

# Paul Scully (b. 1993) is a **composer**.

His work utilises both acoustic and electronic instruments and in recent years has expanded to include elements of theatre and performance art including video and lighting, as well as gestural elements and acting. Much of his work is site-specific and considers the full gamut of an audiences' experience.

His recent works *Will we Give it a Bash?* and *Everything's Left That's Worth Defence* – both premiered in 2022 – seek to subvert the assumptions of the audience through playful, humorous, and often chaotic means. Considering Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of 'carnival' and his understanding of dialogue, Scully's subversive work attempts to exist *on the boundaries* of dialogue rather than *within* and therefore is ever-evolving depending on the context in which it is performed. Most notably, *Will We Give it a Bash?* is a kind of lecture-recital that begins with the presumption that the composer is merely introducing a piece (which they never get around to actually performing). The piece is written such that what happens in each performance will be dependent on the audiences knowledge of the work and their expectations – always seeking to subvert these.

His works *Line of Sight* (2020) and *Virtual Reality Therapy* (2020) are concerned with the postdigital, examining the interplay between the digital and the physical worlds. In these works, performers are asked to explore, adapt, and juggle with demanding physical and digital spaces that are created for the piece. Scully uses speech and language in his music as well as other aforementioned extra-musical elements, which he describes himself as 'expanded composition'. That is, pertaining to an extension or expansion of composition rather than a transposition of music composition into another field.

He studied at Trinity College Dublin, graduating in 2016 with a BA (Hons.) in Music. In 2021 he graduated from IADT with a PGDip in Cultural Event Management (with distinction). He has had composition lessons with Andrew Hamilton, Kevin O'Connell, Tansy Davies, Nicola LeFanu, and Jonathan Nangle.

In 2021, he received the Arts Council's Agility Award to develop a live version of his piece *Virtual Reality Therapy* which involves the tuning and repairing of an upright piano to create a hybrid electroacoustic microtonal instrument.

In 2022, he received the Arts Council's Bursary award to develop his practice, particularly focusing on a new, ambitious, large-scale work which involves the composer running to a venue in time for his entry on the piano, but the ensemble have already started playing.

He is supported as an emerging composer for 2022-2023 by the Contemporary Music Centre, Ireland.

He is the general manager of the experimental music ensemble Kirkos and runs their venue and artist space, Unit 44, in Stoneybatter, Dublin. [www.kirkosensemble.com](http://www.kirkosensemble.com)

He is currently thinking about: carnivalesque and dialogue (Bakhtin), 'potential music', expanded composition, turning compositions into video pieces and/or installations, and running faster than he has ever ran before.





“This piece is not a possible object of knowledge – because it is not an object at all, not an entity or set of entities. It is that within which entities appear, a field, a horizon, that sets the conditions for any intra-worldly relation. And so, it is not analysable in terms of any such relation.”

## Will we Give it a Bash (2022)

Performance



video: <https://youtu.be/oqrAlfzOkK0>

### Themes/ideas:

non-duality,  
expanded composition,  
world disclosure,  
subversion

### Instrumentation:

clarinets, actor,  
harmonium, video,  
electronics, light

Commissioned by  
Dublin Sound Lab  
and first performed  
in Music Current  
festival April 2022

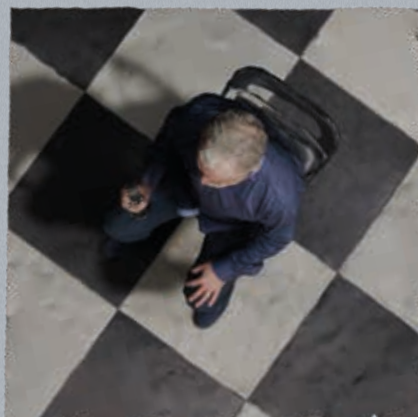
Paul Scully- Actor/electronics  
Paul Roe - Clarinets

*“This was a great piece to herald the start of the festival: it was theatrical, self-reflexive, multimedia, and fun, even if the fine grain of the composition seemed less carefully wrought than the overall thrust was.”*

Journal of Music

*Will We Give it a Bash?* is a kind of lecture recital piece with a twist. It is a humorous, playful, and self-reflexive piece that attempts to subvert the audiences' expectations of what a concert performance should be. The nature of the piece means it is difficult to describe without spoiling its effect, it is recommended to watch the video before reading on.

The performance begins with the scene set for a piece for clarinet and electronics to be performed, with the composer coming on stage to make an introduction. After describing his process and talking about the various electronic elements involved in the work, the performer and composer decide to demonstrate how the computer elements work. This is followed by ‘the beginning’ of the performance which is quickly interrupted by the composer who then continues to talk instead. After 15 minutes, some twists and turns and revelations along the way, it becomes clear that the ‘piece’ as it were is never going to start (or had been going the whole time) and that there were hints and references to this along the way.





## Everything's Left That's Worth Defence (2022)

Walking tour, expanded composition

*Now's here's a proof of Irish sense*

*Here Irish wit is seen*

*When nothing's left that's worth defence*

*We build a Magazine*



*Everything's Left That's Worth Defence* was a response to the Magazine Fort site in Dublin's Phoenix Park. The Magazine Fort is a disused bastion fort on top of St Thomas' Hill in the Phoenix Park that is not open to the public. The performance led the audience on a walk around the perimeter of this star-shaped fort, taking the format of a walking tour but with surprising musical and theatrical elements along the way. Using audience plants as well as actors and performers moving positions out of sight of the audience, the walk was staged such that there was a new surprise around each corner.

This piece takes colonial architecture as metaphor for unstable local narratives and histories and engages with sound as an invisible material surrounding the fort. It was a collaborative work by Tom Roseingrave, Paul Scully, Jenn Moore, and Yseult Cooper Stockdale. It was co-devised by the group with a text written and performed by Tom, and music by Jenn Moore, Paul Scully and Yseult Cooper Stockdale.



### trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MstuUZfpNyQ>

### Themes/ideas:

invisibilization,  
expanded composition,  
colonialism

### Instrumentation:

tour guide, string  
trio, trumpet, horn,  
speakers, flag  
bearers, cyclist

Commissioned by  
Kirkos and first  
performed in  
September 2022

### Artists:

Jenn Moore  
Tom Roseingrave  
Paul Scully  
Yseult Cooper Stockdale

### Performers:

Tom Roseingrave - Guide  
Andrew Sheeran - Violin  
Eleanor Chapman - Viola  
Yseult Cooper Stockdale - Cello  
Erick Castillo - Trumpet  
Javier Fernández - Horn  
Daranijoh Sanni - Cyclist



### full text:

<https://bit.ly/43jAACT>



## Virtual Reality Therapy (2020)

Performance



**video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHgobBzFb7I>

*“This is superb!”*

Ben Gaunt (YouTube comment)

In *Virtual Reality Therapy*, the performer is required to juggle playing the piano and the melodica while also reading a chaotic text that constantly switches character. The text for this piece was generated by a language model called GPT-2 created by OpenAI. It is trained on 8 billion web pages and generates synthetic text samples in response to an arbitrary input. It adapts to the style and content of the input text. This allows the user to generate realistic and coherent continuations about a topic of their choosing.

I input paragraphs of text on topics like grief, therapy, computers, and areas in which they intersect. The resulting text generated by the AI is spoken by the performer.

This was my first piece engaging with expanded composition and postdigitality and my first time using Max MSP.

A longer, live version of this piece is currently in development which includes lighting and video that is also triggered by the piano, creating an even more chatotic enviroment.

### Themes/ideas:

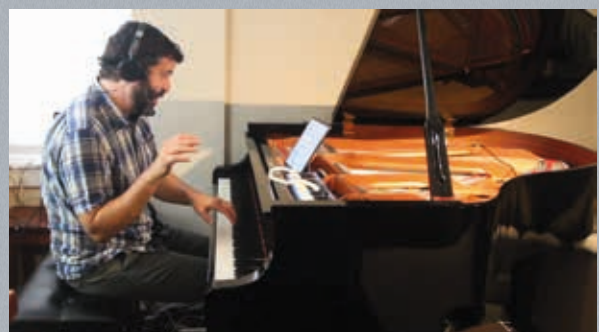
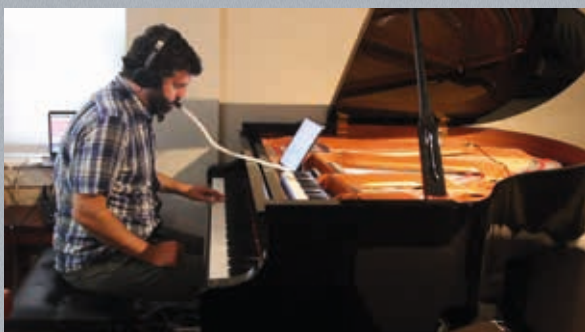
postdigitalism,  
expanded composition  
tion

### Instrumentation:

voice, hybrid  
acoustic and midi  
piano, melodica

Written for Adam  
Marks as part of his  
One Page Pieces  
lockdown project  
supported by the  
Irish Composers'  
Collective

Adam Marks - performer





## Line of Sight (2020)

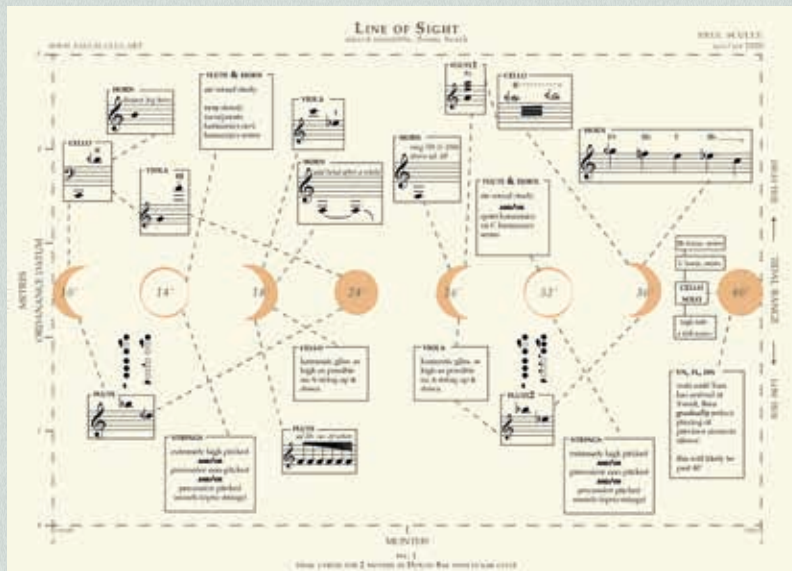
guided walk, zoom call, livestream

*Your car is outside. Unexpected benefit*

*Your car is outside, sir. Unexpected drawback*

*It takes about 12 months for the water of the Irish Sea to be fully renewed by Atlantic Seawater.*

*Sir... your car. Perverse result*



### Themes/ideas:

postdigitalism,  
physical vs digital  
worlds, human  
intervention,  
disorientation of  
spaces/senses

### Instrumentation:

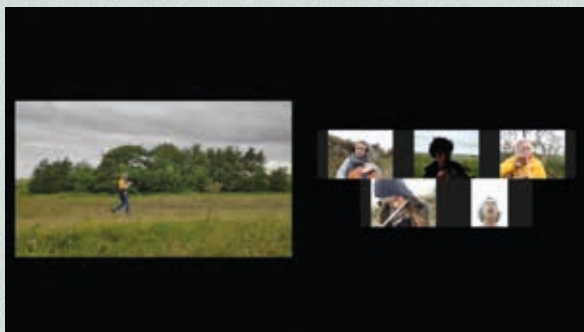
actor, flute, horn,  
viola, cello, zoom  
call

Written for Kirkos  
and first performed  
as part of their  
**Biosphere** festival  
September 2020

Tom Roseingrave - Actor  
Miriam Kaczor - Flute  
Hannah Miller - Horn  
Sebastian Adams - Viola  
Yseult Cooper Stockdale - Cello

Line of Sight was an experimental sound walk in the sand dunes of the North Bull Island Nature Reserve. It shows multiple sonic and visual perspectives on the same space by combining physical and digital worlds. Performer Tom Roseingrave (on Zoom and in person) led an audience in one direction across 1.5kms of sand dunes, guided by a series of striking landmarks, and connecting with stationary instrumentalists along the way. Line of Sight explores the effect we have on the spaces we occupy, the ambiguous and temporary nature of the land we take for granted, the multiple perspectives of physical and digital worlds, and our reimagined relationships through digital spaces during the pandemic.

An Instagram live of the walk and the Zoom call were simultaneously livestreamed due to covid restrictions on audience numbers at the time of the performance.



### excerpts:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViBiZNYK4V8>

### full text:

<https://bit.ly/3o9f1nN>