

LOCAL MUSIC PARTNERSHIPS IN TUNE

The Department of Education and Skills will start to co-fund the Music Generation programme with Local Music Education Partnerships in July, as part of its long-term development of the initiative. Here's a round-up of what's happening locally in each of the areas where Music Generation is now active.

Music Generation – the national music education programme initiated by Music Network and co-funded by Local Music Education Partnerships, with the support of U2 and the Ireland Funds – has organised a huge range of activities, which the Department of Education and Skills will begin to co-fund on a phased basis from July 2014.

The national music education programme was set up in 2009 to increase access to music education for children and young people. To date some 18,500 children and young people across 12 counties now have access to quality performance music education in their own locality, with employment opportunities having been created for over 200 musicians.



MUSIC GENERATION

Carlow: Now well into its second year of operation, already the programme is delivering music tuition to 2,850 children and young people through a range of new tuition courses for pre-schoolers through to second-level students, including music composition scholarship schemes.

Over 900 primary school children participated in recorder workshops with the Irish instrumental group The Gregory Walkers in March. A recent highlight was the performance of a new composition 'Speranza' by the Transition Year (TY) Students of Borris VS during the visit of Minister for Education Ruairi Quinn to the school.

Composed by the students in collaboration with composer Linda Buckley, they were invited to perform the piece in St Mark's Basilica, Venice as part of their TY trip.

Cork City: A variety of vocal and instrumental programmes has been developed through local providers including weekly classes and ensembles delivered by Cork Academy of Music and Barrack Street Band. Young musicians from the SoundOUT programme in Terence MacSwiney Community College recently travelled to Dublin where they performed their version of The Script's 'Man that can't be moved' live on RTÉ TV's Elev8!

Laois: Almost 800 children each week benefit from a variety of tuition in choral, harp, uilleann pipe (in partnership with Na

Probairí Uileann), brass, the inclusive Music Box programme for children with special needs, and the recently launched School of Rock & Pop. The Laois School of Music and Music Generation Laois Inaugural Music Festival, which took place in March in Portlaoise College featuring over 80 young performers, is set to become an annual event. The Stampede Drummers are ever-increasing in popularity after their performance at the launch of the new Arts Plan for County Laois.

Limerick City: Winning 'Best Float' in Limerick's St Patrick's Day Parade and presenting an 'Orchestra of Orchestras' with over 200 young musicians in the Lime Tree Theatre are just two of the highlights. Band Explosion performed for Africa Day 2014 at Limerick City Hall and Music Generation Limerick City's new 'Express Yourself' bus is being prepared for public viewing in July.

Louth: Building on the success of the 'Let's Sing' choral programme in primary

schools, two new children's county choirs for 7-12 year olds have been established in Drogheda and Dundalk, providing many performance opportunities. Classes continue in five tuition centres across the county with the Junior String Orchestra recently winning first prize at the Newry Feis and Junior Brass Band, featured on RTÉ Radio 1's 'Countrywide'. Songlines, a collection of 10 children's songs celebrating the growing cultural diversity of County Louth, was launched at Dundalk Gaol's Oriel Centre.



MUSIC GENERATION

Mayo: An exciting new musician-in-residence programme is being rolled out this year in the county. The Kaleidoscope Big Band programme is enabling participants aged 12-18 to learn about composition, improvisation and performance and have the opportunity to work together closely with a professional ensemble to hear their own music come to life. Their debut performance took place on 9 May at the Linenhall Arts Centre, Castlebar. As part of a collaboration with Music Network, intergenerational music workshops also took place at the centre.

Offaly/Westmeath: An early years' programme for primary schools has been kick-started in Offaly/Westmeath following a comprehensive training programme for its musician tutors. Young children are getting the opportunity to develop their musical skills in a fun way and are enjoying their first musical performances. An Open Evening was held for music makers, parents, schools and community groups to see how Music Generation Offaly/Westmeath has already impacted over 1,500 young people in their area.

Sligo: Classical-Trad Young Musicians Exchange Programme, a Traditional Irish Music Camp, featured in May. As part of the Music Generation/ Arts Council Partnership, two projects are underway—a masterclasses with Dervish and West Ocean String Quartet and a Young Composers' Mentoring Programme led by composer Neil Martin, with performances planned for August.

Wicklow: Following the success of the composition celebrating the acknowledged relationship between Music and Maths: Rhythm + Algorithm written collaboratively by composer Andrew Synnott and 40 young people from Scoil Chonglais, Baltinglass, Wicklow has four new composition projects in development. The first of these is a work written by young people from Arklow working with composer George Higgs which was premiered in May. The second piece, a composition for foundation years primary school with composer Elaine Agnew, was recently performed at the Mermaid Arts Centre.

LATEST PARTNERSHIPS

Clare and South Dublin are the two latest Music Education Partnerships to receive funding through Music Generation. They will soon announce details of their plans as the programme reaches its target roll-out to 12 areas of the country 18 months ahead of schedule.

MUSIC GENERATION RAISES THE ROOF WITH A 'BIG SING'

Over 400 children and young people from across Ireland gathered in the Mansion House, Dublin recently for Music Generation's inaugural BIG SING event. This was the first national gathering of participants in Music Generation – the U2 and Ireland Funds' supported national music education programme initiated by Music Network match-funded by Local Music Education Partnerships.

The event marked the culmination of a Choral Music Education Programme, which commenced in September 2013 in partnership with the Association of Irish Choirs and the Choral Music Experience Institute.

This continuing professional development course brought together 40 choral conductors, choir leaders and music teachers working with Music Generation to study with acclaimed US conductor Dr Doreen Rao, who is an expert in supporting singing and choral projects throughout the country.

The idea behind the BIG SING was to bring the course participants together with their local choirs in a celebration of learning to mark the end of the programme.

In preparation for the national BIG SING event, Dr Rao travelled around Ireland delivering workshops in schools in Louth, Donegal, Laois, Cork, Carlow, Wicklow and Westmeath participating in Music Generation choral programmes. Dr Rao, who reflected on the opportunity to travel right across the country and work really closely with Music

Generation, the students and the tutors delivering choral workshops, said she has seen how Music Generation is empowering children and young people to celebrate music and their own talent.

Music Generation National Director Rosaleen Molloy said: "The Big Sing is the very first time that we have been able to bring so many young people involved in Music Generation together to perform. We are very lucky to have had Dr Doreen Rao here to lead us on this momentous occasion. Her methodology has inspired much of the Music Generation ethos, she is an exceptional choral conductor and an inspirational music educator whose approach has transformed music education in North America."

Since the national music education programme was set up in 2009 to increase access to music education for children and young people, to date some 18,500 children and young people across 12 counties now participate in the programme. The Department of Education has committed to funding the initiative on a phased basis from July 2014.



Music Generation tutors pictured at the 'Big Sing' event in the Mansion House.