Classics Now: a new cultural festival

13-15 November 2020

Curtain up on Classics*Now*, a new cultural festival taking place online, in Dublin and beyond. It invites audiences to explore contemporary artistic interpretation and reimagining of the literature, arts and ideas of Ancient Greece and Rome.

The weekend will showcase the current burst of artistic and intellectual engagement with Classics by artists and writers, both international and Irish, in new versions, translations and re-workings of the Homeric poems, Greek tragedy and Roman history. It will highlight the rich tradition of Irish writers reflecting on Ireland through the Classics, which goes back centuries.

The Classics*Now* weekend is the start of something new: a platform for future collaborative projects and a series of interdisciplinary public events over the coming year, under the Classics*Now* banner.

Highlights of the weekend programme include wide-ranging 'in conversation' events with some of the most exciting writers who are using the Classics as a lens to think about our contemporary concerns: the essayist and translator Daniel Mendelsohn, Editor-at-Large of the *New York Review of Books*; Italian journalist and classicist Andrea Marcolongo and BBC broadcaster, novelist and classicist, Natalie Haynes. These will be in conversation (remotely) with the Laureate for Irish Fiction, Sebastian Barry, and the *New Yorker* author and editor, Mary Norris.

The Classics*Now* events are being held in partnership with a range of arts organisations, including Literature Ireland, Poetry Ireland, the Italian Cultural Institute, Dublin City Gallery: the Hugh Lane and Junk Ensemble dance company. The programming will combine artists working in different genres and forms in imaginative ways, through public interviews, discussion, film screenings, theatre and dance performances and exhibitions.

Keeping a close eye on plans for easing restrictions regarding public gatherings over the coming weeks, the organisers are creating a festival that will be a hybrid of digital events and 'in-person' events.

Live events include Antigone Now, a staging of excerpts from Sophocles' *Antigone* by director Conall Morrison, followed by a panel discussion on the play's enduring significance to Irish playwrights and theatre-makers. A preview of an exhibition at the Classical Museum in UCD spotlights six contemporary visual artists who are creating new work that responds to the museum's collection.

Classics departments and associations around Ireland are invited to hold their own events for the public, and information on these will be available over the coming weeks. Online events appealing to second and third level students will include self-recordings of key speeches from Greek tragedy, interactive quizzes and a creative focus on translating Greek and Latin into Irish. Hip hop musician and film-maker,

Akala, will introduce a screening of his Aegean journey on the trail of Odysseus, *Akala's Odyssey.*

With funding from the Arts Council of Ireland, Classics*Now* has been developed by a steering committee with representatives from the Classics departments of University College Dublin, Maynooth University, Trinity College Dublin and the Classical Association of Ireland. These are: Dr Alexander Thein (University College Dublin), Dr Maeve O'Brien (Maynooth University) Dr Martine Cuypers (Trinity College) and Seamus O'Sullivan (Chair of the Teachers Branch of the Classical Association of Ireland). They are joined by arts journalist, editor and consultant, Helen Meany, who is the festival's Curator.

* Please note that the programme is designed to be as flexible as possible in the current circumstances, so not all events are finalised yet and some will necessarily be subject to change closer to the time. All information will be updated on the website, www.classicsnow.ie

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Classics *Now* will take place online, in Dublin and beyond from 13-15 November. Full programme information will be available from mid-October on www.classicsnow.ie