

LIVERPOOL IRISH FESTIVAL PROGRAMME ANNOUNCEMENT: 17-27 OCT 2024

Liverpool Irish Festival, the UK's largest Irish arts and culture led festival, today announces its **2024 programme**. The annual Festival features 35+ events, for adults and children, across 10 remarkable days (Thurs 17-Sun 27 Oct 2024). Starting five weeks from today, it opens with an official launch at the **Liverpool Irish Centre**, with performances from **Sue Rynhart** (new single and album out in the coming month), Sinéad Campbell and others. Visit: liverpoolirishfestival.com/events/

The Festival, a highlight of the UK cultural calendar, celebrates 'departures' as its core theme this year. Considering migrancy, displacement, changes in thinking and rejecting shame, our range of events span from children's activities to rich historical Irish heritage. Our line-up includes an array of Irish artists and contributors from across the worlds of theatre, film, spoken word, visual arts and academia. Each connects with 'departure'— whether focussed on the displacement of people or the advent of a new philosophy.

Programme headlines

Internationally acclaimed **The Armagh Rhymers** feature as part of our annual *Family Day* at **Museum of Liverpool**, as well as delivering an adult performance: *The Trail of Tears – Memory* (26 Oct). Linking with our new Irish Famine vigil and official annual Irish Famine memorial (27 Oct) is new song — *The Ullaloo* (I Cantwell, M Snape, 2024) commissioned specially this year. It will be sung here for the first time by the **Liverpool Irish Centre Choir**. These events precede an **Irish Heritage Trust** talk on *The Poor Helping the Poor*. Several heritage tours are included this year, complemented by films, talks and book launches. Linked directly to 'departures' and *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail* work, our *Revealing Trails* exhibit offers a poignant look at contemporary views on An Gorta Mór, whilst our (self-guided tour) reflects on Irish migration, settlement and legacy.

In theatre, Manchán Magan brings *Arán Agus Im/Bread and Butter* to the **Liverpool Medical Institute**, comparing language with baking. **Big Telly Productions** consider mortality and digital afterlives in *Granny Jackson's Dead*, whilst **Circus 250s** *Am I Irish Yet?* challenges assumptions around Irishness.

Those who enjoyed *Brave Maeve* in 2023 will be thrilled that a second children's volume will be released this year, with readings at **Central Library** (Sat 19 Oct) and **The Old Library** (Fri 25 Oct) and an exhibition at **St Helen's Library** (Mon 7 Oct-Sat 30 Nov 2024).

Work with **Fréa's Renewing Roots** project brings two films highlighting Ireland's care abuses, both to be shown on 2 Nov at **The Bluecoat** *In Each Other's Shelter We Survive* and *Stolen* (augmented with a Margo Harkin (director) interview and panel Q&A) each contribute to our **In:Visible Women** work strand.

In our exhibitions we consider the departure of ash trees from our planet. Disease has swept through ash stocks. Michael 'Muck' Murphy's work employs the remaining wood *In the Window* at the **Bluecoat Display Centre**, whose garden facing windows peer on to the trunks of two felled ash trees. There will also be an eclectic retrospective of Irish makers on show, in the **Display Centre**, looking back over our *In the Window* exhibits from previous years.

Celebrating local talent, specifically, we look at music and dance in our **Melody Maker** and **George Ferguson Dance School** night (**Palm House**, Sun 20 Oct) called *...and so for now adieu/Slán leat*. Referencing the North American wakes of the Irish Famine era, the two companies have collaborated to create a night of music and song that reflect leaving.

Printed programmes will be available in Festival venues shortly, along with several online articles and new online features (including brand new, state-of-the-art in-browser GPS triggers for our *Famine Trail* and interactive content, launching in Oct). Our annual newspaper follows in late Sept/early Oct. As usual, it will be complete with commissions, children's activities, venue and transport details and our helpful pull-out guide. liverpoolirishfestival.com/about/print/

Quotes

Liverpool Irish Festival CEO & Artistic Director, Emma Smith says:

“As in previous years, the **Liverpool Irish Festival** brings Liverpool and Ireland closer together using arts and culture.

“Departures’ allows us to consider ideas and philosophies that are core to the Irish experience. As the third largest migrant community in England, the Irish are aware of how challenging (and damaging) assumptions can be.

“As we navigate our collective and individual identity — post-Brexit, post-Culture Wars and with new post-Colonial language and approaches — we have a responsibility to share stories that might help people today. Perhaps we shouldn’t be surprised at some of the difficulties witnessed recently; by further unpicking class-division, fears around wealth and growing intolerances we can help to build a stronger, more cohesive community. The work we’ve selected for #LIF2024 helps us shine a light on such conversations and invites all people to engage with their own identity”.

Dr Ann Hoskins, new Chair of the **Liverpool Irish Festival**, states:

“I’ve been around the **Liverpool Irish Festival** since its inception. I’ve watched it become a significant cog in Liverpool’s annual cultural machine. I’m proud to support the work as Chair. Though I’m originally from Belfast, I’ve built my family life in Liverpool. I can see how the Festival connects the culture of the city with the island of Ireland. I’m excited by this year’s programme and look forward to being challenged, stimulated and enjoying the events”.

Sarah Mangan, Consul General of Ireland, follows with:

“the Northwest contains many thriving Irish communities. Here at the Consulate, we’ve been invigorated by the work of the Festival, particularly events that treat the diaspora as a progressive and changing community and, especially, the commemoration work around Irish Famine and the city”.

PROGRAMME SEARCHES

Search by aft form, location or chronologically, using the Event menu dropdown, here:

<https://www.liverpoolirishfestival.com/events/>

PRESS INFORMATION FOR MORE DETAILS

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’ve become a 10-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). The Festival’s *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail* work is funded by the **National Lottery Heritage Fund**. The Festival is a Director of **Culture Network LCR CIC**, a radical friend of **The Baobab Foundation**, signatory and action group member of the LCR’s arts and culture sector *Race Equality Manifesto* and holds a committee seat on Ireland’s *Department of Foreign Affairs’ Emigrant Services Advisory Committee*. We lead the **Cultural Connectedness Exchange Network**, which it founded and chairs, having over 80 members.

CONTACT DETAILS

For images, information and interviews please contact Artistic Director and CEO Emma Smith on emma@liverpoolirishfestival.com or +44(0)7804 286 145. Visit liverpoolirishfestival.com Follow **@LivIrishFest** and #LIF2024 on social channels. A *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail* photo archive and [logo suite folder can be found here](#).