[♫ Dreamlike electronic music throughout the following]

Mara Menzies:

It's a very lovely sensation.

Mark Thomas:

I quite like that little moment of falling into sleep.

Mara Menzies:

I think because I have had trouble sleeping in the past with some insomnia, sometimes I have to make a conscious effort to reach that state of drifting away.

Mark Thomas:

I like turning out the light. I look forward to it.

Mara Menzies:

Other times, if I'm so tired, it just happens and I'm out. So I don't recall the process of falling asleep. I just know that I'm awake, now I've got to sleep, and then I was asleep.

Mark Thomas:

I think the move from consciousness into sleep is fairly sudden.

Tawona Sitholé:

From the language of my mother's tongue, dreaming is entering other worlds. Sleeping is going into other worlds. So there's that spiritual aspect to it. And I guess the mechanical part of the mind, not the imaginative one, there is the recurring dream - have I done what I need to do? So it involves now because I'm a parent it's around the kids. Oh, I'm out somewhere. But my kids are not here - I left my kids! [Laughs] Before, it was about other things, about an exam that I haven't prepared for properly.

Cathy Forde:

I do experience recurring dreams. I quite often have a dream where I'm sitting in one of the exam halls at the university and I haven't studied for the exam. I think that's quite a common dream.

Peter Geoghegan:

I'm not somebody who's kind of throughout history had these recurring dreams, beyond I think the kind of recurring dreams that lots of us have. The exam anxiety, I think probably afflicts everyone until the day they die. Where they think that they've missed that business studies exam when they were fifteen and they're going to be sent back to school to repeat it.

Cathy Forde:

Even though I went to university about thirty-five years ago I finished, I still have that dream.

Kirstin Innes:

For the longest time my responsibility dream, or kind of anxiety, panic dream was of losing a hamster and then going downstairs to a basement to find the floor moving, covered in lots and lots and lots of little hamsters, which obviously goes back to when I was about seven.

Isobel McArthur:

I have had a lot of dreams about being attacked by animals. The animals vary. For a while, the animals were like thousands and thousands of mice. The proper adrenaline-fueled, heightened, frightening, my life is under threat kinds of dreams. I'm often in all kinds of different locations and the animals are sometimes huge, genuinely, you know, tigers, all different kinds of animals.

Cathy Forde:

I'm dog phobic, really dog phobic. Like, it's not a joke. And I have terrible dog dreams.

Isobel McArthur:

One really vivid one. I recall there was a dilapidated old house and because it was full of holes and we were in this wild environment, animals would get in and I had to get them out, round the clock, 24 hours a day.

Cathy Forde:

I have dreams about dogs where they start biting and attacking me.

Isobel McArthur:

And I had to fend them off. And for some reason, one of the bits of kit to hand was one of those very, very heavy bottomed mic stands, those big round metal-bottomed mic stands that you screw into. And it was tipping up the mic and trying to get like, now, I'm going to say an armadillo out of this house. The funny thing about dreams is it's not about whether it was an armadillo or it wasn't. It's what my brain thinks is an armadillo. [Laughs] And I just remember arming myself with this, mic stand and trying to shoo the thing out of there.

Cathy Forde:

Yes, I am trying to fight them and they, they get hold of me and they're biting in my hands and I'm trying to get away and trying to get help. And nobody's helping me.

Isobel McArthur:

I'm always alone in the task of having to overcome the, uh, you know, the animal or the animals. Yes. I'm always overwhelmed by it, it always feels impossible.

Cathy Forde:

I hate those dreams where I'm shouting out for help and you end up, you can feel your throat straining in your sleep. And then sometimes I wake myself up because I am actually crying out for help.

Isobel McArthur:

Yeah it's properly frightening. Like if I don't manage it I'll die. It's, it's wake you up scary.

Uma Nada-Rajah:

I think I might remember dreams a bit more. I used to not remember anything. It seems like there's a lot more animal ish imagery. I might have a slight, like fear of birds, beaks, like bird beaks. Where I stay there's robins, robins love coming indoors. They're the most likely to cohabitate with humans. At one point, there was actually two in the living space. Trying to gently coax the robin out became part of the daily routine. Robins did make it into my dream. They were like gently nuzzling, with their beaks, but their beaks, one of their beaks was massive, like a toucan. Big orange arced beak, but it was a robin. I would normally have a big aversion to twenty bird beaks in my face. But this was like an olive branch extension pleasant dream. [Laughs].

Mara Menzies:

Ever since I was a little girl, I have had this dream. It comes and it goes in waves, but it's always, always there. I'm sure it's a dream that lots of people have, and it's the dream where you're flying, but it's like, you're swimming, swimming through air in a breaststroke motion. It's always in this breaststroke motion. It's me, and it's as if I can see myself. Sometimes it's as if I am looking at it through my own eyes, and other times I'm looking at it from the outside. Often I fly over forests. Because I've grown up both in Kenya and in Scotland, the trees are all very mixed. Oak trees in amongst baobabs. I kind of created it just by imagining and sort of fusing these two worlds together. I always thought maybe that sort of dream would disappear, but it never did it. It still happens even, you know, decades later. How it has changed is that the reason for this kind of flying through the air is different. It might be that I'm leaving something. Or sometimes there's something, or a place that I want to go to. So there is, I suppose, a sense of purpose. They're always really positive dreams. Even if it's something that I'm trying to get away from there still isn't a sense of fear or anything. It's just time to fly. And so I go.

MJ McCarthy:

Thank you for listening to episode one of The Dream Frequencies. Contributors to this episode were, in order of appearance: Mara Menzies, Mark Thomas, Tawona Sitholé, Cathy Forde, Peter Geoghegan, Kirstin Innes, Isobel McArthur and Uma Nada-Rajah. The Dream Frequencies is part of the Creative Community, Irish theatre in Scotland series, a Traverse Theatre partnership with the Consulate General of Ireland Edinburgh. The Traverse is a registered Scottish charity number SC002368, and is funded by Creative Scotland and the City of Edinburgh Council, with additional support from the Scottish Government Performing Arts Venue Relief Fund.