

**A REVIEW OF  
ST. PATRICKS  
FESTIVAL 2016**

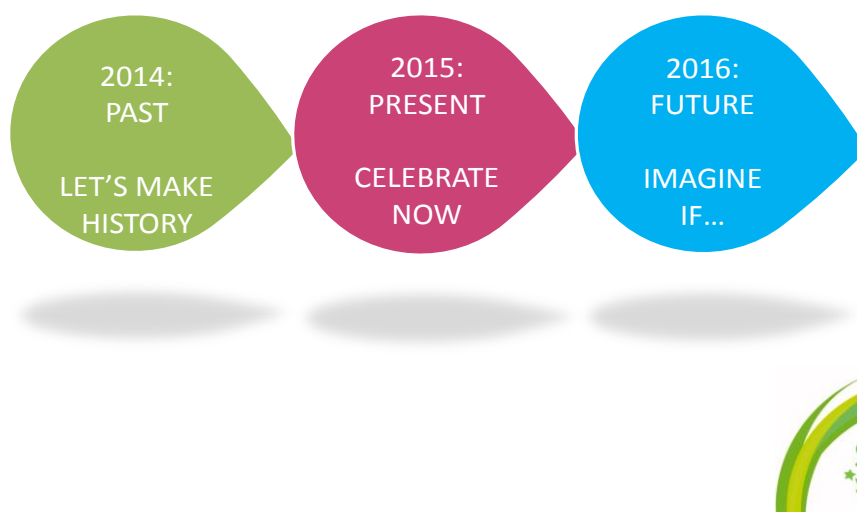
## A REVIEW OF THE FESTIVAL IN 2016

**Parade Theme:** 2016 was a seminal year for Ireland and this year the festival celebrated its where the figurehead event of the National Festival was part of the Ireland 2016 Youth & Imagination Programme Strand. Other festival programme events were part of recognising the strands Cultural Expression, Historical Reflection & An Teanga Bheo.

## 2016 PROGRAMME PERSPECTIVE:

A 3 year thematic celebrating 'IRELAND' and all that is great about her.

Using the narrative of Past, Present & Future, we allow ourselves the opportunity to talk about the people, places and passions from Ireland old and new, and look at what we aspire to be in the next 100 years.



In 2014 we announced for the first time in the festivals history a three-year creative thematic for the Festival Parade, each year being inspired by past, present and the future respectively. In 2016 Imagine If, Samhlaigh as Gaeilge, was a futuristic theme as part of the Youth & Imagination strand which gave a voice to the children to Ireland to consider the next 100 years and marked the final instalment of the creative trilogy.

*'We were delighted that St. Patrick's Festival was an official programme partner of Ireland 2016, the figurehead event of the National Festival, the Festival Parade celebrated the Youth & Imagination Strand programme, and the wider cultural festival included events as part of the strands Cultural Expression, Diaspora and The Living Language. The official events of the Youth & Imagination strand of the programme commenced with Proclamation Day on March 15<sup>th</sup> which was then followed by SPF Parade on March 17<sup>th</sup> and the two events were an excellent compliment to one another. It was a very proud day and a wonderful way in which to give a voice to the children of Ireland in this seminal year.'*

**John Concannon, Director, Ireland 2016**

## THE FESTIVAL IN 2016

Formal State celebrations commenced the weekend directly after the Festival to formally mark 1916. As part of this the official programme held Proclamation Day on March 15<sup>th</sup> where every school in the country was invited to share their Proclamation for a New Generation. This event then bookmarked the Parade presentation on March 17<sup>th</sup> with Imagine If.....

It was a rich and rewarding process working with children through school and youth groups across Ireland in facilitated workshops to pose the question ***'Who do we aspire to be in the next 100 years?'***

The childrens responses ranged from the profound to the hilarious, individual pageant companies across Ireland then worked to produce pageants which reflected the childrens aspirations.

## VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE: 2016

The Festival developed created four artistic representations as part of the Parade of key themes coming from workshops and inspired by The Proclamation. Taking combined inspiration from the workshops and the passage from The Proclamation below;

“The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all of the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien Government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.”

Childrens groups were invited to represent the following themes as part of the Festival Parade: Equality – Opportunity - Happiness – Children – Teanga Beo

## GRAND MARSHAL 2016:

*'We were delighted to have Joanne O'Riordan lead the National Parade. As the youngest Grand Marshal ever to hold the role and as an inspirational young lady she is a great ambassador for people young and old, of all abilities to live life to the best of their ability. Joanne is truly the personification of Youth & Imagination.'*

Judith Woodworth

Chair, St Patrick's Festival



## COLLABORATION WITH THE OFFICE OF THE LORD MAYOR & DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL

In collaboration with the office of the Lord Mayor & Dublin City Council, the Festival adopted an award-winning Dublin songwriter Pete St. John's composition *March to Dublin*\* as its celebratory tune for the 2016 Festival Parade. This is the first occasion the Festival has adopted a theme tune.

*March to Dublin* is a declaration of the welcoming spirit ever present in our nation's capital city for all visitors to Ireland's shores. It is an all-inclusive invitation to embrace and enjoy the history and culture of our over one thousand years old city on the banks of the magnificent river Liffey. The composition was performed during the ceremonial section of the Festival parade by the Artane Band.

## COMMUNITY

Our community outreach programme is an important part of the Festival and promotes integration and social inclusion, and celebrating our diversity at the time of our National holiday.

City Fusion and Brighter Futures are commissioned annually, by St. Patrick's Festival, to engage with groups and communities, from a variety of backgrounds, to work together alongside professional artists, to create and stage two large scale pageants for the Festival parade. Some of the wonderful groups who took part in 2016 included:

### **City Fusion 2016** (adult group participants):

- Alma Boliviana Ballet, Creative Steps, DCU, Japanese Society, Filipino Cultural Organisation of Ireland, Lithuanian Association of Ireland, St. John of God Community Services, Liffey Region, Brazilian Samba Dance Community Group

*'It was an excellent project for our youth group to take part in - challenging, creative, social and a great time for all!'*

Brighter Futures participant

### **Brighter Futures 2016** (youth group participants):

- Igbo Union (South East Nigerian Community Group in Dublin), Buion Colmcille Guides Ringsend, Gaisce – The President's Award – Trinity Comprehensive School, Ballymun, Irish Wheelchair Association, Knockmitten Youth Cafe, Polish Weekend School SEN, Robert Emmet Community Development Project, Syrians in Ireland, Sphere 17 & Coláiste Dhúlaigh.

*'Brilliant experience all round and a fantastic project to get young people involved in.'*

Irish Wheelchair Association,

Youth Group, Clondalkin

**A special thanks to Dublin City Council for their support of the community outreach programme including providing building and rehearsal space for our groups in the Digital Hub, Dublin 8 – the groups love the excitement of rehearsals in the heart of one of Dublin' oldest communities.**

## **The Wider Festival Programme**

A number of events on this year's *I Love My City* culture programme were inspired by the aspirations held by the people of Ireland in 1916 of a different type of Ireland. Through debate, music, film and exhibitions audiences had the opportunity to engage, reflect and re-imagine at the time of the national holiday celebrations, just some of the events included:

### **The Past is Present: Lunchtime Talk Series**

A series of fascinating lunchtime lectures exploring subjects connected with the 1916 Easter Rising.

### **The Children's Soapbox**

What does it mean to be a child in 2016? This special event to launch and introduce The Ark's new Children's Council, gives a platform to children to express their views and wishes for Ireland.

### **look-see RUN**

The Festival in association with performance mavericks THEATREclub conspire with a group of teenagers you've never met to bring you round town. A unique teenager led tour in association with Bradóg Regional Youth Service, where the kids will show you their Dublin.

### **Future Composers**

As Ireland reflects on a historic 100-year milestone, take a glimpse at what the next century might hold for Irish composition. *Future Composers* brought together three of Ireland's most innovative new music ensembles – The Dublin Laptop Orchestra, Kirkos Ensemble, and Tonnta - to perform works by emerging Irish composers for electronics, acoustic instruments, and voices respectively.

### **See Dublin by Bike: Easter Rising Cycle Tour**

'See Dublin By Bike' hits the streets of the capital this St. Patrick's Festival weekend for a special Easter Rising bike tour to discover the rich history, folklore, unique architecture and atmosphere of Dublin city. 'See Dublin By Bike' take you on a journey through some of the main sites of the Rebellion such as the GPO and Moore Street, where the rebels surrendered, to occupied buildings such as Boland's Mills and Jacob's Factory and to Dublin Castle, where government power was centred.

### **Older than Ireland Film Screening plus Q&A with stars from the film**

Older than Ireland is a landmark documentary that tells the story of a hundred years of a life as seen through the eyes of thirty Irish centenarians. *Older than Ireland* features thirty men and women aged 100 years and over. Often funny and at times poignant, the film explores each centenarian's journey, from their birth at the dawn of Irish independence to their life as a centenarian in modern day Ireland.

## **The Ultimate Sunday**

Cultured chats, sweet sounds, live comedy, stellar coffee, board games and sink into the perfect week-end where we bring the style, sport, current affairs and culture sections of the Sunday papers to life, all in the ornate surrounds of Belvedere House.

As part of the day Century Ireland's Mike Cronin delves into the media of 100 years ago to tell us about the Easter Weekend that never was, while fearless journalists Shona Murray (INM) and Sinead O'Shea (The Irish Times/Al Jazeera) recount what it's like reporting from war zones with Una Mullally.

### **Other Festival programme events included:**

#### **ROUNDS by BoNs Synth Ensemble**

For this atmospheric event combining sound and light, BoNs Synth Ensemble will perform a newly commissioned composition for synthesizer, which takes inspiration from the cathedral's Bell Ringing and Evensong traditions. This special event marks the **21<sup>st</sup> anniversary** since the foundation of the St. Patrick's Festival.

#### **In conversation: Donal Dineen with Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh**

Join presenter, filmmaker & photographer Donal Dineen in conversation with Ireland's revered sports commentator Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh, to discuss his lifetime practice as a gifted storyteller.

#### **Rarity by Tonnta**

Beneath the cavernous ceiling and amongst the giant and tiny exhibits, take your seat in the Natural History Museum and listen to the lofty, surround-sound choral performance of 'Rarity'.

#### **The Irish Breakfast: Afternoon Talks to discover the past, present & future of breakfast in Ireland**

The Irish Breakfast is a delectable exploration into the past, present and future of breakfast in Ireland through an afternoon of talks and tastings inside the beautiful Georgian rooms of No. 63 Merrion Square, home to The Royal Society of Antiquaries.

#### **Iéiriú Imram - DUANTA DAMNAITHE: Tionscadal The Pogues**

Chuir The Pogues na mílte faoi dhraíocht lena meascán mire de phunc agus ceol traidisúnta na hÉireann. Le Duinta Damnaithe, cuireann na filí Liam Ó Muirthile agus Gabriel Rosenstock beocht na Gaeilge ar liricí chorrathreacha Shane Mac Gowan, á chasadh ag Marcus Mac Conghail leis an mbanna ceoil The Pogues, agus cuireann Margaret Lonergan íomhanna leo ar scáileán.

Festival favourites also took centre stage including:

- Festival Céilí (Fri 18<sup>th</sup>)
- Festival Treasure Hunt (Sat 19<sup>th</sup>)
- National Concert Hall (Sat 19<sup>th</sup>)
- Festival Big Day Out (Sun 20<sup>th</sup>)
- Music in the City & Street Theatre Programme (Thurs 17<sup>th</sup> – Sat 19<sup>th</sup>)
- Gaelspraoi : Irish Language programme
- Festival 5K roadrace (Sun 20<sup>th</sup>)
- Irish Craft Beer & Whiskey Village (Thurs 17<sup>th</sup> – Sun 20<sup>th</sup>)
- Funfairs
- Comedy
- Film
- Dublin Bay Prawn Festival (Fri, Sat & Sun)

The Festival's citywide animation initiative – *Greening the City*, was again implemented with great success. The initiative grows annually and is becoming a regular happening throughout the Festival.

The Festival works closely with existing cultural institutions in the City to promote their exhibitions, talks, walks et al at the time of the festival and this year was no exception with a jam-packed programme of events submitted and promoted via the website and print to illustrate the rich and diverse programme of activity available at the time of the festival.



## **Imagine If : The Communications Plan 2016**

Formal State celebrations commenced the weekend directly after the Festival to formally mark 1916. As part of this the official programme held Proclamation Day on March 15<sup>th</sup> where every school in the country was invited to share their Proclamation for a New Generation. This event then bookmarked the Parade presentation on March 17<sup>th</sup> with Imagine If.....

The Festival announced its programme plans in 2014 which culminated in 2016 and was supported annually by a professional public relations campaign and communicated through all marketing collateral. The Festival worked with historian Mike Cronin, Academic Director at Boston College and Director of Century Ireland as part of Ireland 2016, to support and advise programme and communications development.

A series of briefings were held as part of the communications process including:

- Ireland 2016 & Office of the Taoiseach
- DCC Commemorative Committee
- Boston College
- Foras na Gaeilge
- Failte Ireland
- Tourism Ireland
- Domestic & International Media Briefings
- A number of business briefings were held in advance of the festival
- Statutory festival stakeholders including Gardai, HSE and transport providers
- Numerous artistic briefings with programme partners
- Volunteers briefings

The Festival documented the artistic process through a series of 3 video vignettes in the build up to the festival showing the commissioning process from the seed of the ideas through to the creative presentations on the streets of Dublin on St. Patrick's Day 2016. Documentary footage was disseminated across the Festival's digital platforms, widely promoted through programme partners and participants and made available to stakeholders.

Four large screens were positioned along the parade route to assist with viewing and were used to screen the videos explaining the process to the audience. The screens proved very popular and also carried stakeholder content.

The live broadcast, which reached 302,000 (49% share) in 2016, also repeatedly messaged the artistic process. Two children who took part in workshops were interviewed as part of the broadcast and the entire broadcast allowed children to see their visions for the next 100 years brought to life along with giving the Festival the opportunity to promote upcoming events and the wider 2016 programme.

## IMPACT & ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

St. Patrick's Festival is a multi-disciplinary arts festival with a rich community engagement programme so when we consider our value culturally we question how arts and culture can enrich our lives. We also understand that arts and culture has a wider measurable impact on our economy, health and wellbeing, society and education and we consider ourselves an important part of the Strategic National agenda for this reason.

We believe that in order for Dublin and Ireland to be recognised as a great country for business it stands to reason that it should be a great country to live in, a country with a strong and distinctive identity which can present itself, in all its cultural diversity and richness to the World – St. Patrick's Festival can and does deliver against this.

The value generated by economic diplomacy at the time of the festival is substantial and offers our artists, leaders and businesses a unique platform to promote our Island on a global stage.

*'Over the 2015 St. Patrick's Day period, the Embassy Network, in co-ordination with the state agencies, undertook an extensive programme of activities in support of trade, tourism and investment and to enhance Ireland's reputation internationally. Our National day also provided an excellent opportunity to deepen our relationship with countries around the globe and to strengthen our ties with the Irish diaspora.'*

Department of Foreign Affairs, 2015

Finally the festival and in particular the parade are some of the largest events taking place in Europe and the World, the scale and volume of stakeholders involved in making it happen speaks to the creativity, connectivity and enterprise of us all as a people.

### Economic Impact

- There were over 112,000 out-of-state visitors at St. Patrick's Festival in 2015, including about 100,000 overseas visitors and 12,000 visitors from Northern Ireland.
- These visitors spent an average of 6.5 days in Ireland, and 4.5 days in Dublin, with two people travelling in the average visiting party.
- With an average expenditure per person of just over €650 in Ireland, including over €450 per person in Dublin, this means that out-of-state visitors generated an estimated total expenditure of €73m while in Ireland, including expenditure of €51.3m while in Dublin.

(Source Fáilte Ireland Research March/April 2015)\*

The Festival company would like to thank all of the festival stakeholders for the valuable work they do year-round for the company. The company is a registered charity which relies on the support of funders and sponsors without whom none of the work detailed in this report would be possible. Go raibh mile maith agaibh – thank-you all.

## **SPECIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2016**

Every year we strive to innovate through our contemporary programme and marketing campaigns and increase access and social inclusion through the programme. There was so much to be proud of as part of Festival 2016 but just some of the innovations this year which we are proud of include:

- New to the Festival programme was 'Gaelstage' a free live music stage on Festival Thursday celebrating our Teanga Bheo. The event was funded by Dublin City Council to facilitate promotion of the Irish language through our incredible Irish musical acts. The event was MC'ed as gaeilge by Eoghan McDermott and was headlined by Irish acts; Imlé, Enda Reilly & friends and Seo Linn.
- The Festival's digital platforms performed strongly with increases across all social media platforms including Twitter (14,100) Facebook (29,132) & Instagram (812).
- In line with our stated strategic policy of growing the footprint of the festival and capitalizing on the unique destination offering of Dublin as a city between the mountains and the sea we partnered for the first time with Fingal County Council to present the Dublin Bay Prawn Festival as part of the programme.
- As part of our access programme we expanded the areas available to the public to cover disabled access areas and special needs areas, and these received very positive feedback from users.
- We were delighted to welcome for the 1<sup>st</sup> time a group of wheelchair users as participants in the Brighter Futures pageant.
- Statutory agencies including DCC & the Gardai worked closely with the festival to produce a detailed Temple Bar Management Plan and a communications plan to alleviate anti-social behavior on the evening of March 17<sup>th</sup>.
- We forged numerous new artistic relationships in the City and deepened existing ones, some highlights included working with DIT to produce a pageant for the first time – we hope to announce a more detailed educational partnership in the coming years with one of Dublin's largest colleges.
- Our volunteers and interns programme is a pleasure to preside over each year and we met some of the most wonderful and enthusiastic recruits this year – we owe them a debt of gratitude for their valuable contribution.
- Not quite our achievement – but the weather was glorious!