

Awards Ceremony 2018 – Belmont Prize for Contemporary Music

Friday, 22 June 2018, 7.30 pm, The Oriel Centre at Dundalk Gaol

— Press Release

The first *backstage laureate*: The Forberg-Schneider-Stiftung has awarded the Belmont Prize for Contemporary Music, with its EUR 20,000 endowment, to the programme planner and concert organiser Eamonn Quinn of Dundalk, Ireland. It is the first award for this self-taught maverick in the European festival landscape. The award ceremony will take place on 22 June 2018 during the 'Book of Hours' Festival, held in Dundalk on 22 and 23 June 2018.

Born in 1967, Eamonn Quinn is a sophisticated explorer and communicator with a burning passion for contemporary music. He listens to as much as he possibly can, studies mountains of scores, scours the Web, searches on his own and discovers, with unfailing instinct and visionary imagination, all that is good, new and dramaturgically relevant. He pays no heed to such labels as mainstream, zeitgeist or commercial potential, not even as things to be avoided: *'The bottom line for me: is the music any good?'* **In 2006, together with his wife Gemma Murray, he founded LCMS**, the Louth Contemporary Music Society, in Dundalk. Since then he has functioned as its brain, heart, spirit and prime mover. He plans and organises an annual festival with no more than four or five unique concerts conceived specifically for this occasion – without a firm budget and operating with minimum resources. He commissions new works and at times immortalises them on CD for the LCMS label.

With passion, lucidity and the curiosity of an astonished child, Eamonn Quinn mounts programmes of great sensitivity. Performers and composers are fascinated by his intellectual freedom and his aversion to compromises – and they yield to his charisma. They all travel to this town of 30,000 inhabitants to hear their works performed and premièred: Terry Riley, Garth Knox, Marino Formenti, David Lang, and most recently Salvatore Sciarrino. The harbour town of Dundalk, founded by the Normans in the 12th century, has become a magnet for *music-lovers*: most of the festival's visitors arrive from Dublin some 50 miles away, with 30 percent coming from the local vicinity and increasingly large numbers from abroad.

Eamonn Quinn grew up as the youngest of nine siblings in a worker's family in Newry, County Armagh, a border county in Northern Ireland that was deeply affected in the days of The Troubles. After living in Belfast, Galicia (Spain) and Dublin as an English teacher and community worker, he now lives and works on the Irish side of the border in Dundalk, County Louth, which, if worst comes to worst (owing to Brexit), may well again become the outermost border of the EU.

Founded in 1997, the Forberg-Schneider-Stiftung honours outstanding achievements in contemporary music. It does so by, among other things, awarding the Belmont Prize, if possible every two years. In 2018 its recipient will be, for the first time, a *'hero behind the scenes'* who satisfies the Foundation's motto in a special way: *'Who chooses me, must give and hazard all he hath'*. The Belmont Prize is one of Europe's most richly endowed awards for artistic creation.

Previous laureates of the Belmont Prize for Contemporary Music:

2015: Milica Djordjević, composer (Belgrade and Berlin) • 2013: Sabrina Hölzer, stage director (Berlin)
2012: Alex Ross, author/music critic (New York) • 2009: Marino Formenti, pianist/conductor (Vienna)
2007: Bruno Mantovani, composer (Paris) • 2005: Quatuor Ebène, string quartet (Paris)
2004: Carolin Widmann, violinist (Leipzig) • 2001: Florent Boffard, pianist (Paris)
1999: Jörg Widmann, composer/clarinetist (Munich and Berlin)

Further information at www.louthcms.org • www.forberg-schneider.de

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