



Composers in the Classroom

Background

In 1997, the Cork International Choral Festival, in association with the Arts Officers of Cork City and County, and the Arts Council, initiated a Composer-in-Residence scheme for Post-Primary schools titled ***Composers in the Classroom***.

What is *Composers in the Classroom*?

Composers in the Classroom is a Composer in Residence Scheme. It is designed to offer music students and their teachers the opportunity to work with a professional composer or singer-songwriter assigned to the school for the duration of the scheme. It is specifically envisaged that the residency operates with a class group from Transition Year. The ***Composers in the Classroom*** Scheme is designed to complement the general music studies curriculum at senior cycle, and is of particular interest to students who intend to take the higher elective in composition in the Leaving Certificate Music Syllabus which was examined for the first time in 1999. In recent years the remit of the scheme has successfully extended to include students with little or no musical training. It stimulates students' interest in composition and song writing and encourages musical creativity and experimentation. It is envisaged that the music created by the students will be primarily, but not exclusively, vocal or choral in nature, and will involve the participation of the school choir (where such exists) and other performers. The use of music instruments on the part of the students is encouraged.

Previous composers in residence include Paul Linehan, Louise McCarthy, Emily Magner, Sam Barker, Irene Buckley, Ann Cleare, John Gibson, Maria Judge, Ashley Keating, John Spillane, Róisín McGrath and John O'Connor.

What is required of the students?

The students taking part will be required to listen actively to a wide range of music, to analyse and discuss the elements that go into making a musical structure, and to use this knowledge creatively in their own work. The participant's musical backgrounds, their musical preferences and experiences etc. will be regarded as rich sources for creativity.

How is the teacher involved?

This residency will firstly provide the teacher with the opportunity to work alongside a professional composer and to learn from such collaboration. It will then allow them to discuss and develop new approaches to encourage and support creative composition in the classroom. The teacher plays an integral role in supporting the work of the composer throughout the duration of the residency and is expected to attend all ***Composer in the Classroom*** sessions. The teacher plays a very important part in overseeing the presentation of the student's work at the culmination of the residency.

What is required of the school?

The minimum class contact required is **one double period per week**. This period should be timetabled and be consistent from week to week. To ensure the most effective operation of the scheme the residency should commence as early in September as is feasible but, at the very latest, it should commence no later than early October. A specific room suitable for purpose is to be made available throughout the year. Availability of instruments would be an advantage. It is expected that the participating school will encourage and support the work of the participating students, composer and music teacher throughout the scheme. The school is responsible for student discipline. It is expected that visiting composers be treated as such and not as disciplinarians during class time.

When does the residency conclude?

The residency will operate on a scheduled basis throughout the school year and **culminates in a seminar held as part of the 60th Cork International Choral Festival, 30th April– 4th May 2013**. As a centrepiece of this event examples of the compositions created by the participating students will be presented and performed.

Is there a cost implication for the school?

The school will not be responsible for any tuition payments and travel expenses incurred by the visiting composer through participation in the scheme. All other related costs (school clerical expenses, photocopying, transport to and from seminar etc.) will be the responsibility of the school.

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