



HARD  
RAIN  
SOLOISTENSEMBLE

**HARD  
RAIN  
SOLOIST-  
ENSEMBLE**

SEASON  
23/24

ENSEMBLE IN RESIDENCE AT QUB



PRINCIPAL FUNDER





Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble  
[www.hardrainensemble.com](http://www.hardrainensemble.com)

Sonic Arts Research Centre  
Queen's University Belfast  
Claremont Park, Belfast, BT9 5HN

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# ARTS COUNCIL OF NORTHERN IRELAND FOREWORD

Every once in a while, a group of like-minded artists come together and shake things up. They become the catalyst of something special, pushing the boundaries of creativity and taking their chosen art form to new places and new heights. A decade ago, just such a moment occurred with the birth of the Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble. The only contemporary classical music repertoire ensemble in Northern Ireland, Hard Rain's championing of innovative New Music is acknowledged as pioneering on these islands. They have developed and showcased the work of local composers, commissioning and premiering around 60 new pieces, supporting the work of rising as well as established talent. They have built new audiences for the music, performing works that we would not otherwise have the opportunity to experience live, and all to the highest possible standards. In doing so, they have reconnected Northern Ireland's music making with the best of modern classical music from elsewhere in the world.

Greg Caffrey, founder and original Artistic Director of Hard Rain, who rejoins the Ensemble this season as Featured Composer, is a current recipient of a Major Individual Artist Award – the highest honour that the Arts Council can bestow on an artist, for their contribution to the arts in Northern Ireland.

The Arts Council, as principal funder through our National Lottery funds, wishes the interim Artistic Director, Aisling Agnew, and the Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble, another successful season ahead. We are proud to support such an accomplished, dynamic and ground-breaking company.

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**Ciaran Scullion**  
Head of Music and Opera  
Arts Council of Northern Ireland

# HARD RAIN SOLOIST ENSEMBLE



Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble at SARC,  
Sonic Lab, Belfast

Photography Neil Harrison

Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble is Northern Ireland's contemporary music group. Now, with over a decade of performing experience and increasing international engagements, Hard Rain remains committed to giving a voice to local composers and performing their music in the context of the leading exponents of contemporary music worldwide. It aims to programme music that otherwise cannot be heard live locally, while serving as an outlet for the talent of highly specialist

performers and acting as a meeting point for their innovation, ideas and enthusiasm. Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble's incredible line-up of musicians make the performance of contemporary music a central aspect of their creative lives. HRSE are ensemble in residence at Queen's University Belfast and are based at the Sonic Arts Research Centre QUB, a state of the art facility opened by Karlheinz Stockhausen in 2004.

# A WELCOME FROM THE INTERIM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Season 11 for Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble marks the beginning of a new decade amid a burgeoning contemporary music scene in Northern Ireland.



Aisling Agnew,  
Interim Artistic Director Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble

We pay homage to our founder and former Artistic Director Greg Caffrey who, in celebrating his 60<sup>th</sup> year, rejoins us this season as Featured Composer. We thank Greg for his tireless efforts in getting Hard Rain off the ground, making lasting connections, creating countless concerts and establishing the solid foundations of our ensemble. Most of all, we thank him for his unending faith in us as musicians and his brave programming choices. We will make sure to carry on with his *'nothing can go wrong'* attitude.

Behind the scenes Hard Rain operates as a close-knit chamber ensemble that shares a spirit for discovery and exploration. We have grown and developed, we have inspired each other, and we have learned much from listening to each other carefully over 10 years. We've been privileged to work closely with some wonderful collaborators and composers, and we look forward to much more of that.

Hard Rain will take courage for the next chapter in thinking how far we have come, and how we have helped set the groundwork for a network of new music in Belfast. We have formed a firm base here, and we are privileged to have such a wonderful home in QUB. As always, we are excited by our involvement within the University. But in addition, we have established and nurtured the new music scene and become an important part of the musical fabric of this island. In many ways we are proud to be the go-to ensemble for many of Ireland's greatest composers.

**“The establishment of HRSE in Belfast over the last decade has been the single development of greatest significance for new music in Ireland over that period.”**

Piers Hellawell

And so the adventures continue...

We start our Season with a concert of connections. We open with a work by our featured composer, which was written during our first season, and close with a newly composed work by **Raymond Deane**, dedicated to **Greg Caffrey**. In between, we feature the music of friends: **Ryan Molloy**, who has both composed and performed with Hard Rain, **Anita Mawhinney** with her third work for the group and **Sungji Hong** who we were delighted to host last year. We also showcase two upcoming composers: **Sarah Colgan**'s piece was selected as a highlight from our QUB industry professional workshops last year and **Samuel Kane**, a previous PRSf composer and now one of our Featured Young Artists of 23/24.

The natural world beckons for our second concert. The planet and world around us can be a source of inspiration for many musicians and composers and with ever-growing environmental concerns coming to light in increasingly disturbing ways, it feels very timely to highlight and reflect on this. This

is a truly international programme featuring **Joan Tower**, **Judith Weir**, **Tansy Davies** and **Toru Takemitsu** to name but a few. We have a live premiere performance from our Featured Composer which also includes our Young Artist harpist **Rosie Murphy** and we look forward to welcoming **Jonathan Mann** as guest conductor for the first time.

In the new year we have our annual **Ink Still Wet** concert which showcases brand new works and no less than eight world premieres, including those commissioned through our **PRSf Talent Development Partnership** from early career composers **Rebecca Doherty**, **Orly Watson** and **Sarah Colgan**. We are also very excited for the return of the **Peter Rosser Award**, here in its sixth edition, which will showcase three finalists and offer the audience a chance to vote for their favourite work. Bookending the concert are two world premieres from highly experienced local composers, **Matthew Whiteside** and **Stephen Gardner**, and these will feature guest conductor **Paul McCusker** at the helm.

We promote the talents of this year's **Featured Young Artists**, violinist **Samuel Kane** and harpist **Rosie Murphy**, in a QUB Lunchtime Recital. Sam and Rosie, will demonstrate their incredible talents in this beautifully chosen programme, which places their own compositions alongside local composer **Greg Caffrey** and international counterparts **Nenad Firšt**, **Naji Hakim** and **Arvo Pärt**. ▶

We celebrate **International Women's Day** with works which exclusively include electronics. Another international selection, with New York residents **Anna Clyne** and **Missy Mazzoli**, this concert also features composers well known to the ensemble such as **Elaine Agnew** and **Deirdre Gribben**, and we pay particular homage to **Kaija Saariaho** who sadly passed away in 2023. From conflict and protest pieces to ambient late night atmosphere, this concert is a true exploration of live music with electronics.

We look forward to working with the Ulster Youth Orchestra once more and featuring two American contemporary greats: **George Lewis** and **Terry Riley**. We welcome **Paul Hoskins**, Director of Music at the Purcell School, to lead and conduct this workshop and concert, such a great opportunity for some of our most talented young musicians.

A highlight of our season will be the Gallery Music events for which we make a welcome return to the beautiful **Hugh Lane Gallery** in Dublin. We also take up residency for a day in the amazing **Ulster Museum**. The concert includes music inspired by the visual arts including **Greg Caffrey's 3 movements on the work of William Scott** which hangs in the museum. We carry on the American connection with music by **John Luther Adams**, **Perry Goldstein** and **Jane O'Leary**. There is a world premiere by local rising star **Amelia Clarkson** and an incredibly atmospheric piece by **Anna Thorvaldsdottir** to finish, perfect for the amazing acoustics of the gallery. We also mark this special collaboration with the Ulster Museum in featuring short solos from various spaces within the museum every hour for the whole day.

As always, the *thank yous* are so very important, the most important of which goes to our principal funder the **Arts Council Northern Ireland** for supporting the many strands of our work. As mentioned, we are grateful to **Queen's University School of Arts, English and Languages** for adopting us as their resident ensemble, allowing us to situate ourselves in their vibrant environment with access to wonderful facilities, and above all world class venues. Thanks also to **PRS Foundation**, whose funding supports our early career initiatives, and we see that as something which helps futureproof the creative environment going forward. Most of all we thank both our long-standing and new friends of the ensemble and our amazing thrill-seeking audience who take this journey with us and never fail in their enthusiasm and support for what we do.

Needless to say, I'm looking forward with the greatest excitement to this upcoming season.

New music, new connections and in many ways, a new beginning.

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#### **Aisling Agnew**

Interim Artistic Director  
Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble

# SEASON AT A GLANCE

## A NEW BEGINNING Season 23/24 launch & opening concert

- ▲ Harty Room, QUB, Belfast
- Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023
- 7.30pm

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## UNDER THE SKY Music inspired by the world around us

- ▲ Sonic Lab, SARC, QUB, Belfast
- Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023
- 7.30pm

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## INK STILL WET VII Exclusive world premieres

- ▲ Sonic Lab, SARC, QUB, Belfast
- Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024
- 7.30pm

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## HRSE FEATURED YOUNG ARTISTS Samuel Kane & Rosie Murphy

- ▲ Harty Room, QUB, Belfast
- Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024
- 1.10pm

## PLUGGED IN International Women's Day Concert

- ▲ Sonic Lab, SARC, QUB, Belfast
- Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024
- 7.30pm

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## UYO WORKSHOP & CONCERT HRSE & UYO join forces In C

- ▲ Harty Room, QUB, Belfast
- Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2024
- Workshop 3-6pm  
Concert 7.30pm

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## GALLERY MUSIC DAY I Inspired by visual arts & elements

- ▲ Ulster Museum, Belfast
- Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2024
- Hourly pop-up performances  
and evening concert at 8pm

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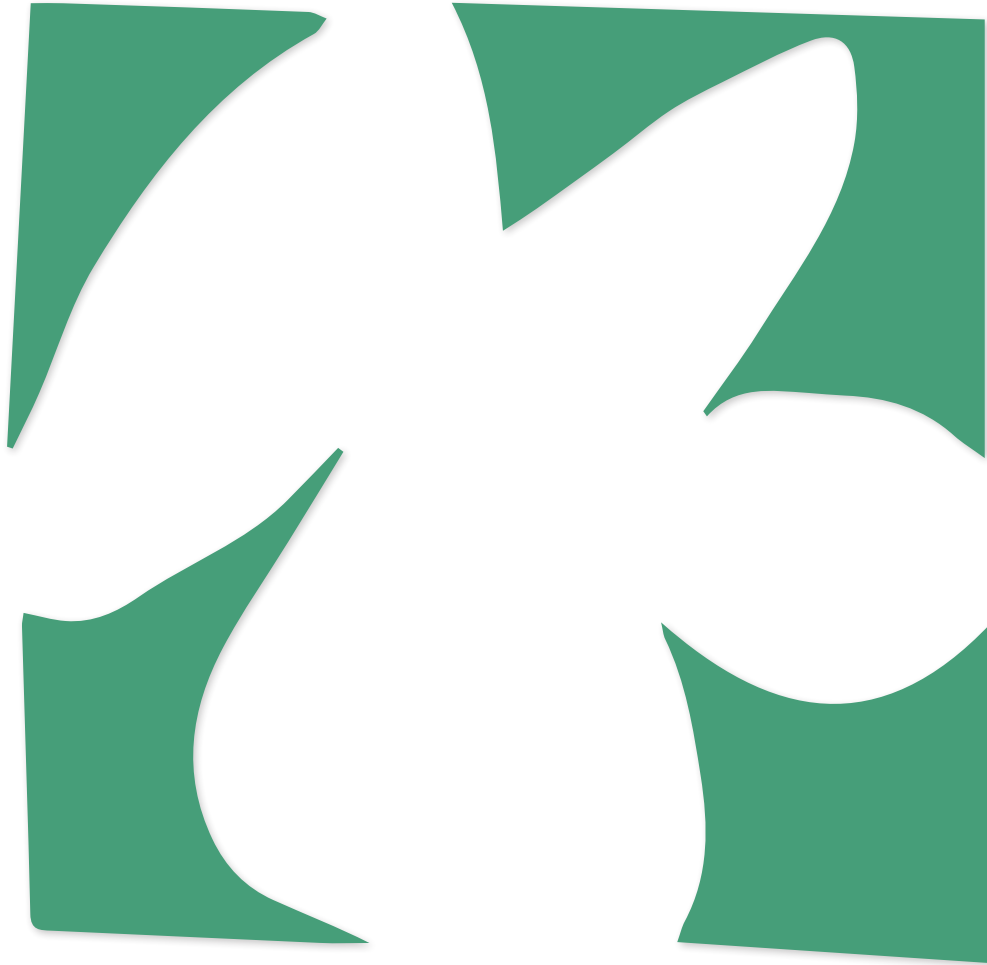
## GALLERY MUSIC DAY II Sundays at Noon

- ▲ Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin
- Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2024
- 12 noon

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More info and how to book at  
[www.hardrainensemble.com](http://www.hardrainensemble.com)

# SEASON 23/24



## A NEW BEGINNING

### Season 23/24 launch & opening concert

- ▲ Harty Room, QUB, Belfast
- Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023
- 7.30pm
- ◆ £10/5 (Free for QUB students & staff)

#### *Unrest* (2008, rev. 2013/2015/2023)

Greg Caffrey (1963)  
flute (alto fl.), bass clarinet,  
violin, violoncello, piano

#### *Eplithisan* (2023) ◆

Sungji Hong (1973)  
flute, bass clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano

#### *Amhrán Fheilimidh* (2017)

Ryan Molloy (1983)  
bass clarinet

#### *Elatha's Ascension* (2022)\*

Samuel Kane (1999)  
alto flute, violin, violoncello

#### *Demonic Dance* (2023) ◆

Sarah Colgan (2001)  
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano

#### *Macalla Mhacha* (2023) ◆ \*\*

Anita Mawhinney (1974)  
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano

#### *Skew Weft* (2023) ◆ \*\*\*

Raymond Deane (1953)  
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano

This concert celebrates our ongoing connections with local and international composers and begins as we mean to continue, with several premieres. We performed *Unrest* by **Greg Caffrey** in our first season and so it feels fitting to revisit this at the beginning of our new decade, especially as we close the concert with a new work by **Raymond Deane**, widely considered one of Ireland's most prominent composers. *Skew Weft* is a recent Arts Council of Ireland commission and is dedicated to Greg.

We showcase two upcoming composers: **Sarah Colgan** whose *Demonic Dances* was selected from our QUB residence last year, and the beautifully atmospheric *Elatha's Ascension* by **Samuel Kane**. Sam was a PRSf composer of 22/23 and now as one of our Featured Young Artists of 23/24, we're delighted to welcome Sam to join us on stage for this performance.

We also build upon our existing connections with works by composers who are becoming well known to Hard Rain audiences: **Sungji Hong** who joined us last season from USA and her most recent piece *Eplithisan*, **Anita Mawhinney** with a world premiere of *Macalla Mhacha*, her third work for Hard Rain, and **Ryan Molloy** who composed a solo bass clarinet piece, *Amhrán Fheilimidh*, for our own Sarah Watts.

\* Commissioned by PRSf Talent Development Programme 2022/23

\*\* Commissioned with funds by ACNI

\*\*\* Commissioned by Arts Council of Ireland

#### KEY

▲ Venue / ■ Date / ● Time / ◆ Tickets / ● Irish Premiere / ◆ European Premiere / ◆ World Premiere

# UNDER THE SKY

Music inspired by the world around us

- ▲ Sonic Lab, SARC, QUB, Belfast
- Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023
- 7.30pm
- £10/5 (Free for QUB students & staff)

**Amazon (1977)**  
Joan Tower (1938)  
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano

**Undertow (1999, rev. 2018) ●**  
Tansy Davies (1973)  
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano

**Callan (2021)**  
Áine Mallon (1994)  
violoncello, piano

**Toward the Sea – The Night (1981)**  
Toru Takemitsu (1930 – 1996)  
flute, harp

**Blue–green hill (2013)**  
Judith Weir (1954)  
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano

**Seul sous la grande indifférence du ciel (2020)** Live concert premiere\*  
Greg Caffrey (1963)  
flute, clarinet, violin 1 & 2, viola, violoncello, harp

The natural world is the source of inspiration behind this concert. Highlighting our environment with music inspired by our planet, the places and nature within, this is a worldwide programme that showcases and connects some of the finest international contemporary composers alongside well-known local composers.

There are some folk-inspired themes; there is a suggestion of Scottish fiddle tunes in **Judith Weir's** *Blue–green hill*, and an expression of longing in **Áine Mallon's** *Callan*, inspired by the river Callan in Co. Armagh. And water continues to flow through this programme, from the Brazilian river of **Joan Tower's** *Amazon* to the sea of **Toru Takemitsu's** striking imagery. It is also present in *Undertow* by **Tansy Davies**:

*“Exploring the elemental mechanisms of the natural world, exploring the psychological devastation of global events, exploring the most intimate aspects of body and heart and head. Tansy’s music lets us feel what it is to be multiform and nimble, intense and enlivened, confrontational and beautiful.”* Kate Molleson

We close the concert with the first live concert performance of **Greg Caffrey's** *Seul sous la grande indifférence du ciel*. Composed in 2020 for the Fews Ensemble while reflecting upon the pandemic, the piece is in two movements; the first is dedicated to Maurice Ravel and the second to Albert Camus:

*“Thus each of us had to be content to live only for the day, alone under the vast indifference of the sky”*

\* Commissioned with funds by the ACNI Artist Emergency Fund

# INK STILL WET VII

Exclusive world premieres

- ▲ Sonic Lab, SARC, QUB, Belfast
- Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024
- 7.30pm
- £10/5 (Free for QUB students & staff)

**Into Light, Being (2023) ● \***  
Matthew Whiteside (1988)  
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano

**Right Thoughts, Not Always Right Order (2023) ● \*\***  
Rebecca Doherty (1999)  
violin, violoncello, piano

**The Coming of Pan (2023) ● \*\***  
Orly Watson (1992)  
flute (picc.), piano

**Mephistophelian (2023) ● \*\***  
Sarah Colgan (2001)  
clarinet, violin, piano

**Peter Rosser Award Finalists**  
(Shortlist announced 1<sup>st</sup> December)

**The Tyranny of Time (2023) ● \*\*\***  
Stephen Gardner (1958)  
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano

With no fewer than eight world premieres, Ink Still Wet remains our most exciting vision of new music. As talent development partners with PRSf, Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble are able to fund three early stage career NI composers to write for the ensemble and they also benefit from workshops with the ensemble, discussions with our conductor, and mentorship from more senior composers.

We also greatly welcome the return of the **Peter Rosser prize**, this year in its sixth edition. With previous prize-winners now forging successful careers, this competition is a great opportunity to witness first-hand the future of Irish contemporary music.

Bookending our programme are two commissions from Northern Irish composers: a first Hard Rain performance for **Matthew Whiteside** and a return to the uniquely visceral music of **Stephen Gardner** with a new Arts Council Ireland commission. Not to be missed.

\* Commissioned with funds by the Hope Scott Trust  
\*\* Commissioned by PRSf Talent Development Programme 2023/24  
\*\*\* Commissioned by Arts Council of Ireland

# HRSE FEATURED YOUNG ARTISTS

## Samuel Kane & Rosie Murphy

- ▲ Harty Room, QUB, Belfast
- Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024
- 1.10pm
- ◆ Free

***Dawn of Spring* (2023)** ●  
Samuel Kane (1999)  
solo violin

***Jeu* (1987)**  
Naji Hakim (1955)  
solo harp

***Something Wild* (1988)**  
Nenad Firšt (1964)  
solo violin

***New Work* (2023)**  
Rosie Murphy (2000)  
harp & electronics

***Vigour Rigour Jigger* (2008)**  
Greg Caffrey (1963)  
solo violin

***Fratres* (1977)**  
Arvo Pärt (1935)  
violin, harp

Hard Rain are proud to present this recital in partnership with QUB School of Arts, English and Languages. Here our two brilliant Young Artists (also both composers in their own right) perform as soloists as well as forming a chamber duo. This year we feature talented harpist Rosie Murphy who is currently studying classical music and sonology in The Hague Royal Conservatory. Alongside her is the equally accomplished violinist Samuel Kane who is now in his final year of a Masters degree at the Royal Northern College of Music.

This programme features a range of virtuosic solos and ends with a duo from one of the worlds best known contemporary composers. It features Irish music, including new compositions from our two Young Artists, alongside international works from Lebanon, Slovenia and Estonia. Join us as Sam and Rosie showcase not only their talents as performers but also their enthusiasm for discovery and increasing expertise for new music.

# PLUGGED IN

## International Women's Day Concert

- ▲ Sonic Lab, SARC, QUB, Belfast
- Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024
- 7.30pm
- ◆ £10/5 (Free for QUB students & staff)

***not just an ideology* (2021)** ●  
Oktawia Pączkowska (1996)  
flute, clarinet (bass cl), violin,  
violoncello, piano & tape

***A Thousand Tongues***  
Missy Mazzoli  
violin, cello, piano & tape

***NoaNoa* (1992)**  
Saariaho (1952 – 2023)  
flute & electronics

***The Broken Piece of the Moon* (1998)**  
Deirdre Gribben (1967)  
piano, tape & live electronics

***I want to tell you* (2013)\***  
Elaine Agnew (1967)  
violin, cello & tape

***Downward in a freezing earth* (2015)**  
Linda Buckley (1979)  
bass clarinet, violin, cello & tape

***1987* (2008)**  
Anna Clyne (1980)  
bass flute, bass clarinet, violin, cello & tape

We celebrate International Women's Day this year with a stunning programme of music including electronics. We feature the legendary Finnish composer **Kaija Saariaho**, one of the greats of contemporary music who sadly passed away earlier this year. Her masterpiece for flute *NoaNoa* refers to woodcuts made by Paul Gauguin after his return to Paris from Tahiti.

As always, younger composers are included and we give the Irish premiere of Polish composer **Oktawia Pączkowska's** *not an ideology*. This is a protest piece which, in using quoted statements from the far right government, seeks to highlight and question the inequality and underlying homophobia present in modern day society.

We feature three of our finest Irish composers: **Linda Buckley** who depicts the snowy silences of Alaska, **Deirdre Gribben's** piano piece featuring the dawn prayer ritual of an exiled Tibetan monk, and **Elaine Agnew's** work for the Aftermath project with an accompanying voice track of victims, survivors and displaced families affected by conflict.

We also feature two New York based composers here: **Anna Clyne**, whose tape part "*comprises a melody and winding sounds from a music box that my father gave my mother in their early days of courting, and the sounds of the carousel and pebbles at Brighton Beach in the South of England—a place of fond memories*" and **Missy Mazzoli**, whose piece is a short but intense response to the following text by Stephen Crane:

*Yes, I have a thousand tongues,  
And nine and ninety-nine lie.  
Though I strive to use the one,  
It will make no melody at my will,  
But is dead in my mouth.*

\* Commissioned by The Aftermath Project, with funding provided by the European Union's PEACE III Programme



# UYO WORKSHOP & CONCERT

## HRSE & UYO join forces In C

- ▲ Harty Room, QUB, Belfast
- Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2024
- Workshop 3–6pm
- Free Concert 7.30pm

*Arcades* (2018)  
George Lewis (1952)  
flexible instrumentation

*In C* (1964)  
Terry Riley (1935)  
flexible instrumentation

Join us for our annual joint concert with the talented musicians of the Ulster Youth Orchestra. This year we have guest conductor Paul Hoskins, visiting from the Purcell School of Music and we mark the occasion by featuring music by two giants of American contemporary music, George Lewis and Terry Riley. Our afternoon workshop (not open to the public) is an exciting chance for the young musicians of UYO to explore contemporary music, investigate new sounds and techniques within a larger ensemble setting.

**George Lewis** piece *Arcades* is essentially a group improvisation and “as the musicians navigate through the written passages that make up the sonic arcades, the overall effect should be that of several different kinds of musical behaviours heard in juxtaposition, but with a certain common direction. The players feel their way through the piece from beginning to end, establishing and re-establishing consensus—an emergent sonic sociality, or perhaps a protean assemblage.” (CoMA).

“**Terry Riley’s** piece *In C* is one of the seminal works of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Premiered in 1964, it was the work that introduced the musical style now known as Minimalism to a mainstream audience. Full of repeating cells, insistent rhythms, and high energy, *In C* is a work that can also be endlessly colourful... *In C* had a deep and lasting impact on contemporary classical composers like Steve Reich and John Adams; but it also affected the rock world, influencing artists like John Cale and Brian Eno.” (John Schaefer)

Come and see the future of new music in safe hands.

# GALLERY MUSIC DAY I

## Pop up performances

- ▲ Ulster Museum, Belfast
- Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2024
- 10am – 5pm
- Free

Join the soloists of the Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble as they count down the hours to their evening Gallery Music performance. Starting at 10am and at every hour until the closing time at 5pm, museum visitors will be delighted as instrumentalists from Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble pop up in a different space each time!

The performances are short and visitors can wander between different spaces during the performance, hearing the music from as many angles as possible.

We will feature a range of new music throughout the day and include solos by both Irish and international composers such as Alvin Singleton, Jane O’Leary, Eleanor Alberga, Greg Caffrey, Adolphus Hailstork and Ryan Molloy.

# GALLERY MUSIC DAY I

## Inspired by visual arts & elements

- ▲ **Ulster Museum, Belfast**
- **Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2024**
- **8pm**
- ◆ **£10/5** (Free for QUB students & staff)

### **3 movements on the work of William Scott (2017)**

Greg Caffrey (1963)

flute (alto fl.), clarinet (bass cl.), violin,  
violoncello, piano, vibraphone

### **The wind cries over the state of her house (2022)** ●

Amelia Clarkson (1995)

flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano,  
percussion

### **Twittering Machine (1998)**

Perry Goldstein (1952)

flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano,  
percussion

### **Beneath the Dark Blue Waves (2019)\***

Jane O'Leary (1946)

flute, bass clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano

### **The Light Within (2007)** ●

John Luther Adams (1953)

alto flute, bass clarinet, violin, violoncello,  
piano, vibraphone (crotales) & electronics

### **In the Light of Air – Serenity (2014)** ●

Anna Thorvaldsdottir (1977)

viola, violoncello, piano, harp,  
percussion & electronics

\* Commissioned by HRSE with funds from the  
ACNI Small Grants Programme

Largely inspired by the visual arts, this programme highlights music which encourages us to consider and imagine various visual elements. William Scott, whose works hang in the Ulster Museum, is the focus for our Featured Composer **Greg Caffrey** and we also premiere a recent work by **Amelia Clarkson**, an upcoming local composer formerly supported by our PRSf scheme.

There is an American connection between **Perry Goldstein**, whose piece *Twittering Machine* was inspired by Paul Klee's painting, **Jane O'Leary**, with her atmospheric vision of Gwen O'Dowd's abstract sea paintings and **John Luther Adams** *The Light Within*. He describes the inspiration behind the piece "On a crisp autumn day sitting inside Meeting – Turrell's skyspace at PSI in Queens, New York – I experienced my own epiphany of light. From mid-afternoon through sunset into night, I was transfixed by the magical interplay of light and colour, above and within. Over the hours the sky descended through every nameless shade of blue, to heaviest black. The light within the space rose from softest white, through ineffable yellow to deepest orange. Just after sunset there came a moment when outside and inside met in perfect equipoise. The midnight blue of the sky and the burnished peach of the room came together, fusing into one vibrant yet intangible plane...light becoming colour, becoming substance."

Continues on page 17 ►

# GALLERY MUSIC DAY II

## Sundays at Noon

- ▲ **Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin**
- **Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2024**
- **12 noon**
- ◆ **Free**

### **3 movements on the work of William Scott (2017)**

Greg Caffrey (1963)

flute (alto fl.), clarinet (bass cl.), violin,  
violoncello, piano, vibraphone

### **Beneath the Dark Blue Waves (2019)\***

Jane O'Leary (1946)

flute, bass clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano

### **The Light Within (2007)**

John Luther Adams (1953)

alto flute, bass clarinet, violin, violoncello,  
piano, vibraphone (crotales) & electronics

### **In the Light of Air – Serenity (2014)**

Anna Thorvaldsdottir (1977)

viola, violoncello, piano, harp,  
percussion & electronics

\* Commissioned by HRSE with funds from the  
ACNI Small Grants Programme

The spacious and thoughtful atmosphere of this work carries through to the end of the concert with a work by Icelandic composer **Anna Thorvaldsdottir**, whose "musical material is constructed with a focus on subtle nuances and poetic textures...". Her score is imbued with beauty and fragility and performance directions such as "Soloistic with calm & ease and subtle sense of brokenness" complete our transcendence into ambient artistry.

# THE CORE ENSEMBLE



Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble at SARC, Sonic Lab, Belfast  
From left to right: David McCann, Daniel Browell, Joanne Quigley McParland, Sinead Hayes, Aisling Agnew, Sarah Watts

# AISLING AGNEW

## Flute / Interim Artistic Director

Aisling Agnew is a flautist from Belfast. She has performed internationally including prominent festivals such as Musicahora in Chile, National Flute Association's 40<sup>th</sup> Convention at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, Jeonju International Sori Festival in Korea, Sarajevo Winter Festival and also closer to home at New Music Dublin, the British Flute Convention in Manchester, Celtic Connections in Glasgow, and the Belfast International Festival. Aisling is host of the successful podcast The Flute NI and she has made many successful recordings, many of which have been broadcast on BBC Radio, RTE Lyric FM and Classic FM. Aisling is a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and is the recipient of many awards including the Countess of Munster, Arts Council of NI, Creative Scotland and Belfast Classical Music Bursaries.



Aisling Agnew,  
Flute / Interim Artistic Director

Aisling's involvement in Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble reflects her continued passion for new music and working with composers. She has premiered and recorded many contemporary works for flute and highlights include performing for Sir Peter Maxwell Davies 80<sup>th</sup> birthday concert and giving the first performance in Scotland of Penderecki's Flute Concerto. Aisling regularly performs with various orchestras in the UK and Ireland, she is a founding member of the Irish Memory Orchestra and she also

performs in the Clyde Duo with Welsh Harpist Sharron Griffiths. Aisling is also involved in music education, in addition to teaching flute at Queen's University, she works with the Ulster Orchestra's Crescendo Project. Having previously acted as concert manager, Aisling is delighted to extend her role as HRSE's Interim Artistic Director for Season 11.

[www.aislingagnew.com](http://www.aislingagnew.com)

# SINEAD HAYES

## Conductor / Interim Concerts Manager

Irish conductor Sinead Hayes is a Britten Pears Artist for 2023/24. A graduate of the masters conducting programme of the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, she is emerging as a leading interpreter of contemporary music and opera in Ireland. The 2023–24 season is Sinead's tenth season as conductor of the Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble in Belfast, with whom she has premiered numerous works by established Irish and international composers. She has conducted all the major professional orchestras in Ireland including the Ulster Orchestra, RTE Concert Orchestra and Irish Chamber Orchestra, as well as conducting productions for Northern Ireland Opera, Irish National Opera and Opera Collective Ireland.



Sinead Hayes,  
Conductor / Interim Concerts Manager

Recent projects include conducting the world premiere of Ian Wilson's *Passerine Night* with the Fews Ensemble, the broadcast of Elaine Agnew's opera *Paper Boat* for RTE Lyric FM, concerts with Wexford Sinfonia, Limerick Philharmonic and the Luminosa String Orchestra as well as the creation of an audio piece documenting the work of Anthony Braxton at the Darmstadt Summer Course 2023. This season she returns to Wexford Sinfonia and Limerick Philharmonic, as well as making her Ulster Hall debut conducting the Irish Doctor's Orchestra. She will work for a third season as conductor of the Royal Irish Academy Symphony Orchestra, and looks forward to sharing new approaches on creative music making and conducted improvisation, inspired by her experiences at Darmstadt 2023.

She is founder and artistic director of the Ivernia Ensemble, a new flexible chamber group dedicated to bringing high quality performances and immersive musical projects to areas currently underserved by the performing arts. Sinead is happy to join the HRSE management team as interim concerts manager & artistic advisor for this season.

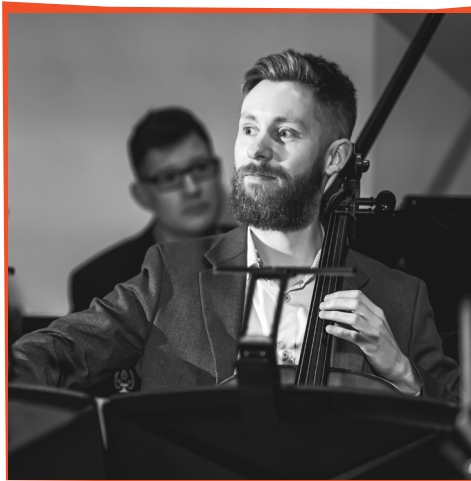
[www.sineadhayes.net](http://www.sineadhayes.net)

# DAVID McCANN

## Cello

David McCann has worked with many of the U.K. and Ireland's leading orchestras, including the Hallé Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, the Ulster Orchestra, the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, Ireland's National Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestra of Opera North and Northern Ireland Opera. He also enjoys playing chamber music; in addition to his role as HRSE's cellist he performs regularly with Newry Chamber Music's Fews Ensemble, and in 2017 he performed George Crumb's *Vox Balaenae* in the closing concert of the Salisbury International Arts Festival.

A passionate interpreter of new music, David has given premiere performances of dozens of new pieces for his instrument. He is also active as a composer; in 2017 he was commissioned by HRSE to compose *Three Caprices* for solo cello. His *Six Pieces* for solo flute and *Suite* for solo cello received first performances in 2019, and his *Reflexion* for solo cello was premiered in 2022. David graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music in 2010 and completed the MMus course with distinction in 2012. He teaches privately at his home in Belfast.



David McCann,  
Cello

# DANIEL BROWELL

## Piano

Daniel Browell enjoys a busy and varied performing career, having given recitals in the UK, Europe, China and North America. His debut recital at London's Purcell Room in the Southbank Centre and concerto performance at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall received critical acclaim in the national press. Daniel particularly enjoys collaborative projects with instrumentalists and singers in addition to his work with the Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble; he has performed with YCAT winner Kathryn Rudge at the Wigmore Hall and on many occasions since, and he has worked with the BBC Philharmonic on numerous occasions, including performing in the orchestra's chamber music series in Salford. Other recent engagements have included projects with the Ulster Orchestra and Birmingham Contemporary Music Group.

After studying for his undergraduate degree at the University of Birmingham, Daniel went on to study in Paris, London (Royal Academy of Music) and Chicago. Whilst then going on to become a Junior Fellow at the Royal Northern College of Music, he won numerous prizes and awards. Daniel is in great demand as a teacher; he has given masterclasses and has taught in China, Europe, the Middle East and America, and is highly regarded as an adjudicator. He was appointed Associate Head of Keyboard at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire in 2014 and is currently a member of the jury and organising committee of the Dudley International Piano Competition.



Daniel Browell,  
Piano

# SARAH WATTS

## Clarinet

Sarah Watts studied clarinet at the Royal Academy of Music, and then solo bass clarinet at the Rotterdam Conservatorium. Sarah was awarded the Exxon prize for the best classical music student in Rotterdam and made an Honorary Associate of the Royal Academy of Music in 2016. Sarah has achieved an international reputation for her solo bass clarinet playing and has attracted composers such as Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Piers Hellawell and George Nicholson to write music for her. She has released numerous solo and chamber CDs playing on clarinet, basset horn, bass and contrabass clarinet.

Sarah is Director of Music Performance at the University of Sheffield and has given masterclasses and workshops in many leading UK conservatoires and universities. She also runs an international solo bass clarinet course on the Isle of Raasay in Scotland and other courses for amateur musicians. Sarah performs extensively with SCAW (bass clarinet and piano duo) and rarescale (low flutes and clarinets). She has completed a PHD exploring bass clarinet multiphonics and published a book on the subject. Sarah is an Henri Selmer Paris artist, Vandoren Artist, and a Silverstein pro artist.

[www.sarahkwatts.co.uk](http://www.sarahkwatts.co.uk)



Sarah Watts,  
Clarinet

# JOANNE QUIGLEY McPARLAND

## Violin

Joanne Quigley McParland is in demand as an orchestral principal and leader having guest led the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Ulster Orchestra, the NSO and The RTE Concert Orchestra. She is the former co-leader of the RTE Concert Orchestra and former member of The Royal Northern Sinfonia. She freelanced regularly as principal player with the English Chamber Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, The Philharmonia and John Eliot Gardiner's Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique. Joanne also performs with Sinfonia of London having been involved in The John Wilson Orchestra from 2009-2019.

Away from the orchestra Joanne has led the Crash Ensemble on several occasions including performances at Carnegie Hall. She is co founder and Artistic Director of Newry Chamber Music and their flagship group The Fews Ensemble with whom she has performed throughout Ireland. Joanne is on the faculty of The Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin. She was a tutor for UYO for 10 years and has also coached for NYO Ireland and NYO Iraq. She plays on a violin by Samuel Zygmuntowitz and with a bow by Noel Burke.



Joanne Quigley McParland,  
Violin

# GUEST CONDUCTORS

In a new collaboration, this season sees the Hard Rain musicians joined by visiting conductors.



## PAUL HOSKINS

Paul Hoskins is Director of Music at the Purcell School, where he manages the artistic programme and a department of over 60 specialist music teachers, educating the next generation of young musicians.

Until 2018, he was Music Director of world renowned dance company Rambert, where in 2009 he devised the innovative and hugely successful Rambert Music Fellowship, to encourage young composers to write for dance. Other significant Rambert projects included *Life is a Dream*, set to symphonic works by Lutoslawski, at the 2018 Bergen International Festival; a choreographed production of Haydn's *Creation* at Sadler's Wells with the BBC Singers; Mahler and Dance at the Edinburgh International Festival, with Jane Irwin and Gerard Finley; and CDs of contemporary music for NMC Records. Paul has been responsible for dozens of acclaimed commissions and world premieres.

As guest conductor, Paul has worked with many of the world's major ballet companies, and in concerts with symphony orchestras in the UK, Europe and America. He has conducted Don Giovanni with Roderick Williams, *The Magic Flute*, the world premiere of Stephen McNeff's *Clockwork* at the Royal Opera House, and less well known classical opera at the Buxton Festival. He has assisted at Glyndebourne and English National Opera, working closely with Mark Wigglesworth. Paul Hoskins studied French, German and Music at Cambridge University, and conducting at the Royal College of Music, and at summer courses in Siena and Dartington.



## JONATHAN MANN

Hailed by Bernard Haitink for the "infectious joy in his conducting and music making", British conductor Jonathan Mann is currently Music Director of UK based Ensemble Cambrica (formerly Cardiff Sinfonietta), an exciting new orchestra aimed at reaching the community in innovative ways. He has conducted broadcasts for the BBC and S4C and worked with soloists including Nicola Benedetti, Dame Evelyn Glennie, Benjamin Grosvenor, Sunwook Kim and Dennis O'Neill.

Highlights this season include his South Korean debut with the Seongnam Philharmonic Orchestra (Seoul) and world premiere performances of the ballet *White Doves* in Belfast with Six Dance Collective.

Jonathan is increasingly in demand as a teacher of conducting through his role as Artistic Director of the CIAC Conducting Academy, recently collaborating with the Ulster Orchestra, English Symphony Orchestra and NEW Sinfonia. From 2015 - 2022 he was Artistic Director of the Immanuel Orchestra in Bangkok, Thailand which is modeled on the renowned Venezuelan music program 'El Sistema'.

Jonathan Mann studied in London at the Royal Academy of Music and Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He was a prize winner at the Jeunesses Musicales International Conducting Competition in Bucharest, as well as the Sir Charles Mackerras Junior Fellow in Conducting at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. His conducting mentors are Colin Metters, George Hurst, Jac Van Steen and Bernard Haitink.



## PAUL MCCUSKER

Paul began studying music when he took up the violin and piano at the age of seven. Following school, he opted to study zoology at Queen's University Belfast (QUB), but while there he became heavily involved in the musical life of the university, conducting the Music Society Choir and then the QUB Symphony Orchestra.

Having completed his PhD in molecular parasitology in 2014, Paul worked as a postdoctoral researcher in the School of Biological Sciences at QUB before leaving in 2017 to study conducting at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with Garry Walker and Alasdair Mitchell. There, he won the Hugh S Robertson prize for orchestral conducting, participated in a workshop with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and conducted the Red Note Ensemble in concert.

In March 2018 he won the panel and orchestra prizes at the Feis Ceoil Conducting Competition with the RTE Concert Orchestra, which led to a lunchtime concert performance with the orchestra. He has subsequently conducted the Ulster Orchestra, Ulster Youth Orchestra and Esker Festival Orchestra as well as founding/directing Laganside Sinfonia, a Belfast based charity orchestra that has raised around £20,000 for local charities since its establishment. While working as a postdoctoral researcher at the Medical College of Wisconsin, USA (2018 - 2020), he established an orchestra before returning to QUB in 2020. In recent years Paul has studied with Garry Walker, David Brophy and Jac van Steen.



# FEATURED YOUNG ARTISTS

Each year we invite applicants from Ulster Youth Orchestra (including recent UYO alumni) to audition for our Young Artist scheme. Our chosen artist/s receives specialist coaching in contemporary chamber music through participation in rehearsals, workshops and professional experience in concerts.



Last year's Featured Young Artist Rohan Harron  
with HRSE pianist Daniel Browell



## **SAMUEL KANE** Violin

From County Armagh, Sam grew up with a love for classical and traditional music. He won the NI Young Musician of the Year award before moving to Manchester where he studied violin with Cecily Ward at the Royal Northern College of Music, and was awarded the RNCM Norman George violin prize. Sam led the Ulster Youth Orchestra, and has played with the Ulster Orchestra and Manchester Camerata.

As a soloist Sam performed Bruch's 1<sup>st</sup> violin concerto with the Manchester Beethoven Orchestra as well as playing recitals for Festivals such as Clandeboyne, Charles Wood, Enys, Blackwater Valley Opera, Belfast International Music Festival, and Harp Ireland alongside Rosie Murphy. Sam has worked in masterclass with violinists James Enhes, Yair Kless, Elina Vähälä, Yossi Zivoni and Bettina Mussumeli during his time at RNCM, and has also received composition lessons from Caroline Shaw. Passionate about composing and performing new music, Sam was supported by the PRS early career commission scheme to compose a piece for the Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble for their 2022/23 season.

Sam has performed at the Wigmore Hall, London and his compositions have been broadcast on BBC Radio Ulster and Classic FM, winning Classic FM's 'Big Platinum Performance' prize. He is currently a final year MMus student at the RNCM, where he is supported by the Irish Heritage Homman Potterton Bursary and a Help Musicians Postgraduate Award.



## **ROSIE MURPHY** Harp

Rosie Murphy is a harpist and composer currently studying classical music and sonology in The Hague Royal Conservatory. She has also received a diploma of higher music from The Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London. Rosie has performed recitals of her own music in Áras an Uachtaráin, No. 10 Downing Street, The Lyric Theatre Belfast, The London Irish Centre and the Sonic Arts Research Centre. She was selected as Music Network's 2022 Emerging Musician-in-Residence in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown and In 2021, she composed a work inspired by Irish mythology for 21 Artists for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This summer Rosie made her debut as a soloist, playing Handel's Harp Concerto with the Irish Youth Baroque Orchestra, which was performed in St. Annes Church and recorded in The National Concert Hall. She was principal harp with the Ulster Youth Orchestra in 2021/22 and in 2023, was principal harp in the Esker Festival Orchestra. Rosie has a keen interest in performing contemporary music and newly composed works, recently performing a work by Phillipe Hersant which was subsequently broadcast on Dutch radio. Rosie premiered new works in the composition festival in the Hague in May 2023 and is an awardee of the 2022 Music Capital Scheme. She is delighted to be a Featured Young Artist for The Hard Rain Soloist ensemble for 2023/2024!



# FEATURED COMPOSER

Our 23/24 Featured Composer needs almost no introduction. Now celebrating his 60<sup>th</sup> year, our founder and former Artistic Director Greg Caffrey has composed many works especially for Hard Rain and with its specific players in mind. We're privileged to have inherited such incredible repertoire and it's especially fitting for us to celebrate that and carry this collaboration through into the next decade.



HRSE founder and former Artistic Director Greg Caffrey  
with Flautist Aisling Agnew

Photography Neil Harrison

# GREG CAFFREY

## Composer

The Irish composer Greg Caffrey read music at Queen's University Belfast where he studied composition under Prof. Piers Hellawell and complexist composer James Clarke, completing a PhD in 2002. Numerous awards for composition include: First Prize at the Concorso Counterpoint, Italy in May 2012, finalist in the ISME- IVME 2<sup>nd</sup> International Composition Contest in Brussels in 2008, at the Taukay Edizioni Musicali International Composition Prize in 2012 and the Musica Domani International Composition Prize (USA). His recent orchestral work *A Terrible Beauty* was designated a "recommended work" in the 4<sup>th</sup> Uuno Klami International Composition Prize by a jury which included Magnus Lindberg and Erkki-Sven Tüür and *Environments II* for guitar and orchestra was a prizewinning work in the chamber orchestra music category of the International Conductors Union Composition Contest, Ukraine in 2021. His work *...for peace comes dropping slow* was selected by the international jury to represent Ireland at ISCM World Music Days in China 2021. Recently he was awarded the Major Individual Award. This award is the highest value honour bestowed by ACNI on artists. Greg is additionally the recipient of the prestigious PRSf 2022 Composers Award.



Greg Caffrey,  
Composer

Greg has received commissions from numerous performers and ensembles at home and abroad as well as from BBC Radio 3 and the Irish national broadcasting station RTE. His music has been represented at important international festivals and his works have been performed across 17 countries and are represented on 12 record labels. Greg is the founder and former Artistic Director of Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble, N. Ireland's only professional ensemble performing modern and contemporary repertoire. Greg is represented by the Contemporary Music Centre, Ireland.

[www.gregcaffrey.com](http://www.gregcaffrey.com)

# PRSF COMPOSERS

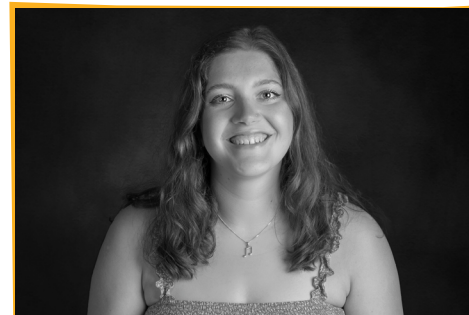
Hard Rain are proud to be a talent development partner with PRS foundation and through this scheme we are able to fund three shortlisted early-career composers and offer them a unique opportunity to develop their talents and gain professional exposure and recognition.



## ORLY WATSON

Orly Watson is a pianist, organist, and composer. He read Music at Somerville College, Oxford and studied the piano with Michael Dussek at the Royal Academy of Music in London. He is Official Accompanist at Queen's University Belfast where he is also a PhD researcher and teaching assistant. He is active as an operatic répétiteur and has worked closely with Ulster Touring Opera since its formation.

He coordinates an organ recital series and spent more than six years as Organist and Director of Music at Dromore Cathedral. His doctoral research examines the role and potentiality of reconsidered Romantic aesthetics in contemporary composition and places a particular emphasis on the influence of Irish landscape and folklore. His recently-composed cycle of Eight Pieces on Irish Hymn Tunes has been published in the UK and performed in leading venues, and has been described as "one of the finest Irish contributions to the organ repertoire. A future classic for the modern organist, as starkly original as it is fascinating."



## SARAH COLGAN

Sarah Colgan has recently completed her Bachelor of Music degree (BMus) at Queen's University Belfast. Originally from Loughinisland, County Down, Sarah went to St. Macartan's primary school, and Down High School, where she found a real love for music, participating in numerous performances.

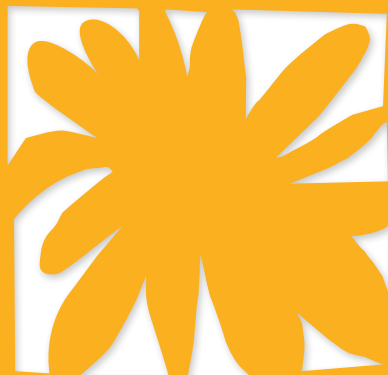
More recently, at Queen's her interest in composition has flourished under the guidance of Piers Hellawell, and Simon Mawhinney. During her time at Queen's, she has had the opportunity to compose solo pieces for bassoon, clarinet, and cello, as well as for trios (flute, clarinet, and violin) and quintet (flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano). Through workshop collaborations with Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble, she gained invaluable experience, and is currently pursuing as many opportunities as possible to develop her compositional practice.



## REBECCA DOHERTY

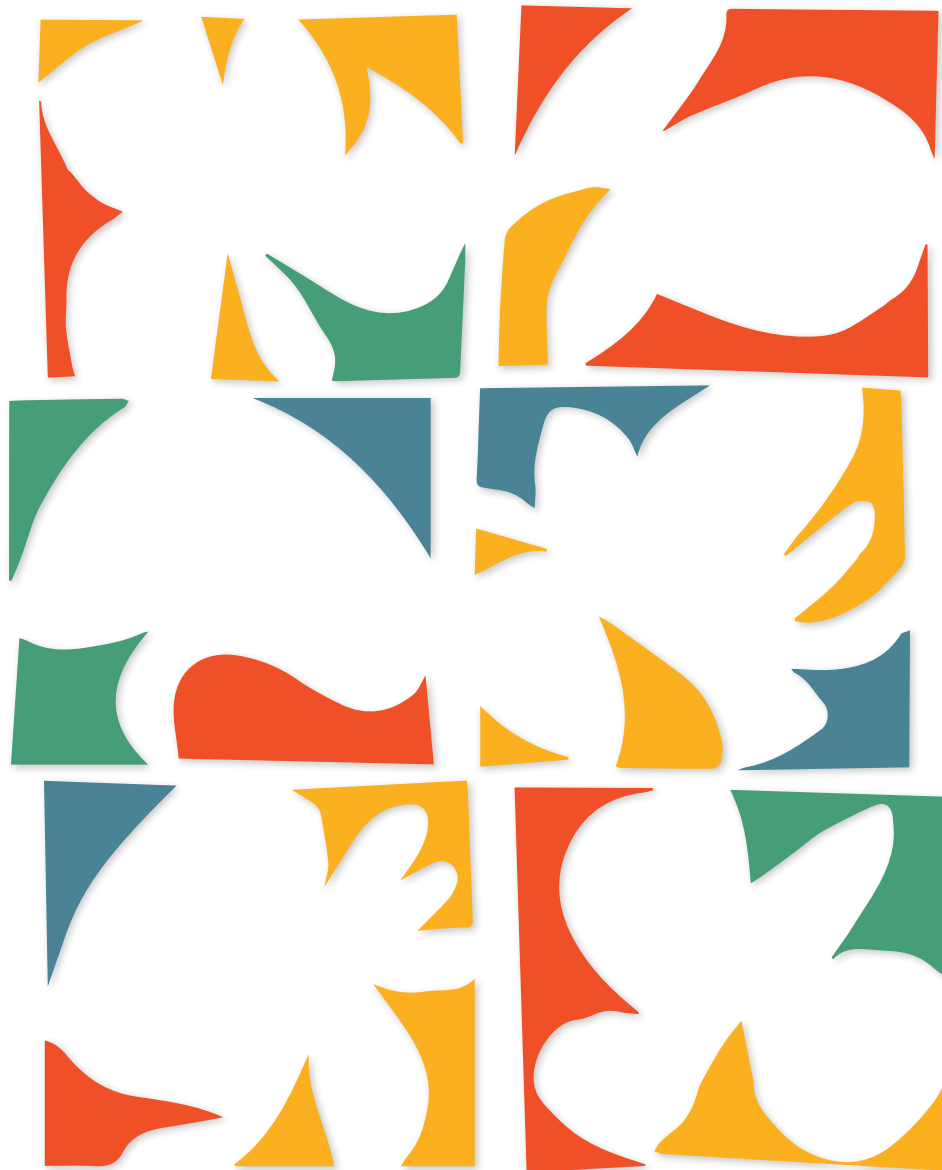
Rebecca Doherty is a media and concert composer and multi-instrumentalist originally from Derry. Films she has scored have screened at Oscar, BAFTA and BIFA-qualifying festivals, and she has scored numerous theatre productions. Her music has been performed by groups including the Bristol Ensemble, Green Opera, Inter Alios Choir, The Phoenix Music Society and the Cambridge Opera Workshop, with her music featuring in the Edinburgh Fringe and on BBC Radio Ulster. She won two composition awards at ESB Feis Ceoil 2023: the IMRO Award for Chamber Ensemble and the Walter Beckett Cup for Original Song.

Her piece *There is Hope* (2019) was written to accompany the book 'Children of the Troubles' by Joe Duffy and Freya McClements, and was premiered at the book's launch in Belfast. She holds a BA in Music from the University of Cambridge and an MA in Film Composition from the University of Bristol. Rebecca is also an avid recorder player, having won multiple competitions at the Feis Ceoil festivals in Dublin and Sligo. She has performed extensively on BBC Radio Ulster including on the Blackstaff Sessions, Classical Connections and The Arts Show.



# PEDAGOGY

## QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST



*“Queen’s University is an incredibly important place for us. Presenting our 2023/24 Season to audiences from the amazing venues it houses is a privilege. We feel equally at home among the unrivalled technical universe of the Sonic Lab as within the uniquely beautiful acoustic of the Harty Room. In fact, for a contemporary group which prides itself on exploring the full capabilities of both acoustic and electronic elements, the dual aesthetic of these two venues reflects our musical vision perfectly. We are passionate about our involvement with the music students, offering ongoing workshops and advice and doing our best to stimulate and encourage the next wave of composing, performing and technical professionals through the QUB Industry Professionals initiative. We feel very fortunate to continue our role at the University and in addition to our pedagogy, to offer them a season packed with premieres, an international outlook incorporating local musicians, composers and creatives.*

*As always, sincere thanks to all at QUB for their support and encouragement.”*

**Aisling Agnew**  
Interim Artistic Director,  
Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble

*“As we welcome Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble back to Queen’s as our Ensemble in Residence, so much has happened that it can be hard to keep up. Clearly the landmark of a 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary changes an organisation – gives it a seriousness of artistic purpose and a confidence in its strides, as a new chapter opens up. In recent months alone, since completing last year’s series in Queen’s, Hard Rain have made a memorable concert visit to the Netherlands, and have released a stunning video, in the Sonic Lab at Queen’s, of their performance of Schoenberg’s Pierrot lunaire, with star singer Sarah Richmond.*

*As hosts in Queen’s University to the residency of Hard Rain for another year, we cannot fail to note the momentous retirement of Dr Greg Caffrey, founder and Artistic Director of Hard Rain over a triumphant decade. Greg has re-drawn the instrumental landscape for composers around Ireland in this time, and it is a measure of his abundant vision that he insists on his artistic project’s being bigger than his own creative role within it; we thank him for the immense resource for new music that he has created over a decade of commissioning and performance. Yet even as I find myself looking back, Hard Rain are forging ahead – and we can now anticipate exciting new concert and teaching collaborations with Aisling Agnew, in her role as Interim Director. This 2023–24 brochure attests to Hard Rain’s artistic confidence, and we hope you will continue to join us in supporting their events this season in our Queen’s venues.”*

**Professor Piers Hellawell**  
Composer and Professor of Composition,  
Queen’s University Belfast

# WORKSHOPS, OPPORTUNITIES & MENTORSHIPS

We are delighted to be continuing our role as Industry Professionals within Queen's University again this year and are excited in our continued position as Ensemble in Residence. These designated roles allow us to engage in an exciting series of pedagogic activities as well as centering our season of events in the exceptional concert-giving facilities of the university.

Hard Rain hold regular workshops at QUB throughout the year. Specifically, we will be offering instrumental demonstrations throughout the first term, supporting students studying Audio Engineering and Production with recording sessions and performing read-throughs for composition students at various stages in their development. In addition, this year we will offer a platform to a specially selected piece from our 22/23 composition and recording workshops which has been added to our season programme. This is a great opportunity to showcase the ongoing benefit of these workshops and excellence of the QUB students.

## Working with the Ulster Youth Orchestra

In addition to our work at Queen's, Hard Rain are delighted to work with the talented players of the UYO and this year will be our sixth year of collaboration. For many of the young players this initial workshop and performance is their first experience of contemporary music and it's always such a positive one - for both ensembles. From exploring the world of extended techniques, to improvisation and often incorporating complex rhythm and harmony, this is a very important step for developing musicians.

## UYO WORKSHOP & CONCERT

- ▲ Harty Room, QUB, Belfast
- Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2024
- Workshop 3-6pm
- ◆ Free Concert 7.30pm

Entrance to the concert is free of charge, but tickets must be booked in advance. See [www.hardrainensemble.com](http://www.hardrainensemble.com) for booking detail.

This workshop is also a vital stepping stone to our Featured Young Artist scheme, where we offer the opportunity to work within the ensemble, meet composers and gain professional experiences through participation in a season concert. This scheme has had a huge impact on the development and opportunities of our former participants:

**“The young artist programme was an invaluable experience to me!”**

**“The scheme was the olive branch I needed; through the concert opportunities, especially the recitals, I got core contemporary repertoire polished and recorded, and this enabled me to make applications for international opportunities... The impact was enormous: without this early support and encouragement, I wouldn't be where I am today.”**

## PRSF Talent Development Partnership

Our PRSf talent development partnership is now in its sixth year and a growing number of successful composers have benefitted from this opportunity. Not only do these early career composers have the opportunity to work directly with the ensemble in creating, performing and recording their music, we also offer a range of networking opportunities and are this year increasing the mentorship and specialised workshops for these selected composers.

Additional benefits to QUB students, UYO players and PRSf composers are free tickets to HRSE events (*subject to availability and must be booked in advance*).

# NEW REPERTOIRE



## HRSE COMMISSIONS & BESPOKE MUSIC

Two newly composed works, for Hard Rain, have been initiated thanks to funding from **Arts Council of Ireland**. These two commissions are for the full ensemble and include a new work from Raymond Deane entitled *Skew Weft* and *The Tyranny of Time* by Stephen Gardner. We're very excited to be collaborating with both and giving the premieres of these works during our 23/24 season.

We premiere a new work *Macalla Mhacha* by Anita Mawhinney. This forms the second part of a two-part project and, composed with funding from the **Arts Council of Northern Ireland**, is based on *Macha* from Celtic mythology. Matthew Whiteside also features in our premiere performances this year with his new piece *Into Light, Being* commissioned with funds from the **Hope Scott Trust**.

As always, we present our three early career composers' works funded through our **PRSF Talent Development Partnership**. This was initiated through a competitive call for smaller works and this year they were awarded to Sarah Colgan, Rebecca Doherty and Orly Watson. We also feature two new works from our Young Artists Rosie Murphy and Samuel Kane, both receiving their premiere performances this season.

Previous HRSE commissions will receive continued exposure this year such as Jane O'Leary's, *Beneath the dark blue waves* and we're delighted to give the first *live* concert performance of *Seul sous la grande indifférence du ciel* by Greg Caffrey, composed with funding from the **Arts Council of Northern Ireland**.

**“The first-rate players of the Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble and conductor Sinead Hayes are committed to bringing new music to life with technical prowess and attention to detail.”**

**Deon Price**

Journal of the IAWM  
(International Alliance for Women in Music)

# A TERRIBLE BEAUTY DIATRIBE RECORDS

Our highly acclaimed double CD *A Terrible Beauty* was released in 2021 on Diatribe Records and formerly featured as a *Pick of the Week* by The Guardian:



*"A Terrible Beauty on the Diatribe label showcases more than a dozen pieces performed by the Belfast-based Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble. As you would expect from such a compilation, the stylistic range is wide, from the delicate tracery of John Buckley's Three Mobiles after Alexander Calder, the grand gestures of Iain McCurdy's Found Sounds Lost and the sparkling sound world of Gráinne Mulvey's Luca to the neo-expressionism of Frank Corcoran's Nine Looks at Pierrot."*

The Guardian

*"...an extraordinary demonstration of the sheer range of colour it is possible to extract from this type of ensemble... in terms of performance standard and range of music commissioned, this CD set makes one look forward with anticipation to Hard Rain's second decade promoting Irish composition."*

The Journal of Music

*"...this is a very impressive first recording from the Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble, showcasing the wealth of musical talent which currently exists across Ireland."*

Musicweb International

*"...the seven-strong ensemble, held seamlessly together by conductor Sinead Hayes, is clearly a tightly-knit unit, secure enough to allow individual members to shine and showcase when called into the spotlight. Such flexibility proves to be one of the group's defining strengths, together with the fluent reciprocity that binds them together."*

*"...a vitality and confidence in contemporary Irish music fully at ease with its multi-accented voice and wider relationship with Europe and beyond."*

*"Handsomely presented by Diatribe, the exemplary recording, in Belfast's Sonic Arts Research Centre, merits a listen on headphones for its detail and well-framed immediacy."*

Limelight Magazine

Available to buy now from Diatribe Records:  
[www.diatribe.ie](http://www.diatribe.ie)

# FRIENDS

Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble is a registered charity (NIC102506) and therefore a not-for-profit organisation. Your support enables us to continue to provide world class performances of cutting edge contemporary music to audiences in Northern Ireland and beyond. The most enjoyable way to support us is to continue to attend our concerts and to bring your friends and family along to share the experience.

Otherwise, you may want to support us by becoming an official Hard Rain Friend.

## Rain Support on Us:

This season we continue our **Friends of Hard Rain** scheme. We are asking our Friends to join us under the HRSE Friendship Umbrella by making one of a choice of monthly donations.

### ► DRIZZLE CONTRIBUTOR

£5 per month or £60 per year

This contribution could, for example, help fund travel expenses for a performer.

### ► HARD RAIN CONTRIBUTOR

£10 per month or £120 per year

This contribution could help towards the cost of music purchase/hire for a concert.

### ► DELUGE CONTRIBUTOR

£25 per month or £300 per year

This contribution could help towards fees for our wonderful performers.

Ask us for our Standing Order Mandate at [hardrainensemble@icloud.com](mailto:hardrainensemble@icloud.com)

Or make a single **Cloudburst** donation:

If you would like to make a single donation it would be gratefully received.

► Donations can be made using the "Donate Here" button on our website.  
[www.hardrainensemble.com](http://www.hardrainensemble.com)

► Or by cheque (though cheque donations incur bank charges).

► We can also furnish you with our bank details if you would like to make a transfer from your account. Contact: [info@hardrainensemble.com](mailto:info@hardrainensemble.com)

► Or you can donate when you buy a ticket for our events through Eventbrite.

**Monsoon** contribution for businesses and organisations.

Perhaps you are affiliated to an organisation or business that would like to make a bespoke corporate Monsoon donation as sponsorship. If your business or organisation is on the cutting edge, why not use a cutting edge ensemble to promote what you do? Why not meet with us to discuss ways in which we could collaborate:

To enquire contact us at [info@hardrainensemble.com](mailto:info@hardrainensemble.com)

These are difficult times, so the schemes above are aimed only at those HRSE supporters that can genuinely afford to contribute. Otherwise, having you at a concert is brilliant support on its own. We are holding our ticket prices for Season 2023/24 at £10/5 because we feel high quality contemporary music should be accessible to everyone.

If you would like to contact us about donations or anything else, you may do that through our website contacts page or email: [info@hardrainensemble.com](mailto:info@hardrainensemble.com)

# THANK YOU

No cultural programme of this magnitude could possibly exist without the financial and in-kind support of our funders and partners. We would particularly like to thank our principal funder The Arts Council of Northern Ireland for their ongoing support and are additionally grateful for financial support from PRSf Talent Development Partnership. This year we also thank Arts Council of Ireland for awarding us with two incredible commissions.

Support from Queen's University School of Arts, English and Languages, who host our residency, is invaluable, while our various collaborators this year: Ulster Museum, Hugh Lane Gallery, Ulster Youth Orchestra and The Contemporary Music Centre, Ireland, are essential to the season's success.

A final and sincere thanks goes to all the incredible supporters of this wonderful music. We feel honoured to have your constant and valued attendance at our events. From those dipping their toes into the contemporary for the first time, to the familiar faces we look forward to seeing smiling back at us, we are so very grateful for your ongoing support.

Lastly, we thank all of the composers who have trusted us with their amazing pieces. From those local and international, and at either end of the career spectrum, we love bringing your music to life.

# HOW TO BOOK

## Tickets will be available:

Through the Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble website

[www.hardrainensemble.com](http://www.hardrainensemble.com)

Or directly from our Eventbrite sites – a digital link to which will be provided in our mailouts and social media.

Or on the door.

Tickets £10/5 (Free for QUB students & staff)

General box office/event enquiries:

[info@hardrainensemble.com](mailto:info@hardrainensemble.com)

[www.hardrainensemble.com](http://www.hardrainensemble.com)

# PRINCIPAL SEASON VENUES



## Sonic Arts Research Centre

Queen's University Belfast  
Cloreen Park  
Belfast, BT9 5HN



## Harty Room

Queen's University Belfast  
Junction College Sq. & Botanic Avenue  
Belfast, BT7 1NN



# CREDITS

We acknowledge support from the following organisations:

## PRINCIPAL FUNDER



## Funding Partners



## Ensemble in Residence & Industry Professionals



## Partner organisations & collaborators



HUGH LANE  
GALLERY



Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council

**“Hard Rain Ensemble successfully conveyed rich orchestral textures and sonorities... I was struck by the striking range of colours and the virtuoso demands of the works; hats off to all the soloists for rising to the challenge so well.**

**The Hard Rain Ensemble did an excellent job breathing life into these exciting new works”**

**Robert Beattie**  
Seen and Heard International



