



NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh

Arts in Action 2021

ART AS LEGACY





A NOTE FROM THE INTERIM DIRECTOR

In 2020, Arts in Action lost its founding artistic director and producer Mary McPartlan. The circumstances of this sudden loss and our world situation with Covid-19 have led to the presentation of a limited programme this year while we plan as a University for Arts in Action's future after Mary's passing.

The theme of this year's limited programme is art as legacy.

- The legacy left by Mary McPartlan as the programme draws on many of her frequent collaborators and will provide opportunities to reflect on her legacy in pre-presentation materials and post-show talkbacks
- What we learn about the power of art as legacy because of how Mary approached Arts in Action's growth over the years within NUI Galway during a time of curricular expansion and growing investment by the University in the Creative Arts
- A chance to reflect on our collective need for the arts as a site of connection and exchange in a Covid/post-Covid world and the legacy of that particular space for reflection during this time
- Legacy within this programme also means reflecting on Arts in Action as a launchpad for future legacies being built in the arts by NUI Galway staff, students, and alumni

When I moved from the United States to Ireland to take up my post at NUI Galway in 2012, Mary sought me out almost immediately as another colleague and woman working in the creative arts, and trying to balance an identity within the University and as a creative practitioner working with students as a new generation of artists. I experienced Mary's love, generosity, care and her own artistry as boundless energy where every conversation not only resulted in inspiration, but usually a collaboration dreamt up first by Mary that had not been remotely a possibility before the conversation. As myself and

my colleagues have had to come to terms with her sudden passing, what I have come to reflect on is that her boundless energy has in no way dissipated or left us, but instead has left so many seeds and hearts touched that the force that was Mary McPartlan will shape this campus and creative arts community for generations to come.

There is a line in Lin-Manuel Miranda's groundbreaking U.S. musical *Hamilton* about legacy, namely that it is "planting seeds in a garden you will never see," an obsession that the musical's anti-hero Alexander Hamilton only begins to mistrust at the very moment of his death. My experience of Mary was that she joyfully and totally devoted her life to planting seeds and nurturing the seeds underway that she came across around her, as in her own passionate support of my career and own well-being as a colleague. We witnessed this not only in her work with Arts in Action but in her creative arts focused collaborations with the International Office and the School of Medicine among others. She did this not thinking of herself but of the joy and transformative power of the arts as a force that she needed to evangelise about in order to enrich the lives of all around her as much as humanly possible in the present as well as the future.

May we not only remember Mary through this programme, but in carrying forward the work of Creative Arts at NUI Galway and beyond, work as individuals and collectively to keep sowing the seeds she left through the contribution of her spirit, and also embrace how we too might take up the work of continuing to plant the seeds that will ensure a sustainable and vibrant future for the Creative Arts across our University community.

Dr Charlotte McIvor

DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDIES
SCHOOL OF ENGLISH AND CREATIVE ARTS



MARY MCPARTLAN

8 JANUARY 1955 – 6 APRIL 2020

Arts in Action and Music for Galway: A collaboration that is greater than the sum of its parts

Music for Galway (MfG) was founded in 1981 by a group of people who were very much tied to NUI Galway. Some local, some finding themselves in the West of Ireland having been brought here through their academic work, they all shared a passion for music and had this vision of facilitating music performances at the highest level for Galway audiences on a regular basis.

When Mary McPartlan created the Arts in Action (AiA) programme, she did so out of the same conviction, that of perceiving the essentiality of experiencing artistic practice, the wish of wanting to transmit to the student population a cultural patrimony by ensuring that the University would offer a cultural programme of music, literature, theatre, visual arts of top quality. She was adamant that the programme be varied, challenging, inspiring. She was adamant that it should be presented regularly.

Having two such initiatives running side by side, it was only natural that they would eventually seek each other out.

MfG had started to run its own lunchtime series in recent years with the aim of giving Irish-based artists and especially emerging artists a platform, and to facilitate access to a wider audience. MfG was also looking for a way to bring its programme closer to the student population. When MfG approached Mary about the collaboration and the idea to co-curate a certain number of AiA events, Mary being Mary could see the potential straight away. As she had presented primarily traditional music and folk music, the world in which she had connections and expertise, here she felt that by working with MfG she would have a partner that could bring her the same in the world of classical music and so the collaboration came into being. The start was a little slow but we built it up and within one season our concerts were regularly sold out. The audience were a mix of NUI Galway staff, students and MfG audiences – a welcome addition to AiA. When the BA in Music started, a further opportunity to link in presented itself. Working with Dr. Aidan Thomson, MfG brought visiting artists to his lectures for pre-concert talks and workshops.

Mary McPartlan was about the project at hand. She knew what she wanted, and what she wanted was always getting something done. Working with a person like that, and with

the team she had put together, was straightforward, lean, to the point. This is the legacy that she has left – this belief in the importance of the arts, her devotion to the cause, bringing people together, cutting through any nonsense, and serenely getting on with her work. May it live on in many more years of collaboration between Arts in Action and Music for Galway.

**ANNA LARDI FOGARTY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
MUSIC FOR GALWAY**

"In April 2020, we lost our beloved friend and colleague, Mary McPartlan. Mary, as an Honorary Clinical Fellow, led the academic credit-bearing Medicine and the Arts special study module in the School of Medicine for over ten years. This novel initiative was based closely on the vibrant Arts in Action programme. It introduced first and second year undergraduate medical students to a range of artistic disciplines, including music, theatre, literature, film studies and the visual arts. Field trips with Mary to national art galleries and theatres in Dublin were among the cherished highlights for our students. From Medicine and the Arts sprang the acclaimed Medical Orchestra which, during its existence, performed with considerable distinction under Mary's watchful eye at venues in Galway, the regional Medical Academies and at an international medical orchestra festival at La Sapienza University in Rome.

Mary worked closely with me to not only provide an outlet for the medical students' creative talents, but also to allow them to explore as scholars the connections between the Arts and healing. The students responded very positively to her infectious passion

for the Arts, and to her well-informed belief in the importance of holistic healthcare. Part of Mary's enduring legacy is that she managed to forge such a deep and respectful collaboration between our respective academic disciplines. This reached a crescendo in 2019 with our joint delivery, along with some of Mary's wonderful colleagues from the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies, of a workshop on the Medical Humanities at the Irish Network of Healthcare Educators conference. Mary was so generous in sharing her love for the Arts with the School of Medicine and our programme is the poorer without her Midas touch. She had an innate appreciation for the importance of the humanities in helping medical students to understand patients' needs and to demonstrate empathy and compassion. Ní bheidh a leithéid arís ann."

PROFESSOR GERARD FLAHERTY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

"Mary McPartlan was a warrior with an artist's heart, she was fearless in pursuing her vision to make art accessible to the students and open minds and hearts to the endless possibilities, I deeply miss her spirit and her beautiful voice."

RIONA HUGHES, SOCIETIES

"The experience of many of our international students was enriched through participation in Arts in Action and the module 'Exploring Indigenous Arts'. Mary embodied multiculturalism and truly valued the diversity which these students brought to the classroom."

ANNA CUNNINGHAM, INTERNATIONAL OFFICE





“Mary was a real force of nature when it came to promoting the arts in general, and traditional arts in particular, within NUI Galway. She was a warm and welcoming colleague, and a constant source of help and encouragement, often behind the scenes (for instance, in the creation of the choral scholarships for the Schola Cantorum). I remember vividly her excitement about the new Music degree, and her high hopes of how it could contribute to music in Galway, both the University and the city. I miss her greatly.”

DR AIDAN THOMSON, MUSIC

“Mary McPartlan enriched everyone she met. She loved ideas, she loved making ideas happen, and she loved the fun of making art happen. Mary immersed students from all over the world in the heritage of Irish music, arts and culture and shared with them her deep knowledge and sense of understanding of how art enriches the soul. ‘Arts in Action’ encapsulated so much of Mary’s spirit - it celebrated culture, brought people together and made us all think a little more about the world around us. As a friend, mentor and colleague, we will miss Mary greatly.”

DR BARRY HOULIHAN, ARCHIVIST, JAMES HARDIMAN LIBRARY

“Mary was steadfastly committed to fairness and justice for artists and strove to realise those goals in all her work.”

PROFESSOR LILLIS Ó LAOIRE, GAEILGE

“Mary was passion and grace. Advocate, agitator, teacher, mentor, artist, peacemaker, friend. She was passionate about theatre, music and the arts. She was passionate about students. Every class she taught was student led, be that in arts policy, producing or Chekhov.

She prepared them for the industry to shake up the status quo, to imagine and research new worlds and approaches. She believed that all of us in NUI Galway had the right to access to the arts, no matter what our discipline and made sure that we did through Arts in Action. She believed that all artists had a right to be paid fairly for their contribution to the arts in NUI Galway, and fought systems to make that happen.”

MARIANNE KENNEDY, DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDIES, HEAD OF PRODUCING AND CURATION

“Mary brought light and joy to our School, and to the University as a whole. No idea was too daunting to consider, no project too ambitious to imagine, whether it meant mobilising our medical students into an orchestra, or bringing the great American poet Amiri Baraka to Galway to electrify our undergraduates, or persuading Christy Moore to deliver a seminar rather than sing! So often, despite the odds, Mary made truly transformative and astonishing things happen, bringing us along in her energising slipstream. Her legacy of curiosity, courage and care for the arts is one for our School and College to carry forward into the future. An artist herself, she showed us not merely how to celebrate the artistic achievements around us, but how to nurture the sparks of what may be possible. The Arts in Action programme that Mary created and bequeathed us could be based on no better principles.”

PROFESSOR SÉAN RYDER, ENGLISH, HEAD OF SCHOOL OF ENGLISH AND CREATIVE ARTS



SHARON SHANNON

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE & JEAN RITCHIE ANNUAL LECTURE

17 February 2021 | 1PM | Online

Sharon Shannon is a musician who likes to surprise. While she is known for her arrangements of traditional Irish tunes and Irish-influenced compositions, she has always been eager to explore new styles, and to meet and work with other musicians. Renowned for her collaborations, not just in Irish traditional music, but through all musical genres, Hip-Hop, Cajun, Country, Reggae, Classical and Rap.

Sharon has recorded and toured with a who's who of the Irish and Global Music Industry, including Bono, Adam Clayton, Sinéad O'Connor, Jackson Browne, John Prine, Steve Earle, The RTE Concert Orchestra, The Chieftains, The Waterboys, Willie Nelson, Nigel Kennedy, Alison Krauss and Shane MacGowan. The genre-defying star has achieved multi-platinum album sales and has had several chart topping albums, singles and DVDs. She also celebrates being the youngest ever recipient of the Meteor Lifetime Achievement Award.

Sharon will be accompanied in this concert by Jim Murray, an internationally acclaimed Irish musician. Having a wealth of teaching experience and performing master classes around the world, 2011 saw Jim produce his own highly anticipated on-line guitar tutorial focusing on all aspects of accompanying traditional Irish music with a guitar. He has released two critically acclaimed albums with long term partner Seamus Begley in 2001 and 2008 which collectively scooped many prestigious awards such as The Irish Times and Hotpress Traditional Irish Music Album of the Year.

This Arts in Action concert presentation, presented as the annual Jean Ritchie Lecture, launches Sharon Shannon's new partnership with Music at NUI Galway and celebrates her musical virtuosity as well as the future potential arising from her engagement with our Music students as the next generation of emerging artists. Along with her long-time collaborator, Irish-American fiddle player, Win Horan, Shannon will be recording a series of masterclasses that look at different facets of the creation, performance and production of traditional Irish music. These masterclasses will be used as part of the teaching of traditional music modules within the new BA in Music. Shannon and Horan will follow up the masterclasses with six live workshops per year, in which they will discuss traditional Irish music directly with the students. Just as Arts in Action's vision under the artistic leadership of Mary McPartlan put traditional music at its centre, this new partnership places traditional music at the centre of imagining new directions for the study of music at NUI Galway.

SACRIFICIAL WIND REVIVAL

PERFORMANCE IN MEMORY OF
MARY MCPARTLAN

03 March 2021 | 1PM | Online

Lorna Shaughnessy was born in Belfast and lives in Co. Galway, Ireland. She has published three poetry collections, *Torching the Brown River*, *Witness Trees and Anchored* (Salmon Poetry), and a chapbook, *Song of the Forgotten Shulamite* (Lapwing). She is also a translator of Spanish and South American Poetry. Her most recent translation was of poetry by Galician writer Manuel Rivas, *The Disappearance of Snow* (Shearsman Press). She lectures in Hispanic Studies in NUI, Galway.

Max Hafler began his professional life as an actor is a theatre tutor, director and writer who specialises primarily in teaching Michael Chekhov Technique and Voice and directing work. He teaches at NUI Galway, and has guested at other international colleges. He has worked extensively on youth theatre programmes. His book, *Teaching Voice*, was published by Nick Hern Books in 2016. He is director of Chekhov Training and Performance Ireland.

Lorna Shaughnessy's poetic examination of the characters around the story of the sacrifice of Iphigenia by her father Agamemnon asks big questions about war, patriarchy, and society. Mary McPartlan commissioned Shaughnessy and Hafler to produce it as a world premiere in 2017 for Arts in Action, and *Sacrificial Wind* also held the distinction of being the first piece of theatre performed in the new O'Donoghue Theatre. *Sacrificial Wind* has also been performed in the Seamus Heaney Centre in Queen's University, Belfast. The piece was worked using the Michael Chekhov Technique, a process of acting McPartlan herself was dedicated to and which she also pioneered at NUI Galway.





MÁIRTÍN O'CONNOR, SEAMIE O'DOWD & CATHAL HAYDEN

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

10 March 2021 | 1PM | Online

Máirtín O'Connor's name has been synonymous with the accordion for decades both as a master of the instrument and as a composer/arranger. His skill, dexterity, innovation and versatility have won him acclaim around the world. O'Connor is on the 20/21 Honorary Doctorate list from NUI Galway for his contribution to traditional music.

Seamie O'Dowd is a guitarist, singer, and songwriter. He has travelled worldwide, sharing stages with many musical greats including Christy Moore, The Chieftains, Tommy Emmanuel, Matt Molloy, and Rick Epping. A defining member of Dervish for over a decade, he has also released three critically acclaimed solo albums.

Cathal Hayden is an internationally renowned banjo and fiddle player. When not performing to packed

venues in America, China or Australia, Cathal is just as content playing in the quiet local family pub. As a musician who has been involved in the release of many albums; both as a solo artist and a member of "Four Men and a Dog", as well as his contribution to other artists' albums, he remains happy in the knowledge that he has helped bring Irish traditional music to a worldwide stage.

For more than two decades, O'Connor, Hayden and O'Dowd have recorded and toured around the world. They have recorded two CDs, *Crossroads* and *Going Places*. The trio have toured with Christy Moore, and with Martin Hayes as part of the 'Masters of Tradition concerts'. As frequent past contributors to Arts in Action, their concert is a celebration of this bond and friendship with Mary.



IN CONVERSATION

GREEN FIELDS & GRANITE SONGS: VINCENT WOODS WITH MICK MOLONEY

24 March 2021 | 1PM | Online

Vincent Woods is a writer and broadcaster. Former Writer in Residence and teacher of creative writing and drama at NUIG, he has worked extensively with music and musicians, co-editing, with Eva Bourke, the anthology *Fermata; Writings inspired by Music*. His song lyrics have been set to music by Máirtín O'Connor and others and recorded by Mary McPartlan, Liz Hanley, Colleen Raney and Charlie McGettigan. He is director of the Iron Mountain Literature Festival in Leitrim and is a member of Aosdána.

Mick Moloney holds a PhD in Folklore and Folklife from the University of Pennsylvania. He has taught ethnomusicology, folklore and Irish studies courses at the University of Pennsylvania, Georgetown, and Villanova Universities, and currently teaches at New York University in the Music and Irish Studies programs.

He has recorded and produced over sixty albums of traditional music and acted as advisor for scores of festivals and concerts all over America. Mick also served as the artistic director for several major arts tours including The Green Fields of America, an ensemble of Irish musicians, singers and dancers which was formed in 1978 and toured internationally since then.

In 1999 he was awarded the National Heritage Award from the Irish National Endowment for the Arts, the highest official honour a traditional artist can receive in the United States. Mick received the Presidential Distinguished Service Award from the President of Ireland in November of 2013.

SEÁN RYAN, MICK CREHAN & GREG COTTER

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

31 March 2021 | 1PM | Online



Native of Tipperary, Seán Ryan is regarded as one of the foremost exponents of tin-whistle playing in Ireland. He is best known for his distinctive staccato style of playing and his extensive repertoire and knowledge of traditional music. He has toured extensively in Europe, Japan and the USA.

Mick Crehan is a member of the renowned musical family, the Crehans of West Clare. Whistle players have had the most profound influence on his playing, while most influential is his long association and friendship with Seán Ryan. Mick became proprietor of the Crane Bar in 2001 and in the intervening 20 years the Crane has become one of the premier traditional music venues in Ireland under his stewardship. He also is founder and director of the “Galway Sessions” music festival.



Greg Cotter, a native of Shantalla in the heart of Galway, is an accomplished guitar, banjo and mandolin player. Greg has an unparalleled and extensive repertoire of songs drawn from the folk traditions of Ireland, UK, America and Australia gleaned from a lifetime of travel and experiences.

This Arts in Action concert brings together these three musicians who feature in the now legendary Sunday lunchtime session at the Crane Bar, which celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2019. Seán shared this session with well-known troubadour Pat Conneely for over 30 of those years. When Pat sadly passed away in 2010 Seán was joined by Mick Crehan and Greg Cotter. This mighty session social occasion continues to this day.



LEAH REDMOND & DEARBHLA COLLINS

SOPRANO & PIANO

21 April 2021 | 1PM | Online

Kildare soprano Leah Redmond graduated with a first class honours degree from the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin (where she studied with Dr Veronica Dunne and Dr Dearbhla Collins) and is now in the first year of the Masters programme at the Royal College of Music in London where she studies with Janis Kelly and Simon Lepper. A keen recital artist, in March 2020 she premiered the Evangelina Rigaki piece *If Words are Water* in a series of concerts in New York and in 2019 she made her début in Ireland's National Concert Hall accompanied by James Vaughan, head of music at La Scala in Milan.

Dearbhla Collins is one of Ireland's finest pianists and leading vocal coach. She is Assistant Head of Music at the National Opera Studio, London and vocal coach at the Royal Irish Academy of Music,

Dublin. She is very highly regarded internationally as a song pianist and performs recitals with singers such as Benjamin Appl, Patricia Bardon and Tara Erraught. She also regularly works with Dame Ann Murray and Brigitte Fassbaender. In October 2017 she was awarded an honorary doctorate for her services to music in Ireland from the National University of Ireland.

For their Galway recital, Leah and Dearbhla will perform songs by Franz Schubert and Richard Strauss, including "Morgen" / "Tomorrow", one of his most popular songs, which looks forward to a future of hope and love.

Presented in partnership with Music for Galway with support from SAP.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
MUSIC FOR GALWAY



MIKE MCCORMACK & EL PUTNAM

LITERATURE & PERFORMANCE

28 April 2021 | 1PM | Online

Mike McCormack is the author of two collections of short stories *Getting it in the Head* and *Forensic Songs*, and three novels *Crowe's Requiem*, *Notes from a Coma* and *Solar Bones*. In 1996 he was awarded the Rooney Prize for Literature and *Getting it in the Head* was chosen as a New York Times Notable Book of the Year. In 2006 *Notes from a Coma* was shortlisted for the Irish Book of the Year Award. In 2016 *Solar Bones* was awarded the Goldsmiths Prize and the Bord Gais Energy Irish Novel of the Year and Book of the Year; it was also long-listed for the 2017 Man Booker Prize. In 2018 it was awarded the International Dublin Literary Award. He teaches creative writing at NUI Galway and is a member of Aosdána.

EL Putnam is an artist-philosopher writer working predominately in performance art and digital technologies. Her work focuses on borders and entanglements of gesture, particularly the interplay of the corporeal with the machinic. Through her artistic practice, EL explores hidden histories and emotional experiences, testing the limits of their unrepresentability. EL actively presents artworks, performances, and organizes events in Ireland and the United States. She is member of the Mobius Artists Group (Boston). Originally from the US, she currently lectures in Digital Media at Huston School of Film and Digital Media, NUI Galway.

In this collaborative piece, McCormack and Putnam explore the following questions: What has become of grief during this time of pandemic? Is it another emotion or faculty to be organised, mediated, ordered, disciplined?



SIMON MAWHINNEY

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

05 May 2021 | 1PM | Online

Simon Mawhinney is a composer and teaches music at Queen's University Belfast. As a pianist he has performed internationally repertoire from Bach to Boulez. He has a particular interest in large-scale works of the 20th and 21st centuries (works by Messiaen, Sorabji and Feldman.) In addition to his recent piano cycle, *Solo Fingers*, he is currently working on a two-hour work in 19 movements entitled *The Garden of Light*. Most of his composition work is for ensemble, and he is currently working on works for musicians in Ireland, UK, France, Poland and Iceland. In addition to music he enjoys locomotion, wild camping and laughter.

For his Galway recital, Simon will juxtapose three movements from his own cycle, *Solo Fingers*, with four movements from Olivier Messiaen's revelatory cycle *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus*, an extensive meditation on the infancy of Jesus composed in 1944.

Presented in partnership with Music for Galway with support from SAP.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Interim Artistic Director	Charlotte McIvor
Producer	Joanne Couch
Technical Director	Mike O'Halloran
Administrative Support	Karen Walsh
Cover Image	Patricia Byrne

This programme is made possible by NUI Galway's College for Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies.

SPECIAL THANKS

Séan Ryder and the School of English and Creative Arts
Aidan Thompson
Anna Lardi Fogarty and Music for Galway
Rebecca Braun
Marianne Kennedy
Patrick Lonergan
Caroline Kennedy
Lillis Ó Laoire
Cathal O'Donoghue
Bary Houlihan, John Cox and James Hardiman Library
Bryan Rabbitte
Paddy, Méabh and Mairéad Noonan

 facebook.com/artsinactionnuigalway

 [@NUIGArtsAction](https://twitter.com/NUIGArtsAction)

 [@arts.in.action.nuig](https://instagram.com/arts.in.action.nuig)



www.nuigalway.ie/artsinaction