



### **An Opera for Carlow**

**1X60' – radio documentary is an Athena Media production for RTÉ lyric fm funded through the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland Sound and Vision scheme. The documentary will be broadcasted on Friday July 1<sup>st</sup> at 7.00pm on RTÉ lyric fm.**



*"I'm fascinated with the process of providing a major musical challenge for singers who come to this project with an open mind and with enthusiasm, even if they have never previously sung in anything like this. There's a richness and character in everybody's voice and our job is to harness this and give it the right environment to allow it flourish".* **Brian Irvine, composer.**

Since April 2010 Athena Media, an independent production company led by Helen Shaw, has been following the crafting of 'An Opera for Carlow'. The radio project, for RTÉ lyric fm, is supported by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland's Sound & Vision Scheme, and has allowed radio listeners, nationally, to follow the journey from idea to performance.

This newly crafted opera, titled **'Shelter me from the Rain'** will be performed on **May 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> at the George Bernard Shaw**, a new state of the art theatre in Carlow. It is created with the collaboration and voices of the people of Carlow and surrounding areas, the young voices of Aspiro Choir and the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra.

Each month on RTÉ lyric's morning programme '**In Tempo**', which is presented by Paul Herriott and produced by Celia Donoghue, Athena Media has tracked the creative stages from auditions to rehearsals, from creative workshops to the writing of the opera itself talking to the creative team led by **conductor and curator Fergus Sheil, composer Brian Irvine and librettist John McIllduff**.

Athena Media has recorded the journey of the local people who have participated in the project and in particular those who will now play solo roles in the production Tony Murray, Nicola Harding and Damian Furlong. The new opera which is about the universal themes of Love and Weather has been supported by both RTÉ lyric fm and the BAI as a public initiative to promote and further community music initiatives. It follows an earlier project called 'Tower Songs', which followed the journey of children and young people in Ballymun, Dublin, who wrote and performed a song cycle to tell the story of regeneration as they see it in their area. This production, for RTÉ lyric fm, won a Gold PPI Radio Award in 2009.

Athena Media will record the final performance of the opera and a full one hour documentary narrating the story of the project and the music will be broadcast during the summer on RTÉ lyric fm. Presenter Paul Herriott will narrate the documentary. **The documentary will be broadcasted on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> July at 7.00pm on RTÉ lyric fm.**

***The radio project is produced by Athena Media's radio team Helen Shaw, Lisa Essuman and Paula Cunniffe.***

All ten episodes of the radio series 'An Opera for Carlow' are available online [www.rte.ie/lyricfm/tempo/1383971.html](http://www.rte.ie/lyricfm/tempo/1383971.html).

All broadcasted audio from the project can also be heard via the following links:

[www.podcastingireland.ie](http://www.podcastingireland.ie)

[www.audioboo.com/carlowopera](http://www.audioboo.com/carlowopera)

and further details on the project and the radio producers is available on [www.athenamedia.ie](http://www.athenamedia.ie)

You can also visit the 'Shelter Me from the Rain' website [www.sheltermefromtherain.ie](http://www.sheltermefromtherain.ie)

And visit them on [Facebook](#)  [Twitter](#) 

*An Athena Media production for RTÉ lyric fm funded through the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland Sound and Vision funding scheme 2010.*

**Contact Lisa on 01 4885850 for further information**

