

National Concert Hall date for the County Donegal Youth Orchestra

Each year, some of the 8,000 members of the Irish Association of Youth Orchestras get an opportunity to appear on the stage of the National Concert Hall if they are lucky enough to be part of one of the eight orchestras selected to perform at the Annual Festival.

This year, young musicians, from as far apart as Donegal and Wexford, will travel to take part in the 19th Festival of Youth Orchestras which showcases the best in Irish youth orchestras from around the country and it takes place at the National Concert Hall, Dublin on Saturday, 8th February.

Invited to perform this year, the 60 piece **County Donegal Youth Orchestra** is the largest of Donegal Music Education Partnership's performing groups and prides itself on musical diversity and community involvement. Drawing its musicians from the vast geographical spread of the county, the orchestra was initially led and inspired by Jim Rafferty and is conducted in more recent years by Vincent Kennedy.

Every year it performs a wide variety of music ranging from classical to folk, pop and film inspired favourites to hundreds of people all over Donegal. It is particularly happy to have commissioned new works from such composers as Vincent Kennedy and Neil Martin as well as special collaborations ranging from the art-science collaborators Softday to traditional music luminaries, Altan. The orchestra has grown and developed over the years, reflected in its IAYO's 'Achievement Award' at the 2013 Festival of Youth Orchestras for its performances of *The Happy Prince*, a musical adaptation of the Oscar Wilde story with words by Little John Nee and music by Vincent Kennedy.

This is the second time the County Donegal Youth Orchestra has been invited to participate in this Festival, the first being in February 2010. The Festival of Youth Orchestras will see more than 400 young people perform original works and arrangements from the classical repertoire, shows, films and pop music. For this year's evening performance, the County Donegal Youth Orchestra will perform Allegretto from *Symphony No. 7* by **Beethoven**; A Suite from *The Happy Prince* by **Vincent Kennedy**; and *Farandole* by **Georges Bizet**.

The afternoon performance features: Ceol na Mara Chamber Orchestra; St Agnes/Scoil Colm & St Ultan's Primary School Orchestras; Music Matters Orchestra and County Wexford Youth Orchestra. The evening performance also features the East Meets West Orchestra; Tipperary Millennium Orchestra and Young European Strings Chamber Orchestra.

The IAYO was founded in the mid 1990s to foster and encourage the development of Youth Orchestras and now represents more than 8,000 young players, playing in 108 orchestras, countrywide. Visit www.iayo.ie for more information.

Tickets for the Festival on Saturday, February 8th, are on sale from the National Concert Hall Box Office - 01 417 0000 www.nch.ie, Prices: €15 (Concessions: €10); Children under 14: €7.50; Family Ticket (Family of 4 max. 2 adults): €40. 40% discount for groups of 10 or more also from the NCH Box Office. The Irish Association of Youth Orchestras is grant-aided by The

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