

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a vibrant red, draped dress and a matching necklace, is captured in a dynamic pose. She is looking off to the side with an expressive face, her right arm extended forward. The background is dark, with a textured, red, crystalline structure visible behind her.

Welcome to NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY

necmusic.edu

Department of Contemporary Musical Arts
presents

Aoife O'Donovan

Artist-in-Residence

Prodigal Daughter—Americana Revisited

Produced by
Eden MacAdam-Somer with Lautaro Mantilla and Anthony Coleman

Wednesday, February 15, 2023
7:30 p.m.
NEC's Jordan Hall

PROGRAM

Aoife O'Donovan

The King of All Birds

Aoife O'Donovan, voice, electric guitar

CMA Chamber Ensemble

Itay Dayan, bass clarinet

Aiden Coleman, trombone

Carson McHaney, Hannah O'Brien, violin

Katie Purcell, viola

Karl Henry, cello

Jamie Eliot, electric bass

Carles Pereira Romero, drums

Eden MacAdam-Somer, director

Emily Mitchell

Dawn

Emily Mitchell, voice, guitar

Clayton Hancock, violin

Crooked Still

Text by Wendell Berry

The Peace of Wild Things/Dayblind

Serena Bixby, voice

Kaitlyn Knudsvig, violin

Karl Henry, cello

G Korth-Rockwell, banjo

Jamie Eliot, double bass

Aoife O'Donovan

Jupiter

Delfina Cheb Terrab, voice
Solomon Caldwell, double bass
Carles Pereira Romero, drums

**Donovan Woods
Aoife O'Donovan**

Iowa

Kaia Berman Peters, voice, accordion
G Korth-Rockwell, voice, guitar

Edward Sun
arr. Edward Sun, Kevin Crawley

All On Me

Edward Sun, voice, guitar
Emily Mitchell, voice, electric guitar
Mitsuru Yonezaki, Caroline Smoak, violin
Kevin Crawley, Phillip Rawlinson, viola
Giulia Haible, cello
Jamie Eliot, double bass

Traditional American

Lulu Gal

CMA Bluegrass Ensemble
Sarah Matsushima, voice
Carson McHaney, violin
Thatcher Harrison, guitar,
voice G Korth-Rockwell, banjo
Giulia Haible, cello, voice
Jamie Eliot, double bass
Greg Liszt, director

Giulia Haible

Alive

Giulia Haible, voice, piano
Kaitlyn Knudsvig, violin, voice
Karl Henry, cello, voice

Woody Guthrie/Grant Beale

This Land is Your Land

Roman Barten Sherman, voice
Michele Zimmerman, violin
Yoon Kim, ajaeng
Avi Randall, viola
Karl Henry, cello
Solomon Caldwell, double bass
Jiangcheng Jeff Guan, woodblock

Avi Randall

Time Flies By

Avi Randall, voice, mountain dulcimer
Tejas Nair, esraj

Aoife O'Donovan
arr. Jeremy Kittel

Bull Frogs Croon Suite

Night Fishing
Darkness
Valentine

Aoife O'Donovan, voice, guitar
Carson McHaney, violin
G Korth-Rockwell, mandolin
Katie Purcell, viola
Solomon Caldwell, double bass

GRAMMY Award-winning artist **Aoife O'Donovan** operates in a thrilling musical world beyond genre. Deemed “a vocalist of unerring instinct” by the *New York Times*, she has released three critically-acclaimed and boundary-blurring solo albums including her most recent record, 2022's boldly orchestrated and literarily crafted *Age Of Apathy*. Recorded and written over the course of Winter and Spring 2021 with acclaimed producer Joe Henry, *Age Of Apathy* is “stunning” (*Rolling Stone*) and “taps into the propulsion of prime Joni Mitchell” (*Pitchfork*). *Age of Apathy* is nominated for multiple awards, including a GRAMMY nomination for Best Folk Album and two GRAMMY nominations for *Prodigal Daughter* featuring Allison Russell. Elsewhere, the song *B61* was awarded 2022 Song Of The Year by Folk Alliance International.

A savvy and generous collaborator, Aoife is one third of the group I'm With Her with bandmates Sara Watkins and Sarah Jarosz. The trio's debut album *See You Around* was hailed as “willfully open-hearted” by NPR Music. I'm With Her earned an Americana Music Association Award in 2019 for Duo/Group of the Year, and a GRAMMY-award in 2020 for Best American Roots Song.

O'Donovan spent the preceding decade as co-founder and front woman of the string band, Crooked Still and is the featured vocalist on The Goat Rodeo Sessions - the group with Yo-Yo Ma, Stuart Duncan, Edgar Meyer, and Chris Thile. She has appeared as a featured vocalist with over a dozen symphonies including the National Symphony Orchestra, written for Alison Krauss, performed with jazz trumpeter Dave Douglas, and spent a decade as a regular contributor to the radio variety shows “Live From Here” and “A Prairie Home Companion.”

Donovan *The King of All Birds*

Look out, look out
Here I come now, fists out
I'm a fighter bird
I'm a Harrier hawk, a wild flock
I keep time by the city clock
When the moon is steady, I'll find you
I'm not lucky and I'm not scared
There could be goldmine anywhere

Anyone that I might want in this world
They're asleep in the arms of another girl
Who will they be when the lights come up?
Everyone that I ever loved in my life
Now calls somebody else their wife
Who am I to you?

(The text continues on the following page. Please turn the page quietly.)

Get up, get up
Get it together and climb on up
To the top of the tree
I'm an owl now, a lonely owl
Who, who, where, what, why, when?
How the hell did I get this far without you
Pull my feathers one by one
Put 'em in your pocket when I'm gone

Anyone that I might want in this world
They're asleep in the arms of another girl
Who will they be when the lights come up?
Everyone that I ever loved in my life
Now calls somebody else their wife
Who am I to you?

Who am I to you? Am I just anyone?
Am I the only one?
Who am I to you? Am I just anyone?
Am I the only one?

Come on, come on
Put me back together, let me soldier on
I'm the King of it all
I'm a little wren, I'm happiest when
I hitch a ride on the wing of a friend
Looking down on everything then
When the road gets weary love
Remember who I'm dreaming of

Mitchell *Dawn*

This song is about turning from brokenness and coming into the light with full confidence in the grace and love of the Father.

Soarin' away
I'm in pieces yet
Unafraid of my brokenness
Carryin' on
To the sunlit morn
Where the dawn will reveal
All the tears of the night

I'm gonna fall
I'm gonna fall

Turn from it all
Down on my knees, I'll fall

Surely now
In the light of the morn
The sound of Your voice is bright
Dark is as day
Love has cast out
Every fear of my brokenness

I'm gonna fall
I'm gonna fall
Turn from it all
Down on my knees, I'll fall

Your loving hand, it leads as a Father
I'm washed in the water
On the bank of the river
And I'm falling
Into Your arms
Can You carry me?

I'm gonna walk
I'm gonna walk
Give You my
all I'm gonna
walk With You

Crooked Still *The Peace of Wild Things/Dayblind*

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Wendell Berry

O'Donovan *Jupiter*

Write me a letter
Write it by hand
Tell me everything you wanna do before the end
I think we'll make it another seventy years
At a hundred and one the only color we'll see is clear

This future's blacker than a black hole
And I know it's hard to get a read on when's the right time to
fold If you keep on keeping on and keep your eyes fixed on the
road You'll make it, oh

'Til we are star stuff
Steady in a coal mine sky
Wherever you go I go
I hit Jupiter and hang a right
It's a slow ride, it's a slow ride

Earth's shifting
Temperatures rise
But I'll never forget the way your skin tastes in July
It tastes like peaches, tastes like firelight
When the park stops burning we can saddle up our bikes

If this city
Should underwater go
I will gather up sticks and I will build my love a boat
Float down the river - float gently down the stream
Pinch me til I bleed, I want to see how hard I'm dreaming

O'Donovan *Iowa*

I am waiting for this book to get good
I do not have your patience
So I'm driving up to Chicago
I'm getting weird looks at gas stations

I did not bring a winter coat
I do not have your foresight
A holistic practitioner told me once
It's why I will not live a long life

I am trying to remember where I gave up
If it was not in Iowa

Iowa
Somewhere in the middle of the middle of the Great Plains I saw
A little girl waving her hand out of the window of a car
Saying goodbye to her ma

Iowa
Where the tall grass prairie used to ripple like the ocean in the breeze
And the hummingbirds still suckled from the flowers in the trees
It'd bring you to your knees

I can imagine my whole life
Sweet and never-ending
In every house I float by
But they'd never let me blend in

I called a taxi in Des Moines
I met him at the corner
When I asked about his army coat
He said he would not tell a foreigner

I am waiting for this book to get good
And you won't meet me halfway
So I'm driving up to Chicago
I am sorry to keep you waiting

Sun *All On Me*

When one doubts a sacred belief, the dimmest night creeps in - a mighty warrior
puts down their sword and flees your world without leaving anything...similarly,
one's soul may be ripped apart in a relationship, leaving one feeling "like it was all
on me."

Foolish optimism in a deep-end life
Drives a wedge between wrong and right
Now I say a votive prayer
Surrendering to all my failure

Wandering around the forest in the moonlight
resembles a study of beauteous tragic
I'm encased in a fine glaze of ice
While the cold bites deep at the tide

(The text continues on the following page. Please turn the page quietly.)

Just laugh and concede it, my favorite one
You're the splattering rain hitting my world for once
With such force that I put my swords away
But I'm begging you to stay
Entwined in a whiskey haze

A thousand suns shine in a boundless sky
Cut tingling scars in my body and soul alive
Who dares to carry conviction
Now that we are all half broken

Wandering around the forest in the moonlight
resembles a study of beauteous tragic
I tried to hold my secret tight
And bury it out of sight

Just laugh and concede it, my favorite one
You know the ropes - and you bound my heart for once
With such strength that I gave all of me to you
You know I was your man
I was your man

Packed up the baggage, captive to your message
You're under my skin, you possess all my senses
A snowy reverie in this frozen pile of dust
I grow small as I lay down, keep thinking of
All the things you did to me, and I just can't stop wondering
What a mortifying scene
Ending up so silently
Like it was all on me

Wandering around the forest in the moonlight
Resembles a study of beauteous tragic
I throw away all of the memory
Let it float and drift with the tide

Haible *Alive*

I'm always tired when I wake up
And the sun always fails to cheer me up
My friends are happy but they
No longer fill my cup

Why do the seasons feel the same
When I sit around waiting for them to change
I tell myself to stick a-
Round but I'm just going more insane

Take me on a long car ride
To the West Coast ocean side
We can see the changing tides
And feel alive

I don't care if it's a lie
If you don't love me I won't mind
I'm okay with this goodbye
If I can feel alive

Time is a fleeting cloud above
And it moves too fast for the speed of love
Days turn into minutes and they
Can only slow down when we unplug

Take a walk through the wilderness
See that forests are nothing but a beautiful mess
Like a bird I have built a tangled nest
And one day it will fall to the ground to rest

Guthrie *This Land Is Your Land*

Interpreting traditional songs carries with it the burden of confronting the cultural significance that a piece carries. Originally a scathing critique of capitalism, and privatization, *This Land is Your Land*, written by Woody Guthrie in 1940 was shortly after co-opted, propagandized, and sung by schoolchildren across the country with defanged lyrics. It was my goal to reinstate these often forgotten verses in order to highlight their relevance 83 years later. The main theme I interpreted in my reading of Guthrie's lyrics was entropy, a decay of possibility, and opportunity, which I was taught in school were guiding principles of the American experiment. I interpreted this entropic process through two principles of physics, the second law of thermodynamics, and the Poincaré recurrence theorem, I interpreted these mathematical principles through Xenakis' stochastic performance practices and vocabulary creating emergent moments of structure which rise organically from the choices of the performers.

- Grant Beale

As I went walking that ribbon of highway
I saw above me that endless skyway,
I saw below me that golden valley,
This land was made for you and me.

I roamed and I rambled, and I followed my footsteps
To the sparking sands of her diamond deserts,
All around me a voice was sounding,
This land was made for you and me.

In the square of the city, in the shadow of the
steeple, By the relief office I saw my people,
As they stood there hungry,
I stood there whistling,
This land was made for you and me.

Was a big high wall there that tried to stop me,
Was a great big sign that said, "Private Property,"
But on the other side, it didn't say nothing,
That side was made for you and me.

(This verse is attributed to Pete Seeger)
Maybe you've been working as hard as you're able,
But you've just got crumbs from the rich man's table,
And maybe you're thinking, was it truth or fable,
That this land was made for you and me.

This land is your land, This land is my land,
From California to the New York Island,
From the Redwood Forest to the Gulf Stream waters,
This land was made for you and me.

Randall *Time Flies By*

i walked into his room
deep in his work discovering life
he said that he'd change the world
one day at a time but time will fly by

i sat with him and looked at his notes
and looked at his face filled with wonder
he said that he'd found the key
a way to slow time when time flies by

on the table alone in a glass bowl
there was a small animal
it looked up at us with a look in its eye
and told us our time that time will fly by

i said please come out of this room
your friends miss you your family does too
you've studied for so long alone
aren't you concerned that time will fly by?

he said his animal can speak
but not with his words he's learning so much
yet his pet shows signs of a sadness
the sadness of time of time that flies by

and all alone in its glass bowl
the creature curled up and cried
it's lost from its home it misses his friends
it knows that their time oh their time will fly by

the days turned to months turned to years and
everyone he knew moved away or died he
only knew his own little life
he didn't seem to care when their time flew by

his only friend was locked in that bowl
a friend who was trapped and had no choice
a friend who grew old alone with nothing to
do as his time flew by

one day i found a letter
from my long lost friend
it said that he'd gone to travel the stars
to find his friend a new home to live

he said he'd never come back to earth
for everyone he knew is long dead
he said that his friend is all he has left
he'll live with his guilt
till his time has long gone

O'Donovan *Bull Frogs Croon Suite*

Night Fishing

The water is a glaze
Like loneliness at ease with itself
I cast and close my eyes for the whirl out across the
water The line striking the surface
And sinking

I like waiting
For it to settle on the bottom
Then I jig it up a little
I imagine
The lure in utter dark
I play it lightly. Fish rise
Just shy of the surface
They play their glints
Off the moon on the water
I see too my own loneliness

It's not too big
And it breathes easily
Soon, it may pretend it's rain
Soon, it may pretend it's rain

Rain blurs the water
There is nothing wrong
With rain
I take a deep breath and I cast
And cast

The Darkness

Say you are out for a walk
And somewhere through the trees
You walk out of everything in your head

Or off by a window in thought
And what you look out to
A crease of trees perhaps you don't see at all
But what you are thinking there in the trees

As you open like this through a window

Or walk and walk into a gazing
Then say darkness falls

Darkness farther back than the cave you felt into
Farther back than violence to animals

Darkness farther back than water you dove into
Hands in front of your face
To feel your way down and know
This darkness did not begin did not gather

Then something backing off it seems as you come
in Re-renters you and crosses you over
The sleep of the living and the dead

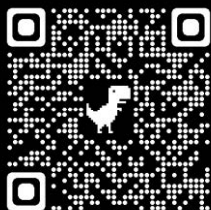
Valentine

Big frogs croak
Baby frogs slither;
I'd rather go broke
Than not be with her

Bull frogs croon
Slugs wiggle wider;
I'd live in ruin
To lie down beside her

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