

**Kenneth O'Halloran from St. Patrick's Festival will issue shots to picture desks*

Press Release

13th February, 2018



The Best of 'Home' Inspires 5 Days of St. Patrick's Festival Events

15th – 19th March 2018: www.stpatricksfestival.ie

Ireland's national festival, St. Patrick's Festival, returns with a cast of thousands of talented home-grown and international musicians, dancers, storytellers and performers coming together for five days and nights of events from March 15th to 19th. The vibrant and colourful programme of over 30 events will create a world class cultural celebration of Ireland, its people and our national holiday. Launched today (February 13th) by Lord Mayor of Dublin Mícheál Mac Donncha the theme for the 2018 edition of the Festival is **HOME**; the exploration of my home, your home, our home. It is the inspiration for the artistic programme that includes a unique film commission project, street-theatre, talks, walks, spoken word, literature, music, Irish language, visual art and more.

Principal funders of St. Patrick's Festival are Fáilte Ireland, Dublin City Council and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. This year the Festival has commissioned radio presenter, photographer and film maker Donal Dineen to create *Pathways: Irish Routes to the Art of the Matter* in response to the theme of Home. A documentary about successful Irish creatives who are making it abroad, it will uncover the story of how they got there and look at where and when the seeds for their success were sown. Filmed in London, Malmo, New York, Los Angeles, Belfast and Kerry it includes interviews with Fiona Shaw, Enda Walsh, Annie Mac, Seán Curran, Eva Rothschild, Brian Cross aka B+, Aoife MacArdle, Richie Egan aka Jape, Brian Ormond and Richard Gilligan. *Pathways* will be shown as part of the *Where We Live* presented by THISISPOPBABY with St. Patrick's Festival programme of events in The Complex in Smithfield on March 18th and will also be available to view on the Festival's Facebook and YouTube channel from March 9th. A programme of theatre productions, work in progress showings, music events, live art and a major exhibition, *Where We Live* is a kaleidoscope of stories regaling what it feels like to live in Dublin and Ireland today, told by some of the best storytellers on the island including Oonagh Murphy, Peter Flynn and Veronica Dyas.

Speaking at the launch of the Festival, Ardmhéara Bhaile Átha Cliath / Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mícheál Mac Donncha said, "It is a great honour for me to launch the 2018 national St. Patrick's Festival programme. Celebrating Ireland's national holiday, our capital city is

set for five wonderful days of fun and activities for all ages and interests from March 15th to 19th. I invite Dubliners and people from across the country to enjoy the events on offer, and for those who will be visiting from overseas I extend a céad míle fáilte. You're sure to have a fantastic time at this year's festival and leave with lasting memories. Is í seo Bliain na Gaeilge agus beidh imeachtaí i nGaeilge mar chuid den bhFéile. Is linne go léir ár dteanga náisiúnta agus tá ról ar Leith ag pobal Bhaile Átha Cliath chun í a chaomhnú agus a chur chun cinn mar teanga beo”

Another specially commissioned event, ***Kormac: Equivalent Exchange*** at Vicar Street on Sunday March 18th is a premier collaborative concert with DJ, producer and composer Kormac, alongside the Irish Chamber Orchestra, Kormac's Big Band and an array of 30 musicians and artists, including ArtSoul singer/songwriter Loah, famed composer and conductor Eimear Noone, spoken word artist Stephen James Smith, Persian classical musicians Shahab and Shayan Coohe, and Jack O'Rourke, known for his honest ballads and moody synths. Kormac has also collaborated with celebrated urban artist Maser to produce the show visuals.

Fáilte Ireland CEO Paul Kelly said “Festivals and events are crucial elements to the tourism sector which generates €8.8bn in revenue and sustains 235,000 jobs. With significant investment from Fáilte Ireland, this year's St Patrick's Festival promises again to provide a big, bold and colourful showcase that not only attracts tens of thousands of international visitors for the festival weekend itself but also showcases Ireland as a tourist destination to global media. Fáilte Ireland will be hosting a number of key international media during the event – ensuring that all the activity and excitement is captured and shared with as big a global audience as possible.”

Each year the festival, warmly welcomes over 100,000 overseas visitors to our Home to celebrate our national holiday. A firm highlight of the celebrations, the ***Festival Parade*** taking place at 12 noon on March 17th, will weave its way through the heart of the capital city in a flourish of colour and flair. Community groups and pageant companies from all over Ireland will come together to celebrate the parade theme *Home Is Where the Heart Is* through a variety of performances and street theatre around subjects such as precious moments treasured by the family clock and 'Home' as a tribe, family and shared experience. Once again *City Fusion* the Festival's in house community arts participation project has been commissioned to engage with groups and communities from a variety of backgrounds to produce a pageant. Preparations for the festival parade can take up to two years of careful planning and this year will also see over 2,000 band members from far and wide deliver dazzling rhythms and uplifting music that will reverberate throughout the city's streets.

Other festival highlights include the chance for fans of vintage Hollywood to enjoy ***Screening and Live Performance: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*** in St. Patrick's Cathedral on March 15th. Directed by Irishman Rex Ingram the screening features a new score by renowned composers Matthew Nolan and Barry Adamson which they will perform live on the night accompanied by Seán Mac Erlaine, Adrian Crowley and Kevin Murphy. Dublin experimental folk-rock band ***The Spook of the Thirteenth Lock*** will expand to an 18-piece electric guitar orchestra to launch their new album *Lockout* in the beautiful surrounds of the Pepper Canister Church on Friday March 16th; and on March 17th Druid's acclaimed

production of Samuel Beckett's seminal play *Waiting for Godot* comes to Dublin's historic Daisy Market for an exceptional once-off, outdoor theatre performance for the whole community.

Susan Kirby, St. Patrick's Festival CEO said "For those of us living here or the Diaspora, Home will forever be a part of us and for this year's festival we want to explore and celebrate what this means. For some it is our physical place of birth and holds a special place within us, while for others it isn't physical but rather the feelings, the emotion, the character, the people and the culture, that shape it and make it. It is the inspiration for our artistic programme of over 30 events from talks, walks and literature to street theatre, spoken word and a unique film commission project. Together these reflect the talents and achievements of Irish people on national and world stages, showcasing the skills of every age and social background."

St. Patrick's Festival aims to strengthen the deep cultural connection between Ireland and its diaspora and also promote Irish contemporary culture and arts worldwide. This year it brings *Coming Home: Art and the Great Hunger Exhibition* to Dublin Castle on 15th March from Ireland's Great Hunger Museum at Quinnipiac University in Connecticut, showcasing the world's largest collection of Famine-related art never before exhibited on Irish soil. Enjoy a tour of the exhibition followed by an artist's panel discussion featuring artists Rowan Gillespie, Robert Ballagh, Brian Maguire and Geraldine O'Reilly whose work is represented in the collection. The Festival's new international cultural exchange programme, the aim of which is to promote Irish contemporary culture and arts worldwide, also sees events taking place in London and Manchester. On March 16th the London Irish Centre will host a collaborative cultural event inspired by the #IAMIrish project which addresses the diversity of Irish identity and what it looks like to be Irish, and Screening and Live Performance: *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* will travel to the HOME arts centre in Manchester on March 18th. In addition to these, the production of *Pathways: Irish Routes to the Art of the Matter* by Donal Dineen has been supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and will be screened worldwide in partnership with the Embassy network throughout 2018.

Sunday, 18th March will see Merrion Square transform for *Big Day Out*, a vibrant day-long street carnival, bursting with street theatre, music, aerial performances and workshops. Dublin UNESCO City of Literature's Citywide read 'Making Millions' will come to life in a Georgian House featuring a world of fantasy with mysterious storytelling by torchlight and shadow puppetry; while elsewhere minds will be blown by experimenting with cutting edge technology in the Science Foundation Ireland science zone. From life sized arcade games to hilarious comedy and daring performances, *Big Day Out* will be something for all the family to enjoy!

Cuireann muid fáilte roimh chách ceiliúradh a dhéanamh ar chultúr thraidisiúnta agus comhaimseartha na Gaeilge le Féile Naomh Pádraig. Cuireann Gaelspraoi scoth na siamsaíochta Gaeilge ar fáil, agus tá imeachtaí ar siúl do ghach aois ghrúpa agus cumas teanga. *Gaelspraoi*, the Festival's Irish language programme is a series of fun and engaging events for all ages to enjoy. Dust off your dancing shoes and try out your aon dó trí's at the Céilí, marvel at the extraordinary feats in the Cirque de Gael tent and pick up some new circus skills at the *Big Day Out*. Whether you have cúpla focal, or no focal at all, come and celebrate the Irish language.

*The full programme of events for St. Patrick's Festival is available on
www.stpatricksfestival.ie*

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NOTES TO EDITOR

St. Patrick's Festival's principal funders are Fáilte Ireland, Dublin City Council and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Its aim is to develop a major annual international festival around the national holiday over which the Irish people can stand proud. The first St. Patrick's Festival was held over one day, and night, on March 17th 1996. Preparation used to take five months, but with its subsequent growth, it now takes 18 months to plan for Ireland's biggest annual celebration.

Over 105,000 out-of-state visitors attended the Festival in 2016, spending an average of 8.8 days in Ireland, and 6.5 days in Dublin. During the 2015 Festival, out-of-state visitors generated an estimated total expenditure of €73m while in Ireland, including expenditure of €51.3m while in Dublin, and circa €22m which was spent in the rest of Ireland. (Independent research conducted in 2015 & 2016 by Behaviour and Attitudes on behalf of Fáilte Ireland.)

Why was it started?

- To offer a national festival that ranks as one of the greatest celebrations in the world
- To create energy and excitement throughout Ireland via innovation, creativity and grassroots involvement, and marketing activity
- To provide the opportunity and motivation for people of Irish descent (and those who sometimes wish they were Irish) to attend and join in the imaginative and expressive celebrations
- To project, internationally, an accurate image of Ireland as a creative, professional and sophisticated country with wide appeal.

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