

Donnacha Dennehy has had work featured in festivals and venues around the world, including the Edinburgh International Festival, Royal Opera House (London), Carnegie Hall, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, ISCM World Music Days, WNYC's New Sounds Live, Ultima Festival (Oslo), Musica Viva (Lisbon), the Schleswig-Holstein Festival, and the Gaudeamus Festival (Amsterdam). Dennehy's recent opera *The Last Hotel* premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival in August 2015. Other recent premieres include *The Weather of it* for the Doric Quartet, *Surface Tension* for Third Coast Percussion, and *Tessellatum* for violist Nadia Sirota, viol consort and electronics, scheduled for release by Bedroom Community in 2017. He has been on the music faculty at Princeton University since 2014.



Photo by Marylene May

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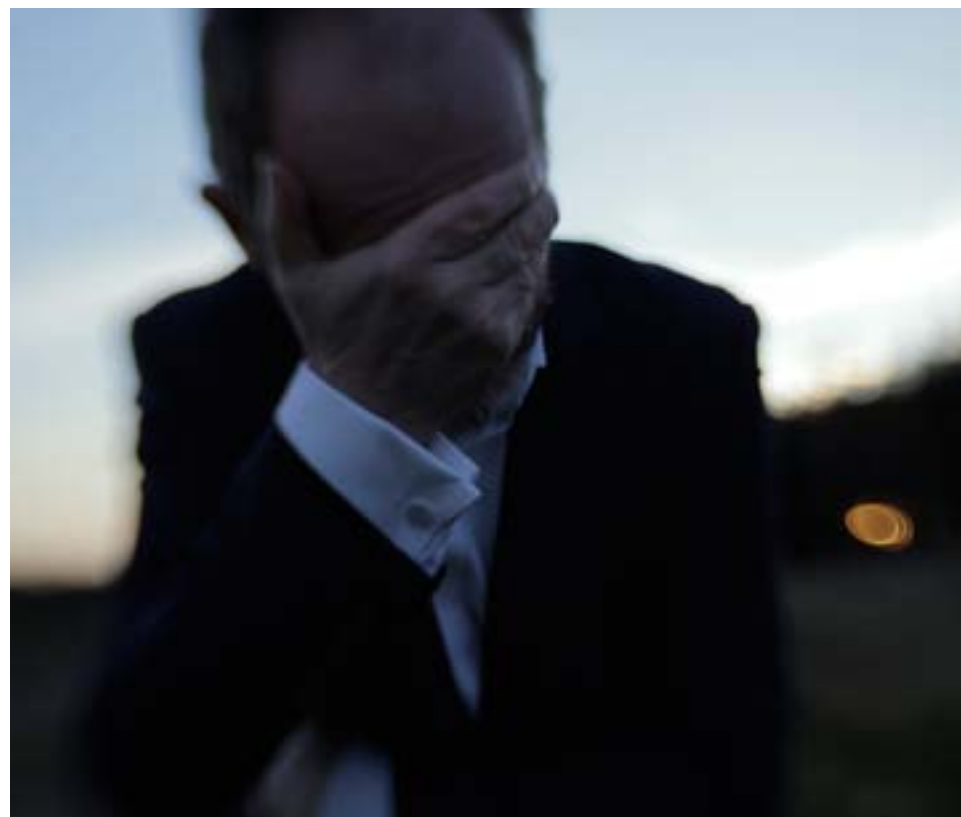
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Donnacha Dennehy

OPERAS

The Hunger (2014), *The Last Hotel* (2015),
The Second Violinist (2017)



The Hunger

A docu-opera (2014)



“Jabbing staccati mirror the thrumming of Morel’s sinister machines, effectively undergirding the vocal writing.”
- *Chicago Tribune*

Libretto by Asenath Nicholson, anon.

Interviews with Noam Chomsky, Paul Krugman, Maureen Murphy,
Branko Milan

Duration: 1 hour 10 minutes

Premiere: December 2014, Alarm Will Sound, St. Louis, MO

Orchestration: 1(pic,af).1(ca).2(bcl).1./1.1.1.0/2perc/pf/str; vintage recordings,
electronics, video interviews

Cast: S. Sean-nós singer

synopsis

The Hunger concerns itself with the Great Irish Famine of 1845-52, which transformed Irish society irrevocably. The main narrative in the piece is provided by the accounts of the famine by the American non-conformist Asenath Nicholson who spent two years traveling around Ireland helping those dying from starvation and writing about her experiences. Her account stands outside the norm because of her transgressive sympathy; she directly quotes from those suffering. Extremely little is available from those who directly suffered. Only the song, ‘Na Prátaí Dubha (Black Potatoes)’, of the Sean-nós tradition deals with the topic. Shards of that song form the basis of an extended section sung by the Sean-nós singer.

The Last Hotel

a three-act opera (2015)

Duration: 1 hr 20 min

Cast: 2S, Bar, silent role

Premiere: August 2015, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Orchestra: fl(pic,trec), cl(bcl), tbn, perc, acn, egtr(bass drum), pf, 2vn, va, vc, db(5 string); sound design.

Libretto (English) by Enda Walsh

synopsis

An English couple and an Irish woman meet at a hotel. Pensioners arrive with their families. The husband asks himself - how many of them would choose to die? The Irish woman wants to know when they'll rehearse — a rehearsal was an important part of the service the husband and wife were offering. The husband talks about what he'll build when they return home to England. They rehearse the woman's suicide. Suddenly the husband and wife are on a car ferry. The wife is left alone and she calls out to the Universe for some resolution - some peace. She'll have to live with the voices of many dead people in a house built from their souls. There is no rest for the Irish woman. Though now dead - she still hurts.

The Second Violinist

an opera (2017)

Duration: 90 min

Cast: S., Mz, Bar, actor (man), child (14 yr old girl); SATB chorus (16 singers)

Premiere: July 2017, Galway International Arts Festival, Galway, Ireland

Orchestra: Ensemble of 14 players

Libretto (English) by Enda Walsh

synopsis

Martin, the second violinist starts to experience a mental breakdown. A married couple, Matthew and Amy, and their houseguest Hannah, sing. Martin's playing is increasingly terrible. A voice reaches out from Martin's screen. A forest enters his dreams. Matthew and Amy's marriage is in a bad state, and Amy is in love with Hannah. Matthew murders them in revenge. We become aware that Matthew is the younger version of Martin: this is his past. He arranges to meet the voice that had reached out to him - in the forest: a 14 year old girl who comes to meet a 14 year old boy. We sense he's going to kill her. Here he will end things.