DAVID McCANN
CELLO

100% 100/100

lento ma non troppo

90° arco

mf

100°
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In truth, Messiaen’s formidable chamber work has been something the ensemble has been longing to get its teeth into, and all that was needed was the ideal circumstance. I’m glad to announce that in collaboration with Belfast Music Society, and within the framework of the Belfast International Arts Festival, that moment has arrived. It’s not a small bonus for audiences that the work accompanying the Messiaen on this occasion, Takemitsu’s Quadrain II, is a work Hard Rain has a particular affection for. It was one of the works the ensemble performed in our first concert in Sept 2013. The pairing of these two works in the same concert has been in my mind since those early days, but it also exemplifies the ensemble’s enthusiasm for bringing great international luminaries to the attention of local audiences.

On the subject of collaborations, we are genuinely beside ourselves with delight at the prospect of performing Steve Reich’s pulsating Double Sextet with Maiden Voyage Dance. It should be obvious that a local modern dance company, with the reputation of MVD, and a pioneering chamber music group like HRSE would inevitably converge in the creation of something larger that the sum of its parts.

But, there are other new and exciting collaborations afoot. HRSE will be celebrating one of Ireland’s most distinguished composers this year in a special portrait concert of the music of Kevin O’Connell. This collaboration with the Royal Irish Academy of Music, where O’Connell is Head of Composition, is in celebration of the composer’s 60th birthday. Check our website for an announcement on this soon.

The National Concert Hall, Dublin, will be the venue for our appearance as part of the Sounding the Feminist Chamber Music Series. It’s truly a privilege to be a part of such an ambitious project and HRSE has a programme of local and international composers that demonstrates tremendous breadth of style along with real compositional virtuosity.
The collaborative work we undertake consolidates old partnerships like Belfast Music Society, Peter Rosser Foundation, Red Box Recording, Ulster Youth Orchestra, Sonorities Festival and Contemporary Music Centre, while establishing new links with Belfast International Arts Festival, Royal Irish Academy of Music and Maiden Voyage Dance. Through these vital associations HRSE builds an infrastructure to support the work we do. They enable us to reach even bigger audiences and bring our exciting and unique offer to a more diverse range of people than would otherwise be the case.

Our most significant partnership, Queen’s University, where we are Ensemble in Residence as well as participants in their Industry Professional Programme, permits engagement in a range of pedagogic activities from workshops for student composers to helping the development of performers and audio engineers – our new wave of local music professionals. This wonderful mutual partnership allows us to situate ourselves at the center of their vibrant academic community and avail of two incredible concert facilities, the Harty Room (a chamber musician’s dream) and the indescribably highly specified technical environment of SARC’s Sonic lab. In delivering our season in this stimulating environment we hope to bring many people across the university threshold to discover its dynamic work, beautiful buildings and excellent concert facilities. An added dimension this season will be HRSE’s appearance at the Sonorities Festival where the ensemble will participate in an exciting international call for scores.

Our commitment to the commissioning and showcasing of our own composers is stronger than ever. Our Ink still Wet series, now in its third year, is a very focused place to present a large body of brand new work, of which the ensemble is proud to have brought into existence. Every work included has been written specifically for the ensemble and testifies to the difference HRSE is making in its support for our local composers.

Indeed, HRSE has created 5 new commissions this season. We are fortunate again this year to have been able to commission two of Ireland’s most prestigious composers, Jane O’Leary and John Buckley. These new works, each for the full ensemble, were made possible with funding through the ACNI Small Grants Awards. Three additional commissions were aimed at early career composers and resulted from a call for proposals earlier this year and the talented recipients were Amy Rooney, Alan Perrin and Richard McReynolds. I’m looking forward immensely to the performance of these works too, which were funded by the PRSf Talent Development Partnership.

Our position as a PRSf Talent Development Partner allows us scope to support the development of composing talent here through our commissioning and performing, but also as a networked member of a UK wide organisation with its own opportunities that we can help disseminate.

As always, I only scratch the surface here. I invite everyone to browse what’s on offer in the knowledge that the musically adventurous, the beauty seekers and art lovers, will find their way along to our concerts. Why come? Perhaps the late Frank Zappa put it best:

“Without music to decorate it, time is just a bunch of boring production deadlines or dates by which bills must be paid.”

Dr. Greg Caffrey
Artistic Director
## Season at a glance

### 2019

#### SEASON LAUNCH 2019/20
Hellawell / McCann / Wilson  
**QUB, Lecture Room, Belfast**  
**Tue 22nd October 2019, 6.30pm**

#### REICH DOUBLE SEXTET  
(with Maiden Voyage Dance Company)  
Agnew / Johnston / Caffrey  
Morrison / Rooney / Reich  
**SARC Sonic Lab, Belfast**  
**Sat 30th November 2019, 7.30pm**  
**£10/£5 - Pre-concert talk 6.45pm in SARC Multimedia Room**

### 2020

#### INK STILL WET 3
Ashraf / Barkley / McReynolds / McCann / O’Leary / Perrin / Terry / Buckley  
**Sonic Lab SARC**  
**Fri 31st January 2020, 7.30pm**  
**£10/£5 - Pre-concert talk 6.45pm in SARC Multimedia Room**

#### KEVIN O’CONNELL PORTRAIT
A selection of works by Kevin O’Connell  
**Venue/date/time to be announced**  
**For info please check [www.hardrainensemble.com](http://www.hardrainensemble.com)**

#### SOUNDER THE FEMINISTS I
**NCH Chamber Music Series**  
O’Leary / Moshizuki / Clarke / Weir / Mulvey / Rooney / Gubaidulina / Tower  
**The Studio, NCH, Dublin**  
**Sat 21st March 2020, 7.30pm**  
**€17.50 - Tickets available at: [www.nch.ie](http://www.nch.ie)**

#### REICH DOUBLE SEXTET
(with Maiden Voyage Dance Company)  
Agnew / Johnston / Caffrey  
Morrison / Rooney / Reich  
**SARC Sonic Lab, Belfast**  
**Sat 30th November 2019, 7.30pm**  
**£10/£5 - Pre-concert talk 6.45pm in SARC Multimedia Room**

### 2021

#### ULSTER YOUTH ORCHESTRA/HRSE Workshop & Concert
**QUB Harty Room, Belfast**  
**Wed 8th April 2020, 7.30pm**  
**Free admission with advance booking through: [www.hardrainensemble.com](http://www.hardrainensemble.com)**

#### 5TH PETER ROSSER COMPOSITION AWARD
3 Shortlisted Works / Morrison  
**Red Box Recording, Belfast**  
**Thurs 9th April 2020, 7.30pm**  
**Admission strictly by advance booking through: [www.hardrainensemble.com](http://www.hardrainensemble.com)**

#### SONORITIES FESTIVAL
**QUB Harty Room, Belfast**  
**Sat 25th April 2020, 1pm**  
**Free admission with advance booking through: [www.sonorities.net](http://www.sonorities.net)**

#### SEACHANGES
Goldstein / Buckley / Deane / Cleare / Caffrey  
**QUB Harty Room, Belfast**  
**Sat 23rd May 2020, 7.30pm**  
**£10/£5 - Pre-concert talk 6.45pm in McMordie Hall**

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Book for all HRSE organised events can be made via: [www.hardrainensemble.com](http://www.hardrainensemble.com)  
Tickets on sale on the door of the venues on the evening of the performance (subject to availability)
Come along, enjoy a glass of wine and an opportunity to meet and hear the ensemble. This informal event will include performances of three incredible commissions initiated by HRSE last season with funds from ACNI and PRSf.

GROUND TRUTHING* (2018)  
Piers Hellawell (1956)  
flute (picc. alt fl. mel.) bass clarinet (Bb cl), violin, violoncello & piano

POINTS OF ATTRACTION** (2018)  
Chris McCann (1989)  
bass clarinet & violoncello

THE EMPTINESS OF THE EVER EXPANDING UNIVERSE CANNOT COMPARE TO THE VOID WHERE YOUR HEART SHOULD BE* (2018)  
Ian Wilson (1964)  
alto flute, bass clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

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QUB, Lecture Room, Belfast  
Tuesday 22nd October 2019, 6.30pm

* Commissioned by Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble with funds from ACNI Small Grants Award.  
** Commissioned by Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble with funds from PRSf Talent Development Partnership.
A true masterpiece of the 20th Century, Olivier Messiaen’s *Quartet for the End of Time* was premiered in the most unparalleled of circumstances. It was composed and first performed in 1941 in Stalag VIII-a, a German prisoner of war camp where the composer was interned. The instruments for the first performance were of poor quality and acquired, as were the materials Messiaen used to write the composition down, through the endeavors of an approving guard. The performance took place outdoors, in the rain, to an audience of around 400 prisoners and guards. Messiaen himself played the piano. The composer commented, “Never was I listened to with such rapt attention and comprehension”.

Paired with this profound work by Messiaen in this concert is a composition with close stylistic connections. Toru Takemitsu’s *Quadrain II*, a work Hard Rain have performed several times before, resulted from the Japanese composer’s lifelong preoccupation with the music of Messiaen, a composer he described as his “spiritual mentor”. *Quadrain* (for quartet and orchestra) followed from a lesson Takemitsu had with Messiaen in which the French composer played his *Quartet for the End of Time* at the piano. It is interesting that Takemitsu asked the composer’s permission to write for the same instrumentation for the core of his orchestral work, later making the arrangement of it (Quadrain II) for the chamber lineup you hear this evening.

“Among the many things I learned from [Messiaen’s] music, the concept and experience of colour and the form of time will be unforgettable”

Toru Takemitsu

**QUADRAIN II (1977)**

Toru Takemitsu (1930 – 1996)
clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

**Short Interval**

**QUARTET FOR THE END OF TIME (1941)**

Olivier Messiaen (1908 – 1992)
clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

I. Liturgie de cristal

II. Vocalise, pour l’Ange qui annonce la fin du temps

III. Abîme des oiseaux

IV. Intermède

V. Louange à l’Éternité de Jésus

VI. Danse de la fureur, pour les sept trompettes

VII. Fouillis d’arcs-en-ciel, pour l’Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps

VIII. Louange à l’Immortalité de Jésus

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**QUB, Harty Room, Belfast**

**Friday 25th October 2019, 7.30pm**

£14/10 - £5 for under 18s and students

Tickets available at:
www.belfastmusicsociety.org
Hard Rain’s enthusiasm for collaborative projects with key artistic partners leads us this season to a dance event with Belfast’s incredible Maiden Voyage Dance. MVD will offer interpretations of Steve Reich’s mesmerising Double Sextet and Greg Caffrey’s solo work for vibraphone Deluge, Fugue & Allegro.

This is also an opportunity to hear the premiere of Attition by Amy Rooney, the first of three commissions this season from early career composers supported by the PRSf Talent Development Partnership. Elaine Agnew’s Calligraphy, its origin in the writing of the Canadian author JE Weaver, navigates a wide range of gesture and emotion and, perhaps similarly, Fergus Johnston’s solo piano work Éagaoineadh deftly moves from its position of spacious beauty to a radical conclusion in just the space of 3 minutes. Audiences also have the chance in this concert to revisit our brilliantly atmospheric 4th Peter Rosser Award first prize work by Pàdruig Morrison, Caoin Leth-Challtach.

CALLIGRAPHY (2002)
Elaine Agnew (1967)
flute (alt fl), clarinet (bs cl), violin, violoncello & vibraphone

ÉAGAOINEADH (1995)
Fergus Johnston (1959)
solo piano

CAOIN LETH-CHALLTACH (2019)***
Pàdruig Morrison (1996)
(1st Prize 4th Peter Rosser Composition Award 2019)
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

Greg Caffrey (1963)
solo vibraphone

ATTRITION** (2019) World Premier
Amy Rooney (1983)
clarinet, violin, violoncello

DOUBLE SEXTET (2007)
Steve Reich (1936)
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano & vibraphone

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SARC Sonic Lab, Belfast

Saturday 30th November 2019, 7.30pm
£10/5
Pre-concert talk 6.45pm
SARC Multimedia Room.

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** Commissioned by Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble with funds from PRSf Talent Development Partnership.
*** Written especially for HRSE.
This concert reflects HRSE's continued commitment to generating new repertoire and offering fresh opportunities to our composers. We are delighted to present two works here, by composers Richard McReynolds and Alan Perrin, that were commissioned as part of our PRSf Talent Development Partnership. Additionally, two of Ireland’s most distinguished composers, Jane O’Leary and John Buckley are included, both of whom were recipients of our 2019/20 HRSE commissioning scheme, funded by ACNI Small Grants. Kevin Terry and Chris McCann, two composers who emerged as finalists in our 4th Peter Rosser Composition Award, are showcased again and we are delighted as well to include a solo cello work by the late Daniel Barkley, which was premiered by our ensemble’s cellist Dave McCann, for whom it was written in 2016. Completing this collection of works that have been written exclusively for the ensemble is a new work by the Iraqi composer Abdullah Jamall Ashraf, presently a doctoral composition student at QUB.

YOSHIYA (2019)*** World Premier
Abdullah Jamall Ashraf (1968)
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

CADENZAS FROM AN INVISIBLE CONCERTO (2016)***
Daniel Barkley (1989)
solo cello

FOLLOWER (2019)** World Premier
Richard McReynolds (1987)
clarinet, violin, & violoncello

DANCING LIGHT (2019)***
Chris McCann (1989)
Flash, Dimmer, Flicker, Pulse
(2019 Peter Rosser Award Finalist)
alto flute (picc.), clarinet (bs cl), violin, violoncello & piano

BENEATH THE DARK BLUE WAVES (2019)* World Premier
Jane O’Leary (1946)
flute, bass clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

FROM NOTHING, TO SOMETHING, THROUGH EVERYTHING** World Premier
Alan Perrin (1990)
flute & violin

QUIPU (2019 PETER ROSSER AWARD FINALIST) (2019)***
Kevin Terry (1988)
alto flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

THREE MOBILES AFTER ALEXANDER CALDER (2019)* World Premier
John Buckley (1951)
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

* Commissioned by Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble with funds from ACNI Small Grants Award.
** Commissioned by Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble with funds from PRSf Talent Development Partnership.
*** Written especially for HRSE.
HRSE celebrates one of Ireland’s most distinguished composers this year in a special portrait concert of the music of Kevin O’Connell. This collaboration with the Royal Irish Academy of Music, where O’Connell is Head of Composition, is in celebration of the composer’s 60th birthday.

The concert presents a cross-section of O’Connell’s chamber music written since 2005.

LITTLE OVERTURE (2013)  
flute, clarinet, violoncello & piano

PIANO TRIO NO. 2 (2015)  
violin, violoncello & piano

MOTUS (2005)  
solo bass clarinet

AVES DE PASO (2016)  
soprano, clarinet (bs. cl) & piano

CÉIMEANNA (2007)  
solo piano

ICTUS (2005)  
solo flute (alt. fl)

A BATTUTA (2017)*  
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

Venue/Date/Time to be announced

Check www.hardrainensemble.com for details as they are released.

* Commissioned by Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble with funds from ACNI Small Grants Award.
This concert demonstrates some of the breadth of music created by women composers working in Ireland today and contextualizes them internationally. New commissions featuring the textured sound-worlds of Jane O’Leary and Amy Rooney are exposed alongside Gráinne Mulvey’s LUCA (a 2017/18 HRSE Commission) in which the very extremities of timbre are explored. In sharp contrast we have the sedate and warm melancholy of Rhona Clarke’s solo cello work, In Umbra.

This aesthetic range is reflected in a stylistic continuum seen in the international works showcased, which span, an early example of Sofia Gubaidulina’s “Soviet” style, music by English composer Judith Weir with its origins in Scottish fiddle music, a Stravinskian texture conjured by American composer Joan Tower, through to the work of Japanese avant-gardist Misato Moshizuki.

**BENEATH THE DARK BLUE WAVES (2019)**
Jane O’Leary (1946)
flute, bass clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

**ALL THAT IS INCLUDING ME (1997)**
Misato Moshizuki (1969)
bass flute, clarinet & violin

**IN UMBRA (2000 REV.2016)**
Rhona Clarke (1958)
solo violoncello

**BLUE GREEN HILL (2013)**
Judith Weir (1954)
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

**Interval**

**LUCA (2017)**
Gráinne Mulvey (1966)
flute (picc.), bass clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

**ATTRITION (2019)**
Amy Rooney (1983)
clarinet, violin, violoncello

**ALLEGRO RUSTICO (1963, REV. 1993)**
Sophia Gubaidulina (1931)
flute & piano

**PETROUSHKATES (1980)**
Joan Tower (1938)
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

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* Comissioned by Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble with funds from ACNI Small Grants Award.
** Comissioned by Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble with funds from PRSf Talent Development Partnership.
SARAH WATTS
CLARINET

100%
90°

non vibrato
meno mosso

2019/2020
An opportunity for our Belfast audience to hear our recent Dublin programme exposing some of the breadth of music created by women composers working in Ireland today and contextualizing them internationally.

New commissions featuring the textured sound-worlds of Jane O’Leary and Amy Rooney are exposed alongside Gráinne Mulvey’s LUCA (a 2017/18 HRSE commission) in which the very extremities of timbre are explored. In sharp contrast we have the sedate and warm melancholy of Rhona Clarke’s solo cello work, In Umbra.

This aesthetic range is reflected in a stylistic continuum seen in the international works showcased, which span, an early example of Sofia Gubaidulina’s “Soviet” style, music by English composer Judith Weir with its origins in Scottish fiddle music, a Stravinskian texture conjured by American composer Joan Tower, through to the work of Japanese avant-gardist Misato Moshizuki.

BENEATH THE DARK BLUE WAVES (2019)*
Jane O’Leary (1946)
flute, bass clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

ALL THAT IS INCLUDING ME (1997)
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bass flute, clarinet & violin

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Rhona Clarke (1958)
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flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

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Gráinne Mulvey (1966)
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ATTRITION (2019)**
Amy Rooney (1983)
clarinet, violin, violoncello

ALLEGRO RUSTICO (1963, REV. 1993)
Sofia Gubaidulina (1931)
flute & piano

PETROUSHKATES (1980)
Joan Tower (1938)
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

* Commissioned by Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble with funds from ACNI Small Grants Award.
** Commissioned by Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble with funds from PRSf Talent Development Partnership.
This workshop will see Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble team up with some of the talented players of the Ulster Youth Orchestra to explore repertoire for an unspecified group of instruments under the baton of Sinead Hayes. This serves as a taster session, in terms of the performance of contemporary music, for the UYO musicians and we hope that the experience in many cases could be truly transformative. As the young musicians are asked to volunteer to participate in the workshop, the material we perform needs to be flexible enough to accommodate any number of players, for any instrument of any transposition. It is a challenge, and one that both HRSE and UYO will certainly rise to as in previous years.

Join us in performance at 7.30pm for an unmissable experience, and one that will leave you confident in the knowledge that our next generation of new music performers is on its way.

Repertoire for unspecified instrumentation.

Exact programme to be announced – please check www.hardrainensemble.com for more information.

QUB Harty Room, Belfast

Wednesday 8th April 2020, 7.30pm

Free admission with advance booking through: www.hardrainensemble.com

Workshop – 3pm (not open to the public)
This event will see performances of the three shortlisted works (anonymously chosen by jury) in the 5th Peter Rosser Composition Award. The performed works will be placed as first prize with two runners up. In addition there will be a performance of last year’s winning work, Caoin Leth–Challtach by Pàdruig Morrison, as well as a featured appearance by Soft Rain SoloistEnsemble.

The evening will also include another opportunity to hear last year’s Peter Rosser 1st Prize work

CAOIN LETH–CHALLTACH (2019)***
Pàdruig Morrison (1996)
(1st Prize 4th Peter Rosser Composition Award 2019)
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

PERFORMANCE OF 3 WORKS
TO BE SELECTED BY JURY
Anonymous submission

A unique performance by previous HRSE Young Artists:

Soft Rain SoloistEnsemble.
Three of our HRSE Young Artists:

> William Curran
  Clarinet (2016/17 Young Artist)

> Susanna Griffin
  Violin (2017/18 Young Artists)

> Olivia Palmer–Baker
  Bassoon (2017/18 Young Artists)

Red Box Recording, Belfast
Thursday 9th April 2020, 7.30pm
Places are limited, admission strictly by advance booking through: www.hardrainensemble.com

*** Written especially for HRSE.
A performance of selected works submitted as part of a Sonorities International Call for Scores.

“\textit{It is my great pleasure as Director of the Sonorities Festival Belfast to welcome the Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble (HRSE) to the 2020 festival as a group which continues to play an essential role in the musical life of Northern Ireland. HRSE are the leading contemporary music ensemble in NI, and are one of the few established ensembles of this caliber on the island of Ireland. Their contribution is commendable, helping build audiences for new music while providing pivotal opportunities for local composers at all stages of career. I have personally witnessed HRSE perform on five separate occasions, and I have been consistently impressed by their level of musicianship and openness to diverse and adventurous musical materials.}

HRSE’s appearance at Sonorities 2016 was a tremendous success and we would like to place the ensemble at the centre of an international Call for Scores initiative as part of the April 2020 edition of the festival. Sonorities is now entering into its third decade and continues to attract local and international audiences, with artists from over 40 different countries participating in recent years”.

Prof. Paul Stapleton
Sonorities Festival Director

See \url{www.sonorities.net} for submission details.

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\textbf{QUB Harty Room, Belfast}  
\textbf{Saturday 25th April 2020, 1pm}  
\textbf{Free admission with advance booking through: \url{www.sonorities.net}}
Our final concert of the season revisits some work that the ensemble has familiarity with while introducing (Belfast audiences at least) to new works. HRSE Artistic Director Greg Caffrey has “drip fed” his latest offering for the group, A Terrible Beauty, to audiences over the six years of the ensemble’s existence, introducing each of the three movements as independent works as they emerged over the years. Indeed this work has expanded into an orchestral piece, lauded as a “recommended work” by illustrious composers Magnus Lindberg and Erkki-Sven Tüür. This chamber version completes the Yeats trilogy. Perry Goldstein’s beautifully wrought reflection on Paul Klee’s eponymous painting Twittering Machines is also not new to our regular audience, but appears again this season as the players simply loved playing it in the last! We have a second outing for John Buckley’s new HRSE commission premiered earlier this year (another work with its origin in the visual arts). Ann Cleare’s intricate work Inner for cello and piano probes the very nature of sound itself in the most uncompromising way. A recent recipient of the prestigious Ernst von Siemens Prize, she is surely one of Ireland’s most pioneering composers. Raymond Deane’s highly individual Seachanges owes its inspiration partly to The Tempest and to preoccupations with death and metamorphosis. Due to the work’s inclusion on the Leaving Certificate Music syllabus, it may be one of the most known and studied pieces of Irish contemporary music.

Perry Goldstein (1952)
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello, piano & percussion

THREE MOBILES AFTER ALEXANDRE CALDER (2019)*
John Buckley (1951)
flute, clarinet, violin, violoncello & piano

SEACHANGES WITH DANSE MACABRE (1993 – 94)
Raymond Deane (1953)
iccolo (alt fl), piano, violin, violoncello & percussion

INNER (2009)
Ann Cleare (1983)
violoncello & piano

A TERRIBLE BEAUTY II (2019)
(Chamber Version) World Premier
Greg Caffrey (1963)
flute (picc.), clarinet (bs cl), piano, violin, violoncello & percussion

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QUB Harty Room, Belfast
Saturday 23rd May 2020, 7.30pm
£10/5
Pre-concert talk 6.45pm McMordie Hall.

* Commissioned by Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble with funds from ACNI Small Grants Award.
DANIEL BROWELL
PIANO

100%
90°
una Corda

 poco a poco affettuoso
Kevin O’Connell was born in Derry and began composing when he was twelve. He studied composition with Redmond Friel (1907–1979) before completing a music degree at Trinity College Dublin. He subsequently taught composition there and at Queen’s University Belfast.

Since his first BBC commission at age 25 (Concertino for 12 Players) Kevin O’Connell has completed a continuous succession of commissions including three operas and much chamber and orchestral music. His music has been played around the world.

His first opera Sensational! was commissioned by Opera Theatre Company and toured Ireland and Britain. The Fire King was commissioned with funding from British Telecom and had runs at the Playhouse, Derry and Malibu Theatre, Los Angeles. My Love, My Umbrella (also OTC) toured Ireland, England and Germany in 1997–98.

His orchestral work North, commissioned by BBC Radio 3, is possibly the most performed modern Irish orchestral work. It has been succeeded by large-scale commissions for the National Symphony Orchestra including Four Orchestral Pieces (2007), Symphony (2011) and Early Music (2015).

In 2001 his massive String Quartet was premiered by the Lotus Quartet of Stuttgart. Other significant chamber works include Cello Sonata (Raphael Wallfisch), Piano Trio no. 1 (Lontano Ensemble) and Apollo and Marsyas (Crash Ensemble). For the latter work O’Connell, who holds an MPhil. in Anglo–Irish literature from Trinity College Dublin, wrote the text himself.

Recent premieres include Piano Trio no. 2 for the Kungsbacka Trio, Mass and Aifreann for the Palestrina Choir, Horn Trio for Kirkos Ensemble, A Batutta for Hard Rain and Carrikfergus for the Ulster Orchestra. A new opera is planned for the RIAM opera school.

A CD of O’Connell’s orchestral music from the NSO appeared in 2014 as Vol. 8 of the Lyric FM label Composers of Ireland series.

O’Connell is a member of Aosdána, Ireland’s academy of creative artists.

This year the composer Kevin O’Connell celebrates his 60th Birthday and as part of those celebrations Hard Rain is delighted to present a portrait concert in collaboration with the Royal Irish Academy of Music, where Kevin is Head of Composition. The portrait features a cross-section of his chamber music dating from 2005 up until, A Batutta, a HRSE commission from our 2017/18 season.
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 2nd 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 4th Uuno Klami International Composition Prize by a jury which included Magnus Lindberg and Erkki-Sven Tüür.

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 RTÉ. 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 represented by the Contemporary Music Centre, Ireland and is a member of the Association of Irish Composers.

Prior to joining Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble, **Chloé Morrison** specialised in providing support for visual arts organisations including Source Photographic Review; Golden Thread Gallery; the third space gallery and Ormeau Baths Gallery.

Chloé holds an MFA from the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam and completed her BA in Fine Art at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, and the Slade School of Fine Art, London.
Hard Rain Soloist
Ensemble
2019/20 season
The Core Ensemble
**The Core Ensemble**

**David McCann** graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music in 2010 and completed the MMus course with distinction in 2012. While a student at the RNCM David was a recipient of the Leonard Rose award for cello, the Chris Rowland Prize for chamber music and the Contemporary Music Performance Prize.

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.

David has worked with many of the U.K. and Ireland’s leading orchestras, including the Hallé Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, the Ulster Orchestra, the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra of Opera North.

David teaches privately at his home in Belfast.

**Conductor Sinead Hayes** is no stranger to the world of contemporary music. Now in her sixth season as conductor of the Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble, she has already this season premiered Raymond Deane’s new opera *Vagabones* for Opera Collective Ireland, working with the Crash Ensemble, and was musical supervisor for Irish National Opera’s production of the installation opera *This Hostel Life*.

Highlights of the 2018/19 season included returns to Northern Ireland Opera to conduct Sondheim’s *Sweeney Todd* and Caffrey: *The Chronic Identity Crisis of Pamplemousse*, as well as being assistant conductor and chorus master for all of Irish National Opera’s mainstage productions including Verdi’s *Aida* and Bartok’s *Bluebeard’s Castle*.

Sinead graduated with a BMus in violin and composition from City University London, and completed her MMus in orchestral conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester. She has participated in numerous masterclasses across Europe with mentors including Johannes Schlaefli, Peter Eotvos and Martyn Brabbins.

Highlights of the 2019/20 season include working for the first time with the Ulster Orchestra and conducting a new opera by Elaine Agnew for Galway European Capital of Culture 2020, alongside premiering works by Irish composers with HRSE.
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 the Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble; he has performed with YCAT winner Kathryn Rudge at the Wigmore Hall and on many occasions since, and he regularly works for the BBC Philharmonic, recently performing piano quartets in the BBC Philharmonic’s chamber music series in Salford.

After studying for his undergraduate degree at the University of Birmingham, Daniel went on to study in Paris, the Royal Academy of Music in London, Chicago and became a Junior Fellow at the Royal Northern College of Music. Whilst there 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.

Aisling Agnew was born and raised in Belfast. She performs internationally and has been broadcast on BBC Radio, RTE Lyric FM and Classic FM. High profile concerts include a Wigmore Hall recital, Belfast Festival, the National Flute Association’s 40th Convention in Las Vegas and Concertos with the Ulster Orchestra and RSNO. Aisling is a graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She performs on a wide range of flutes on which she has released various recordings and she works regularly with ensembles such as the Irish Memory Orchestra and her long-standing flute and guitar duo with Matthew McAllister with whom she has toured worldwide.

Aisling’s involvement in Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble reflects her strong interest in 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 80th birthday concert and giving the first performance in Scotland of Penderecki’s Flute Concerto. Aisling also enjoys helping students develop an interest in contemporary flute playing through workshops and classes. She is flute teacher at St Andrews University and also tutors students from Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities.
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 both clarinet and bass clarinet. Sarah teaches bass clarinet at the Royal Northern College of Music, is Teaching Associate in Music Performance at Sheffield University 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 a Wind Chamber Music course at Malvern for amateur musicians. Sarah performs extensively with SCAW (bass clarinet and piano duo). She has completed a PHD exploring bass clarinet multiphonics and published a book on the subject. Sarah is a Vandoren UK Artist, Selmer bass clarinet artist, Uebel clarinet artist and a Silverstein pro artist.

Joanne Quigley McParland is in constant demand as an orchestral principal and leader and has guest led the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the Ulster Orchestra. She is the former co-leader of the RTÉ Concert Orchestra and performs regularly as co-leader with the English Chamber Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra. She is a principal player in John Eliot Gardiner’s Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and a member of The John Wilson Orchestra.

Away from the orchestra Joanne has led the Crash Ensemble on several occasions since 2012, including performances at Carnegie Hall. She is 1st violinist of the Giordani String Quartet who perform Classical and Romantic music on period instruments and is the founder and musical director of Ireland’s newest group, The Fews Ensemble. Joanne has performed extensively as a recitalist with her brother, pianist David Quigley. She is on the faculty of the Royal Irish Academy of Music. Joanne holds a Bachelor of Music and a professional performance diploma from the Royal Northern College of Music. She completed her formal studies at the Royal Conservatoire of Music, Toronto in 2002.
Guest Musicians

Ioana Petcu lives by the sea in Bangor, from where she enjoys a diverse musical life. She has performed many of the great concertos from Beethoven to Shostakovich alongside more contemporary offerings from Philip Glass, Tavener, Ian Wilson and Arvo Pärt.

Contemporary music features highly in Ioana’s professional life. She was invited by international publishing house Universal Edition to edit ‘Violin Project’ and performance highlights include working intensively with Arvo Part and Peteris Vasks, duetting with Philip Glass in concert and a BBC Radio 3 broadcast of Luigi Nono’s La Lontananza Nostalgica Utopica Futura. Bigger projects include Una Santa Oscura by Ian Wilson – an opera without words for staged solo violin. Veer is a disc of Ian’s work recorded during Ioana’s time as leader of the Callino Quartet, with whom she toured internationally, recorded and broadcast and Ensemble Avalon, Ioana’s piano trio, were the first-ever Ensemble-in-Residence at Trinity College, Dublin.

Associate Leader of the Ulster Orchestra, Ioana also regularly joins orchestras such as CBSO, RTÉNSO, Camerata Ireland, English Symphony Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic and BBC Symphony as concertmaster.

Ioana plays on a 1695 Goffredo Cappa violin and a very special bow made for her by her father, Adrian Petcu.

Alex Petcu is a percussionist who is quickly establishing himself both nationally and internationally as a musician of the finest calibre. As an active freelance musician he regularly performs with various professional groups in Ireland as well as featuring in more unusual projects such as theatre and dance productions and solo concerts. He enjoys working with composers and promoting the use of percussion in all possible musical settings.

Ensembles that he has performed and collaborated with include Irish contemporary music groups, Crash Ensemble and Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble, orchestras such as the RTÉ Symphony and Concert Orchestras and various smaller chamber groups like ConTempo Quartet and EQ Ensemble to name a few. As a soloist he has performed with both RTÉ Orchestras and was selected to be the National Concert Hall Rising Star recitalist in 2015.

Alex is delighted to have recorded his debut album Alex Petcu: In Time which has just been released on the RTÉ Lyric FM label.
**William Stafford** began his musical studies at Manchester University and the Royal Northern College of Music. After receiving the RNCM’s Gold Medal in 2008, the college’s highest and most prestigious award for performance, he went on to study at the Royal College of Music, London, where he graduated with distinction.

Stafford has appeared as Guest Principal Clarinet with the London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, English National Opera, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Northern Sinfonia and Ulster Orchestra. In 2011, he was appointed Sub Principal Clarinet with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

Stafford has enjoyed collaborations with artists including Maurice Bourgue, Sergio Azzolini, Richard Watkins and Michael Collins. He has performed chamber music with the Eidos Trio at the Wigmore Hall, and, as a member of the Countess of Munster Recital Scheme, has given recitals at music clubs all over the UK.

**William Curran** is a graduate of Queen’s University Belfast and the Royal Northern College of Music. During the 2016/17 season he was the inaugural Featured Young Artist with the Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble, allowing him the opportunity to perform a solo recital at QUB as well as several appearances in concerts with HRSE.

In November 2018 he was selected as the winner of the Arts Council NI and BBC NI ‘Young Musicians Platform Award’. Since graduating from the RNCM with distinction in 2018 William has been enjoying a varied freelance career.

Recent performance highlights include solo appearances with the Ulster Orchestra and Ulster Youth Orchestra, a recording session for BBC Radio Ulster and a performance with the RNCM’s contemporary music ensemble at the Wigmore Hall. Orchestrally he has worked with the BBC Philharmonic, Northern Ireland Opera and the Ulster Orchestra.
We are delighted that our close association with Queen’s University will continue this season as we plunge ourselves into the second year of our Ensemble in Residence programme. This initiative allows the ensemble to embed its substantial season offer within the wonderful atmosphere and ambiance provided by the university. The university’s two venues continue to enhance the experience the ensemble can present its audiences and it is fitting that a vibrant ensemble should be based amid the equally vibrant life of the university campus. In terms of the direct educational offer to students, concert season aside, nothing changes. HRSE continues its extensive Industry Professional relationship with QUB alongside its residency, one enhancing the other.

On behalf of the ensemble I would like to say a thank you to QUB for continuing its investment in HRSE, an investment that we will ensure pays a great pedagogic, cultural and creative dividend in the future.

Dr. Greg Caffrey,
Artistic Director, Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble

“At Queen’s we are thrilled to continue our relationship with Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble, which has established itself firmly as one of the leading ensembles in Ireland to specialise in contemporary music. HRSE have a dedicated and loyal audience and it is a real pleasure to host their amazing concerts in our two superb concert spaces – the Harty Room and the Sonic Lab.

Not only are HRSE ensemble-in-residence, but they are also designated as our ‘Industry Professionals’; our student composers have enjoyed the rare luxury of having professional attention to their musical output, and this provides them with an excellent opportunity to learn through practical experience of ensemble writing.

As usual, Hard Rain brings in a stream of modern classics and new discoveries while, as its cornerstone, continuing to premiere and re-visit work from Northern Ireland’s own flourishing composer scene; no other ensemble in Ireland offers a continuing showcase of home-grown new work against a riotous back-drop drawn from today’s music around the globe. Hard Rain is a one-off, an ensemble whose commitment to the expressive force of new music makes it the perfect partner for Music at Queen’s.”

Professor Piers Hellawell,
Composer and Professor of Composition, QUB
Workshops, Opportunities & Mentorship

Ensemble in Residence and Industry Professionals at Queen’s University Belfast.

We are delighted to be continuing our role as Industry Professionals within the university this year and are excited in our sustained position as Ensemble in Residence. These designated roles permit us to engage in an exciting series of pedagogic activities and well as centering our season of concerts in the exceptional concert giving facilities of the university.

HRSE will be providing workshop read-throughs for composition students at various stages in their development as well as instrumental demonstrations, talks and support for students studying Audio Engineering and Production. This year HRSE will continue its engagement with the Queen's work placement scheme, offering the opportunity for a student to assist administratively, in terms of stage management and as front of house staff.

Working with the Ulster Youth Orchestra.

As always HRSE are delighted to work with the talented players of the UYO and this year will be our 4th year of collaboration. The full Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble line up, with conductor Sinead Hayes, will engage with the UYO players in a workshop culminating in an informal concert in the evening. For many of the young players this will be their first experience of contemporary music and it’s always such a positive one for both ensembles.

Workshop with the Ulster Youth Orchestra
Queen’s, Harty Room
Wednesday 8th April 2020, 3.00 – 6.00pm

Workshop not open to the public
Informal performance: 7.30pm Open Invite
Entrance is free of charge, but tickets must be booked in advance. Booking details at: www.hardrainensemble.com

Additional benefits to UYO players will be free tickets to HRSE events. Hard Rain will offer free places (up to a maximum of 10 tickets per concert on a first come, first served basis – one ticket per player).

5th Peter Rosser Composition Award

The Peter Rosser Award was jointly established by Hard Rain SoloistEnsemble and the Peter Rosser Foundation in 2016 in the memory of our esteemed colleague and friend. It is supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, The Contemporary Music Centre, Ireland, Cormac O’Kane of Red Box Recording Studio, Belfast as well as through generous donations made in Peter’s memory by friends and colleagues. HRSE will call for new works again this year, through the Contemporary Music Centre, Ireland, for the forces of the core ensemble: the award will be open to composers born or domicile in N. Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The award is open to composers regardless of age; however it is aimed at emerging composers. The organisers, therefore, welcome submissions from composers at the start of their careers.

Submissions are particularly welcome, and encouraged, from women composers.

Shortlisted composers will be invited to a workshop with the ensemble at Red Box Recording Studio, Belfast. Participants of the workshop will receive a recording of their work and the winner will receive the Peter Rosser Prize for composition. Cash prizes to assist with the composer’s careers are also offered.

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THE COMPETITION IS NOW OPEN!
Deadline for submissions is Friday 13th March 2020 at 4pm.

The final adjudication and award will take place on Thurs 9th April 2020.

Application details available at www.hardrainensemble.com
Two new HRSE commissions, for the forces of the full ensemble, have been initiated thanks to funding from The ACNI Small Grants Award. This year’s HRSE commission recipients are Jane O’Leary and John Buckley, two of Ireland’s most influential figures in contemporary music.

Previous HRSE commissions receive continued exposure this year. Ian Wilson’s The emptiness of the ever expanding universe cannot compare to the void where your heart should be, along with Piers Hellawell’s Ground Truthing and Chris McCann’s Points of Attraction, will be performed in celebration of our Season Launch. Kevin O’Connell’s A Battuta from our 2017/18 commission round will form part of the Kevin O’Connell Portrait concert in celebration of the composer’s 60th Birthday, while Gráinne Mulvey’s LUCA, from the same season, appears as part of our Sounding the Feminists concerts.

Together with our exciting new additions to the repertoire, we will be presenting other bespoke pieces for the ensemble. We have three works that emerged in our 4th Peter Rosser Composition Award from composers, Pàdruig Morrison (1st Prize), Chris McCann and Kevin Terry. Additionally, we have a work written specifically for the ensemble by Iraqi composer Abdullah Jamal Ashraf, a current doctoral composition student at QUB.

As if all this new music were not enough, we initiated a competitive call for three more commissions again this year with funds from PRSf Talent Development Partnership. These are for smaller works aimed at early career composers and this year they were awarded to Amy Rooney, Alan Perrin and Richard McReynolds.

Finally we are honored to include a solo cello work by the late Daniel Barkley, written specifically for our HRSE cellist, Dave McCann. Danny was a remarkable young talent who worked with the ensemble on a number of occasions and we are delighted that this performance can help celebrate his recent posthumous award of a PhD in composition from QUB.

Thanks to our Funders and Supporters!

No cultural programme of this magnitude could possibly exist without the financial and in-kind support of our funders and partners. We acknowledge the support of our principal funder The Arts Council of Northern Ireland and are additionally grateful for the contribution of the PRSf Talent Development Partnership.

Support from Queen’s University School of Arts, English and Languages, who host our residency, is invaluable, while our myriad of collaborators: Belfast Music Society, Belfast International Arts Festival, Maiden Voyage Dance, Royal Irish Academy of Music, Sounding the Feminists, The National Concert Hall, Sonorities Festival, Redbox Recording, The Peter Rosser Foundation, The Contemporary Music Centre, Dublin and The Ulster Youth Orchestra are essential to the ensembles success.

A final and sincere thanks goes to all the incredible supporters of this wonderful music. We are grateful for those who crossed the threshold of our performance spaces last season, to those people who demonstrated their passion in the auditorium with their whoops and cheers, to the many of you whose constant and valued attendance has numbered you amongst the Hard Rain faithful, to the composition students and professional composers who gave us their wonderful music to play, to the enthusiastic social networkers, the hardened New Music enthusiasts and new-comers. This year we commend this exciting programme to you, and we are so appreciative of your continued commitment and fervor.
Friends

Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble is a registered charity NIC102506 and therefore a not-for-profit organisation. We would like you to support us in any way you can and help us continue our work. The most enjoyable way to support us is to continue to attend our concerts and bring your friends – bring all your friends!

You can also Rain Support on Us:

This season we are continuing 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 or speak to us at one of our events.

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 “Make a Contribution” button at: www.hardrainensemble.com

• 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

• 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 Greg Caffrey at hardrainensemble@icloud.com

In these difficult financial times we realise that life is hard for everyone, not just our organisation, 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 2019/20 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: hardrainensemble@icloud.com
How to book

Booking for all HRSE organised events can be made through our website: www.hardrainensemble.com

Tickets may be purchased on the door of the venues on the evening of the performance (subject to availability), although advance booking is recommended.

Booking for the Quartet for the End of Time (Belfast Music Society/Belfast International Arts Festival) can be made at: www.belfastinternationalartsfestival.com

Tickets for National Concert Hall Events can be found at: www.nch.ie

Tickets for our Sonorities event can be booked at: www.sonorities.net

General box office/event enquiries: hardrainensemble@icloud.com

Principal Venues

Harty Room
Queen’s University Belfast
Junction College Sq. & Botanic Avenue, BT7 1NN

Sonic Arts Research Centre
Queen’s University Belfast
4 Cloreen Park, BT9 5HN
We acknowledge support from the following organisations:

Principal Funding Partners

Ensemble in Residence & Industry Professionals

Partner organisations and collaborators
JOANNE QUIGLEY McPARLAND
VIOLIN

90° poco a poco accelerando

1019/1010

sul ponticello

100%
“...something remarkable has been happening in the hitherto neglected field of new music.”

Michael Quinn
Culture NI