



THE LIVING TRADITION

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COMHALTAS – CORONAVIRUS

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Athbhliain faoi mhaise. Yes, we have entered another year with challenges still facing us. However, we have learned much in the last two years. We were inspired by the manner in which Comhaltas responded in so many ways to ensure that we did not become dormant or irrelevant. There were hundreds of initiatives embellished by innovation. **Maith sibh.** Well done. **Múineann gá seift.** Necessity was certainly the mother of invention in this case as an antidote to the pandemic. We are well equipped to keep the music flowing and the feet tapping. **Nuair a thosnaíonn an ceol bíonn na damhsóirí réidh.** The dancers will be ready when the music starts!

FLEADHANNA

The Fleadh Cheoil is synonymous with Comhaltas and Irish Ireland. It is a unique festival – nothing like it in the world. It reflects the richness of our native cultural traditions as diligently cultivated and promoted by Comhaltas throughout the community. It is a shop window of who we are as a people: music, song, dance, language, folklore, history.

Following the disruption of the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, all shoulders are now to the wheel to get the Fleadh at county, provincial and national levels over the line in 2022. We are confident, as we were with FLEADHFEST, that this will happen. **Brostaíonn airc intleacht.** Need hurries the intellect.

Many of the counties have now announced the dates of County Fleadhanna. Provincial Fleadhanna are up and running in Ireland, Britain and America. **Tá siamsaíocht gan sárú romhainn.** It will be entertainment beyond compare.

**MULLINGAR
BECKONS**

The Fleadh in all its splendour will return to its cradle in 2022. The indomitable spirit of the people of Mullingar, Co. Westmeath and the surrounding region was never more evident than in their response to adversity. The devastating blow which was the cancellation of Fleadh 2020 and Fleadh 2021 due to the coronavirus crisis would have flattened lesser beings but not the people of the birth place of Comhaltas in 1951.

With determination and renewed vision, they rallied in a manner worthy of the great Gaeil of former years. They picked themselves up – that is if they were ever down! – and re-focused.

The names and spirits of Reynolds, Ó Muimhneacháin, Seery, Mulally, Rowsome and so many more will permeate this great gathering of the Gaeil. The seed sown in 1951 gave us an abundant harvest. The hope and vision of 2022 in Mullingar will in years to come be another cause of commemoration and celebration and the names of those who made it possible will be spoken of with pride and admiration. Fleadh 2022 will be no mere festival. It will be a powerful expression of who we are as a race – creative, cultured, welcoming, freedom-loving, tenacious, industrious, survivors, and inheritors of a rich Christian heritage. We have journeyed through the world not as colonisers but in fraternal spirit. Now, our Irish diaspora will be well represented at the Fleadh experience in Mullingar. The wheel has come full circle and together we will be stronger. **Ní neart go cur le chéile!**

CÉAD MÍLE FÁILTE

Visitors to Mullingar are in for an even more energised and ecstatic céad míle fáilte – if that is possible – than that of 2020 and 2021. As well as music on the streets, there will be exhilarating music in the hearts of the multitudes knowing that, in fact, this was a celebration of survival.

One notices a very clear spring in the step of the Fleadh organisers as they set about even embellishing that which had been achieved to date.

The Fleadh Executive Committee and their partners in Westmeath County Council were not open to deserting the hundreds of thousands of Fleadh followers who had looked forward in eager anticipation to visiting the place where the cultural revolution, which was Comhaltas, was spawned seventy years ago.

DÓCHAS AGUS MISNEACH

We salute our colleagues in Mullingar. Through their efforts, we will also proclaim ATHNUACHAN (Renewal), hope and confidence so that the dark shadow of 2020 and 2021 will evaporate and we will enjoy brighter days and better times. [Go raibh Rath Dé ar ár saothar agus ár gcúram.](#)

We wish Joe Connaire and his Fleadh Team every success, which they so richly deserve.

Le beart de réir ár mbriathar, spreagfar dóchas agus misneach ag Fleadh 2022. Beidh ár gcultúr in uachtar. Beidh spiorad na nGael beo agus bríomhar. Is ar scáth a chéile a mhairfimid. Bí linn. Is i dteannta a chéile is fearr sinn.

TELEVISION

There will be extensive television coverage of the Fleadh in Mullingar, with live streaming as a distinct possibility. TG4 are also hoping to provide coverage of the Provincial Fleadhanna which are a curtain raiser for Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.

PASSING ON

THE TRADITION

In the very first minutes of Comhaltas in 1951, the need for classes to pass on the traditions was considered. In the intervening years, an unprecedented education programme has been achieved by Comhaltas - 1,500 classes, SCT examinations, TTCT Diploma, Scoil Éigse, etc.

Throughout the pandemic, classes have, while observing guidelines and restrictions, been organised online and face to face. Every effort was made by a meitheal of volunteers and teachers to ensure that young people would not be deprived of the opportunity to hone their musical skills. Through the work of Comhaltas, thousands of young people now embrace our native cultural traditions.

SCOIL ÉIGSE

[Máthair na suailce an t-eolas.](#) Knowledge is the mother of virtue. Director Kieran Hanrahan and his Scoil Éigse team are determined that the hundreds of young musicians who each year participate in the Scoil Éigse will not be forgotten. This Summer School is the jewel in the crown of the Comhaltas education programme. For the last two years, due to the pandemic, the Scoil Éigse was delivered online. The plans are now being prepared for a return to the face to face format. The Scoil Éigse is held in the week preceding Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.

COTHROMAÍOCHT Comhaltas has expressed its appreciation to Minister Catherine Martin TD and her Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media for her support in ensuring that the COTHROMAÍOCHT (Respect. Equality. Opportunity) programme will be developed and delivered.

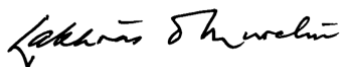
DIASPORA We wish Comhaltas members and supporters throughout the world a very successful, pleasant and safe New Year. They have inspired us at home by their dedication and loyalty. They have been supportive colleagues in very difficult times. [Bail ó Dhia orthu i gcónaí.](#)

SPREADING THE NEWS The first issue of the Comhaltas journal TREOIR in 2022 is expected in early February. It has a feast of news, views, aspirations, personalities, achievements, music and songs. [Tarraingíonn scéal scéal eile.](#) One story attracts another story.

Bhuel, sin é go fóill. We will keep you updated as the year progresses. Bí aireach i gcónaí. Keep safe and vigilant as we carefully and successfully navigate the challenges which lie ahead. Is olc í an ghaoth nach séideann maith do dhuine éigin. It is an ill wind that doesn't blow good to someone! Seas an fód. Be steadfast.

From our Buanchoiste and Ardchomhairle, we send you all our best wishes for the year that lies ahead. Bail ó Dhia oraibh go léir.

Mise, le mór-mheas,



Labhrás Ó Murchú
Ardstiúrthóir CCÉ