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# Encyclopedia of Music in Ireland: Gráinne Mulvey

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**Mulvey, Gráinne**, (b Dublin, 10 Mar. 1966). Composer. Mulvey studied composition with ERIC SWEENEY at WATERFORD INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, HORMOZ FARHAT at TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN, Augustine Fernandez at QUEENS UNIVERSITY BELFAST, and received a D. Phil in composition from the University of York in 1999 under Nicola LeFanu. Mulvey won the composer's section in the RTÉ MUSICIAN OF THE FUTURE COMPETITION in 1994, received compositional prizes from the ARKLOW MUSIC FESTIVAL, NEW MUSIC FOR SLIGO and St. John Memorial University, Newfoundland, and was awarded the Macaulay Fellowship in 1998. She represented Ireland at the International Rostrum of Composers in Paris with *Piano Etude No. 1* (in 1994) and her orchestral work *Scorched Earth* (in 2006), and her orchestral work *Akanos* was performed at the ISCM World Music Days in Vilnius. She is currently head of composition at the DUBLIN CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC AND DRAMA and was elected to AOSDÁNA in 2010.

Mulvey's early freely atonal scores such as the *String Quartet No. 1* (1991) are notable for their emphasis on the expansion and development of short motivic cells but with *Rational Option Insanity* composed in 1993, Mulvey began to move away from the more traditional formal approach of the earlier works to experiment with less restrictive structures. This tendency towards a more gestural form is further expanded in the orchestral work *Woburn Struggles On* of 1996 where the concept of struggle is inspired by the character of Woburn from SAMUEL BECKETT's radio play *Cascando*. Mulvey also began to experiment with ways of achieving greater colouristic contrasts and since *Casa Voodoo* (1999) and the *Trombone Concerto* (2000), her work has increasingly incorporated spectral dimensions. This is particularly evident in the orchestral work *Akanos* (2006) where all the material is derived from the harmonic series, a work which also marks something of a culmination of Mulvey's earlier approach to gestural forms in that the material develops, in one single extended gesture, to a series of striking spectral chords which conclude the work. She has also composed a number of electronic works including *Two Reflections* (2004), a work commissioned to commemorate the centenary of the Fastnet Lighthouse off the south west coast of Ireland.

#### SELECT COMPOSITIONS

STAGE: *Yerma* (1994), S, Mez, Bar, cl, pf, vn, vc (Frederico Garcia Lorca); *Waiting for Godot* (2000), Mez, Bar, pf (Beckett); ORCHESTRAL: *Angst* (1992 rev. 1993); *Woburn Struggles On* (1996); *Diverge and Merge* (1997); *Horrendous Elation* (1998); *Scorched Earth* (2004); *Horizons Fanfare* (2006); *Akanos* (2006); SOLOIST(S) WITH ORCHESTRA: *Trombone Concerto* (2000); CHAMBER: *Arachnid* (1991), vc, perc; *String Quartet No. 1* (1991); *Rational Option Insanity* (1993), ob, cl, hn, vn, pf; *Reverie* (1994), 2 vn, va, vc; *Mood Swings* (1994), fl, vn, vc; *Rí Ra*, 1995 (West Virginia 2001), 2 bn, db; *Relentless* (1996), vn, pf; *Defiance*, (1997), asax, vc, pf; *Sextet Uno* (1997), pic+fl+afl, cl+bcl, perc, pf, vn, vc; *Casa Voodoo* (1999), trbn, perc; *Duo* (2001), vn, vc; *Chase* (2001), vn, vib; *Jealous Moon* (2001), fl+pic+afl, cl+bcl+rainmaker, vn, vc; *Fanfare* (2004), 2tpt, org; *Agglomeration* (2007), cl+bcl, accdn, vn, vc; *Entropy* (2009), 2vn, va, vc; *Dedication* (2009), fl, pf; SOLO INSTRUMENTAL: *Étude No. 1* (1994), pf; *Exploration* (2001), hp; *Judith* (2010), afl; CHOIR: *La Corbière* (1998), S-solo, 4 perc (Anne le Marqueand Hartigan); *Stabat Mater* (2003), satb [div]; *Earth Song* (2007), S, accdn, (Emerson); *Eternity is Now* (2008), Mez, (Anne le Marqueand Hartigan);

ELECTRO-ACOUSTIC: *Soundscape* (1996) vn, vc, perc, el-ac; *Sonic Study I: Wood* (2002); *Sonic Study II: Clay* (2002); *Two Reflections* (2004); *Swirling Sea and Frightened Fish* (2004 rev. 2010), fl+afl+ bfl+ pic, el-ac; *Parallel Light* (2008); *Soundscape II* (2008), fl+bfl+pic, el-ac; *Soundscape III* (2009), fl+bfl+pic, el-ac; *Syzygy*, (2010), vc, el-ac; *Periastron* (2010), bcl, el-ac; *The Gift of Freedom* (2010), S, el-ac.

#### SELECT DISCOGRAPHY

Contemporary Music Centre: *Contemporary Music from Ireland Vol. 7*; National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, cond. Robert Houlihan; CD, CMC (2008)  
*Internationale Akademie für Neue Komposition, Austria*; Tomasz Bartosiak, Max Angel, Jan Pilch, Marek Choloniewski; CD, Avantgarde (1997)  
*Rational Option Insanity*; Concorde Ensemble; CD, Black Box (1999)  
*The Sound We are Now*; Joe O'Farrell; CD, Aphasia Recordings (2007)

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