

AICF

Association of Irish and Celtic Festivals

CONFERENCE

Galway, Ireland

October 24 - 27, 2023



Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eorpacha
Department of Foreign Affairs



Cultúr Éireann
Culture Ireland



hosted by **MILWAUKEE**
IRISH FEST

WELCOME

Milwaukee Irish Fest extends a heartfelt welcome to all as we gather in the picturesque city of Galway, Ireland, for this much-anticipated 2023 Association of Irish and Celtic Festivals conference.

Galway, often referred to as the "City of Tribes," has a deep-rooted tradition of celebration, arts, and community spirit. It is a place where creativity flourishes, music fills the air, and festivals are woven into the fabric of life.

As we come together, we hope to tap into that vibrant spirit and share our collective wisdom to inspire and elevate how we showcase culture and community at our own festivals and events.



**OPENING
RECEPTION**

Tuesday, October 24

6:30 pm

Galway Bay Hotel- Atlantic Bar

JOIN US TO KICK OFF THE CONFERENCE WITH ENTERTAINMENT, HORS D'OEUVRES AND A WELCOME BY OUR HOSTS, THE CITY AND COUNTY OF GALWAY, IRELAND. MUSIC WILL BE PROVIDED BY OLAS.

- Friends & Family Registrants Included

SPONSORED BY  Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe
Galway City Council

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

DAY 1

Wednesday, October 25

7:30 am

Bay Brasserie

BREAKFAST (ON YOUR OWN)

8:00 am

Lettermore Suite Pre-Function

REGISTRATION OPEN

9:00 am

Lettermore Suite

OPENING REMARKS AND GALWAY WELCOME

9:30 am

Lettermore Suite

WHAT IS YOUR WHY?

10:30 am

SPONSORED BY  **Fáilte Ireland**

The Conservatory

BREAK

10:45 am

Lettermore Suite

MODERN IRELAND: INCORPORATING INTO YOUR FESTIVAL

GUEST SPEAKER: MINISTER SEAN FLEMING, TD

12:00 pm

LUNCH & LEARN

SPONSORED BY



Lettermore Suite

SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS YOU CAN USE TODAY

GUEST SPEAKER: CASSIE ROBERTS DISPENZA, VP OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, SAFFIRE

1:00 pm

Lettermore Suite

ENSURING THE FUTURE OF IRISH FESTIVALS

GUEST SPEAKERS: CIARAN CANNON, TD
SHARON BARRY, DIRECTOR OF CULTURE IRELAND
FRANKIE GAVIN, ARTIST
MODERATED BY KEITH FINNEGAN

2:15 pm

BREAK & IRISH COFFEE DEMO

COMPLIMENTS OF DURTY NELLY'S

SPONSORED BY



The Conservatory

3:00 pm

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS: (YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN 2 OUT OF 3 SESSIONS BELOW. EACH ROTATION WILL LAST 30 MINUTES.)

- **VOLUNTEERS:** WHERE ARE ALL THE VOLUNTEERS? HOW DO WE KEEP THEM ENGAGED? *Inishmaan Suite*
- **SPONSORS:** SHOW ME THE MONEY- CREATIVE WAYS TO ENGAGE SPONSORS FOR YOUR EVENT *Inishturk Suite*
- **PROGRAMMING:** ENHANCE YOUR GUESTS' EXPERIENCE *Inisheer Suite*

4:15 pm

FREE TIME

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

DAY 2

Thursday, October 26

7:30 am

BREAKFAST (ON YOUR OWN)

Bay Brasserie

8:00 am

REGISTRATION OPEN

Lettermore Suite Pre-Function

9:00 am

MORNING REMARKS

Lettermore Suite

9:15 am

SUCCESSION PLANNING & VOLUNTEER PANEL

Lettermore Suite

10:30 am

BREAK

SPONSORED BY 

The Conservatory

10:45 am

ENTERTAINMENT AND VISA CHALLENGES PANEL

Lettermore Suite

12:00 pm

LUNCH

SPONSORED BY 

Lettermore Suite

1:15 pm

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS: (YOU CAN PARTICIPATE IN 2 OUT OF 3 SESSIONS BELOW. EACH ROTATION WILL LAST 30 MINUTES.)

- **GENERAL:** BACK TO THE BASICS
- **VENDORS:** WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE?
- **ENGAGEMENT:** ENGAGING YOUR AUDIENCE

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR AND AVOIDING BURNOUT

*Inishmaan Suite
Inishturk Suite
Ballyvaughan Suite*

2:30 pm

BREAK

SPONSORED BY 

The Conservatory

2:45 pm

GLOBAL IRELAND

GUEST SPEAKER: JOHN CONCANNON
DIRECTOR GENERAL- GLOBAL IRELAND DFA

Lettermore Suite

3:45 pm

IRISH HAPPY HOUR

FIVE FARMS IRISH CREAM, WHISTLER IRISH
WHISKEY & BUNRATTY MEAD

The Conservatory

SPONSORED BY   

CONFERENCE EXHIBITORS

BUNRATTY MEAD

OLIVER DILLON |
BUNRATTYWINERY@GMAIL.COM

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IRISH MUSIC MAGAZINE

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MY IRISH COUSIN

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SAFFIRE

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WHISTLER WHISKEY

STEPHEN RANGLES |
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ENTERTAINMENT SHOWCASES

SPONSORED BY



Cultúr Éireann
Culture Ireland

THE DINNER AND ENTERTAINMENT SHOWCASES WILL TAKE PLACE AT MONROE'S LIVE IN GALWAY. DINNER BEGINS EACH NIGHT AT 6:00PM WITH THE SHOWCASE BEGINNING AT 7:30PM

TRANSPORTATION WILL BE PROVIDED TO CONFERENCE REGISTRANTS, REGISTERED FRIENDS AND FAMILY AS WELL AS SPONSORS AND VENDORS.

TRANSPORTATION TO MONROE'S LIVE

- **BUSES LEAVING AT 5:30PM**

TRANSPORTATION FROM MONROE'S LIVE

- **BUSES FROM 11:00 PM TILL 12:30AM**

FANCY A WALK? MONROE'S IS A 35 MINUTE WALK FROM GALWAY BAY HOTEL. THIS WALK WILL TAKE YOU ALONG GALWAY BAY AND THE HISTORIC FISHING VILLAGE, CLADDAGH.

NIGHT 1

Wednesday, October 25

Emcee: Kieran Hanrahan, Culture Ireland



3 ON THE BUND IS AN EXCITING BAND THAT CAME TOGETHER IN MARCH OF 2019 AFTER MEETING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK'S PRESTIGIOUS IRISH WORLD ACADEMY. THEIR COMPLEX, LAYERED ARRANGEMENTS CONSIST OF TRADITIONAL AND NEWLY COMPOSED TUNES PLAYED WITH AN ENERGY AND A PASSION THAT IS COMPLETELY AUTHENTIC.

CONTACT: 3ONTHEBUNDMUSIC@GMAIL.COM



CEOL, FORMED IN 2021, IS A FOLK BAND WITH FOUR MEMBERS, DRAWING INSPIRATION FROM IRISH LEGENDS LIKE THE WOLFE TONES, THE DUBLINERS, AND THE CHIEFTAINS, AS WELL AS INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS LIKE MUMFORD AND SONS. THEY AIM TO REJUVENATE FOLK MUSIC FOR A NEW GENERATION, SPARKED BY THEIR ENCOUNTERS WITH TALENTED YOUNG MUSICIANS DURING TRAVELS ACROSS IRELAND'S PUB MUSIC SCENE.

CONTACT: INFO@CEOLBAND.COM



STEPH GEREMIA, RENOWNED IRISH FLAUTIST AND SINGER, WILL BE JOINED BY ALAN KELLY (ACCORDION), AARON JONES (BOUZOUKI), AND JIM HIGGINS (PERCUSSION) FOR A PERFORMANCE OF SONGS FROM VARIOUS TRADITIONS. STEPH IS KNOWN FOR COLLABORATIONS WITH THE ALAN KELLY GANG AND EDDI READER, SHOWCASING HER EXPERTISE IN IRELAND'S NORTH CONNAUGHT TRADITION, AS SEEN IN HER 2018 RELEASE, "UP SHE FLEW."

CONTACT: STEPHGEREMIA@GMAIL.COM



THE KINGS OF CONNAUGHT, A 4-PIECE FOLK/BALLAD/TRAD ENSEMBLE, HAVE ENCHANTED AUDIENCES SINCE THEIR INCEPTION IN 2012. INITIALLY, A 6-MEMBER GROUP, THE QUARTET OF MARK COSTELLO (VOCALS/GUITAR), LIAM O'GRADY (VOCALS/MANJO), THOMAS RYAN (WHISTLE/MANDOLIN) AND MORE RECENTLY CAOIMHE NEWELL (FIDDLE) DRAWS INSPIRATION FROM PROMINENT IRISH ARTISTS LIKE LUKE KELLY & THE DUBLINERS.

CONTACT: THEKINGSOFCONNAUGHT@GMAIL.COM



THE MURPHY SISTERS, A DYNAMIC TRIO OF MUSICIANS AND SONGWRITERS, CAPTIVATE GLOBAL AUDIENCES WITH THEIR DISTINCTIVE SOUND. THEIR SONGWRITING JOURNEY BEGINS IN TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC AND EVOLVES INTO A CAPTIVATING FUSION OF HARMONIES, POWERFUL VOCALS, AND LIVELY FOLK/COUNTRY MUSIC. NOTABLY, THEIR TRACK "NIGHTMARE" WAS FEATURED ON THE NETFLIX SHOW JACK TAYLOR.

CONTACT: INFO@THEMURPHYSISTERS.COM



THE JEREMIAHS IS AN IRISH FOLK BAND COMPRISED OF FOUR MUSICIANS WHO HAVE COME TOGETHER WITH THE COMMON GOAL OF WRITING, COMPOSING, AND PERFORMING FOLK SONGS AND MUSIC. THEY HAVE TRAVELED EXTENSIVELY, BRINGING THEIR MUSIC FAR AND WIDE, AND ARE HERALDED AS A LIVE BAND NOT TO BE MISSED. THEY ARE SURE TO ROUSE EMOTIONS WITH A WONDERFUL MIXTURE OF NEWLY COMPOSED SONGS AND TUNES IN THE FOLK GENRE AND A WELL-SELECTED CATALOG OF OLDER FOLK SONGS.

CONTACT: INFO@THEJEREMIAHS.IE

NOTES

NIGHT 2

Thursday, October 26

Emcee: Keith Finnegan, Galway Bay FM



BAILE AN SALSA BRINGS TOGETHER AN INTERNATIONAL MIX OF WORLD-CLASS MUSICIANS TO DELIVER A DISTINCTIVE BLEND OF LATIN RHYTHMS AND TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC - A FUSION THAT THEY CALL "SALSA-TRAD." THE MUSICIANS SEAMLESSLY BLEND THEIR INFLUENCES FROM LATIN AMERICA, EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES TO CREATE A CONTEMPORARY TWIST OF TRADITIONAL TUNES WITH ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS.

CONTACT: BAILEANSALSA@GMAIL.COM



BERNADETTE MORRIS IS NOT ONLY AN EXTREMELY TALENTED IRISH FOLK SINGER, PERFORMER, FIDDLE PLAYER AND ENTERTAINER, SHE IS ALSO AN EXCEPTIONAL SONGWRITER. SHE IS AN ENGAGING PERFORMER WHO TAKES AUDIENCES ON AN EMOTIONAL JOURNEY WITH A REPERTOIRE OF SONGS THAT SPEAK FROM AND TO THE HEART.

CONTACT: BERNADETTEMORRISMUSIC@GMAIL.COM



CONOR MALLON, A UILLEANN PIPER FROM KEADY, CO. ARMAGH STARTED HIS MUSICAL CAREER WITH THE ARMAGH PIPERS CLUB, BEFORE TOURING WITH HIS BAND, CONNLA. CONOR WAS THE FIRST BBC NI YOUNG MUSICIANS AWARD RECIPIENT AND A SENIOR ALL-IRELAND CHAMPION. FOLKING.COM HAS PRAISED MALLON FOR "LEADING THE NEXT GENERATION OF UILLEANN PIPE PLAYERS."

CONTACT: CONOR.MALLON@GMAIL.COM



SIÓMHA, AN IRISH SINGER AND GUITARIST, EFFORTLESSLY COMBINES FOLK, JAZZ, AND NEO-SOUL, CREATING A MEMORABLE MUSICAL EXPERIENCE WITH HER SOULFUL MELODIES. HER DEBUT ALBUM "INFINITE SPACE," PRAISED BY THE IRISH TIMES, FEATURES SONGS IN BOTH IRISH AND ENGLISH. HER HEARTFELT VOICE, ACCOMPANIED BY GYPSY JAZZ AND LATIN INFLUENCES ON GUITAR, TAKES LISTENERS ON AN UNFORGETTABLE COSMIC JOURNEY.

CONTACT: SIOMHAMUSIC@GMAIL.COM



ONÓIR, FORMED IN 2020, CONSISTS OF DONEGAL MUSICIANS TOM MCHUGH, DECLAN GAUGHAN, DEANE CONNAGHAN, AND DIARMAID MCGEE. THEY GAINED INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION BY REINVENTING THE CLASSIC IRISH FOLK BALLAD "THE AULD TRIANGLE," WITH A VIDEO REACHING OVER 3 MILLION VIEWERS. ONÓIR'S UNIQUE TALENT, DISTINCT VOCAL STYLES, AND EXCEPTIONAL MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS SET THEM APART, MARKING A NEW STANDARD IN CONTEMPORARY IRISH FOLK.

CONTACT: ONOIROFFICIAL@GMAIL.COM



ISPÍNÍ NA HÉIREANN, LEAD BY FRONT MEN ADAM J. HOLOHAN AND TOMÁS MULLIGAN, AND JOINED BY CELLIST AND FIDDLE PLAYER AONGUS MACAMHLAIGH, BODHRÁN EXTRAORDINAIRE CIAN 'KINKO' Ó CEALLAIGH, AND THE SAXOPHONE AND UILLEANN PIPES PLAYER PÁDRAIG ÓG MAC AODHAGÁIN, CREATE AND PLAY MUSIC THAT IS A COMBINATION OF ORIGINAL SONGS AND REIMAGINED COVERS AND TUNES. ALL OF WHICH ARE INFLUENCED BY THE IRISH MUSICAL TRADITION.

CONTACT: SAUSAGESOFIRELAND@GMAIL.COM

NOTES

PARTICIPANT LIST

Catskills Arts Week

*Paul Keating | paulkeating@aol.com

Ceili at the Roundhouse Celtic Festival

Carolee Bowen | carolee.bowen@gmail.com

Central New York Irish Festival

Mary J Bassett | mjjoy616@gmail.com

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Chicago Gaelic Park

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Dublin Irish Fest

Jim Loch | rloch@dublin.oh.us

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*Michael Lange |

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Goderich Celtic Roots Festival

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Holland Waterfront Celtic Festival & Highland Games

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John Daley | johnd@irishfest.com

Linda Daley | lindad@irishfest.com

-list continued

*DENOTES AICF BOARD MEMBER

GUEST SPEAKERS

Minister Sean Fleming, TD



Minister Sean Fleming is a seasoned Irish politician known for his exemplary service in the field of finance and public expenditure. With a career spanning over two decades in the Irish Parliament, Sean Fleming has consistently demonstrated his dedication to public service and his commitment to shaping Ireland's economic policies.

Ciaran Cannon, TD



Ciaran Cannon is a dedicated Irish Member of Parliament known for his unwavering commitment to education, innovation, and community development. With a career rooted in public service, he has played a pivotal role in shaping policies that have a profound impact on the future of Ireland.

Sharon Barry



Sharon Barry is a distinguished cultural leader and the Director of Culture Ireland, where she has dedicated her career to promoting and supporting Irish arts and culture on an international scale. With an unwavering commitment to showcasing Ireland's rich cultural heritage, she has been a driving force behind the global recognition of Irish creativity.

Frankie Gavin



Frankie Gavin is a highly skilled musician from a family of musicians. He has had the opportunity to collaborate with renowned musicians, The Rolling Stones and Stephane Grappelli. He has also performed for several American presidents. One of Gavin's most significant achievements is co-founding the globally celebrated band De Dannan. The band continues to evolve and will feature a new lineup in 2023.

Cassie Roberts Dispenza



Cassie is an experienced professional with a background in online marketing and event planning. She has worked with prominent organizations like the Austin Sports Commission and the United States Olympic Committee. Cassie has been a part of Saffire since 2011, contributing to the company's substantial growth, and she has also actively serving on various boards.

John Concannon



John Concannon is a renowned Irish entrepreneur and community leader. He is celebrated for his pioneering work in social entrepreneurship, bridging business principles with societal impact, and community engagement in Ireland. With a career spanning both the public and private sectors, he has held key positions in government agencies and private companies, showcasing his business acumen and commitment to innovation.

Keith Finnegan



Keith Finnegan has been the voice of Galway for over thirty three years. Keith and a delegation from Galway have been attending the Irish Fest in Milwaukee for 26 years. Keith understands the demands and difficulties encountered in putting on the Irish Festivals across the United States. The session Keith is facilitating will acknowledge the hard work of all attending the conference, in keeping the Irish Culture alive in the USA.

Dr. Niamh Hamill



Dr. Niamh Hamill is the Academic Director at Institute of Study Abroad Ireland in Donegal, and Associate Professor of Global Studies at Drew University NJ. Historian, lecturer and scholar of Irish culture and history, Niamh is passionate about links between Irish-America and Ireland, and the positive impact of study abroad programs on this relationship.

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