



Echo Echo Festival Presents

TRADITION AND BEYOND

DANCE | MUSIC | PERFORMANCES | WORKSHOPS | TALKS

22ND - 24TH SEPTEMBER 2023

A short festival rooted in and extending the Irish Tradition

Produced by Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company
in partnership with Siamsa Tíre - Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin
- Leitrim Dance Project - University of Limerick / Ollscoil Luimnigh

www.echoechodance.com

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Welcome to the second edition of the Tradition and Beyond Festival. The festival focuses on artists who come from different backgrounds in the rich and varied streams of Traditional Irish Dance. They all continue to work from a deep commitment to it while finding ways that the tradition may develop, adapt and change as time moves on. We again focus the festival on artists who are invited to be in residence at Echo Echo Studios and at Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin. We give these exceptional artists time and space to reflect and create, after which they will perform concerts

of new work. We also present Áirc Damhsa in a concert of dance and music and a video screening showing of a youth dance project by Áirc Damhsa founder Edwina Guckian. The invited artists will also teach open workshops and there's a "round table" discussion to finish off. Come along to watch and join in. Great deals are available on festival passes - make a weekend of it!

Steve Batts

Artistic Director, Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company

Photo - Maurice Gunning



Festival Double Bill 1:

Sarah Fennell / University of Limerick Students

🕒 Fri 22nd September | 8pm | Echo Echo Studios | Tickets £8

Festival Artist-in-Residence ~ Sarah Fennell with mentoring from Caoimhe Ennis
New work 'Absolutely No Problem'

This new work explores the body in motion and in human existence. I am looking at ego, the mind, and living with memory, experience and emotion.

"My work at the moment is an enquiry into movement and performance. The 'natural' and the 'unnatural'. How can I move through movement and through life with little remembered 'motion' and how can I be as 'in the moment' as possible. I'm finding it hard to articulate it with words, but hopefully 'Absolutely No Problem' can do that a little for me."

Sarah Fennell is a dance artist and teacher based in Limerick. Her exploration lies within the parameters of Traditional Irish step dance through the lens of contemporary dance. Sarah is a graduate from the University of Limerick with an MA in Traditional & Contemporary dance and is now a tutor of Creative Practice on the BA course. She has been a member of Ériu Dance company since 2016.

Sarah's mentor Caoimhe Ennis is an Irish dancer from Dublin with several local and provincial Championship titles. She is a fellow tutor at the University of Limerick and is currently continuing her studies with an MA in Ethnochoreology.

Duration: +/- 1 hr

A selection of short works by University of Limerick BA in Irish Dance students

These works emerge from the 'Creative Practice' classes of the Irish Dance BA programme, which are focussed, reflective and exploratory sessions. Using approaches and tools such as deconstruction, authentic movement, and improvisation, amongst others, we facilitate an emergence of aesthetics and concepts which reveal the students' innate artistic expression, a window to the world as they see it and as it manifests upon them.

"At the Irish World Academy (UL) we aim to create 'thinking dancers' and 'dancers who think'. We acknowledge that these are people with formal training in the Irish step dance tradition. At the same time we embrace their lived experiences and consider how that affects their way with their movement, and how it manifests in poetic, emotive, and powerful dances, so that they may divulge to us a version of the world we may not have access to."

(Dr Breandán de Gallaí - BA Irish Dance Course Director)

Duration: +/- 1 hr



Festival Double Bill 2:

Jonathan Kelliher / Mary McGuiggan

🕒 Sat 23rd September | 5:30pm | Echo Echo Studios | Tickets £8

Festival Artists-in-Residence ~ **Jonathan Kelliher in collaboration with Sinéad Murrihy**

Traditional Dance has been part of the culture in North Kerry for centuries, passed down through the generations by the Dance Masters such as O'Ceirín, Ned Batt Walsh and the great Jeremiah Molyneaux, affectionately known as Munnix.

The residency will consider why the traditional dance of this area is one of the few regional styles to survive today, and what effects this strong tradition has had on the place and its people. Jonathan will collaborate with singer, dancer and musician, Sineád Murrihy, to explore how this unique old style of dance can be relevant in today's world.

Jonathan is Artistic Director of Siamsa Tíre's National Folk Theatre since 2005. He joined as a professional performer in 1989 and performed in numerous productions nationally and internationally throughout the years. Jonathan has studied the North Kerry style of traditional Irish Dance since the age of six and in 2000, became a Dance Master. Now with over 30 years of teaching experience, he is one of the most respected voices in the style.



Festival Artists-in-Residence ~ **Mary McGuiggan in collaboration with Maura Johnston and Paraig O'Brien**

For Mary, dance is "Food for the Soul". She was raised in a rural community, rich in language, music, poetry, storytelling and song. In her festival residency she explores how her roots have influenced her dance. As an older woman, a mother, grandmother, community and environmental activist, she continues to find avenues to marry her passions. Mary will be collaborating with Maura Johnston and Paraig O'Brien, both of whom share her interests and maybe more importantly come from her own "neck of the woods".

Mary is a traditional step dancer from Ballynease, a rural community, on the banks of the river Bann. She has been dancing since she was 4 years old. She has danced competitively at local, national and All Ireland level and has had a career as a dance teacher both at primary, secondary and competition level. Her greatest love is to encourage everyone to dance for joy and fun, building confidence as well as learning a new skill.

Paraig O'Brien is both a traditional and classically trained violin player, music teacher and music therapist from Portglenone on the river Bann.

Maura Johnston is from Moneymore, Co Derry. She is a published writer of poetry and short stories. She is also an experienced facilitator of writing and reminiscence workshops.

Duration: +/- 1 hr



Music Concert: 'The Year in Ireland' with Edwina Guckian, Caitín Nic Gahann and Áirc Damhsa

🕒 Sat 23rd September | 8pm | Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin | Tickets £10

An hour long concert delving into the role of music and dance in pagan Irish calendar customs.

Dancer Edwina Guckian hails from outside the village of Drumsna in Co. Leitrim. She

learned her dancing from her mother and the local dancers of Leitrim and Roscommon. In 2004 Edwina established her dance club Áirc Damhsa which now has over 400 members, 11 teachers and is based in 9 counties. She has been awarded Leitrim County Council 'Arts Person of the Year', Arts Council's 'Next Generation Award' and 'Business Person of the Year' by the Irish Enterprise Board.

Since 2016 she hosts 'Leitrim Dance Festival', supporting traditional percussive dancers from all over the world.

Edwina Guckian video showing:

'Becoming Different'

🕒 Sun 24th September | 12noon | Echo Echo Studios | Free

What does it mean to be different? Is it a good thing or a bad thing? Should we be celebrating these differences or do we keep them to ourselves? What challenges do we face because of them? Being a young person in today's world is a massive challenge; that path of discovering who we are and what makes us different. We think our differences are something to celebrate.

We don't want to stand in lines, dressed in uniform and blend in with the crowd. We want to dance however we want to dance, dress however we like, express ourselves in our own unique ways, travel paths we're not certain of, share with the world the things that make us stand out and have the confidence and space to celebrate who we are without any judgement or pressure. We want to be ourselves and love that person and all their differences. Because our differences matter and we are all different. You and I make a huge difference in this world.

Duration: +/- 1 hr

Photo - Cian Flynn



Ongoing Project: Edwina Guckian & Caitlín Nic Gabhann: '... And They Danced and Danced'

🕒 Occurring in Derry/Londonderry over weekend 23rd/24th September

Dancers Edwina Guckian & Caitlín Nic Gabhann travel Ireland interviewing the older generation of dancers within their communities. Speaking to these dancers about their experiences in growing up with dance, how and where they learned, who were their teachers, musicians who played for them, where they danced and who they danced with. All documented for the Irish Traditional Music Archives.

Workshop Programme

🕒 Echo Echo Studios | Tickets £5 | Open to all levels of experience

These classes are open to everyone over 14 years of age. Each artist will introduce some of the ways they work with dance and movement. The workshops are for anyone interested in looking at Irish dance in a different way and finding new connections to the old. All are welcome, and do stay for a cup of tea and a chat afterwards!

Sat 23rd September - 10am - 11.30am | **Jonathan Kelliher**
North Kerry "Munnix" Style Traditional Dance

Sat 23rd September - 2.30pm - 4.00pm | **Sarah Fennell**
Moving Through - Imagery & improvisation

Sun 24th September - 10am - 11.30am | **Edwina Guckian** | **Caitlín Nic Gabhann**
Dancing the Tune

Sun 24th September - 2pm - 3.30pm | **Mary McGuiggan**
The Slip Jig

Please visit echoechodance.com for more details on our Workshop Programme.

Photo - Simon Alleyne



Round Table Discussion: Roots, Flowers, Fruits

🕒 Sun 24th September | 4pm - 5.30pm | Echo Echo Studios
| Free

All of the artists involved in the festival will join in an informal round-table discussion about the different ways that they

approach their work and how they both honour the tradition they are rooted in and find ways to extend and challenge it, and themselves. There will be a chance for audience members to ask questions and join the exchange of ideas, and we'd love to hear from dancers, musicians and artists working in other mediums for whom this theme is relevant. The discussion will be facilitated by Steve Batts, Artistic Director of Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company.

Art Exhibition: 'Blow In' - by Fiona Rainey curated by Sinéad Smyth

🕒 Opening: Tuesday 8th Sep - Oct 12th | 7pm | Echo Echo Studios Gallery
Free | Ongoing throughout festival

A new collection of oil paintings by artist Fiona Rainey. We are invited to consider whether we ever truly belong in a place or is the connection between us and the space more compelling? Where is and what is home?

Belfast born Fiona Rainey has been a studio based artist for a number of years. She describes herself as a sculptor who paints and has exhibited widely both locally and abroad. Currently she divides her time painting in her studio in Straid Ballyclare, and facilitating art classes.

Photo - Fiona Rainey



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Booking Information

Festival Pass £35 - Access All Events

Performance Tickets £8 to £10 each

Workshops £5 each

Accessibility

Festival venues Echo Echo Studios on Magazine Street and Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin on Great James Street are fully accessible. If you have a specific query please contact us in advance by email info@echoechodance.com or phone 028 7130 8883.

Book now at echoechodance.com

Festival Thanks

Special thanks to: all of the artists and companies for their support - and to all of their circles of colleagues, funders and supporters; thanks to the Department for Tourism Culture Arts Gaeltacht Sport and Media *Co-operation with Northern Ireland Funding Scheme*; thanks to all of our project partners Peter O'Doherty and team at Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin, Siamsa Tíre, Leitrim Dance Project and University of Limerick; thanks to Echo Echo Principal Funder the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Caoileann Curry-Thompson; thanks to Echo Echo core funder Derry City and Strabane District Council and all of the Arts and Festivals teams; thanks to the Garfield Weston Foundation for its generous support; thanks to all previous Echo Echo Festival funders and supporters; Zoocreative; the Echo Echo staff team, Echo Echo Ensemble and the company's Board of Directors; and finally thanks to our audiences for your continued support!

Festival
Thanks



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media



Siamsa Tíre
The National Folk Theatre of Ireland

LEITRIM DANCE
PROJECT

