



Connecting communities through our culture

2030
PROSPECTUS

Unlocking our
cultural potential



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Department of Tourism, Culture,
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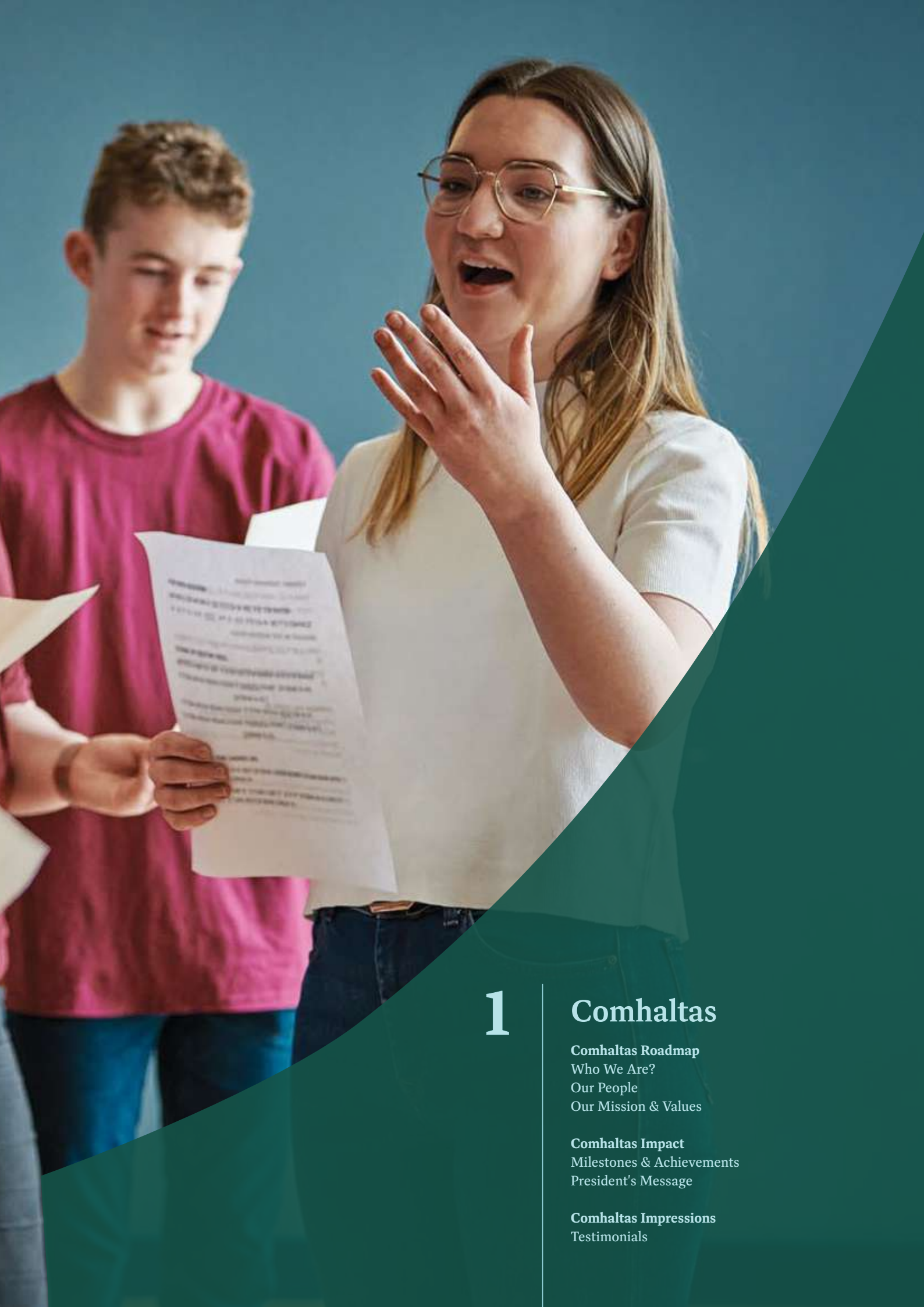
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An Roinn Cosúlachta Eorpacha
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Comhaltas

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Comhaltas Roadmap

This Prospectus sets out some of the salient achievements of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann over the last 70 years and provides a road map for future enhancement and expansion as expressed in the multifaceted track record and potential of this premier cultural movement.

Who we are?

Comhaltas is a national and international movement, providing opportunities for young people in particular to enjoy and participate in the traditions that have been passed down through the generations. Through its extensive network across 21 countries worldwide Comhaltas makes a contribution to fostering strong links with the Irish Diaspora and to promoting a positive image of Ireland on the international stage. It also promotes strong links with other national cultures.

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann was founded in 1951 with the objective of keeping our unique cultural traditions in all forms alive and returning them to a prominent position in Irish life. This was at a time when the future of our indigenous culture was under threat after many years of neglect. As a result of the pioneering work of Comhaltas, public interest in our ancient traditions was rekindled and that torch, once lit, has burned with increasing intensity over the last seven decades.

Following on from the historic All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil in Derry, – which attracted 450,000 people and involved all traditions – where Comhaltas demonstrated its role as a bridge builder between communities, the movement was awarded the prestigious European Citizen of the Year award. Today, Comhaltas has 19 cultural centres covering the whole island of Ireland and it provides services to three million people annually worldwide.

Our People

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann can rightly celebrate over 70 years of success. This success is the result of many thousands of individuals acting locally for the collective good. A shared vision of restoring the cultural traditions of Ireland to prominence in Irish life provided a common purpose, and the multitude of individual creative actions have woven a rich tapestry that is the heritage and strength of the movement today.

Our Mission

Cultural traditions should be an enriching part of the lives of Irish people everywhere, particularly our young people; they should be a living, highly visible and vibrant part of society; they should be easily accessible to all; and their unique social, cultural and economic benefits should be fully realised by communities and individuals throughout the country and in Irish communities abroad.

Our Values

Diverse: we are all-embracing of everyone regardless of race, religion, or ability.

Open & Honest: we ensure our services are underpinned by fairness, in recognition of the dignity and humanity of each person, free from harassment, anti-sectarian and anti-racist.

Empower: we believe in the intrinsic value of every person, and we aim to further the dignity of all associated with our movement.

Inspire: we want each individual to avail of opportunities for self expression in the pursuit of traditional music, song, dance and language.

Inclusive: we promote equal opportunity for all regardless of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious belief or lack thereof, race, ethnicity or nationality.

Comhaltas Impact

The challenge taken on by Comhaltas in 1951 of reversing the fortunes of the cultural traditions was, by any yardstick, truly ambitious. From the outset, Comhaltas recognised the fundamental link between these traditions and the community, and the importance of providing a comprehensive response to the needs of the traditions.

Over seventy years on the standing of these traditions at home and abroad is radically different. The art forms themselves have been immeasurably strengthened through the creativity and proficiency of individual artists. The number of people participating as artists and as audience members has grown exponentially. The impact of this growth has been overwhelmingly positive. (see page 10)

- The **cultural, social and economic impact** of Comhaltas has been generously acknowledged.
- The **Irish language is central to the work of Comhaltas** and a fully bilingual policy operates throughout the movement.
- Comhaltas has an **extensive online archive** and is a contributor to EUROPEANA SOUNDS.
- Education is the bedrock of Comhaltas' success with over **1,500 classes each week**.

These cultural assets belong to the community as they express the personality and identity of that community over time. The focus is much less on the individual artist.

Our cultural traditions are a unique heritage of great sophistication and antiquity.

They are a heritage grounded in stability rather than in frenetic, market-driven changes of fashion, and they encompass key concepts like community, participation, apprenticeship, responsibility and the development of identity. Such a heritage draws us closer to former generations but its future depends on the constant forging of links between old and young, a constant bridging of generations through an unbroken thread from ancient times. That heritage is a proud resource that belongs to Irish people everywhere, young and old alike.

A unique culture

A unique cultural experience



Fleadhanna Festival Facts

44

Fleadhanna Ceoil
(cultural festivals)

500,000

People attend Fleadh Cheoil
na hÉireann annually

15,000

Musicians, dancers, singers
and storytellers

€60m

Generated for the host
region economy of Fleadh
Cheoil na hÉireann



Achievements & Milestones

€60,000,000

Generated for the host region economy of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann each year

3,000,000

People engage annually with the Comhaltas organisation worldwide

500,000+

Attend Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann each year

50,000+

Comhaltas Community Volunteers

1,500

Comhaltas classes take place each week

450+

Community branches nationally and internationally

21

Countries Comhaltas have a presence in

1

European Citizen of the Year award



A Unifying Cultural Force

Comhaltas has diminished barriers and successfully promoted cross-community initiatives.

When in 2013 the All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil was held in Northern Ireland for the first time in its sixty year history, it embraced all communities and traditions and was an outstanding example of friendship, reconciliation and co-operation.

This work continues on the ground through the 40+ Comhaltas branches in Northern Ireland.

450,000 People attended the Fleadh Cheoil in Derry

40+ Branches in Northern Ireland

Shipquay Street Derry – Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2013

It is truly inspiring to reflect that from such small beginnings came the founding of Comhaltas and the successful revival of our wonderful musical tradition.

Uachtarán na hÉireann, Michael D Higgins

Growing Ireland's cultural potential globally through innovation and education

Uachtarán na hÉireann, Michael D Higgins

Volunteerism and generosity of spirit are the cornerstones of Comhaltas, and such values are manifest at the Fleadh. Its network of branches and events are underpinned by a corps of upwards on 50,000 volunteers. Each of these individuals plays a part in ensuring the vibrancy of the traditional living arts and sharing its appreciation with the upcoming generation of performers.



Picture: Bob Morrison

The Fleadh, the Comhaltas branch network worldwide, and the various Comhaltas events and activities throughout Ireland and abroad continue to connect us to our larger Irish diaspora. Among the many artists who visit the Fleadh are the descendants of Irish emigrants who are now numbered among the virtuoso musicians of the global traditional music community. The music, song, dance and Irish language, which were such cohesive forces within Irish communities abroad, continue to strengthen our diaspora today while contributing to that deep well of tradition here in Ireland itself.

In bringing our heritage to the furthest corners of the world, the diaspora has in turn reflected back to us aspects of this heritage, including our music, song and dance, with re-energising variations and new interpretations. Also and most welcome among the participants and visitors at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann are those who have neither ancestral nor geographic links to Ireland, but who may have developed a kinship with the Irish through culture and our folk traditions with a curiosity that we all welcome.

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann is the world's largest annual celebration of Irish music, language, song and dance. It attracts in the region of 500,000 visitors every year. And may I say what a joy it is to all of us to be able to celebrate the Fleadh once again in person, i gcomhlúadar ár gcairde in atmaisféar an cheoil agus an traidisiúin.

Despite pressures, including globalising forces that push a drive to homogeneity in taste and content for monopolised market advantage, and a dramatically changed industry that carries too much of these tendencies, Irish music has survived, refused to be quenched, travelled, has been enhanced and come back again.

Music is one of the most vital forms of expression, arguably the most powerful, enabling us to delve into our history, to tell our stories, to reflect on every aspect of life – love, death, the everyday pursuit of happiness – and also to come together in moments of celebration, whether within families, among friends or on significant occasions.

From its ability to affect our emotions and memories to the way it has no borders, unites people, music is perhaps the universal *lingua franca*, communicating emotions and memories that words often cannot.

Ó thús ama, mar Ghaeil, tá stádas an chumadóra cheoil agus an déantóir cheoil oirmhinnithe againn mar cheann ársa, urramach. Faoi Ré na hArd agus Meánaoise Déanaí, bhíodh na hannála Éireannacha ag lua ceoltóirí dúchasacha. Go deimhin, in Annála na gCeithre Máistrí, rinneadh taifead i 921RC (Roimh Chríost), de bhás Chú Chongalta, sagart Lann-Léire, an ‘tethra’ nó óráidí na hÉireann ó thaobh gutha, foirme pearsanta, agus eolais de.

In traditional and folk music in particular, we have an extraordinary body of unique and brilliant Irish art and artistry: powerful songs and moving melodies, laments that draw on the deepest emotions, and playful tunes that encourage a smile and dance – and perhaps even to throw caution to the wind.

It is not in mere monetary or economic terms that we have valued the work of our musicians or composers. The beauty, the joy – and the irrefutable cultural importance – of what our musicians collectively give to us is, I believe, immeasurable. It is of the spirit.



Picture: Bob Morrison

Comhaltas Impressions



Take Comhaltas out of the equation, turn back the clock and contemplate Ireland without Comhaltas and the sheer scale of what we owe you is revealed.

Comhaltas people have rightly been described as ambassadors for our country, communicating in a language that knows no boundaries and which has won us friends and admirers far and wide.

That admiration, those links, have reflected back to us that inestimable value of what we have inherited, and have added greatly to that new-found sense of cultural confidence and pride that we now enjoy and which is so inextricably linked to our success on other fronts – social, political and economic. We owe so much to Comhaltas for the role they have played in this.

Generations of Irish men, women and children have tapped their feet to the lilt of Irish music that's been made by Comhaltas. So often when we listen we fail to understand the extraordinary legacy that tradition gives us.

We are proud of that ancient art form, once the preserve of fireside and local crossroads, and which today enjoys such widespread popularity at the global crossroads of the modern world.

Mary McAleese, Former Uachtarán na hÉireann,



Music is the life and soul of our Gaelic culture and it's Irish musicians who are the heart of that culture. Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann has been in the vanguard of Irish music and culture for the past 70 years.

TG4 is very proud of our relationship and the joint vision we have for Ireland's culture and language, both here in Ireland and around the world. Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann is one of TG4's flagship broadcast events and we appreciate the collaboration this fosters between TG4 and Comhaltas throughout the year. Long live Comhaltas, long live its commitment to the Irish language and to all aspects of Irish culture and long live its zeal in encouraging and sustaining our collective work towards that dream.

Alan Esslemont, Príomhstiúrthóir TG4



Music, like language, is a powerful connector: it can create links across the centuries, across oceans and across generations. Comhaltas has harnessed that power through its work enabling people of all ages, backgrounds and identities to participate in and enjoy Irish traditional music and culture regardless of where in the world they are located.

From my involvement in projects and events supported by Comhaltas I have seen at first hand the impact of its work in showcasing Irish traditional music and in encouraging and supporting participation. I am always struck by the enthusiasm and commitment of those involved and it is a great pleasure to see so many young people being facilitated to continue the wonderful tradition of Irish music. Here in Northern Ireland, the work of Comhaltas in bringing together people from different communities is particularly valuable.

**Linda Ervine, Bainisteoir Tionscadal Turas / Turas Project Manager
- East Belfast**



Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann founded in 1951 by a small group of visionary individuals, whose aim was to arrest the decline of Irish traditional music, has become a major cultural movement not only in Ireland but also among the Global Irish especially in the UK and USA.

In many cases it is the only link that connects the Irish abroad to Ireland. Over the past fifty years, I have had personal experience of this connection, firstly when I travelled the world with the Kerry Senior Football team and later as Minister for The Diaspora. I witnessed first-hand the enormous contribution that Comhaltas branches made to the promotion of Irish Music and Dance, not only for Irish immigrants but also for other nationalities as well. With modern technology it is now possible for Comhaltas to provide music education to a multi-cultural global audience. This presents the organisation with a unique opportunity for the future.

The phenomenal growth of Comhaltas did not happen by chance or accident. It can be attributed to a number of factors, but the standout one for me is the commitment and dedication of its officers at all levels and its many volunteers. Both are driven by their love of Irish traditional music and dance which to me is an expression of true and genuine patriotism.

It's heartening to see so many young people attending music classes and playing in grúpaí ceoil. Their love for Irish music, song and dance is palpable and for many young people it is now considered cool to play traditional Irish music. I believe that Comhaltas has done more to promote Irish traditional music, song and dance than any other organisation, either before or since Independence. Long may it continue to do so.

Jimmy Deenihan, Former Minister for the Diaspora



With age, memories become dim and fade. As a result, furnishing a narrative from memories spanning more than 60 years is a challenge, and is probably unreliable, in some details at least. So, when I now cast my mind back to the early 1960s and the Fleadhanna Ceoil I attended around that time I cannot pinpoint accurately in time or in place, when or where, I first fell under the spell of Leo Rowsome's magic uilleann pipes, or first heard the heart- piercing pluck of Barney McKenna's banjo or the soaring thrill of Sliabh Luachra reels as played by Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford.

Was Rowsome sitting on a low stone wall in Clones? Was McKenna playing behind a pub in Mullingar? Did the fiddling duo enthral their audience in Kerins's yard in Ennis?

Truthfully, I cannot say for sure. But one thing I do know for certain is that their music, first encountered back then, infused my whole being at the time and their graceful notes, even at this remove, linger long as powerful formative realities.

The musicians just mentioned are randomly recalled. There were many others: who could forget the deeply moving "Lament for Staker Wallace" as played on the accordion by Tony McMahon? Or the excitement of Sean Maguire's virtuosic rendition of "The Mason's Apron"? Or the rakish Joe Burke signalling the end of the session with the rousing reel "The Bucks of Oranmore" on his button accordion? I could have mentioned a host of other ghosts, who from the dark recesses are now putting their hands up for recognition. Many are now gone, but their music will never be forgotten, due, in no small measure, to the early recognition and the extraordinary intuition of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann to promote these magical musical events at that time.

Back then we hitchhiked to the early Fleadhanna with vague and ill-defined expectations, but with the excitement that drives all adventurers into the unknown. As we poured into the provincial venues, however, we sensed that a discernible social shift was occurring. Irish music was creating a new constituency, a new community even, and like the children of Hamelin we followed the Pied Piper with total optimism.

Bryan McMahon - Retired Judge of the High Court







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Strategic Pillars

Overview Pillars

- Organisation
- Cultural Activities
- Education
- Communications

Pillars Overview

70 years after its foundation is an opportune time to assess how the aims and objectives, as identified in 1951, have been implemented to fully realise the potential for our native traditions.

So much has been achieved to date and our goals now are no less ambitious than they were in 1951.

We want to build on our rich heritage, continue to enhance our communities by facilitating access to our unique Irish culture through updating and creating new branches and centres. Education is also key to achieving this, showcasing and engaging our young people in dance, song, music and our language. Connecting communities to create bonds that link our local communities and spread across the world through our diaspora and international branches.

Key Pillars

	<i>Organisation</i>	Branch People Social Community Resource Centres Cultural Archives
	<i>Cultural Activities</i>	Fleadhanna Irish Language Festival & Events
	<i>Education</i>	Education Youth Diversity, Equality & Inclusion
	<i>Communications</i>	Diaspora Tourism Communications





The Branch Network

The Branch Network is the foundation that allows Comhaltas to be a multifaceted cultural organisation. It enables Comhaltas to have a global reach and includes 19 resource and outreach centres across the island of Ireland and 450 branches worldwide, with a presence in 21 countries. These branches engage communities and enable people to share in Irish culture, connecting people and generations as well as delivering positive outcomes for their host communities.

Where we are...

Branch Scope

Comhaltas boasts 450 branches across 21 countries, promoting the cultural traditions of Ireland as well as enabling cultural expression and promoting the cultural ethos of their local host communities.

Community Branch

Our branches provide a 'nurturing' environment in which young students spend most of their formative years, learning and perfecting their art forms, while developing an attachment and commitment to our rich cultural heritage and their local community that will stay with them throughout their lives.

Cultural Melting Pot

Pupils learning instrumental music are introduced to other cultural traditions such as singing, dancing and folklore etc.

The Session

The branch session brings people together in a safe and supportive setting, providing an invaluable opportunity for players to perfect their art, develop a sense of community and connect with people across all ages locally.

Connection

The branch acts as an important meeting point, where the coming together of young and old - in a safe and positive environment - ensures the passing on of the traditions, and where the use of Irish and cultural expression is encouraged in an everyday setting.

Social Life

The branch provides a significant social outlet for young people as they become part of a national and global network creating connections outside their own community and promoting creativity.

Multi User Space

The branch contributes to the cultural and social life of its host community, delivering and participating in local events, charity performances and community spaces including healthcare settings etc.

Support

Comhaltas has robust support structures in place through county, provincial and national committees which reinforce the work of its branches and provide the support infrastructure necessary for a national response.

Our Challenge:

The Comhaltas branches face challenges as volunteering levels have dropped across the sector in recent years.

Comhaltas will seek to re-energise its people, build their capacity, engage new people through new and exciting volunteering opportunities, and expand the branch network.

Comhaltas Connections



Clare Anne Kearns - Actuary

Offaly: Fiddle, Button Accordion

Comhaltas has given me great opportunities throughout the years to develop not only as a musician, but in other areas of my life as well. I have been very fortunate to tour with Comhaltas groups both in Ireland and overseas, to teach and perform. I am currently a member of the National Folk Orchestra of Ireland. I have made many friends all over the country through the music. As a teacher within the Comhaltas family, I am delighted to give back to an organisation that has given me so much throughout my life. It's very rewarding to see the next generation develop the same grá for our music and culture as I have.

Where we are going...

Branch Renewal

A period of branch renewal is timely. Comhaltas will develop an engagement strategy to assist branches to address the challenges identified and to create new energies in order to achieve their full potential. This strategy will be supported by the recent publication "ATHNUACHAN -BRANCH RENEWAL".

Community Hub

Through continued investment in our people, especially our youth, Comhaltas will enable branches to develop, ensuring more people have the opportunity to engage with our culture at home and abroad.

Community Melting Pot

Branches can potentially be established in most areas/regions to expand the range of activities and to reach out to new communities to share the joy of music, song, dance and language with all.

Events Programme

New imaginative programmes and activities will have the potential to strengthen the work programme of Comhaltas and make our work relevant to our members and the wider community, expanding our community event delivery and impact.

The Irish Connection

Comhaltas branches have the potential to reach out to, and be inclusive of all Irish people in Ireland. Comhaltas branches abroad will likewise seek to expand their membership to strengthen their community impact and identify new branch formation opportunities.

Social Platform

Using electronic communications to get our messaging to our members and the wider community - e.g. social media, instant messaging applications, video conferencing and electronic mail etc. offers Comhaltas the potential to reach major populations at home and among the Irish diaspora as well as Irish cultural enthusiasts across the globe.

Lifelong Education

The potential to engage with students from pre-school to third level under our education programme can be achieved and implemented if resources for these programmes are available and can be accessed.

Open Door Support

Through continued delivery of our COTHROMAÍOCHT policies and training on equality, diversity and inclusion, Comhaltas can have a significant impact in building a safe and respectful environment within the arts for all persons.

Get Involved!

Comhaltas, through the delivery of volunteer training and development modules, will have a significant impact on the wider volunteering sector and improve the outcomes for our branch host areas.



Our People

Our people are the bedrock of Comhaltas. Our members, volunteers and staff should feel supported, valued, connected and empowered in carrying out their work on behalf of Comhaltas as a result of the actions, services and support offered from the movement.

Where we are...

People Power

Comhaltas has a dedicated network of volunteers who support and enable the development of Irish culture, especially its music, throughout Ireland and across the globe.

Open Floor

Comhaltas is led by its volunteers at all levels and listens to its volunteers' voices through the organisation's multi-layered structure.

Team Support

Comhaltas offers and supports volunteering opportunities for all people regardless of age, race, religion, ethnicity, gender, disability or sexual orientation etc.

Broad Demographic

Comhaltas attracts volunteers from a broad demographic especially age ranges who bring varied experiences and approaches to their roles. This ensures Comhaltas is constantly evolving as an organisation.

Core Team

Comhaltas has a small staff team to support the work of our branches and volunteers and who also administer the day to day management of the movement and its events.

Strong Roots

Comhaltas has strong roots in community and is recognised within Government and its statutory agencies for its volunteer ethos.

Fleadhanna Effect

Comhaltas attracts thousands of volunteers for its Fleadhanna and events annually, connecting these people to their community, building community confidence and expanding the skills base.

Elevated Environment

Through delivery of our COTHROMAÍOCHT initiative promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, Comhaltas has contributed to building a safe and respectful environment within the arts for all persons who engage with them.

Our Challenge:

Through developing our people and those who wish to engage with Comhaltas and its events.

Comhaltas can improve the outcomes for our beneficiaries, deliver opportunities for our communities, and increase the cultural outputs of the movement.



Where we are going...

Empowering People

Through the development of a people strategy and securing resources to create a volunteer development and training officer role across the organisation, Comhaltas will ensure the continual support and development of its volunteers through a year round calendar of relevant training interventions and support materials.

Future Leaders

Comhaltas will identify potential leaders of the future and secure branch progression and succession planning by embedding a sponsored mentoring, training and coaching programme with experienced volunteers.

Workshop Weekends

Comhaltas will actively seek to attract new volunteers introduce induction workshops/weekends for new volunteers to facilitate peer-to-peer support outside the branch and to engage volunteers with the goals and aspirations of the wider organisation.

Volunteer Network

Comhaltas will develop a database of volunteers to enable direct communication to all volunteer grades and to streamline role-specific communiques. This will enable increased engagement, support and communication with the volunteer body.

Global Team

Comhaltas will develop and expand the staff team both nationally and regionally to support and develop our volunteers. Through developing the vast volunteer pool within Comhaltas, the organisation can play a huge role in the development of the wider volunteer sector due to the scale and scope of the organisation.

Collaborations

Comhaltas will explore the potential for dedicated youth leadership development programmes linked to national standards e.g. Gaisce (President of Ireland Youth Awards).

Fleadh Family

Comhaltas will capture the information of its episodic volunteers from events and Fleadhanna to keep them informed of future opportunities to get involved with the organisation.

Ongoing Culture

Through continued delivery of the COTHROMAÍOCHT initiative, Comhaltas will continue to build a safe and respectful environment within the arts for all persons.

Celebrate our People!

Comhaltas will increase the visibility and accessibility of its volunteer recognition awards i.e. Gradam Seirbhíse and Gradam na nÓg etc. to ensure that volunteers across the organisation can identify their own impact in achieving the wider goals of Comhaltas.



Social Community

Comhaltas is much more than a music organisation, it is embedded in the community and connects people and communities across its network of branches and delivers a range of important social outcomes through its activities and events.

Where we are...

Community Space

Comhaltas currently delivers significant social benefits through the diverse range of infrastructure/buildings it owns and the community spaces it supports.

Community Bonds

Comhaltas increases social inclusion, reduces isolation and builds community cohesion through its activities, classes, branch sessions, events and education programmes.

Cultural Networking

Comhaltas builds social capital through the activities of its branch network and the organising of its Fleadhanna and events. These activities and events improve community interaction, collaboration and cooperation.

Lifelong Learning

Comhaltas increases the skills and volunteering opportunities across all ages and levels, delivering opportunities for lifelong learning, building skills and promoting brain activity which improves cognitive function.

Life Enhancing

Comhaltas through its many community-based activities, especially Daytime Comhaltas, improves mental health and well-being for participants through enabling regular participation in culture, arts and leisure activities and facilitating social contact.

Access to All

Comhaltas increases access to, and participation with culture for all, especially rural based youth, through its community-based network of branches.

Age Positive Approach

Comhaltas promotes intergenerational contact which is essential for promoting understanding, reducing ageism and enhancing life experiences for all involved.

Strategic Links

Comhaltas creates strategic links and partnership working across the community & voluntary sector into the private and public sector.

Our Challenge:

Through further developing our activities, events and spaces,

Comhaltas can deliver an increased impact for wider society through effecting positive change for individuals and groups.



Kevin Kennedy and Joe Connaire – Mullingar 2022

Where we are going...

Cultural Centres

By developing the 19 Cultural Centres into community hubs which reach out to, and provide services and facilities to a broader and diverse community, Comhaltas will further increase its social impact.

My Comhaltas Community

By further development of Comhaltas' Fleadhanna and community-based activities, the organisation will further increase its impact on inclusion, isolation and community cohesion.

Youth Leaders

Comhaltas will open new pathways for young people by utilising its local branch network to identify potential leaders of the future and embedding a youth leadership programme as well as sponsored mentoring, training and coaching programmes with localised experienced volunteers. This could be linked to Uachtarán na hÉireann's Gaisce Award.

Volunteer Development

Through further resourcing volunteer training and development, including developing support materials and securing a dedicated staff resource, Comhaltas will not only increase its lifelong learning opportunities for its own beneficiaries, but can have a significant impact on the wider community and voluntary sector.

Day-to-Day Engagement

Comhaltas will have a role in the development of social prescribing activities, i.e. daytime Comhaltas through wider roll out with government investment. Daytime Comhaltas brings people together to take part in music and/or dancing which benefits health and wellbeing e.g. increased social interaction, decreased stress etc.

Service Development

Through additional resourcing of its centres, Comhaltas will increase the range of services they deliver regionally and grow their links across statutory and community agencies.

Socially Networked

By expanding its community events, Comhaltas will increase social capital, deliver social interaction opportunities and facilitate the development of support networks for beneficiaries.

A Community Connected

Through targeted programmes Comhaltas will increase intergenerational contact and the passing down of traditions thus enhancing life experiences for all.

Strategic Links

Given the scope and scale of Comhaltas, the movement will increase its strategic links with other community and voluntary organisations and advocate on behalf of the wider cultural sector.



Resource Centres

Comhaltas currently has 19 centres across the island of Ireland, these centres support the Comhaltas volunteer and branch network, deliver the Comhaltas vision, including this prospectus and form an important part of the cultural landscape and community infrastructure across the island.

Where we are...

Regional Resource Centres

There are seven Regional Resource Centres located in Dublin, Tipperary, Westmeath, Sligo, Louth, Tyrone and Clare.

Meitheal

The Regional and Outreach Centres bring their host communities together and through the Meitheal initiative deliver the Comhaltas vision to "give people genuine access to traditional arts".

Cultural Centres

These centres also provide a significant community resource and are a vital part of the arts infrastructure locally.

Cultural Foundation

Each Regional Resource Centre provides co-ordinating and back up services to its respective region. It provides a comprehensive and varied programme of education, entertainment, training, archives, and information etc.

Satellite Supports

There are twelve outreach Cultural Centres in Corofin, Riverstown, Tulla, Kilrush, Ennistymon, Lixnaw, Tralee, Youghal, Rockchapel, Moate, Ballynacargy and Tullamore.

Landmark Locations

Several of the centres have been donated to Comhaltas and a number of them have a significant history. These include two churches, a gaol, a convent, a school and one of them is adjacent to the Rock of Cashel.

Comhaltas HQ

Cultúrlann na hÉireann, based in Monkstown, Co. Dublin, is an Irish Cultural Institute, and is the HQ of Comhaltas. It co-ordinates the 19 Cultural Centres and supports the delivery of the Comhaltas cultural programme at home and abroad.

Cultural Heritage Investment

The State has provided generous financial support for this nationwide and international development.

Our Challenge:

Through investment in our physical infrastructure and increased revenue funding,

Comhaltas will expand and develop our presence across the island and beyond, increasing the services available at our centres and ensuring a regionally balanced delivery of this ambitious roadmap.

Comhaltas Connections



Dr Robert Harvey - Lecturer and Musician

Laois: Flute

Comhaltas has been hugely influential in my musical and professional career. Early performance, recording and touring opportunities with Camross branch inspired me to pursue music as a career and study Irish music to PhD level. Attending Scoil Éigse, Fleadhanna Ceoil, SCT exams and weekly branch classes gave me the confidence and skills for performing and influenced my approach to teaching. I feel it is important to provide those same opportunities to young musicians through my work teaching in Comhaltas branches, TTCT course, universities and Ceoltóirí Óga Laigheann. Being a member of the National Folk Orchestra offers a unique opportunity to engage with music in an innovative way and develop and maintain lifelong friendships in music.

Where we are going...

Regional Revamp

Upgrade and develop the 19 Cultural Centres into community hubs which will reach out and provide services and facilities to a broader and diverse community.

Tourism Partnership

With the needs of rural Ireland and the tourism sector in mind, engage staff and facilitators with various skills and specialities to provide a range of services, training, conferences and partnership events and projects.

Central Purpose

Enable and resource the centres through their Meitheal regions, to become an integral partner in delivering the broader national/international programme of Comhaltas and other appropriate State initiatives.

Resource Full

Provide the necessary physical and human resources which will enable the centres to reach beyond their own jurisdictions, to a national and worldwide audience.

Global Market

Develop a central online shop for resources including books, CDs, learning materials and tourism literature etc. to respond to the growing international interest in Irish cultural traditions evidenced by the fact that up to 25% of those at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann are from out-of-State.

Destination Comhaltas

Carry out a review to maximise the unique tourism potential for the current 19 Cultural Centres, to include scoping on investment for interactive exhibitions included across all centres and the possibility of becoming tourist Information centres for Fáilte Ireland/ Tourism Ireland.

Resource Centre Expansion

As the opportunity arises, establish further centres where needed and appropriate.

Supporting Initiatives

Comhaltas will ensure the ongoing support of the Regional Centres and seek funding to expand this support and their varied programmes.

Prospectus Distribution

Comhaltas will disseminate this prospectus across all its Regional Resource Centres and Outreach Centres to support a regionally balanced delivery of its strategic objectives.



Cultural Archives

Comhaltas has built a huge library of cultural resources and archive over its 70 year history. These collections are held both nationally and regionally with a large amount of these items being available online or physically at one of our 19 Regional Centres located across Ireland. These resources combine to both educate and entertain and are a valuable resource in telling the cultural and heritage story of Ireland.

Where we are...

Cultural Archive

The Comhaltas Archive is a free access digital repository which has been collected or donated to the organisation over its seventy-year history. The archive, which is linked to the EU Europeana Sounds interface, comprises c. 20,000 items of audio, video, print and photographic archival material.

Treoir

Treoir magazine is delivered to all members, stakeholders and community representatives. It is also available on the Comhaltas website. Treoir covers a varied range of articles on all aspects of Irish traditional instrumental music, singing, dance, storytelling, poetry, social history, folklore and news of events.

Community Archives

Many individuals and branches have collected a vast personal or community archive of materials from their local areas. Many of these branches and individuals have donated or intend to donate these collections to Comhaltas in the future.

ComhaltasLive

Is a weekly programme of live audio-visual recordings of Irish traditional music performances available on comhaltas.ie. Each week a 20 minute programme is divided into segments featuring musicians from all over Ireland and worldwide. This is accompanied by detail on the musicians and music.

Music Exhibitions

Many Comhaltas Regional Centres host an exhibition detailing a person, culture or area of historical or cultural interest locally. These include the Sounds of History- Glór na gCianta at Brú Ború Cultural Centre, Cashel, Ceoláras Coleman's history of the South Sligo Musical Tradition and Oriel Centre's interpretative exhibit on Dundalk Gaol.

Recordings

Comhaltas continues to add to its cultural archive through recordings by Regional Centres and by supporting local branches to document noteworthy musicians, events and locations etc.

Audio Visual Output

Comhaltas has produced over 85 audio, print and audio-visual publications i.e. music tuition books and accompanying CDs, Concert Tour CDs / DVDs, archival CDs, as well as compilations on instrumental music, singing, dancing, storytelling and other related historical works. Many of these works have an educational value and historical significance.

YouTube Archive

The Comhaltas YouTube channel, and that of Cois na hAbhna, offer another important resource of Irish traditional music recordings and acts as a contemporary record of current musicians and musical styles. These recordings are available for free across the globe, promoting Irish traditional music as an example of our Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Our Challenge:

The cultural resources and archive offer a valuable asset in the telling of the cultural and heritage story of Ireland and in attracting new visitors to these shores.

Through further investment in digitisation and archive infrastructure, Comhaltas can ensure these and future cultural assets are available to all with an interest in the culture of Ireland across the globe.



Comhaltas - Great Wall of China

Where we are going...

Archive Spotlight

At both national and regional level, the archival recordings are a valuable cultural resource, however they are not widely recognised. An opportunity exists to raise awareness about the archive and its content, not only among musicians and academics but also the wider public. This promotional drive could also result in an increase in donations of material.

Website Upgrade

Investment required to update the current archive website functionality and compatibility with all smart phones. Included in this update, a function to provide ongoing recording, uploading of material including via direct uploads from a mobile phone or tablet. This is important for regional archives where lesser-known local musicians and singers remain to be recorded.

Cultural Cataloguing

Comhaltas will seek investment to resource the digitisation and cataloguing of all material held by Comhaltas. This will ensure the entire valuable resource that is the Comhaltas archive is widely available to all.

Archive Exhibit

Comhaltas will explore the potential of a portable physical exhibition with A/V elements from the Comhaltas Archive which could visit venues across Ireland and the wider Comhaltas network incorporating an educational element.

Exhibitions Review

Carry out a review of the exhibitions at the current Cultural Centres, to include scoping on investment for interactive exhibitions included across all centres.

Folk Orchestra

Comhaltas will continue to support the development of the national and regional folk orchestras. Nurturing groups to ensure the continued evolution of regional musical styles, promotion of new commissions and creating opportunities for members to develop their performance skills and repertoire.

Audio Visual Legacy

Resourcing the ongoing digitisation of audio, print and audio-visual published material at regional level would mean ease of access for those seeking access, especially from abroad. It would also ease searchability and ensure preservation of materials for years to come.

Platform Presence

Improve the online presence of Comhaltas through a new main organisation website with improved ecommerce to increase sales of Comhaltas material making investment in future products more sustainable.

Generating Content

Comhaltas will, through investing in training, encourage members and the public to record and document local individuals and events and make available this new material to the Comhaltas Archive.



Fleadhanna

The Fleadh Cheoil phenomenon comprises County, Provincial, National/International and Diaspora Fleadhanna. The staging of these flagship events showcases the many positive aspects of our cultural expression, enhances communities, attracts 1000's of out-of-State visitors and builds Ireland's reputation globally as a culturally aware nation.

Where we are...

A Unique Event

It is widely acknowledged - and publicised by the media and supported by the Irish Government - that the Fleadh from community to international levels is a unique network embracing the Irish race - and friends of Ireland - across the whole island of Ireland and globally.

Cultural Expression

Since its inception in 1951, the Fleadh Cheoil has evolved into a significant cultural expression of who we are as a people -it includes music, language, dance, song, folklore, storytelling and history. A virtual 'national institution', with a multi-faceted programme.

Fleadh Cheoil

The Fleadh Cheoil helps to not only develop the competitors' participants' musicality, but also assists their personal development through building their confidence and communication skills as well as expanding their social support network.

Elevating Fleadh

The structures at all Fleadh levels have developed over a seventy year period building best-practice procedures and operations.

Global Fleadh

The national/international Fleadh - Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann - is now one of the foremost cultural festivals in the world. It attracts in excess of 500,000 people - over 25% of whom are out-of-State making it a prime tourism attraction, generating over €60 million for the economy and gaining significant positive PR worldwide.

Passionate People

Fleadhanna across the island and abroad deliver thousands of volunteering and personal development opportunities.

Civic Pride

Fleadhanna offer the host location the opportunity to build social capital, community engagement and develop a civic pride in place.

An Ghaeilge

A previous Value for Money Review of the Department's Ciste na Gaeilge commissioned by the Department of Finance stated,

'Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann provided a positive environment conducive to the normalisation of the use of the Irish Language, exposing large numbers of people to Irish'.

Our Challenge:

By developing our Fleadhanna at home and overseas through innovative and flexible initiatives, Comhaltas can expand the reach of these events.

Engaging more people and organisations locally as well as attracting increased international visitors to our regional towns and villages to experience our globally renowned culture.



Fleadh Cheoil Ennis 2016

Where we are going...

Fleadhanna Nation

The All-Ireland Fleadh will be linked to the expansion and enhancement process at County, Provincial and Diaspora levels.

Fleadh Future

The County Fleadhanna, which act as qualifiers, to be more closely associated with the Provincial Fleadhs. These Provincial Fleadhs to become week-long celebrations of community and cultural expression and aspirations.

Fleadhanna Week

Developing each of the 32 County Fleadhanna in Ireland into vibrant week-long community festivals which embrace other organisations and activities such as crafts, local history, heritage, environment, climate action, and traditional sports and pastimes etc. can offer the public increased opportunities to engage with our culture.

Fleadh Streaming

Through the introduction of streaming for some competitions, Comhaltas will open up the fleadh further to new audiences across the globe and grow participation and engagement with Irish culture as well as encourage additional visits by out-of-State tourists.

Tourism Driver

Through a strategic development process, the regional and provincial fleadhanna at home and abroad can act as a tourism driver for Ireland nationally and internationally and leave a legacy within host regions.

Fleadh Programme

Through adequate resourcing, the newly revamped Fleadh programme from local to international levels will be packaged as a comprehensive cultural tourism product.

Fleadh Platforms

Utilising new and existing internal and external communications, Comhaltas will market the Fleadhanna locally, nationally and internationally engaging more people and organisations with these cultural events.

Developing Our People

Through a dedicated volunteer development and training resource, Comhaltas will deliver further personal development opportunities for those who volunteer with our Fleadhanna.

Fleadh Support

Comhaltas will develop engagement supports at all levels of Fleadhanna to assist local communities in harvesting the social capital and civic pride generated by these events.



Irish Language

Gaeilge is a major part of Comhaltas and central to all policies. Comhaltas at all levels works with a wide range of bodies in promoting the language to maximise its use and development. Comhaltas achieves this by offering opportunities for people to use their language across our activities and events.

Where we are...

Bilingual Policies

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is playing a significant role in promoting and developing Irish cultural traditions, and through its bilingual policies, recognises the importance of achieving greater use of the spoken language at all Comhaltas activities.

Love of the Language

Initiatives delivered annually across the organisation to promote the Irish Language include; Seachtain na Gaeilge, Seomraí and Ionad na Gaeilge at Fleadhanna Ceoil, Comhrá Gaeilge, Scéalaíocht, Amhránaíocht, Amhráin Nuachumtha, Ciorcail Cainte, Summer Camps as well as bilingual signage at all Comhaltas events and Centres.

Irish Language Classes

Many Comhaltas branches across the network deliver Irish language classes as part of their programme of events.

Coiste na Gaeilge

At national level there is a Coiste na Gaeilge devising policies and implementing strategies to promote and enable the learning of, and wider use of our Irish language.

Focal ar Fhocal

Comhaltas actively supports the use of Irish in all our branch activities. As a practical and active measure in this regard Comhaltas made available a useful programme of conversational building blocks - known as "Focal ar Fhocal" - to encourage the use and understanding of Irish.

Using our Irish Language

Comhaltas events and activities provide a positive environment for all levels of proficiency to use their Irish language. These events and activities normalise the use of Irish outside the classroom and expose large numbers of people to the language.

Treoir

All Comhaltas publications are bilingual and the Comhaltas journal TREOIR contains a number of pages as Gaeilge.

Treoraithe na Gaeilge

All Comhaltas branches, county boards and provincial councils have appointed Treoraithe na Gaeilge.

Our Challenge:

Comhaltas is constantly producing new opportunities which have a real tangible impact on language usage and development.

Comhaltas will explore new ways to encourage people and 'the new Irish', to use Irish at Comhaltas events and to embrace the presence of Irish language and Irish culture within their daily lives.



Where we are going...

Fleadh Cheoil

At Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann the use of the Irish language as a general means of communication is very evident. Comhaltas sees huge potential arising from this and would now like to take the necessary steps to capitalise on the synergy and implement the lessons learned throughout Comhaltas and the broader community.

Bilingual Expansion

Further expand and enhance the existing bilingual operations throughout the organisation. Comhaltas will provide backup assistance through training and resources to achieve this by developing a module.

Language Environment

Consider and implement new and practical ideas, with supporting resources, to make a further contribution to a bilingual environment as evident at Fleadhanna Ceoil and other Comhaltas events.

Funding Gaeilge

Deliver additional funding for classes across the branch network to encourage as many branches as possible to deliver learning opportunities across the Comhaltas network.

Treoraithe Development

Develop practical training materials and resources for Treoraithe to enable them to expand the use of and understanding of Irish at Comhaltas events and activities.

Campaí Samhraidh

Expand, enhance and further develop the existing campaí samhraidh scheme in Comhaltas and ensure a strong regional spread of activities.

All Ages Access

Roll out a national scheme whereby parents and guardians can attend Irish language classes while waiting to collect children from music, singing and dancing tuition.

Seachtain na Gaeilge

Further develop and resource Seachtain na Gaeilge at County, Provincial Fleadhanna and Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.

Focal ar Fhocal

Comhaltas will update and make available online its Focal ar Fhocal resource to enable everyone to increase their understanding of the Irish language.



Festivals & Events

Outside of the Fleadh series, Comhaltas delivers a wide variety of community events, festivals, summer schools and Féilte which add to the cultural offering and landscape of Irish culture at home and overseas.

Where we are...

Fleadh Nua

Comhaltas organises Fleadh Nua, an event, which has been running since 1970 and draws thousands of visitors to the town of Ennis each year. It has evolved into a major cultural event spanning 10 days and featuring more than 120 separate events including; concerts, céilithe, talks & lectures as well as sessions and street entertainment.

60+ Festivals

Comhaltas supports and delivers through its branch network, over 60+ commemorative and participative festivals each year outside of Fleadhanna.

Event Coordination

Comhaltas events and festivals build the skills and confidence of local communities in event delivery.

Campaí Samhraidh

Comhaltas supports the delivery of 'Campaí Samhraidh' (summer camps) and music schools across the branch network. These include events such as Scoil Éigse, the Joe Mooney Summer School, Scoil Acla and many others. Attracting large numbers of domestic and international audiences and promoting the use of An Ghaeilge mar theanga bheo.

Meitheal Festival

Comhaltas supports the nurturing of new and emerging events and festivals through its Meitheal initiative.

Social Capital

Comhaltas events and festivals build social capital within their host communities and improve community connections, collaborations and cooperation with young people whilst also tackling social isolation within older generations.

Féilte

Comhaltas supports the delivery of 10 Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Féilte and other cultural events internationally including Féilte in North America, South America, Britain, Australia & Japan.

Performance Groups

Comhaltas supports a number of concert tours nationally and internationally, the summer seisiún series as well as the National Folk Orchestra of Ireland which reformed in 2013 to deliver a number of performances which have received critical acclaim.

Our Challenge:

Through leveraging additional investment and utilising its wide network, Comhaltas can expand the scope and scale of the events and festivals it offers.

Comhaltas will build confidence in communities to develop events/festivals. This will protect regional cultural styles, drive tourism outside of the peak periods and create distinct cultural places and spaces.

Comhaltas Connections



Cathy Kirke - Secondary school music teacher

Monaghan: Bodhrán, whistle, piano

Comhaltas has paved the way to so many musical opportunities for me as an adult. Comhaltas has allowed me to forge many lasting friendships and opportunities I would not otherwise have had. I have competed, adjudicated and been a member of Comhaltas tour groups. Membership of Comhaltas has given me the opportunity to play in the National Folk Orchestra and the Ulster Youth and Folk Orchestra for performances of Ómós na nUlltach. Above all, I value the opportunities I've had to meet and make music with so many friends

Where we are going...

Festival Tourism

Many Comhaltas events like Fleadh Nua, attract overseas and out-of-State visitors. Comhaltas will attract more out-of-State visitors, musicians, and dancers to attend or perform at these events through targeted investment in a marketing and communications strategy aimed at the diaspora and potential out-of-State visitors.

Youth Events

Comhaltas will investigate the feasibility of a youth event, this event will be targeted at young people and be designed, planned and delivered by Comhaltas Youth Officers. These events should espouse the Cothromaíocht principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, creating a safe and welcoming environment for all.

Banner Brands

Comhaltas will seek funds to invest in developing a banner brand for its festivals and events, similar to the Fleadh Cheoil brand. This would enable the events to be marketed together as a package and increase visibility of new events and those held overseas.

Aos Óg (Youth) Concerts

Have long been a feature of Fleadh Nua. Properly resourced and promoted this event has the potential to be replicated across other Comhaltas events. It could also become a national showcase for the best of emerging traditional musicians, singers and dancers from all around the country and abroad.

Planning Processes

Comhaltas, through increased investment in the Meitheal event support initiative, will further de-risk event planning and delivery for volunteer branches encouraging new events and 'Campaí Samhraidh' (summer camps) to come on stream and existing events to expand.

Event Training Seminars

To ensure all events, festivals and activities are delivered safely and in line with best practice, Comhaltas will deliver a comprehensive series of online and off-line event management training seminars. This will build skills across the network and wider community. Ensuring a standard when developing and delivering events.

Folk Futures

Comhaltas will continue to support the National Folk Orchestra of Ireland ensuring the Orchestra can deliver performances at national and regional events and festivals as well as continuing to create opportunities for members to develop their performance skills and repertoire.

Tours

Comhaltas will seek additional funding and support to expand its national and international touring opportunities and support to diplomatic missions enhancing the visibility of our Irish cultural traditions locally, nationally and internationally.

Global Events

Comhaltas will seek further investment to support the expansion of current féilte delivered through diaspora branches and to develop new events which showcase and promote our culture overseas and throughout the global Irish community.

We want to build on our rich heritage, continue to enhance our communities by facilitating access to our unique Irish culture





Picture: Gary McGivney



Education

Comhaltas delivers 100's of educational opportunities, classes and programmes that promote cultural excellence each week outside the formal education sector. These activities increase lifelong learning opportunities and build the skills base of our students and wider society.

Where we are...

Branch Classes

Comhaltas branches deliver hundreds of classes each week in music, song, Irish language, and dance. These offer social engagement opportunities and a chance to perform competitively and non-competitively.

Trad is Fab

Primary school programme which introduces Irish traditional music and covers elements of the current primary school curriculum.

Scoil Éigse

International summer school, held over 5 days before Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann. There are over 70 classes for all instruments, song, Irish language, and dance.

SCT Scrúdú Ceol Tíre

(SCT) is a series of graded exams designed to take a musician from basic proficiency in tune playing to a mastery of the tradition. There are four graded elements, performance, aural awareness, musical discussion and sight reading.

TTCT - Teacher Training

Teastas i dTeagasc Ceolta Tíre is a weeklong course which helps equip teachers by providing practical teaching sessions, methodology, musical literacy, analysis, general preparation, using the SCT as a teaching tool, and much more. A one-day Preparatory Course is also available to guide potential teachers.

Adjudicator Seminar

A weekend course including various instruments, solo and group competitions, competition rules, different scenarios met, the role of the adjudicator, and much more.

Summer Schools /Festivals

There are many workshops and masterclasses organised globally as part of music festivals and campáí samhraidh organised by branches, County Boards and Provincial Councils.

The Aural Tradition

Comhaltas facilitates life long learning opportunities through the passing on of our Irish cultural traditions through our events and activities.

Our Challenge:

Comhaltas will continue to deliver and expand its cultural education programmes.

Inspiring people of all ages to reach their full potential through engagement with Irish culture. Enabling people to gain skills or qualifications that improve their lives and the communities they live in.



National Folk Orchestra of Ireland

Where we are going...

Class Flexibility

Provide a list of resources that are available to branches to aid in the teaching of all classes. Develop online tutorials. Create a branch activity list to encourage more development through education.

Trad is Fab Online

Develop 3 new online interactive programmes for pre-school, primary, and secondary level education. They will cover the music curriculum at all levels and each programme connects to each other delivering continuous musical development throughout students' formal education. CPD* accredited programmes.

*CPD - Continuing Professional Development

QQI Accreditation*

Comhaltas will expand its educational offering by developing two level 5 qualifications in music performance and education with continued research and development of level 6 and 7 in the future.

*QQI - Quality and Qualifications Ireland

SCT + MTB

Comhaltas will, in partnership with MTB* gain accreditation in Northern Ireland and Britain for its SCT graded exams. It will update the syllabus, develop online resources for all, new management system, online module as a teaching aid, advanced certificate to be consolidated as part of a new Level 5 QQI accredited PLC (Post Leaving Cert) in Music Performance.

*MTB - Music Teachers Board

Training Upgrade

CPD accreditation, development of current ETB* accreditation, updates of all syllabi, online resources, creation of an official teachers list, integrating modules on diversity, equality, and inclusion. The Preparatory Course and the TTCT will form part of a new Level 5 QQI accredited PLC (Post Leaving Cert) in Music Education.

*ETB - Education and Training Board

Adjudicator Cert

Certificate of Attendance to be developed for all adjudicators every three years. Development of online resources and adjudicator's handbook. Creation of online course for overseas candidates. These seminars will integrate into both the PLC (Post Leaving Cert) in Music Performance and Music Education.

Summer Schools /Festivals Programme

Provide an annual list of workshops, masterclasses, festivals and campai samhraidh to all branches globally. Develop a manual on how to run a Campa Samhraidh. Create a list of lectures and lecturers that could be used at these events.

Scoil Éigse

Expand the model of Scoil Éigse to deliver learning opportunities at provincial and county Fleadhanna.

Inspire to Connect

Improve the visibility of Comhaltas formal and informal education and learning opportunities, inspiring more people of all ages to improve their lives, and the lives of their communities by increasing their skills through engagement with Comhaltas.



Youth

Comhaltas ensures the voice of its young members is given equal weight at all levels of the organisation and seeks to support and grow our youth through education, training, volunteering opportunities and recognition.

Where we are...

Youth Representation

Comhaltas currently has an elected position of Youth Officer at Branch, County Board and Provincial Council. There are two Óg-Bhaille elected to the Ardchomhairle. The Óg-Bhaille, who must be under 25 years of age, ensure that the voice of our youth is heard at all levels.

Youth Officer

The Comhaltas Youth Officer carries out and assists with a number of additional tasks including organising youth events. This method builds a portfolio of skills, including leadership skills for the officer throughout their tenure.

Ré Nua na nÓg

Is a youth manual designed to equip the youth officer with inspiration and motivation. The launch of this document was accompanied by a series of training seminars.

Youth Training

Comhaltas offers a vast array of education and learning opportunities for young people who engage with the organisation. From branch classes, youth sessions, summer schools, training and mentoring in committee roles and participation as well as structured training through Scrúdu Ceol Tíre (SCT) and Teastas i dTeagasc Ceolta Tíre (TTCT).

Volunteering

Comhaltas offers 1000's of volunteering opportunities across all levels of the organisation and through our activities and events, enabling intergenerational contact and delivering lifelong learning opportunities outside of the formal education structure.

Comhaltas Space

Comhaltas enables young people to have a safe and protective environment to connect and engage with their peers and local community.

Gradam na nÓg Award

Comhaltas gives tangible recognition to the work and effort of our Youth through the Gradam na nÓg award. This has been seen to increase motivation and engagement among our youth.

Performance

Comhaltas facilitates and offers 1000's of performance opportunities for young people across its network and through community celebrations which engage Comhaltas for their events and activities.

Our Challenge:

Comhaltas will continue to develop our culture through supporting and nurturing young talent.

Building the capacity and confidence of our youth to enable them to achieve and open up new opportunities for them.

Comhaltas Connections



Donagh McElligott - Dental Surgeon

Kerry: Tin whistle, fiddle and piano

Comhaltas has played a pivotal part in my life since 10 years of age. My musical journey began in The Ceolann Cultural Centre in Lixnaw, Co. Kerry, where I attended music classes for many years and took part in various Fleadhanna ceoil with the branch. Through Comhaltas, I have had the opportunity to travel the entire country and even abroad for sessions and festivals, and have made life long friends. I have been teaching music classes, grúpaí cheoil and céili bands in the branch since 2016. Through teaching and from taking part in grúpaí cheoil competitions over the years, I have found a great love for creating, arranging and composing music. I was also fortunate enough to win the Newly Composed tunes competition at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in 2014.

Where we are going...

Youth Recruitment

Comhaltas will open up new pathways and opportunities for young people by utilising its local branch network to identify and develop potential leaders of the future through a youth leadership programme and sponsored mentoring, training/coaching programmes with local volunteers. Also an option for participants of the Gaisce Award.

Youth Forum

Establish a Youth Forum at regional and national level. This forum will be another voice of the youth within the organisation. It will put forward proposals for recruitment/retention of young people, peer to peer training, a mentorship programme to assist youth officers in developing their role while also spreading awareness of the roles and it's importance.

Comhaltas Exchange Programme

Further develop and reinvigorate the Comhaltas exchange programme to enable branches & regional boards to organise programmes which engage young people from different backgrounds across the organisation. It will encourage communication/contact between branches and youth officers.

Youth Focused Events

Comhaltas will develop and resource a series of youth specific events and projects at county, regional and national level, these will be designed, planned and delivered by youth. These events should espouse the Cothromaíocht principles of creating a safe and welcoming environment for all.

Annual Induction

Comhaltas will establish an annual induction and training calendar for youth officers based on the 'Ré Nua na nÓg' document. This will introduce new officers to the role and educate existing officers on its scope and opportunities within Comhaltas. This will increase youth engagement, promote peer to peer learning/ mentoring as well as personal and professional growth.

Cúlra na nÓg

Develop a programme based on the Cúlra na nÓg project devised by Comhaltas in Britain to target young people within the many new traditions and social backgrounds that constitute contemporary Ireland, this is in line with the vision of 'Culture 2025' - The right of everyone to participate in the cultural and creative life of the nation.

Promote Gradam na nÓg

Comhaltas will increase the visibility and accessibility of its youth volunteer recognition awards i.e. Gradam na nÓg to ensure that young volunteers across the organisation can identify their impact in achieving the wider goals of Comhaltas.

College Communities

Further develop links with higher education institutions across Ireland and institutions overseas which house Irish and/or Celtic studies to extend the pathways open to young people as they continue their musical education journey and offer other Comhaltas members and cultural enthusiasts a familiar group to aid their transition into third level education.

Global Access

Comhaltas will design a formal qualifying procedure for young competitors living outside the main province structure to ensure young people across the Irish traditional world have access to qualification for Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.



Diversity, Equality & Inclusion

Comhaltas through its programmes and events continually reach out and encourage a new and diverse range of people to engage with Comhaltas and to experience our cultural assets.

Where we are...

Open Door

Comhaltas is non-political, non-denominational, it attracts a membership from a diverse demographic and acts as a conduit for persons born here or new to this island to integrate into their local community.

Cothromaíocht

The Comhaltas Cothromaíocht initiative ensures that the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are considered in all aspects of the organisation.

Awareness Seminars

Comhaltas has developed a series of online training seminars and policies aimed at creating awareness across the volunteer network with regards to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and educating members on a safer space to enjoy and work in the arts. Engagement with the 'Safe to Create' programme promoted by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

Cross Community Collaboration

Comhaltas events offer engagement opportunities well outside its core beneficiaries through linking with wider community groups and organisations in the delivery of these events, creating spaces where our cultural traditions can be explored, celebrated and mutually respected.

Community Cohesion

Comhaltas through its events and activities build social capital and community cohesion as well as developing civic pride within the communities where our activities take place enhancing inclusion and promoting diversity and equality.

Whole Community Approach

Comhaltas Fleadhanna are "whole community" events and welcome people from all traditional backgrounds as well as newcomers to the island through outreach work.

Comhaltas has a strong reputation with local communities, Government, public agencies in Ireland and beyond.

Nationwide Reach

Comhaltas has a significant community based presence across the island of Ireland with resource centres and branches across NI and the border counties as well as key events hosted throughout the region annually.

C.E.O.L

Comhaltas' Community, Engagement, Outreach and Liaison (C.E.O.L) project has brought scores of young musicians from PUL (Protestant, Unionist & Loyalist) and CNR (Catholic, Nationalist & Republican) backgrounds together to highlight how the culture and music of Ireland and Scotland are inextricably linked.

Our Challenge:

Comhaltas will continue to devise a range of initiatives and programmes across the entire organisation.

This will ensure all people feel safe, comfortable and welcomed to participate in, or engage with, Comhaltas activities and events, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to experience our cultural assets.

Comhaltas Connections



Fiona Gaffney - Cake Designer

Dublin: Fiddle, Viola, Harp

I started learning Irish traditional music at my local branch in Dublin when I was just seven years old. I am now a fiddle teacher in my branch 18 years later and it gives me great joy each week to teach the younger generation of musicians. Comhaltas has given me the chance to develop my music through classes, competitions, weekly sessions, at the Fleadhs and performing with the Comhaltas National Folk Orchestra of Ireland of which I am very proud to be a member. I have made lifelong friends both at home and away in London where I was invited to join the Parish Ceili Band which went on to win at the All Britain Fleadh. I am very lucky to be a part of such an inspiring and friendly community.

Where we are going...

Shared Island Agendas

Comhaltas, through its established links and strong reputation across the political and cultural sphere, will have a significant influence on delivering the shared society and shared island agendas within the Programme for Government (PFG) both North and South.

Trusted Partnership

Through further establishing strategic links and collaborative working relationships across Government, statutory agencies and other cultural organisations, Comhaltas will advocate on behalf of the sector and become a trusted partner in the delivery of the shared society and shared island agendas in both jurisdictions.

Community Liaison

Establishing a staff resource and relevant 'community liaison officer' role to the existing volunteer branch committee, alongside widening its outreach policy to all provincial and county Fleadhanna, Comhaltas will increase its level of impact in integrating new communities as well as improving North/South relations and creating a wider shared future (PFG IRELAND 2020 - A SHARED FUTURE).

Ease of Access

By ensuring all Fleadh and Comhaltas event websites are designed and updated regularly to maximise visitors to our events, especially non-Comhaltas visitors, Comhaltas will create a seamless visitor journey to a fleadh or event and can in turn encourage new people to engage with the culture of the island.

Training Upgrade

Utilising a training section within a newly commissioned website, Comhaltas will develop and deliver specialised training for key audiences i.e. teachers, examiners, volunteers, and staff. This will work alongside the training modules provided by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and the "Code of Behaviour" for the Irish Arts and Creative Sectors adopted by Comhaltas.

Cothromaíocht Expansion

Through further expanding the Cothromaíocht initiative and delivering additional training for volunteers and staff, Comhaltas will ensure that the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are considered at all levels and in all aspects of the organisation.

Community Engagement Plan

Producing a Community Engagement plan and securing a Diversity Officer to deliver training for volunteers, Comhaltas will ensure that events and activities are inclusive, welcoming and accessible. Encouraging communities and people to engage with CCÉ and experience Ireland's cultural assets.

All-Ireland Fleadhanna

Actively encouraging bids for Provincial and All-Ireland Fleadhanna by branches within Northern Ireland, Comhaltas will expand its reach/impact in delivering the shared society/shared island agendas from the PFG's both North and South. Facilitating mature dialogue about our culture, its interconnectedness and creating spaces where all cultures of this island can be explored, celebrated and respected.

Welcome

Ireland is known globally for its "Céad Míle Fáilte", Comhaltas will ensure all its events, activities and spaces are welcoming to all of society.



Diaspora

Comhaltas facilitates a tangible connection back to Ireland for many overseas and is making the diaspora a valued partner in growing Ireland's cultural potential across the globe as the movement acts as an ambassador for the country on the global stage.

Where we are...

Global Influence

Comhaltas has grown to have a presence in 21 countries across the world. The appointment of a Diaspora Officer has reaffirmed the importance of linking branches, members and communities overseas with Ireland and the value to be gained from harnessing the diaspora.

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann

Has grown into one of the largest cultural events, not only in Ireland but also the world. Over 25% of attendees for the event are from out-of-State. The overseas reception and concert, which celebrate the skills and diversity of our musicians from overseas, are now established key events at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.

Fleadhanna and Féilte

Have been developed in Japan, Brazil, Argentina and Australia, leading to a growth in the numbers of competitors at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann from overseas.

Print & Digital Presence

Branches and units of Comhaltas have embraced social media and digital technology as a method of connecting with members, between units and as a means of fostering a closer connection with Ireland. Treoir remains the flagship publication distributed to our diaspora members and stakeholders worldwide.

Comhaltas Tours

Successful Comhaltas tours in the past have included tours to USA, Australia and the Far East. The concert tour of Britain has been successful in maintaining a link for the Irish community in Britain since the 1970s. Comhaltas tours sit alongside demand from international events and Irish diplomatic services to send groups to represent the culture and nation of Ireland.

Branch Twinning

Has been promoted since the establishment of Comhaltas. The concept of musicians from different places meeting and sharing knowledge, tunes, styles etc. is central to the Comhaltas ethos. Several branches overseas exist because of a direct and personal connection to an individual, group or place back in Ireland.

Irish Connections

The value of Comhaltas in the diaspora is seen differently than at home in Ireland with branches forming the bedrock of access and participation in 'Irishness' beyond the music.

Supporting Communities

Encompassing social, health and a support network, Comhaltas, through the diaspora uses our intangible cultural heritage to provide a tangible link and support to Ireland and the community living or visiting overseas.

Our Challenge:

Comhaltas will approach all activities and initiatives from the point of view of how it might work both in Ireland and abroad.

Developing a global Irish viewpoint and leveraging the global diaspora community to ensure a multicultural dimension to growing Irish culture.



Comhaltas Japan

Where we are going...

Engaging Embassies

Comhaltas will expand and strengthen its links with the Irish Embassies and Consulates globally to facilitate ease of access for our diplomatic missions to a wide network of Irish traditional musicians for functions and events.

Competition Structures

Comhaltas will design a formal qualifying procedure for competitors living outside the 6 province structure to ensure parity of access and maintain the integrity of qualification for Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann and that of its competitions.

Comhaltas will celebrate the attendance and contribution the diaspora bring to Irish music and culture at this event.

New Flagship Events

Fleadhanna and Féilte overseas have been developed and strengthened as flagship celebrations of Irish culture around the world. Comhaltas will develop an understanding of how events outside Ireland can be networked globally to leverage a direct connection back to the Fleadhanna programme in Ireland.

Digital Infrastructure

Comhaltas will strengthen our digital infrastructure, especially communications. Improving how our branches worldwide can engage with competitions, campaigns, initiatives, resources, and events. Comhaltas will also develop an engagement strategy to connect with members globally through webinars, digital diaspora newsletters etc.

Comhaltas Tours Networks

Comhaltas will explore the development of the Comhaltas tour network to complement or enhance the annual tours of Britain and North America and to capitalise on the benefits of musicians, singers and dancers travelling from Ireland to visit the diaspora.

Twinning Goals

Twinning between Comhaltas branches in Ireland and branches overseas will be strongly encouraged through the development of resources and support.

Irish Communities

Comhaltas will continue the consideration of its role in supporting local, national and diaspora communities beyond Irish music and look to be a leader in building strong, connected, and sustainable Irish communities around the world.

Proactive Partnerships

Comhaltas will continue to work and partner with other organisations such as the GAA, Department of Foreign Affairs etc. to play its part in supporting the Irish Diaspora in a holistic way.

Global Resources

Comhaltas will further expand its network outside Ireland with individuals and communities who wish to engage with Irish culture by creating resources to support the establishment of new branches overseas.



Tourism

Comhaltas plays a major role in delivering on regional and international Tourism. Comhaltas events and festivals at community, regional and national level are a core element to Ireland's Cultural Tourism sector.

Where we are...

Economic Impact

Comhaltas delivers Ireland's largest Cultural Festival, Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann. The event changes location normally on a bi-annual cycle. It attracts over 500,000 visitors with approximately 25% from overseas. It returns approx €60 million to the host area.

Regional Events

Comhaltas delivers a programme of 44 Fleadhanna Ceoil annually. Held from April to August across various regional locations. These events build community capacity and enhance regional location profiles.

Summer Seisiún

Comhaltas delivers the Summer Seisiún Programme (June-August). 450 shows across 45 locations offering an authentic cultural experience with formal and informal elements.

Festival Focus

Comhaltas festivals and events are participative, immersive, intergenerational experiences that are accessible to all. These formal and informal occasions also support the use of An Ghaeilge mar theanga bheo.

Positive Impact

Comhaltas events deliver significant positive media coverage both nationally and internationally for the country and host region.

Nurtured Networks

Comhaltas units and Centres have developed long standing effective partnerships with individuals, community organisations, and networks which are key to developing the reach and impact of events and Festivals.

Long-term Links

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, Fleadh Nua and other annual Comhaltas Festivals have established repeat visitors with connections to the community and locations.

Global Drive

Comhaltas has a structure and wide range of consolidated networks in Britain, North America, Japan, Australia and a developing structure/network in South America and Europe which drives visitors to its events.

Our Challenge:

Comhaltas events and activities attract a large number of out-of-State visitors.

Through investment aimed at growing Comhaltas' presence at home and overseas, Comhaltas can deliver economic growth through becoming a key driver in boosting regional and international tourism.



Where we are going...

Marketing Team

Development of a Marketing and Communications team at national level to deliver a comprehensive marketing and communications plan for events across the organisation and to support and mentor volunteer PROs, growing the economic impact of our events.

Festival Guide

Comhaltas will actively engage and participate in Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland and DiscoverNI marketing campaigns, creating an internal festival guide reflecting Fáilte Ireland / Tourism Ireland / DiscoverNI campaigns and strategies. This guide will be regularly reviewed to keep pace with changes in policy by tourism agencies.

Signature Events

Comhaltas will investigate options under the Fáilte Ireland 'Festival Innovation Programme' and will seek to develop Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann and Provincial Fleadhanna as 'signature events' in the tourism calendar.

Event Team Training

Training for Comhaltas volunteer event presenters and organisers to develop marketing, communication, and event management skills to bring CCÉ events to wider audiences. This to include the use of the Irish language as a cultural experience.

Unique Culture

Development of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann as well as provincial and county fleadhanna programmes to include local arts and connected elements, highlighting the activities as an authentic experience of Irish 'Intangible Cultural Heritage' (UNESCO).

Brand Loyalty

Development of brand 'Comhaltas Fleadh Cheoil' as a participative, immersive experience. Utilising 'word of mouth' and 'positive experience' endorsements to build new and repeat visitors.

Information Centre

Comhaltas Fleadhanna websites design to be focused on creating a 'seamless visitor journey' to maximise footfall / visitor numbers at Comhaltas events. This should include event details, travel, parking, accommodation, food & drink options, and event packages available.

Reflect & Evaluate

Evaluation of Comhaltas Fleadhanna and other events at all levels to create data on social & economic impact assessments. Review the unique tourism potential for Comhaltas' 19 Cultural Centres, to include scoping on investment for interactive exhibitions across the organisation which can attract out-of-State visitors.

Meitheal Support

Working closely with other local community interest groups to utilise the Comhaltas Meitheal initiative to further support branches in developing new and existing events across the organisation.



Communications

Comhaltas at an organisational level uses a variety of methods to communicate with our members, enthusiasts and the general public. These different mediums communicate our services, initiatives and benefits to the individual as well as the wider community and all stakeholders. Our local PROs work tirelessly in local communities to increase awareness of Comhaltas and our services.

Where we are...

Treoir

Treoir is the Comhaltas magazine, this publication is delivered to all members as well as stakeholders and community representatives. The publication highlights a range of activities, events, personalities and initiatives across the Comhaltas network.

ComhaltasLive

Is a repository of 1000's of hours of video footage recorded at events across the Comhaltas network. This initiative not only offers a platform for musicians, singers and dancers from across Comhaltas, but also offers the wider public an opportunity to enjoy some of the best music, song and dance for entertainment or research purposes.

Websites

Comhaltas hosts a series of websites covering the organisation's main site, fleadhanna sites, archive, examinations and the National Folk Orchestra etc. These websites have been among the main communication tools for almost 20 years, they offer a wealth of information about the organisation and its activities.

Social Media

Comhaltas uses many social media channels to communicate quickly and efficiently with members, volunteers and beneficiaries across the globe. It also acts as an advocacy tool, keeping key decision makers and the public aware of the work of the organisation.

Video Conferencing

Since the onset of the Covid pandemic, Comhaltas has embraced video conferencing to complement in-person communications and training. Comhaltas sends a number of direct communications across the year to its branches and officers to highlight campaigns and initiatives. These are delivered by post or electronic mail.

Public Relations Officer

Comhaltas has volunteer Public Relations Officers (PROs) at all levels of the organisation. These volunteers manage a wide range of local websites and social media pages. They also communicate using traditional media within their local area.

Media Matters

Media coverage around Fleadhanna is currently substantial, this is normally managed by the local host committee. At Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann level, a company is employed for the week of the Fleadh to manage the increased volume of press requests at this time.

TV Presence

Comhaltas gains significant media coverage for its Fleadhanna and events, especially Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, this includes live broadcasts and pre-recorded material on TG4 and RTÉ.

Our Challenge:

Comhaltas will increase awareness of our initiatives and services along with the benefits to our stakeholders and across our own network.

Modernising our communication tools and investing in a communications strategy, staff resource and training for volunteer members.

Comhaltas Connections



Michael Coney - Solicitor

Tyrone: Flute & Whistle

I have been a member of Comhaltas from a young age, it has been an important part of my musical education and development. From attending Tin Whistle classes in Coalisland/Clonoe Comhaltas at the age of 7, I am involved with Comhaltas to the present day. It has afforded me many opportunities throughout my musical career, allowing me compete and partake at various Fleadhanna Cheoil where I was fortunate enough to be a member of the All-Ireland winning Blackwater Céilí Band, to teaching music and organising events. Comhaltas has enabled me to pass on the tradition to the locality and the next generation, as well as having the opportunity to perform with ensembles such as the National Folk Orchestra of Ireland. It has provided a fantastic social outlet...

Where we are going...

Communications Strategy

Comhaltas will develop an organisation wide communications strategy. This will be communicated to volunteer PROs and include training on all aspects of their role.

Website Update

Comhaltas will review and modernise its website to make it more user friendly and optimised for viewing all devices. This review will provide an enhanced central website for Comhaltas as well as providing greater support and functionality to branches and other Comhaltas web services.

Social Media Strategy

Comhaltas will develop a social media strategy, providing guidance on platform choices and usage guidelines for staff and volunteers.

PRO Team

Comhaltas requires a dedicated staff resource to devise, manage and deliver a comprehensive communications strategy for the organisation. This function will include engagement with, and training for volunteer PROs to ensure they are aware of, and in tune with, the 'voice' of the wider organisation.

Electronic Marketing

Comhaltas will investigate options for increasing electronic direct contact with branches to include the ability to include individual members and those who subscribe for electronic marketing.

Comhaltas App

Many online users spend more time on mobile applications therefore Comhaltas will investigate the possibility of developing an 'app' which will also enable improved personalised communications for users. This 'app' could include a live player function for ComhaltasLive.

Expand Online Training

Comhaltas will expand its online training and support delivery and will include this option where possible for future training opportunities.

Media Reach

Comhaltas will expand its media reach across all platforms especially broadcast, seeking to grow the recognition and awareness of Comhaltas and attracting new and diverse people around the world to engage with and participate in Irish culture.

Brand Recognition

Comhaltas will oversee TV and radio coverage of its events and activities to ensure that they are consistently branded, this will create greater awareness of the Comhaltas brand among its audiences.

At a Glance

Overall, what has enabled Comhaltas to deliver on its cultural activities in Ireland and overseas is the focus it has put on:

Organisation



The organisation that is Comhaltas has many aspects to it, including its branch network, people, the social community aspect, the resource centres and its cultural archives.

Branch

Comhaltas will seek to continue its investment in, and development of, its branch network enhancing the services they deliver and expanding the number of people they engage with. Comhaltas will support them by maintaining and increasing its robust support structures at all levels.

People

Comhaltas will continue to invest and support its bedrock, namely the members, volunteers and staff. These are valued and dedicated people who come from a broad demographic especially age ranges which bring much needed “varied experiences and approaches” to their roles.

Social Community

The social and community aspect of Comhaltas has and will continue to be given the highest priority as it connects communities through our culture, placing an emphasis on social inclusion, reducing isolation and building community cohesion through events, activities, classes, branch sessions and education programmes.

Resource Centres

Comhaltas will seek increased investment for its network of 19 centres across the island of Ireland to secure provision of the basic infrastructure and support base to deliver an increased Comhaltas programme of cultural activities throughout the island of Ireland, in a regionally balanced manner.

Cultural Activities

The cultural resources and archive that Comhaltas continues to develop offers a valuable asset in the telling of the cultural and heritage story of Ireland and in attracting new visitors to the island of Ireland. Further investment in digitisation and archive interpretation is a priority to fully utilise the power of this resource.

Cultural Activities



As outlined in this prospectus, the Fleadh Cheoil phenomenon comprises county, provincial, national / international and Diaspora Fleadhanna. Comhaltas plays a significant role in promoting and developing further investment in expanding events, digitisation of archive material and archive interpretation is a priority. Irish cultural traditions through its bilingual policies, recognising the importance of achieving greater use of the spoken language at all Comhaltas activities. Comhaltas also delivers a wide variety of community events, festivals, summer schools and féilte which add to the cultural offering and landscape of Irish culture at home and overseas.

Fleadhanna

By continued development of the Fleadh Cheoil phenomenon at home and overseas, Comhaltas aims to further expand the reach of these events. This further investment in the Fleadhanna events will build volunteer skills and confidence, engage more people and organisations, increase exposure of host areas and attract increased international visitors to Ireland's regional towns and villages to experience Ireland's globally renowned culture.

Irish Language

Irish language initiatives will be further expanded and developed in order to realise new opportunities which can have a real and tangible impact on language usage and development. The key focus will be on continuing to identify and resource new ways to encourage people and “the new Irish” to use the Irish language at Comhaltas events and in their daily lives.

Festivals & Events

Research confirms that through leveraging additional investment and utilising its wide network, Comhaltas can expand the scope and scale of the events and festivals it offers. Comhaltas will continue to build confidence in communities to develop new events / festivals that will protect regional cultural styles, drive tourism in the shoulder and off-peak seasons and create distinctly cultural places and spaces.

Education



From a Comhaltas perspective, education has a number of aspects to it as follows:

- Educational Programmes
- Youth Policy
- Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policies

Educational Programmes

Comhaltas will continue to prioritise the delivery of an expanded range of educational opportunities, classes and programmes that promote cultural excellence. These activities aim to increase life-long learning opportunities and build the skill base of Comhaltas students and the wider society.

The focus will continue to be on inspiring people of all ages to reach their full potential through engagement with Irish culture.

Youth Policy

Comhaltas will continue to prioritise its focus on ensuring that the voice of its young members is given equal weight at all levels of the organisation in order to further nurture and grow youth development through innovative education, training, volunteering opportunities and recognition.

Diversity, Equality & Inclusion

This is a vital aspect of the Comhaltas mission, namely to encourage a new and diverse range of people to engage with Comhaltas and to experience our cultural assets. Comhaltas will continue to devise a range of initiatives and programmes across the entire organisation to ensure all people feel safe and welcome.

Communications



Bringing Ireland's cultural traditions to the furthest corners of the world as well as throughout the island of Ireland requires effective communications and consistency in messaging.

Comhaltas delivers its communications in a number of ways, specifically through its **Diaspora Activities**, its **Tourism Activities** and its **Marketing and PR campaigns**.

Diaspora

Comhaltas recognises that with modern technology it is now possible for Comhaltas to connect to a multicultural global audience. Developing a global Irish viewpoint and leveraging the global diaspora community will help to ensure a diverse and multicultural dimension to growing and nurturing Irish culture. This focus on growing Ireland's cultural potential globally through active engagement with the diaspora will remain a priority focus for Comhaltas.

Tourism

25% of those attending Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann are out-of-State, Comhaltas will continue to work closely with its tourism stakeholder partners in delivering its range of Comhaltas festivals and events for the benefit of visitors and the local community. Latest research confirms that amongst Irish Americans, when given a list of things that attracted them most to their Irish heritage, 33% picked Irish history followed by 24% who identified Irish music.

Marketing & Public Relations

Continued investment is required to allow Comhaltas to continue the communication and marketing necessary to promote its range of activities and events. This will be vital to maintain awareness of how our rich Irish cultural heritage can be enjoyed by so many and benefit communities globally. Resourcing this communications drive will be vital in maintaining and increasing Comhaltas' outputs.





3

Strategy Summary

Summary



Comhaltas Global Reach

Europe

Belgium
England
Ireland
Italy
Luxembourg
Finland
Moscow
Portugal
Scotland
Spain
Wales

North America

USA
Canada

South America

Argentina
Brazil
Columbia

Middle East

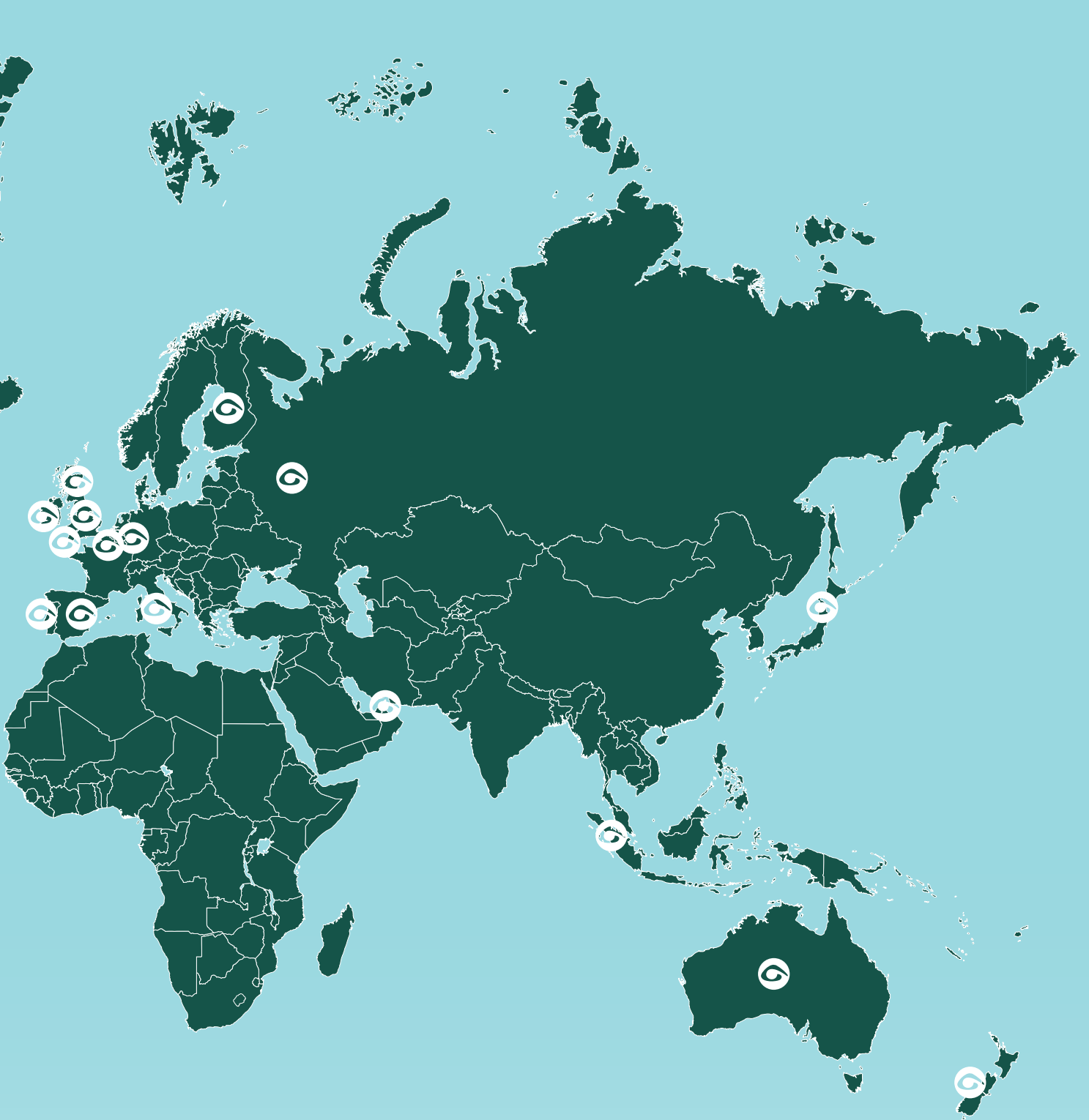
Dubai

Asia

Japan
Singapore

Australasia

Australia
New Zealand



Comhaltas Future

**Growing Ireland's
cultural potential globally
through innovation
and education**

This Comhaltas Prospectus is another milestone in Ireland's cultural journey. On reflection, it is a reminder of what can be achieved in the most challenging of times. As with the founders of Comhaltas in 1951, it again sets out the exciting possibilities for the future of our unique cultural characteristics.

**Ireland's rich cultural heritage
today earns unstinted
admiration in international
circles. Our achievements
in this regard give us an
immense pride in ourselves
and our ancestors.**

Our culture, in its varied and diverse expressions, has been a cohesive and reconciling influence among all communities on the island of Ireland and among the Irish diaspora and friends of Ireland worldwide.

The delivery of the cultural potential, as outlined in the Prospectus, will be an investment in our own future. This will result in self-perpetuating gains for future generations.

It is the road to excellence.
