

23rd Annual

Donegal Bay and Blue Stacks Festival

Sept 29th - Oct 15th 2023

FREE
PROGRAMME



BlueStacksFestival



donegalcoco

Presented by Donegal County Council Culture Division



Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall
Donegal County Council

Fáilte | Welcome

Welcome to the 23rd edition of this annual festival, which is presented by **Donegal County Council Culture Division**, in partnership with a range of arts organizations, cultural venues and community groups, largely in the South and South West of the county.

The festival is funded by **Donegal County Council, The Arts Council, the Department of Tourism, Culture Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (Decade of Centenaries Fund)** and Creative Ireland.

Ba mhaith linn buíochas a ghabháil chuig

Ailis McIntyre, Linda Clyne, Abbey Arts Centre, Ballyshannon. **Conor Malone**, Balor Arts Centre, Ballybofey. **Rosemary Ward**, The Bluestack Centre, Drimarone. **John O'Connell**, Eclipse Cinemas, Bundoran

Chantal McCormick, Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Theatre. **Rachel Mitchell**, Aerialist, Fidget Feet's House! Residency. **Susan Byrne**, Community Liaison, Fidget Feet's House! Residency. **Lucina Russell**, Kildare County Council Arts Office.

Shirley Anne Bonner, Celine McGlynn, Leah Fairman, Frances Browne Literary Festival. **Tanya Ward**, Aislingí Dance Academy. **Deborah Cunningham**, Bluestack Chorale & Donegal Voices. **Kieran Kelly, Charlie Bonner**, Drumboe. **Amanda Crawford, Christian Carbin, Art Kavanagh**, Donegal Drama Circle. **Keith Mannion, Patsy O'Kane**, Treehouse Productions. **Linda Connolly**, The Kicking Donkey, Bundoran. **Dean Maywood**, Ghostlight Sessions.

Marc Gegan, Donegal Bay Film Festival. **Maura Logue**, Dark Daughter Productions. **John McDonagh**, NYC. **Caoimhín Mac Aoidh, Rab Cherry**, Cairdeas na bhFidiléirí, Billy Finn Sessions Committee. **Matt McGranaghan, Fergus Cleary**, Island Players. **Seán Ó Beirne**, Ceol na gConallach/Comhairle Paróiste Cill Chartha. **Tommy Callaghan**, Manna Design.

Frances Connaghan, William Colvin, Donegal County Council Communications Office. **Mark Sweeney**, Snr. Executive Engineer, Roads, Donegal County Council. **Naoise Nolan**, Marketing Graduate, Donegal County Council Culture Division. **Judith McCarthy**, Curator, Donegal County Museum. **Niamh Brennan**, Donegal County Archivist. **Sarah Nolan, Margaret Sweeney**, Donegal County Council Tourism Unit.

Cover: **Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Theatre** performers **Oran Leong, Sara Granda** and **Roisín Harten** in House! (Photo: **Jym Daly**). See. P 13.



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THE BLUESTACK CHORALE PRESENTS

Songs for An Autumn Evening

The Bluestack Choral with **Deborah Cunningham**, Soprano,
Paul Martin, Baritone and **Evan McGarrigle**, Piano.

Date: Friday, September 29

Venue: St. Patrick's Parish Centre, Donegal Town

Time: 8.00pm • **Cost:** €10

After the resounding success of the Mountcharles Opera Festival in their new home - Drumbeg House, Inver - this summer, The Bluestack Choral are delighted to be back again for another Autumn festival



season. Their Songs for an Autumn Evening will see a selection from their back-catalogue ranging from the glorious technicolour of Rodgers & Hammerstein to the modern Scandi of Ole Gjelto, as well as a selection of new pieces from the summer programme.

Deborah Cunningham and Paul Martin once again bring a touch of drama with some of their favourite opera solo arias and duets, featuring Verdi, Puccini and a host of others and of course, no evening would be complete without Evan McGarrigle entrancing the audience as he showcases his immense talent on piano with an adapted Bach work.

Deborah Cunningham holds a Recital Diploma from Trinity College, London. She is the founder of the Mountcharles Opera Festival and formed the Donegal Voices vocal ensemble in 2013.

Paul Martin is one of Donegal's premier baritones. He is musical director of The Bluestack Choral and of St. Agatha's Choir, Donegal.

Evan McGarrigle is an award-winning pianist. He is much in demand as a solo performer and runs a successful music school in Carrick. A gifted music arranger, he is also director of the Donegal Voices ensemble and the Donegal Abbey Singers.

Sean Keane

With **Pat Coyne**, Guitar and **Fergus Feeley**, Mandocello.

Date: Saturday, September 30

Venue: Balor Arts Centre, Ballybofey

Time: 8.00pm • **Cost:** €30

Hailing from the Galway village of Caherlistrane, **Sean Keane** was born into a musical family that also includes his renowned sister, Delores, and his aunts, the sublime Sarah and Rita Keane.

In the early 1990s, along with Johnny 'Ringo' McDonagh, Jackie Daly and Frances Black, he was a founder member of the traditional supergroup Arcady. His solo career burst into life with the release of the album *All Heart No Roses* in 1994, leading him to be dubbed 'the greatest Irish musical find of the decade', by *The London Independent* and 'the fastest rising star of the Irish music scene', by *The Irish Times*.

His unique repertoire of traditional Irish folk music, pop, blues, and country has seen his popularity endure throughout a career that has seen the release of eleven solo albums while collaborating on another five.

For this Balor Arts Centre show, songs like *I'll Be There*, *You Are Loved* and *Whispered*, will join popular favourites like *Isle of Hope*, *Galway to Graceland* and *Never Alone*, on a set list that will also include some of his newest and latest material.



TREEHOUSE LIVE PRESENTS

Jinx Lennon, Rising Damp, Tramp, Tomcat, Elaine Malone, Aoife Wolf

Date: September 30, October 7, 14

Venue: The Kicking Donkey, Main Street, Bundoran

Time: 10.00pm • **Cost:** €10

Saturday September 30

Jinx Lennon

Support **Rising Damp**

Legendary Dundalk punk troubadour and fearless social commentator **Jinx Lennon** has released 13 albums to-date, has supported The Fall and toured with John Cooper Clarke.

Last year, Jinx appeared on the Tommy Tiernan Show performing his song, Pushing the Patients Round. Recent album releases have included Border Schizo Folk Songs, Liferrafts for Latchicos and Pet Rent.

Rising Damp was originally the solo project of Dublin-based visual artist and musician **Michelle Doyle** but has now expanded to include **Ivan Pawle** on synth and guitar and **Sarah Grimes** on drums.



Saturday October 7

Tramp

Support **Tomcat**.

Tramp are already firm favourites with Treehouse audiences, having helped open the current live series back in May. With regular airplay from BBC NI's Across The Line and BBC Radio 1's Introducing, they had their biggest show yet when headlining Stendhal Festival's Henry McCullough Stage this summer.

Tomcat is a four-piece rock band made up of frontwomen **Emer Mc Laughlin** (vocals, bass) and **Niamh O'Raw** (vocals, guitar), with **Jason Feenan** on drums and **Liam Bradley** on guitar. They spent the summer recording their debut EP, Gothic Horror Romance, and gigging around Derry, Donegal, Belfast and Dublin.



Saturday October 14

Elaine Malone

Support **Aoife Wolf**.

Elaine Malone has been immersed in Cork's thriving music scene for over a decade. An eclectic array of influences – from 90s grunge to the Velvet Underground to the storied country music of Lee Hazelwood – colours her brilliantly expansive psych-rock material. Her most recent recording, Pyrric, was issued by Pizza Pizza (Just Mustard, Altered Hours) this summer.

Aoife Wolf is a psych-folk singer-songwriter from the Midlands. Influenced by Kate Bush, Elizabeth Fraser and PJ Harvey, she has been making some of the most magnetic music around in recent times.



Donegal Bay Film Festival

Curated by Marc Gegan.

Date: Tuesday – Thursday, October 3-5

Venue: Eclipse Cinemas, Bundoran

Time: 8.00pm • **Cost:** FREE



Tuesday, October 3

Wednesday's Child, **Laura O'Shea** and **Caroline Harvey**. Northern Chirish, **Diana Cheung**. Otherland, **Alice Ward**.

Wednesday, October 4

Chaos and Quiet, **Fiacra Ó Longáin** and **Seán Coyle**. Daoine na Mara, **Giles Carey**. Bean Feasa, **Daniel Butler**. I Know You, **Colm Herron**.

Thursday, October 5

Border Trail, **Darach MacDonald** and **John O'Neill**. Q&A, hosted by writer, **Frank Galligan**.

In **Wednesday's Child** Maire is optimistic on her first day as a Social Care worker, but a house call to a family in crisis quickly brings her back to earth.

Northern Chirish explores the experiences of four young Chinese creatives living and working in Northern Ireland. Australian surfer Vittoria Farmer

arrives in Donegal at the onset of winter, in **Otherland**.

In **Chaos and Quiet**, boxer Tyrone McCullough strives for glory, whilst his father Vin relates his own troubles with family life and mental health.

Daoine na Mara explores the ways in which the surfers of the West of Ireland live and experience the ocean.

In **Bean Feasa**, the sceptical daughter of a traditional healer has her certainties challenged when she encounters an Otherworldly figure.

I Know You follows Gerard as he returns to Northern Ireland on hearing his brother has had a stroke.

Border Trail explores the experiences of communities on both sides of the Border and the legacy of a century of Partition.

Marc Gegan. An Appreciation.
See Page 24

DONEGAL DRAMA CIRCLE

The Beauty Queen of Leenane

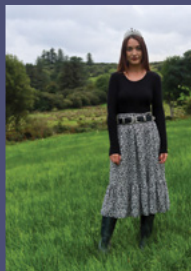
Written by **Martin McDonagh**. Directed by **Christian Carbin**.
Lighting Director, **Art Kavanagh**.

Date: Thursday, October 5 - Saturday, October 7

Venue: Leghowney Community Hall, Leghowney, Donegal Town

Time: 8.00pm • **Cost:** €15

A modern classic of Irish theatre, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, is set in the mountains of Connemara and tells the story of Maureen Folan, a plain and lonely woman in her early 40s, and Mag, her manipulative, aging mother. Mag's interference in Maureen's first and potentially last romantic relationship sets in motion a chain of events that are as tragically funny as they are horrific.



First produced by Druid Theatre Company and the Royal Court Theatre in 1996, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* was directed by Gary Hynes with Anna Manahan and Maire Mullen in the lead roles. Following a successful run on the West End and a series of hugely popular Irish tours, it received its Broadway production in 1998, winning four Tony awards after an extended sold out run.

In this Donegal Drama Circle production, **Amanda Crawford** plays the part of Mag while **Laura McNulty** is Maureen. **Martin Callaghan** and **Conor Friery** are the neighbouring Dooley brothers, Pato and Ray.

Martin McDonagh's massively successful plays - including *The Cripple of Inishmaan*, *The Lonesome West*, *Hangmen* and *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* - have been produced all over the world, enjoying extended runs in the West End and on Broadway. His screenwriting and film directing ventures have been equally successful, especially *In Bruges* and the recent multi-Oscar nominated *Banshees of Inisherin*.

THE GHOSTLIGHT SESSIONS

Paul Sherry | Síomha | Joel Harkin**Date:** Thursday, October 5**Venue:** Balor Arts Centre, Ballybofey**Time:** 8.00pm • **Cost:** €15

Clare musician and singer **Síomha** dances the line between folk, jazz and neo-soul. Her debut album, *Infinite Space*, was produced by Grammy nominated Tyler Duncan (Carly Rae Jepsen) and featured an all-star line-up of American jazz musicians. Earlier this year, she was awarded the Music Network's Residency at the Centre Culturel Irlandais in Paris and was also invited to record some of her songs from *Infinite Space* - including the wonderfully atmospheric *Spéir Rua* - with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra.

Paul Sherry is a singer songwriter Monaghan. He is also a longtime member the Gráinne Duffy Band, for whom he is co-writer and guitarist. His most recent album release, *Let It Flow*, has gained nationwide airplay and rave reviews including being named Album of The Week on Bernard Clarke's *Blue of The Night* programme on RTÉ Lyric FM.

Joel Harkin is a yarn spinner and a singer of songs from Convoy. Based in Belfast, his 2020 album, *Never Happy*, was shortlisted for the Northern Ireland Music Prize. Joel lies awake at night, terrified at the prospect of the looming abyss and channels these fears into his haunting songs. He's also renowned for the contrast between his music and the whimsical, very funny banter he does as he tunes his guitar. He hopes you think he's good craic!



Donegal Voices

Conductor and Musical Director, **Evan McGarrigle**.
Accompanied by the **Donegal Voices Chamber Orchestra**

Mass in C- Major by Mozart

Christus (Opus 97), by Mendelssohn. O Sacrum Convivium, by Messiaen

Date: Friday, October 6

Venue: St. Patrick's Church, Ballyshannon

Time: 7.30pm • **Cost:** Donations

Date: Friday, October 13

Venue: St. Connell's Church, Glenties

Time: 7.30pm • **Cost:** Donations

Donegal Voices first performed in 2015 and have by now established themselves as one of the premier choral groups in the North West of Ireland.

Under their new Director, **Evan**

McGarrigle, and accompanied by a Chamber Orchestra of some of Donegal's

finest instrumentalists, they bring yet another inspired programme to audiences this autumn, the highlight of which will be one of Mozart's best loved shorter works, Mass in C-Major, with **Deborah Cunningham** - Soprano, **Fiona Wasson** - Mezzo Soprano, **Pat Doherty** - Tenor and **Paul Martin** - Baritone.

Further works will include Felix Mendelssohn's romantic biography of Christ, Christus (Op.97), along with extracts from his grand oratorio, Elijah, with a semi-chorus presenting Oliver Messiaen's only liturgical piece, O Sacrum Convivium.

In recent years, this exceptional 30 member vocal ensemble has performed works by JS Bach (Magnificat in D), Vivaldi (Gloria), Beethoven (Mass in C), George Friderik Handel (Coronation Anthems and The Hallelujah Chorus), Joseph Haydn's Nelson Mass and Elgar's From the Bavarian Highlands.

Musical Director **Evan McGarrigle** is an award-winning pianist, music arranger and music educationalist. He is much in demand as a solo performer and runs a successful music school in Carrick. He is also director of the Donegal Abbey Singers and is a popular tutor with the Donegal Music Education Partnership (DMEP).



CUIREANN CAIRDEAS NA BHFIDLÉIRÍ I LÁTHAIR

The 41st Annual Donegal Fiddlers Glenties Gathering

Date: Friday, October 6 – Sunday, October 8

Venue: The Highlands Hotel, Glenties

www.donegalfiddlemusic.ie



This major gathering of fiddle players was established in 1983 and is held annually in The Highlands Hotel, Glenties. The popular event is for anyone interested in fiddle music and the formal programme includes classes, a concert with special guest fiddle players, talks and occasional recitals.

Fiddle Masterclass

Date: Saturday, October 7 & Sunday, October 8

Venue: The Highlands Hotel, Glenties

Time: 10.30am to 12.30pm • **Cost:** €10 (For the 2 days)

Booking: Please Book in Advance at Email info@donegalfiddlemusic.ie or by Text to 086 3409019.

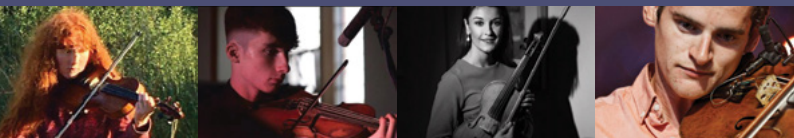
Talk: The West Highlands Fiddle Style

With **Ewen Henderson** (Fort William, Scotland).

Date: Saturday, October 7

Venue: The Highlands Hotel, Glenties

Time: 12.30pm – 1.30pm • **Cost:** FREE



Donegal Fiddlers Concert

Showcasing performances by some of the younger generation of fiddle players in the Donegal style, with **Fiona Gavin**, **Oisín Duffy** and **Melanie Houton** and special guest from Scotland, **Ewen Henderson**.

Date: Saturday, October 7

Venue: The Highlands Hotel, Glenties

Time: 9.00pm • **Cost:** €15

Bookings: Tickets At Door. No Advance Booking.

Fiona Gavin is a young fiddle player Glenties. She started playing the fiddle when she was five years of age. She was initially taught by Denise Boyle and has been fortunate enough to spend a good deal of time with the Campbells (Peter and the late Jimmy) and other local musicians. She particularly enjoys playing at sessions in the Glen Tavern near Glenties.

Oisín Duffy is a multi-instrumentalist from Moville. He started playing fiddle at the age of seven with Clodagh Warnock, while throughout his teens he enjoyed playing in groups ran by Roisin McGrory of the Inishowen Traditional Music Project. Oisín was part of the Inishowen Trad Orchestra and Choir who performed at the National Concert Hall earlier this year.

Melanie Houton is a fiddle player from Glengad, Inishowen. She has won numerous Fleadh competitions and was recipient of the Senior Oireachtas Fiddle title in 2009. She has performed at many festivals and events at home and abroad and is a member of the Sí Fiddlers ensemble. She performed with the Inishowen Trad Orchestra and Choir at the National Concert Hall earlier this year.

Ewen Henderson is a fiddle player, piper and Gaelic singer from Fort William, Scotland. Ewen started learning fiddle at the age of five, under the great Angus Grant. He was a member of the Battlefield Band from 2010-2014 and is a founder member of Scottish traditional innovators Mànrán, with whom he has performed all over the world. Ewen is also keen shinty player, the Scottish field game closest to hurling.

AN IRISH REPERTORY THEATRE NEW YORK PRODUCTION

Off The Meter

Written and Performed by **John McDonagh** (Authentic New York Yellow Cabbie!).
Directed by **Ciarán O'Reilly**.

Date: Friday, October 6

Venue: Abbey Arts Centre, Ballyshannon

Time: 8.00pm • **Cost:** €15

After a sold-out run at the Irish Repertory Theatre in New York City, **John McDonagh** is bringing his one man play, *Off The Meter* to Donegal. McDonagh, whose parents hail from

Pettigo, takes his audience on a fascinating and often hilarious ride

through his 40 years behind the wheel of a New York yellow cab. With a parallel career as a radio host, he has condensed his many years of activism, reality television show antics and observation into a love song to the ever changing neighbourhoods of the city that never sleeps. Add in a touch of politics and brushes with celebrities who are itching to get behind the wheel of a big yellow taxi and *Off The Meter* is a gift that keeps on giving.



"John takes his passengers and his theatre audiences on one hell of a ride!."
- **New York Daily News.**

"The Bard of Gridlock! - New York Times.

"May fellow cabbie ... the best and most articulate guide I ever had."
- **Stephen Fry.**

"McDonagh is faster than a New York minute."- Richard Hammond.

Pilgrim St.

Date: Saturday, October 7

Venue: Balor Arts Centre, Ballybofey

Time: 8.00pm • **Cost:** €25

Pilgrim St. are a County Meath-based collective of musicians which includes

Peadar Farrelly on Guitar and Vocals, **Eugene**

Donegan on Banjo and Vocals, **Eoin McDonnell**

on Mandolin and Vocals,

Francis McGinn on Bass,

Mark Lynch on Dobro, **Brendan Kelly** on Accordion and Vocals and

Cathal McQuaid on the Fiddle.



Strongly influenced by Bluegrass, Old Time Country and Folk Music, fused with Traditional songs from this side of the Atlantic, the band have garnered a glowing word of mouth endorsement from venues around the country with their powerhouse live performances.

Drawing on material from such luminaries as Hank Williams, Woody Guthrie, The Pogues and Bruce Springsteen's Seeger Sessions, Pilgrim St. issued two EPs before the release of their debut album, Ash Into Gold Dust, in 2021. Their second album, Folk Bones, is scheduled for release later this year.

DARK DAUGHTER PRODUCTIONS

Nora Gallagher's - Dry Dance Hall Days

Comedy, Romance and Jiving in 1950s Donegal

Written and Performed by Maura Logue

Date: Sunday, October 8

Venue: The Termon Complex, Pettigo

Time: 3.00pm Matinee • **Cost:** €8 - €5 Students & Children

Meet Nora Gallagher, the Cloakroom Girl at Drumshee Dry Dance Hall, who sees and knows all. Nora introduces us to a host of characters from the fictional townland Drumshee. We meet the Oddities, the Oldies and of course the young ones, looking for love. She reminds us that Fr. Maloney watches over everything and is suspicious of the Strabane Boys Band and their jazz music and the jiving craze that's sweeping the land.



We hear of poor Jimmy Rua, useless at seeking romance. Will the Dolly Birds find love? Will Nora herself be lucky? To find out, join Nora in a homegrown Donegal comedy yarn and a walk down memory lane, to the Dry Dance Hall Days of the 1950s.

Maura Logue is an actor, playwright, theatre director and creative producer from Donegal. Founder and artistic director of Dark Daughter Productions, she has created many memorable theatre works for the Festival, often on a theme of strong women from times past. Highlights have included Síle Molloy (2018), Mother Loss (2016) and Anna Katherine Kelly (2012). Maura developed the character Nora Gallagher during the Covid lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, creating a series of hugely popular online storytelling sessions set in a fictional 1950s Donegal, accompanied by musician David Ison, and which were a highlight of the Donegal Bay and Blue Stacks Festivals, during those dark times.

FIDGET FEET AERIAL DANCE THEATRE

HOUSE!

An Outdoor Aerial Drive-In Bingo Spectacle!

Date: Saturday, October 7 - Sunday, October 8

Venue: The Market Yard, Ballyshannon

Time: Saturday: 1.30pm & 4.30pm. Sunday: 1.00pm & 4.00pm

Cost: Tickets €40 Per Car (Up to 5 People). €10 Per Individual Walk-In

Those masters of aerial spectacle, **Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Theatre**, make a welcome return to Ballyshannon's Market Yard, the scene of their very first crane-assisted aerial show, *Wired and Free* (2005!), this time with their spectacular new Bingo-themed touring show, *House!*



Drive in, park up and play Bingo while aerialists dance high above you and a feast of comedy unfolds below, between bingo fanatic Bidy and the new caller, John O'Dowd. If you don't have a car, no need to worry. Just bring blankets, deck chairs and a picnic and settle in for a fun and laughter filled hour with family and friends.

House! comes to Ballyshannon as the spectacular finalé to a month long Aerial Dance Residency hosted by Fidget Feet, the Abbey Arts Centre and Donegal County Council, working with performing groups, schools and community groups in the Ballyshannon, Bundoran, Ballintra and Donegal Town areas.

The House! Residency and series of Performances is being delivered under The Arts Council's **Invitation To Collaboration** scheme, led by Kildare County Council with project partners Donegal and Tipperary local authorities.

Drumboe

Written by **Kieran Kelly**.
Directed by **Charlie Bonner**.

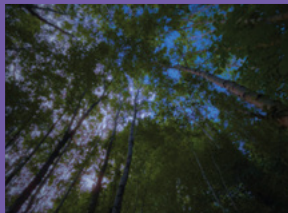
Date: Thursday, October 12 - Saturday, October 14

Venue: Balor Arts Centre, Ballybofey

Time: 8.00pm • **Cost:** €15

**We were comrades once.
Like brothers.**

March, 1923. Anti-Treaty prisoners are held at Drumboe Castle, awaiting execution. With time running out, Fr. Stephen McDevitt visits prisoner Charlie Daly in an attempt to save his life and build an understanding between him and his former comrade in arms, General Joseph Sweeney. A thrilling new drama, it brings the tragic events of a century ago to life like never before, casting new light onto the shadows of our past.



Kieran Kelly's War of Independence play, *Beneath an Irish Sky*, reached the All-Ireland Amateur Drama Finals for Letterkenny Music and Drama Group in 2018. His *Jimmy's Winning Matches* enjoyed a second successful run at An Grianán Theatre this summer.

Charlie Bonner has performed in all of the leading theatres in Ireland including the Abbey (*Philadelphia*, *Here I Come!*, *Macbeth*) and the Lyric Belfast (*Dancing At Lughnasa*). His recent film work includes *The Woman in The Wall* (BBC 1) and *Obituary*, filmed earlier this year in Ballyshannon.

Drumboe has been assisted through the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media's **Decade of Centenaries** fund, administered by Donegal County Council through Donegal County Museum.

MATT MCGRANAGHAN PRESENTS

embrace

A Journey into the Power of Music

Devised and Performed by **Matt McGranaghan**, Fiddle.

Accompanied by **Denise Roper**, Piano.

Date: Thursday, October 12

Venue: Abbey Arts Centre, Ballyshannon

Time: 8.00pm • **Cost:** €15

Matt McGranaghan invites his audience on a voyage of discovery, using his own compositions which reflect the many occasions and moments of life where music is most often pertinent and appreciated. In his own words, 'In my 30-plus years of learning, playing and studying music, I've had some unforgettable moments where I have been deeply affected by music. I want to share that with people and that is what 'embrace' is all about.



Matt McGranaghan was recognised from a young age as traditional fiddler of exceptional talent. His playing has since gone on to encompass many different genres and influences. Matt formed and led his own twenty four piece orchestra in 2004 and 2005 and led a twenty piece jazz band in 2006. He was musical director of the very successful Irish/Scottish music, song and dance show, Kintra, for four years. Matt has also toured and performed with Nathan Carter, Mary Black, Michael English and Brendan Shine, to name but a few.

Denise Roper is an accomplished pianist from the Crossroads. An honours graduate of NUI Maynooth, she taught music in a secondary school for many years before moving to private education. Denise has been Musical Director for countless musicals and shows in County Donegal over the years.

Sherlock Junior

Starring **Buster Keaton**.

With a live musical soundtrack performed by **Little John Nee** and **Fionn Robinson**.

Date: Friday, October 13

Venue: Abbey Arts Centre, Ballyshannon

Time: 11.00am & 1.00pm • **Cost:** FREE

In this classic silent comedy film from 1924, the legendary Buster Keaton stars as a kindly movie projectionist who, when his girlfriend is robbed by a local thief, imagines he is the great Sherlock Holmes and embarks on a quest to catch the criminal.



The screening is accompanied by live music and sound effects created and performed by **Little John Nee** and **Fionn Robinson**, taking the audience 100 years back in time, as they converse with the flickering ghosts of the early silver screen. The work was commissioned by the Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny as part of the Film Soundtrack Festival, earlier this year.

Buster Keaton was one of the biggest stars of Hollywood's silent film era and *Sherlock Junior* is considered to be one of his greatest comedy films.

Born in Glasgow, raised (mostly) in Donegal and now based in Galway, **Little John Nee** is a writer, performer, storyteller and musician. Among his most popular plays and shows have been *The Derry Boat*, *The Mother's Arms*, *Radio Rosario* and the most recent, *Nettle Horse*.

Fionn Robinson is a musician and music therapist from Ramelton. He has collaborated with Littlejohn on many projects including the wonderfully named *Caledonia Highly Strung Orchestra*.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH FRANCES BROWNE LITERARY FESTIVAL

The Stranorlar Workhouse

Poetry Premiere with **Annemarie Ní Churreáin**

Panel Discussion with **Niamh Brennan, Rev. Raymond Blair, Clare Curran.**

Date: Friday, October 13

Venue: Kee's Hotel, Main Street, Stranorlar

Time: 3.00pm • **Cost:** €5

Booking: www.francesbrowneliteraryfestival.com

In 2022, poet **Annemarie Ní Churreáin** was appointed as Decade of Centenaries Artist-in-Residence at the Donegal County Archives and County Museum and asked to look at the final days of the Workhouse system in Donegal. Annemarie re-imagined the experience of one unmarried mother residing in Stranorlar Workhouse in 1922, drawing from the minute books of the institution which are held at the Donegal County Archives.



She has created a longform poem, **Ghostgirl**, which she will premiere as part of the Frances Browne Literary Festival.

A panel discussion will follow, chaired by **Niamh Brennan**, Donegal County Archivist, with the **Rev. Raymond Blair** and **Clare Curran**, Manager of Dunfanaghy Workhouse.

Annemarie Ní Churreáin is an award-winning poet from Falcarragh. Her most recent collection, *The Poison Glen*, centres on the story of a lost child. She is the guest Editor of this summer's edition of *Poetry Ireland Review*.

This project was funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media under the Community Strand of the **Decade of Centenaries** programme,

DARK DAUGHTER PRODUCTIONS

Nora Gallagher's - Dry Dance Hall Show

Comedy, Romance and Jiving in 1950s Donegal

Written by **Maura Logue**.

Performed by the Company and a Community Cast.

Date: Friday, October 13

Venue: St. Bridget's Community Centre, Ballintra

Time: 8.00pm • **Cost:** €10/€5 Students, Children

Step back in time to the jiving heyday of 1959 in this community theatre performance which sees Nora Gallagher holding court at the fictional Drumshee Dry Dance Hall. Relive the social etiquette of the time and the search for love that was part of the fabric of a 1950s rural dance hall.

Dark Daughter company actors will appear alongside a large cast of local community performers including the famed Ballintra Belles, a star turn by champion Irish dancer Alan O'Donnell of Ballybofey and many more. There will be dancing to the music of Brian O'Sullivan and audience members are invited to take to the floor.

This setting of the Dry Dance Hall Show in Ballintra follows a similar community theatre project by Dark Daughter in Leitir Mac a'Bhaird, which was a hugely successful part of this year's Bealtaine Festival.

Maura Logue is an actor, playwright, theatre director and creative producer from Donegal. Founder and artistic director of Dark Daughter Productions, she has created many memorable theatre works for the Donegal Bay and Blue Stacks Festival, often on a theme of strong women from times past. Highlights have included Síle Molloy (2018), Mother Loss (2016) and Anna Katherine Kelly (2012).



IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE FRANCES BROWNE LITERARY FESTIVAL

The Tale of Fairyfoot

Story by **Frances Browne**. Adapted by **Shirley Ann Bonner**.
Directed by **Tanya Ward**. Presented by **Aislingí Dance Academy**,
with **Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Company**.

Date: Saturday, October 14 & Sunday, October 15

Venue: Drumboe Woods, Stranorlar

Time: 2.00pm & 4.00pm • **Cost:** €10/€35 Family

Booking: www.francesbrowneliteraryfestival.com

Promenade Performance Outdoors.

Loop Walk. 1km. Duration 45min.

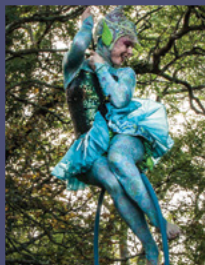
*(Assemble at **Drumboe Woods Carpark**.)*

*Parking at **St. Columba's College**, Drumboe Avenue)*

Aislingí Dance Academy and Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Company bring Frances Browne's much loved childrens' story to vibrant life through contemporary dance, storytelling, music, song and aerial performance.

Set long, long ago in a land where big feet are the height of fashion, there is consternation at the palace when the King's youngest son is born with the tiniest of feet, so earning the nickname Fairyfoot. Believing it to be a bad omen, the King sends the boy to live far away from the palace. And it's there that Fairyfoot's adventures truly begin!

Tanya Ward is a Donegal based dancer and choreographer, trained in ballet, contemporary and modern dance. She established Aislingí Dance Academy in 2003, one of the earliest performing arts companies in the county. Performers from the Academy have been an



integral part of Inishowen Carnival's St. Patrick's Festival Parade (Dublin) spectacles for many years.

Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Theatre are Ireland's first and foremost aerial performance company. Founded by Ballybofey choreographer Chantal McCormick, they are based at the Irish Aerial Creation Centre in Limerick, from whence they tour the world with their spectacular productions.

Shirley-Anne Bonner is a PhD candidate at the University of Galway, where she is developing theatre practices to recover the legacies of marginalised Irish women writers.

CEOL NA GCONALLACH Á CHUR I LÁTHAIR

The Island Wake

Written by **Fergus Cleary**. Performed by **Fergus Cleary** and **The Island Players**.

Dáta/Date: Dé Satharn/Saturday, 14ú Meán Fómhair/October

Ionad/Venue: Halla an Pharóiste, Cill Chartha/Kilcar

Am/Time: 8.30pm • **Cead**

Isteach/Cost: €10

*All Proceeds to the Halla an
Pharóiste Maintenance Fund*

In this hilarious comedy by
writer, storyteller, musician
and all-round entertainer
Fergus Cleary, an inquisitive

English tourist meets an
islander who invites him to experience a traditional island wake. However,
with no one having died and there being no corpse to wake, the islanders
have to improvise.

The Island Players have toured this hugely popular show to close to
forty community venues and theatres throughout Donegal, all the while
raising thousands of euros for local community causes. This will be the
company's first visit to the Gaeltacht area of South West Donegal and they
are looking forward to it immensely.

Thee ten strong cast includes **Fergus Cleary**, **Andy McGranaghan**, **Mary
Lafferty**, **Mark McIntyre**, **Mary Sweeney**, **Noel Sweeney**, **Bernadette
Thompson**, **John Duffy**, **Gerard McGee** and **Seamus McCrudden**.



BIG GUERRILLA PRODUCTIONS

The Ballad of Mossy Flood

Written and Performed by **Seamus O'Rourke**

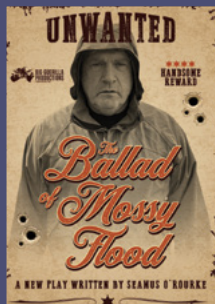
Date: Saturday, October 14

Venue: The Bluestack Centre, Drimarone, Letterbarrow. F94 C9YN

Time: 8.15pm • **Cost:** €15

'Mossy Flood might just save humanity from self-destruction.'

Seamus O'Rourke's character Mossy Flood has a knack of going the long way around a story. In so doing, he makes us laugh and examine ourselves in a way we haven't done before. He might be an unsociable odd-ball with a big thick head, but his wrestle with the everyday is pure gold. He will always land on his feet or at least somewhere near his feet.



After a couple of appearances on social media a few years back, Mossy Flood is probably Seamus O'Rourke's most loved character. His musings have been viewed millions of times on the internet, and now he finally has his very own show – joining a growing collection of hit shows by Seamus O'Rourke, including The Handyman, My Aunt Bee and Padraig Potts' Guide to Walking.

Seamus O'Rourke is an award-winning writer, director and actor from County Leitrim. He tours Ireland regularly with his own self-penned shows and was seen recently in Livin' Dred's brilliant production of Jimmy Murphy's Kings of the Kilburn High Road. He has over two million hits on YouTube and Social Media with his inimitable collection of short stories, recitations and sketches.

ÓMÓS BILLY FINN

Aoife Fadyean, The McGrath Brothers, Emmett Gill, Aoife Nic Lochlainn.

Date: Saturday October 14

Venue: Abbey Arts Centre, Ballyshannon

Time: 8.00pm • **Cost:** €15

The late **Billy Finn** was a native of Kilkenny who spent much of his adult life as a secondary school teacher in Ballyshannon, where he was a founding member of the local Phil Rooney Branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann.



This year's Billy Finn Sessions will once again see a stellar cast of local and internationally renowned traditional musicians. The young **McGrath Brothers**, Oisín and Mícheál of Ballyshannon, have achieved All Ireland Fleadh success as a fiddle and banjo duet. They will be joined by their friend **Dáthí Sheerin** on accordion, to open the concert.

Aoife Fadyean from nearby Sligo is an uilleann piper and pupil of Leonard Barry. Working with Leonard, Aoife has rapidly developed into a piper of considerable talent. Her gift was acknowledged when she was invited recently by Na Píobairí Uilleann to be a featured performer at their annual Abbeyleix concert.

Also featured on the night will be uilleann pipes and fiddle duet, **Emmett Gill** and **Aoife Nic Lochlainn**. Emmett is one of the most sought after uilleann pipers of today having performed on stages internationally and including a command performance at the JFK Centre for the Performing Arts in Washington. Aoife Nic Lochlainn is a fiddler from Falcarragh and a pupil of the late Francie Mooney.

Marc Gegan. An Appreciation

As well as being a noted musician, writer, academic and producer in his own right, **Marc Gegan** devoted much of his considerable energy and imagination to the creation of platforms and opportunities for other artists to share their work with the public, the Donegal Bay Film Festival event curated by Marc being a typical case in point. Marc has made an enormous contribution to the cultural life of his native county and will be sorely missed by all who knew him and were touched by his talents and generosity of spirit. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

Dialann Lae | Day By Day

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Bookáil | Booking

For all **Festival events**, tickets will be available for purchase at the venue on the evening of the performance. To avoid disappointment, however, please plan to arrive at the venue at least **20 minutes** before the advertised showtime. Should you wish, you may also Book certain performances in advance, at the venues below.

- **Tickets and Booking at Abbey Arts Centre, Ballyshannon.**
Tel: 071 9851375 | www.abbeycentre.ie
- **Tickets and Booking at Balor Arts Centre, Ballybofey.**
Tel: 074 9131840 | www.balorartscentre.com
- **Booking at www.francesbrownliteraryfestival.com**
- **Booking at The Bluestack Centre, Drimarone** - Tel: 074 9735564

For General Information on The Festival

Telephone the Festival Office/Donegal County Library on 074 9153900



**Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall**
Donegal County Council



Clár Eitire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme
2017-2022



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media



**ABBEY
ARTS
CENTRE**
BALLYSHANNON

