

PRESS RELEASE EMBARGOED UNTIL APRIL 2008



# Bealtaine 2008

Celebrating Creativity in Older Age across Ireland 1<sup>st</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> May

## *“Now Strike Your Note”*

This Bealtaine 2008 theme is taken from Seamus Heaney's poem 'Station Island':

*" You've listened long enough. Now strike your note. "*<sup>1</sup>

It's proving an inspiration for arts events all over Ireland celebrating the diverse voices and rich experiences of older people. This year Bealtaine explores the many ways there are to grow older and delights in the fact that you're never too old to try something new!

Amongst the artists participating in this year's festival, Bealtaine is delighted to be welcoming back the inspirational **Liz Lerman Dance Exchange** (LLDX), who will be active in various parts of Ireland as part of the festival. LLDX is an award-winning international dance company, which has opened up an extraordinary world of dance for older people through participation, workshops and performance. For further information see [www.danceexchange.org](http://www.danceexchange.org).

**Magic Me** will be working in partnership with Sligo Arts Office developing an intercultural intergenerational project. Magic Me specialise in running creative projects which bring together young people (aged 9+) and older people (55+) for mutual benefit, learning and enjoyment, and have been described by British Prime Minister Gordon Brown as "...a powerful model that is breaking down prejudice, building connections and touching lives." For further information see [www.magicme.co.uk](http://www.magicme.co.uk).

Renowned artist **Patrick Scott**, who is actively working in his 80s, has collaborated with the festival and has chosen one of his pieces for the cover of the Bealtaine Bulletin, lending his support to the festival.

The festival will also be offering the opportunities to:

- Tap toes at the **Glen Road Bealtaine Sessions** in Donegal with Kitty Sean Cunningham and guests
- Go behind the scenes at the **Hugh Lane Gallery** on a Conservation Open Day
- Dance in the National Concert Hall with **Cois Céim Dance Theatre**
- Take a voice workshop with **Eamon Morrissey** in Cork
- Go on an mystery tour of unusual artefacts at the **National Museum** in Kildare Street

- Join Dublin gardener Helen Dillon as she launches this year's Bealtaine Film Tour with the film *Grow your Own* in the Irish Film Institute, in collaboration with access CINEMA
- Meet **The Sapphire Trio Chamber Ensemble** all the way from Spokane, USA, in Limerick
- Listen to **Jennifer Johnston** read in Donegal
- **Drum** at a workshop in Sligo

### **About Bealtaine**

Coordinated by **Age & Opportunity**, Bealtaine is the national arts festival celebrating creativity in older age. The festival encourages greater participation in the arts by older people as artists and performers, as event organisers and audience, everywhere from national institutions to local parish halls. The ethos is one of fun, empowerment and exploration.

Now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year, Bealtaine is an agenda-setting cultural first, an Irish innovation. In May 2007 there were 1300 events countrywide, organised by 337 partner organisations, attracting an audience of 50,000 people, making this one of Ireland's biggest arts festivals. And while there's currently nothing like Bealtaine anywhere else in the world, other countries are following our lead and creating festivals based on our model of celebration and participation.

Further information on the festival will be available to the general public as follows:

- On the web: [www.bealtaine.com](http://www.bealtaine.com).
- Via e-mail: [bealtaine@mie.ie](mailto:bealtaine@mie.ie)
- By telephone to Age & Opportunity on 01 805 7709
- Via local public libraries and County Council Arts Offices
- By post to Bealtaine at Age & Opportunity, Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9.

For further media information please contact Stephanie Dickenson at Kate Bowe PR  
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<sup>1</sup> Used with permission of Seamus Heaney, From 'Station Island' (Section XII).  
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