

October 2025

Irish Chamber Orchestra

Richard Egarr Conductor

Romantic Fire

Bacewicz

String Quartet No.4,
(2 and 3 Movements)

Atterberg

Suite No.3, Op.19,
No.1 for Solo Violin and Viola

Grieg

String Quartet G minor,
Op.27 (Arr. Tognetti)



16 Dublin and 17 Sligo



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More People, More Places, More Spaces

The Arts Council is the national agency for funding, developing and promoting the arts in Ireland. It was established by statute in 1951. The Arts Act 2003 provides that the Arts Council stimulates public interest, promotes knowledge, appreciation and practice and assists in improving standards in the arts. The Arts Council is an autonomous expert body for funding and promoting the arts, steering its development, and offering advice on arts and cultural matters.

The Arts Council's objective over the next three years is to nurture, support and fund More People, More Place and More Spaces across the country. We want to work alongside artists, arts organisations and partners to develop practices, strengthen capacity and audience engagement. This supports professional development, innovation and adaptability.

We are also implementing and monitoring our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. This will make sure that the arts sector and the Arts Council support a greater diversity of audiences, participants and artists.

The Arts Council proudly funds Irish Chamber Orchestra.

October 2025



Romantic fire

Henning Kraggerud

Director/Violin

Bacewicz

String Quartet No.4, Mov.2 and 3

Atterberg

Suite No.3, Op.19,
No.1 for Solo Violin and Viola

Grieg

String Quartet G minor, Op.27 (arr. Tognetti)

Thursday 16 October

Whyte Recital Hall, RIAM, Dublin, 7:30pm

Friday 17 October

The Model, Sligo, 7.30pm (Con Brio Sligo Music Association)



Irish Chamber Orchestra

We're the orchestra that invites you in. That saves you a seat. That wants you to feel the same heart-stirring, hair-raising, on-the-edge-of-your-seat feelings that we feel. We do so by pouring heart, soul, and no small measure of skill into our art. By playing old, by playing new, by playing everything with guts and fire.

You'll find us each season in **Limerick and Dublin**, touring regularly in the far corners of Ireland, as well as at some of the most prestigious halls in the world. From playing the classics, to performing with theatres, operas, DJs, or dance companies, we forge new pathways to bring you unforgettable experiences, whoever you are, wherever you are.

We are not afraid to push the boundaries of classical music. Since joining us as Principal Conductor and Artistic Partner in August 2025, **Henning Krägerud** has brought a fresh warmth and an adventurous spirit to our work, championing artistic diversity and placing emotional connection at the heart of every performance. His inclusive vision is reshaping our repertoire, inspiring bold new commissions from some of Ireland's finest composers and offering vibrant, human-centred interpretations of the classics.

Most importantly, we believe that music is for everyone. That's why we're also a charity, with a series of successful community engagement programmes. After 16 years, our **ICO Schools** initiative continues to provide valuable free music lessons to children and young people in Limerick City while our **ICO Youth** provides an orchestral platform for teenagers. **ICO Teach**, our online tutorial website gives tutors and children access to free, outstanding music education, worldwide. We are also deeply immersed in the **MA Classical Strings Programme** at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick, where we are proud to be orchestra-in-residence.

It's our rich creative musical heritage that inspires us. It's our unstoppable enthusiasm for what we do, and the people we do it with. As Ireland's national chamber orchestra, we are lucky to call the **University of Limerick** home and are funded by The **Arts Council of Ireland/An Chomhairle Ealaíon**.

Whether it's your first time or your hundredth time, we are the Irish Chamber Orchestra, and you are in for a treat.

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Sadie Fields Guest Leader
Nicola Sweeney Asst. Principal
Diane Daly
Anna Cashell
Kenneth Rice
Oonagh Keogh

André Swanepoel Principal 2nd Violin
Emily Nenniger
Clíodhna Ryan
Louis Roden
Siún Milne

Viola

Joachim Roewer Principal
Alison Comerford
Robin Panter
Mark Coates-Smith

Cello

Aoife NicAthlaoich Principal
Peggy Nolan
Richard Angell

Double Bass

Malachy Robinson Principal

Flute

Fitona Kelly
Emma Roche

Oboe

Daniel Bates
Matthew Draper

Clarinet

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Henning Kraggerud

Director/Violin

Norwegian violinist Henning Kraggerud is Artistic Director of the Arctic Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra. His extraordinary reach as an artist is a result of his versatility and passion for music as well as the genuine quality to his playing and beauty of his performances. His teaching and educational writings provide fascinating insights into his multi-faceted approach to music-making, while his composing, arranging, and improvising — frequently bringing his own works into the concert hall — recall the spirit of the old masters such as Josef Suk and Eugène Ysaÿe. Henning's eminence as a soloist and play-director have led to invitations time and again to many of the world's most significant orchestras, most recently the Royal Danish Opera Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Deutsche Kammerakademie Neuss, Toronto Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Danish National Symphony, Tonkünstler Vienna, BBC Scottish Symphony, Tasmanian Symphony, and Macao orchestras. In past seasons, Henning has performed twice at the BBC Proms in London's Royal Albert Hall as well as with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl and the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra at Carnegie Hall.

Henning is a prolific composer whose works are performed by many prominent musicians and orchestras around the globe. His largest-scale work to date is entitled *Equinox: 24 Postludes in All Keys* for Violin and String Orchestra. Commissioned, premiered, and recorded by the Arctic.

Henning Kraggerud



Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra with Henning as soloist, the work was composed as a musical counterpart to a story specially written by world-famous author Jostein Gaarder and has been hailed as “a fascinating composition to return to over and over again” (MusicWeb International). In 2017 Henning composed a version for violin and piano, premiered in Norway in 2018 with pianist Clare Hammond and Jostein Gaarder narrating.

His most recent composition, **Romantartctica**, was co-commissioned by the Arctic Philharmonic and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, the world's northern and southernmost professional symphony orchestras respectively. The work received its world premiere in Tromsø in February 2021 and its southern hemisphere premiere in Tasmania in May 2023.



Sadie Fields

Guest Leader

Canadian-British violinist Sadie Fields, based in Brussels, enjoys a diverse career as soloist, chamber musician, curator, and artistic director. Her passion for the violin began at age seven after hearing the famed Stradivarius instruments of the Axelrod collection, sparking a lifelong dedication to music.

Sadie performs widely across Europe, North America, Asia, the Middle East, and New Zealand. A committed chamber musician, she was founding leader of the Castalian String Quartet, violinist of Trio Khnopff, and founder of Belgium's Flash Ensemble, a flexible group centred around a string trio. She also performs with Canada's Festival Trio and recently formed a duo with Italian accordionist Luca Piovesan. In 2023 she was appointed leader of the historic Edinburgh Quartet.

Her recent recordings include Flash Ensemble's complete trios of **László Lajtha** (Pavane Records, 2023), awarded 5 stars in **Diapason**, and Trio Khnopff's Weinberg – 1945, named **BBC Music Magazine's "Chamber Disc of the Month."** She has

Sadie Fields



also recorded extensively for BIS and Champs Hill Records, earning **BBC Music Magazine's "Editor's Choice," "Chamber Disc of the Month,"** and the German Record Critics' Award.

Alongside performing, Sadie curates and directs concert series, including **Mini Concerts** in Brussels and **Music in Rannoch** in the Scottish Highlands. She holds a PhD from the Royal Academy of Music, where her research explored tradition and learning through Bartók's violin works. A recipient of numerous international prizes and fellowships, she has been supported by the Leverhulme Trust and the British Library, among others.

Sadie teaches violin and chamber music, has held posts at King's College London, and gives masterclasses internationally. She plays a fine 1687 Gioffredo Cappa violin.

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Programme Notes

Grażyna Bacewicz (1909–69)

String Quartet No.4

- II. *Andante*
- III. *Allegro giocoso*

In the middle of the last century, Grażyna Bacewicz emerged through constant struggle to become the most prominent Polish female composer of the modern era. Spending her composing life under threat from two of the 20th-century's most brutal tyrannies, the Nazis and the Soviet Union, her music was shaped and coloured by her need to satisfy those dangerous overlords and a courageously defiant desire to champion her own native heritage.

Her Fourth String Quartet, the middle point of seven such, was composed in 1951 as the Cold War between East and West began to heat up. Living then under Soviet control and censorship, Bacewicz employed the refined form of the string quartet to disguise the challenge to her authoritarian masters beneath its melody-led surface. Understandably, a darkness of tone haunts her music.

The three-movement Fourth Quartet brought Bacewicz to international attention and remains her most popular and frequently performed work in Poland. At its heart is a tense, troubled *Andante*; a disturbed nocturne striving for the calm and peace it eventually achieves. The richly textured, keening harmonies of the string writing are a reminder that Bacewicz was herself an admired violinist before turning to composing.

The Polish folk tunes glancing referenced in the *Andante* are more freely heard in the lively, dance-like *Allegro giocoso* finale – a prancing gigue whose tempo and spirit claims an obvious kinship with an Irish jig. Listen out for the separate episodes – not least the plucked pizzicato strings repeating the dance theme – that make up this movement. And how Bacewicz weaves them together in virtuosic combinations to bring proceedings to an emphatic, boisterous conclusion that manages to cock a departing snook at her Soviet oppressors.

Kurt Atterberg (1887–1974)

Suite No.3, Op.19 No.1

- I. *Prélude. Adagio*
- II. *Pantomim. Moderato*
- III. *Vision. Allegro moderato – Con moto*

Although largely self-taught, Kurt Atterberg placed himself at the centre of 20th-century Swedish music as a conductor, critic and founder of the Society of Swedish Composers. Today he is better known as a composer who blended the songful soulfulness shared with his Scandinavian peers, Alfvén, Grieg and Sibelius, with the lush European accent of Brahms.

Suite No.3 grew out of incidental music for Maurice Maeterlinck's *Sœur Béatrice* at Stockholm's Royal Dramatic Theatre (where Atterberg had been appointed composer and conductor in 1916). Set in a convent, the play focuses on Sister Beatrice who has been abducted by her lover while praying beneath a statue of the Virgin Mary. Interceding, Mary takes the



nun's place, the divine intervention going unnoticed. Nearing the end of her life, Beatrice reappears to confess her sins and acknowledge the holy forgiveness she was granted.

Originally restricted to only a violin, viola and harmonium, in 1921 Atterberg re-cast the harmonium part for string orchestra for his three-part Suite. The opening 'Prélude' is a keening Adagio in, the composer said, 'a certain sacral style', the beseeching solo violin lighting up and offering succour to the aching low-voices of the accompaniment. Heart-slowing moments of near silence heighten the movement's confessional intensity.

The expressive 'Pantomim' casts violin and viola as the errant Beatrice and her lover in an ardent and intimate dialogue supported by discretely passionate string accompaniment.

The animated 'Vision' is a fantasy of what might have been. Listen for how the accompanying strings become ever more insistent as if trying to separate the two lovers. And how the memories of Beatrice's sinful past keep disturbing the would-be bliss with slicing interjections and unsettling rhythms. A reverie forever out of reach – as all tragic love stories are – the two lovers are isolated by their own guilt and the mournful, knowing melancholy of the surrounding strings.

Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)

String Quartet No.1 in G minor, Op.27 (Arr. Tognetti)

- I. *Un poco Andante – Allegro molto ed adagio*
- II. *Romanze: Andantino – Allegro agitato*
- III. *Intermezzo: Allegro molto marcato
– Più vivo e scherzando*
- IV. *Finale: Lento – Presto al Saltarello*

Of the three string quartets Grieg attempted, the first is lost, the third left unfinished. Only the second – catalogued as No.1 – serves as an example of what he might have done with this most traditional – and testing – of forms.

Premiered in 1878, it is one of the most remarkable works of the string repertoire, its liberal use of Norwegian folk music idioms lending a late-romantic gloss to a score that anticipates the darker preoccupations of early modernism.

Grieg's own intentions for it were clear. In a later letter to a friend, he insisted it was not 'intended to deal in trivialities for petty minds. It aims at breadth, flight of imagination, and above all sonority for the instruments for which it is written'.

Beneath its surface drama and beauty lies complex music marked by formidable technical challenges that caused Grieg's publisher to balk from issuing it in print. The first of its four movements sets out its stall in no uncertain manner. The textures binding together all four voices – two violins, viola and cello – feel glue-like, so intensely and tightly they bind one to the other. It carries itself with a richness bordering on the orchestral, and a beseeching quality that makes it sound like an impassioned opera aria.

Don't be startled by its dramatic opening, where all four voices sing the same doleful song together. Or the agitated confrontations between them that follows in the quartet's longest movement. Listen, instead, for how Grieg allows time and space to the separate voices to say their piece, even as he weaves them together in a dialogue as intimate and intense as any scene from theatre, film or opera.

Announced in the opening unison declaration, the melody that binds the quartet together is borrowed from Grieg's earlier song, *Spillemænd* (Minstrel), depicting a woeful musician separated from his beloved. Absent in Grieg's own life at the time was the happy-ever-after that marriage had promised. The theme returns in various treatments and guises throughout what follows, most notably in its transformation into the tranquil second theme. If you think you can hear in it an echo of Grieg's signature Piano Concerto, you'd be right.

The second-movement 'Romanze' is light and flirtatious – although don't be alarmed by its sudden changes of mood. Such are the vagaries of love and desire. Largely gone are the bruising angles and sharp edges of the quartet's opening. Instead all four voices, like kittens at play, gleefully join in until, exhausted, they fall into slumber.

The animated 'Intermezzo' third movement serves for the expected scherzo. The key elements to listen for are Grieg's use of varied rhythms and pizzicato (plucked) strings, and how the excitable outer sections contrast with a relaxed central section delighting in Norway's buoyant traditional Halling folk dance.

The spirited Finale mirrors the quartet's opening: a slow introduction giving way to a final dance. Listen for how its shift from minor to major key alters the relationship between the individual voices and affects emotional response and mood. After many hurdles and struggles, the quartet ends with a last, optimistic sounding of the theme borrowed from *Spillemænd*.

Notes by Michael Quinn © 2025

A large yellow square occupies the right half of the page. It is decorated with several thick, light pink wavy lines that flow vertically and curve around the edges. The text 'You've got to hear this' is written in a large, bold, black sans-serif font on the left side of the square.

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Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, Piazzolla, Sam Perkin,
Atterberg and Grieg

Saturday 18 October

University Concert Hall, Limerick



November

Emily Davies

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Matthew Jacobson

Percussion

Three Worlds

Works by Purcell, Ronan Guilfoyle and Dvořák

Thurs 13 November

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Sat 15 November

MIT Cork Schook of Music, Cork

Fri 14 November

University Concert Hall, Limerick



December

Christian Curnyn Conductor



Messiah

Handel's majestic and sacred oratorio

Thurs 11 December

St. Mary's Church, Dingle, Co. Kerry

Fri 12 December

St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick

