

GREG CAFFREY

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

# ENVIRONMENTS

divine art



# ENVIRONMENTS ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

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**GREG CAFFREY** B.1963

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>1. AINGEAL II (2021)</b><br>String Orchestra and Percussion                    | <b>9.22</b>  |
| <b>2. ENVIRONMENTS II (2012)</b><br>Solo Guitar, String Orchestra and Percussion* | <b>12.23</b> |
| <b>A TERRIBLE BEAUTY (2013 - 2019)</b><br>Sinfonietta Orchestra**                 | <b>20.14</b> |
| <b>3. These are the clouds about the fallen sun</b>                               | <b>7:40</b>  |
| <b>4. Things fall apart: the centre cannot hold</b>                               | <b>4:43</b>  |
| <b>5. ...for peace comes dropping slow</b>                                        | <b>7:49</b>  |
| <b>6. ENVIRONMENTS I (2011)</b><br>Solo Piano and Symphony Orchestra              | <b>16.50</b> |

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\* prizewinning work in the **International Conductors Union Composition Contest**, Ukraine 2021

\*\* recommended work\* in the **4<sup>th</sup> Uno Klami Composition Prize**

**TOTAL TIME: 58:49**

## NOTE ON THE RECORDING

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This recording was engineered and produced for reproduction using the Dolby Atmos Music immersive audio format. Dolby Atmos Music is a surround sound delivery format utilising height. This allows the sound engineer to locate sound materials around and above the listener within a hemispherical dome, enabling a more enveloping, three-dimensional presentation of the original performance environment.

The Dolby Atmos version of this album is available as a download.

# FOREWORD

## BY THE COMPOSER

O

n the bleak and rainy morning of 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2023 I found myself walking along the infamous republican Falls Road, Belfast, and over towards the loyalist Shankill. It was an area I'd

known as a teenager, which alas had changed very little in the intervening 40 odd years. Nevertheless, the Divis Flats are largely gone now and the scars of melted tarmac on the roads that once bore witness to horrific civil strife are now healed. My destination was the old Townsend Street Church, situated right adjacent to iron gates that are still in place to close off that road in the evenings through to early morning. This 'peace wall' is part of an extensive infrastructure still in place even 25 years after the Good Friday Agreement. But one fairly recent and significant change in this area has been the Ulster Orchestra's adoption of this previous presbyterian church as their new home; a brave new initiative.

After entering the building and settling in the room allocated as a control room space for this recording, I began to think about the significance of the recording happening in this location; in this 'environment' if you like. The irony that I was sitting in front of this orchestra was not lost on me. The guy who had no significant musical education at his school in west Belfast due to the severity of

The Troubles in the 1970s (one might be pushed to say, education of any kind!), was now undertaking a recording project that would have then seemed fantastically fanciful, had I even managed to somehow envisage it. And, it occurred to me that while none of the music on this album aims to say anything, perhaps it says everything? This was, after all, my environment, and these [on disc] are my 'Environments'.

The release of any portrait album by a composer will always be a milestone. The release of a portrait album of orchestral music is a monumental thing. Recording an hour of contemporary music for orchestral forces, in Dolby Atmos Surround Sound (as in this case), is logistically difficult and requires not just faith in one's own music, but the faith of so many others inherent in the process of production. That belief must be reciprocal; one requires a good team to make such an album.

This album chronicles a journey of over 12 years (if not the journey of a lifetime) from the composition of the first piece in 2011 to the commitment of the works to this disc. Along the way there have been premieres, broadcasts and awards for these works, and while each achievement seems to have been hard fought, the process has nonetheless been rewarding. ➡

**Environments I & II** arrived first, the fruit of my endeavours on residencies at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris during two consecutive years (2011 & 2012). Each piece took close to 3 months to create. They are the most abstract of the four works included, having no programme, but rather each dealing with a particular technical approach I was exploring in this period. While that description of the work's development may sound rather academic, on the contrary, I consider these pieces as representing some of the more intuitive music in my output. The two works are contrasted in their instrumental scale, in consideration of the solo instruments they employ. **Environments I** harnesses the full symphony orchestra, with harp and four percussion, alongside the formidable pianistic talent of **Daniel Browell**. **Environments II** is pared down to a chamber orchestra string size with percussion, to accommodate the quiet voice of the guitar, performed here by the incredible **Craig Ogden**. The piece was a prizewinning work in the **2021 Conductors Union Composition Prize** and was to have its premiere in Odessa, Ukraine, but world events intervened, as they do in my experience. Both works were given their premiere performances and broadcasts (BBC Radio 3) by the Ulster Orchestra and so the UO's involvement in this project feels so appropriate.

**A Terrible Beauty** was written over a period of eight years, with each movement arriving as separate works, but with the overall three movement single-work architecture always the plan. It exists in a version for chamber group, written for the **Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble** (a group for whom I served as Artistic Director for ten years) and also in the version here, for a sinfonietta sized orchestra. The three movements each take a poem by **WB Yeats** as inspiration. However, the music is a response to, rather than a depiction of, the poetry. The work was designated a 'recommended work' in the **4<sup>th</sup> Uno Klami Composition Prize** by an illustrious jury including Magnus Lindberg and Erik Sven Tüür.

**Aingeal** ('Angel' in the Irish language) is without doubt the most personal work on the album since its inspiration was a person close to me. This beautiful person endured such pain and tragedy in her short life. Abstract nature of our art aside, if music can reflect beauty, pain and suffering then I'd be happy if it succeeded in that here. The piece is written for string orchestra and percussion.

© **Greg Caffrey**

# GREG CAFFREY B.1963

## COMPOSER

The Irish composer Greg Caffrey read music at Queen's University Belfast, studying composition under Prof. Piers Hellawell and complexist composer James Clarke, completing a PhD in 2002. His music is commissioned and performed internationally.

Numerous awards for composition include: First Prize at the **Concorso Counterpoint**, Italy in May 2012, finalist in the **ISME- IVME 2<sup>nd</sup> International Composition Contest** in Brussels in 2008; **Taukay Edizioni Musicali International Composition Prize** in 2012, and the **Musica Domani International Composition Prize** (USA). His orchestral work **A Terrible Beauty** was designated a "recommended work" in the **4<sup>th</sup> Uuno Klami International Composition Prize** by a jury which included Magnus Lindberg and Erkki-Sven Tüür. *Environments II*, for guitar and orchestra was a prizewinning work in the chamber orchestra music category of the **International Conductors Union Composition Contest**, Ukraine in 2021. He was selected to represent Ireland at **ISCM World Music Days** in China 2021. Recently he was awarded the **Major Individual Award**. This award is the highest value honour bestowed by **Arts Council Northern Ireland** on artists. Greg was additionally the recipient of the prestigious **PRSf 2022 Composers Award** and is a **Help Musicians** supported artist.

Greg is founder of **Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble** and served as their Artistic Director for 10 years before stepping down in 2023.



[www.gregcaffrey.com](http://www.gregcaffrey.com)

# ULSTER ORCHESTRA

## PERFORMERS

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Founded in 1966, the Ulster Orchestra has been at the forefront of musical life in Northern Ireland for over 50 years. and the Orchestra's full-time musicians form the region's only professional symphony orchestra. In 2022/23, after 4 years in partnership with the Orchestra, Daniele Rustioni was appointed as Music Director. The Orchestra performs around 40 concerts a year in its home, the Ulster Hall, and the Waterfront Hall, Belfast.

With a mission to enrich the lives of people living in Northern Ireland, those visiting, and those who encounter it through international touring and regular radio and TV broadcasts with both BBC Northern Ireland and BBC Radio 3, the Orchestra strives for excellence in all it undertakes, be it regular concert performances, learning and community engagement programmes, or creative collaborations across the arts. An important aspect of the Ulster Orchestra's work is its annual touring programme of concerts, which brings live orchestral music to the heart of communities across the region.

The Ulster Orchestra's recordings are gaining global critical acclaim, with a recent CD of music by Kurt Weill on SOMM records garnering international critical acclaim. The Orchestra also regularly records for labels such as Hyperion, Naxos, Chandos and Toccata Classics.

The Ulster Orchestra's Learning and Community Engagement programme aims to connect the Orchestra with communities and individuals across Northern Ireland, both as audiences and participants. All the Orchestra's musicians work on activities including relaxed performances for people with additional needs, mentoring and coaching for players at all stages of their musical journey and the Crescendo project, the Orchestra's flagship community-led residency project for children from disadvantaged areas in North and West Belfast.

# SINEAD HAYES

## CONDUCTOR

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Irish orchestral conductor Sinead Hayes is emerging as one of Ireland's leading interpreters of contemporary music and opera, with a particular interest in the work of emerging and established Irish composers. She is a Britten Pears Young Artist 23/24, participating in The Conductor as Dramaturg course run by the Royal Opera House and Britten Pears Arts, with conductors Sian Edwards & Kanako Abe. From January 2024 she is a member of the Royal Philharmonic Society's Women's Conducting Excel Programme run with the Royal Northern Sinfonia.

The 2023/24 season is her tenth as conductor of the Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble (HRSE) in Belfast, and her third season as conductor of the Royal Irish Academy of Music Symphony Orchestra. In February 2022 she was appointed principal guest conductor of Galway's professional orchestra The Luminosa String Orchestra.

She has worked with all the major professional orchestras in Ireland including the Ulster Orchestra,

RTE Concert Orchestra, Irish Chamber Orchestra & National Symphony Orchestra. In opera she has conducted productions for Northern Ireland Opera, Irish National Opera and Opera Collective Ireland.

She completed her MMus in conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music and her BMus in violin and composition at City University, London. Sinead also participated in masterclasses with Johannes Schläefli, Sylvain Cambreling & Sir Roger Norrington among others. In 2014 she was one of three finalists in the Interaktion Conducting Workshop, chosen by the players of the Critical Orchestra Berlin (leader: Lothar Strauss), whose players are drawn from the Berlin Staatskapelle and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestras. She has worked as assistant conductor to James Lowe (Halle Harmony Orchestra), Alex Ingram (British Youth Opera), André de Ridder (Irish National Opera) and others.

Sinead's award winning education work has been funded by the Irish Arts Council (Agility Award & Artist Bursary) and the Galway County Arts Office, and includes two projects for youth string orchestras fusing classical and Irish traditional music "The Baroque Session" and "Carolán's Rambles"

Sinead divides her time between Galway, Belfast and London, and is also active as a violinist, performing with various chamber ensembles.

**[www.sineadhayes.net](http://www.sineadhayes.net)**

# CRAIG OGDEN

## CLASSICAL GUITAR

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Described by BBC Music Magazine as “A worthy successor to Julian Bream”, Australian born guitarist Craig Ogden is one of the most exciting artists of his generation. Craig Ogden has performed concertos with many of the world’s leading orchestras and is the most sought-after guitarist for chamber music in the UK. He regularly appears as soloist and chamber musician at major venues and collaborates with the UK’s top artists and ensembles.

Numerous composers have written works specially for him and he has recently given world première performances of guitar concertos by Andy Scott, David Gordon (double with accordionist Miloš Milivojević), David Knotts (with the BBC Concert Orchestra, recorded for BBC Radio 3, filmed for

BBC4 TV) and William Lovelady with the English Chamber Orchestra for Music in Country Churches with HM the King in attendance. The work received its London première in November 2022 at Cadogan Hall. In January 2023, Craig gave the world première of a guitar concerto by Greg Caffrey with the Ulster Orchestra in Belfast, recorded by BBC 3.

One of the UK’s most recorded guitarists, Craig has accumulated an acclaimed discography for Chandos, Virgin/EMI, Nimbus, Hyperion, Sony and five chart-topping albums for Classic FM. Recent recordings include a solo recital disc for Chandos, **Craig Ogden in Concert**, a new arrangement of the **Goldberg Variations** by J.S. Bach with violinist David Juritz and cellist Tim Hugh for Nimbus and **Dancing with Piazzolla!** with the London Tango Quintet, released in February 2024. He frequently records for film and has presented programmes for BBC Radio 3, BBC Northern Ireland, and ABC Classic FM in Australia.

Craig Ogden is Director of Guitar at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, Adjunct Fellow of the University of Western Australia, Associate Artist at The Bridgewater Hall, Manchester and Director of the Dean & Chadlington Summer Music Festival. Craig Ogden plays a 2011 Greg Smallman guitar and strings made by D’Addario.

[www.craigogden.com](http://www.craigogden.com)

## DANIEL BROWELL

### PIANO

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Daniel Browell enjoys a busy and varied performing career, having given recitals in the UK, Europe, China and North America. His debut recital at London's Purcell Room in the Southbank Centre and concerto performance at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall received critical acclaim in the national press.

Daniel particularly enjoys collaborative projects with instrumentalists and singers, performing regularly as a core member of the Belfast based Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble. Daniel has performed with YCAT winner Kathryn Rudge at the Wigmore Hall and on many occasions since, and he has worked with the BBC Philharmonic, performing in the BBC Philharmonic's chamber music series in Salford, the Ulster Orchestra and Birmingham Contemporary Music Group.

After studying for his undergraduate degree at the University of Birmingham, Daniel went on to study in Paris, London (Royal Academy of Music) and Chicago. Whilst then going on to become a Junior Fellow at the Royal Northern College of Music, he won numerous prizes and awards.

## CHRIS CORRIGAN

### SOUND ENGINEER

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Chris Corrigan is a Senior Lecturer at Queen's University Belfast and an active audio engineer / producer with particular interest in music production for immersive media. His recordings have been released on the Mode, Delphian, Métier, Diatribe, Divine Art, Farpoint and RTÉ Lyric FM labels and recent engineering credits include Ulster Orchestra, Fidelio Trio, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, Yurodny, Hard Rain Soloist Ensemble, Mornington Singers, and Vanburgh Quartet. Chris is also a composer and his work explores the intersection between contemporary compositional practice and traditional music forms, in particular the Irish and Scandinavian folk music traditions. His compositions have been broadcast on RTÉ Lyric FM and BBC Radio 3 and performed at the International Computer Music Conference and New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival.



# AINGEAL II (2021)

## String Orchestra & Percussion

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he Irish title of this piece translates in English as 'Angel'. Written in memory of a person close to me, who left this world long before her time, this piece attempts to reflect

some of the beauty and the pain of her life. Despite the fact that it is a highly personal work, it is my hope, given music's abstract nature, that the sound world will resonate with some personal meaning for its audience, whatever that may be, or that it may otherwise be appreciated purely and simply as a sonic journey.

In loving memory of Deirdre Caffrey.

**Programme notes © Greg Caffrey**

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Artwork *Aingeal*, acrylic on paper 2024



# ENVIRONMENTS II (2012)

## Solo guitar, string orchestra and percussion

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*nvironments II* is the second in a series of my larger works featuring soloist and orchestra. I avoid the term concerto because of its historical connotations. However,

despite my circumvention of this label, the solo guitar here will no doubt still be seen as being traditionally in “opposition” to the orchestra. The paradox is that the harmonic plan relies on the exposition of two closely related modes used separately by the orchestra and soloist to culminate in the presentation of all 12 pitches. Therefore, I prefer to see the soloist as complementing, or more correctly completing, my desired harmonic sound world for the orchestra. So, it follows that the orchestra is an “environment” consummating the harmonic plan within which the guitar operates.

The orchestral forces are here paired down to accommodate the quiet speaking voice of the classical guitar, an instrument still with much to contribute in today’s orchestral context.

Programme notes © Greg Caffrey

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Artwork Gorse at Cave Hill, acrylic on paper 2024



# A TERRIBLE BEAUTY (2013 - 2019)

## Sinfonietta Orchestra



While the separate movements of *A Terrible Beauty* were created over a period of seven years, they not only share common musical materials, but also their inspiration in the

poetry of WB Yeats. So, despite the three movements being premiered separately as individual chamber pieces, the larger three movement orchestral architecture was always the end goal.

### ***I. These are the clouds about the fallen sun (2013)***

was written as an elegy and reflects a very personal interpretation of the eponymous Yeats poem. The poem is a requiem for the demise of traditional values in the face of modernity. The music expresses a more orthodox sense of loss.

### ***II. Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold (2018)***

is a line taken from Yeats' apocalyptic poem *The Second Coming*. This turbulent poem and the music that it inspires provides the eruptive central movement of the larger work's arch shape form.

### ***III. ...for peace comes dropping slow (2018)***

is a title drawn from Yeats' most well-known poem, *The Lake Isle of Innisfree*. It is a poem that describes an ideal, bucolic scene in the author's mind's eye, however, the penultimate line of the poem betrays the fact that Yeats is describing the scene from the perspective of standing "...on the roadway, or on the pavements grey" and it therefore becomes apparent that he is recalling the peace and beauty of Innisfree from the perspective of the relative chaos of the city. Nevertheless, the movement ends peacefully.

Grouped as they are here, the Yeats poetry charts a trajectory expressing deep loss and sadness, then desolation and anarchy and, finally, an uneasy tranquility.

The orchestral version of *A Terrible Beauty* was designated a "recommended work" by the jury of the 4<sup>th</sup> **Uuno Klami International Composition Prize**, Finland.



# ENVIRONMENTS I

## Piano and Symphony Orchestra

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I

n composing this orchestral work, I have sought a sound world reflected in much of my chamber music since around 2009. My goal during the process of composition

was the creation of a detailed orchestral texture (almost chamber-like in places) imbued with colour and above all having a sense of spaciousness.

My technical concern, then, was in the generation of constant dynamic movement of individual instruments and instrumental sections to permit the harmonic blocks of two opposing hexachords to constantly converge and separate causing, respectively, fleeting moments of density and a comparative release of tension. The prevalent use of resonant instruments: the piano, with almost constant use of the sustain pedal, the harp, tubular bells, vibraphone, glockenspiel and crotales, along with the strings, create great washes of overtones that assist in the gradual merging of colours and harmonies throughout the piece.

**Programme notes © Greg Caffrey**

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Artwork 1971, acrylic on paper 2024

Poetry on which the 3 movs. of ***A Terrible Beauty*** is based.

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I

**These are the clouds about the fallen sun**

These are the clouds about the fallen sun,  
The majesty that shuts his burning eye;  
The weak lay hand on what the strong has done,  
Til that be tumbled that was lifted high  
And discord follow upon unison,  
And all things at one common level lie.  
And therefore, friend, if your great race were run  
And these things came, so much the more thereby  
Have you made greatness your companion,  
Although it be for children that you sigh:  
These are the clouds about the fallen sun,  
The majesty that shuts his burning eye.

II

**The Second Coming**

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
Are full of passionate intensity.  
Surely some revelation is at hand;  
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.  
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out

When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi  
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert  
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,  
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it  
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.  
The darkness drops again; but now I know  
That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,  
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

III

**The lake Isle of Innishfree**

I will arise and go now, and go to Innishfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:  
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee;  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.  
  
And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;  
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,  
And evening full of the linnet's wings.  
  
I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

**WB Yeats**

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**ENVIRONMENTS** Greg Caffrey / Orchestral Music

Recorded 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Recorded in Townsend Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast.

Engineer: Chris Corrigan

Production: Greg Caffrey & Chris Corrigan

Artwork: Paula Caffrey (cover, page 10, 12, 14, 16)

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More information on Greg Caffrey can be found at [gregcaffrey.com](http://gregcaffrey.com)

Instagram: [@gregcaffreycomposer](https://www.instagram.com/gregcaffreycomposer)

For enquiries regarding programming, score hire, etc. please contact: [gregcaffreyworld@mac.com](mailto:gregcaffreyworld@mac.com)

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