

## **Press Release: July 16th, 2007**

### **Crash Ensemble and Iarla Ó Lionáird to perform world premier of new Dennehy Sean Nós settings at Westport Arts Festival**

Friday August 31st 2007 | Holy Trinity Church, Westport

As part of the Westport Arts Festival (31st August – 9th September 2007)

After a triumphant debut in New York, Crash Ensemble, Ireland's foremost contemporary classical ensemble, will perform the world premiere of a new set of Sean Nós settings for Iarla Ó Lionáird at the Westport Arts Festival.

Written by Crash Ensemble's Artistic Director and Composer Donnacha Dennehy, this concert is the beginning of a national tour and the 10th Anniversary celebrations of a company renowned for its compositions and interpretations of cutting-edge music.

The programme for the Westport Arts Festival concert includes the 2nd Irish performance of the highly acclaimed **Grá agus Bás**, written by Dennehy for Ó Lionáird as well as two new settings of Sean Nós songs. Also featuring will be a new piece by grandfather of minimalism, Terry Riley, written for Crash Ensemble - **Loops for Ancient Giant Nude Hairy Warriors Racing Down the Slopes of Battle** – which evokes scenes of ancient celtic Ireland and is heavily inspired by old Irish art.

The concert will also feature work by Ziporyn. Alan Pierson, of New York-based ensemble Alarm Will Sound, will be conducting and performing in the concert.

#### **FULL PROGRAMME**

##### **Crash Ensemble – *Strange Folk***

Sean Nós settings (Dennehy [world premiere])

Loops for Ancient Giant Nude Hairy Warriors Racing Down the Slopes of Battle (Riley)

Kebyar Maya (Ziporyn)

Grá agus Bás (Dennehy)

#### **MORE INFORMATION**

##### **DONNACHA DENNEHY/IARLA Ó LIONÁIRD**

Commissioned by Trinity College and written for Iarla Ó Lionáird and Crash Ensemble, *Grá agus Bás* is inspired by the moments of ecstasy (both luscious and dark) within a number of particular Sean Nós songs, but especially *Aisling Gheal*, and uses these as a collective point of departure for a journey exploring the themes of love and death in a non-narrative context.

The New York Times described the performance as "*a magnificently energetic, wildly cacophonous vocal work*" and Crash Ensemble as "*the Irish new-music band that plays with the energy and spirit of a rock group*"

##### **TERRY RILEY**

Terry Riley was strongly influenced by jazz and tape loop experiments when he began composing repetitive music. In 1964, Riley composed *In C*, which is generally considered the benchmark work of American Minimal music. Its impact was to change the course of 20th Century music and its influence has been heard in the works of prominent composers such as Steve Reich, Philip Glass and John Adams and many prominent rock bands such as The Who, Brian Eno and Curved Air. Later works like *Cadenza on the Night Plain* was selected by both Time and Newsweek as one of the 10 Best Classical Albums Of The Year. The epic string

quartet cycle, *Salome Dances for Peace*, was selected as the #1 Classical Album Of The Year by USA Today magazine and was nominated for a Grammy. Terry Riley was listed in the London Sunday Times as "*one of the 1000 makers of the 20th Century.*"

### **ALAN PIERSON**

Alan Pierson has been praised as "a young conductor of monstrous skill" by Newsday, "commanding" by the New York Times, and "gifted and electrifying" by the Boston Globe. He is the artistic director and conductor of the acclaimed ensemble Alarm Will Sound which has been called "the future of classical music" by the New York Times and "a sensational force" with "powerful ideas about how to renovate the concert experience" by the New Yorker. In addition to his work with Alarm Will Sound, Mr. Pierson has appeared as a guest conductor with the London Sinfonietta, the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, the New World Symphony, and The Silk Road Project, among other ensembles. He has collaborated with major composers and performers including Yo Yo Ma, Steve Reich, John Adams, Augusta Read Thomas, David Lang, Michael Gordon, La Monte Young, and Wu Man, and choreographers Akram Khan and Elliot Feld. Mr. Pierson has recorded for Nonesuch Records, Cantaloupe Music, Sony Classical, and Sweetspot DVD.

### **CRASH ENSEMBLE**

Crash Ensemble was founded in 1997 by composer Donnacha Dennehy; conductor and pianist Andrew Synott; and clarinetist Michael Seaver. Their repertoire features the works of major composers of the 20th and 21st century, including Reich, Stockhausen, Andriessen, Glass, and Cage among many others. They have worked directly with composers such as Steve Reich, Louis Andriessen, Gavin Bryars, Michael Gordon, Kevin Volans and Arnold Dreyblatt in preparing important premieres and performances. Apart from their regular concerts in Ireland, they have also performed in the UK, Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Canada and the USA, and have featured in radio broadcasts in all of those countries. The BBC broadcast their recent December 2005 London debut in full. Crash has made an indelible mark on the Irish music scene and beyond. They believe in a joyous yet absolutely rigorous engagement with the most adventurous music today and the (extremely) recent past. Crash will feature in recordings by labels such as NMC (London) and Cantaloupe (New York) to be released in the coming year. Crash Ensemble is supported by the Arts Council.

**For more details visit [www.crashensemble.com](http://www.crashensemble.com)**

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### **FOR MEDIA INFORMATION, TICKETS AND PICTURES CONTACT:**

#### **Zoetrope**

Nik Quaife T: 087 799 7989 | [nik@zoetrope.ie](mailto:nik@zoetrope.ie)

#### **Crash Ensemble**

Frances Mitchell T: 087 698 3763 | [admin@crashensemble.com](mailto:admin@crashensemble.com)