

# Maoin Cheoil na Gaillimhe

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Newsletter May 2015 Issue 28

## Dear Parent

We are in the last official week of teaching so I am writing to everyone to personally thank you for an amazing year. The school has begun to show a real level of potential this year that is causing a stir amongst all that have seen it. Now as we begin to close up for the summer months I wanted to just run through a number of things that I hope people will find helpful for next year's preparations.

## School Assessment

90 students of all ages and abilities presented for the assessment. It is the first time that we have succeeded in getting a true sense of the work done by students and staff across an equal playing



field. Given that the two assessors were of such high standing there was some trepidation as to how things might appear to them, but they were very satisfied indeed. More than that they thought that a massive amount had been achieved in the short time we are open and the structures in place for the school going forward added to their impression. In a short time now we are expecting a written report from them and we will put that up on our website for anyone to download and read.

The 11 finalists who performed on the Sunday did an exemplary job representing themselves and their teachers. The final selection of the overall student of the year, and runner up prizes, was much more difficult than we might have expected. All 11 finalists did receive their medals and are now exempt from paying the school registration fee next year. This is a way for us to acknowledge their talent and effort. The three main prize winners were Ashley Mobasser on Sax, Beni Solyom on Clarinet, and the overall prize went to Oisín Kerans on Violin. Oisín received the specially commissioned trophy, designed by sculptor Donnacha Cahill, and a €500 bursary towards tuition costs next year. Special mention did go out to Amar Debiasi and Blathnaid Higgins in recognition of their age and ability. The Examiners insisted that their efforts be recognised and have suggested that next year we might create age specific categories so that young emerging talent is not expected to compete with older students performing professional repertoire.

All in all we could not have asked for better in a first ever assessment. It was lovely to have Cllr Donal Higgins, Lord Mayor of Galway present to offer his praise and admiration for the performers as he awarded the prizes.

## Colourstrings Graduation

23 young people have officially graduated from the kindergarten program as a result of assessments conducted over the past couple of weeks. Many of these were in attendance on the Sunday of the finals to receive their medals from the Lord Mayor. It is really gratifying to see so many young people coming through the system. With that in mind we are continuing the series of training and professional development programs this summer with a visit again to London to work with international Colourstrings teachers in the Menuhin School. Those young musicians who have already decided on their instrument of choice are encouraged to make contact with the school so that we can put them into the schedule for the coming year.



## Colourstrings summer camp

Teachers Katri and Anna are running a week of camp activities for the kindergarten classes in July. All the usual suspects are involved - Daily craft activities and colourstrings repertoire development, Instrument demonstrations, and, most of all, a bit of fun making music. They are also asking parents to make confirmations of places with them as there is a considerable materials list that has to be prepared in advance to make sure we have enough for everyone.

## Orchestral Summer Camp



In July we are welcoming once more some of our friends from the French school, Musique Ensemble XX in Paris. Both Students and teachers are coming for a week of intensive playing and fun group activities. Every day will focus on a new area of repertoire leading to a full public concert at week's end. Given the excellent work done by Dr. Haghjoo with our own ensemble in the past months this can only be a remarkable week. The opportunity to work with music from the tango or Klezmer

traditions is reason in itself but to have direct contact with teachers from Paris skilled in these traditions brings it to a much higher and more rewarding level. We will of course be adding a touch of Irish music to balance things out and it is hoped that this course might become a template for future music adventures. There are places available on this course for both residential and non residential participants and all details are available from the office

## Face to Face training

August sees us training teachers in the colourstrings methodology once again - A week of intensive daily training with Karen MacKenzie and Naheed Cruickshank at both beginner and intermediate level. What this guarantees is that we are beginning to introduce a stability to the outreach program in the schools by helping to create a comfort around the material itself and how it can be used to create genuine literacy levels. Colourstrings international has really taken us under their wings by providing this training for us here. To have teaching from Karen MacKenzie alone, who is the head of colourstrings international kindergarten program, is a massive endorsement of what we are doing in Galway. It is not an exaggeration to say that we are already the envy of other cities just for having this happening. Our gratitude also extends to Mr. Bernard Kirk and the Education Centre for their tireless support of the whole venture.



We are also going to create 3 additional spaces on this course for non-primary school teachers so that others with an interest can come and train.

## Colourstrings showcase in June

We are continuously asked to provide some sort of explanation of just what it is colourstrings is all about. This June we have decided to take a significant step forward and launch a showcase of the work being done in the primary schools for all to come and see. In partnership with Adventures in Music, we have booked Leisureland in Salthill for the 14<sup>th</sup> June at 3pm. 8 Primary schools are going to come and show the Work done and some of our own young instrumentalists will be joining them. The idea is to give a broad overview of just what is possible given the right conditions and support. Anyone with an interest in seeing this work unfold is welcome to come and join us on the 14<sup>th</sup>.