**Royal Irish Academy of Music, Concert, Shaw Room, National Gallery of Ireland**

**15 June 2023**

Full programme information including performers’ and composers’ bios, lyrics and contextual information.

Concert Context:

Lavinia Fontana (1552-1614) was a Bolognese artist of breath-taking skill. Her work and life are singular, fascinating and exceptional, whether considered in light of the sixteenth century or the twenty-first. Lavinia Fontana: Trailblazer, Rule Breaker, the first monographic exhibition of Fontana’s work in over twenty years, presented the Gallery with an exciting opportunity to collaborate with the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Ireland’s oldest conservatoire, to produce a programme going beyond the visual. The performance on 15 June 2023 was the culmination of this collaboration. We were delighted to present a magnificent concert of works, from inspirational women composers curated in response to masterpieces from Fontana and the National Collection.

**Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (1665-1729) *Prelude unmeasuré in A minor***

**Michael Noonan (flute)**

**Kevin Meehan (violin)**

**Peader Ó Loinsigh (cello)**

**Laoise McMullin (harpsichord)**

This opening movement preceded a nine-movement dance suite in the composer’s first publication, at 22, *Les pièces de clavecin, Livre 1* (1687). Unmeasured refers to the length of notes being left to discretion of the players and it also served as warm-up section. Jacqiuet, herself, undoubtedly played the bass continuo harpsichord part. She was daughter of organist and harpsichord maker, Claude Jacquet (see Ringling Museum of Art, USA), whose brothers and father were all musicians. She was a child prodigy, singing from sight and playing harpsichord from six, later noted harpsichord virtuoso. Her skill had been noted by Louis XIV and she probably had the early support of his mistress, Madame de Montespan. Around 1682, she left the court and married Marin de la Guerre, organist at the Sainte-Chapelle, Paris. Their home, next door, became celebrated for musical gatherings, where she could perform. Always innovative, her later 1707 sonatas are more like concertos and there were 3 volumes of Italianate sacred cantatas (1708-?1715). The tragic opera, *Céphale et Procris* (1693), was a rare failure. Despite lifelong royal support and dedicating her publications to Louis XIV, she neither received a public position, nor pension, so fortunate that able to earn a living, when widowed in 1704. A portrait of Jacquet, by royal painter, François de Troy (1645-1730), was exhibited at the 1704 Salon and is, generally, accepted to be that in a private collection, showing a woman seated beside dual-manual harpsichord, holding a music sheet and quill pen.



Figure 1. Michael Noonan

Flautist, **Michael Noonan**, is based in Dublin, currently in his final year of the BMus Performance Degree, studying flute with Susan Doyle and Vourneen Ryan, and piccolo with Sinead Farrell. Chamber music has played a big part in Michael's musical life, and he feels strongly about musical collaboration and enjoys playing in non-traditional chamber music ensembles. To this end, he endeavours to include traditionally underrepresented composers in his repertoire He also has developed a strong interest in historically informed performance and recently performed Telemann's *Paris Quartet in Traverso* in RIAM's ChamberFest 2023.



Figure 2. Kevin Meehan

Violinist, **Kevin Meehan,** is a BMus Performance Degree student with Mia Cooper and Claire Duff, studying baroque and modern violin. He performs regularly around Ireland as a soloist and chamber musician. He recently travelled to Croatia with IYBO to perform as soloist, and to Hatchlands Park, Surrey, in the UK, with a small group of RIAM musicians, where the Alec Cobbe collection of working historic keyboard instruments is loaned. He is a Reserve Apprentice with the Irish Baroque Orchestra and former leader of Waterford Symphony Orchestra. He founded the Fantasia Baroque Festival, a new festival in Dublin focusing on early music. His future performance engagements include Birr Festival of Music, West Cork Chamber Music Festival, Kaleidoscope, and Sligo Early Music Festival.



Figure 3. Peadar Ó Loinsigh

Cellist, **Peadar Ó Loinsigh**, has performed in the National Concert Hall, The National Opera House and performs regularly with the National Symphony Orchestra and RTE Concert Orchestra. His studies have led him to perform in masterclasses with Mischa Maisky, Raphael Wallfisch, The Emerson Quartet and The Vogler Quartet. He is currently a student of Martin Johnson at the Royal Irish Academy of Music.



Figure 4. Laoise McMullin

Harpsichordist and Composer**, Laoise McMullin** is in her first year of her MMus in Performance and Composition, having achieved First Class Honours in her Bachelor of Music Performance Degree. Laoise was the winner of the 2023 Lucien and Maura Teissier Scholarship and represented RIAM in the Finals of the Freemasons Young Musician of the Year. With a passion for early music, Laoise recently travelled to Hatchlands Park, Surrey, to perform on Irish-made early pianofortes at the renowned Cobbe Collection. As a composer, Laoise has had works performed by fellow students in concerts, most recently at the launch of the newly founded contemporary music collective 'Outside the Lines'. She also received 2nd prize in the Feis Ceoil Chamber Ensemble Composition Competition 2023.

**Barbara Strozzi (1619-1677) *Lagrime me***

**Róisín O’Grady (soprano)**

**David Adams (harpsichord)**

*Lagrime mie, à che vi trattenete?  
Perché non isfogate il fier dolore  
Che mi toglie'l respiro e opprime il core?  
Lidia, che tant'adoro,  
Perch'un guardo pietoso, ahi, mi donò,  
Il paterno rigor l'impriggionò.  
Tra due mura rinchiusa  
Sta la bella innocente,  
Dove giunger non può raggio di sole;  
E quel che più mi duole  
Ed' accresc'al mio mal tormenti e pene,  
È che per mia cagione  
Provi male il mio bene.  
E voi, lumi dolenti, non piangete?  
Lagrime mie, à che vi trattenete?  
Lidia, ahimè, veggo mancarmi  
L'idol mio che tanto adoro;  
Sta colei tra duri marmi,  
Per cui spiro e pur non moro.  
Se la morte m'è gradita,  
Hor che son privo di spene,  
Dhe [deh], toglietemi la vita,  
Ve ne prego, aspre mie pene.  
Ma ben m'accorgo che per tormentarmi  
Maggiormente la sorte  
Mi niega anco la morte.  
Se dunque è vero, o Dio,  
Che sol del pianto mio  
Il rio destino ha sete,  
Lagrime mie, à che vi trattenete?*

My tears, why do you hold back?  
Why do you not let burst forth the fierce pain  
that takes my breath and oppresses my heart?  
Because she looked on me with a favourable glance,  
Lidia, whom I so much adore,  
is imprisoned by her stern father.  
Between two walls  
the beautiful innocent one is enclosed,  
where the sun's rays can't reach her;  
and what grieves me most  
and adds torment and pain to my suffering,  
is that my love  
suffers on my account.  
And you, grieving eyes, you don't weep?  
My tears, why do you hold back?  
Alas, I miss Lidia,  
the idol that I so much adore;  
she's enclosed in hard marble,  
the one for whom I sigh and yet do not die.  
Because I welcome death,  
now that I'm deprived of hope,  
Ah, take away my life,  
I implore you, my harsh pain.  
But I well realize that to torment me  
all the more  
fate denies me even death.  
Thus since it's true, oh God,  
that wicked destiny  
thirsts only for my weeping,  
tears, why do you hold back?

This haunting cantata comes from Strozzi's *Diporti di Euterpe* (1659), a book of 11 cantatas and a lover's lament about forced separation from his Lidia. It is one of the finest in the volume, expressing pain for both, due to her father's intervention, that must have been a frequent occurrence at this date, when women's lives were so controlled. The words are thought to be by Strozzi's father. As related image and different example of love and pain, in similarly refined pictorial language, there is Andrea Mantegna (c.1431-1506) *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, c.1495-1500, the story of a heroic woman, who risked her life, as she seduced the enemy General, Holofernes, then cut off his head, in his drunken sleep, an action regarded as showing womanly virtue and heroism. The cantata is divided into recitative, arioso and aria, mostly of slow tempi. Key words are drawn out, for additional emotional impact and given extended musical treatment. The sentiments are highly wrought and the end is, typically unresolved, although there is cathartic release in putting the pain into words.

Barbara Strozzi (1581-1644) was the illegitimate, or adopted, daughter of a Venetian poet, Giulio Strozzi. He named her as his heir and supported her music. Unlike Florence, where Francesca Caccini was always under the sway of patrons, even in where she could live, Strozzi was part of, culturally free, if still autocratic, Venice. It was a major centre of music printing as well. She had singing lessons from Francesco Cavalli and performed, from 15, to her own accompaniment, at her father’s private concerts. Nicolo Fontei *Bizzarrie poetiche* (1635) were dedicated to her, testifying to early fame. Breaking convention, she was an unmarried mother with four children, by two fathers. Her best documented relationship was with Count Vidman, by whom she had 4 children. This did not affect her career and she had rare status for a female composer in arranging her own publications, with impressive 8 volumes of mainly secular vocal music, being the family breadwinner, like painter, Lavinia Fontana. They probably reflect her own vocal range, with long melodic lines. She formed an *Accademia dell’Unisoni* (‘Academy of Unison’), with musical discussions and performances. Her first and only volume of Madrigals (1644) set poems by her father and was dedicated to the Archduchess of Tuscany. They set out her favourite theme of love and its sufferings “the language of the soul and instruments of the heart” as the preface states. The music is typically lyrical and impassioned with plenty of fine melodies and shows the imprint of Monteverdi, who had a major impact on Venetian music. A volume of Cantatas and Aria duets (1651), give insight into what she would have sung, her soprano partner unknown, being just as high motion, for refined listeners. Much is not easy listening, her style always more concerned with exploring the power of voice and moving the senses, than conveying a message, or being dramatic. *Cantata a arietta* (1654) were sacred cantatas and arias dedicated to the Archduchess of Austria. In return, she received a jewelled box containing a necklace of rubies, which Strozzi wore, to show them off them and herself, as the Mantuan Ambassador reported. There was sacred music (1655), motets (1656) and solo Cantatas and Arias (1657), more cantatas (1659) and arias (1664). She seems to have retired from performing, by 1663, if likely working as a teacher. An anonymous writer later claimed she was a courtesan, for which there is no evidence.



Figure 5. Róisín O'Grady

Soprano, **Róisín O'Grady**, has performed in recital and oratorio throughout Ireland and specialises in the performance of early music. Róisín studied Music and Italian at University College, Cork and completed a Postgraduate Diploma in concert singing at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Glasgow. She received a First Class Hons. M.A. in Performance at the Cork School of Music in 2008. She was a member of and a soloist with the National Chamber Choir of Ireland for over two years. Roisin has performed with early music ensembles, orchestras and choral societies throughout Ireland and the UK including the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. She is a member of the early music duo tons who performed in the National Concert Hall, the National Gallery of Ireland, the Sligo Festival of Baroque Music, and was broadcast in concert by Lyric FM. The duo has released two CDs, *Songs of Identity* *and Belonging* and *Wintersong*. She is currently completing a DMus in Performance at The Royal Irish Academy of Music, Dublin.

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Figure 6. David Adams

**David Adams** studied organ and harpsichord in Dublin, Freiburg and Amsterdam, winning prizes at international competitions in Speyer, Lüneburg, Bruges and Dublin. Since his début recital at St. Paul’s Cathedral, London, at the age of 16, he has performed throughout Ireland, the UK and Europe and is a regular guest at major international festivals. He is much in demand as an ensemble player in the fields of Early and contemporary music and has premiered many new works, including works by Gerald Barry, John Buckley, Raymond Deane, Donnacha Dennehy, Gráinne Mulvey, Jonathan Nangle, Kevin O’Connell, Kevin Volans, Jennifer Walsh, Sebastian Adams and numerous compositions written specially for him. In addition to solo CDs recorded on the organs of Trinity College Dublin and the National Concert Hall in Dublin, he has recorded for Naxos, Black Box and Wergo. Recently he recorded CDs of eighteenth-century Irish music (with Bill Dowdall) and works by Benjamin Dwyer (with Moya Homburger and Barry Guy).

**Barbara Strozzi (1619-1677) *Le Tre Grazie a Venere (The Three Graces to Venus)***

**Róisín O’Grady (soprano)**

**David Adams (harpsichord)**

*Bella madre d’Amore,  
Anco non ti ramembra  
Che nuda havesti di bellezze il grido  
In sul Troiano lido  
Dal giudice Pastore?  
Onde se nuda piaci  
In sin a gl'occhi de’ bifolchi Idei,  
Vanarella che sei,  
Perché vuoi tu con tanti adobbi e tanti  
Ricoprirti a gl'amanti?  
O vesti le tue Gratie e i nudi Amori,  
O getta ancor tu fuori  
Gl'arnesi, i mantie i veli:  
Di quelle care membra  
Nulla, nulla si celi.  
Tu ridi e non rispondi?  
Ah, tu le copri, sì, tu le nascondi,  
Che sai ch’invoglia più, che più s’apprezza  
La negata bellezza.*

## Beautiful mother of love, have you forgotten that you were nude when you carried away the prize for beauty on the Trojan shore, in the shepherd's judgement?\* So if nude you pleased the eyes of the herdsmen of Mount Ida, vain that you are, why do you conceal yourself from lovers with so many ornaments? Either clothe your graces\*\* and the naked cupids, or you too cast away the attires, robes and veils: Let nothing be hidden of those dear limbs. You laugh and don't answer? Ah, you cover them, you conceal them, for you know that more enticing, more valued is beauty that is witheld.

This teasing love song from Strozzi’s 1644 volume of Madrigals is presented as appeal from The Three Graces to Venus to remove her clothes and ornaments. It is equally a man appealing for his beloved to disrobe. It is relevant to Lavinia Fontana’s portraits of Bolognese women displaying their fine clothes and jewellery, It is especially pertinent to that of Isabella Ruini, in near transparent robe, as Venus, accompanied by cupid. This was thought painted for her husband as intimate reminder of her while on his travels and contrasts with a second formal portrait of her fully dressed, also in the current exhibition that would be suitable to exhibit in their home.

**Francesca Caccini (1587-1644) *Maria, dolce Maria* (*Mary, sweet Mary*)**

**Lauren McCann (soprano)**

**David Adams (harpsichord; Head of Early Music RIAM)**

*Maria dolce Maria, come soave tanto  
Ch'e pronunciar t'in paradisi core  
Nome sacrato e Santo  
Ch'el cor m'infiammi di celeste amore,*

*Maria mai sempr'io canto  
Ne puo la lingua mia piu felice parola  
Trarmi dal sen gia mai che dir  
Che dir Maria  
Nome ch'ogni dolor tempra'e consola  
Voce tranquilla ch'ogni affano acqueta  
Ch'ogni cor fa sereno, ogn'alma lieta.*

Mary, sweet Mary whose name is so lovely,

That to utter it takes your heart to paradise,

Sacred and holy name, you inflame my heart with celestial love,

Mary, I ever sing, no happier word can my

Tongue deliver from my breast than when I say ‘Mary’,

Name which tempers and consoles every sorrow,

Calm voice which assuages every disquiet,

Which composes every heart, which gladdens every soul.

A beautiful, lilting, melody, with vocal embellishments, accompanies a text, which describes how just intoning the name of the Virgin Mary heals all mental anguish. This sacred madrigal comes from Caccini's sole publication, *Il primo libro delle musiche* (1618), containing 36 songs. It might equally be addressed to a lover, giving an added dimension. Caccini grew up in a musical home and was a soprano, who initially sang, in public, with her mother and sisters. From 1607, she was employed by the Medici, in Florence, as singer, composer and teacher, its highest paid musician by 1614. Sadly, little survives of more than 13 court entertainments and 200 songs, as only put down in manuscript. She long remained a musical footnote, famously, the first woman to compose an opera, *La Liberazione di Ruggiero dall’Isola d’Alcina* (1625). Despite forging a career and being left well-off, when her second husband died in 1630, she still needed the patronage of powerful noblewomen. There is a striking cameo portrait of Caccini, by Unknown Sculptor c.1620, at the former home of Pope Clement IX (Palazzo Rospigliosa, Pistoia), which was rediscovered in 1922. This song is perfect accompaniment to **Elisabetta Sirani (1638-1665) *Virgin and Child*, 1660** (purchased 2021). A generation after Lavinia Fontana, Sirani was another family breadwinner, trained in her father's studio and running it from 1654, while also a noted musician. Carlo Cesare Malvasia, author of the 1678 lives of Bolognese painters, claimed to have discovered Sirani's talent and praised her draughtsmanship, originality and speed of working. She was lauded in her lifetime, seen as successor to Guido Reni. His stylistic impact is clear, while she also studied Annibale Carracci, Cantarini and others. *Virgin and Child* is both an uplifting image and realistic depiction of mother and child. Sirani never married and died suddenly, at 27, possibly due to a burst ulcer. Long neglected, her name is returning to the fore, making this a timely acquisition.

**Francesca Caccini (1587-1644) *O che nuovo stupor (O what new astonishment)***

**Lauren McCann (soprano)**

**David Adams (harpsichord)**

*O che nuovo stupor: mirate intorno*

*A mezza notte il giorno,*

*Mirate aprirs' il cielo,*

*Udite il suono degli angelici cori.*

*Venite, andiam, cerchiam Gesù, pastori,*

*Io vo cantar, io vo gioire anch'io,*

*Che nato in terra è Dio,*

*Che nato in terra è Dio per mia salute.*

*Io'l vo vedere omai,*

*Io'l vo adorar che tanto il desiai,*

*Voglio a quei sacri piè nudi e tremanti*

*Piegarmi e sospir' tanti*

*Sparger sopra di lor, ch'io gli riscaldi,*

*Mille volte baciarli,*

*Mille s'io ne son degno ribaciarli,*

*Voglio alla madre vergine beata,*

*Perche mi sia avvocata,*

*Offrir non oro, no, ma nudo il core,*

*Il core umiliato.*

*Venite, andiam, cerchiam Gesù, ch'è nato.*

O what new astonishment: see all around

Day in the middle of the night,

See the sky opening,

Hear the sound of the angelic choirs.

Come, let's go, let's look for Jesus, shepherds.

I want to sing, and I want to rejoice,

That God is born on earth,

That God is born on earth for my salvation.

I want to see him,

I want to adore what I have desired so much.

I want at those sacred naked shivering feet

To kneel, and so many sighs

To shed over him, that I will warm them,

A thousand times to kiss him,

A thousand, if I'm worthy to kiss him again.

To the blessed virgin mother,

Because she is my intercessor,

I wish to offer not gold, no, but the naked heart,

The humble heart.

Come, let's go, let's look for Jesus, who is born.

***O che nuovo stupor (O what new astonishment)*** is also from Caccini’s sole publication of 1618, with a Nativity theme, as we are encouraged to join the shepherds and seek out Jesus in Bethlehem. It is a reminder of the historic cribs, associated with Italy and how vivid the experience of Christmas remains for many.

***Serena* music from *La Liberazione di Ruggiero dall’Isola di Alcina* (1625**)

Caccini’s opera also contains ballet and lasted over 2 hours. It was first performed at Villa di Poggio Imperiale, near Florence, commissioned by the Regent Maria Maddalena, Archduchess of Austria. Typical of such lavish baroque productions, it was to celebrate a marriage. The story is from Ariosto Tasso’s *Orlando furioso* (1516), an important source for composers and artists a century on. Ruggiero is under the spell of the sorceress Alcina on her island, who will transform him into a plant, when she tires of him, as with earlier lovers. He is rescued by Melissa, whose own magic defeats Alcina. More celebrated now is the opera version by Handel.



County Down-born soprano, **Lauren McCann**, has a First Class Honours in BA Music Performance from Queen’s University, Belfast, a Diploma in Music Teaching and Performance from the RIAM, and is currently studying a Master in Music Performance Degree with Lynda Lee and Dearbhla Collins. A regular winner at Feis Ceoil, she recently performed in the European and UK tour of *Open Your Eyes And Tell Me What You See*, a performance project curated by Scottish pianist Iain Burnside, and made her debut as a soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland in the National Concert Hall in May 2023, performing Mozart’s *Exsultate, jubilate.*

Figure 7. Lauren McCann

**Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (1665-1729) Trio Sonata No. 3 in D**

**Michael Noonan (flute)**

**Kevin Meehan (violin)**

**Peader Ó Loinsigh (cello)**

**Laoise McMullin (harpsichord)**

One of four trio sonatas, by Jacquet, the music only survived in a c.1695 ms., compiled by fellow composer, Sébastien de Brossard (Bibliothèque Nationale de France). At the time, it would have been regarded, by many, as avant-garde, even unpatriotic, being inspired by those of Italian, Arcangelo Corelli. The movements are almost seamless - slow, fast and stately, with elegant phrasing, in contrast to more fragmented French-style sonata. Flute, violin and cello (originally viola da gamba) interweave and echo, while harpsichord provides solid bass continuo, with its own musical line, that the composer, undoubtedly, played.

**Laoise McMullin (b.2000) *Makeda (2023)***

Wisdom is  
sweeter than honey,   
brings more joy  
than wine,   
illumines  
more than the sun,  
is more precious  
than jewels.  
She causes  
the ears to hear  
and the heart to comprehend.

I love her  
like a mother,  
and she embraces me  
as her own child.  
I will follow  
her footprints  
and she will not cast me away.

**Lauren McCann (soprano)**

**Megan O’Neill (soprano)**

**Anna-Helena MacLachlan (mezzo-soprano)**

**Laoise McMullin or David Adams (harpsichord)**

**The composer explains the background to the work, which focuses on the two main figures in Lavinia Fontana’s *The Visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon.***

Like Lavinia Fontana, the Queen of Sheba, whose name was Makeda, could be considered a trailblazer. Her fascinating story is portrayed differently in various religious texts and traditional stories. In the Bible, her visit to King Solomon is portrayed as a lesson to those who did not believe in God. Solomon tricked Makeda into revealing her hairy legs, showing off his cleverness, then taught her about God, leading to her abandonment of more Paganistic beliefs. In great contrast to the Bible's telling of Makeda's story, the national saga of Ethiopia (modern-day Saba, where the Queen of Sheba ruled), tells of her use of riddles to test King Solomon's wisdom. The two spoke with respect to each other, both intelligent beings. When Makeda returned to Saba, or Ethiopia, she gave birth to a son, Baina-Iehkem. He later visited his father Solomon in Jeruselum, where was anointed King, taking the name David, before returning to Ethiopia with the first born of noble families selected by King Solomon. Today, some Ethiopian families still claim their ancestry can be traced back to these nobility. It is evident, particularly in the Ethiopian national stories, that Makeda was a powerful woman, who valued wisdom and knowledge greatly. She was even a poet; the text of *Makeda* comes from the Queen of Sheba's poem about wisdom.



Figure 8. Megan O'Neill

From County Kerry, **Megan O’Neill** studies with Prof. Mary Brennan and Dr Andrew Synnott in her third year of the Doctor in Music Performance Degree at the RIAM. She holds a First Class Honours BMus Degree from Maynooth University and a Master in Music Performance Degree from the RIAM, also receiving First Class Honours. Most recently, Megan made her National Opera House debut playing the titular role of *Cinderella* at Wexford Festival Opera. In the 2022 *Feis Ceoil*, Megan was the winner of the Gervase Elwes Memorial Cup and was awarded the 2022 RDS Music Bursary of €15,000 and the 2023 RDS Collins Memorial Award of €2,000. Megan played the role of ‘Teen polar bear’ in *The Scorched Earth Trilogy*, a street art opera by Brian Irvine and John McIlduff, produced by Irish National Opera and Dumbworld in March 2022. She played the role of Signora Avoglio in the ‘Rough Magic’ production of *All the Angels* by Nick Drake. She is also a company chorus member with Irish National Opera.

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Figure 9. Anna-Helena Maclachlan

Mezzo-soprano, **Anna-Helena Maclachlan**, is in her final year of the BMus Performance Degree, studying with Mary Brennan and Grainne Dunne. Anna-Helena performed as Cold Genius in the RIAM’s production of *King Arthur* in 2022 and Melissa in *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall’Isola di Alcina* in 2023. She also performed the role of Victorian 2 in Opera Collective Ireland’s production of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and Nerone in Monteverdi’s ’*L’incoronazione di Poppea* with Saluzzo Opera Academy. Anna-Helena was a soloist in the ‘Sundays at Noon’ song concert series, ‘*Open your eyes and tell me what you see*’ European Tour 2023 and in Handel’s *Messiah* in Wexford and Bray. She has won the Irené Sandford Award, Veronica Dunne Irish Bursary, Veronica Dunne Cup, and Thomas Moore Cup.

**Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (1665-1729) *Judith* (19 mins.)**

**Róisín O’Grady (soprano)**

**Kevin Meehan (violin)**

**Peader Ó Loinsigh (cello)**

**David Adams (harpsichord)**

*Tandis que de la faim*

*Oú la guerre la livre,*

*Bethulie alloit expirer,*

*Le Cruel qui l’assiege avoit fait preparer*

*Un superbe festin oú Judith doit le suivre.*

*Sans elle il ne sçauroit plus vivre,*

*Et déja son amourose se declarer.*

*Le seule Victoire me rendoit hereux.*

*Et sans vous la gloire eut borne mes veoux.*

*Mais la gloire est vaine prés de vos atraits,*

*J’aime mieux ma chaîne,*

*Que tous ses bien faits.*

*Enfoncez le trait qui le blesse Judith,*

*Jettez sur luy les regards les plus doux,*

*Hâtez, l’yvresse, qui le livrer à vos coups.*

*Ne le voyezvous pas charme de sa conquête,*

*Qui boit l’amour et le vin à longs traits.*

*Mais vainement l’impie au triomphe s’apprete,*

*Déjà de ses pavots épais,*

*Le sommeil a couvert satête.*

*C’en est fait le repos, le silence, la nuit;*

*Vous livernt à l’envi cette grande victime,*

*Armezvous et d’un bras magnanime,*

*Eteignez dans son sang l’amour qui l’a seduit.*

*Judith implore encore la celeste puissance,*

*Son bras prêt à fraper demeure suspendu;*

*Elle fremit de le vengeance,*

*Soutenez son cœur éperdu.*

*O ciel! Qui l’inspirez,*

*Soyez son assurance!*

*Le coup est achevé,*

*Quelle gloire éclatante,*

*Judith est triomphante,*

*Isreal est sauvé!*

*Pour ce Guerrier trop tendre,*

*Ol n’est plus de reveil,*

*La mort vient de le prendre*

*Dans les bras du sommeil.*

*Courez courez Judith, que rien ne vous arrete, un peuple allarmé vous attend;*

*Allez, allez, sur vos remparts arborer cette*

*Tete le presage assure d’un triomphe plus grand.*

*Chantons, chantons la gloire*

*Du seul maitre des Rois,*

*Non, ce n’est qu’à ses Loix*

*Qu’obeit la Victoire.*

*Son pouvoir souverain*

*Triomphe des obstacles;*

*Et la plus foible main*

*Suffit pour ses miracles.*

Whilst in the hunger to which war brought it,

Bethulia was going to perish,

The Cruel one who assailed it prepared

A glorious feast, to which Judith must follow him.

Without her, he might no longer live,

And already his love dares declare itself.

Victory alone used to make me happy

And without you glory would have been the limit of my desires.

But glory is futile compared

To your charms.

I prefer my chain to all its blessings.

Plunge in the arrow that wounds him

Judith, cast upon him the most caressing glances. Hasten, hasten the intoxication that will deliver him to your blows.

Do you not see him, charmed by his conquest, imbibing love and wine in long sips, but in vain, the Infidel prepares to triumph, already with its heavy poppies

Slumber has bestrewn his head.

It is over, now rest, silence, night;

Willingly deliver to you this great victim;

Arm yourself, arm yourself, and with a generous hand, extinguish in his blood the love that seduced him.

Judith implores again the Celestial powers;

Her arm, ready to strike, remains upraised;

She shudders with vengeance,

Uphold her distraught heart.

O Heaven that inspires her,

Sustain her!

The blow is dealt, what dazzling glory,

Judith is triumphant, Isreal is saved!

For this too-tender Warrior

There is no more waking,

Death has taken him into the

Arms of slumber.

Run, run Judith, may nothing deter you.

Go display this head on your ramparts-

A certain harbinger of a greater triumph.

Sing we, sing we the glory of the sole ruler

Of the Kings;

No, it is but his Law.

For victory to obey.

His sovereign power triumphs

Over obstacles;

And the weakest hand suffices

For his miracles.

*Judith* was included in vol. 1 of Jacquet’s “French Cantatas on subjects from Scripture, for solo voice and bass continuo” (Paris, 1707), by when she had already established herself as keyboard virtuoso and player. With it were the stories of Esther, Jacob and Rachel, Susanna and the Elders, Jonas and Parting of the Red Sea, so three about women who risked their lives to help their people. Jacquet’s version of the story has more reflection that description of events, divided into four sections that continue with hardly a break. The tone is bright, even when describing the brutal deed. There are frequent contrasts of mood in the short sung passages. An overture is followed by *récit*, where we follow Judith’s thoughts and actions, from how her home village faces famine or destruction, to subsequent events, In an *air,* opening “Only victory will being happiness” and stating the vanity of pure glory, there are more thoughts looking back, continued in the longest section “Sleep”. This changes pace at great speed, the head of Holofernes described as like one in sleep. Even the musicians, playing alone, seem to slow for deeper reflection. The repeated phrase, “Judith is triumphant” stands out. In France, both M.A. Charpentier (1676) and Brossard produced Judith cantatas, while there were Italian examples by A. Scarlatti (1693) and Vivaldi (1716). It is the perfect partner to Lavinia Fontana’s great painting of *Judith*, whose richness and brilliance were recovered, by conservation, completed only just before coming to Dublin. Fontana maintains the Renaissance tradition of showing Judith as heroine, dispassionately carrying out her deed. The truncated sword adds a touch of frisson, the likely self-portrait offers other suggestions.

**Music and composer notes by Adrian Le Harivel, Curator of British Art, NGI. Biographies and *Makeda* text by the participants.**

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Figure 10. Kathleen Tynan

**Kathleen Tynan**, programme curator, is Head of Vocal Studies and Opera at RIAM, where her role includes the programming and artistic production of operas for RIAM Opera and the development of song recital programmes with international collaborators. Most recently in November 2022, *Open Your Eyes And Tell Me What You See,* curated by Iain Burnside as an artistic response to the climate crisis, toured by ferry and train to London, Paris and Salzburg with musicians from RIAM, the Paris Conservatoire, Guildhall School and Salzburg Mozarteum.

Kathleen Tynan has written vocal degrees at RIAM which encourage the study and performance of works by women composers. To this end, she has produced the Irish premières of operas: Francesca Caccini *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall’Isola di Alcina*; Siobhán Cleary *Vampirella*; Judith Weir *Scipio’s Dream* and Elizabeth Maconchy *the Sofa*. Her RIAM Opera programme for 2024 will include Pauline Viardot *Cendrillon*.  In October 2019, Kathleen curated a song recital programme for RIAM in response to the *Sorolla: Spanish Master of Light* exhibition, presented in partnership with the National Gallery of Ireland. She is delighted to curate this programme of works by women composers in response to *LAVINIA FONTANA: TRAILBLAZER RULE BREAKER*.