like the upcoming 2025 Composition Competition in collaboration with the Contemporary Music Centre, launching this January - by joining our mailing list.



Here's a hint for our festival patrons... you might want to start thinking about your favourite farm friends!

ORGAN CONCERTS

St Michael's Church
Dún Laoghaire



DÚN LAOGHAIRE
SUMMER
ORGAN
CONCERTS

51st annual series

Sundays at 8:00pm

8 June – 31 August 2025

8 June

Judit Máté
Cuore Chamber Choir
(conductor: Amy Ryan)

15 June

Mahela T. Reichstatt (Germany)

22 June

Anna-Victoria Baltrusch (Germany)

29 June

Gerard Gillen

6 July

Columba McCann

13 July

George Herbert (UK)

20 July

Sunkyoung Noh (South Korea / USA)

27 July

Patrice Keegan
Ami Hewitt (soprano)
Paul Kiernan (trumpet)

3 August

Joseph Ripka (USA)

10 August

James Short

17 August

Paul Mullen

24 August

David Bremner
Elizabeth Hilliard (soprano)

31 August

David Adams



**West Wicklow
Chamber Music
Festival**



Programme
November, 2025

**Gwendolyn Masin / Sara Ferrández / Alexander Kovalev
/ Finghin Collins / Rosanne Philippens / Niamh
O'Sullivan / Aoife Ní Bhriain / Catrin Finch /
Fiachra Garvey and more!**

westwicklowfestival.com



14 - 16 NOV
WWCF