

EIGHTH BLACKBIRD



OLAGÓN

A CANTATA IN DOUBLESPEAK

DAN TRUEMAN | IARLA Ó LIONÁIRD | PAUL MULDOON

CEDILLE

EIGHTH BLACKBIRD

OLAGÓN A CANTATA IN DOUBLESPEAK

DISC 1

PART I

- 1 Pillow Talk⁺ (8:20)
- 2 Introductions (7:22)
- 3 Marbhan's Shadow (3:28)
- 4 Being Only A Dame (4:59)
- 5 A Queen Bee⁺ (6:30)
*Vocals by Gallicantus, Seán Ó Lionáird,
Peadar Ó Lionáird, Páidí Ó Lionáird*

PART II

- 6 Stirrings I (3:50)
- 7 For Eons and Eons (2:08)
- 8 Stirrings II (0:57)
- 9 Motet for Medhbh (5:36)
Vocals by Gallicantus
- 10 Níl Aon Ton-Ton (2:24)
- 11 Stirrings III (1:27)
- 12 You Know It's a Salmagundi⁺ (4:07)
- 13 Stirrings IV (1:19)
- 14 Marbhan and Guaire⁺ (9:34)
Vocals by Nathalie Joachim

TT: 92:09

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

DAN TRUEMAN, FIDDLE

IARLA Ó LIONÁIRD, VOCALS

⁺Additional vocals by Eighth Blackbird and Dan Trueman

DISC 2

PART III

- 1 Pillow Talk Reprise⁺ (4:12)
- 2 Restless Rest (2:09)
- 3 Ululations I⁺ (1:27)
- 4 Zeus to my Demeter (1:41)
- 5 Only on Medhbh⁺ (3:42)
- 6 Ululations II⁺ (1:09)
- 7 Reeling Reels (4:11)
Vocals by Michaela McDonagh, and Laura Gill
- 8 Ailíll (3:13)
Vocals by Treasa Ní Mhiolláin, Michaela McDonagh, and Laura Gill
- 9 The Book of Lamentations (7:34)
Vocals by Treasa Ní Mhiolláin, Michaela McDonagh, and Laura Gill

MUSIC BY DAN TRUEMAN, WITH IARLA Ó LIONÁIRD

TEXT BY PAUL MULDOON

ABOUT OLAGÓN

by Eighth Blackbird

SOME MEN WILL GIVE IN
TO BATHTUB GIN
SOME FALL BEFORE AFTERSHAVE
BUT AILÍLL IS DRUNK ONLY ON MEDHBH

Olagón: a Cantata in Doublespeak is inspired by the ancient Irish notion of *olagón*—a deep, conflicted cry. It is based on the legendary Irish tale *Táin Bó Cuailnge*, which tells the story of a brutal war — the result of a dispute between warrior-queen Medhbh and her husband Ailíll. When Ailíll offends Medhbh's pride by declaring his wealth superior to hers, Medhbh forsakes him and enters into a violent conflict with those around her. Throughout the poem Medhbh is a central figure, whose pursuit of revenge and power leads to tragic results.

Pulitzer-Prize winning poet Paul Muldoon's modern retelling draws from the ancient myth of *Táin Bó Cuailnge* and the struggles of post-Celtic-Tiger Ireland. In Muldoon's version, we discover Medhbh as a dissolute symbol of the broken promises of Ireland's economic bubble — drinking martinis and suffering from drug addiction before ultimately collapsing in a parking lot, marked off by traffic cones. The poem alternates perspectives between Ailíll and Medhbh, as they describe their falling out and the violence that follows. The sobbing cry *ochon agus ochon o* is woven throughout the text, underscoring the tragic and destructive nature of Medhbh and Ailíll's dispute.

Working with Paul Muldoon, Dan Trueman, Iarla Ó Lionáird, and the other fantastic vocalists heard on this album has been an important and gratifying experience for all of us.

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

by Paul Muldoon

The tradition of macaronic verse is a long and noble one, going back to the mash-up of Latin and vernacular languages that developed throughout Europe at the end of the Middle Ages. Indeed, the word macaronic itself comes from the New Latin term *macaronicus*, which derives from the Italian word for a “dumpling” or other form of plain pasta. The mixing of dumplings with more refined dishes and delicacies is thought to lie behind the mix of low and high that so often characterizes the genre.

One famous example is the 13th century *Carmina Burana*, which includes a number of poems mixing the “sacred” Latin with the “profane” Medieval German or French. Then there's *Macaronea* itself, a 15th century poem by Tifi Odasi that became popular throughout Europe, particularly in countries where bilingualism was the order of the day.

In Ireland, there are a number of bilingual traditional songs such as *Siúil A Rúin* or, one of my own favorites, “One Day for Recreation”:

One day for recreation is gan éinne beo ' mo chuideachta,
I spied a charming fair maid ina haonar is i siopa istigh.
She was singing like an angel is mé ag éisteacht lena binne-ghuth;
I whispered soft and easy – 'séard dúirt si, 'Stad den bheag uirthi!
Anonn is anall, a Mháirín, do mhálaí is do bheilteanna
Sí bean na stocáí bána ba bhreá liom ag iomaidh leat.

The self-same macaronic impulses that lie behind “One Day for Recreation” substantially underpin James Joyce's novel *Finnegans Wake*.

It was with a sense, then, of this musical and literary history of macaronic verse that I embarked on *Olagón*, a story set in an Ireland of political and social upheaval, of highs and lows in every sense, that might somehow be reflected in the form itself.

EIGHTH BLACKBIRD

Nathalie Joachim, *flutes*
Michael Maccaferri, *clarinets*
Yvonne Lam, *violin and viola*

Nick Photinos, *cello*
Matthew Duvall, *percussion*
Lisa Kaplan, *piano and bitKlavier*

Eighth Blackbird is “one of the smartest, most dynamic contemporary classical ensembles on the planet” (*Chicago Tribune*). Launched by six entrepreneurial Oberlin Conservatory undergraduates in 1996, this Chicago-based super-group has earned its status as “a brand-name...defined by adventure, vibrancy and quality...known for performing from memory, employing choreography and collaborations with theater artists, lighting designers and even puppetry artists” (*Detroit Free Press*).

Eighth Blackbird first gained wide recognition in 1998 as winners of the Concert Artists Guild Competition. Over the course of two decades, the group has commissioned and premiered hundreds of works by composers such as David Lang, Steven Mackey, Missy Mazzoli, and Steve Reich, whose *Double Sextet* went on to win the 2009 Pulitzer Prize. A long-term relationship with Chicago’s Cedille Records has produced eight acclaimed recordings and four Grammy Awards for Best Small Ensemble/Chamber Music Performance, most recently in 2016 for *FILAMENT*. They were named *Musical America*’s 2017 Ensemble of the Year, and in 2016 were the inaugural recipients of Chamber Music America’s Visionary Award and the prestigious MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions.

Eighth Blackbird’s mission — moving music forward through innovative performance, advocating for new music by living composers, and creating a legacy of guiding an emerging generation of musicians — extends beyond recording and touring to curation and education. The ensemble served as Music Director of the 2009 Ojai Music Festival, has held residencies at the Curtis Institute of Music and at the University of Chicago,

and holds an ongoing Ensemble-in-Residence position at the University of Richmond. The 2015–2016 season featured a pioneering residency at Chicago’s Museum of Contemporary Art: a living installation with open rehearsals, performances, guest artists, and public talks. In 2017, Eighth Blackbird launched its boldest initiative yet with the creation of Blackbird Creative Laboratory, a tuition-free, two-week summer workshop and performance festival for performers and composers in Ojai, CA.

Eighth Blackbird’s members hail from the Great Lakes, Keystone, Golden, Empire, and Bay states. The name “Eighth Blackbird” derives from the eighth stanza of Wallace Stevens’s evocative, imagistic poem, *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird*: “I know noble accents / And lucid, inescapable rhythms; / But I know, too, / That the blackbird is involved / In what I know.”

Eighth Blackbird would like to thank Dan Trueman, Iarla Ó Lionáird, Paul Muldoon, Jesse Lewis, Bill Maylone, Cedille Records, and Natalie Cooperman.

www.eighthblackbird.org.

Eighth Blackbird is managed by David Lieberman Artists, Hazard Chase, and Paola Castellano.

Nathalie Joachim is a Burkart Flutes & Piccolos artist. Michael J. Maccaferri is a D’Addario Woodwinds Artist. Matthew Duvall proudly endorses Pearl Drums and Adams Musical Instruments, Vic Firth Sticks and Mallets, Zildjian Cymbals, and Black Swamp Percussion Accessories. Lisa Kaplan is a Steinway Artist.

DAN TRUEMAN

Dan Trueman is a composer, fiddler, and electronic musician. He began studying violin at the age of four, and decades later, after a chance encounter, fell in love with the Norwegian Hardanger fiddle, an instrument and tradition that has deeply affected all of his work, whether as a fiddler, composer, or musical explorer.

Dan's collaborators include: So Percussion, fiddler Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh, guitarist Monica Muga, the JACK Quartet, singer Iarla Ó Lionáird, bitKlavierist Adam Sliwinski, the PRISM Quartet, poet Paul Muldoon, choreographer Rebecca Lazier, scientist Naomi Leonard, the Princeton Laptop Orchestra (PLOrk, which he co-founded), Sideband, and others, including, in this project, the incomparable Eighth Blackbird. His compositional work engages a broad range of activities, sometimes exploring rhythmic connections between traditional dance music and machines, other times engaging with the unusual phrasing, tuning and ornamentation of traditional Norwegian music while trying to discover new music that is singularly inspired by, and only possible with, new digital instruments that he designs and constructs. His tools of the trade are the first-of-its-kind Hardanger d'Amore fiddle by Salve Håkedal (played with a beautiful baroque bow by Michel Jamonneau), and the Chuck music programming language by Ge Wang.

Dan's work has been recognized by fellowships, grants, commissions, and awards from the Bessies, Guggenheim Foundation, Barlow Endowment, Fulbright Commission, American Composers Forum, American Council of Learned Societies, and Meet the Composer, among others. He is Professor of Music and Director of the Princeton Sound Kitchen at Princeton University, where he teaches counterpoint, electronic music, and composition.

Dan would like to thank: Iarla, Paul, and his new friends of Eighth Blackbird; Jesse Lewis; Mark DeChiazza; Gabriel Crouch and Gallicantus; Monica, Molly and Otto; Jennifer, John, Abby and Ethan; Gigi Hudson; Brad Garton, Paul Lansky, Steve Mackey; and the Council for the Humanities at Princeton University.

IARLA Ó LIONÁIRD

Iarla Ó Lionáird has carved a long and unique career in music both internationally and 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 and New York's Alarm Will Sound, he has shown a breadth of artistic ambition that sets him apart in the Irish Music fraternity. Preferring not to be categorized, his performances and recorded output follows an ambitious arc that challenges musical identity from Folk to Worldbeat, from New Classical to Opera.

A twice GRAMMY nominated songwriter and prolific recording artist with more than 12 Albums to his name, Ó Lionáird has worked with a stellar cast of composers internationally including Donnacha Dennehy, Dan Trueman, Nico Muhly, Gavin Bryars, and David Lang and he has performed and recorded with such luminaries as The Afro Celt Sound System, Peter Gabriel, Nick Cave, Robert Plant, and Sinéad O'Connor. His unique singing style has carried him to stages and concert halls all over the world, from New York's Carnegie Hall to London's Royal Albert Hall and the Sydney Opera House.

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 "Brooklyn." He is the vocalist for the critically acclaimed Irish /American band "The Gloaming."

Also an accomplished broadcaster, Ó Lionáird's recent Radio Series "**Vocal Chords**" on the mysteries of the human voice, for Ireland's National Classical Music Broadcaster, RTE Lyric FM, won Gold and Silver Awards at the "New York Radio Festival" 2016 and 2017.

Iarla would like to thank: Dan and Monica Trueman, Paul Muldoon, Eighth Blackbird, Mark DeChiazza, the Music Department and Humanities Council at Princeton University, Treasa Ni Mhiolláin, Dr. Deirdre Ní Chongaille, and my brothers Paidí, Peadar, and Seán Ó Lionáird.

PAUL MULDOON

Paul Muldoon is an Irish poet and professor of poetry, as well as an editor, critic, and translator. Born in 1951 in Portadown, Co. Armagh, Northern Ireland, to Patrick Muldoon, a farm labourer and market gardener, and Brigid Regan, a schoolteacher, Paul Muldoon was brought up near a village called The Moy on the border of Counties Armagh and Tyrone. He is the oldest of three children. After studying at Queen's University, Belfast, he published his first book, *New Weather* (Faber) in 1973, at the age of 21. From 1973 he worked as a producer for the BBC in Belfast until, in the mid-1980's, he gave up his job to become a freelance writer and moved to the United States with his second wife, the American novelist Jean Hanff Korelitz. He now lives in New York City and Sharon Springs, New York.

Muldoon is the author of twelve major collections of poetry, including *One Thousand Things Worth Knowing* (2015), *Maggot* (2010), *Horse Latitudes* (2006), *Moy Sand and Gravel* (2002), *Hay* (1998), *The Annals of Chile* (1994), *Madoc: A Mystery* (1990), *Meeting the British* (1987), *Quoof* (1983), *Why Brownlee Left* (1980), *Mules* (1977), and *New Weather* (1973). He has also published innumerable smaller collections, works of criticism, opera libretti, books for children, song lyrics, and radio and television dramas. His poetry has been translated into twenty languages.

Muldoon served as Professor of Poetry at Oxford University from 1999 to 2004 and as poetry editor of *The New Yorker* from 2007 to 2017. He has taught at Princeton University since 1987 and currently occupies the Howard G.B. Clark '21 chair in the Humanities. In addition to being much in demand as a reader and lecturer, he occasionally appears with a spoken word music group, Rogue Oliphant.

Paul Muldoon is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In addition to the Pulitzer Prize, he has received an American Academy of Arts and Letters award in

literature, the 1994 T. S. Eliot Prize, the 1997 *Irish Times* Poetry Prize, the 2003 Griffin International Prize for Excellence in Poetry, the 2004 American Ireland Fund Literary Award, the 2004 Shakespeare Prize, the 2005 Aspen Prize for Poetry, and the 2006 European Prize for Poetry. He has been described by *The Times Literary Supplement* as "the most significant English-language poet born since the second World War."

Roger Rosenblatt, writing in *The New York Times Book Review*, described Paul Muldoon as "one of the great poets of the past hundred years, who can be everything in his poems — word-playful, lyrical, hilarious, melancholy. And angry. Only Yeats before him could write with such measured fury."



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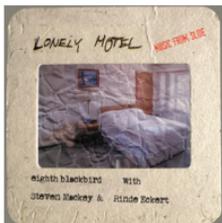


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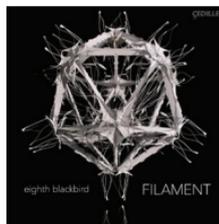


meanwhile

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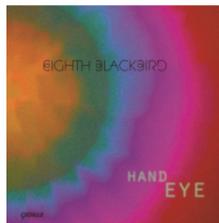


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— *The Whole Note*

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ENGINEERS

Bill Maylone (Chicago sessions)

Andrés Villalta (Princeton University sessions)

Dan Trueman (Galway sessions)

VOCAL DRAMATURGY

Mark deChiazza

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(*Reeling Reels; Allil; The Book of Lamentations*)

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with Iarla Ó Lionáird (Real World Works Ltd)

Iarla Ó Lionáird appears courtesy of Real World Records Ltd

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