

# SOLAS QUARTET

*Katherine Hunka and Marja Gaynor, violins - Cian Ó Dúill, viola - Aoife Nic Athlaoich, cello*

*with Ed Creedon, viola*

**MULLINGAR** - Wednesday 9th November at 8pm - Mullingar Arts Centre

**CORK** - Thursday 10th November at 7.30pm - MTU Cork School of Music - *presented by Cork Orchestral Society*

**MANORHAMILTON** - Friday 11th November at 8pm - The Glens Centre

**CASTLEPOLLARD** - Saturday 12th November at 7pm - Tullynally Castle - *presented by Derravaragh Music Association*

**DUBLIN** - Sunday 13th November at 3pm - National Concert Hall

**CHARLEVILLE** - Saturday 19th November at 2pm - Musica Fusion.

**MITCHELSTOWN** - Saturday 19th November at 8pm - Saint George's Arts and Heritage Centre

**YOUGHAL** - Sunday 20th November at 3pm - The Mall Arts Centre - *presented by Living Youghal*

**Luigi Boccherini** [1743-1805]

**String Quartet op.15 no. 1 G177 in D major** [1772]

1. *Presto*
2. *Rondo*

**John Kinsella** [1932-2021]

**Reeling Rhapsody** [1989]

**Amy Beach** [1867-1944]

**Quartet for Strings Op.89** [1929]

**John Dowland** [1563-1626]

**'Lachrimae Antiquae'** [1604]

**'Earl of Essex, his Galiard'** [1598]

**Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy** [1809–1847]

**String Quintet No. 2 in B flat Op. 87** [1845]

1. *Allegro vivace*
2. *Andante scherzando*
3. *Adagio e lento*
4. *Allegro molto vivace*



LIVING YOUGHAL

## THE SOLAS QUARTET and ED CREEDON

### **Katherine Hunka, violin**

Born in London, Katherine has been the leader of the Irish Chamber Orchestra since 2002 and regularly directs from the leader's chair. She has toured extensively with the orchestra as soloist and director and in 2020 her solo album with the ICO of Piazzolla and Schubert received glowing reviews. As a guest leader she has visited the Manchester Camerata, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

Katherine plays a lot of chamber music and is Artistic Director of the Killaloe Music Festival which sees international artists gather in her home village each June. Her group "The Far Flung Trio" with accordionist Dermot Dunne and bassist Malachy Robinson play across Ireland and the UK, music from Bach to Klezmer. In January of next year she will tour Ireland with duo partner pianist Sophia Rahman.

She is a Lecturer at the MTU Cork School of Music and Artistic Director of ConCorda, a course for young chamber musicians.

### **Marja Gaynor, violin**

Originally from Finland, Marja Gaynor is a Cork-based violinist and viola player. She specialises in Baroque music and is a member of Irish Baroque Orchestra and Camerata Kilkenny, recording and touring with both groups regularly. She has also performed with Irish Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble Marsyas, Dunedin Consort, London Handel Players, King's Consort and Helsinki Baroque Orchestra, and plays contemporary music with Dublin Sound Lab. Marja is known as a versatile musician at home in many different styles, a fluent improviser, as well as arranger and curator. Her string arranging credits include Oscar-winning song "Falling Slowly" from the movie Once, and Marja is also a long time member of the cult band Interference. Upcoming projects include chamber music tours with the Vanbrugh and performing and arranging as a trio with uilleann piper David Power and flamenco guitarist John Walsh. She teaches violin and chamber music in MTU Cork School of Music

### **Cian Ó Dúill, viola**

Cork born viola player Cian Ó Dúill has performed with the Vanbrugh, Carducci and Calino String Quartets, the Fidelio Trio, the Avalon Ensemble, Chroma and the Crash Ensemble. He has played in chamber music recitals with Anthony Marwood, Finghin Collins, Jorg Widmann, Hugh Tinney, Natalie Clein, Howard Shelley, Kirill Troussov, and Patricia Rozario as well as appearing at West Cork, Killaloe, Ortús, Sligo Spring, Kilkenny Arts, Cheltenham, Warwick Arts, Chichester, Aldeburgh, Wye Valley and Kings Lynn Chamber Music Festivals.

Cian was a founder member of both the Regent String Quartet and the Rothko String Trio, played regularly with the Chamber Players and the London Mozart Players Chamber Ensemble and is currently a member of the period instrument Giordani String Quartet and Prism Ensemble. Concerto appearances include performances of works by Bach, Telemann, Mozart, Bruch and Hindemith in Ireland, the UK, Spain and Greece.

Cian is a member of the Irish Chamber Orchestra, was co-principal viola of the London Mozart Players and works regularly with the London Symphony Orchestra, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre Revolutionnaire et Romantique, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Britten Sinfonia. Cian teaches viola at both the CIT Cork School of Music and the Royal Irish Academy of Music.

### **Aoife Nic Athlaoich, cello**

Aoife began her cello studies in the RIAM with Olwen Lewis and later with Nora Gilleece. In 2001 she moved to London to study with Prof. David Strange at RAM and completed her studies under Prof Melissa Phelps at the RCM, London where she graduated with a 1st class Hons degree and was awarded the Stanley Picker Scholarship for her Post Graduate Studies. She was invited to take masterclasses with such eminent cellists as Natalia Gutman, Ralph Kirshbaum, Bernard Greenhouse, Johannes Goritzki and Frans Helmerson.

In 2014 Aoife joined the Irish Chamber Orchestra, with whom she has toured extensively both in Europe and America. Within the ICO she has performed as soloist and chamber musician. She is widely in demand as a baroque cellist and performs regularly with the Irish Baroque Orchestra, Camerata Kilkenny and Sir. John Elliot Gardiner's acclaimed Orchestre Revolutionnaire et Romantique. She has given solo recitals at East Cork, Galway and Sligo early music festivals. Aoife has recorded with the ICO on the Ordeo label and broadcast live from Carnegie Hall, BBC Proms and Wigmore Hall. She currently teaches cello at RIAM, CIT Cork School of music and University of Limerick and specializes in baroque cello and chamber music.

## **Ed Creedon, viola**

Ed Creedon enjoys a varied career as a viola player, performing chamber music, in recitals and as an orchestral musician. Recent performances include the National Concert Hall Chamber Music Gathering, tours throughout Ireland with the Lir String Quartet, tours to Finland, France and India with Camerata Ireland as well as solo performances with Camerata Ireland and Barry Douglas.

Chamber music highlights include performances with the Vanbrugh Quartet, as well as appearances with the Ficino Ensemble in Dublin, the Piatti Quartet in the U.K., at the Ortús Festival in Cork, and repeat invitations to the Clandeboye Festival in Belfast and the Killaloe Festival of Chamber Music. For four consecutive summers he took part in the West Cork Chamber Music Festival's Young Musicians Programme.

Ed comes from Cork and studied with Constantin Zanidache and Simon Aspell at MTU Cork School of Music.

### **PROGRAMME NOTES**

**Luigi Boccherini** [1743-1805]

***String Quartet op.15 no. 1 G177 in D major*** [1772]

The Italian composer and cellist Luigi Boccherini lived from 1743 until 1805. When he was 25 he moved to Spain to join the opera company in which his beloved Clementina Pelliccia sang, and they married the following year. He then began to work as composer and cellist in the court of Don Luis of Bourbon, younger brother of King Charles the third. This position gave him the chance to be based in Madrid and to keep composing.

The quartet you will hear is from his op 15s, which were intended to be easy enough for amateurs. They are shorter than his previous quartets (only two movements) and not wildly technical, but utterly full of character and charm.

**John Kinsella** [1932-2021]

***Reeling Rhapsody*** [1989]

Born in Dublin in 1932, John Kinsella balanced two careers until 1988, when he resigned as RTE's Head of Music and devoted his time fully to composition. He went on to write nine symphonies, concertos, quartets and many chamber works. His music continues to be treasured amongst musicians. He died in November 2021.

Based on the Irish Reel "the four courts" Reeling Rhapsody is frolicking fun for two violins. Dedicated to his wife Thérèse Timoney and friend Clarence Myerscough he writes at the top of the music "for two, preferably inebriated, violinists." It is typical of John's warmth and good humour and great fun to play.

**Amy Beach** [1867-1944]

***Quartet for Strings Op.89*** [1929]

Amy Beach was a child prodigy who first came to prominence in Boston with her debut as pianist at the age of sixteen. Critics predicted a stellar career as concert artist, and two years later she played Chopin's Piano Concerto in F minor, Op. 21 in her debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. That same year, of her first composition, the song 'With Violets', a reviewer wrote that 'many a full-fledged composer might envy her much that it contains, her melodic gift, and especially her unique and sophisticated harmonic sense'. So began a long dual career as pianist and as composer of more than 300 works.

She started work on the Quartet for Strings in One Movement, Op. 89 in 1921, during her first residency at the MacDowell Colony, an artists' retreat in Peterborough, New Hampshire. She completed it in 1929 in Rome. The quartet incorporates themes from three songs of the Alaskan Inuit, which Beach found in a collection by the anthropologist Franz Boas. It opens 'Grave', with a faster central section ('Allegro Molto') which constitutes the main body of the work; it closes with a reprise of the opening.

**John Dowland** [1563-1626]

***'Lachrimae Antiquae'*** [1604] ***'Earl of Essex, his Galiard'*** [1598]

John Dowland was an English lutenist and composer, whose works have enjoyed quite a renaissance since the early music revival. His collection "Lachrimae, or seven teares" was published in London in 1604, although Dowland was at the time employed by the Danish court, and is originally scored for 5 viols and lute.

"Lachrimae Antiquae" is the first piece in the collection and opens a set of seven pavaues, each featuring the motif of 4 falling notes, thought to depict falling tears. Lachrimae Antiquae had already been published previously as a lute song titled "Flow my tears". The lyrics of the first verse are:

*Flow my tears, fall from your springs, Exil'd for ever let me mourn.  
Where night's black bird her sad infamy sings, There let me live forlorn...*

The pavaues are followed by some livelier dances, and one of the most attractive of these is "Earl of Essex his Galiard". Again this tune was published previously by Dowland as a lute-accompanied song, and can be found under the title "Can she excuse my wrongs" in his "First Book of Songs" published in 1598.

All five voices have plenty to work with in both the Lachrimae and the Galiard; Dowland's writing is rhythmically complex, harmonically rich and very satisfying for everyone to play.

**Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy** [1809–1847]  
***String Quintet No. 2 in B flat Op. 87*** [1845]

Mendelssohn's output of chamber music is not large, but he began his composing career with chamber music and was always longing to return to it. He wrote the first string quintet in 1826, revising it in 1832 after the death of a friend, and wrote the second in 1845, one of a number of chamber works written during the last four years of his life, culminating in the String Quartet F minor. He wrote this quartet after the sudden death of his beloved elder sister Fanny in May, 1847 and completed it by September, 1847. Two months later he died of a paralytic stroke, aged only 38. Earlier in that year he had told the English critic, Henry Chorley, that he intended to withdraw from public life, from the wearisome incessant travelling, conducting, playing and administration that interrupted his creative work.

He wrote the second quintet during a period of respite from his extensive duties as official composer to the King of Prussia, able to relax and to return to the string quintet genre twenty years after his previous work. Like Beethoven and Mozart he wrote for a quintet of two violins, two violas and 'cello, unlike Schubert and Boccherini, who used a second cello and single viola. Mendelssohn was extremely self-critical and was so dissatisfied with the exuberant finale of the second quintet that he refused to allow it to be published. He probably intended to rework some of it, but died before he could do so and the work was published posthumously as Op. 87.

Mendelssohn's first quintet is full of youthful exuberance and the second is more thoughtful and restrained, but both share the same structural principles and style. The opening of the first movement of the second quintet appears to be an attempt to recapture the sparkling freshness and atmosphere of his youthful masterpiece, the String Octet, which he wrote in 1825 for there is a strong similarity in the outline of the themes of the two works. In the sonata form first movement the violins play a triadic theme above a tremolo accompaniment, which is interrupted by a triplet figure that eventually returns accompanying the contrasting *cantabile* theme. After a development section rich in tonal, textural and dynamic contrast, Mendelssohn uses additional contrapuntal techniques in the recapitulation to further expand the two principal themes.

The light, playful second movement is typical of Mendelssohn's scherzos. He achieves this quality through alternating pizzicato and arco writing, and by treating a staccato melody fugally. The music shifts between major and minor modes, thus creating harmonic variety.

The third movement is in D minor and is in direct contrast with the previous movement, replacing counterpoint and frivolity with a chordal texture and dramatic harmonies and melodies. The varied dynamics and instrumental effects create an impression that is almost symphonic in concept, and the movement demonstrates Mendelssohn's skill in treating typically Romantic harmonic and instrumental colour with a Classical refinement and balance. The finale returns the work to its original light-hearted state, the violins and violas in particular propelling the movement with their bustling energy.

*Sarah M. Burn*

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