



International Rostrum of Composers 2017: Ireland

Calmly Awaiting the End

Composer: Dave Flynn

Year of composition: 2016

Instrumentation: uilleann pipes and string quartet

Performers – Mick O'Brien (uilleann pipes) and RTÉ Contempo Quartet

Commissioned by Galway City Council and The Galway Music Residency in association with The Galway Sessions for the Éamonn Ceannt Piping Festival.

World Premiere – Sounds Passing Conference, Aula Maxima, NUI Galway

Programme Note – (The composer writes Programme Poems instead of Programme Notes)

Eamonn Ceannt was an Irish republican, who was executed for his role in Ireland's Easter Rising of 1916.

CALMLY AWAITING THE END

Programme Poem written by Dave Flynn 31st May 2016,

100 years and 23 days after Éamonn Ceannt's murder.

Calmly Awaiting the End from his Kilmainham Gaol cell, Éamonn Ceannt of Ballymoe looks back on his brief, shining life. Drones, regulators and chanter sing the soundtrack.

Foremost in his mind, his beloved wife Áine Ní Bhraonáin, an unsung hero herself. Ceannt's mind drifts fondly to June 1905, recalling the hypnotic jigs they danced on their wedding day.

Soon sweet nostalgia gives way to jarring, oppressive thoughts
To the suffering of his fellow Irish,
The relentless repression of their language, culture, beliefs and
livelihoods.

Ceannt's calmness boils to a rage equal to the rage he felt when he realised he
HAD to join the struggle for freedom, to join MacDiarmada's IRB, to plot the
Rising of 1916.

The jigs in his mind change to a revolutionary reel
His thoughts turning to the young men who fought so bravely with their lives to hold the South Dublin Union.

The din of relentless gunfire and bombings fetters the sweet piping music
Cranes cry out as Ceannt recalls Pearse's surrender order. The bitter sapidity of defeat still
freshly sour on his tongue,

The walls are closing in on Ceannt now.

Ceannt's mind turns to the immediate past
Detention at Richmond Barracks,
transfer to Kilmainham Gaol for a pre-determined court martial.

The pipes cry a lament as he recalls his last battle against a military judge
prejudiced with Imperialist spite
He recalls his spirited defence of Ireland's honour,
his defence of his Irish brethren. He recalls General Maxwell's cold judgement.
Death by firing squad
The pipes fall silent....

Back in the present of the past, Ceannt sits in his prison cell calmly awaiting the
end.

A clock ticks relentlessly as he pens his last letter to Áine.

'Dearest Áine, not wife but widow before these lines reach you, I am here without
hope of this world, without fear, calmly awaiting the end. I die a noble death for
Ireland's freedom. Men and women will vie with one another to shake your dear
hand....Tell Ronan to be a good boy and remember Easter 1916 forever.'

The ink not yet dry, Ceannt the hero piper is marched from his cell to calmly await
his fate.

He hears the sound of gunfire one last time. That sound will last for a hundred
years.

Dave Flynn - www.daveflynn.com