

Maoin Cheoil na Gaillimhe

Newsletter

September 2015



Introduction

As we are now in the final stages of preparation for the reopening of school for the next academic year I am taking the time to write this newsletter to all parents to keep you up to date with school activities over the summer and new plans for the year ahead.

Orchestral Summer School

In July the French school, Music Ensemble XX, came to town to launch our first ever 'International Summer School in Orchestral Playing'. About 40 students came together to play as a group, many of whom had no practical experience of working in any comparable setting. A week of lessons and fun



followed and the final result was a concert on the Friday which was by far the most accomplished we have done so far. I am hoping we will have some video footage to show in a short while as our French counterparts are currently compiling a movie for us. We would like to sincerely thank all the parents who helped out and hosted the children and a special note of thanks to Hata Walsh for all her assistance in the preparations. She even brought the Galway Community Circus on board for an afternoon of mayhem and fun.

As a result of this success we are now looking at the possibility of taking our ensemble back to Paris next Easter. At this juncture, given the forthcoming 1916 commemorations, it is our hope to prepare an all Irish musical program and to take this to the French audiences. I will be circulating a specific letter in respect of this to all students eligible in the coming weeks.

Colourstrings Training

During August, four of our staff travelled to London to work with the founders of Colourstrings Geza (pictured) and Czaba Szilvay and their amazing team. The week is the one real opportunity to learn from the masters of this program, but aside from that, it is also a chance to forge relationships with teachers that are amongst the finest working in the world today. Colourstrings students and staff not only fill a 2000 strong school in Helsinki but they also represent a significant portion of the body in the Sibelius academy, which is one of the finest in the world. At this stage it is just a verbal agreement to look at possibilities; however, the exciting outcome of discussions in London is a seeming willingness on the part of some of these teachers to visit us here in Galway and provide some masterclasses to both students and staff. This is something we intend to work very hard at developing because the potential impact here is immense.



It was also proposed to the heads of Colourstrings that we in Ireland needed a teacher trainer for the kindergarten program we are outreaching and to maintain the standards expected. WE made a proposal to them and it has now been accepted. School Director Hugh Kelly is now in the early stages of his Diploma in Kindergarten education with them.

Colourstrings Concert

On Sunday June 28th our first ever Colourstrings showcase took place in Leisureland. Students from all the schools encompassed by our outreach program participated in the event. The event enabled them to showcase what they had learnt and achieved in front of friends and family and the day



seemed to be a huge success. All the children, from the very early stages of learning to the more advanced students, should be extremely proud of their contribution. The teachers who were involved, both from MCnG and from the national schools, gave everyone an insight into the beauty of the learning and the high level of skill already achieved. The concert closed with a performance in three parts by children from Furbo National School. This performance was shown to the head of Colourstrings in London and they were deeply impressed. The day was greatly helped by the support from *Fyffes* who provided nourishment for the children and also from *Clada Minerals* who provided water for the event. It makes a huge difference to have this support so we would like to offer our sincere gratitude to everyone that helped make the day such a success.

Colourstrings Foundation Course

The end of August saw the arrival of our primary school teachers for their induction into *Colourstrings* methodology. 23 enthusiastic teachers from Galway and beyond worked daily with Karen MacKenzie on the basic skills needed to work with young children and to reinvigorate their own love of music. At week's end we had some remarkable transformations and the future of the



schools project really does look secure. Karen is an inspirational lady and her commitment to us here in Galway is the reason we are able to do so very much. As always there are funding issues, and because we work with so many disadvantaged children this will always be the case. But our hope is that with the work of our sister charity *Adventures in Music* we might be able to help bridge some of those gaps and foster a lasting music service in the city and county for all of the primary sector. Having teachers in the school who now believe in this mission is a huge step towards realising our goals.

MCnG Prize

Following on from the success of the first school assessment and the awarding of the MCnG prize to Oisín Kerans, we have already begun planning the assessment for next May. The format will remain largely the same with substantial financial bursaries going to the winners of their section. One difference this year will be that there is to be a junior and senior division. A first and second prize will be awarded in both categories. As with last year there will be a full school assessment made by external examiners followed by a shortlist of candidates who will perform in the finals. Last year's final was a very special occasion indeed with the Mayor of Galway present to award the medals. He commented to us afterwards that he had no idea just how much talent there was in the school and how deeply impressed he was by all of the performers. It is definitely something to build on.





School Calendar

School Re-Opens - Monday 31st August

Mid-Term Break - Sunday 25th October - Sunday 1st November

Christmas Holidays Start - Wednesday 23rd December

School Re-Opens - Wednesday 4th January

Semester 2 Fees Due - Monday 11th January

Mid-Term Break - Sunday 14th February - Wednesday 17th February

Easter Holidays - Thursday 17th March - Sunday 3rd April

Closed May Bank Holiday - Monday May 2nd

End of Teaching Year - Monday 23rd May