



## Maoin Cheoil na Gaillimhe

### Newsletter

March 2017

Dear Parent,

We have had to wait a little before sending out this newsletter, because we have been having some internet difficulties. There was an upgrade of our server in February and in the process something called an SSL cert was dropped; this has meant that many people have not been receiving any communication from us. We only became aware of the source of the problem last week and it has now been rectified.

Because of the issue some families have not yet received invoices or receipts for fees and we are working hard now to rectify this situation. If you have not yet had a bill from us, please let your teacher, and one will be issued immediately.

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### **Workshop with Roy Holmes**

Mr Roy Holmes will return to us on Saturday April 8<sup>th</sup> to workshop with students and staff in MCnG. His years of experience working with some of Ireland's finest pianists have very few equals and that he has graciously agreed to come and advise and share this experience in the school is a huge thing for us. The collective sharing of information is what now drives the teaching community at a pace that has never really been seen before. The speed with which ideas now flow throughout the larger community means that in reality there is access to the finest teaching methods from anywhere in the world, so long as we continue to engage with professionals of this calibre. We will be selecting students to work with Mr Holmes in the coming days and all parents will be notified. But the classes will be open to anyone that wishes to come and



see him teach. Very often there is a lot to be learned from simply watching and taking notes of others lessons.

## MCnG Prize

The annual prize will take place in May again this year. This event is really the flagship of our academic year and it is also our most popular. Because of this popularity we had decided to run the event over two weekends this year. In the first weekend we will hear the students from the entire school, assessed by an external examiner. For us this is the most rewarding section of the prize in that it gives every child in the school an opportunity to come and be heard in a very open and welcoming environment. But it also gives us a proper sense of the position of the school to see how the lessons are progressing and how standards are fairing. For many younger students in particular it is often a solid alternative to the examination process because it is based in performance which is the ultimate display of musicianship.



There is a competitive part to the assessment and this will now take place a week later to separate the two elements. On the second weekend a select number of junior and senior students will compete for significant prizes. A panel of teachers from each department will be selected to make the final adjudication. Every student that is selected for this concert will automatically have their registration fee for the school waived for the next year. But two senior and two junior students will be selected as winners in their groups and they will receive significant bursaries towards lessons. Last year alone the school awarded a total of about €1400 in total prizes. But the level of performance and the musicianship displayed by the students was simply wonderful. Any one of the finalists could have won the overall award such was the standard.



## Cushion Concerts



The welcome return of the cushion concert series has been announced and there is a truly stellar line up for the events. Our very own Robert Solyom, celebrated guitarist Aengus Hackett, up and coming Galway band My Fellow Sponges and world renowned folk artist Máirtín O'Connor and Family will be the performers. The dates and venues are as follows:

- Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March** - Robert Solyom - Áras Uilinn, Moycullen
- Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March** - Robert Solyom - St. Patrick's Band Hall, Galway City
- Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April** - Aengus Hackett - Áras Uilinn, Moycullen
- Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April** - Aengus Hackett - St. Patrick's Band Hall, Galway City
- Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> April** - Máirtín O'Connor & Family - Campbell's Tavern, Headford
- Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April** - Máirtín O'Connor & Family - St. Patrick's Band Hall, Galway City
- Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May** - My Fellow Sponges - Campbell's Tavern, Headford
- Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May** - My Fellow Sponges - St. Patrick's Band Hall, Galway City

Tickets are priced at: Children under 2 - FREE, Children - €5, Adults - €7, Family - €20

## Symphonic Waves

This is our contribution to the Galway 2020 celebrations. We are part of a larger grouping of schools and interested partners in the Galway MEP that collectively decided that we needed to do something about the progression for students in terms of their performance skills. To that end there is now a new orchestra in its infancy that shows us that this decision was entirely correct. After a rigorous selection process there is now a fantastic young string orchestra that works with top professional tutors once a month to achieve standards of performance that have not been available here before. Sinead Hayes has been appointed conductor for the first season and after the first rehearsal there was such optimism about the entire project. In the summer this orchestra will meet with a partner group from Germany to work together and learn from each other. Then they will perform together a short series of concerts.

Next season there will be fresh auditions that will include woodwind players, bringing the orchestra to the next level. The following year Brass and Percussion will be added so that they orchestra will become a full symphony orchestra in time for the 2020 celebrations and though that is the current focus we can already see that this group will create a lasting legacy for the western region that will extend long past the 2020 deadline.



## Galway Community Circus

Probably our most exciting project this year is the collaboration with the Galway Community Circus. We are going to provide live music while the students of the circus perform their marvellous show. What is fantastic about this process is the involvement of the children in every stage of the planning and execution of the final show. There are a number of professional circus performers working with the circus helping them to bring their performance to the highest levels. And in April it all comes together. There will be three performances in a Big Top here in Galway! To that end we would like to remind all the students involved in the performances that rehearsals now need to be prioritised for the coming weeks. We have deliberately kept the workload low for everyone to fit it in around their crazy schedules but the quality of our work now depends of people standing over the commitments they made to the project when it began. Our group are truly wonderful but they are small and because of this there is no real margin for error. Every single one of the orchestra plays a vital part in the final sound. Dr Ramin Haghjoo has put countless hours into the preparation of score and giving of his time for rehearsals and that now deserves to be rewarded so that we can really make ourselves proud in front of family and friends and the larger Galway community.



## Visit of Pirkko Simojoki

Hard to believe that one of the world's great teachers came for a visit in February. The weekend was a total success in every way with some outstanding performances from the students in the school. The level of attention and work was challenging but the results of this will be felt here for years to come. One of the most significant comments from her was how talented some of the students here are and for her to compare ours with those she works with in Finland is nothing short of a wonder.

All too often we take credit for the work done by our staff but on this occasion she specifically targeted the relationship that has been developing with Parents and how that has made such a difference to the progression. Having willing and committed parents guiding the practise at home is making a quantum difference to the outcomes and for this we as teachers are truly grateful. Pirkko has already said she would be happy to return at a future time such is the talent here for her to work with.



## Office Hours Change

Not so much of a change here as a re-adjustment. The physical building that we work from has come under significant scrutiny in the past twelve months. It is now over 100 years old and as such was never intended to meet future security standards. After a number of reviews of access and the overhaul of child protection legislation, there are now measures in place to reflect the need for more secure facilities. In short this means that there is a closed door policy in operation each day between 9 and 3. Access to the building can only be made by ringing our bell in the entrance hall or signing in at the main desk of st Marys. This process is somewhat more complicate for parents in that it can happen that we have meetings outside of our own office and there might not be someone in the office to admit you at a specific moment. We are asking all parents that which to come and see us to do so now by appointment. You can ring the office on 091 528965 or write to us on [admin@mcng.ie](mailto:admin@mcng.ie) In this way we can be certain to be here to help you with any matter.



## Pre-Registration

We will be posting out pre registration forms to everyone in April. As always this is our way of trying to anticipate the needs for next year and to schedule lessons for current students prior to opening our registers to new students. As a thank you we also offer a financial incentive to all parents who take the time to submit their registration documents to us prior to the summer break. Full details will be in the Documents we send out. If you have recently changed postal address please inform the office so that we can ensure that you receive yours in due time.

*Pre-Registration*

## Easter Holidays



And finally, just a quick reminder about our Easter Holidays: The final day of teaching for us before Easter is Monday 10<sup>th</sup> April. The school is then closed between Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> April and Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April. We will reopen again on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April.