



Ultan O'Brien & Nic Gareiss

Fiddler, violist, and composer Ultan O'Brien (Slow Moving Clouds) and percussive dancer Nic Gareiss (This is How we Fly) perform a set of new collaborations exploring space, time, and texture in Irish traditional music and percussive dance. Ultan and Nic create sound and movement at the nexus of sight, sound, and touch, puckishly exploring what fiddle music and step dance reveal about both predetermined and extemporaneous composition. By engaging mimetically: fiddle, fiddler, and fiddling, dance, dancer, and dancing, the duo reimagines the erotic symbiosis of traditional music and dance through historic repertoire and new encounter via the mediums of sound and gesture.

Ultan & Nic met in 2012 while performing at the Solas Arts Festival as collaborators of Gaelic singer and broadcaster Mary Ann Kennedy. After witnessing one another's work in a muddy field that summer in Scotland, the pair continued to look for opportunities to be in dialogue in sound and motion. Despite very different geographic backgrounds (Ultan from Ennis, Co. Clare and Nic from Michigan, USA), it became clear early on that Ultan & Nic shared many ideas about the profundities and possibilities of fiddle and dance; as praxis, as pleasure, as performance, as partnership. They collaborated on as co-facilitators of the 2017 Leitrim Dance Project residency at The Dock Arts Center and in 2019, Nic invited Ultan to spend a week in duo development as part of his First Footing residency at the Traditional Dance Forum of Scotland, School of Scottish Studies, and Moray House School of Education at the University of Edinburgh. In June of 2019, the duo premiered a short set as part of the Kaleidoscope Night chamber music series in Dublin.

Ultan O'Brien & Nic Gareiss' 2022 residency and performance at the Firkin Crane resumes the duo's decade-long commitment to discovering and deepening a lexicon of collaboration which, among other revelations, reconsiders movers as soundmakers and recasts fiddlers as dancers, not only as a means to highlight these respective practices and repertoires, but ultimately to center rapport.

