

# MAOIN CHEOIL NA GAILLIMHE NEWSLETTER



July 2017

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## DEAR PARENT,

It is a little unusual that we would be writing a newsletter at this time of the year but please ensure that you read the document in full as this is crucial information for everyone.

## WE ARE LEAVING ST. MARY'S COLLEGE

Our time at St Marys College has come to an end. After the past 6 years of unbroken teaching, we had to review our position in relation to the situation in the college. It has been a difficult last year in the building with new security measures and problems accessing the resources and spaces within the college.

Our long time friend and supporter Fr Barry Hogg has resigned his position. This was something we deeply regretted as he shared a mutual vision for the development of music in the school. Following on from this, the board of trustees decided not to renew the contract of a number of groups operating from the school, including ours.

In truth, our situation was becoming untenable anyway and staff felt deeply constrained and unable to deliver on several important programs.

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*“The Presentation Primary School...has extended an invitation to us to take up residence and we have accepted”*

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With that in mind we have spent some time looking for a suitable home for the school, which as you will appreciate is not a simple task. Finding a space is not in itself sufficient, it is crucial that we can operate and function properly to deliver an appropriate level of service. That search will extend to several different avenues; but for the short term the absence of public spaces at the current time meant that we needed to look once more at finding an existing school to operate from.

Thankfully we already worked with one such school. The Presentation Primary School on Newcastle Road is one we have worked with for a number of years and they have been developing a creative arts program in the school with our assistance. The school Principal, Colin Barry, has extended an invitation to us to take up residence and we have accepted. The building is



*Our new home*

only a short distance from St Mary's College and has designated parking for parents on the grounds so there is no issue with timetabling or transportation. We also have more rooms available on the ground floor than before, so the majority of teaching will now be far easier to access.

We will be engaging fully with the school to increase the access to tuition for the students there and help build a meaningful arts curriculum. Therefore, from our perspective we get to embark on the one mission statement we have wished for from the beginning, which is to change the way we educate children, using creativity to develop their true potential. This model has worked in so many other countries and we have been studying them to see how they might be applied here. It is a joy to finally get the chance to realise the creative potential of so many young people in situ. The staff and principal of the school are amongst the most supportive and highly trained in Colourstrings methodology we have encountered and the potential is very exciting.

Our phone number and email will remain the same but there will be a slight delay in porting the numbers to the new address so please bear with us on this. We would ask that you spread the word on this because we know already that these newsletters do not reach the audience we hope for every time we send them out. Lastly, we would ask all parents and students to bear with us while we transition. There will be initial teething problems while we negotiate the new premises but we are doing everything possible to keep these to a minimum.

## NEW SCHOOL PATRON

Earlier this year school director Hugh Kelly was invited to be a part of an advisory panel appointed by NUIG to look at the feasibility of establishing a degree in music in NUIG. After numerous meetings with the prime movers in the university it was decided to unanimously approve the move and so in 2018 they will begin enrolling students to the new course. The bulk of the work and initiative came from within the university itself and huge credit is due to them for the vision they have realised in fulfilling the need for third level education in music for the west of Ireland.

As part of that discussion the concert pianist Dr John O'Connor was also invited to sit on the advisory board and throughout the discussions he expressed huge interest in the school of music here at MCnG. Subsequent discussions centred on how



*John O'Connor - MCnG School Patron*

he might help the school to advance the cause of music education here in Galway and arising directly from that he has very graciously agreed to act as Patron for the school. Dr O'Connor is by a long shot the greatest exponent of classical music this country has produced. His reputation as educator and performer is world class. He has brought professionalism to everything he is associated with including the world-renowned Dublin Piano Festival. Having him review and endorse the work we do is one of the greatest compliment we have ever received. Below is his message to us:

*I am very pleased to have been asked to act as Patron for Galway School of Music, Maoin Cheoil na Gaillimhe. Throughout my career I have been a strong advocate for the development of music nationally, but in particular in relation to Galway. I have had the great pleasure of performing to audiences in Galway over the years, and worked to help many of the teachers, so I am keenly aware that there is a great love of music here. This city has such a vibrant and diverse artistic culture, that the absence of a developed music infrastructure has, to date, been deeply felt. But I am happy to note how that is now undergoing a process of change. I was delighted to be a part of the advisory team that, earlier this year, advocated for a degree in music in NUIG. With Galway set to become European Capital of Culture in 2020, and the resultant spotlight this will throw upon the city's artistic institutions, the need for space for a fully dedicated school of music in the city should be a priority.*

*It is with some satisfaction then that I note how Maoin Cheoil na Gaillimhe have laid out their agenda for the development of music across the city. Starting with early years learning and literacy programmes in primary schools, to later instrumental training, they have clear and particular ideas of how to build a strong demand for, and deliver quality music education. They have a network of international training and development programs to ensure that teaching standards are properly maintained and delivered to the students in their care. In short, they have started something of quality and promise that deserves support and recognition at every level.*

*I, for one, am happy to offer my ongoing support and best wishes to all at Maoin Cheoil na Gaillimhe for the work they are doing.*

*Sincerely*

*John O'Connor*

John O'Connor PhD, DMus, MusD, FRIAM, LRAM, ARCM, LRSM

Artistic Director, Dublin International Piano Competition

Distinguished Artist in Residence, Professor of Music and Chair of the Piano Division, Shenandoah Conservatory at Shenandoah University, Winchester VA

Professor of Piano, Glenn Gould School at the Royal Conservatory of Music,

Toronto International Visiting Artist, Royal Irish Academy of Music, Dublin Visiting

Professor, Showa University of Music, Japan

## CHINESE VISIT

We have just finished our first ever summer school in Colourstrings instrumental training and it was a revelation. The



*Visit from a Hong Kong School*

children are just so very good and dealt with some genuinely challenging music in a spirit that was infectious. All of this is in preparation for their first public outing. In August we will be treated to a cultural visit from a school of young children in Hong Kong. This is very much a fact-finding mission for these visitors to see how things are done here in Ireland. There is a significant Irish presence in early education throughout the world and none less that in the emerging Chinese economy. Our wish is to showcase the best of our young players doing what they do best.

We will work with them upon arrival and prepare for a public performance on Aug 17<sup>th</sup> in Leisureland. The Trad on the Prom show there which is a flagship tourist attraction for the city have graciously agreed to allow us to

use their stage for a brief performance prior to their show. It should be a memorable evening for everyone but especially for the young Colourstrings performers in their first public outing. Arising from the interest in this we plan to maintain this group and develop their playing skills as a beginner youth orchestra over the year.

## COLOURSTRINGS TRAINING

We will be training primary school teachers again at the end of August in the methodology that we use in schools. We are almost at saturation point with the schools we currently work with as so the number are a little bit lower this year than normal. What this means is that for the first time in quite a while we have the means to offer places on the course to other interested educators and musicians. In the past we have even worked with some interested parents. If anyone is interested or know people that might be interested then please do contact us by email. It is likely that we might have to wait some years again before we can offer training to outsiders so this is a rare opportunity.



*Enjoy your summer*

## Contact Us

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## **OPENING DATES 2017/2018**

The school will reopen on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September. We will be in touch closer to the date with more information

## **QUESTIONS**

If you have any questions regarding anything contained within this newsletter, please do not hesitate to get in touch using the contact information below.

## **ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR SUMMER**