



festival of new music and poetry

7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> November 2012  
Smock Alley, Banquet Hall

**Béal Festival 2012** is a festival of new music and poetry. We are entranced by the fascinating capacity of words to be both pure sound and a means of communication, and our mission is to explore this in the spoken and sung word. Our festival this year is all about finding alternative ways (no matter how rough and ready) of thinking and experiencing, building alternative combinations of words and music.

The whole festival takes place over three days (Nov 7th - 9th) in the **Banquet Hall** at **Smock Alley**. The format is open-plan, trying wherever possible to allow different aesthetics and approaches to rub against each other. There is much emphasis on multiple streams of text at once, where the overload of information can provoke a joyfully intuitive reaction to the streams of meaning - more about experiencing the moment than understanding it.

We are delighted to welcome our featured composers, **Robert Ashley** and **Tom Johnson** to Dublin for the festival. Included are the European première of Ashley's recent opera **World War III Just the Highlights** and a newly-commissioned work by Johnson for vocal ensemble. Both composers emerged from the time in American new music when the influences of minimalism and Cagean experimentalism met. Both have gone on to forge individual paths, and are pushing music into new terrain.

Other than this, the festival features a wild multiplicity of creative approaches to text and music. There are works with both projected and performed text, Carnatic text-based improvisation, phonetic games, poetry read through resonant objects, readings by poets from the experimental wing of Irish poetry.

The festival features first-rate performers including **Iarla Ó Lionáird**, American baritone **Thomas Buckner**, **ConTempo String Quartet** and the vocal group **ensemblÉal**. Experimental poets **Maurice Scully**, **Aodán McCardle** and **Billy Mills** will perform at the festival. Mills' **Loop Walks** will conclude the festival on the Friday night - this is a newly-invented genre of work, polyphonic poetry, scored for speaking chorus.

Running as a thread through the entire festival are short performances by our house band **TheOpenRehearsals**, a collective of musicians and actors who present improvised opera with a blend of strict criteria and unbounded freedom which produces an uncanny air of focus and unpredictability.

Ashley's operas make the ordinary extraordinary, a very minimalist aspiration. Streams of text, barely inflected from speech, are transformed into music by the slightest of musical furnishing. Ashley is a true realist, focusing and delighting in the overlooked and marginal. Ashley's long-time collaborator Tom Buckner will perform **World War III Just the Highlights**, **The Producer Speaks** and **When Famous Last Words Fail You**.

Tom Johnson finds beauty within the most unadorned of mathematical formulas, often simple counting patterns. He regards such mathematical structures as found objects à la Cage. His newly-commissioned work for the vocal ensemble is a prime example: using only the words *tick* and *tock*, it elucidates a pattern of twos and threes.

Each day of the festival features a series of informal performances surrounding a more formal event.

**Day Tickets (10 euro, 8 concession) and Festival Passes (25 euro)**  
are available from Smock Alley - [www.smockalley.com](http://www.smockalley.com) - or 01 677 0014



for more information see  
[www.bealfestival.wordpress.com](http://www.bealfestival.wordpress.com)  
or contact us at [bealfestival@gmail.com](mailto:bealfestival@gmail.com)

## Wednesday 7 November

from 6.30 pm (finishing at 10.30 pm)  
including: TheOpenRehearsals, Gráinne Mulvey: The Seafarer (world première), readings / projections by Aodán McCardle, Leuclade: Segundo Hechizo

### 8 pm *main event*

#### a method: the road climbs

ConTempo String Quartet, Elizabeth Hilliard, Tom Johnson, Billy Mills perform Tom Johnson: **Counting Music**, Aperghis: **Récitations** (exc.), Tom Johnson: **Formulas for String Quartet**, Haydn: **String Quartet Op 64, No 6**

The first evening concert simply sets out the Béal take on text and music. Here gobbets of information are presented in a simple format where their mystery can emerge. Pattern as meaning - sound as physicality. The inclusion of Haydn's work draws links with the unabashed constructivist energy of the Enlightenment

## Thursday 8 November

from 6.30 pm (finishing at 10.30 pm)  
including: TheOpenRehearsals, Christopher Fox: **MERZsonata**, Bernadette Comac: **The Virtual Performer**, Aodán McCardle: Work responding to Robert Ashley

### 7.30 pm *main event*

#### World War III Just the Highlights

Tom Buckner performs Robert Ashley: **World War III Just the Highlights**, (European Première), **The Producer Speaks** and **When Famous Last Words Fail You**

Ashley's visionary work will open your ears to a world of music previously unexperienced.

Come and hear the Nobel acceptance speech of the man who invented the immortality salve, the adventures of a put-upon French jazz promoter, reflections on the campaigns of El Cid, amongst much more...

## Friday 9 November

from 4 pm (finishing at 9 pm)  
including works by Alvin Lucier, Derek Ball, Mikel Rouse, Michael O'Holohan, Dennis Wyers, Sinéad Finegan, Christine Murray, TheOpenRehearsals and readings by **Maurice Scully**

### 7.30 pm *main event*

#### the air fills us & we fill the air

Iarla Ó Lionáird, ensembÉal, Orla Flanagan, Andrea Scott perform

David Bremner: **Round**, (world première)  
Ailís Ní Ríain: **Eyeless**, (world première, commissioned by Béal)  
Scott McLaughlin: **Phon 2**,  
Tom Johnson: **Tick Tock Rhythms**, (world première, commissioned by Béal),  
Christopher Fox: **A Glimpse of Sion's Glory**,  
Billy Mills: **Loop Walks**, (world première, commissioned by Béal)  
Seán Doherty: **Saccade**

The final concert presents choral music conceived as theatre: incisive, angular, text-oriented.

Bremner's work explores the presentation of the same text (by radical psychoanalyst **R.D. Laing**) simultaneously at multiple speeds in a context influenced by seventeenth-century polyphony.

Fox's work **A Glimpse of Sion's Glory** encapsulates the festival's theme of breaking down and rebuilding: from the ferment of revolutionary seventeenth-century England, competing visions of the future society (the Sion of the title) jostle for attention.

Ní Ríain's work, **Eyeless**, featuring sean nós singer **Iarla Ó Lionáird**, is a somewhat subversive reflection on the dual traditions of classical and sean nós singing.

Director **Andrea Scott** has custom-designed the visual aspect for each piece so this will be a vivid occasion making full use of this wonderful space.

More details including exact times available from  
[www.bealfestival.wordpress.com](http://www.bealfestival.wordpress.com)