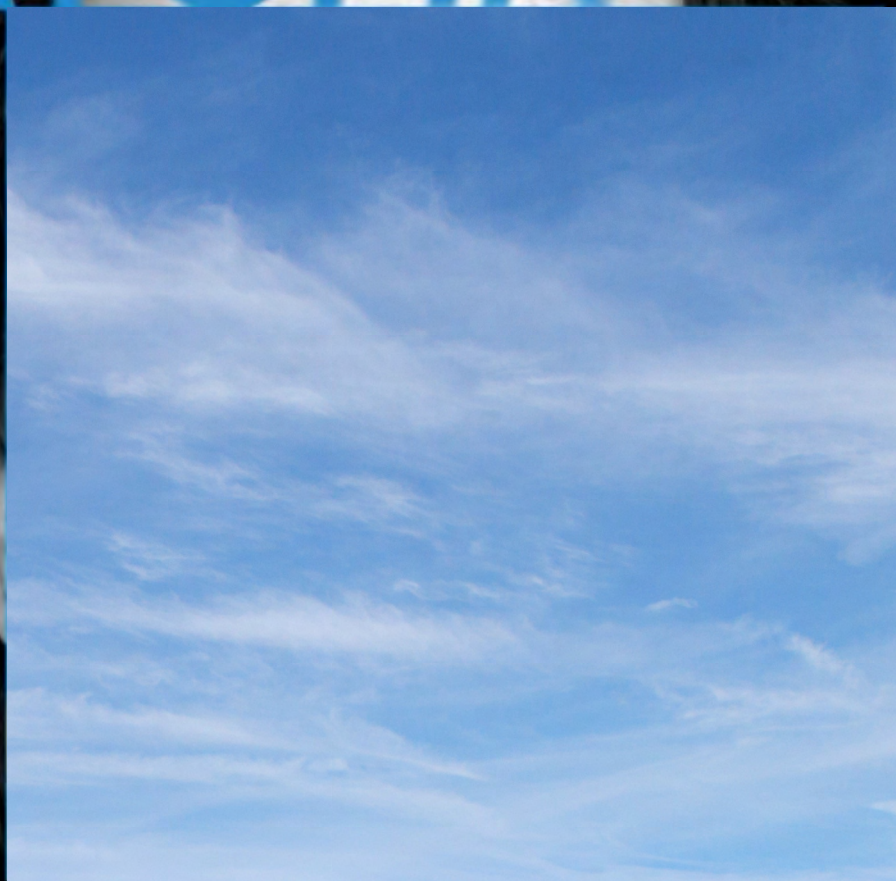


*The Royal Irish Academy of Music
in association with the National Film School at IADT presents*

DREAM CATCHER



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in association with the National Film School at IADT*

DREAM CATCHER

*An Opera by Kevin O'Connell
to a libretto by Lily Akerman*

DIRECTOR: *Hélène Montague, John Comiskey*

WRITER: *Kevin O'Connell (composer), Lily Akerman (libretto)*

CAST: *Megan O'Neill, Hannah O'Brien*

COUNTRY: *Ireland*

LANGUAGE: *English*

DURATION: *50 mins*

A woman with long, wavy blonde hair, wearing a white lace-trimmed dress, stands in a dimly lit bathroom. She is looking into a large, arched mirror. The mirror reflects her face and the interior of the bathroom, including a towel rack with a green towel and a toilet. The lighting is soft and focused on the mirror and the woman's face.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

The opera takes place in an intermediate world between mundane reality and fantasy, where sisters Jane and Polly attempt to understand one another and the virtual world that technology has created for all of us. Alternately comical, bizarre and disturbing DreamCatchr explores the borders between dreams and waking life, sisterhood and selfhood. Featuring an all-female student cast from RIAM Dublin and filmed by students from the National Film School at IADT during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021.

FULL SYNOPSIS

The opera deals with the relationship between two sisters, Jane and Polly, who live together in an apartment. Jane works in IT as a coder creating computer software. Polly works in Real Estate. Jane has become addicted to technology and social media and is obsessed with developing a computer application to capture her dreams – DreamCatchr – little by little she creates her own pixelated reality which Polly can't enter.

The opera takes place in an intermediate world between mundane reality and fantasy, as the characters attempt to understand one another and the different world that technology has created for all of us. Alternately comical, bizarre and disturbing DreamCatchr explores the borders between dreams and waking life, sisterhood and selfhood.

A blue-tinted portrait of Kevin O'Connell, a man with glasses and a beard, looking slightly to the side. The image is partially obscured by a white diagonal line.

COMPOSER

Kevin O'Connell

Since his first BBC commission at age 25 (*Concertino for 12 Players*) Kevin O'Connell has completed a continuous succession of commissions including four operas and numerous chamber and orchestral works. His music has been played around the world.

His first opera *Sensational!* was commissioned by Opera Theatre Company and toured Ireland and Britain. *The Fire King* was commissioned with funding from British Telecom and had runs at the Playhouse Derry and Malibu Theatre, Los Angeles. *My Love, My Umbrella* (also OTC) toured Ireland, England and Germany in 1997-98.

His orchestral work *North*, commissioned by BBC Radio 3, is possibly the most performed modern Irish orchestral work. Other commissions followed including *Four Orchestral Pieces* (2007), *Symphony* (2011) and *Early Music* (2015). In 2001 his massive String Quartet was premiered by the Lotus Quartet of Stuttgart. Other significant works include Cello Sonata (Raphael Wallfisch), Piano Trio no. 1, and *Apollo and Marsyas* (Crash Ensemble).

Recent premieres include Piano Trio no. 2 for the Kungsbacka Piano Trio, *Mass* and *Aifreann* for the Palestrina Choir, Horn Trio for Kirkos Ensemble, *A Battuta* for HardRain Ensemble and *Carrickfergus* for the Ulster Orchestra, and *Measures and Inventions* for piano (Tiffany Qiu).

In 2023 he completed his Dante triptych, a cycle of works for baritone and chamber orchestra based on the *Paradiso*.

A CD of O'Connell's orchestral music with the NSO appeared in 2014 as Vol. 8 of the Lyric FM label's Composers of Ireland series.

Kevin O'Connell is a member of Aosdána, Ireland's academy of creative artists.

A blue-tinted portrait of Lily Akerman, a woman with dark hair, smiling. The image is partially obscured by a white diagonal line.

LIBRETTO

Lily Akerman

Lily Akerman is from New York. She has written several opera libretti, including *Off-Court*, performed in the Princeton One-Act Opera Project, and *The House Trilogy*, commissioned by Cork Opera House as part of Cork Midsummer Festival (nominated for Best Opera by the Irish Times). As a playwright, her recent work includes *The Commons* (59E59) and *Hedgehog Years* (Playing-On-Air). She was a winner of Playing-On-Air's 2018 James Stevenson Prize, a finalist for the Leah Ryan Prize, a recipient of the Rita Goldberg Play Award, and a Fulbright awardee. She is currently a fellow at Juilliard's Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program.

A blue-tinted portrait of John Comiskey, a man with a full beard and mustache, looking slightly to the side. The image is partially obscured by a diagonal white line.

DIRECTOR

John Comiskey

John Comiskey has worked extensively in film, television, theatre and music.

Film and television directing credits include the award-winning dance drama *Hit and Run* (Coisceim Dance); *The Bailout* (White Friar Films); *Great Women* (Dublin International Chamber Music Festival); documentaries *I Was the Little Girl* (on German singer Agnes Bernelle) *Behind the Walls* (the history of Ireland's mental asylums, produced by Mary Raftery); *The Wren's Day* (on the Dingle tradition); the original concert film of *Celtic Woman*; and the live transmission of the *Eurovision Song Contest*. He was Associate Director of *Centenary*, RTÉ's commemorative concert for the anniversary of 1916.

Music projects have included *Antarctica* with David Power and Linda Buckley; *Ich Liebe Dich* with Gavin Friday; *The Well* and *The Frost is All Over* with Tony MacMahon.

He has won Best Design at the Irish Theatre Awards (for *Copenhagen*) and has been nominated several times for Best Lighting Design. Recent lighting designs include *Madama Butterfly*, (INO); *Pericles* (The Lir); *Vagabones* (OTC); *Alcina/The Sofa* (RIAM); *Spectre Knight* (WFO).

He curated and designed the first ever Irish participation at the Prague Quadrennial exhibition of world theatre design in 2007.

A blue-tinted portrait of Hélène Montague, a woman with short dark hair, looking directly at the camera. The image is partially obscured by a diagonal white line.

DIRECTOR

Hélène Montague

Hélène Montague LTCL FTCL was born in Stockholm and moved to West Cork where she was educated at home with music as her first subject. Both her parents danced with the Royal Swedish Ballet, and she studied dance and theatre from an early age. Moving to Dublin at age 16, she studied piano with Dorothy Stokes and composition with James Wilson at the Royal Irish Academy of Music.

She is a founder member of Rough Magic Theatre Company and has worked with them as an actor, musician, musical director, and voice director.

She works as a freelance actor and musician for theatre, radio, TV, and film.

In theatre, Hélène's notable roles include premieres of *I Can't Get Started* by Declan Hughes, *Tea and Sex and Shakespeare* by Tom Kilroy, *Trojan Women* by Brendan Kennelly, New productions of *Lady Windermere's Fan* by Oscar Wilde, and *Play, Come and Go*, and *Catastrophe* in the first Beckett Festival in the Gate Theatre.

In November/December 2021 she appeared as Music Director in *All the Angels* by Nick Drake for Rough Magic Theatre Company in Smock Alley Theatre.

She is a freelance director for opera and theatre.

Opera direction includes productions of Verdi's *La Traviata*, Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Barber's *A Hand of Bridge*, Wolf Ferrari's *Susanna's Secret*, and Offenbach's *Route 66*, all for Glashule Opera in the Pavillion Theatre. In 2019 she directed an Opera Brief for RIAM in collaboration with The Lir - *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola di Alcina* by Francesca Caccini - which was staged in the Peacock Theatre and Freemasons' Hall.

In July 2022, she was director and dramaturg on the premier production of *Slow Recognition*, composed by David Bremner for Béal Festival. She co-directed (with John Comiskey) the film of Gráinne Mulvey's *Great Women* for Dublin International Chamber Music Festival. She directed the premiere of Gráinne Mulvey's SCAM in the Dock with Elizabeth Hilliard in November 2022. In April 2023 she directed the premiere of Ailís Ní Ríain's *Refuse to be Wrecked* in the Richmond Barracks and a staging of Gráinne Mulvey's *Great Irish Women* as part of New Music Dublin, also with Elizabeth Hilliard.

CONDUCTOR

Andrew Synnott



Dr Andrew Synnott is a conductor and composer based in Dublin. He has conducted for the National Symphony Orchestra, RTE Concert Orchestra, Irish National Opera, RIAM Opera, Wexford Festival Opera and Chamber Choir Ireland.

Andrew has written 6 operas and is the only living Irish composer to have had an opera performed on the main stage of Wexford festival opera.

PRODUCER

Kathleen Tynan



Kathleen Tynan is Head of Vocal Studies and Opera at RIAM, where her role includes developing and writing vocal degrees, the programming and artistic production of operas for RIAM Opera and the development of song recital programmes with international collaborators.

Kathleen has produced more than 30 operas for RIAM since 2007 showcasing the emerging vocal talents of a generation of Irish singers. In addition she has developed collaborative partnerships with Design for Stage and Screen at IADT and with The Lir in the design and production of operas in theatres and site-specific locations throughout Dublin. She has programmed an eclectic repertoire including the Irish premières of works by baroque composers, specially commissioned operas, innovative programmes of short chamber operas (Opera Briefs) and operas by women composers alongside more standard repertoire. The challenges of presenting live performance during 2020/21 inspired her to produce her first opera for film, *DreamCatchr*, in collaboration with the National Film School at IADT.

Kathleen has worked closely with the award-winning broadcaster and song accompanist Iain Burnside to develop collaborative song recital projects for RIAM in collaboration with the Julliard School, New York and The Guildhall School, London. The most recent RIAM song project, *Open Your Eyes And Tell Me What You See*, curated by Iain Burnside as an artistic response to the climate crisis, toured by ferry and train from Dublin to London, Paris and Salzburg with musicians from RIAM, the Paris Conservatoire, Guildhall School and Salzburg Mozarteum in November 2022.

In June 2023 Kathleen curated a concert and a series of pop-up performances by women composers in response to *LAVINIA FONTANA: TRAILBLAZER RULE BREAKER* for the National Gallery of Ireland, having previously curated a song recital programme in response to the *Sorolla: Spanish Master of Light* exhibition, for RIAM in partnership with the National Gallery of Ireland. In July 2023 she represented the AEC (Association of European Conservatoires) in Strasbourg at 'Professional Seminars for Gender Equality in the Music Sector in Europe'.

Plans for RIAM Opera in 2023-24 include the opera film première of *DreamCatchr* (Kevin O'Connell + Lily Akerman); the première of *Spirits Unsundered* (Stephen McNeff + Aoife Spillane-Hinks) in a site-specific production at Kilmainham Gaol in collaboration with Then This Theatre and the OPW; and productions of *Cendrillon* (Pauline Viardot) and *Postcard from Morocco* (Dominic Argento) at the Project Arts Centre in collaboration with IADT.



DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

(LOCATION)

Ciarán Tanham

FEATURE FILMS

Penance	DeFacto films (Cinema Feature)
House of Shadows	Interlina Films
A Kiss For Ged	Ignition Films (Cinema Feature)
Bloom*	Odyssey Films (Cinema Feature)
Bobbies Girl	Paramount Pictures USA
Majella McGintey	Hells Kitchen Prod (Short)
Borstal Boy	Hells Kitchen (Cinema Feature)
The Breakfast	Hells Kitchen Prod (Short)
Sun Moon and The Stars (Cinema Feature)	

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D.O.P/ Operator

TV DRAMA

Red Rock (2017/18)	10 x 60 Mins	Series D.O.P.
Into The Badlands (2018)	(AMC)	S/fxUnit & D.O.P.
Love Hate	RTE 6 x 60 min	D.O.P/Operator
Jack Taylor	ZDF Germany 1 x 90 min	D.O.P
Raw (2012/ 13)	Ecoss Films 6 x 60 min	D.O.P
Three Wise Women	RHI 1 x 90 min	D.O.P
Gift of the Magi	Hallmark USA 1 x 90 min	D.O.P
Whistleblower	RTE 1 1 x 90 min	D.O .P/ Operator
Northanger Abbey Jane Austin*	ITV Productions	D.O.P
Sherlock Holmes	BBC 1 x 90 min	D.O.P
Feather Boy	BBC London 1 x 90 min	D.O.P/ Operator

* Nominated for IFTA Award for cinematography



LIGHTING DIRECTOR

(STUDIO)

Andrew Leonard

Andrew’s career in lighting began in Player’s Theatre in TCD in the mid-1970s, where he spent most of his undergraduate life (at the expense of other academic interests!). From there he joined RTÉ in 1976 as a lighting operator, gaining invaluable experience in TV lighting.

After just three years in RTÉ, he was persuaded by Rupert Murray to leave in 1979 and set up a fledgling independent lighting company, providing lighting design and equipment hire to theatre, fashion, corporate and the rapidly exploding concert market. Andrew’ credits in those early years included concerts and tours with U2, Clannad, Moving Hearts, and numerous visiting artists such as Tom Waits, Luciano Pavarotti, Jose Carreras, and Placido Domingo.

In 1995 Andrew lit the first production of ‘Riverdance-The Show’ in the Point Theatre and with the emergence of independent TV production he lit numerous outside broadcasts and TV shows for RTÉ, TG4 and the US PBS network. He has lit the visits of five US Presidents to Ireland, the visit of Queen Elizabeth in 2011, and that of Pope Francis in 2018.

His most recent work includes *La Traviata* at Bord Gais Energy Theatre 2022, the Rose of Tralee Festival 2023, Glor Tire for TG4, the GAA All Stars Awards, the Entrepreneur of the Year Awards and numerous chat shows and panel shows for Virgin TV.

He has no intention of hanging up his light meter just yet as he enjoys lighting shows, large and small, now as much as ever.



SOPRANO

Megan O'Neill

Megan O'Neill is a soprano from County Kerry. She is currently studying with Prof. Mary Brennan and Dr Andrew Synnott and is in third year of the Doctor in Music Performance Degree at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. She completed her BMus Degree in Maynooth University in 2018 and graduated with a First Class-Honours Degree. In August 2020, she completed the Masters in Music Performance Degree at the RIAM, where she also received a First Class-Honours. Most recently, Megan played the titular role of *Cinderella*, an opera by Alma Deutscher, at Wexford Festival Opera as part of the Wexford Factory programme.

In the 2022 Feis Ceoil, Megan was the winner of the German Government Cup and the prestigious Gervase Elwes Memorial Cup. She was also awarded the 2022 RDS Music Bursary of €15,000. Megan played the role of 'Teen polar bear' in *The Scorched Earth Trilogy*, a street art opera by Brian Irvine and John McIlduff, which was produced by Irish National Opera and Dumbworld Production Company in March 2022. She played the role of Signora Avoglio in *All the Angels* by Nick Drake, which took place in the Everyman Theatre, Cork, and Smock Alley, Dublin, from October 2021 to December 2021.

SOPRANO

Hannah O'Brien

Irish soprano Hannah O'Brien currently studies with Elizabeth Ritchie, having recently completed a Postgraduate Diploma at the Royal Northern College of Music. She previously studied at The Royal Irish Academy of Music. This year, Hannah will sing Pamina in *The Magic Flute* for Clonter Opera and is excited for her second season as a Wexford Factory Artist and to perform as Elvira in *L'italiana in Algeri*, Nella in *Gianni Schicchi*, and Tatiana in *L'Aube rouge* by Camille Erlanger. In May, Hannah gave a recital for the Italian Institute of Culture, Dublin in conjunction with WFO.

Previous operatic roles include Mary Crawford (*Mansfield Park* by Dove), Griselda (*Cinderella* by Alma Deutscher), and for RIAM Opera, Il Destino/Linfea (*La Calisto* by Cavalli), and Nance Farrell (*Banished* by Stephen McNeff). In competition success, Hannah recently reached the final rounds of the International Hans Gabor Belvedere Singing Competition, was awarded the Song Prize at the Glenarm Festival of Voice 2022, and placed 2nd in the Dramatic Cup and Lieder Prize at ESB Feis Ceoil.



CREATIVE TEAM

COMPOSER: *Kevin O'Connell*

LIBRETTO: *Lily Akerman*

DIRECTORS: *Hélène Montague and John Comiskey*

CONDUCTOR: *Andrew Synnott*

PRODUCER: *Kathleen Tynan*

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY (Location): *Ciarán Tanham*

LIGHTING DIRECTOR (Studio): *Andrew Leonard*

EDITOR: *Paul Heary*

SCORE AUDIO REALISATION: *Jonathan Nangle*

SET, COSTUME & MAKE-UP DESIGN: *Students from Design for Stage & Screen at IADT*

LOCATION & STUDIO RECORDING: *Students from the National Film School at IADT*

SOUND EDITOR: *Mariana Von Seckendorff*

SOUND DESIGN: *Mariana Von Seckendorff, Lance Hogan*

RE-RECORDING MIXER: *Lance Hogan*

CAST:

JANE: *Megan O'Neill*

POLLY: *Hannah O'Brien*

DREAMCATCHR CHORUS (some also played small roles as indicted below)

Orlaith Mulholland

Rachel Murphy

Cerys MacAllister (Boss)

Louise Florence

Eilis Fox

Niamh Sheehy (Spoon)

Ellen Kelly (Canteen Waitress)

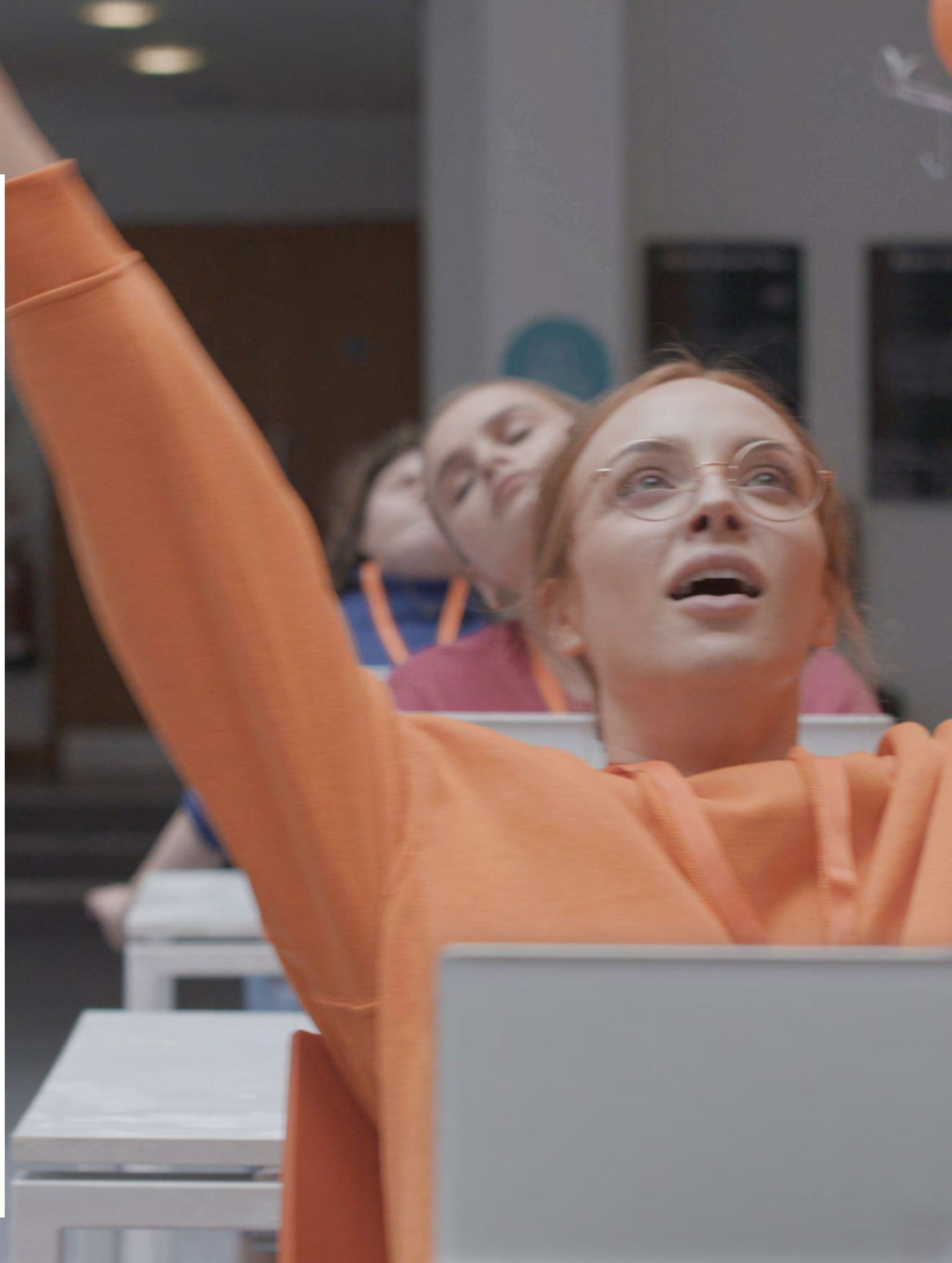
Laura Aherne

Sophie Bellamy

Orla Bruce

Anna-Maria Husca

Stephanie Kinsella





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