



Newsletter March 2021



Welcome to the first SoloSIRENs newsletter! We are using the inspiration of International Women's Day to launch this initiative to share what we are doing with our supporters near and far.

Since summer of 2020, we have been together on zoom and sometimes on Killiney beach, exploring the myth of Cessair and working towards a staging at the Civic, Tallaght in summer 2021. Cessair is a story with many versions. The bones of it are that a woman in northern African in a time of floods asked her grandfather if she could join his boat to escape. He said no and she was understandably upset, but quickly regrouped and decided to build a boat of her own. She asked 149 friends to bring their skills and energy to the task. They set sail eventually in three boats. Two were lost at sea and one made it to what is now called Ireland. That's a very quick summary!

It's a beautiful story and it asks us to consider how each of us is Cessair. What are our unique gifts and how might we share them with the world? It reminds us that we are each original wonders, only to incarnate in this way once, and also part of vast communities of other wonders who we journey with. We need to be our best "I" and our best "we" simultaneously (cue the SoloSIRENs infinity spiral!) It also reminds us that not everyone gets to have their fullest journey in the world as it is.

We have begun collecting stories of 150 women. They are our own stories, stories of the women we love, stories of women in history and in myth. Our newest member Ibi Akigbogun educated us on the details of the life of Hattie McDaniel. She was the first woman of colour to win an Oscar in 1939. She had to sit at a segregated table at the awards ceremony and she wasn't able to attend an after party when her co-stars chose a "No Blacks" club. We felt deep anger hearing her story. We also reflected that it is easy to criticise other places or times and to overlook our own complicity in injustice. We questioned

when we may have been those co-stars, enjoying a party while oblivious to who is outside the door.

Likely, the form of our performance this summer will have to change. The work itself has made us able for the challenge. As Cessair did, we will regroup and find a path. The process has linked us to women who went before us. Women who fought for the rights we have, knowing they might never have them in their own lifetimes. It has motivated us to think of the world we want for future generations. For the women we may never know who will come after us. We hope to keep learning how to be true co-stars to one another and to our wider community—the kind of stars that allow all the constellations to shine more brightly. Whatever the show ends up being, we hope you will be part of the journey!

Jenny Macdonald, SoloSIRENS Director

Cessair is a SoloSIRENS project in collaboration with Tallaght Community Arts and the Civic, Tallaght

SoloSIRENS Collective

We are very fortunate to work with so many immensely talented women and we would like to take some time in our first newsletter to platform some of our SoloSIRENS Collective. SoloSIRENS Collective is a core group of women living or working in South Dublin County. Our collective was formed in 2019 and since then has expanded and evolved as we continue to work together on exciting projects.

Introducing SoloSIRENS Collective members –
Melody, Sumaira, Aoife and Sailí Áine'



Melody Chadamoyo

Melody is a librarian, author, speaker, relationship coach who loves to learn new things and have fun. She enjoys listening to peoples' stories and finding the connections and strengths of what binds us together. She is on a mission to expand our capacity for self love and growing loving interactions.



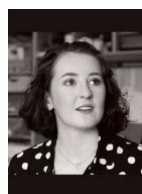
Sumaira Chady

SuMaira is a dancer from Mauritius. She has been dancing since she was 3 years old. SuMaira performed in the SoloSIRENS Collective performance of 'Falling' in 2019 and she fell in love with acting. She hopes to develop her skills and to keep performing in the future.



Aoife Dempsey

Aoife has danced since she was 4 years old. Three years ago, she reconnected with performance on the Active Audience programme led by Jenny Macdonald with Civic Theatre, Tallaght Community



Sailí Áine Ní Mhurchú

Sailí Áine is currently studying drama at TU Dublin. She performed in the Gaiety Theatre in 'The Suppliant Women' DTF 2017. She has taken part in many Tallaght Community

Arts and Liz Roche Company.
This helped Aoife
to rediscover performance
and creativity as an adult.

Arts projects, including Act
Up, The Gaza Monologues
and Unwrapped '20.

Finally, we wanted to share a piece of work created by SoloSIRENs for the Abbey Theatre's 'Dear Ireland III' project in December 2020. This piece is a response to the prompt, 'what does it feel like to be you, right now, in Ireland?'. It features words written by our team and our collective.



Thank you for your interest in and support for SoloSIRENs. More updates soon!

All good wishes until then,
Martha, Jennifer, Jenny and all at SoloSIRENs

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