



## **MPP219 Opera Performance Workshop**

Wednesday, December 21, 2022, 7:30pm  
Lee Rehearsal Room, Lewis Arts Complex

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# **OLAGÓN**

## **An Opera by Dan Trueman Libretto by Paul Muldoon**

Music Direction by Gabriel Crouch  
Directed by Mark DeChiazza

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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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## Director's Note

This evening's presentation is a workshop showing of selected movements from *Olagón*, a new opera with music by Dan Trueman and text by Paul Muldoon. We are performing a sketch—several parts, of what will ultimately become the complete opera—and tonight marks an exciting milestone in *Olagón*'s development.

Princeton University Music Performance Class, MPP219, which I co-taught with Gabriel Crouch was dedicated to the ambitious project of exploring and mounting this large-scale work: the class was a process aimed at discovering through performance how *Olagón* might be brought to the stage. Over the course of the semester the wonderful musicians involved, the undergraduate student singers and instrumentalists as well as the graduate students and professionals who joined our effort, dedicated their talents and energy to *Olagón*. They embodied the alchemy of Dan Trueman's score that brings elements of traditional Irish music into startling and powerful interaction with contemporary motifs. They found their expression in Paul Muldoon's text, sung in English and Irish Gaelic, and rendering high-speed and multi-dimensional meanings with treacherous wit and style. *Olagón* is a work that demands to be considered on its own terms before a performer can render or interpret it, and it was rewarding to have spent the semester doing so in such great and capable company.

I want to thank all the participating students and graduate students. I am so deeply impressed with every one of you. I thank Gabriel for his brilliance and ability to encourage artists to reach new heights, Iarla and Gelsey for the inspiration of their artistry, Adam for his generous and steady leadership of the ensemble, and of course Dan and Paul for creating this wild world we get to play in.

I also want to thank everyone in the Music Department's technical staff, who all went to heroic measures to meet the sprawling demands of the MPP219 class, and this workshop production. I also thank the Humanities Council for the essential support it gave this whole endeavor.

-Mark DeChiazza

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# SYNOPSIS

The ancient Irish myth, The Táin, is the point of departure for *Olagón*, which casts its Queen Medhbh and King Ailill into contemporary Ireland after the collapse of its “Celtic-Tiger” economy. Medhbh and Ailill, their marriage on the rocks, careen through an Ireland teeming with the ghosts of its past, descending into opposing spirals of defiant indulgence and embittered defeat.

Note: the movement titles that appear [*inside brackets and italicized*] will be omitted from tonight’s workshop performance

## Part I

- 1. Pillow Talk: Ailíll**
- 2. Introductions**
- 3. Pillow Talk: Medhbh**
- 4. The Ways of Men**
- 5. Marbhan’s Shadow**
- 6. Only a Dame**
- 7. A Queen Bee**

## Part II

- 1. Stirrings I**  
[2. *For Eons and Eons*]  
[3. *Stirrings II*]
- 4. Motet for Medhbh**  
[5. *Níl Aon Ton-Ton*]
- 6. Stirrings III**
- 7. You Know It’s a Salmagundi**  
[8. *Stirrings IV*]  
[9. *Marbhan and Guaire*]

## Part III

- [1. *Pillow Talk Remembered: Ailíll*]
  - [2. *Restless Rest*]
  - 3. Ululations I**
  - 4. Zeus to my Demeter**
  - 5. Only on Medhbh**
  - 6. To That Verdant Glen**  
[7. *Ululations II*]
  - 8. Reeling Reels**  
[9. *Ailíll*]
  - 10. The Book of Lamentations**
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# CAST

## The Principals

**Ailíll** - Iarla Ó Lionáird

**Medhbh** - Gelsey Bell

## The Vocal Consort

(in voice order)

Emily Della Pietra

Catherine Keim

Katie Chou

Chloe Webster

Molly Trueman

Lucy McKnight

Cherry Ge

Priya Naphade

Shruti Venkat

Matthew Higgins Iati

Tim Manley

Rupert Peacock

## The Band

Kate Park - flute

Kyle Tsai - clarinet

Kevin Mo - clarinet

Evan Honse - trumpet

Daniel Linden - trombone

Jason Treuting - percussion

Amy Garapic - drum set

Francisco del Pino - electric guitar

Adam Sliwinski - bitklavier

Elinor Detmer - violin

Tienne Yu - violin

Kennedy Dixon - viola

Gabrielle Hooper - cello

Pat Swoboda - double bass

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# CREW

## Teaching Team

**Director** Mark DeChiazza

**Music Director** Gabriel Crouch

**Instrumental specialist** Adam Sliwinski

**Graduate Instructor** Francisco del Pino

## Production Team

**Production Manager** Collin Costa

**Production Assistant** Justin Stanley

**Production Assistant** Codi Yhap

**Stage Manager** Julian Singer-Corbin

**Audio Engineer** Carlos Dias Jr

**Lighting Design** Kerstin Fagerstrom

**Titles/Projection Operator** Elijah Shina

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## Biographies

**Gelsey Bell** is a composer-performer, teacher, and sound artist. She has been described by the New York Times as “one of New York’s most adventurous musicians” and the “future of experimental vocalism.”

Her works often center the voice and range from song cycles and sound walks to collaboratively created operas and structures for improvisation. Her sound walk *Cairns* (2020), created with composer Joseph White, was listed on the New York Times’ Best Theater of 2020 list. She is currently a HARP Artist at the HERE Arts Center, developing a new opera called *mɔ:nɪŋ*. Her song cycles and collaborative works include *SubtracTTTTTTTT* (2020) and *A Series of Landscapes* (2020), created with thingNY; *Skylight* (2019), created with composer and saxophonist Erin Rogers; *Prisoner’s Song* (2015), created with visual artist Erik Ruin; and *This Takes Place Close By* (2015), a collaboratively composed opera by thingNY. She received a 2017 sound/music grant from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and both a residency (2015-2016) and a commission (2013) from Roulette and the Jerome Foundation. She has been a resident artist at Mount Tremper Arts, the Kinosaki International Arts Center, and the Exploring the Metropolis Ridgewood Bushwick Composer-in-Residence. Her work has been performed throughout North America, Europe, and Japan.

Gelsey is a core member of new music ensemble thingNY and performance collective Varispeed. With thingNY, she has collaboratively written and arranged music for multiple projects including *SubtracTTTTTTTT*, *A Series of Landscapes*, *This Takes Place Close By*, *IN HOUSE*, *TIME: A Complete Explanation in Three Parts*, and the many *SPAM* extravaganzas. As a founding member of Varispeed, Gelsey collaboratively arranged and performed in their critically acclaimed adaptation of Robert Ashley’s *Perfect Lives* and John Cage’s *Empty Words*.

Gelsey has also had the honor to have worked with a wide range of performance creators as a vocalist and multi-instrumentalist, including composer Dave Malloy, originating the role Princess Mary in *Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812*, and as Pearl and a co-arranger in *Ghost Quartet*; composer Robert Ashley, in his final opera, *CRASH*, in a part that was written for her; composer Kate Soper, in her opera *Here Be Sirens*; composer John King, alongside Joan La Barbara in his *Micro-Operas*, as well as *Impropera*; choreographer Yasuko Yokoshi, for *BELL*; composers Rick Burkhardt and Brendan Connelly and the Theatre of a Two-Headed Calf, for their opera *You, My Mother*; composer Anthony Gatto and sculpture Chris Larsen in their opera *Wise Blood*; Avant Media, for various performances of the music of John Cage; and Panoply Performance Lab, for the recording of their opera *Institute\_Institut*.

She has published articles in *Tempo*, *Performance Research*, *TDR/The Drama Review*, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary Voice Studies*, and *Movement Research Performance Journal*. She is a Contributing Editor for *TDR/The Drama Review* and an Associate Editor for *The Journal of Interdisciplinary Voice Studies*. She is part-time faculty in the College of Performing Arts at the New School, where she is particularly involved in their MM for Performer-Composers program.

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## Biographies

**Iarla Ó Lionáird** has carved a long and unique career in music both internationally and in Ireland. From his iconic early recording of the vision song “Aisling Gheal” as a young boy to his ground breaking recordings with Dublin’s Crash Ensemble and New York’s Alarm Will Sound, he has shown a breadth of artistic ambition both as songwriter and performer that sets him apart in the Irish Music fraternity. Preferring not be categorized, his performances and recorded output follows an ambitious arc that challenges musical identity, from Traditional Sean Nós Song to Worldbeat, from Alt Folk to Opera.

A twice Grammy nominated artist, Ó Lionáird has worked with a stellar cast of composers internationally including Donnacha Dennehy, Dan Trueman, Nico Muhly, Kate Moore, Linda Buckley, Gavin Bryars, Annika Socolofsky, and David Lang and he has performed and recorded with such luminaries as Peter Gabriel, Nick Cave, Robert Plant and Sinead O’Connor. His unique singing style has carried him to stages and concert halls all over the world, from New York’s Carnegie Hall to the Sydney Opera House, London’s Royal Albert Hall and beyond.

He is the recipient of numerous music related awards: A Meteor Music Award, A TG4 Gradam Ceoil Award, RTE Radio 1 Irish Folk Music Award, BBC Radio 2 Folk Award. And for his broadcasting work he has received both Silver and Gold at the New York Festivals World’s Best Radio Programs Awards for his series on Songs and Singing- “Vocal Chords” for RTE Lyric FM.

Iarla Ó Lionáird has been invited widely to lecture on music at various academic institutions. He was the inaugural Traditional Artist in Residence at UCC, Cork where he delivered the Sean Ó Riada Memorial Lecture. He has lectured variously in The Orpheus Institute, Belgium, Georgetown University, Washington DC, University of Notre Dame, Indiana and Glucksman Ireland House at NYU. In 2017 he was awarded a Belknap Fellowship by the Humanities Council at Princeton University where he taught courses in songwriting and verse-craft. Subsequently he took up the position of Global Scholar at Princeton and was appointed as visiting Lecturer in Music, teaching courses at post Graduate level for both the Music and English Literature departments.

Iarla has performed as soloist with concert and symphony orchestras including the Ulster Orchestra, The National Symphony Orchestra at The Kennedy Centre, USA, The Irish National Symphony Orchestra and the RTE Concert Orchestra. He has also recorded and performed with a wide range of Chamber and smaller ensembles across the world including Contemporaneous, Alarm Will Sound, So Percussion, Eighth Blackbird, Present Music, The Vanburgh Quartet, The West Ocean Quartet, Publiq Quartet, Quartetto Maurice and the Crash Ensemble.

His voice has graced the silver screen also with film credits extending from “The Gangs of New York” to “Hotel Rwanda” and most recently as featured vocalist in the film “Calvary” starring Brendan Gleeson and as featured singer in the film “Brooklyn” starring Saoirse Ronan. He is co-founder and vocalist with the acclaimed Irish /American band “The Gloaming.”

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