

Norah Constance Walsh

Filleadh ar an gCathair

for SSA choir

Dur: 3'15

Text: Ailbhe Ní Ghearbhuigh

Filleadh ar an gCathair

Anocht ag filleadh dom,
Blaisim allas na cathrach faram.
Deas liom a taiseacht.

Preabann an Aimsir Láithreach
Gan aire ó gach balla
I mbrothall an tráthnóna.

Admhaím go músclaíonn
Gás sceite
Sceitimíní ionam.

Is fíor nach gcítear
Luí na gréine
I bhfairsing' spéire:

Cacann an oíche
Idir foirgnimh arda
Gan rabhadh;

Ach lasann soilse neon
Cúinní coimhthíocha
Mo chroí.

Faoiseamh a gheobhadsa
Ar mo ghrianán gealaí,
Mo chluas le hamhrán tráchta.

Back to the City

Tonight I'm coming back.
I taste the city's sweat around me,
And it tastes good

The whole thing's present tense,
And heat throbs from its walls
In the late afternoon

I will admit
That I am high on what
The city heaves out of itself.

It's true there's not
The slightest glimpse of sundown
In this wide sky.

The night dives low
Between tall buildings
Without warning.

But neon signs
Light up the strangest corners
Of my heart.

And peace comes dropping slow
On the moonlit window ledge,
My ear lulled to the traffic's song.

Programme Note:

This work is a choral setting of the poem 'Filleadh ar an gCathair' by Irish poet Ailbhe Ní Ghearbhuigh. The poem is both a reflection on certain aspects of city life and a celebration of these; the text is rich in concepts and descriptions that trigger the imagination and engage the senses. I was particularly drawn to the choice of elements that the poet references in conveying the appeal of the city, and how the depictions ring true.

There are two moods to the music of the piece: one of gentle reflection which contemplates some of the attractive aspects of life in the city, and one of constant movement representing the vibrancy, the pulse of the place.

The work was commissioned by Feis Ceoil with support from the University of Notre Dame's Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies to be a set piece for choirs participating in Feis Ceoil 2026.

Performance Notes:

Smile. Sometimes a gentle reflective smile, sometimes excited, with purpose. Keep the energy and vibrancy of the city alive throughout the performance; in the slower sections keep them bubbling beneath the surface. You love this place, let your face show it.

In sections where either the character or the dynamic, or both, change (e.g. bars 22-24, 35-38) aim to capture these changes whilst still keeping the momentum.

There is an optional divisi in bar 57 to be sung should the musical forces allow it.

Filleadh ar an gCathair

Commissioned by Feis Ceoil with support from
the University of Notre Dame's Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies

Ailbhe Ní Ghearbhuigh

Norah Constance Walsh
2025

$\text{♩} = 60$
Reflective
p

Soprano 1

A-nocht ag fill-eadh dom, Blais-im all-as na cath-rach far-am.

mf

Soprano 2

A noch ag fill-eadh dom, Blais-im all-as na cath-rach far-am.

p

Alto

A-nocht ag fill-eadh dom, Blais-im all-as na cath-rach far-am.

$\text{♩} = 90$
Alive

6

Deas liom a tais-eacht. —

Deas liom a tais-eacht. —

p

Deas liom a tais-eacht. — Preab-ann, preab-ann, preab-ann, preab-ann,

11

p

I

mp

Preab-ann an Aim - sir Láith-reach gan ai - re ó gach ball - a

preab-ann, preab-ann, preab-ann, preab-ann, preab-ann,

14

mbroth - all, an Aim - sir Láith-reach, an Aim - sir, an

I mbroth-all an tráth-nó-na.

preab-ann, preab-ann, preab-ann, preab-ann, preab-ann, preab-ann,

17

Aim - sir Láith-reach, go mús-claínn, go

mp Ad-mhaím go mús-claínn

preab-ann, preab-ann, preab-ann, Ad-mhaím mús-claínn,

19

mf mús-claínn ion - am, Gás scei - te,

mf *p* Gás scei - te scei - ti - mí - ní ion - am, go mús-claínn,

mús-claínn, mús-claínn, mús-claínn, mús-claínn, mús-claínn,

21

Gás scei - te scei - ti - mí - ní ion - am.

mf *p* ion - am, go mús-claínn, *mf* ion - am.

mús-claínn, mús-claínn, mús-claínn, mús-claínn, mús-claínn, mús-claínn,

23 $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ (siempre)

mf
Preab-ann, mús-claínn, 'Sfíor nach gcí-tear Luí na gréi-ne

mp
Preab-ann, mús-claínn, 'Sfíor nach gcí-tear Luí na gréi-ne

mf *mp*
Preab-ann, mús-claínn, 'Sfíor nach gcí-tear Luí na gréi-ne

28

p
an oí-che, an

mp
Ca-cann an oí-che

sub. p
Preab-ann, preab-ann, preab-ann, preab-ann, Cac-ann, cac-ann,

31

mf
oí-che id-ir, an oí-che,

mf *p*
i-dir foir-gnimh ar-da Gan rabh-adh, an oí-che,

cac-ann, cac-ann, cac-ann, cac-ann, cac-ann,

34

pp
oí-che id-ir foir-gnimh ar-da, ar-da Gan rabh-adh;

mf *p* *mf* *pp*
ar-da, an oí-che, ar-da Gan rabh-adh;

pp
cac-ann, cac-ann, cac-ann, cac-ann, cac-ann, cac-ann, Gan rabh-adh;