



"The lockdown has of course been challenging in some ways but it has also opened up more opportunities to learn. I've been able to make music with people from all over the world who have been missing creating music together. Unfortunately, the joy of playing live in a room together has diminished with the current restrictions but the collaborative element has been great. I've been able to see people bring their music together in really interesting ways". Justin Grounds

In a project supported by Cork County Council / Creative Ireland, Clonakilty-based composer Justin Grounds worked with twenty singers from across the county of Cork, inviting a diverse community of volunteers to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, practically, symbolically and creatively.

Justin Grounds is a classically trained violinist and composer whose recent projects include *Last Dance* with dancer Inma Pavon, and *The Embracing Universe*, a new oratorio performed by a special project choir and seven musicians at Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre for Skibbereen Arts Festival 2019.

Isolation20 will mark a moment in our history and celebrate the unique culture of our community with the composition and performance of new music.

Following a public call out in July 2020, twenty singers (ten men and ten women) came forward to participate in the project which focused on their experience of life in isolation. Following a series of conversations with the participants, Justin then responded to these encounters to create a new musical composition using themes which emerged from the collective and individual experiences of the singers. During the composing process, a WhatsApp group was formed where Justin posted regular videos detailing ideas as the score came together and invited the participants to add their thoughts, their own inspirations, words and responses. In this way, the music reflects the individual voices and experiences of each singer, and the collaboration of the group as a whole, producing a rich polyphonic sound piece which is a lasting testament to the experience of isolation.

Each participant recorded their part through their mobile phone and sent it to Justin, who edited the recordings together to form a whole. Each also has been tasked with taking a 'selfie' to record this moment in time. The collection of 'selfie' images will form a visual feature as part of the sound installation at Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre (9 January to 20 February 2021). The large scale print format portraits of the singers' images will be placed around the walls of the gallery, each with a speaker below it, playing only the voice of the singer pictured. The gallery visitor controls their own experience of the music, electing to walk around the gallery hearing each singer in isolation, or stand in the centre and hear the rich polyphonic harmony in surround sound.



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