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Encyclopedia of Music in Ireland: John McLachlan

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This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License.
McLachlan, John. (b Dublin, 5th Mar. 1964). Composer. McLachlan studied at DIT CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC AND DRAMA, the ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY OF MUSIC and TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN where he received a PhD in musicology in 2001 for investigating the relationship between analysis and compositional technique in the music of the post-war avant garde. He has also studied privately with KEVIN VOLANS. He was a featured composer in the RTÉ NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA’s Horizons series in 2003 and 2008 and has represented Ireland at numerous international festivals including the ISCM World Music Days in Slovenia in 2003 and Croatia in 2005. In 2006 his work Grand Action was commissioned as a test-piece for the AXA DUBLIN INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION. In addition to his work as a composer he is also active as a music journalist and has written numerous articles for the Journal of Music in Ireland (2000–10). Since 1999 he has served as executive director of the ASSOCIATION OF IRISH COMPOSERS and in 2007 he was elected to AOSDÁNA.

McLachlan’s aesthetic is largely shaped by his concern to explore ways of imparting a sense of narrative and expectation to his music without recourse to pastiche rhetorical devices. Much of his music is structured in large, contrasting block-like sections of homogeneous material which change suddenly from one to the next, surprising the listener. The material within these sections is propelled by a rigorous focus on subtle rhythmic and melodic permutations which result in both surface opacity and gradually increasing tension. A representative example of his approach is perhaps the string trio Radical Roots (2003), where scale fragments are continually reshaped over an extended period before being abruptly cut off by a new section of dissonant chords.

SELECT COMPOSITIONS
SELECT DISCOGRAPHY

Association of Irish Composers: *Hugh Lane November Series* (Michael Darcy, Hibernia Trio: CD, AIC001, 2000) Two Lyric Sketches for String Quartet

Contemporary Music Centre: *Contemporary Music from Ireland, Volume 4* (David Adams: CD, CMC CD04, 2004) Here be Dragons

—— *Contemporary Music from Ireland, Volume 9* (Maria McGarry: CD, CMC CD09, 2010) Grand Action

[David Adams:] *Irish Contemporary Organ Music* (CD, 2008) Here be Dragons

[John Feeley, Laura Chislett, Pavlos Kanellakis:] *Islands: Contemporary Irish Solo Works for Guitar* (CD: 2010) Four Short Pieces for Guitar

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Word count incl work list etc:

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Aosdána
Association of Irish Composers
AXA International Piano Competition
DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama
ISCM World Music Days
Royal Irish Academy of Music
RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra
Trinity College Dublin
Volans, Kevin