

LIVERPOOL IRISH FESTIVAL

LIVERPOOL IRISH FESTIVAL PROGRAMME ANNOUNCEMENT 20– 30 OCT 2022

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Liverpool Irish Festival, the UK's largest Irish arts and culture led festival, today announces its 2022 programme. The twentieth year of this annual festival features 40+ events for adults and children across 10 remarkable days between Thurs 20-Sun 30 Oct 2022.

The Festival, a highlight of the UK cultural calendar, includes an array of Irish artists and contributors from across the worlds of music, theatre, film, spoken word, visual arts and academia, such as Stephen Travers (*The Miami Showband*), Lorraine Maher (*#IAMIrish*) and Ruairi Glasheen (internationally acclaimed bodhrán player).

The theme for this year's Festival is 'hunger'. Alongside the revival and refresh of the *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail* ([now available as a self-guided tour](#)) reflecting on the stories from An Gorta Mór (The Great Hunger), the programme provides reflection for many different interpretations of 'hunger'; from displacement to ambition, through to the Irish story of migration and settlement (including a short *Irish Famine Memorial*, 23 Oct).

Popular strands of the Festival return with theatre performances including Carol Maginn's dark comedy *The Fifth Guest* and *Nwoko Arts's Sweet Mother*, a play exploring stories of white women who fell in love and married Black men, especially in Liverpool's L8 Area. Alongside this multidisciplinary arts strand, there is a variety of visual art exhibitions from artists including Fion Gunn (*University of Liverpool's* artist-in-residence at *The Institute of Irish Studies*), Kieran Murray's online exhibition of abandoned buildings in rural Ireland and Pamela Sullivan's *The Forgotten*; a series of miniature works dotted throughout the city. Film screenings, poetry and spoken word events also shape the programme, with opportunity for audiences to listen, discuss and respond to topics including *Shakespeare on Ireland*, *Irishness in England Post-Brexit*, and *The Mersey Mash*, Doug Devaney's magazine-style film and performance of Irish community tales collected over the last two-years.

The ever-popular walking tours, linking the Irish community's stories of settlement in Liverpool, will also be part of the programme. Festival regulars may also note *The Boy Alive*, a tribute to much-missed Irish language specialist and local, Tony Birtill.

Liverpool Irish Festival CEO & Artistic Director, Emma Smith says

"The aim of *Liverpool Irish Festival* is to bring Liverpool and Ireland closer together using arts and culture. We create spaces in which to do this, building cultural connections between Ireland, Liverpool, the Irish diaspora and neighbouring communities. This year's programme theme is 'hunger'. Growing from our revitalisation of the *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail*-which explores the Irish Famine's enduring effects on Liverpool's identity and environment (liverpoolirishfaminetrail.com)- the theme deeply informs the programme. Through our events we consider people's hunger for change, power, information, acceptance and success. We hope to provide audiences with spaces to feed interests and refuel; find and have conversations; build safer environments for and with each other and create opportunities to relate to identity, place and contribution, whatever community you come from".

Sarah Lovell, Lead Officer - Culture Co-ordinator at *Liverpool City Region Combined Authority* said
"*Liverpool Irish Festival* is a key date in our region's cultural calendar. It plays a powerful role in connecting the cultures of our city and the island of Ireland. It provides a platform to represent the talent and creativity of Irish artists – whether born in Ireland or part of the wider and flourishing Irish diaspora. It's a showcase for Irish and

Liverpool Irish community stories and their continued creative contribution to our city. I hope as many people as possible will take the opportunity to enjoy the Festival's live performances and workshops".

PROGRAMME STRANDS

For more details, including specific date, times and venues visit <https://www.liverpoolirishfestival.com/events>

Music

Tippin' It Up and *Gaelforce* open the Festival at **Liverpool Irish Centre** (20 Oct), which features two live seisiúns at **PK's** (21 Oct & 28 Oct) as well as music cross-threaded through other aspects of the programme, including both **IndieCork** films, the *Family Day* and *Samhain (Hallowe'en) Céilí*.

Visual Arts

- Fion Gunn, an Irish diaspora artist, presents *Arrival/Departures* exhibition (**Victoria Gallery and Museum**, 30 Jul–23 Dec) incorporating themes of what it means to travel and its impact on memory. The exhibition includes a free augmented reality strand for audiences to engage with
- *The Forgotten* by Pamela Sullivan (**The Williamson**, 20 Oct-30 Oct) presents a series of miniature works exploring the forgotten people of Ireland, recreating landscapes hidden within a trail of Merseyside's urban jungle
- *Housing* at **The Reader** (20-30 Oct)
- Northern-Irish Wirral-based artist Martin McCoy presents *Sweeney's Unquiet Islands* (**The Williamson**, 6 Oct – 19 Oct), an exhibition of original prints linking to the medieval Irish story *Buile Suibhne* in a contemplation of our relationship to place and the identity
- Laura Matikaite -a Lithuanian-Irish artist - is this year's featured artist for *In the Window* (1 Oct–31 Oct), an exhibition run at and in partnership with **Bluecoat Display Centre** with support from **Design and Craft Council of Ireland**.

Theatre

- Dark comedy *The Fifth Guest* (Carol Maginn) is a murder-mystery-dinner with a twist, showing at **Liverpool Arts Club/ Hope Street Theatre** (21 Oct)
- **Nwoko Arts** presents *Sweet Mother* (**The Brink**, 22 Oct), a play reflecting stories about white women who fell in love and married Black men, inspired by the lives of women living in Liverpool's L8 area
- *Famished: Women and the Irish Famine* showing at **Liverpool Everyman Bistro** (25 Oct) brings together two female artists, Cherry Smyth and Jaki McCarrick, in a double-bill poetry performance and play discussion about *Belfast Girls*
- *A Very Odd Birthday* (Hannah Donelan; longlisted for *The Women's Prize for Playwriting*) invites you to Michael Moriarty's birthday party (27 Oct) as the play revels in the complexities of working family, working class identity and that of first- and second-generation migrants to the UK (**Liverpool Royal Court Studio**).

Film

IndieCork presents two documentaries highlighting *The Power of the Song* (23 and 24 Oct), whilst a Q&A and educational screening of *The Miami Showband Massacre* at **Sefton Park Palm House** (26 Oct) brings survivor Stephen Travers together with broadcaster and journalist Liam Fogarty to discuss his experiences of the event.

Poetry, talks and lectures

- Catherine Harvey (actor, writer and broadcaster) joins Ashleigh Nugent for *Shakespeare on the Irish* (**Shakespeare North Playhouse**, 22 Oct), which explores the context and interpretations of the Bard's inclusion (or not) of Irish people in his works

- Carmen Cullen's poems (*Liverpool Irish Centre*, 25 Oct) transport you to her childhood and memories of 1960s Irish scenes, brought to life through spoken and written word, images and music
- PhD researcher Niamh Lear is interviewed by *BBC Radio 4* broadcaster Catherine Harvey on *Irishness in England Post-Brexit* (26 Oct; *Zoom*)
- Visual explorer and documentarist Kieran Murray delves further into the stories behind his online exhibition *Times Past* which uncovers stories of abandoned houses in rural Ireland. Online exhibition - access available 24/7 from 10am 20 Oct–30 Oct
- *Republic of Shame* (28 Oct) -presented in partnership with *University of Liverpool* -explores the impact of Mother and Baby and County Homes in Ireland as institutions for the concealment, punishment and exploitation of 'fallen women'
- Rounding up the Festival, *Doug Devaney* presents *The Mersey Mash* at *Liverpool Irish Centre* (29 Oct), a magazine-style film and performance showcasing Liverpool's Irish community.

Workshops and participation

- A free to access *Materials Library* being held at the *Everyman Bistro* (17-30 Oct)
- *Cultural Connectedness Exchange Network* day at *Shakespeare Playhouse North* (20 Oct)
- Artist Pamela Sullivan invites adults to join her for a workshop (26 Oct) exploring her guerrilla exhibition (located at many Festival sites), which considers Ireland's forgotten people and the abandoned homes they left behind
- Ruth McHugh explores Frederick Douglass and his relationship with Ireland, including his first-hand experience of the Irish Famine and discussion on how anti-racist activism informed his portraiture (27 and 28 Oct) (workshop elements will develop a portrait for each participant)
- A family friendly *Samhain (Hallowe'en) Céilí* (at *Liverpool Irish Centre*, 30 Oct) -full of spooky fun, games and music- follows a *Family Day* (29 Oct, *Museum of Liverpool*, free and no booking required) with multiple activities including storytelling for *The Armagh Rhymers*, dancing, music and creative workshops as well as opportunities to join the *Pride of Sefton* boat dock tour (28 and 29 Oct)
- Also, not to be missed *GAA* football 'give it a go' sessions (*John Mitchel's* pitch, 22 Oct), music sessions at the famous *PK's* pub, and bodhrán (pronounced bow-rah-n and being an Irish drum) masterclasses (*Liverpool Philharmonic Music Room*, 24 Oct), led by Ruairi Glasheen; one of Ireland's leading bodhrán musicians.

Self-guided tour

Liverpool Irish Festival - in collaboration with our volunteer *History Research Group* - have revived the *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail*, initially developed in the 1990s by *Liverpool's Great Hunger Commemoration Committee*. Updates to the Trail -which incorporates 15 sites- chronicle the impact of An Gorta Mór (The Great Hunger). It includes a [print-at-home map](#) and [enhanced Google map](#). Marking 175-years since the 7-years of migrations (1845-52) alongside the maps, we have produced a book entitled [Liverpool Irish Famine Trail: Revive](#), available in [hardback](#) or [e-book](#).

Guided tours

- Guided walks during the Festival include the *South Liverpool* (23 Oct) - and *Scotland Road* (30 Oct) walks, led by historian Greg Quiry
- Tours focusing on Robert Cain's life take in prominent buildings including *The Philharmonic Dining Rooms* and *Cains Brewery* (23 Oct, 24 Oct, 25 Oct), whilst the *Liverpool Safari Tour* (30 Oct, starting at *Bluecoat*) takes people on a Liver-Bird spotting mission.

Booking and tickets for the full programme for *Liverpool Irish Festival 2022* are on sale now. Visit www.liverpoolirishfestival.com for more information and the full programme.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Founded in 2003, the Festival brings Liverpool and Ireland closer together, using arts and culture. As the most diverse celebration of Irish culture in the UK, we have become a ten-day festival of music and song; visual arts; performance arts; culture, history and identity sharing, talks and tours and film.

Liverpool Irish Festival receives regular funding from Liverpool City Council's *Cultural Arts Investment Programme* and the Irish Government's *Department for Foreign Affairs* Emigrant Support Programme. It received *Arts Council England*'s HM Government *Cultural Recovery Funding* (2020-21) and has received grant funding for 2022-23. The Festival's *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail* work is funded using *National Lottery Heritage Funds*.

The Festival is a proud member of *Creative Organisations of Liverpool (COoL)*, *The Baobab Foundation* and *Irish in Britain*, holding representation on the Irish Government's *Department of Foreign Affairs' Emigrant Services Advisory Committee*, Liverpool's *Festival Forum* and the *Cultural Connectedness Exchange Network*, which it founded and chairs.

CONTACT DETAILS

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anna@annafranksmarketing.com / +44 (0) 7810 700797
- Visit liverpoolirishfestival.com
- A *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail* photo archive and [logo suite folder can be found here](#)
- Follow [@LivIrishFest](#) and [#LIF2022](#) on social channels.