



MEDIA RELEASE

SUMMER SPRINGS INTO LIFE FOR CLARE'S ELDERLY SUMMER IS THE SEASON TO CELEBRATE 'CREATIVITY IN OLD AGE'

County Clare, IRELAND, Thursday, 3rd May 07 - The Clare Arts Office has announced a wide range programme of activities and events celebrating creativity in old age, as part of the 12th annual 'Bealtaine' festival.

Organised by Age & Opportunity, the aim of the month-long programme is to challenge negative attitudes to ageing and older people as well as to promote greater participation by older people in society. Bealtaine events nationally are independently organised by some 250 organisers drawn from the national arts institutions (like the IMMA and the Irish Film Institute), regional arts centres, public libraries, local authorities, care centres, active retirement and other community groups. In May 2006 an estimated 40,000 people took part in over 1000 Bealtaine events in all counties in Ireland.

Activities and events scheduled to take place in County Clare this year include all art forms like theatre, literature, dance, film, storytelling, music, contemporary art, painting and sculpture.

"Bealtaine is the Irish word for the month of May. Over the last number of years, however, the word has become synonymous with the national 'Bealtaine' festival", said Siobhan Mulcahy, Clare Arts Office.

She added, *"The Clare Arts Office is organising a wide range of activities for this year's festival with music in hospital settings, an art exhibition, a photography exhibition, workshops and concerts held throughout the County."*

The *'Music in Hospitals'* events, which were well received in 2006, will feature performances by notable local musicians and singers at various hospitals and day care centres throughout Clare. Participating artists include Kate Purcell, Paddy Hynes, John Greene, Chris Dronney and Kitty Hayes, Josephine Marsh and Maurice Coyle.

According to Ms. Mulcahy, *'We are delighted that the 'Music in Hospitals' events have returned to the Festival programme. It's great to see their eye's light up when they are all singing a familiar song or hear a familiar tune.'*

Meanwhile, the *'Riches of Clare'* series of traditional music lunchtime concerts will also begin during Bealtaine with the first concert featuring the great Donegal fiddle player Tommy Peoples, who will be accompanied by his daughter Siobhan Peoples in Ennistymon Library on Wednesday May 23rd from 1 – 2pm.

The Arts Office of Clare County Council is also working closely with Glór Irish Music Centre in Ennis to present a matinee theatre production *'Melody'*.

Commenting on the show, Ms. Mulcahy stated, *"This show will take place on May 9th and cooks up an interesting recipe of mature love between two lonely souls who share a passion for classical music, ham and cheese sandwiches and...massage parlours! Glór will host a special lunch/show deal in conjunction with this performance to celebrate Bealtaine, as well as having a special film and music concert."*

Other events being held during Bealtaine include a spinning workshop in the De Valera Library with Geraldine O'Sullivan on Tuesday May 8th at 11am. Elsewhere, an art exhibition will be held in the DeValera Library and Clare Museum from May 14th-26th. The exhibition will feature art and crafts from residents of various Clare hospitals, nursing homes and day care centre attendants.

St. Joseph's Hospital in Ennis will also showcase a photography project entitled *'All of May Ways of Seeing'*, a project hosted by residents and staff as part of *'A Time to Seek'* project.

Another Arts Office-supported initiative is the *'Women's Work'* project, which is ongoing in Ennistymon with the Ennistymon Community Hospital and Transition Year Students. Co-ordinated by artists *'Sara Foust'* this work will be exhibited at the Courthouse Gallery in Ennistymon on May 17th & 18th.