



## Announcing St. Patrick's Festival Parade Grand Marshals 2019!

### Two of Ireland's Best Loved Comedic Storytellers, **Deirdre O'Kane And Jason Byrne** To Lead This Year's St. Patrick's Festival Parade!

**National St. Patrick's Festival Parade, Sunday March 17<sup>th</sup>**

*St Patrick's Festival March 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019*

[www.stpatricksfestival.ie](http://www.stpatricksfestival.ie)

#stpatricksfest

#### **Deirdre O'Kane**

*"Getting to be a Grand Marshal in this year's Parade has absolutely made my 2019!  
(I can't believe I have to share the lovely car with that other eejit but I'm putting a brave face on it.)  
I'm a huge Parade fan and experiencing it from the heart of the spectacle will be an incredible honour."*

#### **Jason Byrne**

*"As a child of 1980's Dublin who went to the Parade every year, I'm amazed to be one of this year's Grand Marshals. I'm also amazed that the Parade is now actually incredibly good, and whilst I'll miss the floats of my era (a truck carrying freezing Americans followed by a fire brigade and a dog), I can't wait to see this year's mega floats as myself and Dee get to wave at our billions and billions of adoring fans".*

Two of Ireland's best loved comedians, Deirdre O'Kane and Jason Byrne, have been announced as Grand Marshals for this year's National St. Patrick's Festival Parade! Attended by more than half a million fans and watched by millions across Ireland and the world on RTÉ One and the RTÉ Player, the Festival Parade 'SCÉALAÍOCHT AGUS SEANCHAÍ – A Celebration of Irish Storytelling' will weave its way through the streets of the capital in a flourish of magnificent pageantry and spectacle from 12 noon on Sunday March 17<sup>th</sup>.

With 'storytelling' the theme of this year's Festival, Deirdre O'Kane and Jason Byrne have been chosen as Grand Marshals in recognition of their outstanding contribution to Irish comedy and acting, both at home and internationally. Comedy is an integral part of Ireland's storytelling heritage, our warm humour and sharp wit appreciated the world over! Both comedians will be appearing that same evening at 'Paddy's Night in Support of Comic Relief in the 3Arena, alongside a huge line-up of Irish comic talent, in what promises to be a cracking evening of fun for fantastic local causes.

**Making the announcement at The Clarence Hotel, Susan Kirby, St. Patrick's Festival CEO said:** "We're absolutely thrilled to reveal our two Grand Marshals for this year's Festival Parade. As we celebrate a nation of storytellers, we recognise Deirdre and Jason as two of our best, both incredibly articulate and engaging comedic raconteurs. The Irish sense of humour and warmth is renowned internationally and we feel that as this year's Grand Marshals they will represent our country wonderfully. "

**Ardmhéara Bhaile Átha Cliath / Lord Mayor of Dublin, Nial Ring added:** "Storytelling is part of what we are, and it is so fitting to have Jason and Deirdre as our Grand Marshals for this year's Parade. They are both outgoing entertainers who bring life, fun and our unique Irishness to their vast repertoire of stories".

**Fáilte Ireland's Head of Festivals, Ciara Sugrue said:** "Fáilte Ireland continues to invest significantly in St. Patrick's Festival Dublin, an event which not only attracts international visitors but also showcases Ireland as a fantastic tourist destination to global media. We are delighted that Deirdre O'Kane and Jason Byrne have been selected as this year's Grand Marshals and we wish them all the best on the day. Two renowned Irish comedians, Deirdre and Jason will be great representatives for this year's 'Storytelling' theme."

# St PATRICK'S FESTIVAL

As well as an accomplished stand-up comedian, **Deirdre O'Kane** is an award-winning actress. She is a six times Irish Film and Television Awards (IFTA) nominee, and was awarded Best Lead Actress (Film) in 2015 for her role as Christina Noble opposite last year's Grand Marshal Liam Cunningham, Sarah Greene and Brendan Coyle in *Noble*. TV credits include *Paths to Freedom*, *The Clinic* and *Moone Boy*. On stage she has appeared in *Juno and the Paycock* at The Abbey Theatre and *At the Black Pig's Dyke* with Druid Theatre.

The biggest selling comedian at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Jason Byrne's inspired, original brand of high-energy intelligent lunacy ensures that there is no other comedian like him. He is a winner of the highly coveted Perrier Newcomer Award Nomination and the Perrier Award Nomination. His television credits include *Live at the Apollo* (BBC One), *Dave's One Night Stand* (Dave) and *The Channel 4 Comedy Gala* (Channel 4). He has performed across the world in New York, Boston, Hong Kong, Singapore, Brussels, Milan, Paris and Australia and can currently be seen as a judge on the second series of Virgin Media One's *Ireland's Got Talent*.

Post Festival Parade on 17<sup>th</sup> March, both Grand Marshals will move to the 3 Arena where they are headliners in this year's **'Paddy's Night in Support of Comic Relief'**. This is the third year of the event where top comedy stars come together for one night only to raise funds for charities tackling homelessness and the refugee crisis. It has a stellar line up including **Tommy Tiernan, Pat Shortt, Neil Delamere, Mario Rosenstock and many more**. Tickets are €39.00 - €45.00 and available from [www.ticketmaster.ie](http://www.ticketmaster.ie)

The five day National St. Patrick's Festival, running from March 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, will feature a host of fun-filled family experiences, breathtaking large scale events, diverse newly commissioned performances, a myriad of musical treats and new for 2019, a three-day Festival Village at Merrion Square, Dublin. Street theatre and pageant companies from across Ireland and the world will join the Grand Marshals to present **SCÉALAÍOCHT AGUS SEANCHAÍ – A Celebration of Irish Storytelling** for the **Festival Parade**. Their magnificent creations and flamboyant performances, will weave through the streets of our capital city in a dazzling spectacle along with bands from far and wide who will bring dynamic rhythms and uplifting musical scores to the magnificent procession.

The National St. Patrick's Festival is made possible by the generous support of **Fáilte Ireland**, the National Tourism Development Authority, as it identifies festivals as a key component to continue to grow tourism through its National Festival Programme, **the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Dublin City Council and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht**. Alongside long-term commercial partners **Renault** and **Irish Ferries**, this year the Festival also welcomes **Tesco Ireland** in a two-year Cultural Partnership, and **Hennessy** as partner on many of the Festival's musical highlights.

St. Patrick's Festival events are supported by many partners including **The Arts Council, Science Foundation Ireland, Dublin UNESCO City of Literature, Foras na Gaeilge, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht under the 20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010 -2030, Conradh na Gaeilge, Guinness Storehouse, Scottish Government, British Council, Embassy of Switzerland in Ireland, Fundación MAPFRE Madrid, Fingal County Council, Dublin Airport, Irish Hotels Federation – Dublin Branch, RTÉ Supporting the Arts, The Irish Times, FM104, Do Dublin** and **Actavo**.

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