



Press Release

June 24th 2010

Reels on Wheels

Pipers get on their bikes to raise funds for new facility

It will be a case of 'Reels on Wheels' as over 35 cyclists from all over Europe set off from Dublin to Milltown Malbay, County Clare for the Willie Clancy Summer School next week to raise funds for a new uilleann pipe-making course and facility.

The marathon cycle which leaves Dublin on Friday July 2, will see piping enthusiasts from Bulgaria, Belgium, Norway, France and Germany join their Irish counterparts for the trip to the famous Irish traditional music summer school with stops in Tullamore and Feakle en route to West Clare.

The journey of over 170 miles is taking place as a fundraiser and to raise awareness of Na Píobairí Uilleann's drive to establish an uilleann pipe-making training course and facility. Na Píobairí Uilleann is the society of uilleann pipers dedicated to the promotion of the instrument and traditional Irish music.

Due to the growing global interest in the music of the uilleann pipes, which is an iconic Irish instrument, the supply of quality instruments has not kept up with demand to the extent that there is a backlog of unfulfilled orders representing over €7million sales. The new pipe making course over an initial five year period will create 30 additional jobs and re establish the craft in Ireland – something worth at least €2million annually in additional economic activity.

Based on the trend of uptake of new players over recent years Na Píobairí Uilleann anticipates that the demand will continue to grow to such an extent that within a short number of years annual sales will reach €5million per annum. By providing the much needed training NPU believes it can reverse the trend of the craft being lost to Ireland and can provide sustainable economic activity and a minimum of 30 additional highly skilled jobs.

Apart from the economic benefits that will accrue to the Irish economy the resultant increased supply of quality instruments will enable young people to realise their desire and potential to play and enjoy the music and the instrument.

The landscape of the craft of uilleann pipe-making which originated in Ireland and was up to the late 1970s solely based in Ireland, has altered significantly in recent years to the extent that the sales output of the Irish makers represents only €500,000 of the current annual sales of €3,000,000 of new uilleann pipes worldwide. In addition there is a significant demand for ongoing repairs and maintenance of instruments.

Donations can be made by post to NPU at 15 Henrietta Street, Dublin 1 or online at the NPU website shop at <http://www.pipers.ie/donate>

Info

For further information about the Sponsored Cycle or Na Píobairí Uilleann's PipeCraft fundraising campaign contact NPU, 15 Henrietta St, Dublin 1, 003531-8730093, info@pipers.ie, www.pipers.ie

About PipeCraft

The challenge for any growing arts organisation lies in meeting the demands of scale while sustaining quality. Nowhere is this reality more current than in the area of uilleann piping where the art is utterly dependent on the unique craft of pipe making.

The world of uilleann piping, and Na Píobairí Uilleann in particular, has enjoyed a successful period of sustained growth and development in recent years, particularly in the areas of tuition and publications. However, the burgeoning demand for quality instruments has led to a major logjam, an impasse which can only be overcome with immediate up-front investment in pipe-making tuition and research. The benefit of this support would be two-fold; it would help to meet the short-term demand for good pipes while yielding long-term benefits for the Irish economy through positive financial returns and sustained jobs.

By committing to the development of skilled pipe-makers, we will be re-establishing Ireland as the home of a self-sustaining growth industry – one which will also underpin and safe-guard the art of uilleann piping for future generations.

For NPU to address the shortage of pipe-makers, funding will be required to establish a long-term, sustainable training programme. Our proposed pipe-making programme, which aims not only to train new makers but to improve the environment

in which they will operate, is endorsed by leading uilleann pipers Paddy Moloney, Liam O'Flynn and Ronan Browne.

Failure to address the worsening trend will result in the industry being lost to Ireland and further jeopardise the supply of good pipes and have a severe adverse impact on the development of piping. In fact, in such a vacuum, the risk increases that the quality of instruments will decline which, in turn, will have a knock-on effect on the standard of playing.

Currently a situation prevails where there is a serious supply shortage of quality instruments and, more importantly, the future of the craft of pipe-making is in jeopardy.

About Na Píobairí Uilleann

Na Píobairí Uilleann (NPU), the Society of Uilleann Pipers was founded in 1968 at grassroots level by pipers with the aim of protecting a threatened art form. Now, 40 years later, NPU is a thriving arts organisation with thousands of members worldwide, dedicated to servicing the aims and needs of pipers worldwide. It is an ambition of NPU's to establish the uilleann pipes as the iconic instrument of Ireland in the 21st century. Since unveiling its restored Georgian premises at 15 Henrietta St in January 2007, NPU has been busy catering for the expanding demand for regular tuition as well as releasing a number of significant publications and recordings. With demand for pipes exceeding supply considerably, a dedicated course in pipe-making is currently being finalised while NPU's commitment to tuition, both on a weekly basis at its premises and internationally, continues to grow, along with its public performance programme. Na Píobairí Uilleann's primary funding agencies include the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism, The Arts Council / An Comhairle Ealaíonn and Dublin City Council

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