



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Gregynog Festival commission to receive its Irish premiere performance on 2 December, documentary screening 6 December**

**“Freakshow”**, commissioned from Sam Perkin by the Gregynog Festival as part of its 2016 *Éire* season, is to receive its **Irish premiere** performance on Friday evening, 2 December 2016, at 7.30pm.

The score will be heard during the opening concert of the **Fidelio Trio’s Winter Chamber Music Festival**, presented in association with Music at DCU and GlasDrum, in the intimate, 18<sup>th</sup>-century setting of Belvedere House on St Patrick’s Campus, Dublin City University, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.

Dr Rhian Davies, Artistic Director of the **Gregynog Festival**, said: “Gregynog is the oldest classical music festival in Wales and has a long and distinguished tradition of composer commissions and first performances dating back to Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst in the 1930s.

“As part of Wales and Ireland’s national commemorations of the centenary of the Easter Rising, we have collaborated with Welsh Government’s *Cymru’n Cofio* Wales Remembers 1914-1918 to create a sequence of events highlighting the forgotten narrative of the prison camp at Fron-goch near Bala, where 1,800 Irish rebels were detained from June to December 1916.

“Music, drama and talks about the Rising were included in the Gregynog Festival programme last June, and the centrepiece was the world premiere performance of **“Freakshow”** by Sam Perkin, a new piano trio that we were delighted to commission for the Fidelio Trio during the same season in which they were shortlisted for the prestigious RPS Award for best chamber ensemble.”

Sam Perkin added: ““*Freakshow*” is inspired by the research of Welsh journalist and broadcaster Lyn Ebenezer, whose book *Fron-Goch Camp 1916* explains how the camp became known as the ‘University of Revolution’ because leading figures such as Michael Collins were imprisoned there.

“One anecdote in particular fired my imagination: the story of the Circus of Rats which acts as a portal to the absurd world of this macabre Suite. One of the prisoners at Fron-goch used to go to great lengths to catch these rats and to put on a show for his fellow inmates. From an oblique compositional perspective and through a macabre lens, I decided to write a set of miniatures dedicated to the stars of the “*Freakshow*”. Building on themes of captivity and spectacle, the seven movements in the work explore seven different stories, including *The Two-Headed Nightingale* and *The Armless Fiddler*.

“I’m delighted that the score will be heard in Ireland before the end of this year of commemoration, and that the world and Irish premiere performances will have taken place in June and December 2016, mirroring the period when Fron-goch Camp operated a century ago.”

Sam Perkin has also edited a **mini-documentary** about the making of “*Freakshow*” which will receive its premiere screening at the **National Museum of Ireland**, Collins Barracks, Benburb Street, Dublin 7, on **Tuesday 6 December at 12 noon**. The screening forms part of the launch event for a series of new 1916 exhibitions for the Digital Repository of Ireland's *Inspiring Ireland* project, in collaboration with the National Museum of Ireland, National Library of Ireland and the People’s Collection Wales.

-ENDS-

**For further information and to arrange press and media interviews, please contact:**

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**Sam and Rhian are both available in Dublin from 1-7 December.**

## **Notes to the Editor**

**Sam Perkin** ([samperkincomposer.com](http://samperkincomposer.com)) is an Irish composer who has written for leading orchestras, ensembles and soloists such as The Irish Chamber Orchestra, The Vanbrugh Quartet, The Fidelio Trio and Finghin Collins. The extent to which Sam likes to explore the boundless possibilities of music can be seen in his recent compositions for Orchestra with Sign Language (*Dreaming in Sign Language* - 2014), Strings with Body Percussion (*Inspirit* - 2013), and Orchestra with Whale Sounds (*Orca for Orchestra* - 2015). [Full bio available from website - [samperkincomposer.com](http://samperkincomposer.com) / The Contemporary Music Centre - [www.cmc.ie](http://www.cmc.ie)]

*"The piece I most want to hear again is Perkin's; the composer's playful, teasing writing got fully under the skin."* Michael Dervan - Irish Times

**Gregynog Festival** ([gregynogfestival.org](http://gregynogfestival.org)) is a lottery-funded project for the Arts Council of Wales, a Signature Event of the Major Events Unit, Welsh Government (Visit Wales), and the only Welsh member of REMA, the European Early Music Network based at Versailles. It has also received funding for the 2016 season from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and *Cymru'n Cofio* Wales Remembers 1914-1918.

Founded by Gwendoline and Margaret Davies at their home Gregynog Hall, near Newtown in Mid Wales in 1933, Gregynog Festival is Wales' oldest classical music festival. Granddaughters of the industrialist, entrepreneur and politician, David Davies, the sisters became philanthropists travelling throughout Europe and passionate about art and music, who bequeathed over 260 artworks to National Museum Cardiff, where many are now displayed.

Gregynog Festival attracts visitors from all over the world into Wales as well as having a social and economic impact on the local community through its investment in concerts, workshops, talks and community outreach projects.

The programme for **Gregynog Festival 2016: Éire** (16-26 June 2016) included the drama *Rebel, Rebel*, directed by Louise Lowe for ANU Productions; Chamber Choir Ireland, conducted by Paul Hillier, in a programme featuring the British premiere of *A Half Darkness* by Aoife Mannix and Stephen McNeff; a talk by Lyn Ebenezer about Fron-goch; and the world premiere performance of Sam Perkin's "*Freakshow*" by the Fidelio Trio.

***Cymru'n Cofio* Wales Remembers 1914-1918** ([walesremembers.org](http://walesremembers.org)) is the official programme to mark the centenary of the First World War in Wales. It's a focal point for information on the latest news, projects, events and signposting of information for the commemoration from 2014 to 2018.

The Programme is coordinated by the Welsh Government, working in partnership with organisations from across Wales and beyond.