

**West Cork Chamber Music Festival 2021**  
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presents

**Bantry and Beyond**

*Festival Echoes*

**13. World Premiere**

Filmed at the Auer Hall, Jacob's School of Music, Indiana

**Pacifica Quartet**

**Simin Ganatra, Austin Hartman** [violins]

**Mark Holloway** [viola]

**Brandon Vamos** [cello]

**Turina**

*La Oración del Torero, Op. 34*

**Deirdre Gribbin**

*Dark Matter Hunting*

*FESTIVAL COMMISSION / WORLD PREMIERE*

**Prokofiev**

*Quartet No.2 in F major Op.92 'Kabardinian'*

**Joaquín Turina** [1882-1949]

***La Oración del Torero Op.34*** (The Toreador's Prayer) [1925]

Amongst twentieth century Spanish composers such as Albeniz, de Falla, Granados, and the Catalan, Mompou, Joaquín Turina was the only one to compose a substantial amount of chamber music. Like most Spanish composers, he completed his studies in Paris, where he was encouraged by the likes of D'Indy, Ravel, and Debussy.

In this brief tone poem for string quartet, *La Oración del Torero*, the influence of Debussy can be heard, especially in the use of lush descending parallel ninth chords. The influence of music of the Andalusian gypsies is also quite evident and the Quartet is marked by a striking contrast of moods and colours. This piece became one of the composer's most popular works, often performed in an arrangement for string orchestra.

*Francis Humphrys*

**Deirdre Gribbin** [b.1967]

***Dark Matter Hunting*** [2020] FESTIVAL COMMISSION / WORLD PREMIERE

*I 'A Day Without Yesterday'*

*II 'Black Rain'*

*III 'Einstein Cross'*

*IV 'Inter-nebular'*

Dark Matter is a hypothetical invisible mass thought to account for approximately 90% of the matter in the universe, and about a quarter of its total energy density. We can only account for 5% of visible matter. It first came to my attention twenty years ago at Trinity College Cambridge during my time there as Visiting Fellow in Creative Arts through my friendship with colleague and astrophysicist Priya Natarjan.

Recently through her book 'Mapping the Heavens', I have been enthralled and absorbed by the scientific investigations and speculations surrounding Dark Matter and its existence. Another pioneering woman astrophysicist, Vera Rubin discovered something unexpected in the 1960's about the way matter moved in other galaxies. It was generally supposed that beyond the visible galaxies that thinly distributed matter would start to move more slowly further away from the galactic centre. In fact, Rubin observed that even the matter which she detected in the outer limits moved at the same speed. The only explanation for this was that the entire visible galaxy as we know it was encased in a sphere of invisible material, which exerted gravitational force on visible matter. It does not emit light, nor does it absorb or reflect radiation. We only know that it is there because of its gravitational pull on objects around it.

### 1. A Day Without Yesterday

In the first movement I endeavour to create a series of links between instrumental voices within the quartet using timbral contrasts to double a single line often at the same pitch but with a specifically differentiated sound quality. Structural fluidity bends individual lines emulating gravitational force pulling musical lines towards a sense of disunity. The music grows in momentum hurtling outwards.

### 2. Black Rain

In the second movement a terse and relentless pizzicato dance drives towards a series of raucous concentrated triple stopped chords. I have used the musical material suggesting an expanding universe where interlinking patterns emulate the light trajectories, which bind 'Dark Matter' molecules together.

### 3. Einstein Cross

A galaxy can hide itself behind another galaxy and then paradoxically become more visible. This amplification of the brightness of a distant celestial object by a massive star in front was predicted by Einstein in his theory of general relativity in 1917. Massive objects alter geometry of space and time in their vicinity. The Hubble telescope relayed a gravitational illusion, which became known to astronomers as the Einstein Cross. This is an excellent example of the phenomenon known as gravitational lensing where refracted light from a hidden distant object curves, forming four separate images from a single source. In this movement, four disparate lines are intertwined, slowly moving from foreground to background. A mesh of harmonic material creates intricate folds and lines constantly closing inwards in microscopic detail 'hiding' source harmonic fundamentals beneath.

### 4. Internebular

In the final movement the musical material is wrought with a sense of propelled urgency. Harmonic fragments hurtle through this ultimate space created, dissipating as veils of vanishing transparent echoes from the opening.

*Deirdre Gribbin*

*Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Annaghmakerrig and Bloomsbury, London*

*June 2020*

**Sergei Prokofiev** [1891-1953]

***String Quartet No.2 in F major Op.92 'Kabardinian'*** [1941]

1. *Allegro sostenuto*
2. *Adagio*
3. *Allegro*

In August 1941 as the Nazis neared Moscow, Prokofiev along with other artistic labourers from the Moscow Conservatory were evacuated to Kabarda-Balkar in the foothills of the northern Caucasus. There he was persuaded to write a quartet that made use of local Balkar and Kabardinian music. Luckily for Prokofiev, back in Imperial times the composer Sergei Taneyev had collected a volume of notated folk tunes from the region.

Prokofiev summarised his objective as creating interesting combinations of this virtually untouched folk music within the form of the classical string quartet. Prokofiev took care not to embellish or refine the raw power of the highlanders' pulsating music. The opening movement is brutal, brash and martial, not surprising given the times – within three months Prokofiev had to be evacuated further south to Tbilisi as Hitler's armies were approaching the Caucasus. The insolent crudity of this music seems exactly to match the brutality of the Great Patriotic War that raged a few hundred miles away.

The bewitching Adagio is a Kabardinian love song whose melody is given mostly to the cello. The central section picks up on a dance that was played locally on the kemange, the ancient three-stringed spike fiddle with a leather sounding board, still in use throughout the Middle East. You can hear how Prokofiev relates to this instrument's special sound. The infectious Finale borrows yet more dances from these musical mountain people that gradually get wilder and wilder. The Quartet was first played in Moscow in September 1942 and, though interrupted by a German air raid, met with a fervent response.

*Francis Humphrys*

*Thank you for watching*

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