

DEPARTMENT OF HISPANIC STUDIES
TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

Sister Acts: The Rise, Fall, and Return of
Spain's *monja cantante*

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Wednesday 21 March 2018 - 6 p.m. Arts Building, Room 5085



The trope of the singing nun has had a long and illustrious history in Spanish film, with major stars such as Carmen Sevilla, Sara Montiel, and Rocío Dúrcal taking on such roles repeatedly. While this trope appeared to have died out with the myth of Spain's *bendito atraso*, recent years have seen a dramatic return of the singing nun to Spanish screens and stages, albeit in radically altered form. This talk will contextualise the recent re-emergence of religious women in Spanish cultural production, highlighting the range of different representations of nuns, female mystics, and their spiritual experiences that have proliferated in both theatre and cinema over the past year. This study will in turn allow us to ask key questions about the role of Christian spirituality in contemporary Spanish culture.

Mary Farrelly received her PhD from the University of Manchester in 2017 with a thesis exploring mysticism and aesthetics in spaces of female enclosure in Spanish film and television since the transition to democracy. She is the 2017-2018 AHGBI/WISPS Dorothy Sherman-Severin Research Fellow, working on the project "From Convent to Cabaret: The Spectacle of Feminine Spirituality on the Spanish Stage and Screen". She is currently undertaking a teaching fellowship at University College, Dublin.