



## THE LIVING TRADITION

CĒARNÓG BELGRAVE, BAILE NA MANACH, CO. ÁTHA CLIATH

Phone: 01-2800295. Fax: 01-2803759

Email: [eolas@comhaltas.ie](mailto:eolas@comhaltas.ie)

Website: <http://www.comhaltas.ie>

### **COMHALTAS – CORONAVIRUS**

#### **Communication No. 39**

**Is fusa gabháil lár báire.** It is easier to take the middle way. This has been the story with Comhaltas during the last 20 months. We didn't fold up or rest on our laurels yet we observed all the restrictions and guidelines relating to Covid-19. There are countelss stories of creativity and innovation. These are the future. **Más fada ag teacht an t-ádh tagann sé faoi dheireadh.** Luck may be slow to come but it comes eventually! At times it may require a little help from ourselves!

#### **NECESSITY!**

**Múineann gá seift.** Necessity is the mother of invention. We have so many examples of this during the challenging times in which we must now operate. Here is a nice one: branches who were struggling to find the necessary funds for their CISTE contribution simply sold 8 books of tickets for the national draw and bingo their problem was solved!

#### **COTHROMAÍOCHT**

This is the title of the new document issued by Comhaltas. It is about Respect, Equality and Opportunity which is at the heart of our cultural mission.

#### **FLEADHANNA**

We have notified County Boards and Provincial Councils in Ireland of the Subvention Scheme for Fleadhanna in 2022 - €5,000 for Counties and €10,000 for Provinces. Application forms have been provided. These should be submitted when dates, venues and Fleadh Teams 22 have been confirmed. The Action Team working on Fleadhanna for 2022 are developing a 4-point plan to allow for reconfiguration if required. A meeting of the Fleadh Support Team will be held and communicate with Provincial and County Fleadh 22 Teams.

#### **FLEADH CHEOIL NA hÉIREANN 22**

**A meeting of Fleadh Team 22 and representatives of the Mullingar FEC and Westmeath County Council was held on the 9<sup>th</sup> November. It was a very comprehensive meeting at which there was a very positive exchange of views. Progress towards what will be a historic Fleadh 2022 is evident on a daily basis. Ní neart go cur le chéile.** Unity is strength and the fruits of this will be seen when next August the thousands of people converge on the town where Comhaltas was founded in 1951.

## TREOIR

The final issue for 2021 has been published and distributed. This is an 86 page bumper issue with news, views, tunes, songs and poetry. There is material on Christmas and 'Hunting the Wren'. An ideal fireside read! Head Office pulled out all the stops to get Treoir to Counties for delivery to Branches who in turn will distribute to members before Christmas. Ní neart go cur le chéile.

2,500 copies have also been posted to decision-makers and others.

## TG4

A meeting was held with TG4 on the 8th November to assess the Provincial and FleadhFest programmes in 2021. The plans for 2022 were considered. The viewing figures for FleadhFest were regarded as very good. The streamed competitions were very well received. There was a very good response to the Provincial programmes. TG4 is very positive about Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2022. Live streaming from the Fleadh is regarded as a good option.

## AUSTRALIA AND SOUTH AMERICA

The first ever meetings with branches in Australia and South America have been held on zoom. These were convened by our Diaspora Officer Patrick Morrison. An tUachtarán Éamon O hArgáin was in attendance.

## MEITHEAL

**Meitheal Teams are encouraged to identify and implement projects which will feed into ATHNUACHAN. Any ideas which people may have should be communicated to Meitheal. Each Team is project-driven. There are seven Teams covering the whole island and there is also a Meitheal Team in North America.**

## TTCT

The purpose of a Preparatory Teaching Course was to give musicians the opportunity to explore their skills as aspiring teachers. This course is a vital step in the Comhaltas education programme and bridges the gap between the SCT and the TTCT. While a candidate gains their valuable teaching experience necessary for entrance to the TTCT, this course gives the teacher guidelines and the incentive to further enhance their potential. This one day course was aimed at potential teachers from 16 years of age and up. No previous teaching experience was required. This course also provided an incentive for current TTCT teachers to refresh their knowledge and skills.

Courses were held in Brú Ború with 10 candidates, Cultúrlann with 15 candidates, Ceoláras Coleman with 6 candidates and an online course with 9 candidates. We are currently working on designing a certificate for this course and organising an occasion to present these certs.

This course is of huge benefit for anyone wishing to engage with Irish traditional music education and is an excellent step forward to achieve the TTCT. The course covers methodology, common tune types, child/vulnerable adult protection and SCT as a teaching tool. There was also an element of teaching practice

where the candidates got the chance to speak directly to a tutor to help them best transmit their music and to reflect and discuss ideas for the future.

These courses were delivered by members of the TTCT team, Majella Bartley, Caroline Uí Chathasaigh, Maura Walsh, Kay Webster, Sean Montgomery, Clare Walsh, Oisín MacDiarmada and Grainne Hambly under the guidance of its director Martin Power and Assessors Kathleen Nesbitt and Paddy Ryan.

The resumption of the national TTCT Course for 2022 is being considered including the most suitable dates.

## **EXPO**

### **Comhaltas Represented at Music Education & Drama Expo London 2021**

Comhaltas was represented for the very first time at London's Music & Drama Education Expo, which took place on September 24/25 2021. The expo is Europe's largest conference and exhibition focussed on music & drama education, and was held in the historic exhibition hall of Islington's Business Design Centre. 150 leading organisations working in the music & drama education sector were present, comprising approximately 2500 attendees representing educational publishers, exam boards, education service providers and teachers.

Spearheaded by Majella Bartley, Comhaltas Facilitator for Educational Structures, in coordination with Comhaltas in Britain Project Officers Paddy Callaghan & Patrick Morrison and Scrúdú Ceol Tíre's Director & Administrator Oisín Mac Diarmada & Jim McAllister, a Comhaltas exhibit stand was procured for the Expo with the aim of increasing the visibility of Comhaltas' education work at this key networking event. Securing an exhibit stand with excellent visibility brought keen interest from attendees, eager to learn about Comhaltas' music education work in Ireland and Britain. The Comhaltas exhibit stand was staffed throughout the event by Oisín Mac Diarmada and Paddy Callaghan, who made a number of key connections which will be followed up in the coming months. Attendance at the Expo provided an excellent platform to start building further international awareness of Comhaltas' music education role. It also provided information and contacts which will assist in progressing initiatives such as developing access for Comhaltas to the Music Hub system in Britain to further the teaching of traditional Irish music within the school system, along with pursuing UK accreditation for SCT examinations to facilitate the rollout of examinations in Britain.

## **AWARD**

**It was agreed that we would examine the possibility of designating 2022 as an award-year for those who give exceptional service in the areas of teaching, training, planning, etc. A special medallion would be struck with an appropriate Certificate. This would be for teachers, planners, examiners, adjudicators, etc. on an appropriate occasion for presentations, publicity, etc. A suggested title is Gradam na hÉigse.**

## COMHDHÁIL

The possibility of holding Comhdháil 2022 is under active consideration. Matters to be considered are (a) format; (b) reconfiguration; (c) venue; (d) ZOOM.

## THE FUTURE

The Department of Further Education and Research have developed a new initiative called 'Creating Our Future'. Comhaltas has been invited to participate in this project.

Creating Our Future is an opportunity for everyone in Ireland to give ideas on how to make our country better for all. From science, the environment, health and education to poverty, the arts, diversity and inclusion – all ideas are welcome that can inspire researchers to help make a better future for Ireland. There is a powerpoint presentation from the Dept that explains more the process and ideas.

We believe that this project if tied with ATHNUACHAN will be a great focus for us to look at what we as an organisation can hope to develop for the future. Our Action Team at our meeting considered points and ideas for research that can be developed and what events we could run towards the end of November early December. Also check out their website [creatingourfuture.ie](http://creatingourfuture.ie) for more information on events etc.

## OIREACHTAS COMMITTEE

Comhaltas was invited to the Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media to discuss 'A SAFE AND RESPECTFUL WORKING ENVIRONMENT IN THE ARTS'. This was held on the 17<sup>th</sup> November. Comhaltas was represented by Tomás Ó Maoldomhnaigh, Ardrúnaí; Majella Bartley, Ardchlárathóir; and Siobhán Ní Chonaráin, Príomhriarthóir.

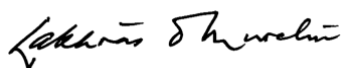
## AMERICA

Our PRO Pádraig Ó Flanagáin will represent the Ardchomhairle at the 2022 North American Convention of Comhaltas in San Francisco. This will be Fleadh within a meeting! We send out best wishes to all our Comhaltas friends in the Cooley-Keegan Branch of whom we are all so proud.

**Slán go fóill. Bí aireach agus go raibh Rath Dé ar bhúr saothar. Keep safe and vigilant as we carefully and successfully navigate the challenges which are presented by Covid-19. Ní fhanann trá le fear mall. The ebb-tide waits for no man. This is also true of opportunity. Buail an t-iarann fad is atá sé te. Strike while the iron is hot. This has been the story of Comhaltas for 70 years. How lucky we were that the founders of Comhaltas didn't miss the opportunity in 1951. They were truly the keepers of the flame which was passed on to future generations who have kept it burning brightly.**

**From our Buainchoiste and Ardchomhairle, we send you all our best wishes for a Nollaig Shona.**

Mise, le mór-mheas,



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Labhrás Ó Murchú  
Ardstúirthóir CCÉ