

THE LIVING TRADITION

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COMHALTAS – CORONAVIRUS

Communication No. 8

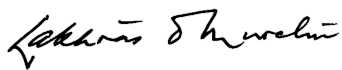
At the Ardchomhairle meeting on the 6th/7th March, the Buanchoiste was designated and empowered to monitor and act on behalf of Comhaltas throughout the coronavirus pandemic. While it is only 4 weeks ago, so much has happened in the meantime requiring far-reaching decisions on our part. These decisions are made in a phased and strategic manner as the necessity arises. More decisions will be made as necessities are clarified.

While at all times protective of the health and well-being of the community, we are also cognisant of the need to sustain the morale of the people and guide us through dark days into better times. On this, we hopefully mirror the efforts of the Government and other organisations like the GAA, community groups, charities, etc.

- Birmingham-based Uachtarán of Comhaltas Vince Jordan has as always put his shoulder to the wheel in time of need. The Irish Ambassador to Britain, Adrian O’ Neill, has called on Comhaltas musicians and singers in Britain to perform on short videos that will be shown on the Embassy Website to lift the spirits of the Irish Community in Britain. Thanks to Vince and his friends, some of the recorded items will be shown on the website this week. Well done.
- We are encouraged and inspired by those who have joined the team in the national interest and who support us in the daunting task facing us all.
- Brendan McAleer of Dún Uladh – Ulster’s Comhaltas Regional Resource Centre – tells us that the branches and members in their province are encouraged – as far as possible – to assist, as volunteers, the vulnerable people in our society. Possibly alongside the GAA and other groups.
- We learn of many Comhaltas units who are providing or planning alternative on-line activities and resources. These will be a great source of comfort for young musicians and their parents.
- A positive phone call can mean so much to those who are isolated and lonely. Is ar scáth a chéile a mhaireas na daoine. We depend so much on each other.

- Former Garda and Comhaltas activist Liam Ó Cuinnegáin of Roscommon directed our attention to an interesting item 'Tweet from An Garda Siochána (@GardaTraffic)'. It was Garda Band members on a break from Covid-19 checkpoint duty in the Phoenix Park. There was Garda Pat Fitzpatrick of Gorey playing his tin whistle. Pat from Gorey – like his family - has a long association with Comhaltas and was on a number of Concert Tours with us. Pat is a multi-instrumentalist. Music certainly stirs the soul.
- Comhaltas membership is an integral part of our organisation. We are keeping our membership open as we understand that it is difficult for members to be registered at this time. The online section of Comhaltas membership can still be developed and we are here to help in this regard.
- Week 2 of the Comhaltas online tutorials has been added to www.sctexams.com. We have had immense positive support with regards to this project so please encourage your branch members to avail of this resource.
- Dr. Ryan Hackett is part of the healthcare team in Altnagelvin Hospital in Derry. The Tyrone man is the frontman for the Blackwater Ceili Band who were crowned All Ireland Champions in 2018. They have just released a music video to raise funds for healthcare workers across Ireland. This video can be viewed on the Band's social media pages.

Tá súil againn go bhfuil sibh uilig slán sabháilte. Ní mhaireann aon rud ach seal. Beidh laethanta spreagúla eile ag an náisiún, le cúnamh Dé, agus beidh An Comhaltas lárnach san ATHNUACHAN sin.



Labhrás Ó Murchú
Ardstiúrthóir CCÉ