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The Hunger

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House

Sep 30 & Oct 1 at 7:30pm

Running time: approx. one hour & 15 minutes, no intermission

By Donnacha Dennehy

Alarm Will Sound

Conducted by Alan Pierson

Directed by Tom Creed

Presented in association with
Irish Arts Center

Set and video design by **Jim Findlay**

Lighting design by **Christopher Kuhl**

Costume design by **Tilly Grimes**

With

Katherine Manley, soprano

Iarla Ó Lionáird, *sean nós* singer

Season Sponsor:

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Katherine Manley
Soprano



Iarla Ó Lionáird
Sean nós singer



Alan Pierson
Conductor & Artistic Director

ALARM WILL SOUND

Erin Lesser flutes and piccolo

Christa Robinson oboe and
english horn

Bill Kalinkos clarinet

Elisabeth Stimpert clarinets

Michael Harley bassoon

Matt Marks horn

Gareth Flowers trumpet

Michael Clayville trombone

John Orfe piano

Chris Thompson percussion

Matt Smallcomb percussion

Courtney Orlando violin

Caleb Burhans violin

Matthew Albert viola

Stefan Freund violoncello

Miles Brown double bass

Alan Pierson conductor and
artistic director

Gavin Chuck managing director

Daniel Neumann audio and
technical director

Jason Varvaro production
manager

Peter Ferry assistant
production manager

ADDITIONAL CREDITS

Dramaturg **Jocelyn Clarke**

Stage manager **Catherine Costanzo**

Répétiteur and vocal coach **Jeremy Chan**

Video engineer **Ryan Nelson**

Assistant video designer **Thomas Kavanagh**

Set construction **Crosstown Scenic**

Text compiled from original sources by Donnacha Dennehy (with dramaturgical assistance by Jocelyn Clarke).

Text based on Asenath's Nicholson's *Annals of the Famine in Ireland*, original sean nós songs such as "Na Prátaí Dubha" (The Black Potatoes) and on interviews conducted by Tom Creed with Noam Chomsky, Maureen Murphy, Branko Milanovic, Paul Krugman, and Megan Vaughan.

Thanks to Florent Ghys for his assistance with the musical transcription of the video.

INTERVIEW CREDITS

Maureen Murphy

Interview by Tom Creed

Dublin, Ireland, Jan 11, 2016

Camera: Kilian Waters

Noam Chomsky

Interview by Tom Creed

Cambridge, MA, Jun 24, 2014

Camera: Jim Findlay

Paul Krugman

Interview by Tom Creed and

Donnacha Dennehy

New York, NY, Aug 6, 2014

Camera: James Gannon

Branko Milanovic

Interview by Tom Creed and

Donnacha Dennehy

New York, NY, Aug 6, 2014

Camera: James Gannon

Megan Vaughan

Interview by Tom Creed

London, UK, Aug 20, 2014

Camera: Oonagh Kearney

Support by Jay Golan and Janet Gornick of CUNY Graduate Center; Bev Stolhl of MIT; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; Culture Ireland

Co-produced by Alarm Will Sound and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis

Commissioned by Alarm Will Sound with additional funding from Arts Council of Ireland, MAP Fund, The Sinquefeld Charitable Foundation, and New Music USA

The Hunger concerns itself with a big topic, the Great Irish Famine of 1845–52, which transformed Irish society irrevocably. The main narrative voice in the piece is provided by the astonishing accounts of the famine by the American non-conformist Asenath Nicholson (sung here by Katherine Manley). Mrs. Nicholson spent two years traveling around Ireland—often on foot—helping those dying from starvation and writing about her experiences of the unfolding famine. Mrs. Nicholson’s account stands outside the norm because of her transgressive sympathy; she directly quotes from those suffering, and actually stayed in their cabins, something that no other commentator did. Nevertheless, it is still for the most part an outside viewpoint.

One tragedy of our understanding of the famine is that precious little is available from those who directly suffered. There is no published account from the Gaelic-speaking majority that experienced the most. Musical culture almost shut down entirely through the period. As the renowned 19th-century song-collector George Petrie commented, “there was a great unwonted silence.” Only one song from the *sean nós* (old style) tradition of unaccompanied singing deals directly with the topic, and that is “Na Prátaí Dubha” (Black Potatoes). Shards of that song form the basis of an extended defiant section of the piece sung by the *sean nós* singer, Iarla O’Lionáird. Indeed it is to the *sean nós* tradition that I turn in seeking out—or maybe even inventing—an indigenous Irish thread in this multi-dimensional narrative.

On a larger socio-economic level, one of the terrible ironies of the famine is that while many were dying of starvation or associated diseases, food (which the majority of the populace could not afford) continued to be exported from the large estate farms. In fact, as the scholar Christine Kinealy observes in her book *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845–52*, certain food exports actually increased during the famine. This is largely due to an ideological battle at the heart of the British government in London, where an influential contingent did not want to interfere with the workings of the market,

at least in Ireland. Many have defined this as the nub of the issue—the conflict between the responsibilities of governance versus a strict philosophy of not interfering with the mechanism of the market. Of course this was further complicated by the dynamics of colonialism. Lord Trevelyan, Assistant Secretary to the Treasury, charged with special responsibility to Ireland at this time, even wrote that the “Famine had been ordained by God to teach the Irish a lesson, and therefore should not be too much interfered with.”

Addressing this broader context (and the parallels today) are voices from the worlds of present-day economics, history, and philosophy. These new voices are presented through video inserts (joining the fabric of found objects) taken from interviews specially undertaken for this piece with Noam Chomsky, Paul Krugman, Branko Milanovic, Maureen Murphy, and Megan Vaughan.

I am deeply grateful to Jocelyn Clarke for giving me dramaturgical guidance on the shape of the piece, and to Tom Creed for his enormous assistance with the interviews, and for collaborating with me on this material. Sincere thanks are also due to Jay Golan and Janet Gornick at CUNY Graduate Centre and Bev Stolh at MIT for their assistance in arranging interviews.

I am grateful to the Royal Irish Academy for allowing me to use an excerpt of a recording from their Doegen Archive. The recording of the woman keening was made by Alan Lomax in the west of Ireland in the 1950s. It is part of the Alan Lomax Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, and is used courtesy of the Association for Cultural Equity.

The Hunger was commissioned by Alarm Will Sound, and has received financial assistance from New Music USA, The MAP Fund, and the Arts Council of Ireland. *The Hunger* is dedicated to Courtney Orlando.

—Donnacha Dennehy

DONNACHA DENNEHY

Born in Dublin in 1970, Donnacha Dennehy has had work featured in festivals and venues around the world, such as the Edinburgh International Festival, Royal Opera House (London), Carnegie Hall (New York), The Barbican (London), BAM (Brooklyn), Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (UK, which opened its 2012 Festival with a portrait concert devoted to Dennehy's music), Dublin Theatre Festival, ISCM World Music Days, WNYC's *New Sounds Live*, Bang on a Can, Ultima Festival (Oslo), Musica Viva (Lisbon), Saarbrücken Festival, Schleswig-Holstein Festival, and the Gaudeamus Festival (Amsterdam). Dennehy has received commissions from Dawn Upshaw, Kronos Quartet, Alarm Will Sound, Bang on a Can, Third Coast Percussion, Icebreaker (London), Contact (Toronto), Lucilin (Luxembourg), Orkest de Ereprijs (Netherlands), Fidelio Trio, Percussion Group of the Hague, RTE National Symphony Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, BBC Ulster Orchestra, and San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, among others. Collaborations include pieces with writer Enda Walsh (including his recent opera *The Last Hotel*), choreographers Yoshiko Chuma and Shobana Jeyasingh, and visual artist John Gerrard. In 2010 his single-movement orchestral piece *Crane* was "recommended" by the International Rostrum of Composers. Returning to Ireland after studies abroad in the US, France, and Holland, Dennehy founded Crash Ensemble, Ireland's now-renowned new music group, in 1997. Alongside the singers Dawn Upshaw and Iarla O'Lionáird, Crash Ensemble is featured on the 2011 Nonesuch release of Dennehy's music, entitled *Grá agus Bás*. NPR named it one of its "50 favorite albums" (in any genre) of 2011. In October 2014, RTE Lyric FM released a portrait CD of Dennehy's orchestral music. Previous releases include a number by NMC Records in London and Cantaloupe in New York. Previously a tenured lecturer at Trinity College Dublin, Donnacha was appointed a Global Scholar for at Princeton University in the Autumn of 2012. He was also appointed composer-in-residence for the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in Texas (2013–14). He joined the music faculty at Princeton University in 2014. Dennehy's recent opera *The Last Hotel* (2015), with a libretto by

Enda Walsh, was met with critical acclaim in the UK when it premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival in August 2015. Other recent pieces include *Surface Tension* premiered by Third Coast Percussion in February, and a new piece for the Doric Quartet co-commissioned from the Wigmore Hall and Carnegie Hall, slated to premiere in London in July 2016. A recording of his new piece for Nadia Sirota and viol consort, *Tessellatum*, will be released by Bedroom Community this fall.

ALARM WILL SOUND

Alarm Will Sound is a 20-member band committed to innovative performances and recordings of today's music. It has established a reputation for performing demanding music with energetic skill. Its performances have been described as "equal parts exuberance, nonchalance, and virtuosity" by the *Financial Times* of London and as "a triumph of ensemble playing" by the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The *New York Times* says that Alarm Will Sound is "one of the most vital and original ensembles on the American music scene." The versatility of Alarm Will Sound allows it to take on music from a wide variety of styles. Its repertoire ranges from European to American works, from the arch-modernist to the pop-influenced. Alarm Will Sound has been associated since its inception with composers at the forefront of contemporary music, premiering pieces by John Adams, Steve Reich, David Lang, Michael Gordon, Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Aaron Jay Kernis, Augusta Read Thomas, Derek Bermel, Benedict Mason, and Wolfgang Rihm, among others. The group itself includes many composer-performers, which allows for an unusual degree of insight into the creation and performance of new work. Alarm Will Sound is the resident ensemble at the Mizzou International Composers Festival. Held each July at the University of Missouri in Columbia, the festival features eight world premieres by emerging composers. During the weeklong festival, these composers work closely with Alarm Will Sound and two established guest composers to perform and record their new work. Alarm Will Sound may be heard on nine recordings, including *Modernists*, its latest album on Cantaloupe Records. *Radio Rewrite*, its release on Nonesuch, is the world-premiere

recording of Steve Reich's newest work for large ensemble, based on the music of Radiohead. The group's genre-bending, critically acclaimed *Acoustica* features live performance arrangements of music by electronica guru Aphex Twin. This unique project taps the diverse talents within the group, from the many composers who made arrangements of the original tracks, to the experimental approaches developed by the performers. Alarm Will Sound were Artists-in-Residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2013–14. In 2010, the group developed and performed the Dirty Projectors' *The Getty Address* in its new identity as a live performance piece at the Lincoln Center, Disney Hall, and the Barbican. Music that Dirty Projectors' front-man David Longstreth created on a computer by meticulous and complicated sampling, looping, and layering is translated and arranged by Matt Marks, Alan Pierson, and Chris Thompson for 23 musicians of both bands. In 2011, after three years of development, Alarm Will Sound presented *1969*, a multimedia work using music, action, image, and text to tell a story about great musicians—John Lennon, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Luciano Berio, and Leonard Bernstein—and their responses to the social, political, and creative tumult of the late 1960s. Members of the ensemble began playing together while studying at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY. With diverse experience in composition, improvisation, jazz, and popular styles, early music, and world music, they bring intelligence and a sense of adventure to all their performances. For more information and to join the mailing list, visit Alarm Will Sound's website at alarmwillsound.com

KATHERINE MANLEY (soprano, Asenath Nicholson)

Katherine Manley studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama, Glasgow and the Benjamin Britten International Opera School at the Royal College of Music, London. A Samling Foundation and Susan Chilcott Scholar, Manley has been supported by a Wingate Scholarship, Ian Fleming MBF Award, and an Independent Opera Fellowship. Her roles include Creuse in David McVicar's new production of Charpentier's *Medée*, English National Opera; Zenna Briggs

in Michel van der Aa's *Sunken Garden* for ENO at the Barbican Theatre and at the Holland Festival; Lucia, *The Rape of Lucretia* for Angers/Nantes Opera; Helena, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Arpago, *L'Incoronazione di Dario* with Garsington Opera; Poppea/Fortune/Virtu, *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* with ENO and Glyndebourne on tour; Melanto/Amore, *The Return of Ulysses* (the Young Vic) for ENO; Musical/Euridice/Messaggera/Proserpina in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* for both ETO and a staged performance at the Barbican with Richard Egarr and Academy of Ancient Music; Sandman/Dew Fairy, *Hänsel und Gretel* for Opera North; Venus, *Venus & Adonis* for Transition Opera; and Belinda in *After Dido*, a joint venture by ENO/The Young Vic of live music and film performance inspired by Purcell's *Dido & Aeneas*, directed by Katie Mitchell, conducted by Christian Curnyn. Manley has also performed Maria in *The Sound of Music* at the Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, and Julie in *Carousel* for Opera North at the Barbican Theatre. She made her Edinburgh International Festival debut singing *The Indian Queen* with The Sixteen (Christophers) and her US stage debut as Oriana in Handel's *Amadigi* for Central City Opera, CO. Her busy concert schedule has featured *Acis, Galatea e Polifemo* with Capriccio Barockorchester, *Saul* (Reuss) with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, *Christmas Oratorio* for Bachkoor (Holland), St. Matthew Passion at Bath Abbey, Acshah in Handel's *Joshua* at the London Handel Festival with Laurence Cummings, *Jephtha* for The King's Consort in Switzerland, *Israel in Egypt* on tour with Musik Podium Stuttgart, *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5* at The Sage (Gateshead), *Amadigi* at Wigmore Hall, *The Fairy Queen* with the Gabrieli Consort and Players, and *Il Pastor Fido* at St. George's Church, London. Recent engagements include Eliza Doolittle in Robert Carson's *My Fair Lady* at the Châtelet, Paris, St. Matthew Passion with Britten Sinfonia, Max Richter's *Memoryhouse* at the Barbican, St. Matthew Passion in Cambridge, Judith Weir's *Natural History* for Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele, and *La descente d'Orphée* at Wigmore Hall. Engagements in 2014/2015 include Maria, *The Sound of Music* for Central City Opera, CO; Drusilla, *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* for Opera North; La Statue in Rameau's *Pigmalion* with the

OAE; further performances of *Sunken Garden* for Opéra de Lyon, and Bach Cantatas with Wrocław Baroque Orchestra. Subsequent engagements include *Acis & Galatea*, *Griselda* with La Nuova Musica, Bach Mass in B minor with Wrocław Baroque Orchestra, and the role of Wife in the world première of *The Last Hotel* by Donnacha Dennehy (music) and Enda Walsh (text) that will be performed in 2015—16 in Edinburgh, Dublin, London, and New York.

IARLA Ó LIONÁIRD (*Sean nós* singer, Man) has carved a long and unique career in music in Ireland. From his iconic early recording of the vision song “Aisling Gheal” as a young boy to his ground breaking recordings with Dublin’s Crash Ensemble he has shown a breadth of artistic ambition that sets him apart in the Irish Music fraternity. He has worked with a stellar cast of composers internationally including Nico Muhly, Donnacha Dennehy, Dan Trueman, Gavin Bryars, and David Lang and he has performed and recorded with such luminaries as Peter Gabriel, Robert Plant, Nick Cave, and Sinead O’Connor. His unique singing style has carried him to stages and concert halls all over the world, from New York’s Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center to the Sydney Opera House, London’s Royal Albert Hall, and beyond. His voice has graced the silver screen also, with film credits extending from *The Gangs of New York* to *Hotel Rwanda* and most recently as featured vocalist in the film *Calvary* starring Brendan Gleeson and the film adaptation of Colm Tóibín’s *Brooklyn* starring Saoirse Ronan. In 2013/14 he took up the inaugural position of Traditional Artist in Residence at University College Cork where he gave a seminar series of lectures and taught both undergraduate and postgraduate courses on the aesthetics and anthropology of *sean nós* song. Having been recently awarded a Belknap Fellowship he will be taking up a teaching position as Visiting Fellow in the Council of the Humanities at Princeton in the fall of 2016. He is the vocalist with the critically acclaimed Irish /American ensemble The Gloaming.

ALAN PIERSON (conductor)

Alan Pierson has been praised as “a dynamic conductor and musical visionary” by *The New*

York Times, “a young conductor of monstrous skill” by *Newsday*, “gifted and electrifying” by the *Boston Globe*, and “one of the most exciting figures in new music today” by *Fanfare*. In addition to his work as artistic director of Alarm Will Sound, he is principal conductor of the Dublin-based Crash Ensemble, has served as artistic director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and has guest conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic, London Sinfonietta, Orchestra of St. Luke’s, Steve Reich Ensemble, Carnegie Hall’s Ensemble ACJW, Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, New World Symphony, and the Silk Road Project, among other ensembles. He is co-director of the Northwestern University Contemporary Music Ensemble, and has been a visiting faculty conductor at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and the Eastman School of Music. Pierson has collaborated with major composers and performers, including Yo-Yo Ma, Steve Reich, Dawn Upshaw, Osvaldo Golijov, John Adams, Augusta Read Thomas, David Lang, Michael Gordon, La Monte Young, and choreographers Christopher Wheeldon, Akram Khan, and Eliot Feld. Pierson received bachelor degrees in physics and music from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a doctorate in conducting from the Eastman School of Music. He has recorded for Nonesuch Records, Cantaloupe Music, Sony Classical, and Sweetspot DVD.

TOM CREED (director)

Tom Creed is a theater and opera director based in Dublin. Previously in New York he has presented *Watt* at The Public Theater’s Under the Radar Festival and *Mimic* at PS 122 and the Irish Arts Center. Opera productions include *Private View* by Annelies van Parys, produced by Muziektheater Transparant, at Vlaamse Opera, Operadagen Rotterdam, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg and on tour; *air india [redacted]* by Jürgen Simpson for Turning Point Ensemble in Vancouver; *The Human Voice* and *Susanna’s Secret* for Opera Theatre Company; *Mavra* and *The Bear* for the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland; and *Die Zauberflöte*, *Suor Angelica*, *Mavra* and *Renard* for the Royal Irish Academy of Music. *Private View* was awarded the FEDORA Rolf Liebermann Prize for Opera in 2014, Best Production at the Armel Opera

Festival in Budapest in 2015, and was named as one of 14 notable productions of the last three years—noted as “aesthetically innovative and reflect new developments in this genre” by *Music Theatre NOW*. His extensive work as a theater director over the past 10 years includes productions for Abbey Theatre, Gate Theatre, Rough Magic, his own company Playgroup, and a range of independent Irish companies which have played in Ireland, the UK, Europe, and the US. He was nominated for best director at the Irish Times Theatre Awards in 2007. His production of *Watt* by Samuel Beckett with acclaimed Irish actor Barry McGovern has been presented at the Dublin Theatre Festival, Galway Arts Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, Perth International Festival, the Barbican Centre in London, Under the Radar at The Public Theater in New York, and on tour in the US. Creed was festival director of Cork Midsummer Festival from 2011 to 2013, and was nominated for an *Irish Times* Irish Theatre Award in 2012 “for original and dynamic use of local spaces at Cork Midsummer Festival”. He has previously been theater and dance curator of Kilkenny Arts Festival and associate director of Rough Magic Theatre Company. Upcoming productions include Britten's *Owen Wingrave* for Paris Opera and Handel's *Acis and Galatea* for Opera Theatre Company on tour in Ireland.

JIM FINDLAY (set and video design)

Jim Findlay works across boundaries as a director, designer, visual artist, and performer. He was a founding member of the Collapsible Giraffe and Accinosco/Cynthia Hopkins, and is a frequent collaborator with Bang on a Can, Ralph Lemon, and Ridge Theater. He worked with the Wooster Group as a company member and designer from 1994—2003. Recent productions include *The Whisper Opera* (director and designer); *Botanica* (writer and director); and at BAM, David Lang's *love fail* (set and video design) and Annie Dorsen's *A Piece of Work* (set and video design); David T. Little/Royce Vavrek's *Dog Days* (set and video design); and *Meditation*, the video installation which he created in collaboration with Ralph Lemon, recently acquired by the Walker Art Center for its permanent collection. His work has been seen at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, BAM, Arena Stage, A.R.T.,

and more than 50 cities worldwide including Berlin, Istanbul, London, Moscow, and Paris. He created a piece for a sleeping audience, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, presented by PS 122 in 2014. He has received two Obie awards, two Bessie awards, a Lucille Lortel award, and a Henry Hewes award.

CHRISTOPHER KUHL (lighting design)

Christopher Kuhl is a Brooklyn-based lighting, scenic, installation and conceptual designer for new performance, theatre, dance, and opera. Recent work includes *Straight White Men* (Young Jean Lee's Theatre Company, The Public Theater, Kaai Theatre); *The Source* (BAM, 2014); *This Was the End* (Mallory Catlett, The Chocolate Factory); *The Object Lesson* (BAM, 2014; Sydney Festival; Edinburgh Fringe); *The Elephant Room* (St. Ann's Warehouse, Philly Live Arts, Arena Stage); *Quartier Libres* with Nadia Beugré (New York Live Arts, Walker Art Center); *Soldier Songs* (Holland Festival); Ethel's *Documerica* (BAM, 2013); *John Cage Song Books* (SF Symphony, Carnegie Hall). Kuhl has also had the pleasure of working and making art at REDCAT, Fusebox Festival, On the Boards, Kennedy Center, YBCA, Jacob's Pillow, The Yard, Beijing Music Festival, Queer Zagreb, KVS Belgium, MAC France, and Santiago a Mil Chile. Kuhl was also the production manager and lighting director for Ralph Lemon's *How Can You Stay In The House All Day And Not Go Anywhere?* (BAM, 2010). In 2011 he was the recipient of the Sherwood, Drammy, Horton, and Ovation Awards. In 2014 and 2015 Kuhl and many of his closest collaborators received a pair of Bessie Awards for Outstanding Visual Design. He is originally from New Mexico, a graduate of CalArts, an associate artist of Hand2Mouth Theatre, and helped launch Live Arts Exchange / LAX.

TILLY GRIMES (costume design)

Tilly Grimes is an English theatre designer based in New York and a third generation theater artist hailing from Irish and Greek actors and musicians. Recent and upcoming work includes *Romance Novels for Beginners* by Boo Kilebrew, directed by Moritz von Stuelpnagel at The Williamstown Theatre Festival's Main Stage; Bess Wohl's *Small Mouth Sounds* directed by Rachel

Chavkin at The Linney in NYC; and *Kingdom Come* by Jenny Rachel Weiner, directed by Kip Fagan at Roundabout. Awards include the Balsamo Grant for Emerging Immigrant Artists, the Irish Arts Design Award, an *Irish Times* Theatre Award Nomination, and the Onstage Critics Award. In New York she has worked with companies such as Roundabout, Ars Nova, Clubbed Thumb, Here Arts Centre, The Barrow Group, New Georges, and La MaMa Theatre Club. Regionally her work has been seen at Williamstown Theatre Festival, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Wilma, Two Rivers Theatre Company, Trinity Repertory Company, Pittsburgh Public, and Westport County Playhouse. Opera credits include Boston Lyric Opera, Curtis School of Music, and The Juliard School of Vocal Arts. Grimes has been a guest artist and guest designer at Duke University, University of Rochester, Rutgers University, New York University, Brown-Trinity Graduate program, Fordham University, PPAS in NYC, and Trinity College Dublin. She received her MFA from New York University's Tisch School and has taught at Brown University's MFA directing program.

JOCELYN CLARKE (dramaturg) is currently Theatre Adviser to the Arts Council of Ireland and dramaturg at American Voices New Play Institute at Arena Stage in Washington, DC. He has taught dramaturgy at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Columbia University and Trinity College Dublin. He was the Commissioning and Literary Manager of the Abbey Theatre for four years, and lead theater critic with *The Sunday Tribune* for nine years. He is an associate artist with The Civilians and Theatre Mitu in New York. He has written six plays for Anne Bogart and the SITI Company—*Bob*, *Alice's Adventures Underground*, *Room*, *Score*, *Antigone*, and *Trojan Women (After Euripides)*—and he is currently working on a new collaboration about composer and philosopher John Cage.

JEREMY CHAN (répétiteur and vocal coach) is an Australian pianist and vocal coach based in New York City and is delighted to be working on Alarm Will Sound's production of *The Hunger*. He recently appeared with the American String Quartet and the Hector del Curto Quintet and has

performed at venues including Stern Auditorium and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Caramoor Center for the Arts, Galapagos Art Space, 92Y Tribeca, and Trinity Church, Wall St. Recent engagements include productions with Loft Opera (*Le Comte Ory*), Aspen Opera Center (*A Wedding*), Opera Upper West (*La Voix Humaine*) and Choirs of America. An active advocate for contemporary music, Chan has been involved in the world premieres of pieces by Yehudi Wyner, Frank Lerdahl, Bruce Saylor, Z. Randall Stroope, and René Clausen, and appears on Bright Sheng's upcoming release on the NAXOS label, while his own compositions have earned him recognition from the Fellowship of Australian Composers. He has spent previous summers as a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center, the Toronto Summer Music Festival Academy, and the Vancouver International Song Institute. Chan received his BM from Queens College and his MM from the Manhattan School of Music.

CATHERINE COSTANZO (stage manager) is thrilled to work with Alarm Will Sound. Her work includes *La Traviata*, *The Mikado* (Chautauqua Opera); *The Aging Magician* world premiere (Walker Art Center, Krannert Center); *Angel's Bone* world premiere, *Visitations*, *Soldier Songs* (Prototype Festival); *Epiphany: The Cycle of Life* world premiere (BAM, 2015); *21c Liederabend opus 3* (BAM, 2013), *Elsewhere* (BAM, 2012); *Song from the Uproar* (REDCAT); *Labyrinth* world premiere (Krannert Center); and *Orphée et Euridice* (Pacific MusicWorks). Dance credits: *FORCES* (STREB Extreme Action Company). Off-Broadway credits: *October in the Chair* and *Other Fragile Things* (OldSoundRoom); *Where We're Born* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater); and *Love Goes to Press* (The Mint Theater). Regional credits: *The Black Suits* (Center Theatre Group); *The Drowsy Chaperone* (Connecticut Repertory Theatre); *The Winter's Tale*, *Belleville* world premiere, *A Delicate Balance* (Yale Repertory Theatre); *West Side Story* (Cape Fear Regional Theatre); *Amadeus*, *The Taming of the Shrew* (Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival); *The Tempest*, *As You Like It* (Yale Summer Cabaret Shakespeare Festival); and others. Costanzo received her BA from the University of Pittsburgh and her MFA from the Yale School of Drama.

MAUREEN MURPHY

Asenath Nicholson was very modest. She doesn't like to bring attention to herself but she did have a vanity, and that was her singing voice.

ASENATH NICHOLSON

I have seen and handled the black bread for months, and have told the story.

MAUREEN MURPHY

She wrote her book, *Ireland's Welcome to the Stranger*, which she published in 1847, to raise an awareness about the Irish poor and their suffering. By then, of course, they were into the second, actually the third year—going into the third year of the Great Irish Famine.

ASENATH NICHOLSON

Going out one cold day in a bleak waste on the coast, I met a pitiful old man in hunger and tatters with a child on his back, almost entirely naked, and to appearance in the last stages of starvation; whether his naked legs had been scratched, or whether the cold had affected them I knew not, but the blood was in small streams in different places, and the sight was a horrid one.

PAUL KRUGMAN

Famines. Very rarely is there, you know, literally not enough calories to keep everybody alive. So famines happen because most of the people are not getting the calories that—so they are always, at some level, economic. It's about who has control of the resources. Was Ireland unique because of the tyranny of free market economics in British thought at the time? Probably not. Things like that have happened before, or have happened in other contexts. It's not the only case but it was certainly the particular language that the government in London took to justify doing nothing to keep people from dying, was couched in classical political economy, because that was the language in which people rationalized injustice in the mid-19th century.

MAN

'S a hUain Ghil Bheannaithe

Na Trua is a hUain

Na Trua is a hUain Ghil Bheannaithe

Fúascail ar ainnise athá nár gcrá

Ná lig ar strae Uait Féin an t-anam bocht
Is a fheabhas a cheannaigh tú é sa Pháis

Lamb of God

Pity, Lamb

Pity, Lamb of God

Save us from misery

Don't abandon the poor soul

That you redeemed on the cross

BRANKO MILANOVIC

You know, one has actually to extend it further to the present days, because very often there—Of course, catastrophes they happen today, which may be likewise, sort of, decided by those who have power, not to interfere because it's a market system. So you might have a situation of really extreme poverty. I mean, I think today people would generally interfere when it comes to famine but they might not interfere with other things.

MAUREEN MURPHY

Nicholson, who walked through Ireland in 1844 and 1845, kept pointing out to the British government that if they would invest in jobs, in creation of employment, they would not have to build the workhouses. She was concerned about the single food source because she worked among—she lived and worked and walked among the Irish poor. And they said, "We're eating the potato all the time. There's nothing. It's a curse. That's the only thing that we have." So she realized that they were living just on the brink of disaster.

ASENATH NICHOLSON

The old man was interrogated why he took such an object into sight, upon the street, when he answered that he lived seven miles off, and was afraid the child would die in the cabin, with two little children he had left starving, and he had come to get the bit of meal, as it was the day he heard that the relief was giving out. The officer told him he had not time to enter his name on the book, and he was sent away in that condition; a penny or two was given him, for which he expressed the greatest gratitude; this was Wednesday or Thursday.

MEGAN VAUGHAN

So not everyone is in favor of providing relief when people are starving, because the politics of

the administration of that relief and the manipulation of that relief are quite complicated.

MAN

A trua
Agus a leanna
Go dté a dhéanfaigh mé
Tá tú ar shiúl uaim
Ochón ochón

*Oh pity
And my child
What will I do
You have gone from me
Alas*

ASENATH NICHOLSON

The next Saturday, on my way from the house where the relieving-officer was stationed, we saw an old man creeping slowly in a bending posture upon the road. The same old man looked up and recognized me.

MAN

Agus ó a thrua
And oh pity

ASENATH NICHOLSON

I did not know him, but his overwhelming thanks for the little that was given him that day, called to mind the circumstance. And, inquiring where the child was, he said the three were left in the cabin, and had not taken a “sup nor a bit” since yesterday morning, and he was afraid some of them would be dead upon the hearth when he returned.

PAUL KRUGMAN

One thing you want to say is that the English were pretty harsh on their own poor people, too. They were. So at the same time people were saying, oh, you know, helping the poor just encourages, just increases the supply of beggars—you know, that sort of thing. So it was a pretty brutal ideology all around.

MAN

Agus ó a thrua
Agus a Neilí
*Oh pity
And my Nelly*

MEGAN VAUGHAN

You can pinpoint cases where free market ideology has been applied in such a rigid and ideological way, combined with a colonial system, that you could certainly lay the blame for, at least some of the consequences on the way in which that ideology has been, if you like, applied.

ASENATH NICHOLSON

The relieving officer had told him to come on Saturday, and his name should be on the book, he waited without scarcely eating a mouthful till then, and was so weak he could not carry the child, and had crept the seven miles to get the meal, and was sent away with a promise to wait till the next Tuesday, and come and have his name on the books.

This poor man had not a penny nor a mouthful of food, and he said tremulously, “I must go home and die on the hearth with the hungry ones.” The mother had starved to death.

MAN

A trua
Agus a leanna
Go dté a dheanfaidh mé
Tá tú ar shiúl uaim
Agus ó a thrua
Agus a Neilí
Níl duine ar bith agam
‘S ó a thrua
Agus mé liom fhéin
Dá meitheá go maith agam
Agus och och ochón inniu

*Oh pity
And my child
What will I do?
You have gone from me
Oh pity
And my Nelly
I have no one now
And oh pity
And me on my own
If I had you healthy here now
And alas today*

BRANKO MILANOVIC

What I found interesting is, of course, that the Irish Great Hunger actually happened during the time when the first inequality in the UK, or actu-

ally, in England, rather than we have the data for, was extremely high. And, that was the period, of course, of the Industrial Revolution.

PAUL KRUGMAN

I would say the big problem with charity is it's almost never enough. It's probably not enough in extreme events like a famine, and it's certainly—it might be enough to deal with the ordinary amount of malnutrition and starvation that happens in a poor place. The fact of the matter is that the amount of money it takes to seriously alleviate poverty on an ongoing basis is more than you're ever going to get in the form of private donations.

ASENATH NICHOLSON

He was given money to purchase seven pounds of meal; he clasped his old emaciated hands, first fell upon his knees, looked up to heaven and thanked the good God, then me.

MAN

Agus mé liom fhéin
Dá meitheá go maith agam
Agus och och ochón inniu.

*And me on my own
If you were well now
And alas today*

ASENATH NICHOLSON

The old man kept on his knees, walking on them, pausing and looking up to heaven; and thinking myself that seven pounds would not keep four scarcely in existence till Tuesday, we stopped till he came upon his knees to the car; he was given money enough to purchase as much more...

MAUREEN MURPHY

She was someone who not only walked around and investigated as many travellers did—there were a number of travellers who came through Ireland in the pre-Famine time—but she got down off the coach. She went into houses.

ASENATH NICHOLSON

... when for a few moments, I feared that he would die on the path.

MAUREEN MURPHY

And she went and she sat in with the Irish poor, she stayed with them, she ate the potato, drank a mug of water...

ASENATH NICHOLSON

His age, exhaustion by hunger, and the feelings of a father, together with the sudden change, from despair to hope, all were so powerful, that with his hands clasped, clinching his pennies, and standing up on his knees, he fell upon his face, and for some time remained there.

MAUREEN MURPHY

So she stepped through the threshold, she stepped over the threshold, and she lived among the people and she knew them and developed a great, great sympathy and great understanding. She was a historian who was a participant.

ASENATH NICHOLSON

He was finally restored to his knees, and the last glimpse we had of this picture of living death, he was behind us on the path, descending a hill upon his knees.

MAN

Beidh Rí na Glóire
A Dhia na Glóire fós
A Rí na dTrua s'a hUain Ghil Bheannaithe
Na Glóire fós 's ag freagairt dóibh
Beidh an dá aspal déag mar bhacaigh ceart
Beidh an dá aspal déag gur déanamh dóibh caradais
Sin stór ná beidh caite acu go Lá an Bhrátha

Ná lig ar strae Uait Féin an
Na dTrua s'a hUain s'a hUain
A dTrua s'a hUain Ghil Bheannaithe
Fuascail ár ainnise atá dár gcrá,
Ná lig ar strae Uait Féin an t-anam bocht
Is a fheabhas a cheannaigh Tú é sa Pháis

Na dTrua s'a hUain s'a hUain
Mar a chéim, a chéim, an chéim réidh,
An chéim seo eadrainn
Oscail ár gcroí is díbir an ghangaid as
Lig braon de Do fhíorspiorad arís chun ár gcneasaithe
Mar gheall ar an

Tá na bochta
Ní hé Dia a cheap
Na d'Trua s'a hUain s'a hUain
Na d'Trua s'a hUain Ghil Bheannaithe
Na Glóire fós 's
Ag freagairt dóibh
Ag freagairt dóibh
Is uaisle na bhFlaitheas
Go ngabhaid i bharr
*King of Glory
God of Glory save us
King of pity, Lamb of God
Save and answer us
The twelve apostles will be crippled
The twelve apostles will welcome us
These treasures wait at Judgement Day
Don't abandon us
His Lamb, his Lamb
Pity, Lamb of God
Deliver us from this agony
Don't abandon us
You whose passion saved us*

*Pity, Lamb
That this has come to pass
Open our hearts, drive out this poison
Send Your spirit to heal us
On account of*

*The poor are
It can't be God that
Pity, Lamb
Blessed Lamb of God
Glory, save us
Answer us
Answer us
May the Angels let us rest*

SOUND OF YOUNG WOMAN KEENING

A trua
Agus a leanna
Go dté a dheanfaidh mé
Tá tú ar shiúl uaim
Agus ó a thrua
Agus a Neilí
Níl duine ar bith agam
'S ó a thrua
Agus mé liom fhéin
Dá meitheá go maith agam
Agus och och ochón inniu
Oh pity

*And my child
What will I do?
You have gone from me
Oh pity
And my Nelly
I have no one now
Oh pity
And me on my own
If you were well now
And alas today*

MAN

Agus och och ochón inniu
Agus mé liom fhéin
Dá meitheá go maith agam
Agus och och ochón inniu
*And alas today
And me on my own
If you were well now
Alas today*

ASENATH NICHOLSON

Agus och och ochón inniu
And alas today

BRANKO MILANOVIĆ

Yeah, I think there are actually very significant segments of economists and people who actually believe first that inequality is necessary. But I think actually there is a prior belief there. And the belief is that if there is a market system, whatever the outcome is, is an outcome which is just.

MAUREEN MURPHY

Many people commenting on the Great Irish Famine talk about food leaving the country, whether it was livestock or grain. And it's interesting to see them going from exporting cattle and sheep to calves and lambs, which mean that they were "selling short," as it were.

NOAM CHOMSKY

As I'm sure you know, the British had the same policies with the Victorian famines in India. India was exporting food to England right in the midst of the famine. Actually Churchill did that. And while the famine was going on, Churchill insisted that Indian grain be sent to England so that people in England could have white bread because they like white bread.

MAUREEN MURPHY

There is, as I say, a complete reluctance to interfere with the free market economy.

NOAM CHOMSKY

Which is a total fraud, of course, because you can interfere with the market as much as you like to support the rich and powerful.

ASENATH NICHOLSON

The blast of the desert comes,
Her loose hair flew on the wind.

MEGAN VAUGHAN

The victim-blaming kind of arguments that colonial rulers produce in these contexts are, I think, quite similar from place to place... the idea that it's somehow colonial peoples, through their inferiority are unable to—are sort of not sufficiently—are not working hard enough to support themselves and are dissolute in various ways.

MAN

A trua
Agus a leanna
Go dté a dheanfaidh mé
Tá tú ar shiúl uaim
Ochón ochón

*Oh pity
And my child
What will I do?
You have gone from me
And alas today*

ASENATH NICHOLSON

I saw the brown silken hair of a young girl waving gently through a cleft of stones.

MAN

Agus ó a thrua
Agus a Neilí
*And oh pity
And my Nelly*

ASENATH NICHOLSON

A little grass was pulled and spread over, and then covered with stones. I shall never forget it.

BRANKO MILANOVIC

The moral aspect has one element which is, I think—everybody finds it—particularly if you're

at the receiving end of that, you're already probably unhappy being poor, or, in the extreme case, we talk about like even dying from that. And on top of that, somebody who is richer and who is actually having a nice time is telling you that somehow that punishment is deserved, and that he, that it's deserved, and that he's morally superior to you.

MAN

Agus mé liom fhéin
Dá meitheá go maith agam
*And me on my own
If I had you healthy here now*

ASENATH NICHOLSON

I never shall forget it.
I shall never forget.

NOAM CHOMSKY

Ireland was a colony, so the British could treat it by the principles of “sound economics” and “don't interfere with the market” and “they should export food because the economics says that's better for everyone.” If they starve, that's not our problem.

PAUL KRUGMAN

If you think that what happened during the Irish Famine was a unique kind of inhumanity that couldn't possibly happen in the 21st century, people don't change that much.

MAN

Agus och och ochón inniu
And alas today

ASENATH NICHOLSON

Oh! the scenes of the dreadful winter! Who can ever forget? We landed, not buoyantly, upon the once pretty island of Arranmore. The first that called my attention was the death-like stillness—nothing of life was seen or heard, excepting occasionally a dog. These look so unlike all others I had seen among the poor, I unwittingly said—“how can the dogs look so fat, and shining here, where there is no food for the people?”

I shall never forget.

The sleek dogs of Arranmore were my horror, my

hatred, and have stamped on my mind images which can never be effaced.

MEGAN VAUGHAN

I don't think that famine is, in any way, inevitable in the world today. I mean there's absolutely no reason why people should be starving to death.

ASENATH NICHOLSON

I shall never forget it.

MAN

Dá meitheá go maith agam
If you were well now

ASENATH NICHOLSON

I shall never forget.

I have been riding and walking through desolate Erris, and in worse than despair, have sat down, asking—what am I to do? What can I do?

Every effort of the friends of Ireland is baffled by the demoralizing effects that feeding a starving peasantry without labor has produced. My heart sickens at looking over the utter wasting of all that was once cheerful, interesting and kind in these peasantry.

MAN

Dá meitheá go maith agam
If you were well now.

ASENATH NICHOLSON

Where are your men of moral, yes, of spiritual might? You have them, then bring them out! I look across that narrow channel. I see the graves of martyrs. I see the graves of men whose daring minds stood forth in a majesty of greatness to speak for truth and justice; and though they may long since have taken flight, where are their mantles? Where is your George Thompson? He who shook the United States from Maine to Georgia in pleading long and loud for the downtrodden Black man? Can he not, will he not lift his voice for poor Ireland? She who stands shivering, sinking on the Isthmus, between two worlds, apparently not fit for either. Will he not reach forth a kindly hand and try to snatch this once interesting and lovely, though now forlorn and forsaken creature, from her fearful position?

MAN

A Dhia na glóire
Oh God of Glory

ASENATH NICHOLSON

Must she?

MAN

Fóir is freagair sinn
Hear and answer us

ASENATH NICHOLSON

Must she, shall she die? Will proud England lose so bright a gem as Ireland might have been in her crown?

Do you say she is intriguing, she is indolent and treacherous? Try her once more; put instruments of working warfare into her hands; hold up the soul-stirring stimulus of remuneration to her.

MEGAN VAUGHAN

Famine I don't think really did serve them in any very straightforward way. When I first started researching this late colonial famine in Malawi, which happened in 1949, I found that in—when looking at the British colonial records, quite a lot of those records are being destroyed. And I suspected and I still suspect that they were destroyed because this was an embarrassment.

One thing you weren't supposed to allow to happen on your watch was for people to die in great numbers.

MAN

Tá na bochta ag plé leis an ainneise
The poor live in misery

MEGAN VAUGHAN

However, I mean, there are examples of African governments who have manipulated famine, and famine relief, in such a way as to quite deliberately starve different communities within nations. In Sudan, the case of the Sudan is an example of that.

MAN

A trua
Oh pity

BRANKO MILANOVIC

It is very difficult often times to actually visualize things that are far from you, and you can see it maybe in the news, and so on, but it's not really striking you directly.

MAN

Ar an bheatha seo!
On this earth!

PAUL KRUGMAN

That's a fantasy that people have, that there's this sort of, purge, cleansing effect of crises. I mean for what, to the extent that we know something about this, it looks quite the opposite, it looks like having a crisis inflicts enormous damage that takes decades to eliminate.

MAUREEN MURPHY

What amazes me, when we look, comparatively speaking, with all of our resources today, with all of our improvements in transportation and communication, we still can't get the food to the people who need it.

MEGAN VAUGHAN

So it's not, if you like, the number of calories that were available, or the number of deaths taking place, it's the sense of a social breakdown.

BRANKO MILANOVIC

I think we are all guilty to some extent of blocking certain death, or giving them less importance than the others.

I think Adam Smith asked that, and I think Dostoyevsky asked also, is whether, you know, whether you would let, I don't know, I think it's in Adam Smith, it's a question whether you would lose your little finger if it would save three lives in China, without anybody knowing that that was a trade-off that you have made. Because everybody would say "yes I would do that" if everybody else knows that this is a trade-off that you're having, but let's suppose that nobody knows that, so would we be willing to do that? And I think it's still a very pertinent question, how much would you be willing to sacrifice of

your own? I think that we all, each of us, has to ask that question.

MAN

A trua
Oh pity

ASENATH NICHOLSON

The dark night had come, my trunk was packed, and the vessel was in readiness that was to bear me away.

OLD RECORDING OF OLD MAN SINGING

Fear gan chéill a bheadh ag dérim leis an chlaidhe atá ard
Is ar an chlaidhe bheag íseal a leag mé mo lámh
Cé gur ard an crann caorthainn bídh sé searbh as a bharr
Fásfaidh sméara agus bláth sú craobh ar an chrann is isle bláth

*Only a man without sense would try to climb
a high wall
With a low wall at his side on which he could
lay his hand
Although the rowan tree grows high, its food
is bitter at the top
The berries and raspberry blossoms grow on
the lowest tree*

ASENATH NICHOLSON

The spires of Dublin could not be seen, and I was glad—I was glad that they could not find me; for them I had labored, and their blessing was mine, that was a rich reward; when my heart shall cease to feel for their sufferings may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.

MAN

Cé gur ard an crann caorthainn bídh sé searbh as a bharr,
Fásfaidh sméara agus bláth sú craobh ar an chrann is isle bláth.

*Although the rowan tree grows high, its food
is bitter at the top
The berries and raspberry blossoms grow on
the lowest tree*