

MUSIC IRELAND
EARTHRise

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| | Deirdre Gribbin | |
| 1. | Before the Moon Shattered and Shone Again | 6:55 |
| | Liam Bates | |
| | Earthrise | |
| 2. | I. Majestically | 7:44 |
| 3. | II. Gently | 8:31 |
| 4. | III. With spirit | 8:18 |
| | Ian Wilson | |
| 5. | Her Charms Invited String Quartet No. 12 | 7:24 |
| | Linda Buckley | |
| 6. | Fíol | 14:31 |
| | Deirdre McKay | |
| 7. | Mr. Shah | 8:49 |

Total playing time 62:12



ABOUT THE MUSIC

Before the Moon Shattered and Shone Again – Deirdre Gribbin *For String Quartet (2021)*

Mia Cooper, violin 1; Ioana Petcu-Colan, violin 2; Beth McNinch, viola; Katie Tertell, cello

“To the Celts, time was circular rather than linear. This is reflected in their commencing each day, and each festival, at dusk rather than dawn. In Irish mythology, Elathan was a prince associated with stories depicting him arriving at night by sea on a silver boat, suggesting he was their moon god. The preoccupation with the nighttime was also reflected in their year, beginning with the festival of Samhain in October when nature appears to be dying down. Tellingly, the first month of the Celtic year is Samonios, ‘Seed Fall’: in other words, from death and darkness springs life and light. The earliest-known Celtic calendar is the Coligny calendar, now in the Palais des Arts in Lyon, France. It is thought to date from the 1st century BC and is made up of bronze fragments, once a single huge plate. It is inscribed with Latin characters but in Gaulish. It begins each month with the full moon. During this period of extreme disruption due to the pandemic, nature has remained. The moon is a beacon constant and reassuring. Fragments of music are reinterpreted and woven via muted passages between foreground and background, with sound ebbing and flowing, transforming through chromatic coldness and then resting. The moon in this string quartet symbolises life waxing, waning, renewing and redefining.”
– Deirdre Gribbin

Earthrise (2023) – Liam Bates

Beth McNinch, solo viola

Ioana Petcu Colan, violin 1; Siobhan Doyle, violin 2; Ed Creedon, viola;

Niamh Molloy, cello; Dominic Dudley, bass; Dianne Marshall, harp;

Meadhbh O'Rourke, flute; Conor Sheil, clarinet Peter Ryan, horn

“EARTHRISE draws inspiration from the more exquisite imagery of our planet, which showcases how nature thrives most when allowed to follow its own natural course - this is where the Earth’s ascent occurs. The vivid imagery finds its way back into the music through its evocative title.

Just as our planet’s diverse life forms are continuously evolving to coexist in perfect synergy, independent rhythmic patterns of varying characteristics are designed for cooperative interplay.

With a vibrant melodic palette, the concerto showcases the viola’s distinctively soulful resonance and remarkable versatility, embodying the role of the wandering observer, actively participating in the world it inhabits.” – Liam Bates

Her Charms Invited String Quartet No.12 (2010) – Ian Wilson

Ioana Petcu Colan, violin 1; Mia Cooper, violin 2; Beth McNinch, viola; Katie Tertell, cello

“Her Charms Invited is inspired by, and based upon, various types of musical ornamentation and gesture used in sean-nòs (traditional Irish) singing, here re-contextualized through the use of a contemporary musical language.

This is the third in a series of works exploring this area, following on from *Where The Moorcocks Crow* for alto saxophone and saxophone quartet, and *The Linnet Sings Her Note* So Pleasing for quartertone bass flute and live electronics. These three pieces are also linked by their use - however distantly or fragmentarily - of an original melody I wrote to the old Irish song *The Mountain Streams*; traces of its melodic and harmonic shape echo throughout *Her Charms Invited*.” – Ian Wilson

Fiol for String Trio (2008) – *Linda Buckley*

Ioana Petcu Colan, violin; Beth McNinch, viola; Katie Tertell, cello

“The soundworld of this piece was inspired by the Norwegian Hardanger fiddle (hardingfele). 'Fiol' was the predominant term used for 'fiddle' in Danish and Norwegian of the 17th and 18th centuries. This instrument is mainly used for the performance of Norwegian folk music and is similar in construction to the violin, but with eight or nine strings. Four of the strings are strung and played like a violin, and the remaining strings, called 'sympathetic strings', resonate 'in sympathy' with the other four. Here I was interested in treating the trio as a single twelve-stringed 'meta-instrument' rather than as three separate voices, almost like a hardingfele or Baroque viola d'amore with sympathetic resonating strings” – Linda Buckley

Mr. Shah (2015) – *Deirdre McKay*

Mia Cooper, violin 1; Ioana Petcu Colan, violin 2; Beth McNinch, viola; Katie Tertell, cello

“Physicists, who know things, tell us that it is very, very quiet in space - space, being an almost perfect vacuum, is not well equipped for transmitting sound. Residency on planet Earth offers the astonishing and magical luxury of sound.

Contemplating the vast quietude of space, I thought of Mr Shah, a Welsh astrophotographer who - at the more dedicated end of the space-curious spectrum - spends his evenings exploring space through a telescope in his garden shed.

Through his window to the universe, he has created photographs of star clusters, light years from earth, rivalling images taken from the £2.5 billion Hubble telescope.

Night after night, in solitude, staring into vast, soundless space.”- Deirdre McKay



MUSICIANS & COMPOSERS

Musici Ireland: is a trailblazing ensemble, at the forefront of the Irish creative scene. Formed by violist Beth McNinch in 2012, Musici Ireland began as a chamber collective, bringing together some of Ireland's most celebrated musicians. With over a decade of performing concerts across Ireland, including live radio broadcasts aired in 12 countries worldwide, this CD marks a significant turning point for the ensemble, as they increasingly dedicate themselves to commissioning and creating new work.

The group actively champions Irish and female composers, consistently pushing artistic boundaries. Renowned for their innovative and interdisciplinary approach, Musici Ireland seamlessly blends music with other art forms, creating groundbreaking productions that resonate deeply with audiences.

Their commitment to socially aware themes is evident in acclaimed original works like "*A Mother's Voice*", which honours the women affected by Ireland's mother and baby homes, through a powerful fusion of activism and artistry. With performances across Europe and America, Musici Ireland has garnered international acclaim, affirming their status as a vital force in the global arts scene.

Regularly featured on RTÉ Lyric FM, the ensemble continues to gain recognition for their cutting-edge work and commitment to expanding the classical repertoire. This album, "Earthrise," showcases their dedication to innovative, musically driven experiences.

www.musici.ie

Beth McNinch, viola

Beth McNinch is an acclaimed Irish violist and artistic director, known for her significant contributions to the world of classical and contemporary music. With a career that spans orchestral, chamber, and interdisciplinary work, Beth has established herself as a versatile and innovative artist, committed to musical excellence and creative exploration.

Beth's musical journey began in London, where she studied viola at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Royal Academy of Music. Her abilities quickly earned recognition, leading to performances with some of the UK's leading orchestras, including the London Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. As a principal violist, Beth appeared with the Irish National Opera, Wexford Festival Opera Orchestra, English National Ballet, Ulster Symphony Orchestra, and the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland.

Her deep understanding of programming and performance has made Beth a sought-after artistic director. As the founder and driving force behind Musici Ireland, a celebrated chamber ensemble, she has developed a reputation for curating performances that blend beloved classical works with lesser-known pieces, creating fresh and engaging experiences for audiences. Under her leadership, Musici Ireland has garnered international acclaim for its innovative approach to chamber music and its focus on socially relevant and interdisciplinary projects.

Throughout her career, Beth has been drawn to collaboration and experimentation, working with artists from diverse disciplines. Her passion for blending music with other art forms has led to numerous cross-genre



projects, where she seamlessly integrates music with dance, theatre, and visual arts. This interdisciplinary approach has led to bold, thought-provoking performances that challenge the boundaries of traditional concert experiences, resulting in invitations to deliver workshops, masterclasses, and lectures on the subject.

In addition to her work with Musici Ireland, Beth is a dedicated chamber musician, frequently collaborating with renowned ensembles and musicians. Her enthusiasm for exploring fresh ideas and creative approaches in performance has earned her respect and recognition within the broader music community, both in Ireland and internationally.

Deirdre Gribbins, composer

Belfast born composer Deirdre Gribbin's music has been described in The London Times as *"...astonishingly accomplished, pure magic and so powerfully expressive that it communicates its meaning instantly."* She has received numerous Awards and Fellowships including Huddersfield Composition Prize, The Arts Foundation Award for her Aldeburgh commissioned opera *Hey Persephone!* The Chester Fulbright Fellowship, and the UNESCO Composition Prize. *Unity of Being* was performed in New York by The Ulster Orchestra after 9/11. Her music profiled in The New York Sunday Times. Her work has been performed by the BBC Symphony, The Philharmonia, Northern Sinfonia, Danish Radio Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, Crash Ensemble, and The Ulster Orchestra and RTE orchestra. Her song cycle *Kindersang* was performed in 2023 in London, Paris and at Lincoln Center, New York and *The Stones of Life* with text by her son poet Ethan Stein who has Down Syndrome was performed by Sharon Carty and the ICO in Limerick and Dublin.



Deirdre has collaborated with astrophysicist Priya Natarajan creating the string quartet *Dark Matter Hunting* which was premiered by The Pacifica and Doric quartets. She has written works exploring genetics and music with scientist Sarah Teichmann and artist Esther Teichmann. *Hearing Your Genes Evolve* featured in the Berlinale Film Festival Documentary Prize category. Deirdre has written extensively for radio, including music for BBC Drama *Embers* starring Patrick Stewart and *The Possessed* starring Benedict Cumberbatch. She wrote the score for feature film *My Kingdom* starring Richard Harris which was nominated for a Screen International Award and the score for Margo Harkin's poignant documentary *Stolen* about Ireland's Mother and Baby Homes scandal which has screened at DocHouse London, Chicago Film Festival and Montreal Film Festival.

Her work has been recorded for NMC and Crash Ensemble labels. Deirdre is Artistic Director of *Venus Blazing Music Theatre Trust* working with people with learning disabilities.

Liam Bates, composer

"Crafting music that evokes a resonant and emotive experience within myself, has always been the compass for my compositional aspirations. I draw from my great love of both classical traditions and contemporary styles to tell stories and convey emotions that bridge diversities, welcoming audiences into my world of imagery and exploration." - **Liam Bates**

Liam Bates is an award winning composer, arranger and conductor of contemporary concert music, of music for ballet and contemporary dance, of music for film and television and of musical theatre. Concert works include, *Vivo*, *Dolmen*, *Elegy*, *Urban Monday*, *Dancing with Gioconda* and choral works such as *Angel*, *I Am Your Hands* and the newly released *Blazing Sky*.



As an arranger, orchestrator and conductor, Liam has performed and recorded with many artists including Luciano Pavarotti, Pete Townsend, Bon Jovi, Meat Loaf, Bryan Adams, Dave Stewart, Michael Kamen and Elliot Goldenthal.

Liam studied composition with Giles Swayne, Susan Bradshaw and John McCabe. He studied conducting with Norman Del Mar and Albert Rosen.

Ian Wilson, composer

Ian Wilson (Northern Ireland, 1964) has composed over 250 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 40 commercial recordings of his music available.

In 1998 he was elected to Aosdána, Ireland's national association of creative artists, and 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.

Visit: www.ianwilson.ie &
www.soundcloud.com/wilsonkul



Linda Buckley, composer

Linda Buckley is an Irish composer who creates electronic and acoustic music, often in the realm of glitch, drone and dark ambient. Her NMC record *From Ocean's Floor* was featured by Iggy Pop on BBC Radio 6 as “beautiful music – here is somebody really special”. Her work has been described as “sublime and brilliant” (BBC Radio 3), “engaging with an area of experience that new music is generally shy of, which, simplified and reduced to a single word, I’d call ecstasy” (Bob Gilmore, *Journal of Music*).

She has written extensively for orchestra (BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland) and was elected to Aosdána in 2021. Recent collaborations include new work for Liam Byrne and Crash Ensemble, Gudrun Gut (Einstürzende Neubauten), Brighde Chaimbeul and the Maxwell Quartet, film maker Mark Cousins (*A Sudden Glimpse to Deeper Things*) and the score to *Nothing Compares* (co-composed with Irene Buckley), the award-winning film based on Sinéad O’Connor.



Dierdre McKay, composer

From rural County Down, Dierdre’s work has featured at London’s Southbank, The Wigmore Hall, The Phillips Collection, Washington, Muziekgebouw, Amsterdam, Orléans Concours International, Gothenburg International Chamber Music Festival, The National Sawdust, Brooklyn, Symphony Space and Carnegie Hall, New York.

Recipient of a Director’s Choice Award from Boston Metro Opera’s International Composers’ Competition and an Arts Council of Northern Ireland’s Major Individual

Artist Award, Deirdre received a Paul Hamlyn Composer Award, London, in 2018. In 2023, Deirdre's work represented Ireland at the ISCM World New Music Days, Cape Town, South Africa.

Commissions and performances include works for Dublin International Piano Competition, Northern Ireland Opera, State Choir Latvija for Louth Contemporary Music, BBC Singers, Chamber Choir Ireland, Irish Chamber Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Boston Firebird Ensemble, Vertavo, Vanbrugh and RTÉ Con Tempo string quartets, Access Contemporary Music Chicago, New Music Dublin, Sound Festival, Aberdeen, Fidelio Trio, Dutch violist Elisabeth Smalt, pianists Andrew Zolinksy and Antti Siirala, Chloë Hanslip & Danny Driver, Darragh Morgan & Mary Dullea, Dušica Mladenović & Ian Wilson, Cliona Doris, Concorde and the Crash Ensemble.



Collaborations have included new works with visual artist Jean Duncan and writer/actor Richard Dormer. Her work has been incorporated into films featuring at the Venice, Dublin and Montreal International Film Festivals. Following a composition Masters and doctorate at the University of Manchester and Queen's University, Belfast, Deirdre studied privately with Kevin Volans.

Her music has been released on the Lorelt, Diatribe and RTÉ Lyric FM labels and broadcast by BBC Radio 3, RTÉ, Deutschlandradio Kultur and New York's WNYC and WQXR.



Musici Ireland

Acknowledgments

The recording of the "Earthrise" album was generously supported by the Arts Council of Ireland, the Contemporary Music Centre, Helen Davies, John Horgan, Bill Whelan and "friends of Musici Ireland".

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the featured composers for allowing us to bring their beautiful pieces to life.

A special thank you goes out to our audience members and RTÉ Lyric FM, whose unwavering support since our formation in 2012 has been instrumental in our journey.

Recorded in November 2023

Recorded at Grouse Lodge Studios, Westmeath, Ireland

Producer: Jonathan Allen

Engineer: Alex Borwick

Original Album Art: “H-N” by Ioana Petcu Colan

H / N intertwines past and present, mirroring the very ethos of the *Earthrise* album. Sterling silverpoint and 22-carat goldpoint delicately trace the shadow paths of a violin string as it unwinds across changing landscapes, the colours shifting by semi-tones, while subtle changes in light and perspective create elusive inversions...shadows gleam and shine casts darkness.

The title track, *Earthrise*, composed by Liam Bates and commissioned by Beth McNinch.

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