

# MAOIN CHEOIL NA GAILLIMHE

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*Newsletter May 2014 Issue 24*

Dear parent.

Our final newsletter of the current year. There is a lot in this, so please bear with us. Please note that there is **information regarding classes and fees** and much more that is hugely relevant to next year, so, as always, we ask you to take the time to look over the details and if you have questions then please contact us in the office.

## **MCnG Award Night**

This Friday evening, the 16<sup>th</sup> May, we are hosting our Award ceremony. Senator Hildegarde Naughton has very graciously offered to attend and present the awards. It was a very memorable event last year and we are hoping to build on that this year. We will open the evening with a



performance by the Drumline Mr. Terry Cooke has been coaching, in their first public display. We will follow this with a performance of Carnival of the Animals, by French composer Camille Saint Saens, in which Staff members will be taking the solo roles! Then, Senator Naughton will present the awards. The night is a celebration of the impact that music is having in the lives of the student body and we welcome all students and parents of the school to the event, not just those receiving a certificate. We start proceedings at 7pm sharp and will finish before 8.30 to facilitate younger participants.

## **Overview of the year**

We are drawing to a close now on what has been our busiest year to date and because we are constantly asked what is happening at the school and how are things going for us we will take this opportunity to outline some of the significant moments of the year.

Numbers of students in MCnG is becoming increasingly difficult to define. In traditional terms the numbers are up a little again on last year which is very gratifying and our strongest indicator that the service offered is recognised for the quality it shows. Ripples are being felt outside Galway already with Teachers like Mr Solyom pulling a marvellous victory in the Feis Ceoil in Dublin this year with one of his Flute students. But beyond the traditional there are elements like the Adult String Orchestra coached by Mr David Clarke who manages to bring his unique humour and taste to a very original and successful grouping. Then there is the colourstrings outreach which now impacts the entire school in Furbo NS and another 5 schools in the city. Next year we are already hoping to add the Presentation NS to the list and this brings a particular brand of music literacy and fun into the lives of about 800 children every week. Altogether we now have contact with over 1000 students of all ages every week in what must be recognised as a real recognition of the role music can play in the lives of every one of us.

This year also saw the coming together of other music organisations to the home here in St Marys College. The Galway Music Residency and the Galway Youth Orchestra and Music for Galway all now occupy space within the building in what is rapidly becoming the centre for music within the city. There have already been a number of projects that have happened precisely because of the relationship that has been building up between the various organisations.

One of the most precious moments of the year in this regard was the Piano workshop here in St Marys with Dr John O Conor. This was such a special event and it had a huge impact on the teachers who attended because Dr O Conor is an enormously giving man and has a wealth of experience to bring to each session.



## **Pre-Registration**

It is that time of the year again and we are currently taking pre registration for next year. It is really an attempt to get control of the timetable before taking on new students, but it also offers the possibility for a lot of parents to secure lessons with teacher in slots that help to compact the week and lessen the journeys in and out of the school. This is particularly relevant to those who have theory commitments or orchestral ones. So we encourage all parents to engage with this now and secure the places you need to for the coming year. There is a small financial encouragement there for all who do and this as a thank you for your continued support but also for simplifying the administration of the school. From the end of June any places that have not been secured will be open for others to fill and from experience I know that this can cause real stress on some families returning in September to find that their hoped for times have been lost. Forms have been sent to every home. If you have not yet received one please contact the office in case there has been an error.



## Composer in residence

The Galway Music Education Partnership sadly failed in its attempt to gain access to the Music Generation fund this year which was disappointing. The reality is that so many Counties in Ireland did not achieve hoped for funding to carry out vital expansion and development of much needed resources. But the MEP group did come together in a unique way that really is a first for the city and county. As part of a composer in residence project

there was a coming together of all the schools of music in the city and county as well as traditional groups and youth orchestras. Young Scottish Composer James Ross held sway amongst the young musicians including them in every stage of the creative process and, last weekend, in Seapoint, 170 young musicians performed the original compositions to a packed house in a landmark concert that really does hold great promise for the future of the partnership. The Partnership itself will continue into the future and it is hoped that this coming together will again add to the co operation that makes exciting projects like this one viable.

## Paris School Exchange

At Easter we hosted musicians and teachers from the school of music based in Paris called 'Musique Ensemble XX'. This as part of our school exchange. We have created a young ensemble from within the ranks of the school that have worked with teachers and conductor Dr Ramin Haghjoo to produce a group of real solidity and maturity that belies their near infancy as an ensemble. They were indeed a ready and able balance to our French visitors and the pairing of the two groups has been a wonder to watch. In June we return to Paris to perform there and the highlight of that visit is a performance in the Irish embassy there on the Champs Elysees. It would be remiss to omit the fact that this adventure was not initiated by the school directly but rather by the Kennedy family that had a connection to the French school and they provided the introduction to the fabulous partnership. Hopefully the first of many such exchanges we make in the future.



## Carnival of the Animals

As part of our ongoing commitment to the training of young people we have been developing a rather nice in school program for primary schools based around Carnival of the Animals. Katri Suominen has put countless hours into lesson plans and games that build upon the narrative of the musical work. We have been piloting this in primary schools for 6 weeks now to iron out any bugs and this Friday we will welcome our pilot schools into St Marys to bring this all together in a live performance. Our special thanks go out to Mr Bernard Kirk in the Galway Education Centre for his support of this and other initiatives we are working on.

## Colourstrings in Primary Schools and teacher training

We have been working in 4 deis schools thanks to the generous support of the Galway Music Residency and we also run classes in Furbo NS and Moycullen NS. This is our greatest ambition, to return the idea of music literacy to every school child in Galway. To make that happen on our own would have been impossible but with the support of our partner organisation and again Bernard Kirk and the education centre it is become closer and closer to reality. The only way to ensure its ongoing success is for us to train the teachers in the schools themselves and this is something we began last year with the first 18 primary school teachers entering for the foundation course in colourstrings training. Throughout the year we backed this up with additional Kodaly Training and now this August they will have the opportunity to return to complete their training. We are also repeating the first step and signing up a new batch of teachers to begin their journey. Next Semester we are signing up the Presentation school as part of the program and we do have space for some more. If there are parents that wish for us to enquire with specific schools they can let the office know.

## Cushion Concerts

We are passionate about the idea of live performance as an integral part of the music landscape of every child. To that end every teacher in the school has at least one concert a year now and more than this we have developed a very special in house program of concerts that became the Cushion Concert series. We launched this in Feb with the assistance of the Galway Music Residency when their rising stars gave us our first gig. Then we followed this with others by Tom Portman, A piano duet evening with Sam Sytsma, David Szabo and Dr Ramin Haghjoo. On the 24<sup>th</sup> May the last of the year will Feature Robert Solyom and David Szabo. The Joy of these concerts lies in the approach. They are timed earlier for younger audiences and they are also shorted and less formal. There are cushions! There is interaction and talking and no one has to sit still. In short they are fun! Those who attend even get a drink and a biscuit at the end. We want the idea of live performance to inspire our students and the standard of the music is of the very highest calibre. For now these concerts are provided free of charge. Please feel free to come on the 24<sup>th</sup> and experience them if you have not already done so, but do come early as they are hugely popular.



## Colourstrings end of year workshop and *Summer School*

We are hosting an *end of year workshop* for parents of colourstrings students **on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May at three o'clock in St. Mary's**. There will be a small presentation from the string dept showing the progress to an instrument. What holds true for violins applies equally for other instruments. It is hoped that we will also outline the criteria by which we measure how well the children are prepared for this next exciting step in their education. Everyone interested is more than welcome, but this will be especially beneficial for the 4-5 and 5-6 year old groups

As the summer is approaching fast and will bring with it a 3 month break in the classes, we are organizing a **Summer School** once again. This will take place **14-18<sup>th</sup> June in St. Mary's college**. The Summer Camp is not restricted to students of MCnG and so family, friends and newcomers are also welcome. The program will include a colourstrings class each morning, followed by crafts (building and painting small instruments), musical games and workshops with very specific reference to instruments and practical exposure.

The camp this year is for 3-6 year olds, and will run 10 am to 1 pm

Prices:

€80 for 5 days

€55 for 3 days

Fee includes a €20 deposit, payable by the end of May. If you still wish to book, please be quick, the camp is filling up and spaces are limited.

*As a final note for all Colourstrings parents, we would like to inform you that next year we are going to regroup all the experienced children, who have been coming to Colourstrings already, into the same classes. Newcomers will be allocated other times. We feel this will create stability and enable the groups to move forward more quickly. Waiting lists will be created for new students and we feel at this point that we will not allow new students into these established classes. Lesson planning will be then done more closely to the stages of musical development ensuring progress, and proper development leading into instrumental training. If you wish to ensure your child has a place in **the experienced group**, please **pre-register**. Times will be allocated in the following weeks and all of you who fill out our pre-registration form will be contacted*