

Birr Festival of Music

Presents

The Trench
Award 2020
&
Music in
Birr Castle

- Online -



Birr, Co. Offaly

057 9122911 www.birrtheatre.com



Birr Festival of Music 2020 - online

Following Theatre closures nationwide on March 12th 2020, and with much regret, the committee of Birr Festival of Music soon after announced the postponement of the Festival, following Government guidelines to curtail the spread of Covid19.

As it became clear that live performances would be severely restricted for the foreseeable future, with international artists continuing to face unpredictable travel restrictions, the Festival sought new ways to deliver part of its 2020 programme online.

We are delighted to present two of the Festival's highlights, the Trench Award Gala and Music in Birr Castle, to be recorded and streamed online, and are immensely grateful

to Birr Theatre & Arts Centre and to Lord & Lady Rosse of Birr Castle for facilitating this.

Sincere thanks also to the Arts Council of Ireland, Offaly County Council Arts Office, and Offaly Local Development Company for its grant aid in support of the artists originally engaged.

To the JVM Trench Trust and Birr Lions Club for consistently supporting Birr Festival of Music in bringing great music to diverse audiences.

We thank, and miss, all our Patrons, Sponsors and Audiences of past years and we look forward to meeting again, hopefully, at a wonderful LIVE Festival in 2021.



The Trench Award 2019. Back L - R, Adjudicators Enda O'Connor, Julian Evans, Bruno Caproni. Front L - R, Finalists Matthew Mannion, Leah Redmond, Aidan Chan, Dylan Rooney, Breffni Fitzpatrick, Brian Flanagan.

Festival Steering Committee: Maureen de Forge, Tommy Lyndon, Emma Nee Haslam, Enda O'Connor, Rebecca Kelly, Michelle de Forge Pascal Kennedy, Anne O'Callaghan Rowan.

The Trench Award 2020 Programme

Orlaith McHugh *Violin*

Violin Sonata No. 2 in G major (*1st movement*)
Waltz from Suite Op. 6

Grieg
Britten

Jessica Hackett *Soprano*

Wo Bin Ich? *Hansel and Gretel*
A Young Maid Stood in her Father's Garden
Donde Lieta Uscì *La Bohème*
Widmung, Op.25 No. 1
Gavotte *Manon*

Humberdinck
arr. Hughes
Puccini
Schumann
Massenet

Ben Cannon *Oboe*

Elegy for Oboe and Piano
The Salley Gardens
'Rondo Pastorale' (*Oboe Concerto*)
Gabriel's Oboe

Rota
arr. Britten
Vaughan Williams
Morricone

Mollie Wrafter *Violin*

Sonata No. 5 (*1st movement*)
Pirin
Etude No. 3

Ysaye
Tabakova
Piazzolla

Sarah Luttrell *Mezzo Soprano*

Jemand
Pena tiranna io sento *Amadigi di Guala*
O Men From The Fields
I Was A Constant, Faithful Wife *The Bear*

Schumann
Handel
Hughes
Walton

Peter Regan *Piano*

Après une lecture du Dante *Années de pèlerinage* Liszt

Accompanist Dearbhla Collins

Selection Panel Bruno Caproni, Julian Evans and Enda O'Connor.

This year the Panel will adjudicate remotely and Awards will be announced at a later date.



The Trench



Orlaith McHugh *Violin*

Beginning her violin studies at the age of six, Orlaith holds an Hons MA in Music Performance from Cork Institute of Technology - CIT.

She is now studying in Gothenburg, Sweden, and continues with her Masters in Symphonic Orchestra Performance there in 2020/21.

As well as playing with various international orchestras she has performed in masterclasses for renowned musicians including Maxim Vengerov and Ray Chen.



Jessica Hackett *Soprano*

Undertaking an MA in Advanced Opera Performance at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Jessica was also a Studio Artist with Northern Ireland Opera Opera 2018/19.

An avid crossover singer, she has performed many leading roles in Opera and Musicals including *Sweeney Todd*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Cendrillon*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Rigoletto* (Gilda cover).



Ben Gannon *Oboe*

Ben, who made his solo debut in Carnegie Hall in 2017, is a winner of many awards including the Birr Lions Club bursary in 2018.

He was also a finalist in the Irish Freemasons Young Musician of the Future 2019, and performs frequently with the RTÉ National Symphony and Concert Orchestras, and Ulster Orchestra.

He is currently pursuing his BA in Music Performance at the Royal Irish Academy of Music.

Award 2020



Mollie Wrafter *Violin*

Currently studying at the RNCM - Royal Northern College of Music Mollie was awarded the Irish Heritage Performance Bursary 2019/2020.

Notable performances of this season include the Wigmore Hall and National Concert Hall, Dublin, Ireland. A multi-prize winner at Feis Ceoil, Mollie performed with the Irish National Youth Orchestra, with SinfoNua under conductor David Brophy, with the RNCM Symphony Orchestra, and received the Musical Futures bursary at the Trench Awards in 2016.

She is an avid champion and performer of chamber music, contemporary music and music composed by females.



Sarah Luttrell *Mezzo Soprano*

An Hons graduate of TUD Conservatory of Music & Drama, Sarah, a mezzo soprano, has performed as a soloist for many oratorios including Handels *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Vivaldis *Gloria* in various venues throughout Ireland.

Opera performances include *La Boheme* with Lyric Opera, *Don Pasquale* with Blackwater Valley Opera Festival and 'Die Fledermaus' with Northern Ireland Opera.

She continues her studies at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2020/21.



Peter Regan *Piano*

Peter's playing has brought him to Carnegie Hall New York, the Center for Performing Arts Toronto, the National Concert Hall, Dublin, Ireland and to London and Madrid.

He also has performed in festivals in Westport, Clondeboye, Boyle and the Winterval Festival.

He graduated from the Glen Gould School of Music in 2018 studying under John O'Connor and is currently pursuing a Masters at the Royal College of Music London.

The Trench Award

The purpose of this award is to assist a singer/musician from the Midlands/Mid-West region to develop their professional career through further study at a University/Music College/ accredited music establishment, in Ireland or abroad, undertaking classical music studies in pursuit of a career in professional performance.

Birr Lions Club Bursary

This award is named in recognition of Birr Lions Club's ongoing support for Birr Festival of Music which is greatly appreciated. They have generously supported numerous community, educational and cultural organisations in Birr since its establishment in 1974.

Canto Al Serchio Award

Awarded to a singer in the Trench Award final, this is a residency at the Summer Academy in Tuscany of renowned baritone Bruno Caproni and pianist Julian Evans. The recipient joins a small group of international singers for vocal coaching, Italian lessons and performance opportunities, visiting Puccini's birthplace in nearby Lucca, and generally immersing themselves in Italian culture.

The Audrey Chisholm Award

In memory of the late Audrey Chisholm, concert pianist and hugely popular teacher for many years at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Dublin. Audrey grew up on Oxmantown Mall, Birr, her father William was head forester at Birr Castle, her mother Ciss taught piano and gave Audrey her first lessons. Awarded to an instrumentalist, this is a new annual award, funded from Audrey's estate by her brother Danvers, and curated by Linda O'Shea Farran.



Musical Futures 2020

A bursary awarded to a midland student entering full-time music studies in the classical field. The 2020 recipient is Aoibhin Keogh Daly who began playing cello at age 7, and studied with Péter Sebestyén in Limerick for many years. She now studies with Christopher Marwood in Cork and has performed as a soloist and in chamber music concerts, on RTE's Late Late Toy Show and on Nationwide.

Music In Birr Castle

Rachel Goode *soprano*

Rachel's programme includes songs by Antonin Dvorak, Francis Poulenc and Hamilton Harty. She was a finalist in the Trench Award 2016; is an Honours graduate from DIT with a masters from the Royal Welsh College of Music. She made her solo debut with Irish National Opera, Wexford Festival Opera, Opera Collective and Welsh National Opera in the past two years.



Ann Hogan *mezzo soprano*

Ann presents *An American Songbook*. Her selection includes some of Aaron Copland's settings of poems by Emily Dickinson, expressing themes of Nature, Life, Love, Time and Eternity; songs by Pulitzer Prize winner Ned Rorem and William Bolcom's *Cabaret Songs*, which combine humour and pathos in equal measure. A graduate of UCC and RNCM Manchester, Ann is noted for her dramatic and often humorous interpretation of diverse music genres, ranging from classical to jazz to contemporary.



Dearbhla Collins *pianist*

One of Ireland's finest and most successful pianists, Dearbhla has toured in Europe, China and the USA, partnering many internationally renowned singers in concerts, recitals and recordings. Vocal coach at the RIAM, assistant head of music at London's National Opera Studio and artistic administrator for the Veronica Dunne International Singing Competition.



Birr Festival of Music

Incorporating **The Trench Award**, now in its seventh year, the aim of Birr Festival of Music is to expand the profile and enjoyment of classical music for all; to support emerging professional musicians in their training and development, with bursaries, masterclasses and performance opportunities.

Julia and Patrick Trench had an abiding love of music. Both sang, played piano, organ, flute and harp and were noted for their musical evenings at their home at Sopwell Hall, North Tipperary. Julia was one of the many generous benefactors of the establishment of Birr Theatre & Arts Centre.

Birr Festival of Music greatly appreciates the continuing generous support of the JVM Trust, which this year also enables the filming and streaming online of the Trench Awards Gala, as well as the awarding of much valued bursaries to young musicians and singers at a time of uncertain pathways ahead.



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