



Advance Program Notes

Crash Ensemble

Wednesday, March 25, 2015, 7:30 PM

These Advance Program Notes are provided online for our patrons who like to read about performances ahead of time. Printed programs will be provided to patrons at the performances. Programs are subject to change.

Crash Ensemble

Donnacha Dennehy: *Turn* (arrangement for Crash Ensemble 2015)

Dan Truman: *Marbles* (2015) world premiere

Intermission

Eric Lyon: *Dualities* (2015) world premiere

Michael Gordon: *Dry* (2013) U.S. premiere

Musicians

Anna Cashell, *violin*

Lisa Dowdall, *viola*

Kate Ellis, *cello*

Malachy Robinson, *double bass*

Susan Doyle, *flute*

Deirdre O'Leary, *clarinet/bass clarinet*

Roddy O'Keeffe, *trombone*

Alex Petcu, *percussion*

Isabelle O'Connell, *piano*

John Godfrey, *electric guitar*

Conductor

Alan Pierson

Production

Adrian Hart, *production manager and electronics*

Valerie Francis, *front of house sound engineer*

Management

Kate Ellis, *artistic director*

Donnacha Dennehy, *artistic partner*

Neva Elliott, *CEO*

Jonathan Pearson, *tour/concerts manager*

Program Notes

TURN (2013-14; arrangement for Crash Ensemble, 2015; U.S. premiere)
DONNACHA DENNEHY

This intricate, detailed piece is one of the most overtly melodic of my purely instrumental works in years. Gently lunging melodies combine to produce a bustling tapestry of sound. *Turn* literally turns over its phrases, varying upon each repetition. Once I decided to dedicate this piece to my mother, an inveterate knitter, it struck me: that's exactly what a turn is in knitting, a reworking on top of an already established stitched pattern!

On a larger level *Turn* pushes towards build-ups that end each time with a literal turn in direction. This in a major way constitutes the *modus operandi* of the piece.

Commissioned by Contact Contemporary Music, with funding provided by the Arts Council of Ireland

MARBLES (2015) world premiere
DAN TRUEEMAN

Marbles began as an etude (one of eight etudes called *Nostalgic Synchronic*) of the same name for "prepared digital piano," an instrument I designed to explore various metric and tuning ideas. The etude itself remains largely untouched in this setting, and is adorned and recontextualized in various ways by larger ensemble. With regards to the title: the little bits of rubber that racecar tires shed while turning are sometimes called "marbles." Sonically this seems about right for this etude, but I also like the racecar driving metaphor; the driver is not expending energy directly to drive the car, but is rather virtuosically handling a powerful beast, sometime slowing it down, pushing it one way, using the smallest muscles as well as the largest. We should have more musical instruments that are like racecars.

DUALITIES (2015) world premiere
ERIC LYON

Dualities inhabits areas between the two poles of electro-acoustic music: the embodied acoustic, located in resonating physical instruments and the human actions that excite them to vibration, and the disembodied electronic, in which the mechanism of control is separated from the sound qualities themselves. Electronic sound is constantly in search of an interface, and for *Dualities*, the interface is an instrument called the BioMuse, a set of on-body sensors created by Ben Knapp, director of the Institute of Creativity, Arts, and Technology at Virginia Tech, and Hugh Lusted to transform human biosignals into music.

Dualities is a double concerto for cello, performed by Kate Ellis, and BioMuse, performed by Knapp. The cellist inhabits the more intimate space of the sounding body of the cello, while the BioMuse is assigned the much larger space of the concert hall, itself. A significant portion of Knapp's BioMuse performance involves controlling motion and dispersal of recordings of Ellis and the Crash Ensemble into and around the performance space.

Most of the musical materials in *Dualities* derive from two basic ideas: a four-note chord initially presented in the cello part, and more elementally, the harmonic series of the C string of the cello. Toward the end of the piece, the harmonic series of the C string is disassembled and dispersed around the performance hall, providing the backdrop for an extended melody articulated exclusively on C string cello harmonics. Ultimately, the dualities of the piece resolve into a single note, returned to its place of origin on the cello.

DRY (2013) U.S. premiere

Dry was commissioned by the Kilkenny Arts Festival for Crash Ensemble with funding from the Arts Council of Ireland.

About Crash Ensemble

Crash Ensemble is Ireland's leading new music ensemble; a group of world-class musicians who play the most adventurous, ground-breaking music of today.

"Crash Ensemble, an Irish new-music collective with international cachet and considerable chops."
—*The Washington Post*

Founded in 1997 by composer Donnacha Dennehy, Crash plays music that is not part of the classical establishment; music that is new, communicative, that explodes the notion of what music is and can be.

The ensemble has worked with many well-known artists from diverse musical backgrounds, including Steve Reich, Gavin Friday, Dawn Upshaw, Terry Riley, David Lang, Íarla Ó Lionáird, Julie Feeney, Gerald Barry, Gavin Bryars, Michael Gordon, and Louis Andriessen. Crash Ensemble has recorded for NMC, Cantaloupe, and most recently Nonesuch, with the release of *Grá agus Bás* by Donnacha Dennehy (2011), which received international praise, including five stars from *The Guardian* (U.K.). In addition to performing regularly throughout Ireland, Crash has appeared in the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, the U.K., Australia, Canada, and the U.S. Crash commissions new works from the most distinctive living composers, collaborates with culturally relevant artists, and creates exciting performances to the highest standards and record original works. We are adventurous, innovative, and ambitious.

Recent notable events:

Nonesuch record's 50th anniversary, May 17-18, 2014, The Barbican, London

U.S. tour, 2013: Carnegie Hall, New York City; The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C.; and Princeton University

The Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, 2012: three-date residency including festival opening concert

Selected commissions: Nico Muhly (2011), Glenn Branca (2012), Valgeir Sigurðsson (2013), and Michael Gordon (2013)

What the press says:

"Massiveness and impact are characteristics that the Crash Ensemble rarely lack." —*The Irish Times*

"The Irish new-music band that plays with the energy and spirit of a rock group." —*The New York Times*

"The Crash Ensemble's feverant performances would be a sensation at the Proms." —*The Times* (U.K.)

"...you want to tap your feet, but two feet rarely seem enough." —*The Guardian* (U.K.)

Biographies

DONNACHA DENNEHY

Born in Dublin in 1970, Donnacha Dennehy has received commissions from Dawn Upshaw, the Kronos Quartet, Alarm Will Sound, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Bang on a Can All-Stars, Lucilin, Contact (Toronto), Electra, the Fidelio Trio, Icebreaker, Joanna MacGregor, Orkest de Ereprijs, Orkest de Volharding, Percussion Group of the Hague, RTE National Symphony Orchestra, the Ulster Orchestra (BBC Radio 3), Smith Quartet, and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, among others. Collaborations include pieces with the writer Enda Walsh (*Misterman* and a forthcoming opera), choreographers Yoshiko Chuma (*To Herbert Brun*) and Shobana Jeyasingh (*Hinterlands*), and the visual artist John Gerrard (*Composition for Percussion, Loops, Blips, and Flesh*). His work has featured in festivals such as the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival in the U.K., which opened its 2012 festival with a portrait concert devoted to Dennehy's music; ISCM World Music Days; Carnegie Hall's Contemporary Music Subscription Series in 2013 and forthcoming in 2014; WNYC's New Sounds Live; Bang on a Can; Ultima Festival in Oslo; Musica Viva Lisbon; the Saarbrücken Festival; the Schleswig-Holstein Festival; and the Gaudeamus Festival in Amsterdam. In 2010 his large, single-movement orchestral piece *Crane* was recommended by the International Rostrum of Composers. Returning to Ireland after studies abroad at the University of Illinois (U.S.), Ircam (France), and the Netherlands, Dennehy founded the Crash Ensemble, Dublin's now renowned new music group, in 1997. Crash Ensemble is very much associated with the performance of many of Dennehy's landmark works, including the pieces *Grá Agus Bás* (with singer Iarla O' Lionaird) and *That the Night Come* (with Dawn Upshaw), which feature on Dennehy's 2011 release on Nonesuch Records (entitled *Grá Agus Bás*). *The Guardian*, in a five-star review of that disc, referred to the music's "startling freshness." NPR named the disc one of its 50 Favorite Albums (in any genre) of 2011. In October 2014, RTE Lyric FM released a disc of Dennehy's orchestral music. Other releases include a number by NMC Records in London and an EP of his piano music, released by Cantaloupe Records in New York in 2012. Previously a tenured lecturer at Trinity College Dublin, Dennehy was appointed a global scholar at Princeton University in the autumn of 2012. He was also appointed composer-in-residence for the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in Texas (2013-14). In 2014 Dennehy joined the music faculty at Princeton University.

DAN TRUEMAN

Dan Trueman is a composer, fiddler, and electronic musician. He began studying violin at the age of four, and decades later, after a chance encounter, fell in love with the Norwegian Hardanger fiddle, an instrument and tradition that has deeply affected all of his work, whether as a fiddler, a composer, or musical explorer. Trueman has worked with many groups and musicians, including Trollstilt and QQQ, the American Composers Orchestra, So Percussion, the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, the Brentano and Daedalus string quartets, the Crash Ensemble, and many wonderful fiddlers, and he has performed across America, Ireland, and Norway. His explorations have extended into new technologies; Trueman co-founded the Princeton Laptop Orchestra, the first ensemble of its size and kind that has led to the formation of similarly inspired ensembles across the world, from Oslo to Dublin, to Stanford and Bangkok. Trueman's compositional work reflects this complex and broad range of activities, exploring rhythmic connections between traditional dance music and machines, for instance, or engaging with the unusual phrasing, tuning, and ornamentation of the traditional Norwegian music while trying to discover new music that is singularly inspired by, and only possible with, new digital instruments that he designs and constructs. Trueman's work has been recognized by fellowships and grants from the Guggenheim and MacArthur Foundations, among others. He is professor of music and director of the Princeton Sound Kitchen at Princeton University, where he teaches counterpoint, electronic music, and composition.

Biographies, continued

ERIC LYON

Eric Lyon is a composer and computer music researcher. His work focuses on articulated noise, spatial orchestration, and computer chamber music. His software includes FFTease and LyonPotpourri, collections of audio objects written for Max/MSP and Pd. He is the author of *Designing Audio Objects for Max/MSP and Pd*, which explicates the process of designing and implementing audio DSP externals. In 2011, Lyon was awarded a Giga-Hertz prize from ZKM, resulting in the creation of the 43-channel computer music composition *Spirits*. His 124-channel composition *The Cascades* was recently premiered in the Cube at the Moss Arts Center. He has composed for such artists as The Biomuse Trio, Margaret Lancaster, The Noise Quartet, Ensemble mise-en, String Noise, Kathleen Supové, and Marianne Gythfeldt. Lyon has taught computer music at Keio University, IAMAS, Dartmouth College, Manchester University, and Queen's University Belfast. Currently, he teaches in the School of Performing Arts at Virginia Tech and is a fellow at the Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology.

MICHAEL GORDON

Michael Gordon's music merges subtle rhythmic invention with incredible power, embodying, in the words of *The New Yorker's* Alex Ross, "the fury of punk rock, the nervous brilliance of free jazz, and the intransigence of classical modernism." Over the past 25 years, Gordon has produced a strikingly diverse body of work, ranging from large-scale pieces for high-energy ensembles to major orchestral commissions to works conceived specifically for the recording studio. Transcending categorization, this music represents the collision of mysterious introspection and brutal directness. He is co-founder and co-artistic director of New York's legendary music collective Bang on a Can. For more information, visit www.michaelgordonmusic.com.

ALAN PIERSON, *conductor*

Alan Pierson has been praised as "a young conductor of monstrous skill" by *Newsday*, "commanding" by *The New York Times*, and "gifted and electrifying" by the *Boston Globe*. He is the artistic director and conductor of the Brooklyn Philharmonic and of Alarm Will Sound, which has been called "the future of classical music" by *The New York Times* and "a sensational force" with "powerful ideas about how to renovate the concert experience" by *The New Yorker*. Pierson has appeared as a guest conductor with the London Sinfonietta, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, the Steve Reich Ensemble, Carnegie Hall's Ensemble ACJW, the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, the New World Symphony, and The Silk Road Project, among other ensembles. He has also been visiting faculty conductor at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and the Eastman School of Music. He has collaborated with major composers and performers, including Yo Yo Ma, Steve Reich, Dawn Upshaw, Osvaldo Golijov, John Adams, Augusta Read Thomas, David Lang, Michael Gordon, La Monte Young, and choreographers Christopher Wheeldon, Akram Khan, and Elliot Feld. Pierson has recorded for Nonesuch Records, Cantaloupe Music, Sony Classical, and Sweetspot DVD.

Upcoming Events

IRELAND 2015

April 2: *Born in the '80s*, Wexford Arts Centre

April 11: *Born in the '80s*, Walled City Music, Derry

September 4: *Born in the '80s*, The Dock Arts Centre, Leitrim

September 19: Bedroom Community album launch, with guests, Cork

September: Free State 9, Dublin

November 5: *Born in the '80s*, The Crescent Arts Centre, Belfast

Tickets available from venues/festivals.

Buy one of Crash Ensemble's albums at www.crashensemble.com.

Sign up for the newsletter at www.crashensemble.com/newsletter for more concerts in 2015 in Ireland, Scotland, and England.

Concert enquiries:

Please contact

Neva Elliott, CEO

Tel: +353 1 4170066

Email: admin@crashensemble.com

The National Concert Hall, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2

Stay in touch



Crash Ensemble are supported by:



Engagement Activities

Wednesday, March 25, 2015, 5:30-7 PM

Irish Beer Tasting

Balcony Lobby, Street and Davis Performance Hall

Keith Roberts, owner of the Vintage Cellar wine and beer shop in Blacksburg, has personally selected a host of Irish beers and ciders for this tasting and will be describing for the participants each beverage's special qualities, including insights to the brewing process, flavors and ingredients, and the similarities and differences between the selections. With each ticket, six tastings will be given. Light hors d'oeuvres will be served. Space is limited.

Wednesday, March 25, 2015, 7:30 PM

Tweet Seats Master Class

Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre, Street and Davis Performance Hall

Select students from Virginia Tech's School of Performing Arts will participate in a Twitter-based educational discussion led by Tracy Cowden, faculty chair of music and associate professor, and Charles Nichols, assistant professor, School of Performing Arts at Virginia Tech, during the performance by Crash Ensemble. Tweet Seats Master Class participants are seated in the back row of the mezzanine and employ black boxes to prevent the light from their electronic devices from disturbing other patrons.

Wednesday, March 25, 2015, following the performance

Q&A with Artists from Crash Ensemble

Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre, Street and Davis Performance Hall

Following the performance, interact with artists from Crash Ensemble in this question-and-answer discussion.

SPECIAL THANKS:

Vintage Cellar, Tracy Cowden, Charles Nichols, and Keith Roberts

In the Galleries



Shinique Smith

Gnosis, 2013

Ink, fabric, and acrylic on wood panel

48 x 48 x 5 inches

Courtesy of the artist and James Cohan Gallery, New York/Shanghai

Explore CONNECTIONS between works of art, artists, and viewers; between art past and present; and between ideas and their aesthetic manifestation.

THREADED

Three one-person exhibitions

featuring Shinique Smith, Angelo Filomeno, and Polly Apfelbaum

Through Sunday, April 12, 2015

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10 AM-6 PM/Saturday-Sunday, 10 AM-4 PM

Three one-person exhibitions by renowned artists Shinique Smith, Angelo Filomeno, and Polly Apfelbaum, who work with threaded material as their medium, mining its symbolic significance while creating fascinating and unexpected visual forms