

THE LIVING TRADITION

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COMHALTAS – CORONAVIRUS

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The heroic efforts of Government, frontline health workers, public officials, community organisations and others to win the battle against the coronavirus is a reminder of the tenacity and compassion of Irish people in time of crisis. These sacrifices put into perspective some of our own less daunting problems. We owe so much to so few.

In hurling parlance, ‘an tiománaí ar an gclá’ is so descriptive. Would the hurler on the ditch ever raise a green flag? Time will tell.

We are inundated with messages of goodwill, support and solidarity. Míle buíochas.

- TG4 have announced that they will partner Comhaltas in our RENEWAL plans as we emerge from this time of emergency and uncertainty. ATHNUACHAN den scoth ag Fleadh na Muíne that could reach up to one million viewers at home and abroad.
- Attracta Brady tells us that at 5:30pm on Friday, 28th March, the final touches were put to the new Comhaltas Cultural Centre in Tullamore. What a wonderful achievement. This great amenity, brought to fruition with dedication and exceptional volunteerism, will be a beacon of hope as we journey to brighter days. The 28th March 2020 will in years to come be another milestone on that journey from where we are now to where we hope to be. It is a reflection of the three memorable All-Ireland Fleadhanna held in Tullamore. Who will ever forget that iconic open-air session when hundreds of traditional musicians in unison sought a world record?
- Majella Bartley, Oisín MacDiarmada and Kathryn Browne, never ones to let the grass grow under their feet, have good news for young musicians who must find the present crisis very difficult. Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí! Starting Monday 30th March Comhaltas will launch an online site for all students of traditional Irish music at all levels to learn repertoire. The material used for this programme is taken from and guided by the varying levels of the SCT exam syllabus. The levels are 1. Elementary Cycle, 2. Grade 1-5 and 3. Grade 6-8. This online site will help students to continue to develop their skills while at home. There will be three tunes added per week, one for each level. You do not need to be entered into the exam system to learn from this site, developing a person's repertoire is important for continued progression. You can access this site at www.sctexams.com.
- RTÉ presenter Kieran Hanrahan, Director of the Annual Scoil Éigse, and his team are examining the prospects of a Scoil Éigse later this year and post-coronavirus to help raise the morale of our music fraternity and general public. Fees for participants would be greatly reduced. There is a growing sense of commitment by various sections of society that we must all focus on light at the end of the tunnel. We recall with pride that 15,000 Céilí House fans were at the Gig Rig for the broadcast from the Fleadh in Drogheda. Many thousands more at home and abroad tuned into this much-loved radio programme.

Is féidir linn go léir dóchas a chothú agus daoine a spreagadh in am an ghátair. Beidh ár gcultúr lárnach sa mhísean seo. Is i dteannta a chéile is fearr sinn. Ní neart go cur le chéile.

