

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2007 Tullamore



6 year old Blaithin Kennedy from Nenagh at the opening of Fleadh (Photo: Nutan/Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann)

The All Ireland Fleadh Cheoil 2007 took place in Tullamore Co Offaly from August 20 to 26. According to Fleadh Chairperson Attracta Brady, *"there was a great sense of vibrancy, enthusiasm and passion on the streets, in the various venues and at the competitions over the weekend"*. The Chairperson, the Fleadh committee, the Town and County Council's and local services including the Gardaí and 400 strong army of volunteers have all received extensive praise for the success of the event.



The week began with Scoil Eipse which was attended by up to 1,000 students in classes and workshops. There were events throughout the week including lectures, exhibitions, concerts and of course multiple sessions. The Árd Ollamh Gala Dinner took place on the Wednesday night at the Tuylamore Court Hotel and following in the footsteps of Micheál Ó Súilleabháin, Charlie Lennon and Tomás ÓCanainn, the Ard-Ollamh this year was Micheál Ó hEidhin, the architect of many Comhaltas education programmes. One of the highlights of the Fleadh this year was the innovative World Record attempt for the Largest Irish Traditional Music session which was set on the Friday night of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann when 2,700 musicians performed together in Tullamore.



Tullamore proved a colourful and attractive Fleadh venue, in particular with the 'Float to the Fleadh' initiative which was organised by the Offaly Branch of the Inland Waterways and was praised by Tánaiste and Minister for Finance Brian Cowan TD. The many boats on the Grand Canal added to the atmosphere throughout the Fleadh.



The All Ireland competitions took center stages on Saturday and Sunday with competitors ranging in age from eight to the eldest in his seventies. The standard of excellence across all competitions was widely regarded as the highest ever. Winners came from all of the major regions represented by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann including; Sorchadha Costello, CCÉ, An Tulach, An Clár who won the under 12 fiddle and Banba Fitzgerald, Dublin, who won the under 12 Uilleann pipes. North American competitor Siobhán McKinney from the Detroit IMA, Crotty Doran Branch, became the Under 15 Harp champion, while Damien Mullane, of CCÉ, West London won the senior fiddle title. Winners too from Northern Ireland with Buíon Cheoil Cáirdín, St Brigids, Jonesborough, Ard Mhacha winning the senior Accordion Band competition.

The Fleadh closed on Sunday evening with the All Ireland Senior Ceilí Band competition which was held in the Church of the Assumption.

Master of Ceremonies, Pádraig Ó Ceallaigh thanked Monsignor Seán Heaney and the Parish for allowing the competition to take place in the Church. Buíon Cheoil Céilí Allow from Craobh Chrónán, Cork took the title with Buíon Cheoil Céilí Innisfree, from the Fred Finn branch in Sligo in second place. Speaking at the Fleadh media lunch, Comhaltas Ardstiúrthóir, Labhrás Ó Murchú said *"it would be the surprise of the century if the Fleadh Cheoil did not return to Tullamore in August 2008"*.

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