



Maoin Cheoil na Gaillimhe

Newsletter

November 2016

Dear Parent,

This newsletter is to update everyone on the activities in the school up to and including the Christmas period so we ask you to please read it carefully so you can stay fully informed of everything on offer.

Fees

There remain a small number of families that have as yet to complete all payments due to the school. Our school is not state financed and so operates solely on the basis that fees collected allow teaching to continue. All parents with a remaining balance will be receiving letters in the post this week with the hope that accounts can be resolved now. Continuation of lessons for students is dependent of compliance so it is important that any family in this situation contact the office to make arrangements.



Piano Developments

This year is earmarked as the year of continual development for piano teachers and students. The past number of years has been devoted to string development and that will remain an ongoing priority but the new emphasis will be on piano. To that end we have already had a week long training course in the summer with Aija Riikka Rannanmaki, who came from the prestigious Helsinki Colourstrings Music School to train teachers in the Colourstrings method for young people. Next weekend, Saturday 19th November, we are welcoming Mr Roy Holmes to the school for the first of two visits. Mr Holmes recently retired from DIT where he has been a huge influence on the development of piano teaching nationally. He has trained some of the country's finest young players many of whom have gone on to enjoy significant careers as performers and teachers. After his visit last year, to adjudicate our annual prize, he mentioned that he would have an interest in helping us build on the amazing work he was seeing here. So to all intent purposes we now have one of the finest piano teachers available, coming with a full career of working knowledge, to share with our staff and students.



It is important to mention here that this is standard practise in major conservatoires. Great teachers pass their knowledge on to the next generation to advance progress and learning. There is no one suggesting that teachers are in some way not as skilled or as passionate. That myth is what keeps many teachers stuck in a rut. The flow of such information is what yields excellence and we remain totally committed to that here. In the spring Mr Holmes will return for a second set of masterclasses to see how things are evolving.



Then we are planning a second major visit. Mr Philip Fowke is one of the greatest pianists of his generation with a long and distinguished career as both a concert player and teachers. He has a raft of beautiful recordings and prominent concerts over his career including playing for the Proms! He has indicated that he is willing to come for a visit to work with teachers and advanced students. While he is here we will look to organise a lunchtime concert for him so you can get to hear his extraordinary talent.

Having this type of program in place ensures that all of our students get the best information possible. It also ensures a proper sense of community between staff, who are really working more as a team to produce a general level of work within the school that ensures that parents get comparable levels of quality from each and every member of staff. But, just to be clear on one last point, the only reason that artists of this quality are prepared to come and work with us is because they see something special here that is worth investing in. Outside the major conservatoires this is not common practise and for that we want to acknowledge all the work done by staff to date.



Practise

We get questions on this on a daily basis. What kind of practise? How long a child should practise for? Etc. So on the afternoon of Saturday December 3rd, the school Director is preparing to give a talk to all parents on the subject of just what practise is and how to get the very best from it. The talk will be completely free and will last for one hour and there will be also be an open forum which will give people the opportunity to ask questions. We absolutely guarantee there will be points made that will be invaluable and help parents to demystify the entire process.



Christmas Concerts

Christmas Concerts for students are currently being programmed by teachers and it is worth checking with them in advance to see when they are planning to have them. Concerts are the lifeblood of any musician and for young people they are a real chance to share everything they have learned. Early preparation means there is less likely to be anxious students come performance time.

