

# *Finding a* **VOICE**

**Juliana Koch (oboe)**

**Michael McHale (piano)**

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024 | 1pm**

**Triskel Arts Centre, Cork**

# Programme

Ruth Gipps

Sonata No. 1, Op. 5a (1939)

- I. *Allegro Moderato*
- II. *Adagio*
- III. *Finale-Tempo di Bolero*

Clara Schumann

*Three Romances*, Op. 22 (1853)

- I. *Andante Molto*
- II. *Allegretto: Mit zartem Vortrage*
- III. *Leidenschaftlich schnell*

Helen Grime

*Five North-Eastern Scenes* (2016)

Marina Dranishnikova

*Poem* (1953)

Ruth Gipps

Sonata No. 2, Op. 66 (1985)

- I. *Andante doloroso – Allegro – Andante doloroso*
- II. *Adagio*
- III. *Allegro moderato – Doloroso – Tempo I – Meno mosso – Andante doloroso – Adagio*

## Juliana Koch | Oboe



Photo by Benjamin Ealovega

[Juliana Koch](#) is Principal Oboe of the London Symphony Orchestra, and since the ARD International Music Competition 2017 she has been in demand as a soloist all over Europe. Juliana was appointed Professor of Oboe at the Royal College of Music, London, in 2018. For her debut at the Berlin Philharmonie in 2019, Juliana performed the Richard Strauss Oboe concerto together with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin. Other solo engagements include appearances with the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks at the Philharmonie im Gasteig (Munich), the London Symphony Orchestra, the Münchener Kammerorchester, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Sinfonia Lahti and the Hungarian National Philharmonic, among others.

Juliana is an active chamber musician and has performed at several prestigious festivals around the world, including Musica Viva's Huntingdon Estate Music Festival in Australia, Lucerne Festival and Bachfest Leipzig. She has appeared in recital performances in the Konzerthalle Bamberg, NDR Hannover and Deutschlandfunk Köln.

As a soloist Juliana has recorded for Chandos, BIS, Wergo, cpo and LSO Live labels - including first recordings of the Ruth Gipps and Enjott Schneider oboe concertos. Her recording of the Dutilleux oboe Sonata has been selected for a BBC Music Magazine Award.

Juliana has been guest Principal Oboe with some of the world's most renowned orchestras, including the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Mahler Chamber Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra. She has previously held Principal Oboe positions with the Royal Danish Orchestra and Filarmonica della Scala, and has worked with many of the world's leading conductors, including Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Antonio Pappano, Bernhard Haitink, Kirill Petrenko, Daniel Barenboim, Riccardo Chailly, Pierre Boulez, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Zubin Mehta, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Sir John Eliot Gardiner and Valery Gergiev. Juliana has studied with François Leleux in Munich and Fabian Menzel in Frankfurt. Additionally she has worked with Jacques Tys in Paris.

## Michael McHale | Piano



Photo by Frank Miller

Belfast-born [Michael McHale](#) has established himself as one of Ireland's leading pianists and has developed a busy international career as a solo recitalist, concerto soloist and chamber musician. He has performed and recorded as a soloist with the Minnesota and Hallé Orchestras, the Moscow, Bournemouth, Jacksonville, Fort Smith, BBC

and London Symphony Orchestras, City of London Sinfonia, London Mozart Players and all five of the major Irish orchestras. He has performed at the Tanglewood, BBC Proms and Tokyo Spring Festivals, Barbican, Cadogan Hall and Southbank Centre, London, Berlin Konzerthaus, Lincoln Center, New York, Symphony Hall, Boston, Concertgebouw, Amsterdam and regular appearances at Wigmore Hall, London as a founding member of the Wigmore Soloists.

Michael's début solo album *The Irish Piano* was released in 2012 by RTÉ lyric fm and selected as 'CD of the Week' by the critic Norman Lebrecht. His discography of over twenty-five albums includes releases on Delos, Nimbus Alliance, Champs Hill, and eight duo recital albums on Chandos with clarinettist Michael Collins. The début album of the McGill/McHale Trio *Portraits* on Cedille featuring special narrations by Oscar-winner Mahershala Ali was released in 2017 and immediately entered the Top 25 US Billboard Classical Chart.

Winner of the Terence Judd/Hallé Award in 2009, Michael was also awarded the Brennan and Field Prizes at the 2006 AXA Dublin International Piano Competition, the 2005 Camerata Ireland/Accenture Award, and in 2016 a Major Individual Award from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. He studied at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Cambridge University and the Royal Academy of Music, and his teachers and mentors include John O'Connor, Réamonn Keary, Christopher Elton, Ronan O'Hora and Barry Douglas.

In 2017 Michael was invited to become a Patron of the Ulster Youth Orchestra, and in 2018 he was appointed lecturer in piano for undergraduate and postgraduate students at the MTU Cork School of Music, in addition to which he regularly gives masterclasses and adjudicates competitions in the USA, Ireland and the UK.

## **Ruth Gipps (1921-1999) | Sonata No. 1 (1939) & Sonata No. 2 (1985)**

Ruth Gipps belonged to that generation of English composers who came to prominence in the years immediately after the second world war. She was an accomplished orchestral oboist, and was also very successful as a conductor and academic teacher. Her parents met at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, and her mother ran a music school. Ruth was a child prodigy, performing her first composition at age eight. She studied at the Royal College of Music, London in 1937, where she was taught composition by Vaughan Williams. At age 26, she became the youngest British woman to receive a doctorate in music.

After injuring her hand at the age of 33, Gipps decided to focus on composing and conducting. She promoted music by women composers including Florence Price, Grace Williams, and Elizabeth Maconchy by conducting their works, but at the same time often distanced herself from the negative connotations of the label 'woman conductor/composer'. Gipps adopted a pastoral style of composition, drawing on English folk tunes and historical English composers such as Byrd, and taking inspiration from the English countryside. She produced over 70 works, including five symphonies. Gipps's refusal to embrace modernism impacted on her reception as a composer both during and beyond her lifetime. She was far from the only composer of her generation whose work, having been pushed out of the limelight by the widespread ascendancy of modernism, is only recently starting to be appreciated anew.

This afternoon's concert begins with Gipps' oboe Sonata No. 1, which was composed in the early stages of her career when she was just eighteen years old. The concert will later conclude with her Sonata No. 2, which was composed forty-six years later. Framing today's programme, these sonatas also frame Gipps' career in composition, demonstrating her early youthful style in contrast with her later, more mature writing. The first sonata is a testament to her precocious talent and burgeoning compositional voice, while the second reflects her continued exploration of the oboe's capabilities as well as her development as a composer. Both display her proficiency in writing for the oboe, and have been praised for their lyrical qualities and idiomatic writing for the instrument.

## Clara Schumann (1819-1896) | *Three Romances*, Op. 22 (1853)



Clara Schumann, née Wieck, was born in Leipzig in 1819, and is now regarded as one of the greatest concert pianists of the Romantic era. She also composed a significant body of work, taught piano, and was a mother of eight children with Robert Schumann (1810-1856). Her compositional output includes orchestral, chamber, choral, and solo piano music.

Schumann grew up receiving daily lessons in piano, violin, singing, harmony, and composition. By age eighteen she had performed a series of recitals in Vienna and was named the Royal and Imperial Chamber Virtuoso, which was the highest musical honour in Austria. Her 61-year performance career that followed was an incredible achievement. In 1878 she was appointed the position of piano teacher at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, where she stayed until 1892.

Schumann's *Three Romances*, Op. 22, were originally composed for violin and piano in 1853. They were among the last pieces that Clara ever wrote, as when Robert died the following year she turned her attention to performing and editing his music rather than continuing to compose her own. The *Romances* were dedicated to close friend and virtuoso violinist Joseph Joachim. Clara went on tour with Joachim performing the work, once performing it before King George V of Hanover who praised it very highly.

The main theme of the *Andante Molto* is loosely based on arpeggios, and is developed and embellished throughout this emotional and passionate romance. The final section refers to Robert Schumann's Violin Sonata No. 1. The *Allegretto* is supposedly representative of all three romances as it embodies all of the elements linking the movements together. The movement is developmental and the theme is quite varied, considering the short length of this movement. The long melody of the *Leidenschaftlich schnell* movement wonderfully complements the busy accompaniment on the piano, which remains fast paced until the end.

## **Helen Grime (b. 1981) | *Five North-Eastern Scenes* (2016)**

The music of [Helen Grime](#) has been performed by leading orchestras around the world, among them the London Symphony Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra. Conductors who have championed her music include Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Mark Elder, Pierre Boulez, Kent Nagano, Oliver Knussen, George Benjamin, Daniel Harding, Marin Alsop and Thomas Dausgaard. Her music frequently draws inspiration from related artforms such as painting, sculpture, and literature, and has won praise in equal measure for the craftsmanship of its construction and the urgency of its telling.

Born in 1981, Grime studied at the Royal College of Music with Julian Anderson and Edwin Roxburgh (composition) and John Anderson (oboe). In 2008 she was awarded a Leonard Bernstein Fellowship to attend the Tanglewood Music Center where she studied with John Harbison, Michael Gandolfi, Shulamit Ran and Augusta Read Thomas. Grime was a Legal and General Junior Fellow at the Royal College of Music from 2007 to 2009. Between 2011 and 2015 she was Associate Composer to the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester and in 2016 was appointed Composer in Residence at Wigmore Hall in London. She was Lecturer in Composition at Royal Holloway, University of London, between 2010 and 2017 and is currently Professor of Composition at the Royal Academy of Music in London. She was appointed MBE in the 2020 New Year Honours List for services to music.

Between 2011 and 2015 Grime was Associate Composer to the Hallé Orchestra. This fruitful period resulted in a series of new works and a recording of her orchestral works released by NMC Recordings. This disc was awarded 'Editor's Choice' by Gramophone Magazine on its release and was nominated in the Contemporary category of the 2015 Gramophone Awards. In 2016 her *Two Eardley Pictures* were premiered at the BBC Proms and in Glasgow, winning the prize for large-scale



composition in the Scottish Awards for New Music and a nomination in the British Composer Awards the following year.

*“Five North Eastern Scenes* for oboe and piano was commissioned by the Kunstförderverein Kreis Düren e. V. for the 2016 Spannungen chamber music festival in Heimbach, Germany. The piece is in five short movements. The first, third and fifth explore space and melancholy, while the second and fourth are fleeting and at times more violent.

This is the third work in which I have used the paintings of the Scottish artist Joan Eardley as a starting point. Her vast, emotive snow scenes painted outside in the brief periods of calm between snow storms capture the striking yet bleak beauty of North East Scotland, an area where I grew up, but have not visited for many years.”

— Helen Grime





## **Marina Dranishnikova (1929-1994) | *Poem* (1953)**

Little is known of the biography of Marina Dranishnikova, and *Poem* is her only work that has not been lost/left unpublished. However, the work's lyrical outpouring strongly suggests she was far from being a beginner in 1953 when she wrote it. She was the daughter of Vladimir Dranishnikov - conductor, composer, music director at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg from 1925-1932, and a friend of Prokofiev.

Dranishnikova studied composition at Leningrad Conservatory, where she also studied piano with Nadezhda Golubovskaya. *Poem* was published in Moscow in 1953, but was left in relative obscurity until its global première at the International Double Reed Society Convention 2003. Oboist Marc Fink rediscovered this piece during his travels to the St. Petersburg and Moscow Conservatory libraries to research twentieth century Russian oboe music in 2002. *Poem* is dedicated to Vladimir Kurlin, who was solo oboist of the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra (now named the Saint Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra), and with whom Dranishnikova reportedly had a tragic love affair.

*Poem* is deeply romantic in nature. With beautiful and sweeping melodies that are fixed within a distinct key area, rubato is heavily utilized. It also contains extensive chromaticism, complex rhythms and mixed meters. Likewise, the piano music is written in a soloistic manner that makes this piece a virtuosic and involved work for the pianist to learn and perform. In this approximately nine-minute piece, nine key signatures are explored. Likewise, Dranishnikova employs twelve different time signatures throughout. The form oscillates between largo and allegretto sections with familiar motives being restated in a unique manner.