



THE LIVING TRADITION

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**PLEASE SPREAD
THE NEWS!**

AN NUACHT - 49

2023 has been a very good year for Comhaltas. There was a feast of music, song, dance and Irish language. It was like a wonderful reawakening after the long hibernation of Covid. Just reflect on 600,000 Fleadh fans in Mullingar at one of the greatest Fleadhanna in its 72 year history with 15,000 performers and generating over €60 million for the region. In Ireland, all 32 County Fleadhanna and 4 provincial Fleadhanna got over the line with several international Fleadhanna. All of this was just the tip of the iceberg – the vast community – based cultural programme. Maith sibh go léir tá an náisiún go mór faoi chomaoin agaibh. The nation is indebted to the 50,000 volunteers who make it all happen.

A SEVEN YEAR MISSION

It was fitting and timely that the new Comhaltas **PROSPECTUS**, *Connecting Communities Through Our Culture 2023-2030*, was launched during the Fleadh. Iar-Uachtarán na hÉireann Mary McAleese performed the launch with style and panache (see her address in the current issue of Treoir). Like the founders of Comhaltas in 1951, the **PROSPECTUS** sets out our vision for the next seven years with many milestones to guide us on this exciting journey. *Go n-éirí an bóthar linn agus go raibh Rath Dé ar an obair. **Mary McAleese said: 'Comhaltas knows our Irish cultural heritage intimately, like no other organisation.'***

This well-grounded comprehensive seven year cultural programme has the potential to be one of the most important cultural initiatives in the history of the State.

A WORLDWIDE LINK

The Comhaltas journal TREOIR Uimhir 3 2023 is now in circulation. This bumper issue of 112 pages is full of news, views, seasonal offerings, music, songs, poetry, personalities, Fleadh results and much more. This is an important link in the global Comhaltas network, with Comhaltas operations in 22 countries. Le TREOIR castar na daoine ar a chéile. **HAVE YOU GOT YOUR COPY?**

FROM FLEADH TO FLEADH

With Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2022 and 2023 Mullingar has set the bar high. Who will ever forget the uplifting experience for 600,000 fans?

Now Wexford, with a history immortalised in song, are well started on the Fleadh journey for 2024.

There are two applications for Fleadh 2025, Belfast and Wexford. The Ardchomhairle will make the decision in March 2024.

AISTEAR 2030

This is a programme to introduce Comhaltas and the new PROSPECTUS to the general public. In the first instance, AISTEAR 2030 will be initiated by the seven Regional Resource Centres, these are in Cashel, Gurteen, Ennis, Mullingar, Clontarf, Dundalk and Omagh and are supported by 12 outreach cultural centres.

AISTEAR 2030 will have –

- **2 Concerts**
- **2 Lectures**
- **2 Archive events**

All these will be free of charge to the general public. Watch out for details in the first quarter of 2024.

AMERICA BOUND

The 2023 North American Convention of Comhaltas in Washington – where Comhaltas celebrated 50 years of our cultural movement – was a great success. Convention 2024 will be held in Buffalo and it is already a ‘sell out’. The Comhaltas network is spread across America and is one of the oldest in the history of our cultural movement.

THE WREN IS BACK

Following the success of the ‘wren’ project last year, plans are already underway to expand the programme on St. Stephen’s day this year. Over 40 Comhaltas branches will take to the highways and byeways bringing musical fun and joy to local communities. Proceeds will go to charitable and cultural projects.

FLEADH NUA ‘50’

Fleadh Nua 24 in Ennis, Co. Clare marks the 50th Anniversary of the great festival. Over the years, it has developed as one of the most significant events on the Comhaltas calendar. 2024 promises a cultural extravaganza not to be missed! The Fleadh Nua will have over 70 events.

COMHDHÁIL – A SHARED ISLAND 2024 FOR SLIGO

The 2024 Annual Congress will leave Dublin for Sligo in 2024. There will be talks, seminars, recitals, concerts, etc. With the theme A SHARED ISLAND. All are welcome. Ní neart go cur le chéile. Unity is indeed strength!

AWARDS

The Ard-Ollamh at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Wexford next year will be Domhnall de Barra from County Limerick. He is one of the most prominent and respected traditional musicians of his generation in Ireland and abroad. He has an in-depth knowledge of our native music and its history and has written extensively on the subject. Also, at the Fleadh the renowned traditional singer from Wexford Paddy Berry will be conferred with a LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD. He is regarded by many as the 'King of the Singers'. He is known throughout the length and breadth of Ireland and in many parts of the world. He has published several books of songs. BARDIC AWARDS will also be conferred on five exceptional artists. These are Vincent Crowley (Cork); Sarah Jane Woods (Dublin); Deirdre Collis (Mayo); Bríd Harper (Donegal); and Mark Redmond (Wexford).

CÉILÍ BANDS ON TG4

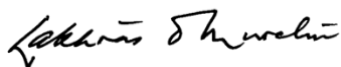
The Céilí Band championship at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann is one of the big cultural events of the year. It can attract up to 2,000 people. Now TG4 will feature this great experience on the 14th January at 9:30pm. This one hour television programme will bring all the creativity, excitement and friendly musical rivalry right into your own home. Put it in your diary now! FLEADH 2023- BANNAÍ CÉILÍ on TG4 at 9:30pm on the 14th January.

FLEADH AN PHOBAIL

The Fleadh is a national institution not only at All-Ireland level but also at Provincial and County levels. Fleadh an Phobail – the People's Fleadh – is intended to afford a participating role to the local community organisations at the Fleadh. The Connacht Fleadh pilot scheme for Fleadh an Phobail in Ballina in 2023 was an outstanding success. Provincial Fleadhanna will again this year have the opportunity to be part of this pilot scheme which it is hoped in time will cover all Fleadhanna. This is a PROSPECTUS ambition.

Sin é go fóillín. Beidh an-chuid nuachta againn amach anseo. One story follows another. Idir an dá linn go raibh Nollaig Shona agus Athbhliain faoi mhaise agaibh. Have a great Christmas and a wonderful New Year. Ar aghaidh leis an gceol agus an Ghaeilge.

Le mór-mheas,



Labhrás Ó Murchú
Ardstiúrthóir CCÉ