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## Hope's signature piece for Solstice Festival

by **John Donohoe**

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The county arts centre in Navan, will celebrate the summer solstice next week with the world premiere of 'Solstice', a new piece of music specially commissioned for the Solstice Arts Centre. 'Solstice' is a three minute piece intended to be the signature piece for the centre, and is being unveiled as part of the inaugural Solstice Festival.

Funded by Meath County Council, this piece was commissioned under the Per Cent for Art Scheme attaching to the Solstice Arts Centre ACCESS Capital programme. An international competition was held which attracted entries from Los Angeles, Japan, Italy, Great Britain, Bulgaria, Canada, and Ireland.

An adjudication panel consisting of Rosemary Collier, head of music and opera at the Arts Council, Seamus Crimmins, head of music programming at RTE and Gerry O'Connor, musician and lecturer, assessed all submissions. The winning entry was by LA-based composer and Dunboyne native Ciaran Hope.



Ciaran Hope has composed 'Solstice', a three-minute piece to be the arts centre's signature theme.

Hope's contributions to today's musical and artistic landscape have proven him a rare commodity. Mr Hope's last album, 'Etude in Film Score', made the top 40 sales in its first month of release at CDBaby.com, the internet's pre-eminent distribution site for independent music. A single from the album, 'Childhood Ends', was selected for inclusion on an exclusive, limited release CDBaby promotional CD due to the album's success.

His music has also featured on 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer' and he has worked on collaborative projects with various musicians including the Russian cellist Misha Quint and Oscar-winning director/producer Jack Green on a major film project starring Olivia Hussey. He is currently working on a commission to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the death of Robert Emmet in the form of an opera and score for a film depicting his role in Irish history.

In addition to Ciaran Hope's music, the concert on Monday next, 21st June will also feature the music of composer Elaine Agnew. Ms Agnew, was recently appointed as the first RTÉ Lyric FM composer-in-residence in association with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra. Her year long residency includes a new carol 'Curoo Curoo' for Lyric FM's annual Choirs for Christmas competition and an orchestral piece for the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, alongside a series of education and on-line projects.

Agnew is currently writing a series of chamber pieces with poet Chris Agee in collaboration with Maltese musicians and has completed a new score for a production by Tall Tales Theatre Company of 'Maisy Daly's Rainbow' which premiered in Solstice in 2009. This piece will be featured as part of the Solstice concert.

Conducting on the night will be Meath-based conductor Fergus Sheil. Sheil studied music in Trinity College Dublin and began orchestral conducting in 1989 when he formed the Trinity Chamber Orchestra while still at college. He has appeared in concert with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, the RTE Concert Orchestra, the Ulster Orchestra, the Northern Sinfonia (UK), the Irish Chamber Orchestra, the Orchestra of St Cecilia, Orchestra 2000 (Cape Town) and many other groups. In Opera, Fergus has conducted amongst others, Verdi's Aida and Donizetti's L'elisir d'amore for Scottish Opera, Donizetti's L'elisir d'amore for Opera Ireland, and Rossini's Cinderella and Peter Maxwell Davies' The Lighthouse for Opera Theatre Company a. A former Head of Music of Opera Ireland, Sheil has also worked as chorus master and assistant conductor at Wexford Festival Opera, Opera Ireland and Scottish Opera.

Tickets are available from the Solstice box office at (046) 909 2330. This concert is part of the Solstice Summer Festival full details of which are available at Solstice, [www.solsticeartscentre.ie](http://www.solsticeartscentre.ie)

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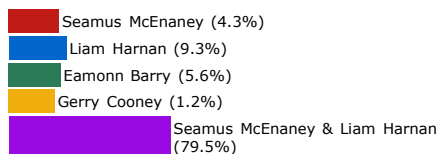
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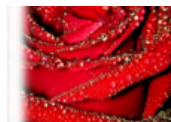
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