



THE LIVING TRADITION

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AN NUACHT - 46

Athbliain faoi mhaise. We can approach 2023 with increased confidence having had a very successful Comhaltas year in 2022. It was great to see our 1,500 classes up and running again with thousands of young people having the opportunity to embrace Irish cultural traditions at community level. **Maith sibh go léir, tá an náisiún go mór faoi chomaoin agaibh.** Well done, the nation owes you a debt of gratitude.

The big story of 2022 was the amazing Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Mullingar. This was a truly significant morale boost, not just for Comhaltas but also for the nation and the Irish diaspora. The people of Westmeath did us proud, míle buíochas. It followed the exceptional feat by County Boards and Provincial Councils to get all 32 County Fleadhanna, 4 Provincial Fleadhanna in Ireland, together with all Fleadhanna abroad over the line.

Tarraingíonn scéal scéal eile. One story attracts another story. Comhaltas has hundreds of good news stories at home and abroad as we start to leave the covid-era somewhat behind. Many of these achievements are chronicled in our TREOIR magazine which now has many thousands of readers in Ireland and worldwide. **An té ag a mbíonn an toil bíonn an tslí.** Where there's a will there's a way might well have been the moto of thousands of volunteers who overcame adversity with activity!

THE VOLUNTEER At the heart of Comhaltas is the volunteer. They are the ones who make it possible at grassroots level with sessions, concerts, classes and other events. They are the dreamers and the doers. Their monumental service is enhanced by the support of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and the Department of Foreign Affairs. **Ní neart go teacht le chéile.** There is no strength till getting it together.

FLEADH 2023 Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann returns to Mullingar in 2023 on the 6th – 14th August. This will be a tumultuous encore of the 2022 performance when over 500,000 people assembled in this Midlands town for the cultural renaissance which is this great gathering of the Gael.

The 2023 Fleadh will again be preceded by the long-running Scoil Éigse under the directorship of Kieran Hanrahan, with his top team of tutors who are household names in the world of Irish culture. See TREOIR for details. Contact eolas@comhaltas.ie.

FLEADH 2024

The venue for Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2024 will be decided at the March meeting of the Ardchomhairle. There are two very impressive applicants – Belfast and Wexford. We thank them for their interest and wish them well in the future.

FLEADH NUA

This multifaceted gathering of the Gael, which has been entertaining thousands of fans for over 40 years, will again be en fete on the 27th May – 5th June. See TREOIR for details or contact frank@ceoltrad.com.

THE 'WREN' SOARS HIGH

TEARS AND LAUGHTER AS THE 'WREN' SOARS HIGH. Over 40 branches of Comhaltas throughout Ireland – and abroad! – resuscitated the 'wren' in 2022. On St. Stephen's Day, hundreds of musicians, singers and dancers took to the highways and byeways bringing joy and traditional entertainment to thousands of people in their homes, pubs, nursing homes and on the streets.

As they travelled through the community, dressed in their colourful and varied outfits wearing an assortment of 'aghaidh fidils', they were welcomed with open doors and hearts. The older people wept with joy as they recounted their 'wren' experiences in days gone by – shades of Jimín Mháire Thaidhg in our school days! Those in nursing homes had tales of nostalgia while those in pubs shared in the fun and there were many impromptu sessions.

The reports from the wren boys and girls reaching the Cultúrlann are a testimony as to how the ancient customs of the past – like 'Hunting the Wren' on St. Stephen's Day – still find favour in the modern fast-moving world. See TREOIR for full details.

Philadelphia and South Wales who also resuscitated the 'Wren' deserve honourable mention. Needless to say, the wren is alive and well! All participants have vowed that, le cúnamh Dé, they will be back bigger and better in 2023.

[Molann an gníomh é féin.](#) The deed praises itself.

TTCT 2023

The TTCT Teachers Diploma Course will be held at Cultúrlann na hÉireann on the 23rd – 29th July. Over 850 teachers have qualified to date. The new Director of the course Majella Bartley and her excellent team were delighted with the 2022 course following the covid disruption. You can contact Majella at majella@comhaltas.ie

THE DRAW

The national Comhaltas Draw is a good way to top up the branch fund with no outlay or risk involved. The branch retains 100% of income. It is totally underwritten by the Ardchomhairle. Why not contact siobhan@comhaltas.ie

**A VISIT
TO THE
CULTÚRLANN?**

Did your branch consider an outing to the Cultúrlann? It can be a day or overnight visit. Local musicians will join your musicians for an unforgettable experience. Picture a rousing music session at a big open fire. **Is leath den fhéile fáilte chaoin.** Half of hospitality is a warm welcome! Contact bernard@comhaltas.ie

**TIONÓL
LEO ROWSOME**

Each year at TIONÓL LEO ROWSOME we remember and salute the 'King of the Pipers' Leo Rowsome, a founding member of Comhaltas. It is held at Cultúrlann na hÉireann and the dates this year are the 1st and 2nd September. The annual GRADAM AN CHOMHALTAIS will be awarded to Ena Doocey who for over 40 years has been the volunteer photographer of Comhaltas. **Is buaine bladh ná beatha.** Fame is more enduring than life.

COMHDHÁIL

The Annual Congress of Comhaltas will be held at Cultúrlann na hÉireann on the 6th/7th May, 2023. Delegates from Ireland and abroad will assemble to assess progress and plan for the future.

**GRADAM
NA hÉIGSE**

This is a new special award – certificate and medallion – for those who have made a significant contribution to the cultural life of the nation. It can be a teacher, writer, composer, or some such person. For more information contact eolas@comhaltas.ie. Branches are welcome to nominate an appropriate recipient/s.

**CULTURAL
CENTRES**

Our 7 Regional Resource Centres and 11 outreach centres provide essential services of a varied nature to the organisation and community in their areas. These amenities cover the whole island of Ireland. They will play a significant role in the new ATHNUACHAN AR AN RÓD SEO ROMHAINN programme of Comhaltas.

MEITHEAL

This is an unique concept of Comhaltas which covers the whole island of Ireland. There are 7 Meitheal Teams mirroring the 7 Regional Resource Centres. It is project driven.

SEANAD 100

The centenary of Seanad Éireann was commemorated in the Dáil Chamber on the 12th December 2022. All current and surviving former Senators were in attendance. The assembly was addressed by An Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD.

Comhaltas was asked to provide a harpist and uilleann piper for the historic occasion, Mary Kelly and Eamonn Walsh were selected.

The event was presided over by the Cathaoirleach Mark Daly who paid tribute to Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann on the contribution they had made to the cultural life of the nation over the last 70 years. He said that history was also made at the Seanad 100 on the 12th December as it was the first time that music had been played at a session of the Oireachtas.

AWARDS

Tom Doorley has been selected as Ard-Ollamh for Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2023 in Mullingar. Tom is a much-acclaimed musician, music teacher and conductor/composer of the Comhaltas National Folk Orchestra of Ireland.

Bardic Awards will be presented to Joe Connaire, Fleadh Cathaoirleach and music teacher; Pamela Schweblin, uilleann piper, Argentina; Dr. Daithí Kearney, musician and lecturer; Martin Gaffney, music teacher and graphic designer; Tommy Doherty, Scoil Éigse tutor; and harpist Gráinne Hambly.

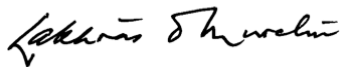
THE DIASPORA

The Irish Diaspora will be feted at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann next August. It will provide an opportunity to acknowledge and salute those of Irish extraction who have been to the fore in promoting Ireland's cultural identity globally.

Comhaltas now has operations in 18 countries worldwide. For more information, contact our Diaspora Officer at brendan@dunuladh.ie.

Sin an scéal go dtí seo. This is an ongoing story and we will keep you up to date with any new developments. We will let you know when the 6 RTÉ television programmes from Fleadh 22 will be screened. In the meantime, keep up the good work. [Tá beocht sa dóchas](#). Hope gives life.

Slán go fóill.



Labhrás Ó Murchú
Ardstiúrthóir CCÉ