

River Shannon Soundwalk

ICMC 2022, University of Limerick, Ireland



Welcome

The Irish Science, Sound, and Technology Association (ISSTA) presents the River Shannon Soundwalk for ICMC 2022.

The River Shannon flows through the University of Limerick, and it was this feature that inspired the conference theme “standing wave.” To explicitly connect sonic practices with the river’s environs, ISSTA invited artists to contribute to a soundwalk.

We asked for musical compositions, performances, spoken word, and other experiments addressing themes of geography and travel, water and way-finding, history and heritage, culture and family, storytelling and poetry, imagined spaces and places. We were interested in artists exploring their heritage or previous connections with Ireland, as well as artists considering an Irish context for the first time.

The response was enthusiastic. We wish to thank everyone who submitted, even if not all the pieces could be included.

— ISSTA board

Jenn Kirby, President

Robin Parmar, Vice-President

Rob Casey, Secretary

John D’Arcy, Web

Brona Martin, PR



Access

The River Shannon Soundwalk begins and ends at the Computer Science & Information Systems (CSIS) Building, on the campus of the University of Limerick. Along the 2.4 km route you will hear twenty sound pieces. Allow yourself two hours for the full experience.

Please note that there are steps near the end of the walk. A few of the sites are located a short distance off the path. Inclinations are all gentle.

To begin, point a web browser to this address: <https://sonicmaps.xyz/player/?p=910>

Local participants

You will need a smart phone or other screen-based device with a GPS, plus headphones. Internet access is not required while on location, providing that sounds are downloaded in advance. To download, tap the icon in the lower-right of the browser window.

For internet access, members of academic institutions can avail of their Eduroam account. ISSTA members will be on hand to assist with alternatives.

Remote participants

If you are not attending ICMC in person, you can nonetheless use the “remote walk” feature. Click the icon of the human figure (lower-left of screen) and position this on the desired listening area.

Panel discussion

Please join us for a panel session on Friday 8 July at 11:20 in the main hall of the CSIS Building (CSG001). This is an opportunity to share your experiences of the River Shannon Soundwalk and meet the artists. A curated walk will follow the panel.



About the walk

For many years I've lived on an island within an island, bound by the Shannon. If I walk an hour upriver from home, my environs become those of the university campus, situated where fast waters rush over wide banks, the river dotted by islands with shifting profiles. What follows are descriptions of my favourite places in these environs.

Otter Bank lies along a tributary. Here otters once had their holt, built under roots, insulated with grasses and moss. On one side the stream is lined by student residences named Yew, Hazel, and Hawthorn. On the opposite bank is a path curiously named Nun's Walk, sheltered from the adjacent parking lot by a crown of trees. Look for the hidden bird house!

You can find several abandoned stone structures along the Shannon, but the ruin of Plassey Mill is perhaps the most impressive, overgrown and graffiti-daubed.

At Plassey Bank are several cute cottages, providing residents with convenient access to the river. Small boats are cast haphazardly on this shore. Sometimes these have a fresh coat of paint; at other times their ancient skins peel in the sun.

Fishers' Island is a place to cast a line, wasting away sunny days. But first you'll need to cross a portion of the river, braving rapids and stony footing. Local youths even take their bicycles across this perilous waterway... but only in summertime, when the flow is lighter.

Along the river path are many curious sites. A small grotto is indicated by discarded bottles. A carved tree stump, now overgrown, sits like a throne for some forest spirit. A cove is known locally as Sandy and — even more optimistically — UL Beach.

Along this route is a concrete underpass, a giant courtyard tree, and a dour statue. My goal with this walk was to incorporate many such distinctive encounters, engaging a milieu where built structures and manicured vistas meet the irrepressible energy of the Shannon.

These places were selected independently from the artists' works. The pairing of place to piece encourages what I call “accidents of listening,” personal encounters with the sonic imaginary.

— Robin Parmar



“I don’t really pack much” by Una Walker

“I don’t really pack much” was made as part of the Cities and Memory *Until We Travel* project in early spring 2021, when we were under a strict lock-down in Northern Ireland. During my daily walks through a nearby forest I would hear the occasional sound of aircraft above. The work combines snatches of conversation recorded on a flight, by Marcel Gnauk, with sounds of the forest, walking and repeated phrases from the original recording. It captures something of the unreality of that time when it was impossible to believe that mundane conversations might be going on the overhead flights.

Bio

Una Walker is an artist and writer based at Flax Art Studios. She has exhibited extensively in Ireland and internationally, making site and context specific installation, audio and video works, and works on paper. Installations have been constructed in diverse locations including military fortifications, derelict factories, and a cathedral. From 2008-15 she was a Research Fellow at the National College of Art and Design in Dublin and a member of the Digital Repository of Ireland Core Implementation Team. In collaboration with Dr Sarah Lappin she has published widely on design history in Ireland.

www.unawalker.com



“Brooke Lanier on Painting ‘Gazela Bow, Overcast’” by Ralph Lewis

Brooke Lanier is a Philadelphia-based painter most known for her depictions of water. In recent years, she has been painting the wear and tear of historic ships, such as the Gazela, docked on the Delaware River within walking distance of her studio. This interview with Lanier is about one of these paintings: “Gazela Bow, Overcast” (below). Her words are joined by sonic re-imaginings of the pleated layers of paint, rust, and corrosion that are frequently at the heart of her practice.

Bio

Ralph Lewis is a composer whose works seek meeting points between sonorous music and arresting noise, alternative tunings and timbre, and the roles of performer and audience. He recently completed his doctorate in music composition at UIUC. Previously, he has served as Composer-in-Residence for Oberlin Arts and Sciences Orchestra and received honors for his research and writing from Phi Kappa Phi and College Music Society Northwest. He founded and leads All Score Urbana, which offers free-to-the-public events open to all kinds of creative musicians to collaborate with local performers.



“Mono No Aware” by Juan Carlos Vasquez

Mono No Aware is a Japanese concept that refers to a nostalgic understanding of the transient nature of things. In this acousmatic piece, a train traveller in Japan undertakes a mental voyage into fragments of past memories, that inevitably warp and overlap with each other. This piece uses a technique that the composer has denominated as “klangfarbensampling,” or the distribution of a timbral “melodic” line comprised of fragmented recordings juxtaposed with textural layers of sound. The distributed melody is in itself a short summary of the piece nested into the first section, portraying a non-linear approach to time.

Bio

Juan Carlos Vasquez is an award-winning composer, sound artist, and researcher. His electroacoustic music works are performed constantly around the world, having premiered in more than thirty countries across the Americas, Europe, Asia, and Australia. Vasquez has received grants and commissions from numerous institutions. As a researcher, Vasquez’s writings can be found in *Computer Music Journal*, *Leonardo Music Journal*, and the proceedings of the standard conferences in the field. Vasquez received his education at the Sibelius Academy (Finland), Aalto University (Finland), and the University of Virginia (USA).

www.jcvasquez.com

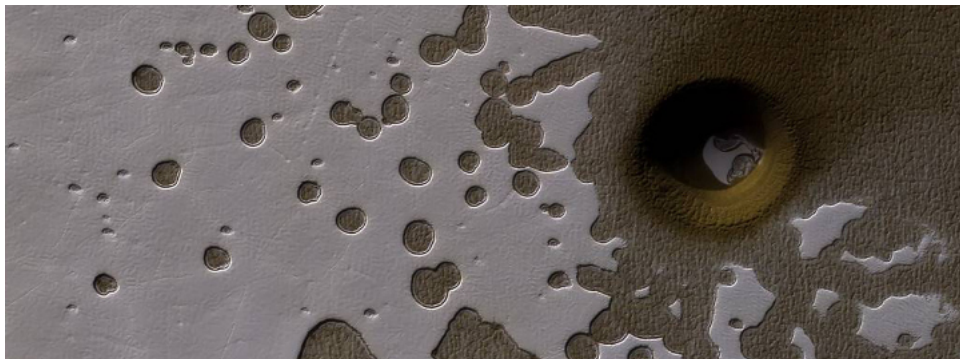


“There and Back” by John F. Barber

“There and Back” portrays a journey via tunnel to another world, and return. This sample from the original 23 minute work *Journey To Another World* highlights environmental and mechanical sounds, with minimal human voice heard along the way. The goal of this work is to create spatial relationships, with and within a sense of being in the place, of making the journey.

Bio

John F. Barber lives and works in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. His work has been broadcast and exhibited internationally. A current project is Re-Imagined Radio (www.reimaginedradio.net), a collaborative project with other sound designers, social media mavens, and voice actors. This explores radio storytelling through broadcasts, streaming, podcasting, and listening.



“Leaves Leave” by Donal Fean

Donal Fean is a songwriter, musician, writer, and artist based in Limerick/Shannon. He has played with The Verbs, The Lost Steps, Whitebeam, and Los PaRadiso, with several albums to his credit.



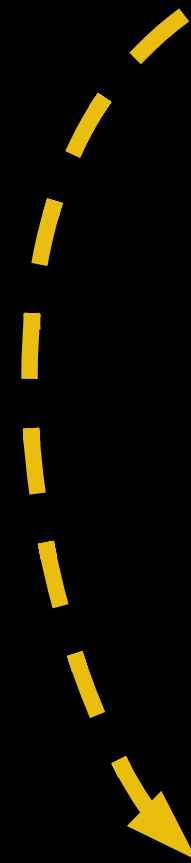
“Metáfora de una ola” by Hugo Víctor Druetta

During the five minutes of “Metáfora de una ola” we hear a progressive transformation of the sound environment, describing an arc of increasing and decreasing intensity. At first, in a subtle way, a certain degree of estrangement is interspersed with the real sounds of a watercourse. Then, the transformation is evident, and it places us as witnesses of a powerful sound mass that operates as a point of articulation. Subsequently, the signs of a return to the calm of the beginning are detected.

Bio

Hugo Víctor Druetta has a degree in Musical Interpretation (Guitar) from the Higher Institute of Music of the Universidad Nacional del Litoral. He studied Electroacoustic Music with Prof. Ricardo Pérez Miró and Musical Informatics with Prof. Guillermo Pozzati. He currently studies the specialization in sound art at the University of Tres de Febrero. He directs the School of Children's Aesthetic Expression of the Municipality of Santa Fe and is a professor of Synthesizer Programming and Machine Management at the Higher Institute of Music of the Universidad Nacional del Litoral (UNL).

hugodruetta.blogspot.com

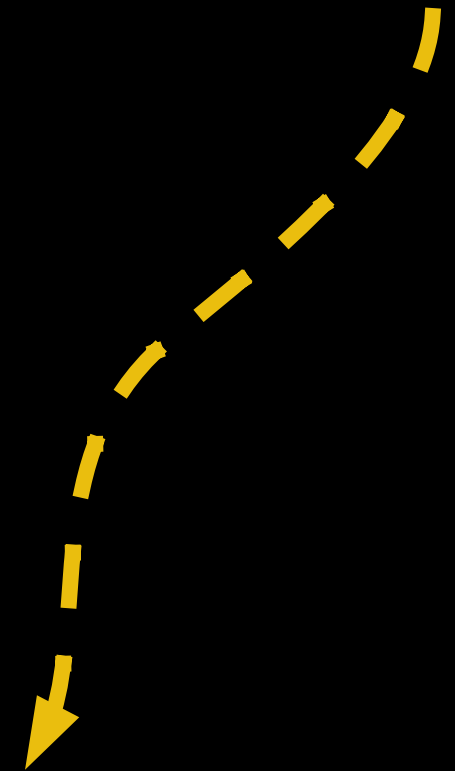


“Ghost Ship” by Kevin Sanderson

“Ghost Ship” is an exploratory soundscape that connects the listener to echoes held within the water between planes present and past. This piece was recorded in one take using field recordings of waves upon a heavily pebbled inlet, played through a cross-over filter and looped through 8-bit delays to create erratic movement. Bell sounds were created with frequency modulation, and its resonance then used to create a howling effect played via modulation and manual manipulation of its filter cut-off.

Bio

Kevin Sanderson is a software engineer who enjoys exploring sound through the use of modular synthesisers in his spare time.



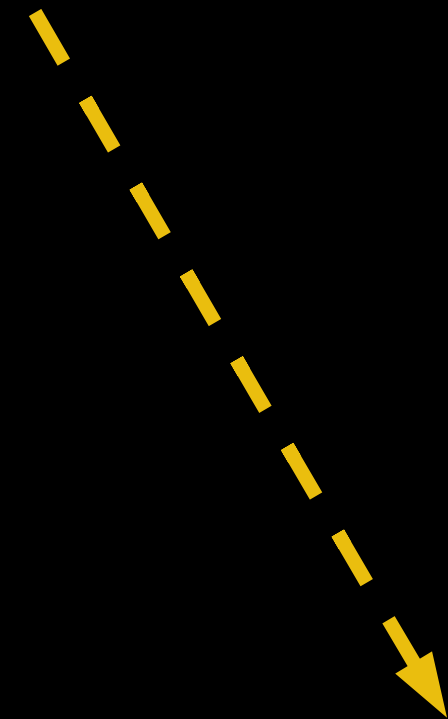
“Sea Songs” by Rob Mackay

“Sea Songs” attempts to convey a sense of the more-than-human world in which we live, opening our ears to the strange and often unheard soundscape that lies only a few meters off the shoreline. The piece opens with the ghostly wailing of grey seals, perhaps evoking the memories of mariners’ tales of mermaids and selkie. We then move to a rock pool on the beach at South Bay where we can hear the release of oxygen bubbles as seaweed photosynthesises. We’re then introduced to human voices, but from the listening perspective of the rock pool. The piece transitions to the howling din of a jet-ski recorded underwater, then moves to the constant hum of a boat engine, reminding us of our entangled and often invasive relationship with our environment.

Bio

Rob Mackay is an award-winning composer, sound artist, and performer. His work has been performed in eighteen countries, including several performances on BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 1, and Radio France. A number of his pieces have received international awards: Bourges 1997 and 2001, EAR 1999, La Muse en Circuit 2007. He has held composer residencies at Slovak Radio (Bratislava), La Muse en Circuit (Paris), the Tyrone Guthrie Arts Centre (Ireland), Habitación del Ruido (Mexico City), and CMMAS (Morelia). Rob is currently a Senior Lecturer in Composition at Newcastle University and Chair of UKISC (UK and Ireland Soundscape Community).

robmackay.net



“Ye Clarge’s Lamentation” by Carina Drury

I love the idea that old music can sing across hundreds of years and connect us to the past in a visceral way. In my album *Irlandiani* I explore this theme along with the idea of geographic location being a connecting factor. “Ye Clarge’s Lamentation” is one of the tunes from my album. It is from the first ever printed collection of Irish music from 1724, *A Collection of the Most Celebrated Irish Tunes* (John and William Neal, Dublin). It is a slow lament and the title might be a reference to the introduction of penal laws in Ireland in the late 17th century.

Musicians: Carina Drury (baroque cello) with Aileen Henry (baroque harp).

Bio

Cellist Carina Drury has held a lifelong love for music and her playing has been described by BBC Radio 3 as “singing across the centuries.” Her love for 18th-century music took hold while she was a student at the Royal Academy in London, where she was awarded the Early Music Prize. Carina researched the musical landscape in Ireland in the 18th-century for her debut album *Irlandiani*, thanks to Arts Council of England funding. It was featured on Irish, UK, and German national radio and was toured live in 2021 with performances in London, Cork, and Dublin.

www.carinadrury.com



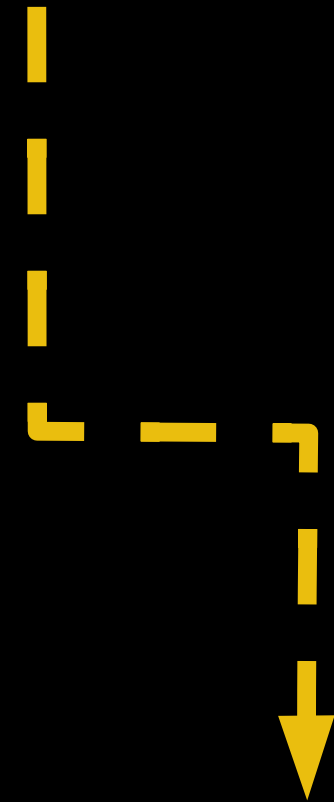
“Midnight Observations at Central Sound Buoy” by Libby Fabricatore

“Midnight Observations at Central Sound Buoy” is an imaginary seascape, with a narration of sea conditions from a marine forecast that was broadcast from Eastern Long Island, New York. The Central Sound Buoy, situated off the coast of Greenport at 41.138 N 72.655 W, was not found at the time of the broadcast. The piece evokes a scene at sea where the not-found buoy persists. Field recordings of waves recorded at the shoreline in Greenport are granulated, filtered, and swirl around the stereo field. Bell buoy samples and physical-modelled church bells punctuate the wash of the sea. A sine synth drone underneath emulates low, underwater ship engines.

Bio

Libby Fabricatore is an electroacoustic composer, video artist, and drummer based in New York City. Libby is a founding member of noise-punk duo The Paranoid Critical Revolution and played drums in Glenn Branca’s guitar ensembles from 2006-14. Libby’s electroacoustic and video works have appeared in festivals in North America, Europe, and the Caribbean.

libbyfab.com

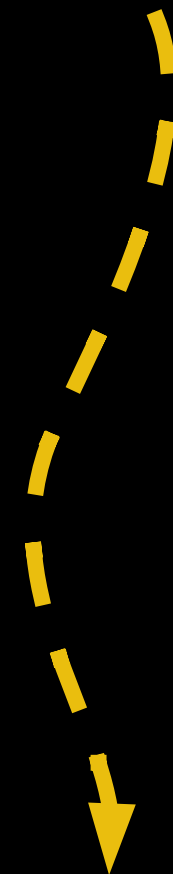


“Sionna” by Niamh O Brien

“Sionna” is an extract from *ECOTONE: A Sonic Journey Through Kildimo-Pallaskenry*, which was first broadcast from Ringmoylan Pier in County Limerick in September 2021. *ECOTONE* brought together local voices, field recordings, and an original musical score. It was shared with the public using a short-range FM transmitter. Listeners tuned in on their car radios, hand-held transistors, and radios placed along the pier for the installation. In this extract you hear the mythological story of the Irish Goddess Sionna, as well as more contemporary sounds from Kildimo-Pallaskenry.

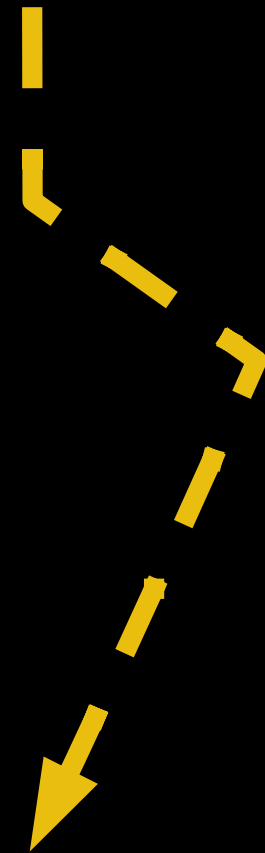
Bio

Niamh O Brien is a harp player, composer, singer, and sound artist from County Limerick. She has performed in Ireland, Europe, and America as a solo artist, and with traditional groups such as The Chieftains, AnTara, and Hoodman Blind. Since 2017 she has been active in audio and radio, working with Grey Heron Media and The Irish in New York Oral History Project. In 2021 she won a Rising Award at the HearSay International Audio Arts Festival. Her compositional practice combines traditional, folk, and electronic music with radio, interview, and sound art. She is currently studying for a PhD in Arts Practice at University of Limerick, where her research is supported by the Irish Research Council.



“I Live Here” by Niamh O Brien

“I Live Here” is a second extract from *ECOTONE: A Sonic Journey Through Kildimo-Pallaskenry*. You will hear young voices from a parish on the Shannon estuary, located about 20 km west of Limerick city. They describe Ringmoylan Pier, the point of access in the parish to the estuary, and reflect on their relationship to their home parish.



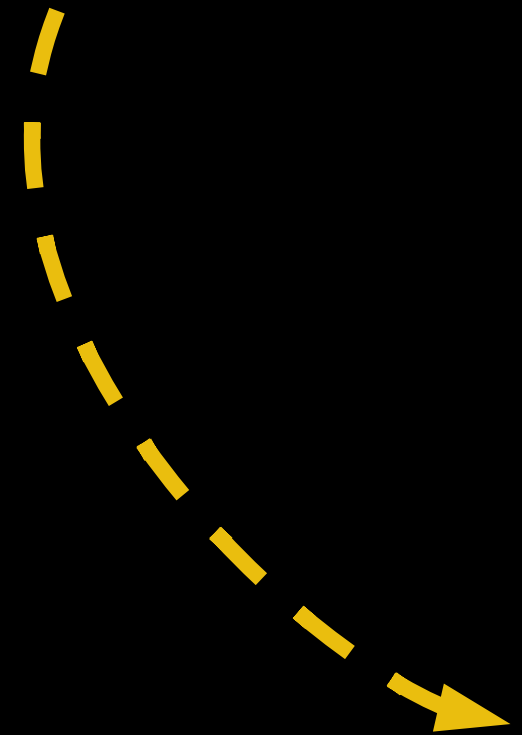
“OverBoard” by Jonty Harrison

On a — for me — unusually long walk in Boston, I encountered a fascinating soundscape of boats at their moorings in a light breeze. “OverBoard”, whose title references both the boardwalks at the Sailing Center and the Boston Tea Party of 1773, is the first movement of *Safe Harbours*, a suite based on coastline and harbour recordings.

Bio

Jonty Harrison is Emeritus Professor of Composition and Electroacoustic Music at University of Birmingham (UK), having founded Birmingham ElectroAcoustic Sound Theatre (BEAST) in 1982. He has been a long-serving board member of Sonic Arts Network (SAN), the Council and Executive Committee of the Society for the Promotion of New Music, and the Music Advisory Panel of The Arts Council of Great Britain. His many prizes include the Bourges International Electroacoustic Music Awards, Prix Ars Electronica, and Musica Nova. He has four solo albums on empreintes DIGITaLes.

https://electrocd.com/en/artiste/harrison_jo/Jonty_Harrison



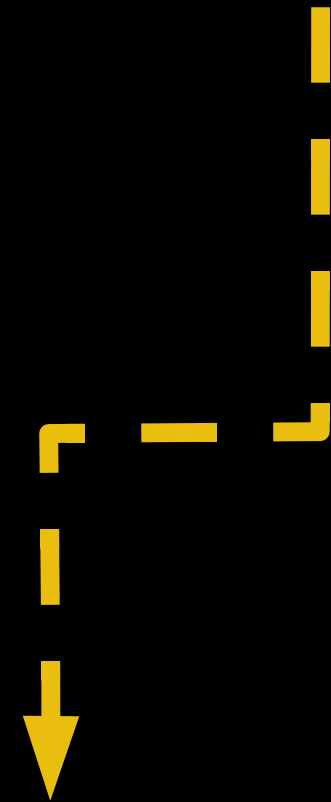
“Aulus Les Bains” by Nikki Sheth

“Aulus Les Bains” is from a site-specific multichannel installation that combines field recordings, video and live hydrophone, based upon a recording session at the Garbet River in Aulus-Les-Bains. The audio creates an inverse sonic reality of that found on the original site: a stereo composition using hydrophones recordings of the Garbet River and an above water recording of the Garbet River that is played via surface transducer into a vessel of water and monitored via a hydrophone.

Bio

Nikki Sheth is an internationally recognised sound artist and composer. Her practice involves field recording, soundscape composition, multimedia installations, sound mapping, and soundwalking. She uses sound as a medium to bring a voice to the environment and encourage a wider awareness of the natural world. She has received international recognition including an Ivor Novello Composer Award 2021 nomination, a Sound and Music 2020 award, a Phonurgia Nova 2020 nomination, and an Honourable Mention for the Sound of the Year Award 2020.

nikkisheth.myportfolio.com

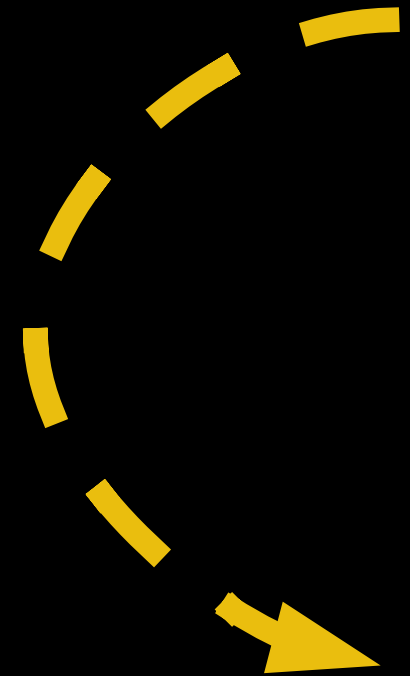


“The Blackbird on the River Shannon” by Cait Ni Ghriofa

The sound recording is influenced by Alvin Lucier “I am sitting in a room” and the bridge that leads to The Irish World Academy. The students carry the music, song, and dance with them as they cross the River Shannon daily. The opening sound is the traditional Irish dance “The Blackbird” composed by Múnix on the banks of the Shannon in North Kerry, performed by Ranog Townsend in a house made of turf walls. The sound of the feet are re-recorded over and over, capturing the connection to Ranog’s feet and the sound that resonates in the room creating a touchpoint, an experience of sound that holds no language but captures the resonance of the dance on the River Shannon.

Bio

Cait Ni Ghriofa is a soundscape and visual artist from Dromid in South Kerry, based in Lixnaw. Graduate of Munster Technological University in TV Radio & New Media Broadcasting and a recipient of Minnesota Arts award. Her work focuses on composition for dance performance and installation, based on original recordings of life sculptured by sound and movement.



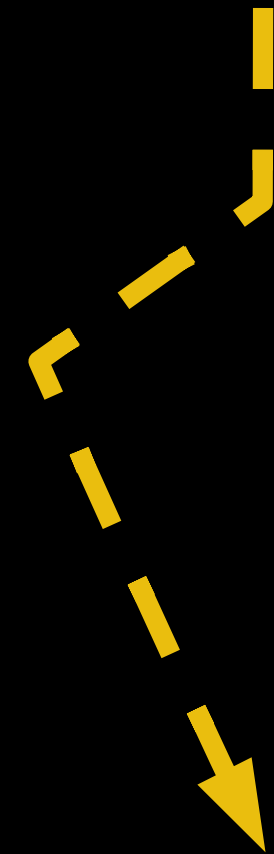
“Mutations” by Cândida Borges

Mutations are artistic organisms of unlimited duration that generate a work with every new bounce/performance. The composition is created using real-time computer systems interacting with field recordings and 3D technology from the DNArchive Project. A selection of world walksapes gets blended/mutated by a special digital compositional process that transmutes sound and image. This is an analogy to the process of transculture, which carries migration, genetic, and cultural diversity reflected in the soundscapes.

Bio

Cândida Borges is a Brazilian contemporary musician and transmedia artist, pianist, singer, songwriter, composer, performer, educator, and scholar. Currently a PhD Candidate in Arts at Plymouth University (UK). As an educator, Cândida has been an Associate Professor of Music for the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO) since 2009, and an invited professor for international institutes, workshops, festivals, and universities. NYC based for a multicultural environment exploration in her PhD project, she has been exploring in arts the subjects of migration, borders, and new technology art.

dnarchiveproject.com



“Interference” by the Sound and Space Research Group

“Interference” is by Georgios Varoutsos, Lara Weaver, Robert Coleman, and the Sound and Space Research Group. This piece is based on interactions experienced within Belfast Harbour where the Lagan River meets the sea. Contact microphones and hydrophones revealed a range of sounds transmitted through air and water. The harbour is host to sea travel, tourist visits, wildlife, and commercial buildings, plus constant interference that often goes unnoticed: radio frequencies, sea life activity, and interactions in the urban environment. The piece enables another mode to listen to these spaces.

Bio

The Sound and Space Research Group at the Sonic Arts Research Centre (SARC), Queen’s University Belfast, comprises PhD students headed by Professor Pedro Rebelo. They investigate interactions between sound and space using interdisciplinary methodologies relating to acoustic ecology, environmental studies, sound and music technologies, composition, health, and many others. The group uses practice-based research projects, weekly seminar discussions, presentations, and papers to explore the multifaceted relationship between sound and conceptions of spatiality.

georgiosvaroutsos.com

laraweaver41.wixsite.com/composer

www.robertcolemancomposer.com

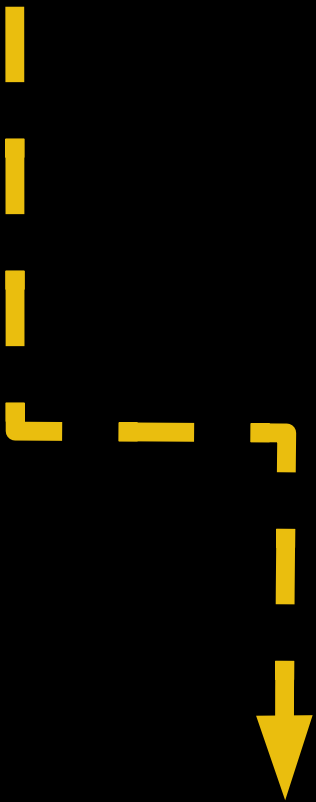


“Barrington’s Pier” by Dave O Mahony

This piece attempts to subtly disorient the listener with sounds taken from different parts of the Shannon River, echoing in their ears as they listen to the river in real time. Sounds from O’Callaghan Strand, the slipway by St. Michael’s Rowing Club, Bishop’s Quay, Harvey’s Quay, and Barrington’s Pier are manipulated to produce spatial relationships with the river from within and without.

Bio

Dave O Mahony’s compositions have been performed at the SEAMUS conferences 2018/19/22, NYEMF 2018, ICMC/NYEMF 2019, EABD 2018/19, Earth Day Art Model 2020/21/22, New Music Gathering 2021, Radiophrenia 2022, and ICMA 2020/21. A member of ISSTA, SEAMUS, the ICMA, CMS, and the SCI, he is interested in manipulating modular synthesizers with brainwaves. He holds a Doctorate in Composition in Music Technology (University of Limerick, Ireland).



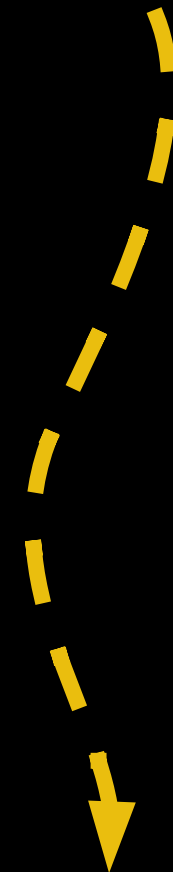
“Where the Bees Buzz” by Shawn Pinchbeck

“Where the Bees Buzz” is the second piece of a series exploring ambisonic field recordings made in the Peace Region of northwestern Alberta, Canada. This piece takes inspiration from the expansive soundscapes and ambiences of this region, creating an electroacoustic composition to accompany the soundscapes. The field recordings are presented in binaural format for headphone listening.

Bio

Shawn Pinchbeck is an award-winning electroacoustic music composer, sound designer, audio engineer, performer, media artist, curator and educator based in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. His artworks merge elements such as video, computer interaction, multi-speaker environments, sensors and electronics, interdisciplinary performance, and installation art. His recent works explore soundscape compositions created from field recordings made in the Peace Region of northwestern Alberta, Canada. Shawn has a PhD in electroacoustic music composition from the University of Birmingham, UK. He sits on the boards of the Canadian Electroacoustic Community (CEC) and the Boreal Electroacoustic Music Society (BEAMS).

www.spinchbeck.com



“County Crossing” by Steve Ashby

“County Crossing” collects sound material from The Living Bridge and along the banks of the River Shannon as one ventures down the path towards Limerick’s city centre. Resonances of reeds, foliage, and the bridge itself merge to intimate sonic phantoms within the air, land, and lives shaped by its might.

Bio

Steve Ashby is a musician, composer, and sound artist based in the United States. Ashby’s work focuses on sound found in the natural and digital worlds, discovering places of intersection which engage the art of listening. Recent performances and residencies include EMS Stockholm Guest Composer Series, Radiophrenia Scotland, Cube Fest at Virginia Tech, New Music Gathering, Sound Arts Richmond, and the NYC Electroacoustic Music Festival.



Credits

This project was curated by the ISSTA Board.

Walking route, photography, and design by Robin Parmar. The text is set in Crimson Pro and Noah Grotesque. Thanks to Ignacio Pecino at Recursive Arts for SonicMaps.

All rights remain with the individual artists.

Irish Sound, Science, and Technology Association (ISSTA)

The Irish Sound, Science, and Technology Association represents practitioners who integrate the diverse fields of music, art, sound, science, and technology. ISSTA serves musicians, researchers, scientists, engineers, and artists by promoting sound practices within Irish and international communities. Since 2011, ISSTA has hosted annual conferences and festivals, gathering people from around the globe to present papers, installations, concerts, and workshops. ISSTA is committed to creating a convivial environment diverse in gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, age, and ethnicity.

Visit issta.ie for information on our activities.



