



Carrick on Shannon's Water Music Extravaganza the perfect antidote to the doom and gloom of this current economic climate

THE ANNUAL Water Music Festival in Carrick on Shannon (25th-30th June 2013) is a wonderful and indeed spectacular family orientated event presenting accessible classical, jazz, folk and world music (and theatre) in a luxurious riverside marquee as well as several other inviting venues in Carrick, such as St Georges Church and The Dock theatre.

Organised by a voluntary committee, the Water Music Festival attracts enthusiastic crowds each year from far and wide across the country, all drawn by the presentation of top quality performers in a wonderfully intimate venue and location. The breadth and depth of talent appearing at the festival has been lauded by locals and visitors alike.

So how did a festival of this size and prestige come about?

Well it had its genesis in an idea from local curate Fr Turlough Baxter, himself a great lover of classical music and a veteran of many classical music festivals.

Fr Turlough took the idea to three other music lovers in town, namely; Liam Farrell, Gerard Fitzgerald and Ian O'Doherty, who got together to examine the feasibility of running a classical music festival in Carrick-on-Shannon.

Having all attended similar festivals over the years and after consulting with the local community and relevant organisations, they resolved to found the Carrick Water Music Festival.

A programme was drawn up, *Opera a la Carte* were hired and while it was clear that the budget and work involved was daunting to say the least, the support both locally and nationally was superb, and so began the

tradition of the Water Music Festival.

So is the Water Music Festival all about 'classical music', is a question we're often asked?

The answer is 'not at all'. Classical plays a big part in the festival because part of its original ethos was to make it available and accessible to a wider audience. Many people have experienced

classical music for the first time by enjoying it 'live' at the festival and, in recent years, the Proms has helped to popularise it even more.

The Proms is something everyone should experience at some time in their lives. There's something genuinely inspiring about the sound of a 30 piece orchestra and singers raising the roof in a powerful crescendo of mostly popular pieces from the classical genre. It really is the perfect antidote to the doom and gloom of this economic climate.

Since the beginning, the festival has gone from strength to strength introducing touring opera, classical music, folk, jazz and world music, as well as providing unusual and entertaining side-shows for children and families.

Amongst the more famous names who have performed are, legendary Rock n' Roller Joe Brown, Dé Danann, Opera a la Carte from London, famed classical guitarist Carlos Bonell, Eleanor Shanley, the Henry Girls, Charlie McGettigan, international opera singers Sinead Mulhern and Martha Bredin, Kila, Cedric Watson's Cajun & Zydeco band from Louisiana, The Black Magic Big Band and many, many others.

Plans are already in place for a bumper festival in 2013 with several international stars being lined up for our very special Gathering and Carrick 400 event.



▲ Proms Acclaim

A festival of this stature could not survive or thrive without funding and sponsorship and in this we are indebted to several organizations, particularly since the economic downturn over the past five years.

MBNA has been our mainstay and funder-in-chief up to last year and without their support of the arts we simply would not have been able to present such a strong and varied programme over the years.

Faillte Ireland, the Arts Council and Leitrim County Council have also been particularly supportive in all this time. Business sponsors and private individual benefactors have been magnificent all through, particularly as they are so stretched these days as well.

So, as we prepare for the Gathering year and the Carrick 400 celebrations, we look forward to continuing to bring accessible quality music to the area and to entice even more visitors to one of the best boutique festivals anywhere in the country.

We look forward to welcoming readers of The Leitrim Guardian from all over the world to the Water Music Festival in 2013. Followers can keep up to date with announcements via our website:

www.carrickonshannonwatermusic.com
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