

DEPARTMENT OF  
**MUSIC**  
AT PRINCETON



PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Humanities  
Council

Tuesday, November 1, 2022, 8:00 PM  
Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall

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**Princeton Sound Kitchen presents**  
*Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh*  
*and Dan Trueman*

Princeton Sound Kitchen presents the Edward T. Cone Fellow in the Humanities Council and Department of Music, **Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh**, and Professor of Music and Chair for the Department of Music, **Dan Trueman** performing a program of fiddle music on hardanger fiddle and 10-string hardanger d'amore, from their recent album release, *The Fate of Bones*.

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The use of photographic, video, or audio equipment is strictly prohibited. Please turn off or mute electronic devices for the duration of the performance. **For more information about the Department of Music and other upcoming events, and to sign-up for our mailing list, please visit [music.princeton.edu](https://music.princeton.edu).**



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## PROGRAM

**Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh  
and Dan Trueman**

*The Fate of Bones Part 1*

INTERMISSION

**Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh  
and Dan Trueman**

*The Fate of Bones Part 2*

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## PERFORMERS

**Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh**, hardanger fiddle and hardanger d'amore

**Dan Trueman**, hardanger fiddle and hardanger d'amore

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## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh and Dan Trueman**

*The Fate of Bones*

Individual movements will be announced from the stage

Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh, hardanger fiddle and hardanger d'amore

Dan Trueman, hardanger fiddle and hardanger d'amore

Both the *The Fate of Bones* album release and this concert were originally scheduled for April of 2020. We finally performed the concert in Dublin this past May, and are doing it again just this once, here in Princeton, tonight. Hopefully more will follow, but if we've learned anything over the past couple years, we can't count on anything. The album itself comes out tonight as well, old news to us, but exciting to share nonetheless.

When we released our first album—*Laghdú*—in 2014, we asked the designer Rossi McAuley (founder of Distinctive Repetition in Dublin) to design album artwork for us; he went far beyond that call and created an entire set of unique CD packaging, printed on recycled materials with organic inks. For *The Fate of Bones*, we went back to Rossi and had a broader conversation about the purpose of album artwork today, in the era of streaming. These conversations began around 2017, while the Golden Records from the Voyager spacecraft were being celebrated for their 40th anniversaries. Etched into the surface of those records is iconography aimed to enable some alien species millions or billions of years in the future to decode and listen to their contents; surely that is the most ambitious and optimistic record release of all time!

While our ambitions are far more modest, Rossi and his collaborator Stephen Kerr went about developing a similarly inspired iconography that represents the different tunings that Caoimhín and I use with our instruments. These instruments—the Hardanger d'Amore, a new kind of instrument that Salve Håkedal created for us about a decade ago, and the traditional Norwegian Hardanger fiddle—sound at their best when in various scordatura, or cross-tunings as fiddlers call them, where the tuning of the bowed strings interact with the sympathetic strings to reinforce one another and create a perpetual, ringing glow. Often, Caoimhín and I have our instruments in quite different, if complementary, tunings, which creates all sorts of wonderful puzzles for our fingers and ears to solve, and many of our tunes are in some ways a product of that puzzling. The iconography that Rossi and Stephen developed is at once concise and beautiful and became the basis for the artwork that will be on stage with us tonight. One of the tunes we play—*Thirteen*—emerges when we “read” this iconography, and we'll play two versions, one to open each half of the program, each one in a different set of tunings; the gestures and forms remain similar, but the sonorities are transformed and filtered by our changed tunings.

We also asked the artist and writer Fiona Hallinan for her reflections on the album, with the aim of integrating her prose into Rossi and Stephen's artwork; it is too difficult to read from afar, so we include it here:

Under light, the sound sparkles. The hardanger d'amore is designed with five additional sympathetic strings, there to add resonance to specific frequencies. As part of their collaborative process playing and performing with this instrument, Dan Trueman and Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh place their recordings in a shared online folder for the other to find and answer to. This is music of friendship, realised by its weightless duty of call and response.

When we think about preservation, it is often kind places that nurture longevity. Once-soft living things encountered just beneath the roots of vegetables, where they lasted long beyond what could be expected. Particulars can survive in gentle spaces, forgotten words snug in a lullaby, drawings in the crook of a cave, bodies wrapped and dried tenderly or curled up intact in cold bog thousands of years after their animation.

We don't know the fate of our bones. Remains can outlast the monuments or attitudes built to contain them as they continue to scatter, transform, ever-complicate. Bones have been dug up to take position on hospital corridors as tools for learning, withdrawn, then re-buried, their emotive materiality contested. As data we cast traces of our selves in real time across new virtual stages, our non-physical selves disseminate, collated and activated by entities beyond our scale.

There is vulnerability when we send sounds out, as a record into space, or a voice message to a friend. We don't know how things will land, yet the thought of reception invites us to act. Helping my child learn to speak, I'm told it's not important what the words are, but that they are responded to. We make sound to know we are heard.

In the museum of musical instruments in Brussels an audio guide allows visitors to listen to samples of the pieces on display, some familiar, some obscure. I press play and hear the sound of a bird organ, a hurdy gurdy, a Nyanyeru, a Moog synthesizer, a harpsichord. The physical objects themselves remain silent, recalling real spaces they once occupied with sound, roads and cliffsides, public squares and furnished rooms, hallways and thresholds.

A sculpture is unearthed and scraped clean, read as intently pure white marble when traces show a truth of multicolour. Bodies found in bogs contorted to prove theories. In sonic terms, the word feedback maps a certain (dis)connection between duration and intention: to harness it is to accept that the self is written against context. The living find endless ways to put the dead to work. Honey on teeth, gold leaf on skin, grain in a gut, the contingent self, the vibration of an unplayed string.

— Fiona Hallinan

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## ABOUT

**Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh** makes music on a 10-string fiddle called the hardanger d'amore. He has performed on some of the most beautiful stages in the world, including the *Sydney Opera House*, the *Royal Albert Hall* and the *Carnegie Hall*. He has made eighteen recordings to date, ranging from quite traditional to fairly out-there, and continues to explore the region where traditional music begins to disintegrate. Caoimhín performs as a solo artist, yet is also widely known through his collaborative work, including groups *The Gloaming* and *This is How we Fly*, and duos with *Dan Trueman*, *Thomas Bartlett*, *Garth Knox*, *Mick O'Brien* and *Brendan Begley*. He has also performed with artists such as *Laurie Anderson*, *Vincent Moon* and *Amiina*. He has made music for theatre and film, including music for the Oscar-nominated movie *Brooklyn* and Volker Schlöndorff's *Return to Montauk*.

“... the most imaginative and fascinating musician in all of trad...”

– Earle Hitchner, *Irish Echo*, USA

“... the missing link between Martin Hayes and Purple Haze

– Nick Kelly, *Irish Independent*, Ireland

“... the most singular traditional Irish musician of [his] generation

– *State Magazine*, Ireland

**Dan Trueman** is a collaborator, a teacher, a developer of new instruments, a composer of music for ensembles of all shapes and sizes. He has worked with ensembles such as Sō Percussion, the PRISM Quartet, Eighth Blackbird, Gallicantus, the JACK Quartet, as well as individuals like scientist Naomi Leonard, choreographer Rebecca Lazier, poet Paul Muldoon, director Mark DeChiazza, fiddler Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh, vocalist Iarla Ó Lionáird, guitarist / songwriter Monica Muga, pianists Adam Sliwinski and Cristina Altamura, and many others. Dan's work has been recognized by fellowships, grants, commissions, and awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Barlow Endowment, the Bessies, the Fulbright Commission, the American Composers Forum, the MacArthur Foundation, the American Council of Learned Societies, Meet the Composer, among others. He is Professor and Chair, Department of Music at Princeton University.



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