



Photography: Martin Gaffney ©

## Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, Letterkenny 2006

**Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann organised by the Letterkenny branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann returned to Letterkenny for the second year running from August 20-27, 2006. Over 100,000 visitors travelled to the North West throughout the week long festival to enjoy the All-Ireland championships and music sessions and to take part in the carnival atmosphere that enveloped the town.**

The competition venues included An Grianán, St Eunan's College and The Letterkenny Institute of Technology where defending champions Naomh Phádraig, Co Meath won the exciting senior Céili Band Championship on Sunday night.

The Fleadh festival commenced with Seachtain na Gaeilge and Scoil Éigse, the Comhaltas summer school and continued through the week with concerts, céilithe, parades, pageants and street sessions and a presentation to Internationally renowned Fiddle player Antóin Mac Gabhann who was selected as 'Ard-Ollamh' or 'Chief Bard by Comhaltas for his lifetime dedication to traditional Irish music.

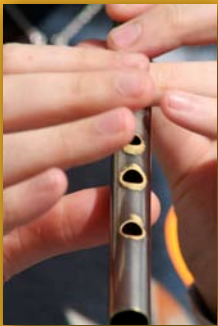
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On Saturday night, RTÉ broadcast 'Ceilí House' live from the Gig rig including performances by renowned Donegal fiddler's Tommy Peoples and Mairead Ní Maonaigh and Flute player Marcus Ó Murchú who celebrated the launch of his new CD 'Turas Ceoil'.

Now an annual event, the first All-Ireland Fleadh was first held in Mullingar in 1951, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann aimed to make this a national event and first presented the title 'Fleadh Cheoil' (Festival of music) at its inaugural meeting in September 1951.

For more than 50 years, county and provincial fleadhanna have found their place in the traditional music calendar. Today there are fleadhanna and branches of Comhaltas abroad in Britain, the US, Australia, Canada, Japan, France, Luxemburg and Hungary

Through the countless Comhaltas volunteers at community level all down the years and the thriving Fleadh Cheoil culture, thousands of musicians of all ages, carry on the great tradition of playing and cherishing Irish music, song, dance and language.



Today Comhaltas is now on the threshold of a new dawn. With finance provided by Government, the new development programme which builds on the solid foundation of the hard work of past generations is implemented back into the community to support the work of the many volunteers who carry on the tradition and to ensure that our traditional culture is available to all citizens.

Ar aghaidh leis an gceoil!

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