



TOTEMIC

Nathan Sherman (viola) and Alex Petcu (percussion)

Sunday 30th October 2022, 1pm

Cowdray Hall

Programme

Benedict Schlepper-Connolly	<i>One Thing I Know</i>
Kate Moore	<i>Crucible</i>
Ian Wilson	<i>TOTEMIC*</i>

*Co-commissioned by Belfast Music Society, **sound** and New Music Dublin.

In association with Aberdeen Archives, Gallery & Museums.



Programme notes

Benedict Schlepper-Connolly *One Thing I Know*

One Thing I Know (2022) began in a rehearsal with violist Nathan Sherman, and was sparked by the simple enjoyment of the low C# on the viola's C string, a note with a characteristic all of its own. The work developed from here, continuing a childlike appreciation of individual sounds, adding in a custom assembly of percussion instruments, some of which were built by percussionist Alex Petcu himself. While working on the piece, I came across the poetry – and tragic life – of Edeltraud Eckert, who was arrested for her opposition to the East German government in 1950, and who died in prison at the age of 24 in 1954. Her poem 'Eines weiß ich' is absurdly optimistic for a better future, and lends this piece its title. *One Thing I Know* was commissioned by Nathan Sherman and Alex Petcu with funds from the Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon.

Kate Moore *Crucible*

The title of *Crucible* (2022) was inspired by the play of the same name by Arthur Miller about the witch trials in Salem in the 17th century. The composition follows on from an earlier work of mine that invokes Saint Brigid to protect the chanter from

harm at the hands of her pursuers. St Brigid was named after the Celtic goddess Brigid who was a triple Goddess who presided over three flames: that of inspiration, poetry, and music; that of hearth, family, and children; and that of the forge, iron mongering, and the crucible. *Crucible* was commissioned by Alex Petcu and Nathan Sherman in 2021.

Ian Wilson *TOTEMIC*

Totemic (2020) is both a response to Berio's *Naturale* and an exploration of quiet sonic gestures. Fragments of my own melody to the old Irish song *The Mountain Streams* come and go while part of my 1996 piano solo *A Haunted Heart* also appears twice as a farewell to a unique person in my life who died shortly after I completed the work.

TOTEMIC was co-commissioned by Belfast Music Society, New Music Dublin and **sound**. It was recently released to critical acclaim on the Ergodos album of the same name.

Biographies

Nathan Sherman

Nathan Sherman is an American-born viola player currently based in Dublin. From an early age Nathan was drawn to the dark sounds of the viola and has dedicated his life to the exploration of the instrument. Passionate about new music, Nathan has premiered many works and has recorded and broadcast with Ergodos, Crash Ensemble, Kirkos, and Evlana. His album, *Totemic* with percussionist Alex Petcu received critical acclaim with Nathan's sound being described as "rich and raw"-*Journal of Music*.

Nathan is Artistic Director and violist of Ficino Ensemble, an acclaimed music group that is devoted to the performance of classical and contemporary chamber music. The group recently released a debut recording, *Winter*, with music by Garrett Sholdice, Maurice Ravel and Johannes Brahms which was hailed as "intelligently programmed and superbly played." (*Classical Ear*). The ensemble regularly performs as a string quartet at the National Concert Hall String Quartet Series and will release a second album, *Folk Songs* in July 2022.

As an orchestral player, Nathan plays with all the orchestras of Ireland and has performed throughout Europe, China, South America, the Kennedy Center (Washington DC), Les Châteaux de Versailles (Paris), Royal Albert Hall (London) and the Palazzo Ducale (Mantova). As a Baroque violist, Nathan regularly appears with the Irish Baroque Orchestra, Camerata Kilkenny and Ensemble Marsyas.

Nathan founded the community string group Offbeat Ensemble with his wife in 2013. Their work with the group of string players has been recognized for its

determination, innovation and excellence in teaching adults the joys of performing in a string orchestra.

Alex Petcu

An Irish musician of Romanian origin, Alex is quickly establishing himself both nationally and internationally as a percussionist of the finest calibre. His debut album, "Alex Petcu: In Time", released on the RTE lyric fm label, showcases both seminal works and new contributions to the percussion repertoire.

Alex performs in a wide variety of settings with a multitude of orchestras, ensembles and groups, however, his main specialty lies in solo and chamber music. As a soloist, recent appearances include performances at the West Cork Chamber Music Festival, Kilruddery House and National Concert Hall to name a few. He has performed as a soloist with both RTE orchestras and the Irish Chamber Orchestra, and had successes in major national and international competitions such as the Irish Freemasons Young Musician of the Year, Tromp and A.R.D. International competitions.

Alex enjoys being involved in the creation of new music for percussion and regularly collaborates with composers. Examples of recent projects include "*Beats, Bells and Bridges*" and the Abbey Theatre's production of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, both collaborations with composer Tom Lane, "*A Most Peculiar Wintry Thing*", a children's show jointly commissioned by The Ark and Music Network with music composed by Brian Irvine and "*Invitation to a Journey*", a dance/theatre/music collaboration with music by Deirdre Gribbin. He is a regular performer with the Crash and Hard Rain ensembles, two of Ireland's main contemporary groups, and is a founding member of the Bangers and Crash Percussion Group, a new exciting percussion ensemble.

Alex also enjoys performing in an orchestral setting and is a regular extra player for the various professional ensembles in Ireland such as the RTE Symphony, RTE Concert, Irish Chamber, Irish Baroque and Ulster orchestras. Aside from his performing activities, he is also a keen teacher and currently teaches percussion at the CIT Cork School of Music. He has also given lecture recitals at Ireland's universities, provided workshops for West Cork Music's "Tuning Up" outreach scheme, Music Network, the ESB and more. He also holds an MA in music performance from the CIT Cork School of Music and an MSc and BSc in Physics from University College Cork.

Ian Wilson

Ian Wilson (Northern Ireland, 1964) has composed more than 200 works including operas, a range of orchestral and chamber music, and multimedia pieces.

His compositions have been performed and broadcast on six continents and presented at festivals including the BBC Proms, Venice Biennale and

Gaudeamus and at venues such as New York's Carnegie Hall, London's Royal Albert Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and Tokyo's Suntory Hall. There are over 30 commercial recordings of his music available.

In 1998 he was elected to Aosdána, Ireland's national association of creative artists, and since then he has been AHRB Research Fellow at the University of Ulster and "An Foras Feasa" post-Doctoral Research Fellow at Dundalk Institute of Technology as well as composer-in-association with California's Camerata Pacifica ensemble, the Ulster Orchestra, and the Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble. He was director of the Sligo New Music Festival from 2003 to 2011.

Ian Wilson's music is published by G. Ricordi & Co. and Universal Edition.

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