



## NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2016

Hello to everyone and we hope that the summer has been a time of great rest and fun. Summer is a time of planning for the year ahead. All the workshops and projects take months to organise and when working with top professionals there are schedules that have the narrowest of availability etc. But, after a massively successful year last year, there was a chance to grow things further and we have brought together such a huge amount of things in the past number of weeks, we had to write to bring everyone up to date with developments for the year ahead. So, please read what follows and relax.....the holidays are not over yet! Classes will recommence on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> Sept.....

### **Galway 2020**

Well, after almost two years of work, the Galway team won the bid to host the capital of culture 2020. Many people are now asking what does it all mean? In short, it means the potential development of a cultural infrastructure where currently none exists. As part of that development we here at MCnG have a commitment to develop a regional **youth** orchestra over the next four years. Not just from a teaching perspective but also from teacher development with a huge array of resources coming online over the intervening period. This means more skills and more facilities and more access to training at the very highest levels for our young students. It has the potential to accelerate our development program here by years. In terms of students it will create the most beautiful opportunities. We have made our commitment to this project and that is written into the bid book for all to see, so it will happen. This is not idle talk or wishful thinking. It is now officially a contract with the 2020 board to deliver.



### **Circus**

We have a bit of fun lined up for our school ensemble (we really do need a better name for these players). We have entered into a project with the Galway Community Circus to deliver a live music accompaniment to their circus next May. A big top has been appropriated and there is a year of training and planning

ahead to deliver a youth production the likes of which has never been seen in the city before. It will of necessity require a little more by way of rehearsals from the players but we will be structuring this in the coming weeks so that the additional workload is properly spread. This really is a once in a lifetime chance and we encourage all orchestral players to become involved to make this a very special event.

## Colourstrings Piano

As part of our ongoing commitment to continuous professional development for all our staff we employed the services of Aija-Riikka Rannanmäki to come to Galway to deliver the training in Colourstrings Piano to our staff and other teachers in the larger community in Galway. A week of intensive sessions has sparked all sorts of ideas and collaborations. The Piano course has been undergoing massive rewriting in the past couple of years and to have Aija-Riikka here to explain the developments and the fun and learning behind the methodology was a breath of fresh air. Students making the transition this year from the kindergarten are in for a treat.



## Colourstrings Violin

Geza Szilvay has been teaching his unique violin method for a lifetime in Finland and one of his premiere students in that time is a lady called Pirrko Simoyoki. She is one of the most remarkable teachers we have ever seen. She has all the skills needed for teaching. Her technique is flawless, her pedagogy is known inside out, her knowledge of psychology and physiology is evident in everything she does and every gesture she makes, her knowledge of the repertoire is huge. In short she is pound for pound one of the greatest string teachers in the world at the moment. Her services attract students from around the world to study with her in the Sibelius Academy and in case it's not obvious at this stage....She has agreed to come to Galway next February and tutor our students for a couple of days. There is no overestimating what a coup this is for the school!!!!

## Colourstrings as Gaelige!

After years of building up colourstrings in the school and then working in the primary schools we have decided on the most ambitious part of the entire project. We are going to offer a class in kindergarten colourstrings through Irish. The basic concept remains unchanged, but what a beautiful way to develop both musicianship and language skills for young children. Beidh Muinteoir Julie Anne i gceannais agus, ag an am seo, is doigh linn go mbeadh na ranganna ar suil maidin De Sathairn. Fiosrúcháin chuig an oifig.....



## October Jazz

The good folk at the Galway Jazz Festival had the great idea of pushing ahead with their festival this October in spite of the fact that they had no funding to do so. They have scrimped and saved every penny they could raise to put together a really wonderful program. As part of that we felt it was a good opportunity to put together an educational component in support of the whole venture. So on the Saturday of the

festival we are offering two Masterclasses in Jazz piano with brilliant young pianist John Leighton, one for younger students, and one for older. A day of improvising for all to come and enjoy. We will have full details of all of this when school opens in a couple of weeks.

## MCnG Prize

This one event has now become a flagship event in the calendar. The levels of performance continue to inspire us to push further and further. Over €1500 in bursaries are now available to students in the final competition. But more than this there is a forum for all to come and develop their skills and musicians and communicators to expand in a positive and supporting environment. There is for everyone to see a real love of music-making. We have seen this grow so much in the past two years that this year we are going to host the event over two weekends - One for the school assessment and one for the finals.

## Enrolment

All of this will run in addition to the usual fare of student recitals and exams and smaller workshops. And though we do not open for another couple of weeks we find ourselves in the position that we are already full in a number of areas of the school. String classes are currently full, as are wind lessons. Piano classes have a small number of openings. Percussion groups and guitar are still open to new students. Leaving cert and junior cert classes are also still open.

We are currently trying to negotiate extra teaching rooms in St Mary's College so that we can expand the number of hours we can offer to allow for new enrolments from our waiting lists. There are also engaged in a process of internal development that might stall this for us so please understand that as of time of writing we are at capacity and therefore it is vital that when teachers make contact in the next two weeks to confirm existing places that everyone replies as promptly as possible.

