

CASSIOPEIA WINDS

Cassiopeia Winds is an Irish chamber wind ensemble formed in 2010, whose performances are marked by vivacity, panache and a dedication to the exploration of fine sound-worlds. Though the ensemble has the capacity to expand or contract to suit its innovative programming, at its core is a quintet of players whose members are among the finest in the country, including players from the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, RTÉ Concert Orchestra and the Crash Ensemble.

The ensemble aims with each performance to run the full and varied gamut of the wind repertoire from 19th-century to contemporary works, including Danzi, Reicha, Barber, Hindemith, Poulenc, Francaix, Ibert, Nielsen, Ligeti and Arvo Part. Their concerts represent the startling originality and exoticism, and the inimitable palette of tone colours of the wind ensemble. They have a dedication to bringing the lesser-known works of this repertoire into the Irish and international concert halls and festivals.

The ensemble also has a great interest in contemporary music and in supporting the work of Irish composers. They have commissioned, premiered and toured new wind quintets from John Buckley and Jonathan Nangle, as well as premiering and touring a new quintet written for them by Adele O'Dwyer. In 2022, with funding from the Arts Council, they commissioned a new work from Raymond Deane which they will premier in the NCH in March 2023. They have collaborated with the Irish Composers Collective and Maynooth University's Music Dept to workshop and premiere works for many young and more established composers.

Cassiopeia Winds has had the great pleasure of collaborating with well-loved and renowned musicians Finghin Collins, ConTempo Quartet, Melvin Tan, and Lise de la Salle, among others. They have performed at the Galway Midwinter Festival, the New Ross Piano Festival, the Sligo International Chamber Music Festival, the Castleconnell Autumn Series, the Joan Trimble Centenary Celebration and have recorded three pieces at a live performance of the long running RTÉ Radio 1 programme Sunday Miscellany. They have been regular performers at Dublin's Kaleidoscope Night and have toured Ireland three times with the generous support of the Arts Council.

In February 2020 the quintet performed a concert of music by five women composers from the 20th and 21st centuries in the National Concert Hall as part of the NCH's "Sounding the Feminists" programme.

Following the introduction of restrictions due to Covid-19, Cassiopeia Winds adapted to making music in new and interesting ways. In June 2020 the quintet recorded an arrangement of Ode to Joy from Beethoven's 9th Symphony, which was broadcast by Music Network and the Irish Youth Wind Ensemble on social media as part of the nationwide tribute to frontline workers led by President Higgins. Also in June the quintet performed a live streamed concert from the Pro Cathedral in Dublin.

In July Cassiopeia Winds collaborated with the Contemporary Music Centre to record three works by Irish composers for the Wood Quay Summer Sessions online.

Since the easing of restrictions they have enthusiastically returned to live performances, touring music venues in Ireland again in late 2021 with the support of the Arts Council and recording for the much loved Sundays at Noon series in the Hugh Lane Gallery.

Cassiopeia Winds are:

Catriona Ryan was a scholarship student with the legendary Doris Keogh at the Royal Irish Academy of Music and later with Trevor Wye, Richard Davis and Patricia Morris at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England. During her college years she was engaged by numerous orchestras including the BBC Philharmonic, Manchester Camerata, Northern Sinfonia and Hallé orchestras. Catriona is Flute Section Leader of the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra and has also played Principal Flute with many other ensembles in Ireland, such as the Irish Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra of St. Cecilia and the Irish Film Orchestra, and has performed as Guest Principal Flute with the Royal Northern Sinfonia in the UK.

An enthusiastic chamber music player, she is a founder member of Cassiopeia Winds who feature in many music festivals around Ireland, including the Vogler Quartet's International Festival of Chamber Music in Sligo and Music for Galway's Midwinter Festival. They have performed on several Irish tours following awards from the Arts Council of Ireland and are keen performers of contemporary repertoire, also having commissioned a new Wind Quintet from composer John Buckley.

Catriona also has an active career tutoring, teaching, giving masterclasses and adjudicating/examining for bodies such as the Royal Irish Academy of Music, TU Conservatoire of Music and Drama, the European Youth Orchestra and the National Youth Orchestra of Ireland.

She enjoys hosting occasional pre-concerts talks for the RTÉNSO Friday night subscription series and the opportunity it affords her to meet the audience up close. Catriona particularly enjoys collaborations with other musicians, some of her highlights other than festival appearances with Cassiopeia Winds being, Bach obbligato arias with Mark Padmore, performances with the ConTempo Quartet, recitals with pianist Finghin Collins and most recently with Fíachra Garvey in a live-streamed performance from Russborough House for West Wicklow Chamber Music Festival.

She appears frequently as a soloist with various ensembles including the RTÉNSO, most recently performing Mozart's Flute Concerto in D Major for the orchestra's first live-streamed concert after lockdown from the National Concert Hall.

Matthew Manning was Principal Oboe in the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) for 21 years before leaving to pursue a freelance career. He recently returned to his former position as Principal Oboe with the NSO. He has played with the Irish Chamber Orchestra, The Orchestra of St Cecilia, the Irish Film Orchestra, the Wexford Festival Orchestra, and the Scottish National Orchestra. His work ranges from education workshops in County Mayo and the National Youth Orchestra to commercial recordings and concerts with 'The Doors' and 'Bill Bailey's Amazing Guide to the Orchestra'!... He teaches oboe in the Royal Irish Academy of Music and the Cork School of Music. His solo CD 'Silver River' features the music of Michael McGlynn and is available on www.cdbaby.com.

Deirdre O'Leary is a freelance clarinet & bass clarinet player. As an orchestral musician she has performed with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, RTE Concert Orchestra, Wexford Opera Festival, Irish Chamber Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra and Irish National Opera.

As a chamber musician, Deirdre performed all over Ireland and in Norway with the exuberant Prey Trio from 2000-10. In 2010, she co-founded Cassiopeia Wind Quintet with principals of the RTE Concert Orchestra and the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland.

Deirdre was a member of Crash Ensemble from 2003 to 2022, touring Europe, Australia and the US and recording for Nonesuch. She has toured and recorded with the Berlin-based contemporary group, s t a r g a z e, and with singer/songwriters Lisa Hannigan and Branwen Kavanagh. She has also performed and recorded with Richard Reed Parry.

Deirdre is a member of Caitríona O'Leary's band, Anakronos, whose first album received international critical acclaim and a five star rating from the Irish Times. Deirdre lives in Cloughjordan ecovillage where she and her family have built a cob house by hand.

John Hearne began his musical education at a young age, studying the piano and the recorder with his father William Hearne. Taking up the bassoon at the age of 11, he was taught by Michael Rogers in Dublin before continuing his studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Graham Sheen and Meyrick Alexander, and at the Scuola Musicale di Milano under Valentino Zucchiatti. Since returning to Dublin in 2001, John has worked as a freelance player with the RTE National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, the RTE Concert Orchestra, Irish National Opera, Wexford Festival Opera, the Irish Chamber Orchestra, Opera Theatre Company, the Orchestra of St. Cecilia, Castleward Opera and various other ensembles. A keen chamber musician, John is a member of Cassiopeia Winds, Musici Ireland and the Ficino Ensemble. He teaches bassoon at TU Dublin Conservatoire and at the Royal Irish Academy of Music.

Cormac O hAodáin was born in Dublin in 1971. He studied horn with Victor Malirsh at the Royal Irish Academy of Music and continued his studies at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London. Cormac has been a member of both the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Philharmonia Orchestra in London and is now Section Leader/Principal French Horn of the RTÉ Concert Orchestra.