

**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN**  
**HONORARY CONFERRING**  
**Friday, 18 March 2022**

TEXT OF THE INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS DELIVERED BY **PROFESSOR REGINA UÍ CHOLLATÁIN** on 18 March 2022, on the occasion of the conferring of the Degree of Doctor of Literature, *honoris causa* on **TRÍONA NÍ DHOMHNAILL**

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Deputy-President, Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Both as a student and professional musician, Tríona Ní Dhomhnaill represents the very essence of UCD's proud and extensive influence on the Irish folk music revival of the 1960s and 1970s. One of Ireland's most beloved Irish singers, she has been acknowledged and appreciated on the world stage for her unique understanding of Irish traditional music, drawing extensive influence from the Donegal song tradition. Her distinctive voice and mastery of the keyboard contributed uniquely to the fiery underpinnings and rhythmic attacks of the Bothy Band. While a student at UCD, studying French and Archaeology, Tríona was first introduced to the vibrant traditional music scene in Dublin, then playing with fellow founding members of the influential Bothy Band, Matt Molloy, Paddy Kennan, Mícheál Ó Domhnaill, Paddy Glackin, and Dónal Lunny. Tríona's unique vocal talents would provide the melodic base of the band's acclaimed and influential sound, profoundly contributing to the contemporary cultural heritage of UCD.

Her vocal influence would in turn contribute significantly to the revival and reinterpretation of Irish traditional music in the 1970s, combining the enduring power of traditional melodies with the musical daring of her contemporaries, altering many approaches to this genre of music in Ireland and abroad.

Tríona Ní Dhomhnaill's extensive musical career in the United States after the disbandment of the Bothy Band, is additionally notable for the promotion of both Irish traditional music and the Irish language to an international audience. Her success is a testament to an enduring musical talent and unique ability to capture the imagination of international audiences.

Although raised in Meath, Tríona Ní Dhomhnaill, has always possessed a respect and deep affection for the Donegal musical tradition of her family. This understanding of the tradition and inherent beauty of Irish folk music is a central component to her musical approach leading her to become one of Ireland's most cherished singer/songwriters. She first rose to prominence during the folk revival of the 1970s as a member of the seminal band, Skara Brae. The group's single album is one of the most influential Irish recordings ever. After Skara Brae's disbandment, she joined the Bothy Band and to this day their recordings are still regarded as the most prominent of the folk music revival of the 1970s with Tríona Ní Dhomhnaill's vocal contribution providing a distinct musical identity and impact. In 1979, she moved to the United States, becoming an accomplished member of the bands Touchstone, Relativity, and Nightnoise. Her international success has been vital in the promotion of the Irish language and culture abroad. She has released two solo albums: *Tríona* (1975) and *The Key's Within* (2010). Alongside her sister, Maighread, Ní Dhomhnaill's 1999 recording, *Idir an Dá Sholas/ Between Two Lights* is considered a career milestone.

As an accomplished composer, musician and singer firmly rooted in her own tradition Tríona Ní Dhomhnaill is a worthy recipient of this Honorary Doctorate on many levels; the influence she continues to wield on Irish traditional music in a national and international context is remarkable. The legacy she has created for an upcoming generation of musicians and composers of traditional music through the medium of English and Irish has opened new opportunities and

plays a significant role in shaping a new vision for traditional musicians. This Doctorate honouring Triona Ní Dhomhnaill's endeavour and commitment also confers a valuable quality to the Creative Arts in the complicated context of the links between art and humanity, a relationship which is growing in importance in the complicated, diverse, and wonderful worlds we share.

## **Gaeilge**

Ó thus a ré mar amhránaí, mar cheoltóir, mar ealaíontóir agus mar chumadóir ceoil den chéad scoth a bhainfeadh cáil idirnáisiúnta amach, léirigh Triona Ní Dhomhnaill féith an dúchais agus tábhacht na hoidhreachta as ar shíolraigh sí ina saothar iomráiteach. Bhí an Ghaeilge lárnach ina lán gnéithe dá saol faoin am sin ach ba thionlacan nádúrtha í an Ghaeilge seachas príomhfócas na cumadóireachta. D'éirigh léi a teanga agus a cultúr dúchais a phósadh i mbealach a lig dá buanna bláthú, agus a ghreamaigh áit tábhachtach di i bpobal na Gaeilge agus na hÉireann mar aon le bheith ina ceannródaí clúiteach ceoil ar stáitse an domhain.

Tháinig a buanna ceoil chun solais sna seachtóidí luatha agus í fós ar scoil nuair a bhí sí féin, a deirfiúr óg Maighread, a deartháir Mícheál, agus Dáithí Sproule as Doire sa ghrúpa ceoil SKARA BRAE. Faoi lipéad Gael Linn a chuir siad an chéad taifead ar an saol agus go dtí an lá atá inniu ann airítear é ar na píosaí ceoil is forásaí agus is tábhachtaí a raibh an tionchar ba shuntasaí air sa ré sin. Tharraing an taifead sin ar thraidisiún saibhir amhránaíochta Dhún na nGall. Lonnaíonn nasc tosaigh an cheoil seo le Gaeltacht Rann na Feirste, na fréamhacha tosaigh i spás eiseamláireach a thrasnaíonn teorainneacha spáis agus áite, a chinntíonn go dtéann a ceol i bhfeidhm ar raon leathan éisteoirí ag iliomad leibhéal.

Tar éis na síolta tosaigh seo lean sí féin agus a deartháir ar aghaidh le tionchar mór acu ar chur le chéile an Bothy Band. Aithnítear suaitheantas an Bothy Band

i dtimpeallacht an cheoil Ghaelaigh agus an cheoil idirnáisiúnta agus sealbhú déanta acu ar réimse ar leith cumadóireachta na ré úd. Tá clú Bothy Band le n-aireachtáil ar iliomad seanraí ceoil in Éirinn i gcónaí agus airítear albaim uile dá chuid mar chlasaicí sna seánraí ar leith traidisiúnta ach go háirithe. Ba den bhunús sin a d’eascair glúin nua ceoltóirí agus cumadóirí a raibh rath as cuimse ag leibhéal domhanda ar a ndúthracht chun ceol dúchais na Gaeilge agus na hÉireann a thabhairt chun solais. Chruthaigh siad dearcadh agus tuiscintí nua ar an cheol, dearcthaí a bheadh deacair a shamhlú i gcomhthéacs nua-aimseartha ag an am.

Ach ba bhóthar iltréitheach, ildánach, ilchultúrtha é an bóthar a thrial Triona Ní Dhomhnaill a chothaigh agus a chruthaigh caidreamh le ceoltóirí agus le hamhránaithe a raibh seasamh domhanda ag a gceol i measc mórealaíontóirí idirnáisiúnta. Thuig sí cumhacht an cheoil mar uirlis saoil agus machnaimh nuair a chan Danny Doyle a píosa cumadóireachta, “Words” i gcomórtas an Amhráin Náisiúnta I 1970 agus foláireamh faoi dhúshláin aeráide mar théama aici. Cuireadh liricí leis an bhfile cáiliúil Michael Davitt leis agus seoladh an t-amhrán ‘Faoileán’ ag Gael Linn i 1975.

I 1979 bhog sí go North Carolina mar a raibh sí ina ball den bhanna ceoil Touchstone. Bhí éileamh uirthi mar threoraí agus mar cheannródaí ildánach do thionscadail a thrasnaigh seánraí éagsúla ceoil agus trasnaíonn a saothar tuiscintí saoil, cultúir agus teanga. Is sampla eile de seo é an Trio Collection a raibh a ceol lárnach ann agus a cuireadh amach ag Dolly Parton, Emmylou Harris agus Linda Ronstadt. Tá amhráin eile dá cuid taifeadta ag an gceoltóir Seapánach Mimori agus cuireadh cuid mhaith dá píosaí cumadóireachta chun tosaigh agus í ina ball de Nightnoise. Bhí Nightnoise ar na díoltóirí ab fhearr de chuid an lipéid Windham Hill. Tá Relativity le deartháireachta Albanacha, Johnny agus Phil

Cunningham agus lena deartháir féin, Mícheál, ar na tionscadail ceoil ilghnéitheacha eile a raibh ról lárnach aici iontu.

Cé gur ghlac sí páirt i dtionscadail chomhoibritheacha, chomhtháite, d'fhán sí dílis i gcónaí dá buanna cruthaitheacha agus ceoil féin agus fréamhacha an dúchais le sonrú go smior sna héachtaí atá bainte amach aici. Tá sé seo le braistint go láidir san albam 'The Key's Within', a chuir sí amach i 2010. Cuireann bronnadh na Dochtúireachta Oinigh seo le duaiseanna gradamacha eile atá bainte amach aici ar na mallaibh, Gradam Cumadóir agus Comharcheoil TG4 2019 ina measc.

Is cumadóir, ceoltóir agus amhránaí Iltréitheach, ilghnéitheach, ilchumasach, fréamhaithe, dúchasach, dílis, agus ildánach í Triona Ní Dhomhnaill agus tá an onóir seo tuillte go mór aici; ní hamháin as an rian saoil atá leagtha aici ar cheol traidisiúnta na tíre seo ag leibhéal domhanda go nuige seo, ach fosta as an oidhreacht atá á leagan aici do ghlúin nua ceoltóirí agus cumadóirí a chuireann go mór le fíis agus le féidearthachtaí sa seánra ceoil seo don todhchaí. Is ábhar mór inspioráide agus spreagtha é tiomantas agus dílseacht Thriona Ní Dhomhnaill dá fréamhacha dúchais agus dá hoidhreacht chultúir agus teanga, a bheireann luach ar leith ar thábhacht na ndaonnachtaí, na n-ealaíontóirí agus na cumadóireachta i gcomhthéacs coimpléascach an dúchais agus an duine.

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Praehonorabilis Pro-Praeses, totaque Universitas,

Praesento vobis hanc meam filiam, quam scio tam moribus quam doctrina habilem et idoneam esse quae admittatur, honoris causa, ad Gradum Doctoratus in Litteris; idque tibi fide mea testor ac spondeo, totique Academiae.