

## Press Release

### 2016 ST. PATRICK'S FESTIVAL PROGRAMME LAUNCHED BY MINISTER DONOHOE

#### *St. Patrick's Festival looks to the future with 'Imagine If' Parade Thematic*

**Dublin, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2016:** Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport Mr. Paschal Donohoe, TD was joined by Ciara Withington (age 6) from Clongriffin, Dublin and James MacDougald (age 8) from Co. Kildare along with Festival Parade characters in Dublin this morning to announce the launch of St. Patrick's Festival 2016, which will take place from **17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> March**. The world class line-up of events and street-theatre will showcase all that is great about Ireland both domestically and internationally, creating a carnival atmosphere across the Capital.

In 2014 the Festival embarked on a three-year creative thematic for its principal event, the Festival Parade, each year being inspired by the Past, the Present and the Future respectively. The 2016 theme, **Imagine If...**, responds to the Future thematic and marks the final instalment of an exciting creative trilogy which will see the streets of Dublin come to life with spectacular pageantry and performance. St. Patrick's Festival is proud to be an official programme partner of Ireland 2016. In what is a significant year for Ireland, the principles of the proclamation and the significance of this period of history in shaping the future of Ireland and her people have inspired a number of events on the 2016 Festival programme.

Commenting on the launch of the 2016 St. Patrick's Festival, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport Mr. Paschal Donohoe, TD said: *"The St. Patrick's Festival has developed into a major attraction, which provides us with the chance to showcase our own culture and talents and promote all that is great about Ireland, on an international stage."*

*"Established by the then Minister for Tourism and Trade, Enda Kenny, St. Patrick's Festival celebrates its 21<sup>st</sup> birthday this year. As is the case every year, the Festival offers a varied, exciting and rich programme with a fantastic selection of music, dance, performance art, street-theatre and film, ensuring that its reputation as a world-famous event continues to grow. And with more than 100,000 overseas visitors coming to Ireland to help us celebrate our national day, the Festival kicks off the tourist season in a most spectacular way. Generating an estimated €73m in additional revenue for the country, the impact of this key tourism attraction is significant. I am delighted to be launching the programme and look forward to seeing everything it has to offer in this very special year."*

The ever popular cultural programme, **I Love My City**, returns to the 2016 festival. The series of engaging, evocative and intimate cultural events and happenings that have been curated by the Festival will be staged in some of Dublin's most beautiful, historic and prestigious cultural venues and spaces. Headline events, featuring established and emerging Irish and international artists, from a variety of disciplines, including literature, music, film, spoken word, design, visual art and more, will be presented throughout the Festival.

This year, as part of the I Love My City programme, the Festival presents a packed event schedule including - **The Moth StorySLAM**; an open mic storytelling competition like no other where storytellers put their names in a hat are selected at random to tell a story on the spot on the night's chosen theme. See Dublin through the eyes of its youth's with **look-see RUN**; a teen centred project that offers an alternative tour of Dublin. **The Children's Soapbox**; in preparation of the Festival the children have explored their hopes and dreams for Ireland and together will shape these into soapbox style performances using spoken word, stories and poetry. **Older than Ireland**; tells the amazing story of a hundred years of a life as seen through the eyes of



thirty Irish centenarians. This landmark documentary is both funny and at times poignant. **The Ultimate Sunday** is back; the Sunday papers are brought to life through a series of talks, interviews, live music and much more.

People are invited to get their dancing shoes on and join the **Festival Céilí** taking place on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> to dance their way into the night at Ireland's largest outdoor celebration of traditional Irish dancing. Learn the steps, enjoy live traditional music and soak up the atmosphere on the streets of Dublin.

Join '60s legend, icon, poet and **renowned singer-songwriter, Donovan** for a celebratory evening at the spectacular National Concert Hall on Saturday night. You will be treated to Donovan's history of all his hits: 'Sunshine Superman', 'Mellow Yellow', and 'The Hurdy Gurdy Man' to name a few, plus also his legendary storytelling and cult songs. Tickets are priced at €20-€35 and are available to purchase from the box office now at [www.nch.ie](http://www.nch.ie).

Take part in the **Festival Treasure Hunt** on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March, a family-friendly, fun-filled trail through the capital city, not to be missed. Visit impressive Dublin landmarks, gather and solve the clues and race back to City Hall to finish the adventure! Registration is from 10am-1pm on the day in City Hall or you can pre-register your team in advance at [www.stpatricksfestival.ie](http://www.stpatricksfestival.ie).

Sunday brings the **Festival Big Day Out** at the heart of Georgian Dublin with Merrion Square providing a stunning setting for this day-long street carnival. Spend the day being entertained by quirky performances, open-air shows, music, fun zones, workshops, arts and craft, Irish language events, Keeling's Love to Grow Children's Garden and much more. Don't miss the special Dublin UNESCO City of Literature event in the beautiful Georgian House of RSAI Merrion Square, which will bring the characters and story of The Book of Learning by E.R. Murray to life.

Partner events around Dublin this year include the **Dublin Bay Prawn Festival**, taking place from Friday 18<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 20<sup>th</sup>. Enjoy the many tastes Howth has to offer in one of its many award-winning restaurants which will be serving delicious prawn dishes in bite-sized portions at the food village. In addition, the food village will have a local market, local food, fish filleting and fishery skills, demos and a programme of family fun activities to offer.

Susan Kirby, CEO of St. Patrick's Festival commented; *"This year's St. Patrick's Parade creative theme, Imagine If, is looking to the future, and over the past months we have been collaborating with children, young adults and some fantastic leading Irish pageant companies to bring this vision, that marks this seminal year for Ireland, to life, in a creative and artistic way. Now in the final year of the three-year theme, we are very excited to see the final instalment unfold in front of an audience of thousands lining the streets of Dublin, in a celebration of creativity and artistry."*

Speaking today, Noel John McLoughlin, Fáilte Ireland's Director of marketing said; *"Fáilte Ireland is investing significantly in this iconic festival and we consider Ireland to be lucky to have such a world-renowned event with which to kick off our tourism season. The festival is easily the largest festival in Ireland and it attracts over 112,000 overseas visitors - benefitting the economy to the tune of €73m. We look forward to another successful week this year and I am sure that all who attend, from home and abroad, will thoroughly enjoy themselves."*

**A selection of Headline events as part of the 2016 I Love My City programme include:**

**The Moth StorySLAM** – an open-mic storytelling competition founded and now held weekly in New York City. Now also held monthly in Dublin and this St. Patrick's Day the beautiful Teelings Distillery will host a 'slam' under the theme of '**Only in Dublin**' commissioned specially by St Patrick's Festival. The Moth StorySLAM event will take place in the Teelings Distillery, New Market Square, Dublin 8 on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March. Tickets for the event are priced at €8 each.

**look-see RUN** – is a walking performance in Dublin created and led by young people. Imagine - It's just after sunset. You've just had your tea. And you're comin' with us. Performance Mavericks THEATREclub conspire with a group of teenagers you've never met to bring you round town. This is a performance that is also a walk, that is sometimes a talk, and possibly we might have to run. **Please note:** look-see RUN may or may not contain GLITTER. SCREECHING. LOUD MUSIC. SINGING GIRLS. ME. MAN UTD. DOOR STEPS. DOOR SLAMS. YOU. BALCONIES. STARS. GLOWSTICKS. Rnb. HEROES. HIM. SNOOKER. HER. RAILINGS. CONTEMPLATION. US. RESOLUTION. US. REVELATIONS. US. CARS. BRICKS. SKYLINES. LANES. CRANES. DANCING. US. Tours will take place at 6:30pm and 8:00pm on both Friday 18<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March meeting at Hugh Lane Gallery. Tickets are priced at €5.

**The Children's Soapbox** – asking what does it mean to be a child in 2016? This special event will both launch and introduce **The Ark's new Children's Council**, which gives a voice to children from across Dublin and a platform to express their views and wishes for Ireland of the future. In preparation for the event, the children have explored their hopes and dreams for our Ireland's future. Together, they will shape these into soap box style performances using spoken word, stories and poetry. This event will take place on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March at The Ark Children's Cultural Centre, Temple Bar. Tickets to this event are free and are available from Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March.

**'Rarity' by Tonnta Music** – 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'. Presenting the first public music performance in this exquisite venue, join Tonnta for a unique aural experience combining live singers and an electronic vocal soundscape. The event features a new collaborative work by composer and sound designer Rob Moloney alongside other Irish choral works, including the mesmerising Difference in Clouds by Michael Gallen. Taking place on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March this event will have two performances at 6:30pm and 7:30pm. Tickets to this event are free of charge.

**ROUNDS by BoNs Synth Ensemble** – BoNs is the musical and songwriting catalyst for Dublin based multi-instrumentalist, producer and synthesist Glenn P Keating (Jape, Redneck Manifesto). Following the success of last year's event at the Freemasons Hall, Glenn will be delving further into his exploration of synthesizer music. Aptly, this year's venue will be the ethereal surroundings of St Patrick's Cathedral. The performance will feature a new composition, taking inspiration from the cathedral's Bell Ringing and Evensong traditions. This event is ticketed at €8 per person and will take place at 8:00pm on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

**Older than Ireland 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. These centenarians truly are older than Ireland, they are our living history and these are their extraordinary stories. Join us in the gorgeous setting of The National Gallery of Ireland for a special screening and interview with some of the stars of the documentary as part of this year's 'I Love My



City' cultural programme. A special screening and interview with some of the stars will take place at 2:00pm on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March at The National Gallery of Ireland. This is a free ticketed event.

**Future Composers** – As Ireland reflects on a historic 100-year milestone, we take a glimpse at what the next century might hold for Irish composition. Future Composers brings 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, and culminates in all three groups joining forces to perform a new large scale work by award winning composer Linda Buckley, specially commissioned for the event. Presented by Ensemble Music, who along with the performing groups strive to present classical music in non-traditional settings, Future Composers explores the full sonic range of new Irish composition in a unique, immersive surrounding. Tickets are available for €8 with the event taking place at The Chocolate Factory, Kings Inn Street on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March.

**The Ultimate Sunday** – Soothe yourself of the week that went before with Ultimate Sunday, the perfect week-ender for that tired or curious head. In the ornate surroundings of Belvedere House, Ultimate Sunday will lay on a full day schedule of cultured chats, sounds, and interactive fun. Hear Helen Steele on how to run a fashion empire from Monaghan, Michael Cronin will run through the papers of 100 years ago, Shona Murray will tell us what's it's like to be a journalist in a war zone and Julien Clancy will bring his audio tales to life with Sounds Alive. Come and join us on the day the city takes a breath. A mixture of panel talks, interviews, music, screenings, and some food and drink as we re-imagine each section of your relaxed Sunday; whether it's reading through the issues of the day in news, sport, fashion and culture or taking a more holistic approach to the traditional week-ender. Tickets are available for €10 with the event taking place on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March at Belvedere House, Great Denmark Street, Dublin 1.

St. Patrick's Festival will take place this year from 17<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> March. For details on the programme log on to [www.stpatricksfestival.ie](http://www.stpatricksfestival.ie), download the app, or join the Festival's official **Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/StPatricksFestivalIreland/?ref=ts> and follow on **Twitter** <https://twitter.com/stpatricksfest>.

**ENDS**

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**NOTES TO EDITOR**

St. Patrick's Festival is funded by Fáilte Ireland and Dublin City Council.

The principal aim of St. Patrick's Festival, since its inauguration, is to develop a major annual international festival around the national holiday over which the Irish people would stand proud. It sets out to reflect the talents and achievements of Irish people on many national and world stages, and it acts as an exciting showcase for the manifold skills of the people of Ireland, of every age and social background.

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.

As the one national holiday that is celebrated in more countries around the world than any other, St. Patrick's Day is the day when everyone wants to be Irish.

**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.

The first St Patrick's Festival was held over one day, and night, on March 17th 1996. The live audience for the day was estimated to be 430,000.

Preparation for the first St. Patrick's Festival used to take only 5 months, but with the growth of the Festival, it now takes 18 months to plan for Ireland's biggest annual celebration.