



LISTENING FOR THE ÓRAN MÓR

PART OF BLAS INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL OF IRISH MUSIC AND DANCE

 TUESDAY 24TH JUNE 2025 | 10:00–18:00

 IRISH WORLD ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND DANCE | UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

Bringing together musicians, artists, activists, and academics to explore the deeper cultural resonances of music, story, and performance in reawakening our ecological awareness and re-enchanting our relationship with nature.



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An Roinn Gnóthaí
Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of
Foreign Affairs and Trade

Location: Tower Theatre

9:00-10:00	Registration
10:00-11:00	<p>Public Seminar: Awakening the Óran Mór</p> <p>The session will open with brief welcomes and framing from WEAll's Peter Doran and UL's Matthew Noone. Introducing the intention and the schedule.</p> <p>Nóirín Ní Riain will offer an invocation, calling us into the Óran Mór, the Great Song that underpins all life.</p> <p>Dónal Ó Céilleachair will screen a clip from the <i>Amhairghin</i> film—an evocative visual invocation of the poet-druid whose song first named our place.</p> <p>John D'Arcy (QUB) and Pedro Rebelo will discuss how music, story, and performance can re-enchant our ties to rivers, bogs, trees, mountains and places, and channel the living voices of our landscapes in the face of today's socio-ecological crises.</p>

11:00-12:00	<p>Workshop I: Listening to Land Through Sound</p> <p>In this hands-on workshop, composers and sound-artists John D'Arcy and Pedro Rebelo will guide participants through active listening exercises—tuning into field recordings, vocal improvisations, and sonic textures drawn from the Irish landscape. Joined by members of the Hive Choir, you'll experiment with using the voice as an instrument of place-making.</p> <p>The workshop will include a short film on John Moriarty's philosophy of listening: "the world is a story, and we are its listeners."</p>
12:00-13:00	Lunch
13:00-14:00	<p>Lunchtime Concert: The Island Sings Back Host: Kevin Murphy</p> <p>Performers: John Spillane, Liam Ó Maonlaí, Cáit Ní Riain, Nóirín Ní Riain</p> <p>Against the backdrop of the Blás Festival, this intimate concert will feature traditional themes reimagined for today's ecological and cultural moment. Between songs, host Kevin Murphy will guide brief reflections on the pieces' connections to place, myth, and memory.</p>
14:00-16:00	<p>Workshop II / Masterclass: Practices of Reconnection Host: Dónal Ó Céilleachair Leaders: Cáit Ní Riain, Liam Ó Maonlaí, John Spillane, Nóirín Ní Riain</p> <p>In this extended session, each artist will share their personal practice for tuning into land and story—whether through sean-nós vocal techniques, songcraft, or site-based improvisation. You'll move between demonstration, guided practice, and small-group experimentation, collectively generating new musical-materials rooted in local ecosystems and mythic imagination.</p>
16:00-17:00	Tea and coffee break

17:00-18:00	<p>Opening: Caroline Whyte Roundtable: All available contributors (morning panelists + musicians + facilitators) Moderator: Roisin Markham Performative Close: Hive Choir</p> <p>We reconvene with the <i>Seeding the Future</i> film (9 mins long), a cinematic reflection on creative collaboration in service of ecological renewal. Caroline Whyte will offer framing remarks on how today's insights might feed into WEAll's Cultural Creatives CoP. Then, all morning panelists and artists will gather for a wide-ranging roundtable: Where do we go from here? What new projects, collaborations, or rituals can we sow together? To close, the Hive Choir will weave elements of today's workshops into an improvised, communal song—sending us off with the living resonance of the Óran Mór in our ears.</p>
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Contributors

Peter Doran - WEALL Ireland / Senior Lecturer, Environment, Sustainability and Law at QUB School of Law with a deep interest in political ecology and economy, the law of the commons, and the transition to a wellbeing economy.

Matthew Noone - An Australian-Irish ex-indie rocker, improviser, composer, artist-scholar and performer of the 25 stringed Indian sarode. He is the Course Director of the BA in World Music at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick.

Nóirín Ní Riain – An internationally acclaimed Irish singer, theologian, writer, and interfaith minister. She is known for her spiritual songs and her expertise in Celtic spirituality and Gregorian chant.

John Spillane – Musician, songwriter, performer, recording artist, storyteller, poet and dreamer. Rooted in people, place and story.

Liam Ó Maonlaí - Musician, singer, and composer best known as the frontman of the band Hothouse Flowers. Beyond his musical career, he's a cultural activist, particularly advocating for the Irish language and traditional music.

Cáit Ní Riain – Singer and multi-instrumentalist from Co. Tipperary. She is deeply rooted in Irish traditional music and song, and influenced by folk musics the world over that have grown from the ground up, from the human's relationship with

land.

Kevin Murphy – Musician, Artistic Director of The Playhouse Derry and a cultural leader focused on art making, peace building and social change

Dónal Ó Céilleachair - a multiple-award winning filmmaker and an ecological storyteller with 30 years of experience in cinema, broadcast television and the arts.

Roisin Markham - Strategic designer, systems thinker, technologist and innovative business leader. Her current focus of work and research is strategic design for the deep design of business and post-growth society transformation. Her personal creative work is on new social imaginaries, livelihoods and deep time. She is the founder and network steward of IDEN, the Irish Doughnut Economics Network, and the co-founder of BDT Consultancy Ltd.

John D'Arcy – Composer, performer and researcher based in Belfast. His work draws on Irish folk song, vocal improvisation and participatory song-making. John works in collaboration with audiences and groups of communities, exploring social, cultural and environmental histories through the use of archives, found text, oral histories, folklore and traditional melodies.

Pedro Rebelo – Composer, sound artist and performer based in Belfast working primarily in chamber music, improvisation and sound installation.

Robert Coleman – PhD student at the Sonic Arts Research Centre at Queen's University Belfast focused on Ecological Sound Art.

Lara Weaver – PhD researcher in Musicology and Composition at the Sonic Arts Research Centre (SARC) at Queen's University Belfast.

Hive Choir – A vocal ensemble based in Belfast. exploring improvisation and collective sound practice.

Caroline Whyte - An ecological economist at Feasta, the Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability, and a steering group member of the [Wellbeing Economy Hub for Ireland](#).