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ACCLAIMED Dublin band Delorentos will be recorded live for a new RTE Radio documentary about the art of song-writing and you can apply for tickets to attend the show. The new documentary, which is presented by 2fm DJ Paddy McKenna, who is also the singer with the band Storyfold, is being made in association with IMRO. To be in with a chance of attending the Delorentos show, send an email to songwriters@imro.ie and include Delorentos in the subject line.
Christie weekend sounds great

Last weekend, the Troubadour Club and IMRO Christie Hennessy commoration advanced a further few degrees towards becoming a major wintertime festival in Kerry.

“The songwriting competition was won by Paul McDonnell from Dublin but Don Baker and myself had terrible difficulty in selecting the winner because there were so many good songs,” said Francie Conway, the chief Troubadour who set up the event four years ago.

“The songwriters are becoming well known and people want to get to Kerry for it,” he added.

The Troubadour Club concert at the Fels Point on Friday was a great success. “The local bands Q14 and Chapter 2 worked really hard on their sets and they put so much into their shows.

“We also had Gary Keane and John Buggy as well as the great Victor McCullough,” Francie said.

Fiach Moriarty, another Dubliner, Mickie Hart and Robert Delaney were also on the schedule and they all got tremendous receptions too.

“Robert, who wrote the title track for Between the Canals, the film Damien Dempsey is in, came home from Europe specially to be there for the weekend,” he confirmed.

The songwriting workshops under Mickie Harte were filled to the quota with budding musicians who had access to 35 different instruments for the day.

It ran way beyond schedule up until nearly five o’clock and Irish TV, which had cameras there to record a segment, were so impressed a half-hour programme on the songwriting event has been listed.

The songwriting competition went ahead and Pam & Joe performed a selection of Christie numbers.

One of the biggest moments of the entire weekend was when Christie’s brother Simon came up on stage and sang Remember Me with Francie - to great applause.

“It was just a really fantastic weekend and our thanks to IMRO and also to Tralee Credit Union who came on board this year.

“There is not enough live music these days in Kerry but there is plenty of talent coming through,” Francie said.
Tadhg and Helen Cronin with Kathleen and Benny Dobbelaar at the "Troubadour Club" at the Fels Point hotel, Tralee on Friday as part of the Christie Hennessy Celebration weekend.

Dave Cumian, Claire Kelleher, Erin Belton and Nick Belton enjoying "Troubadour Club" at the Fels Point hotel, Tralee on Friday as part of the Christie Hennessy Celebration weekend.

Ted and Mary Cronin enjoying the IMRO Christie Hennessy Song Writer Contest Final at the Fels Point hotel, Tralee on Saturday as part of the Christie Hennessy Celebration weekend.

Simon Ross, Molly Smith and Tony Brown attending the IMRO Christie Hennessy Song Writer Contest Final at the Fels Point hotel, Tralee on Saturday as part of the Christie Hennessy Celebration weekend.
Donegal students set for Limerick Beo event

A group of Donegal students from two schools are set to visit Limerick for a special music event.

The “Beo Ireland” event aims to get young people interested in music by organising and attending music gigs in their local area and around Ireland, whilst putting an emphasis on the Irish language and culture. Founded in 2009 by Joseph McKelvey and transition-year students from Letterkenny secondary schools, Beo has become an anticipated music competition nationwide. In 2011, Beo was short-listed as a finalist in the Designs for Learning Competition. This national contest was run by the National Digital Research Centre in association with the National Science Gallery, which has helped to make Beo what it is today.

The transition-year committee members of 2014-2015 have worked hard to organise a Beo event in Limerick on November 28th for transition-year students from Colaiste Ailigh, Loreto Letterkenny and Saint Eunan’s College. Part of the day will consist of social conscience talks from Aaron Casey, a member of The Irish Music Rights Organisation (IMRO) and the father of Donal Walsh, who will present the Donal Walsh Live Life talk. Students will attend the music gig at Colaiste Nano Nagle, where Limerick-based Little Tents will be performing, as well as Clare-born Daithí Ó Drónaí and the Cork band, Neon Atlas. They will also have a chance to tour the city.

Further Beo dates include the 18th of December in Belfast and an event organised by Loreto and Saint Eunan’s students on the 27th of February 2015 in the Regional Culture Centre in Letterkenny. For more information please visit www.BeoIreland.com
‘Ease the Worries’ Song Recorded in Youghal for Pieta House – Let them Know It’s Christmas Time

by DENISE FITZGERALD

Fourty two volunteers called Deise Aid 14, gathered at Claycastle Recording Studios in Youghal on Saturday last to record a new song for the Christmas Market. Aged between four years (Emily Stack) and sixty five years(!), the singers are donating all the proceeds for Pieta House, preventing suicide and self harm, and the Children’s Hospital in Crumlin. Sung to the air of ‘Let them know it’s Christmas Time’ the new lyrics were provided by Dungarvan man, John Stack.

Kris Cowming of Deise Aid told The East Cork Journal that it all started just three weeks ago when he was listening to the new Christmas version of Let Them Know It’s Christmas, and got the idea of recording a CD with new lyrics, as a fundraiser for Pieta House and Crumlin Hospital. He immediately contacted his friend John Stack who, like Kris, is a member of Curtain Call Productions, Dungarvan and asked him “Can it be done?” John response was “Yes. It can. Let’s do it!” And so started a frantic effort, including contact with IMRO, checking the rights to the song and all legalities involved. Kris posted on his FB page looking for volunteers and, within three days, the project was up and organised.

The song was recorded on Saturday 13th in Claycastle Recording Studios, Youghal in an atmosphere of commitment, elation and cheer. The singers gave it their all, with eighteen soloists singing eighteen lines and a full complement of forty two singers for the chorus. The CD is a joyous, heart filling rendering of a beautiful song with new lyrics as below, sung with passion and love.

One thousand copies only, costing just 65 each, have been printed and will be on sale in shops all over Dungarvan, and into Youghal and the East Cork area from tomorrow, Friday 19th December.

Further information from kcowming371@gmail.com or log onto Curtain Call Productions Dungarvan Facebook or Twitter page.

Lyrics
It’s Christmas time, and there’s no need to be afraid, At Christmas time, it’s okay not to be okay. But there’s a world where worry weighs heavy on a mind. Throw your arms around that world at Christmas time. But say a prayer, pray for the worried ones. At Christmas time it’s hard, but when you’re having fun There’s a world outside your window, And it’s a world of dread and fear Where the only silence breaking, Is the shedding of a tear And the Christmas bells that ring there Are the clanging chimes of gloom. Well tonight we’re reaching out to comfort you And there won’t be hope in every body’s Christmas time For those who cannot feel the worth of life For life can leave you low ‘til you don’t know where to go Do they know it’s Christmas time at all? Change a life now come on let’s do it right. There’s no pain like the pain of suicide. Do they know it’s Christmas time at all?

Ease the wo- or -ies let them know it’s Christmas time. Ease the wo-or -ies let them know it’s Christmas time. Ease the wo-or -ies let them know it’s Christmas time. Ease the wo-or -ies let them know it’s Christmas time. Ease the wo-or -ies let them know it’s Christmas time.
Ennis Street Radio returns for Christmas

Owen Ryan

THE 13th Century saw the rise of the Christmas carol but festive music really came into its own in the county town four years ago, when Ennis Street Radio began in the run-up to Christmas.

It has continued each year since and, this year, it will resonate in Ennis' ear drums on December 8, 12-14 and 18-24.

Most people like Christmas songs and while it certainly isn't everyone's cup of tea, Ger Sweeney, who is heavily involved in the project, says it has got a good reception from the public.

"People are very positive towards it. When we do test transmissions, we find out if people are annoyed; it might be too loud in one area but it's a matter of trial and error and we facilitate everyone as we go along."

He says people approach him months in advance to find out if Jingle Bells, Santa Claus is Coming to Town and the other festive favourites will be played again.

"From the middle of September onwards, people are asking are we doing the street radio this year. It's a positive thing and it's something that has been part of Ennis for the last four years."

People who work in shopping centres sometimes complain about an overkill of festive music and those working in the centre of Ennis are at risk of the same problem. Ger says he does his best to keep it fresh but he admits there is only so much that can be done on that score.

"We'd have different playlists every day but there's only a certain amount of Christmas tracks. Whether it's Garth Brooks singing Jingle Bells or a choir singing Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells will happen. We vary it as much as we possibly can but, as I say, there's only a certain number of Christmas songs."

There are a few favourites that he gets a lot of requests for. "There are always people looking for Band Aid, the original one. People love the old traditional ones, like White Christmas. I think it's those that remind us of our childhood and those memories. Bruce Springsteen's Santa Claus is Coming to Town is also very popular."

He says he is trying to please the public and is responsive to what he is told about his choices.

"I play what I think people will like and if they say they don't like it, I don't play it again and we move on. It's about filling the streets with happiness and joy and festive sounds."

He says there has been a lot of support for the venture over the last few years.

"Ennis Chamber do all the administration work and the traders of the town support it hugely. We'll have €6,000 to €7,000 in prizes to give away, thanks to them. The town council were hugely supportive of it and the county council is supporting it now because the town council made sure the funding was in place."

"As well as that, the Irish Music Rights Organisation are hugely supportive of it and where we can, we try and promote local artists and Irish artists," Ger noted.
Five band line-up to celebrate Monroe’s Live fifth birthday

BY KERNAN ANDREWS

MONROE’S LIVE is celebrating five years of music concerts with Monroe’s Live Turns 5! from 9pm on Friday December 5, which will include a set from the mighty Hot Sprockets.

The Hot Sprockets play an energetic and rootsy blues-rock and r’n’b and have more than earned their reputation as an energetic and exciting on-stage experience, the Irish Mirror calling them “a must see live act”. Check out their most recent album Brother Nature. Also playing are RudyTrix, Youth Mass, Wood Burning Savages, and The Sandy Rats, while covers band Lunar Playground will wrap up the party.

Since December 2009, Monroe’s Live has hosted concerts by international, national, and local acts. The venue was voted Ireland’s Best Live Venue 2012 at the IMRO Awards and overall winner of the Galway Advertiser Best of Galway Awards 2012 and 2013.

Tickets are €5 and there will be drinks deals for just €5. For more information see www.monroes.ie.
Fundit

One could ask what is ‘Fund It’? The best answer is that Fund It is an Irish based, Ireland wide initiative providing a platform for people with great ideas to attract funding or fundraise from friends, fans and followers across the world. Why are we bringing up the subject? Ciara Donnelly from just outside the town, a singer, writer and pianist who performs under the guise of Yellowbridge and based in Dublin wants to fund her next release. The studio has been chosen, the songs have been written. Now with your help she hopes to record the material to the best standard possible to release her next piece of work as a true representative of her style of music and songwriting abilities.

One of the tracks off her debut EP ‘Circus’ was nominated for the Irish Music Rights Organization’s Christie Hennessy Songwriter of Year award in 2012. Yellowbridge were also shortlisted for Hotpress music magazine’s ‘Big Break’ for 2013. Ciara was also involved as a contestant in The Voice of Ireland 2014, reaching the Top 16 of the competition. Since the show, she have been busy writing material for her next release and forming a band for live touring in 2015 to support the release. So she is appealing to friends and anyone who is willing to support a young local talent to contribute to the fund.
Galway's premier live venue

To be awarded ‘Best Pub in Galway’ two years running is no mean feat, especially when you consider that Galway has arguably the best nightlife in Ireland. Yet that’s precisely what Monroe’s Live has achieved, winning the prestigious accolade in the ‘Best of Galway’ Awards, 2013 and now 2014.

The ‘Best of Galway’ Awards are voted for by the public, which makes them the most reliable barometer of where to go in Galway, and there’s no better place for live music, drinks and craic than Monroe’s Live, set in the heart of Galway’s West End, on Dominick Street.

A cut above

What sets Monroe’s Live apart is that it takes everything to the highest level, and never settles for second-best. Whether it’s attracting international superstars like Kodaline, the welcoming, inviting environment, its delectable cocktail menu or its enthusiastic, friendly and obliging staff, Monroe’s Live delivers the ultimate Galway going-out experience – a cut above the rest.

With Monroe’s Tavern on Dominick Street hosting live music seven nights a week since 1964, Gary and Robert Monroe, Fergus McGinn and their team had quite a reputation to uphold when they opened Monroe’s Live in December 2009.

Awards

However their determination to build on a half-century at the heart of Galway’s music and social scene and to give Galway a 21st century venue experience has been acknowledged at both a local and national level, with two consecutive ‘Best Pub in Galway’ Awards and in 2013, when Monroe’s Live was voted ‘Best Venue in Ireland’ in the Hot Press Awards.

Monroe’s Live promoter Gary Monroe said these awards were all the more special because they were voted for by the public.

“I’d like to thank the people of Galway for their support over the last five years, not only in attending all of the wonderful gigs, but in voting for us in these awards. It’s a great recognition of all the hard work we put into creating the best live music experience in Galway,” said Gary.

Stars

In five short years, Monroe’s Live has welcomed such luminaries as Texas, Keywest, Walris Bird, Kila, Alabama 3, Ryan Sheridan, Samantha Mumba, The Original Rudeboys, Damien Dempsey and X-Factor winner Matt Cardle to Galway over the past five years, while always hosting the very best in emerging talent and cover bands.

With five bars and two stages hosting live music from early evening until the small hours, the music never stops, ensuring there’s something for everyone at Monroe’s Live.

Add to that an additional two stages downstairs in Monroe’s Tavern, and you really are spoiled for choice.

So if you fancy listening to some folk, jazz, trad, or blues in intimate surrounds, sit back and relax and soak up the atmosphere with a cocktail in the Backstage Bar. If you fancy a dance and a shuffle to some of the best rock and pop out there, the Main Stage is for you.

Choice

Can’t Decide? You can pop from one to the other, depending on what sounds are tickling your fancy, just like your very own festival! With top-of-the-range sound systems throughout the venue; whatever music you like, it’s guaranteed to sound great at Monroe’s Live.

Saw Doctors manager Ollie Jennings has fond memories of Monroe’s Live and of its sister pub, Monroe’s Tavern down through the years.

“I remember some great rock gigs in Monroe’s back in the 1970s. It used to be called The Manhattan. Buzz Promotions – Aidan Cosgrave and Tom Prendergast – put on top Irish bands in the downstairs venue such as The Radiators from Space, Tokyo Olympics and Slagalee,” recalls Ollie.

“In the last twelve months I’ve seen some of the best new Galway bands play upstairs at Monroe’s Live – bands such as We Banjo 3, My Fellow Sponges and Mikey and The Scallywags.”

Ambitious

Galway Bay FM DJ Jon Richards agrees that Monroe’s Live has become “Galway’s premier live music venue”.

“The ambitious move made by Gary and Rob and all the Monroe crew with their talented team changed the face of live music in Galway five years ago, since then their dedication to both bands and customers alike has paid off,” says Jon, “you only have to walk around inside the venue and see all the accolades they have received and more importantly the customers that make Monroe’s their first choice for their night out.”

“We always strive to bring the best musical talent to Galway and we’re delighted to continue to offer patrons of Monroe’s Live the best possible going-out experience,” says Gary Monroe.

Parties

With three bars, two levels and two stages, Monroe’s Live is ideally positioned to cater for large groups, from 5 to 500, and their dedicated party liaison can arrange everything for your special night, with food, bubbly, entertainment and the best of craic available at the click of a button on www.monroes.ie.
Rob Monroe is presented with the Hot Press IMRO Irish Live Music Venue of the Year Award 2012 by Victor Finn, CEO of IMRO.
Jack is master of all trades

For a man who is, at first glance, quite shy, Jack Carey has a CV that is amazing. A qualified farrier, a good hurler, excellent hurley maker and also a highly regarded singer-songwriter.

Jack Carey from Gowran and, yes, brother of DJ, has just won first prize in the lyrics category of the 2014 USA Songwriting Competition with his collaborator, Paul Kealy for their song “Fall Before You Fly”. This is one of the most prestigious Songwriting Contests in the world and it is a great accolade for the Kilkenny man and for Paul, who hails from over the border in Carlow.

Winners were selected out of almost 25,000 entries from 80 countries. While another song written and composed by Paul and IMRO songwriter Ciaran Brennan, sung by Jack “The Emigrants Story” was a finalist in the ‘World’ category.

Past winners have gone on to win Grammys and climb the American Billboard charts, with Judges including, A&R from Universal Music, Warner, BMG/Sony Music, Capitol Records, Record Label Publishers, Producers and other distinguished professionals from the music world.

Jack and Paul previously reached the Semi Finals in the Americana category in the ‘2013 ISC International Songwriting Competition’ who’s judges included Tom Waits; Bernie Taupin, Robert Smith and Garbage.

“Fall Before You Fly” is still in contention to win the Overall Grand Prize, which will see the winner receive US$50,000 worth of cash, merchandise and services.
Mario sues music promoter

Online article
Monroe’s hits fifty

BY KERNAN ANDREWS

MONROE’S TAVERN celebrates its 50th anniversary on January 1. The venue, formerly known as the Manhattan, first opened in 1964 by John and Margaret Monroe.

To enter, punters paid a penny in the lounge and music was provided for free. Today the venue is run by Gary and Rob Monroe alongside Fergus McGinn.

Monroe’s Live celebrated its fifth birthday in 2014 and has been awarded two IMROs. It has four distinct performance areas in which to host live music and has staged concerts by Kodaline, Jack L, Aslan, Republic of Loose, and Damien Dempsey.
RADIO 1's PADDY McKENNA is recording a special one-off interview with DELORENTOS about the art of songwriting, followed by a live show. The recording is at IMRO, Lower Baggot Street in Dublin from 7-9pm this Thursday. For a free ticket, email songwriters@imro.ie.
Return of The Pav

Ronan Leonard

WHEN The Pavilion closed in July, the outpouring of messages on social media, blogs and newspapers from music fans and musicians alike was overwhelming, once the dust settled on its closure, talk moved on to who would reopen the bar and venue.

Towards the end of last week, it was announced that a trio of businessmen all originally from Togher; James Chisholm and brothers Kevin and Aidan Foley have taken on that challenge. They will be renaming the downstairs bar Pana and the upstairs music venue will be shortened to The Pav. The person they have brought on board to take on the booking of the live acts is Edel Curtin, who has been running Coughlans on Douglas Street. She and her team will be booking the bands and reopening its doors in March, with Pana opening in January.

The reason the owners have got Edel involved is quite clear as James explained, “We’re taking an extremely pragmatic approach with The Pav. We know where our skills exist, but we also know when we need to step back and let people with greater experience shine. We knew we needed to get the very best to ensure the reputation the venue has continues to grow.”

Two years ago Edel decided to change her focus with her music career. “Music has always been a huge passion of mine and I’ve been lucky enough to make a living from playing piano pretty much all of my working life. Being a full-time musician was something I aimed to be and for a long time is what I loved.”

She sees her transition from performance to promotion as a natural one. “As you get older, your ambitions and goals change. I really believe that Cork is home to some of the most amazing musicians in the country and became a dream to have a small intimate venue for musicians to come and play and feel at home. It was realised with a lot of help from those musicians and Coughlan’s Live was born just over two years ago, within that space of time we won the IMRO National Venue of the Year which gave us a huge boost.”

The rapid development of what she and her colleagues, Brian Hassett and Paraic O’Regan, achieved with Coughlans Live is what she credits with their move into larger venues. “A huge amount of musicians have been through the doors of Coughlans, many returning time and time again.

“Naturally, relationships have formed and thankfully a trust built. Musicians started approaching us to organise gigs for them in bigger venues and so we started looking at the options that were available. We decided to set up Coughlans Live Promotions, we are running Mick Flannery’s annual gig in The Cork Opera House on New Years Eve for instance.”

Aware of the great reputation that The Pavilion built up with a variety of types of music is something Edel is aware the The Pav will have to live up to. “Everyone that was involved in The Pavilion was extremely good to us in Coughlans. We’ve learned everything we know from all the people that have done this before us. We can’t help but be influenced by it; they are big boots to try to fill. It’s going to be a huge amount of hard work, especially at the start but to see The Pav alive with great music again will be a good enough reward to justify it.

Edel was clear about her and Coughlans Live role in the new venue: “We won’t be running the place as such, just looking after the live music. The rest will be left in the very capable hands of the new owners; they’ll be installing a world-class sound and lighting system and there will be club nights at the weekends and a late bar. Our shared intention is to put on as much great live music as possible!”

“It’s really important to us that the musicians and everyone involved in a gig are looked after too. It’s a great opportunity for us; it will give us a chance to bring different styles of music and types of acts in that we haven’t been able to do before. This is a huge honour for us to be able to help increase jobs and add more to the cultural landscape in Cork.”

On a personal level Edel notes one of those “life’s little circles” about her becoming involved with The Pav: “It is strange, I was given a lot of chances in The Pavilion as a musician thanks to Pat Conway and the crew there. It will be a nice feeling to hopefully do the same for the musicians of Cork now.”
COLM O’HARE PREVIEWS TRADFEST, THE EXCITING, ECLECTIC SHOWCASE OF TOP FOLK, TRADITIONAL AND ROCK ARTISTS THAT WILL HAVE TEMPLE BAR, IN THE CENTRE OF DUBLIN, BUZZING EARLY IN 2015.

2015 will mark the tenth year of the hugely successful Tradfest, the festival of folk and traditional-based music, which takes place in venues in and around Dublin’s Temple Bar area. Now a firm favourite on the Irish festival calendar, Tradfest is the biggest and best festival of Irish music and culture in the capital and attracts over 18,000 international visitors each year. Running from Jan 28 to Feb 1, 2015, it will showcase the cream of both Irish and international trad and folk artists, while also providing a springboard for the next generation of Irish folk musicians.

The festival has grown considerably over the years and now features artists from the worlds of folk, nu-folk, and even rock ‘n’ roll. This year’s headline, Donovan, encompasses all three genres, while Derry’s finest, The Undertones, add a bit of punk-pop flavour to the proceedings. RTE presenter/producer and former member of Stockton’s Wing, Kieran Hanrahan, has been the festival director for over half of its existence.

“I got involved about six years ago when I was asked to come onboard and I’ve been doing it ever since,” he explains. “Being a bit of a musician myself, I’d have a fair bit of knowledge of what’s out there and a good few contacts as well.

It’s great for me to be able to ring up bands and artists that I’d like to see and ask them if they’ll be free at the end of January to do a gig or two.”

Brilliant and legendary as they are, The Undertones aren’t the first group that would spring to mind as headliners for a trad festival. How did their appearance come about?

“Well, the festival is much broader in scope than the title suggests,” he says. “If we stuck rigidly to what’s known as ‘Irish trad’ the thing would be exhausted in a very short space of time. The Undertones came up during a discussion we had in the office, it was as simple as that. Someone would say ‘What about this band?’ or ‘What about this group?’ It’s a matter of matching the band and the venue together and The Undertones fit the bill.”

Tradfest also offers concert-goers unique opportunities to experience live music in some of Dublin’s most historic places. From the breathtaking nave of St Patrick’s Cathedral to the elegant proportions of City Hall, Tradfest is about savouring the city, as well as the music.

“A lot of production has had to go into those old buildings to make them work as venues – between stages and sound and lighting,” explains Hanrahan. “We have been embraced by the authorities in all of the buildings we work with.

For example, in City Hall they’ve been just fantastic – they see it as an opportunity to bring people in and to appreciate the historic significance of the building itself. Is there anything on the bill that he’s particularly looking forward to this year?

“The fact that Sweeney’s Men are getting together again is very special,” Kieran reflects, “as that they really are the pioneers of this whole scene. Sadly I’ll only get to hang around for about ten or fifteen minutes at every gig if I’m lucky, because you’re going around trying to make sure stuff is organised and attending CD launches and so on.

“The other important aspect of the festival is the fact that we put on showcases for up and coming bands and artists in conjunction with IMRO. We bring in the festival buyers from Milwaukee and Kansas City, and elsewhere, to hear those young bands and to present what they have to offer. It works out very well for everyone – it’s giving the musicians a platform, and making it easier for the festivals to check out a lot of new young talent in one place.”

The Festival will also include a unique 30th anniversary Gala Celebration, which will be held in Dublin Castle.

For more information go to www.templebartrad.com
Don't forget your shovel if you want to go to Tralee where the music and songwriting genius of Christie Hennessy will be celebrated Fels Point Hotel this coming weekend, Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd November.

The Gathering of Songwriters – A Tribute to Christie Hennessy, now in its fourth year and sponsored by Tralee Chamber Alliance, will provide a platform for new singer/songwriters to showcase original material over two glorious days.

The CEO of Tralee Chamber Alliance, Kieran Ruttledge, said: “The positive impact of last year’s Celebration of Christie Hennessy has been phenomenal and we are confident that this year’s Gathering of Songwriters will be even more memorable. Every minute of the weekend will be a highlight with a packed line-up of performers on both Friday and Saturday nights. The free workshops are back by popular demand with many budding musical talents set to hone their skills under the guidance of some songwriting experts.”

Dublin bluesman Don Baker will perform as the special guest during the IMRO Christie Hennessy Song Contest Final on Saturday 22nd November.

Open to all musical styles, the artists must perform their own compositions live (no backing tracks) and the 10 finalists – selected by IMRO – will perform their songs before a live audience (and panel of judges) in Fels Point Hotel.

The Troubadour Club presented by Francie Conway will return to kick-start the weekend on Friday 21st November featuring performances by ten artists (many Kerry-based) including Robert Delaney, Chapter 2, Fiach Moriarty, Gary Keane and Mickey Harte.

The festival title will really do what it says on the tin in bringing together a gathering of songwriters at FREE songwriting workshops at 12pm and 4pm on Saturday 22nd November hosted by Mickey Hart and IMRO respectively.

Musicians will also be treated to a showcase and trial of equipment from Cort Guitars and Bose Sound Systems at 2pm on Saturday afternoon.

Admission to The Troubadour Club event on Friday night is only €5 with tickets available from Tralee Chamber Office, 18 Denny St, Tralee and at the door on the night. Admission to the Song Contest Final is free, while seats can be reserved through IMRO at info@imro.ie or 01-6614844. Places at the FREE workshops can be reserved by contacting johnk@tralee.ie or 066 – 7121472.