As a Grade 8 pianist, Catherine Jordan became fascinated by the impact of music on an individual’s brain during her undergraduate studies at the National University of Ireland, Galway. A passion to explore the neural benefits of learning a musical instrument has driven her research to date. Musical practice places heavy demands on cognitive abilities, engaging various brain regions in a coordinated manner and resulting in sustained anatomical and functional brain changes. In her research, Jordan explores how playing a musical instrument can protect cognitive abilities in old age and whether differences in memory result from musical expertise.

As an Atlantic Fellow at GBHI, Jordan will pursue the relationship between musical expertise and the development of dementia, as well as the mechanisms underpinning this association. She also hopes to shed light on the use of music therapy as a potential treatment for dementia. She believes that music has the potential not only to offer support to individuals suffering from dementia, but also to influence the development of the disease.
Bio: Catherine Jordan, an experimental psychologist, completed her BA in psychology at National University of Ireland, Galway. She holds an MSc in human cognitive neuropsychology and a PhD in psychology from the University of Edinburgh.