

Consulate General of Ireland

Newsletter for the U.S. Southeast

January 2018

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Culture Ireland Cultúr Éireann

Message from the Consul General

A chairde,

Christmas 2017 came early for the Southeast. On 19 December, Ireland's national culture agency, Culture Ireland, released details of a varied and wonderful arts programme that it will support across the region in the spring:

Renowned chamber orchestra, [Camerata Ireland](#), will perform in Thomasville, Georgia; major bands [Lúnasa](#) and [We Banjo 3](#) will headline Nashville's wonderful Music City Irish Fest; [JigJam](#) will play in East Tennessee's Great Smoky Mountains at Dolly Parton's own Dollywood; [Dervish](#) and [Goitse](#) will rock Asheville and Tryon, respectively, in North Carolina.

We will also see a show of force from Ireland's literary sector. A Poetry Ireland delegation will attend [O, Miami Poetry Festival](#), while Eamonn Lynskey, Anne Fitzgerald, Colin Barrett, Kathy D'Arcy and Niamh Prior will be representing Ireland in Tampa at events associated with the [Association of Writers & Writing Programs](#) and Contemporary Irish Voices in Literature at the University of Tampa.

I hope you had a peaceful and enjoyable holiday season and I look forward to seeing you on the great line-up of business and cultural events in the works for 2018. Happy New Year!

Shane Stephens January 3, 2018

Business and Sport



Consul General Stephens was delighted to meet with newly elected Mayor Randall Woodfin and his economic development team in Birmingham, Alabama

The Consul General welcomed his colleague, Belgian Consul General William De Baets with Ambassador-Auditor Roland van Remoortele from Brussels



Congratulations to Annie Ruffino (with ball), who was featured in an excellent ESPN article "[Annie Ruffino excels in the unusual sport of Gaelic football](#)". This highlights her contribution to Charlotte's James Connolly GAA team, winner of the 2017 Senior US championship.

(Photo by David Stiles)

Culture Ireland supports Irish Artists in prominent Miami shows



Honorary Consul Ian O'Flaherty admires an Isabel Nolan tapestry with Darragh Hogan in the [Kerlin Gallery](#) booth at [Art Basel Miami](#) where leading galleries show significant works of modern and contemporary art

O'Flaherty with Anita Groener and Ciara Gibbons of the [Gibbons & Nicholas Gallery](#) at Context Art Miami, pictured in front of art by Anita Groener and Helen O'Leary



[mother's tankstation limited](#) artist [Yuri Pattison](#) was also featured at Art Basel, and [Stoney Road Press](#) appeared at the [INK Miami Art Fair](#) which features modern and contemporary works on paper.

Holidays 2017, Irish style



Atlanta's iconic Celtic Christmas Concert, celebrating 26 years of Irish, Scottish and Appalachian tradition - masterfully presented by John Mashinot (at left with CG Stephens) and The Celtic Company team



Lovely time at the annual Christmas gathering of the Hibernian Benevolent Society of Atlanta





Consul General Stephens joins Santa for the 10th annual Celtic Kids Christmas, an event supporting St. Baldrick's Foundation Atlanta

Georgians once again enjoyed GPB's Christmas Eve broadcast of the Emmy Award-winning A *Southern Celtic Christmas Concert* produced by Dr. James Flannery



And farther south, the South Florida Emerald Society dressed in style for their festive annual holiday gathering



Irish News

EU leaders agreed to move on to the second phase of talks on the UK's departure from the European Union. As the Taoiseach has indicated, we achieved all that we set out to achieve in phase one, with the Good Friday Agreement protected and the Common Travel Area continuing.

See President Michael Higgins' 2017 Christmas and New Year Message on YouTube [here](#).

Minister Ciáran Cannon laid out the Government's plans for harnessing the power of the Irish Diaspora in 2018 in two important and wide-ranging articles in [Irish Central](#) and [The Irish Times](#). He outlines plans for reaching more of our people through social media, making even better use of our more than €11 million Emigrant Support Program, helping those who wish to return to Ireland, supporting the undocumented in the U.S. and holding a referendum to amend the constitution to allow Irish citizens resident outside the state, including in Northern Ireland, to vote in Irish presidential elections.

The Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, through its network of Embassies and Consulates, [provided support](#) to a record number of more than 2,500 Irish citizens in distress abroad in 2017. Minister Coveney announced that over 779,000 [passports were issued in 2017](#), an increase of 6% over 2016 and the highest number ever issued in one year. The number of applicants from Northern Ireland and Great Britain has continued to rise. Overall, almost 20% of the total number of applications received by the Passport Service this year were from Irish citizens in Northern Ireland or Great Britain.

CSO data reflected real [growth in the Irish economy](#) of 10.5 per cent in annual terms in the third quarter of 2017. This positive tendency was also seen in strong employment growth as well as tax receipts to end-November which increased by 6 per cent over the same period last year.

Ireland was named [first for skills and innovation](#) in the EU Commission's 2017 Small Business Fact Sheet.

Ireland won Travel Weekly Magazine's "[Best Destination](#)" travel award for the fourth year in a row.

[The National Folklore Collection UCD](#), one of Europe's largest archives of oral tradition and cultural history, received recognition from UNESCO for The Irish Folklore Commission Collection 1935-1970, which has been inscribed on the prestigious UNESCO Memory of the World International Register. [Uilleann Piping](#) was also inscribed onto UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Enjoy [Culture Ireland's celebratory 2017 retrospective](#) on a global programme that, with its funding assistance, reached a 3.5 million live audience and 7 million online.

We wish Nora Twomey, Saoirse Ronan, Daniel Day-Lewis, Martin McDonagh and Caitriona Balfe good luck following their [Golden Globe nominations](#).

Look out for @DanMulhall, the twitter feed of Ireland's Ambassador to the US. It intersperses blog reflections, his latest speeches, literary reviews, poetry and economic updates. In particular, be sure not to miss his recent Christmas Day reading from Patrick Kavanagh's A Christmas Childhood.

Here in the Southeast, @IrelandAtlanta, the account of the Consul General of Ireland, Shane Stephens, has been joined by @IrelandMiami, the account of Ireland's Honorary Consul in Miami, Ian O'Flaherty.

Upcoming Events in the Southeast

Do not miss your chance to see *Riverdance* during their current tour of the Southeast. They will perform in Fort Lauderdale, Tampa and Orlando FL, Montgomery and Dothan AL, Athens and Columbus GA, Biloxi and Jackson MS, Fayetteville NC and Charleston SC. [Schedule and tickets at this link.](#)

The 8th Annual Florida Cup will be hosted by Tampa Bay Hurling Club-GAA and South Florida GAA on Saturday in Tampa Bay, January 13th 9am-4pm. For more information email: pro.orlando.southeast.usa@gaa.ie or southfloridagaa@gmail.com

[The King O'Sullivan Winter Feis](#) takes place January 26th and 27th at the Evergreen Marriott in Stone Mountain, GA.

[Kevin Barry](#), the award winning author of the novel *City of Bohane* will speak at Clemson University on February 19th and at University of Georgia's Willson Center on February 20th.

NOTE: Be sure to send in your St. Patrick's Day events for inclusion in the Newsletter! To: carol.jordan@dfa.ie