

Frenchman, Victor Cousin, who popularised the term *l'Art pour l'Art* or Arts for Art's Sake. This, to my understanding, is a neat summation of the argument that art does not have to have any intrinsic moral, societal or intellectual meaning or input for it to have any value or worthiness.

The very consideration of art to such an extent may indeed appear to be a luxury to many people today, as the individual struggles for economic equanimity in a turbulent, market driven, 'global village'. It is exactly this type of discourse that can disenfranchise

those many people who see the arts as, to coin another French cliché, a *bourgeois* hegemony that benefits the elite alone. It was not until after the 2nd World War, that art, theatre, in particular, became a vehicle for the masses to reflect on life and living, as artistic endeavour expanded through improved educational systems into the consciousness of the working class.

The 'angry young men' of 1950's Britain (John Arden, John Osborne, Harold Pinter etc) brilliantly questioned the validity of the old world order. One that had literally ordered millions of other young men to

senseless deaths in two world wars. European drama theorists like Maria Knebel, Bertolt Brecht, and Jerzy Grotowski revolutionised dramatic theory as they variously explored the subconscious, the intellect and physical impulse/memory as the conduits of expression to affect social change. The arts became mainstream and were recognised as an important harbinger of modern society.

So whether it is art for its own sake, for pure entertainment, or to promote discourse, Leitrim can be proud of the role, however small, that The Glens Centre plays therein.

## Ballagh Choir of Ages SARAH BRONKHURST

**The New Ballagh Centre** in Ross-inver was approached in 2017 with the idea of making a television series about the formation of a choir made up of older people and children, led by renowned conductor David Brophy. This led to the highly acclaimed three part series "David Brophy's' Choir of Ages" screened on RTE in December 2017.

Participants enjoyed the experience so much that funding was sought to continue the Choir when the cameras stopped rolling. Led by Sligo Choirmaster Dave Flynn, the Ballagh Choir of Ages was supported in 2018 by the Reconciliation Fund at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and includes members from County Fermanagh so is Cross Border, Cross Community and Intergenerational. In 2018 the Choir performed at the Stoneywoods Festival in Kiltyclogher and at the opening of the Cashel Community Centre in Fermanagh. The highlight of the



year was when members of the original Choir of Ages TV series performed for the pope in Croke Park at the World Meeting of Families.

The Choir recorded a 4 track CD during the summer, which was launched at a star studded concert held at the Beepark Community Centre in Manorhamilton in October. One of the tracks on the CD is a cover of the Joni Mitchell classic "Both Sides Now" which includes a unique spoken word section,

*Choir of Ages performing at the Beepark Manorhamilton in October 2018. Inset the Choir of Ages CD. Photos: Jonas Dellow*

where members of the Choir, both young and old, talk about their everyday experiences of living close to the border. A beautiful music video has been made for this song and can be found on Youtube by searching "Ballagh Choir of Ages Both Sides Now"