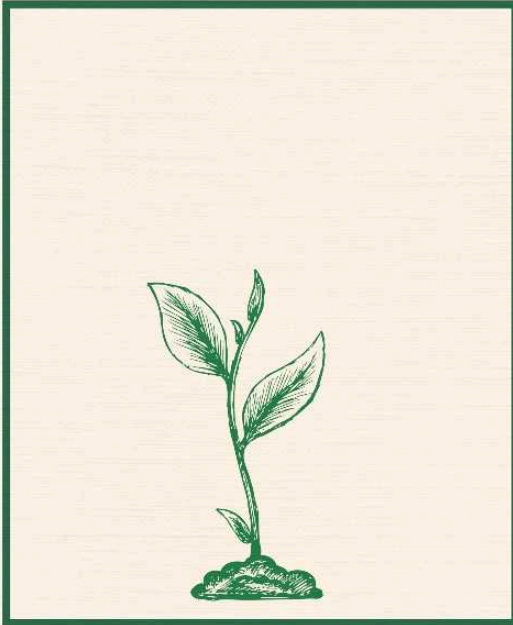




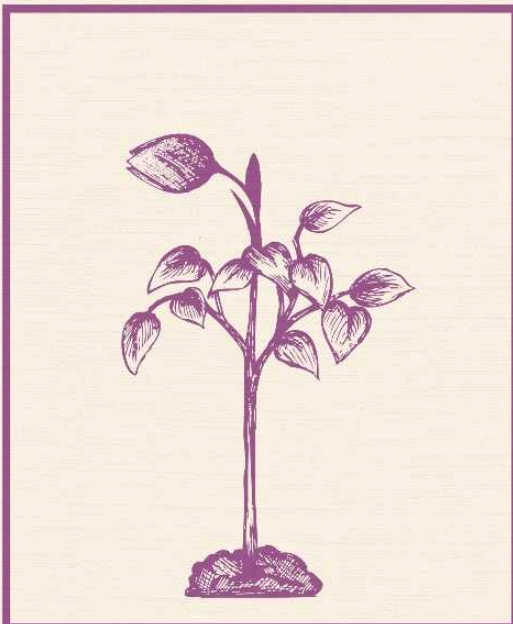
CUORE Chamber Choir

Conductor: Amy Ryan

GALLO • O'FARRELL



IN SPRINGTIME



NYSTEDT • ZIÓŁKOWSKI

SATURDAY 25TH APRIL • 7:30^{PM}
HADDINGTON RD CHURCH (ST MARY'S) DUBLIN 4

[CUORE.IE/TICKETS](https://cuore.ie/tickets)

In Springtime
Cuore Chamber Choir | Amy Ryan

In You, Lord, I Have Taken Refuge - Galen Mac Caba

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Prayers of Kierkegaard - Knut Nystedt

Movement I - "We Speak This Way With You, O God"

Movement II - "Lord Jesus Christ, Who Loved Us First"

Movement III - "Great Are You, O God"

Movement IV - "Father in Heaven, Open Your Fountains"

Movement V - "Father in Heaven, In Springtime..."

Movement VI - "Father in Heaven, You Loved Us First"

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Agnus Dei - Joost Slingerland

Hymn To Aphrodite - Carmel Whelan

Sol de Invierno - Andrés Gallo

~

To A Child Dancing Upon The Shore - Michał Ziółkowski

A Can of Lilt - Anne-Marie O'Farrell

As this concert is being recorded, please ensure your phone is on silent or airplane mode.

Please note, there will be no interval.

Welcome to Cuore's spring concert in the beautiful surroundings of St. Mary's Church. We hope you enjoy our performance which features a range of contemporary and newly composed music, in addition to the premiere of our 10th anniversary commission from celebrated Irish composer, and Cuore alumna, Anne-Marie O'Farrell.

Cuore Chamber Choir is an internationally award-winning, mixed-voice, Dublin-based choir founded by conductor Amy Ryan and Patricia O'Neill in 2014. The choir consists of thirty singers from a range of nationalities and ages, committed to high-quality performances of rewarding music, from early polyphony to contemporary premieres.

Cuore has consistently achieved high standards including Gold at the International Choir Competition Ave Verum, Baden, Austria (2024) and two second prizes at the Tallinn International Choir Festival (2023). Closer to home, Cuore achieved first place in RTÉ lyric fm's Choirs for Christmas competition (2024), at the Feis Ceoil (2023), Cork (2018), Mayo (2016), Sligo (2016) and New Ross (2015). Cuore has a particular affinity for the music of living composers, having been awarded special prizes for contemporary music by RTÉ lyric fm (2024), in Tallinn (2023), the Feis Ceoil (2023) and Cork (2022 and 2018). Beyond competitions, the choir engages in charitable performances, collaborations with orchestra in Ireland's National Concert Hall, and its own regular concerts.

Amy Ryan is a Dublin-based conductor from Killarney, lecturing in Music at the Royal Irish Academy of Music and previously at Trinity College Dublin. She founded the internationally award-winning Cuore Chamber Choir and is Artistic Director of UCD Philharmonic Choir and UCD Elevare Ensemble. She has a particular affinity for contemporary choral music, having presented numerous premieres and having won interpretation prizes nationally and internationally. She also directs Irish-language choir Cór Duibhlinne and the professional choir of St Stephen's Church, Dublin, and has prepared choruses for Irish National Opera, Blackwater Valley Opera Festival and Lyric Opera.

Also at home in orchestral music, Amy has appeared as Guest Artistic Director with UCD Symphony Orchestra and worked as Score Reader with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland. As conductor of Jubilate Choir she presented major symphonic choral works, including the Irish premiere of Graun's 18th-century Passion oratorio, *Der Tod Jesu*. She studied orchestral conducting with Alice Farnham and Robert Houlihan. Earlier this month, Amy conducted the world premiere of a large-scale work by Rhona Clarke for choir, string orchestra and string trio, as part of Music Network's 40th anniversary celebrations

Amy contributed a chapter to *Perspectives on Conducting* (Routledge, 2024) and served as a Conducting Fellow at Yale Norfolk Chamber Music Festival (2017). Following a BMus at Cork School of Music, she completed a Master's in Kodály Music Pedagogy and Advanced Diploma in Choral Conducting at the Kodály Institute of the Liszt Academy of Music, studying with Péter Erdei and Dr László Nemes. She is sought-after as a guest conductor and adjudicator, and served as Chairperson of Kodály Ireland (2018–22) and as a board member of Sing Ireland (2022–26).

Cuoresters Performing This Evening

Sopranos: Helen Blackmore^{†*}, Sarah Cunningham, Monica Donlon[†], Caoimhe Duggan, Aoife Dunne, Sibéal Farrell, Carolyn Graber, Éabha McCarthy, Marguerite Smith[†], Rose Sherezade Suhrab.

Altos: Alison Cline, Clare Dixon, Emma Kavanagh, Muireann Lynch, Lorraine O'Connell, Ellen O'Driscoll, Caoilin O'Meara, Sofía Ortiz Curtis, Margaret Samahita, Laura Slattery, Carmel Whelan.

Tenors: Zhaopeng Li, Richard McCullough, Torin Nolan, Garrath Patterson, Kieran Tully, Glenn White.

Basses: John Horan, Karl Leavy, Manus MacGearailt, Brían Merriman, Peter Ogden, Joost Slingerland.

[†]*Soloist in Prayers of Kierkegaard*

^{*}*Soloist in Sol de Invierno*

Support Cuore

The support of our audience is crucial to bring you events such as tonight's concert. We invite individuals and corporate bodies to join our Friends and Patrons programme, to receive benefits such as free guest tickets and reserved seating. Visit cuore.ie/support or scan the QR code on rear.

Cuore is also fundraising for our first album, consisting of music with strong Cuore associations which have never been recorded before, including six pieces from tonight's concert. Visit cuore.ie/album to learn more.

Coming Soon For Cuore

- ❖ Cuore will be performing in a **free concert this Friday 1st May**, at 7:30pm in St. Finian's Church, Adelaide Rd. with other local choirs and musicians. This event will launch an international workshop on contemporary church music organised by the Lutheran Church. See lutheran-ireland.org or scan the QR code on rear.
- ❖ Our annual *Christmas with Cuore* concert will take place here in St Mary's on Saturday 19th December 2026.

To stay up to date with all our exciting plans, **sign up for our newsletter** at cuore.ie/list or **follow @CuoreChoir** on your favorite social media channels.

Programme Notes

1. *In You, Lord, I Have Taken Refuge* - Galen Mac Caba (b. 1985) - Concert Premiere

A note from the composer: *In You, Lord, I Have Taken Refuge* is a five-voice motet setting verses 1-3 of Psalm 71, with the kind permission of Biblica Inc., who publish the New International Version. I previously set these verses in German for my *Cantata for Estomihi*, a five-movement work for the last Sunday before Lent. They also feature in two memorable settings by Heinrich Schütz, alongside works by other composers. I wrote this setting for Cuore to sing at my son's baptism earlier this year, and am grateful that Amy and Cuore are including it in this springtime concert.

2. *Prayers of Kierkegaard* - Knut Nystedt (1915 - 2014) - Irish Premiere

English text translated from the original Danish by Edna & Howard H. Hong.

Norwegian composer Knut Nystedt was one of the central figures in Norway's musical life. He studied with Aaron Copland and had a long career as a composer, conductor, and teacher, as well as founding Der Norske Solistkor (Norwegian Soloists' Choir). Much of his choral music draws on biblical and sacred texts, reflecting his upbringing in a devout Christian family. In 1966 he was made a Knight of the Order of St Olav in recognition of his contribution to Norwegian music. His style combines warm, lyrical writing with more exploratory harmonies, always with a strong sense of vocal colour and line.

Written in 1999 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Det Norske Solistkor, *Prayers of Kierkegaard* (Op. 157) is an *a cappella* setting of texts by Søren Kierkegaard, the Danish theologian and philosopher often described as the first existentialist. The work is less a formal liturgical setting than a series of personal reflections, shaped by rich textures and finely controlled choral colour. Across six movements, Nystedt brings us on a spiritual journey, moving from directly addressing and confessing to God towards vision, consolation and renewal. Each movement represents a sensitive and intensely personal treatment of the prayers, allowing the text to remain at the centre. Human struggle and the challenge of forging a

personal relationship with God are set against moments of inwardness and quiet contemplation, portrayed through the juxtaposition of rich, often intense and dissonant harmonies with resolution to a warm tonal centre of D Major, which in turn provides a sense of home.

There are also many moments of contrast in character between the movements. The plainchant-like opening and ending of the first prayer contrasts with the more virtuosic singing of the animated second. The third and fifth prayers begin with strong declamations of “Great are you, O God”, and “Father in Heaven” respectively, but end with a solo soprano voice rising gently from the choir. There is much juxtaposition of male and female voices throughout the fourth and fifth movements. In the final prayer, there is a palpable sense of joy, tempered towards the end with humility. The result overall is a restrained but deeply expressive work, unfolding with a quiet, contemplative intensity, suggesting that prayer is ultimately about inner change.

3. Agnus Dei - Joost Slingerland (b. 1973)

We have been very fortunate in Cuore to count several composers among our choristers. Joost, a longstanding bass, is one such talent. This beautiful setting of the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God) is taken from his Mass composed in December 2018. We had the honour of giving its concert premiere in June 2019, shortly followed by its Portuguese premiere in July 2019, when it was performed alongside his Kyrie setting from the same work. The composer, in response to Renaissance practices of not providing performance indications of pace, dynamic, accent and breath, intentionally gives us performance freedom. This setting of the *Agnus Dei* is built around a passage in parallel thirds and fifths, giving it its serene and contemplative character.

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.

Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Agnus Dei,
qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.

4. *Hymn To Aphrodite* - Carmel Whelan (b. 1988) - World Premiere

Sappho, from the Greek island of Lesbos, is highly regarded as one of the greatest lyric poets of ancient times. Sadly most of her work has been lost to time and what survives today mostly exists in fragmentary form - only her *Ode to Aphrodite* (in which she prays for Aphrodite to ease the pain of her heartache) is complete. It is this work, and imagery from other fragments, that has served as inspiration for the text.

An ode to unrequited love, this piece is written as a prayer to the Goddess Aphrodite - the ancient Greek goddess of love - in which Sappho pleads to be released from the isolation of her longing. This slowly evolving soundscape begins as a quiet reflection, featuring poignant harmonies and chant-like textures, before unfurling as an intense expression of desire. This is the world premiere of *Hymn To Aphrodite*, written by Cuore alto, Carmel Whelan - an award-winning composer in her own right.

5. *Sol de Invierno* - Andrés Gallo (b. 1987)

Sol de Invierno (*Winter Sun*) is a choral work by Colombian composer Andrés Gallo, a Cuore alumnus who sang tenor with the choir while he was studying in Dublin. In 2015, this piece was awarded third prize in the Busan Composition Competition, demonstrating the composer's skill in modern, expressive choral writing that is both challenging and rewarding to perform.

The title evokes the contrast of light and cold, reflected in the music's delicate textures and lyrical vocal writing. This piece makes use of independent melodic lines that often overlap to create shimmering harmonic clusters. Gallo employs subtle shifts in dynamics, textural layering, and careful voice leading to draw out the contrast between brightness and shadow suggested by the title. There are moments of close harmony alongside more open, spacious passages, requiring careful balance and blend from the choir.

Sol de Invierno

*De las nubes caen gotas
Unas grandes y muy gordas
tocan suelo y mojan otras
pero tú que eres chiquita,
al bajar el sol te quita
y en el aire te evapora.
Eres virga que otro día caerá.
Luego el Hielo ya enojado
frío, seco, congelado, cae duro y suena fuerte
ahuyentando así a la gente,
pero el sol, a ti granizo,
ya tendido tú en el piso,
siempre te derretirá.
La tormenta ha cesado,
es el sol quien ha ganado,
ya en la noche sólo duerme
que así llueva y llueva fuerte,
esa luna que te alumbra,
es la luz que te promete,
que muy pronto es otro día,
y que ya amanecerá.*

Raindrops fall from the clouds
Some big and very thick ones
Touch the ground and soak others
But you, who are so little
When coming down the sun takes you away
And in the air he evaporates you.
You are a virga which will fall another day.
Then, the already mad ice
Cold, dry and frozen falls hard and sounds loudly
Thus scaring people away
But as you, hail,
are already lying on the ground,
The sun will always melt you down.
The storm has subsided
It's the sun who has won
He sleeps alone at night
Even if it rains and rains heavily
The moon that shines upon you
Is the light that promises
Very soon it will be another day
And it will get light in time.

6. To A Child Dancing Upon The Shore - Michał Ziółkowski (b. 1991)

This piece was commissioned by Cuore and conductor Amy Ryan to celebrate the choir's 10th anniversary, and received its world premiere at our celebratory anniversary concert in 2025. The composer describes the piece in his own words:

Yeats' beautiful yet brief poem evokes the image of a child dancing - innocent, free, and unaware of the future. However, in today's world, many children are deprived of safety and even lose their lives in the brutal wars waged by criminals. For me, this little piece is both a celebration of life and my small expression of opposition to the violence inflicted upon the youngest and most vulnerable.

This sensitive setting of the text, with its rich harmonies and the interweaving repetition of the word 'dance' in the closing section, perfectly evokes the carefree atmosphere of the dancing girl and childhood innocence. The middle section, a little more ominous, is more reflective, developing into a *molto crescendo* portraying the word 'monstrous'. The modal music together with the ornamentation gives an idiomatic feeling of traditional Irish music. We are very grateful to Michał for composing this beautiful piece for us.

7. *A Can of Lilt* - Anne-Marie O'Farrell (b. 1966) - World Premiere

Dr Anne-Marie O'Farrell has a substantial output of works for orchestra, mixed choir, solo vocal, chamber and solo instruments to her name. Her music has been performed by the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, RTÉ Concert Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Ulster Orchestra, BBC Singers, the Tower of London Chapel Choir, Chamber Choir Ireland, ConTempo Quartet and numerous international solo artists.

Wide ranging commissions include Music Network's commission for a clarinet and harp work written for members of the Vienna Philharmonic, Dionysis Grammenos, and Anneleen Lenaerts; *Cúige na gCruitirí*, a substantial work for Harp Ireland, written for forty harps, which premiered at Dublin Castle; *Love-Wounded Lord* commissioned by the Tower of London Chapel Choir as part of World War I commemorations; and a work for the 92-piece Meitheal orchestra of traditional instruments. Her civil war cantata, *Who'd Ever Think It Would Come to This?* was a resounding critical success following its premiere by the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, Resurgam Chamber Choir and vocal soloists, conducted by Ciarán Crilly. In 2022 she gave the world premiere of her lever harp concerto, *In Light Anew* at the World Harp Congress in Cardiff, and recently performed its Irish premiere with conductor Gavin Maloney and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra in Dublin's National Concert Hall, broadcast live on RTÉ Lyric FM.

Currently Head of Harp at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, Anne-Marie has lectured in composition at TU Dublin Conservatoire, and was Arts Council-funded Composer-in-Residence at Mary Immaculate College,

Limerick for three years. She holds a PhD in composition at Queen's University Belfast studying with Professor Piers Hellawell; a first class honours MA in composition from NUI Maynooth; and undergraduate degrees from UCD. Anne-Marie is regularly invited to give lecture recitals and masterclasses at international festivals, and acts as jury member for competitions. Her compositions are featured on conservatoire and examination syllabuses worldwide.

A Can of Lilt (2026) is the final work of three commissions celebrating Cuore's 10th Anniversary and was commissioned by Amy and the choir with funding from the Arts Council of Ireland. It is written for unaccompanied mixed choir with some division of vocal parts to highlight harmonic colour. The piece draws heavily on the Irish lilting tradition of singing dance tunes in a way that conveys the rhythmic shape and nuance of the melody. The text has been compiled by the composer using titles of Irish set dances, along with characteristic lilting syllables heard in the singing of dance music. In the earlier part of the piece, the composer has superimposed these set dance titles onto rhythmic iterations of dance steps. The compilation of dance titles is deliberately random, with a playful sense of the absurd. The choir later adopts a tune in the style of a jig, heavily shrouded in irregular metres, cross rhythms and playful interjections. Modes of traditional Irish music feature strongly, and are combined with other scale types to maximise tonal colour. The work is designed to be a tour de force for the choir to use these combined materials to perform a 'dance for choir'.

Acknowledgements

- ❖ Cuore thanks everyone who has supported our activities, particularly all at St. Finian's Church on Adelaide Road, and here at St. Mary's Church, Haddington Road.
- ❖ Programme notes by Lorraine O'Connell, Margaret Samahita, Carmel Whelan, Carolyn Graber and contributing composers.
- ❖ Poster & programme cover design by Carmel Whelan.



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