

FAM NEWS

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Sounds Good!

Ireland's first Online Music Club



SOUNDS GOOD!
Online Music Club

Ireland's First Ever
Online Music Club

Monday - Friday / 1 Hour a Day / for 2 Weeks:
6-10 & 13-17 July 2020

Each student gets a special Club Package with:

- Ukulele
- Tin Whistle
- Drum Sticks
- Club T-Shirt
- Club Workbook

Meet other kids from Ireland and beyond

Log on each day and make music with our SUPER FUN leaders

Loads of fun music material to try out with friends and family

For More Info Visit:
www.soundsgood.ie

With the success of the first video "Óró mo Bháidín" and with interest from children across the country - we are now launching Ireland's First Online Music Club at www.soundsgood.ie.

Since 2009, we have been running our Sounds Good! Music camps and we've loved every minute of it. Now we are taking this format online so that kids can have fun with music from the comfort of their own homes.

Not only is this a high-energy activity based course that takes place over two weeks in July, it is part of an ongoing online music club run by the Irish Institute of Music & Song, which will deliver fun-filled musical content on a monthly basis.

Sign up for the camp HERE!

Alessia absolutely loved the camp! Would definitely recommend."

"Thank you for organising a brilliant camp! Kaifina had a great time and learned a lot in such a short time!"

"Michael and Zach have been singing the songs non-stop at home. Very happy kiddies!"



Teaching Online

A teacher's perspective

For many professional musicians, online lessons are just par for the course. They spend a lot of their time touring throughout the year or moving around with various shows and performances.

The skill to teach remotely has become a valuable skill for many sought-after musicians. In Ireland, the vast majority of tutors teach from a school or studio, so recent developments have seen them adapting to completely new territory.

In the words of Fingal Academy of Music's Sarah May Rogers:

"Our sitting room or kitchen has now become our workspace, like many others, and we want to feel confident that we are doing as best we can for our students in these tough times."

Sarah May has spent the last few weeks researching best practices for online teaching. This "new normal" has sparked much debate among music teachers in online forums, and within our networks at home.

Sarah had some interesting discussions with her music colleagues around how everyone is feeling here's an excerpt from her conversation with Zena Palmer. Sarah: **"listened to a great Podcast from Niall Breslin** (Mental Health Advocate, founder of A Lust for Life and Where is My Mind? Podcast), **where he mentioned how online video communication is potentially as effective as face to face interaction. It really got me thinking about the pros and cons of online teaching and what the general consensus might be among our fellow music teachers."**

Zena: **"Teaching online is a lot more**

demanding on both parties although it may not appear that way at first. It requires a lot more extra preparation and, personally, I have had to think on my feet and learn technology fast - technology that I didn't really know well before I was plunged into this online teaching world head first!

For me, the most important part about it is the continuity of lessons with the student. Particularly in the early years of learning, practice habits depend on having a lesson later on that week.

Music lessons are a huge investment, both financially and time-wise, so it would be such a pity to throw that away and stop lessons for the duration, when we don't have an end point. I truly believe that regression would occur, and then lead to a student giving up an instrument, so it is crucial to keep it going to aid in seamlessly returning to normal eventually."

Top 3 Tips:

1. Original Sound - Turn on your 'original sound' on zoom for MUCH better audio quality - [Click here for Michelle's video on how to do this!](#)

2. Screen Position - To check the angle, turn your screen onto selfie mode, and place it about a metre away from you. In the screen view, the tutor should be able to see your instrument and posture. A tripod stand is really useful.

3. Space - Find a quiet space with no distractions and good internet connection

Student **STORY**



Long Time FAM Student Rob Meehan talks to us about the Leaving Cert, the pandemic, music and more.

What instrument(s) do you play and when did you first start lessons?

I have sung all my life but only began serious training four years ago: first with Dónal [Kearney], then with Michelle [O'Rourke]. They were both excellent teachers. I also play piano.

Tell us about one of your proudest musical moments?

This may seem a bit of an odd choice for one of my proudest musical moments, but at one of the Academy recitals I was performing a piece called "River". There was a moment in which I felt the technique and practice I had put into the piece was so deeply embedded in me, and everything was happening exactly as I wanted to. It might not be the biggest achievement but it's a moment that reminds me of the pure bliss I experience when performing.

Tell us about one of your scariest musical moments?

My first solo with the choir. I was 13 or 14 years old, we were performing in Christ Church Cathedral, and I had never performed for such a large audience before. It is also worth mentioning I was one of the youngest members of the choir, so I felt severely out of my depth. Thanks to the bond I had with the choir I was able to perform it to the best of my ability, but I spent a lot of time beforehand worrying about how it would go and whether I was good enough to do it.

How did you feel about not getting a chance to do your leaving cert practical and the leaving cert in general?

Every 6th year student has had an experience that's distinct and personal to them. I was devastated when the

cancellation was announced, because I felt I had lost my competitive edge. I had scored 100% in my mock practical. Other students, who weren't as comfortable with performing, were delighted that this part of the music exam had been axed. With regard to the Leaving Cert in general, I am glad to have a much deserved Summer back, but I worry that my predicted grades may not be as high as the grades I think I would have earned. It's a double-edged sword. But I am thankful to have so much time to focus on music.

What role has music played in your life during the COVID-19 pandemic?

It's been a distraction from the terrifying daily news, the struggles of the Leaving Cert and the problems of the country. At times, it's also been a distraction from my studies because I had a piano about three metres away from me...

What have you been singing during the COVID-19 pandemic?

I have been trying my hand at some tougher pieces, particularly from the world of Musical Theatre. I believe that "what doesn't challenge you, won't change you". Right now, Michelle and I are working on a piece called "Lost Stars" during our online classes. Michelle still finds a way to push me and teach me from miles away.

How have your musical tastes changed over the past 6 years?

I think about this quite often. I used to listen only to pop music as a child, not knowing all the things there are to love about so many other genres. A few days ago I found myself listening to Mozart purely for my own enjoyment. Having spent the last few years studying classical music in school, I never thought this would happen. But after studying it you really do learn to appreciate it.

What do you think your musical plans will be after leaving school?

Next year I plan on attending Phoenix Performing Arts College. After that I hope to move to London to attend a performing arts college, and hopefully to pursue a career in Musical Theatre there. I only recently made this decision, having originally planned to study law.

Teacher **FEATURE**

What is your favourite thing about teaching piano?

My favourite thing about teaching piano is when students come to me with pieces that they would like to learn. I want to encourage all students to learn and perform pieces that they want to learn, and they feel passionate about.

What's a memorable experience you've had while teaching?

My most memorable experience I've had while teaching was watching students who were not confident at the beginning to play in front of a live audience, overcome their fear and now perform at the majority of academy recitals with confidence and enjoy them.

What is your proudest musical moment?

My proudest musical moment was performing as the female lead in my 4th year musical 'Sueussical', in secondary school. I played the role of Gertrude

McFuzz and I loved every second of it. I teach piano and piano would be my biggest passion and my number one instrument, however I adore singing and performing. I love musical theatre. The feeling I got on stage every night while singing and dancing and acting was unforgettable.

What was the biggest lesson you learned from a music teacher?

I was fortunate enough to have an incredible, encouraging, and influential piano teacher for 8 years. He taught me so many things but the biggest lesson I learnt from my piano teacher was that you can spend so much time learning the notes of a piece perfectly and certainly to be able to play pieces note perfect is great but that's not music. What you do with those notes is what makes a piece. Music is meant to be interpreted, expressed, and performed. You can play a piece note perfect but have little impact on a listener. However, you can play wrong notes beautifully and make a great impact on a listener. This was the biggest lesson I learnt from my piano teacher and I try to pass that lesson on to my students. I want to encourage all of my students to embrace mistakes but play each piece as if it has never been played before, to make it their own.

Currently I'm listening to:

I am currently listening to Dermot Kennedy a lot. Also, I am re listening to the soundtrack of Hamilton before its release on Disney plus!

What I'm practicing at the moment:

I am practicing Kiss the Rain by Yiruma and trying to perfect an old project- the 3rd movement of Moonlight Sonata by Beethoven.



Aoibhinn Bannigan

Fingal Youth Choir

Darkness into Light

Darkness Into Light is an annual sunrise charity walking event, in association with Pieta House and Electric Ireland. Pieta House provides free therapy to people engaging in self-harm, with suicidal ideation, or bereaved by suicide. They rely on the generosity of the public whose donations and fundraising make up over 80% of the organisation's income.

The annual Darkness Into Light sunrise walking event is part of that fundraising effort. The first walk took place in 2009. At that event, 400 people gathered in Dublin's Phoenix Park in the middle of the night and marched together as the sun came up.

Ten years on, over 200,000 people participated in Darkness Into Light 2019 in two hundred locations across the world. Our very own Fingal Youth Choir (FYC) wanted to become involved after deciding together to contribute something to support a worthy cause.

FYC raised over €700 for Pieta House with this video of a song by Swedish DJ Avicii, who died by suicide on 20 April 2018.

FYC commissioned their conductor Eoin Conway to arrange this piece and the group recorded it in Malahide Castle in March 2019, just before embarking upon their tour to Berlin. This recording was generously supported by Fingal County Council Arts Office.

It was wonderful to see that the young singers of Fingal Youth Choir decided to raise money for Pieta House, out of so many different charities they could have chosen. Mental Health Awareness is something that is

very important to all of them. They put their heart and soul into this project and it paid off. We're immensely proud of them.

- Lea Försterling, Fingal Youth Choir Manager, May 2020.

Filed on the grounds of Malahide Castle, the video for the piece was supported by Fingal County Council Arts Office, and was shot just before Fingal Youth Choir embarked on their annual international tour earlier this month. The choir were also invited to perform for the Association of Irish Choirs (AOIC) in the National Concert Hall, have collaborated with youth choir Junge Consortium Berlin, and have hosted a concert at the prestigious Marienkirche in Alexanderplatz in central Berlin.

Darkness Into Light was scheduled to take place last weekend, but unfortunately all public gatherings were forbidden due to the health risks caused by Covid 19.

More information can be found in this article published by Fingal Independent on 4 May 2019: ['Fingal Youth Choir Shines Light on Darkness'](#)

[Watch the video 'Fade Into Darkness' HERE.](#)



Fade into
Darkness

The role of the Conductor in the 21st century

An introduction to conducting



What is the image that typically comes to mind when you think of a conductor? How do they look? What are they wearing? Are they male or female? How are they standing and what expression is on their face?

I ask these questions fully aware that a large proportion of people share a similar image of what a conductor typically looks like. For most of the 20th century, the conductor was often seen as a larger-than-life character, in some ways mystical, with a supernatural gift of understanding music. In 1967, American music writer Schonberg wrote:

“He is a leader of men... He has but to stretch his hand and he is obeyed. He tolerates no opposition. His will, his word, his very glance, are law.”

Now conducting aside... Can you imagine having a teacher like that, or a boss, maybe you do already? Maybe you ARE that teacher/boss!?

Luckily for singers, students and musicians, the philosophy of teaching, leadership and psychology has moved on leaps and bounds in the late 20th & early 21st centuries. In fact, the traditional autocratic model of the conductor appears to be in direct opposition to contemporary educational thought.

In many ways, the 21st century con-

ductor has a harder job than their recent ancestors. Aside from being excellent musicians, they also need to be competent administrators, highly organised, emotionally intelligent leaders, excellent educators and they must be able to communicate efficiently both verbally and nonverbally through gestures.

Many of these skills can be refined in areas outside the world of conducting, however the ability to communicate musical ideas, singing technique and emotion through gesture is something that is unique to the world of conducting.

Every day, the role of the conductor is played by primary school teachers preparing the school choir for events, singers taking their section for a rehearsal, musicians guiding small ensembles through performances and more. The opportunity to learn the intricacies of the craft has never been widely available in Ireland.

This is why we are launching our new online course “An Introduction to Conducting” at the IIMS in June. I am extremely excited to guide new conductors through their first steps into the world of conducting and hope that the knowledge they gain on the course allows them to make a positive impact in their communities.

[**Click here to find about more about the course.**](#)

Written by **Michael T. Dawson,**

Co-founder of Fingal Academy of Music and founder of Fingal Youth Choir

Upcoming Events & Faculty News



12th 19th 23rd June Virtual Recitals

Our next virtual recital is scheduled for 12th June and we welcome videos from all our students. Watch this space!



Weekly #StudentSnapshots

We will be posting new Student Snapshots every week so keep an eye out on our social media platforms on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!



‘The Young Folk’ New single

Piano Teacher Paul Butler released a new single with his band ‘The Young Folk’. The single ‘Apple Tree’ is available for download on all platforms. [Watch here!](#)



Blingmaster New video

Our pre-instrumental music expert Rebecca Gilbert and the Blingmasters Barbershop Chorus give you their version of Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious in honour of all the wonderful kids, teenager & babies keeping us all safe by staying home.

[Watch here!](#)



Trú's Liminal EP

FAM-co founder Dónal Kearney released a new Liminal EP with his band Trú. Recorded in isolation in Dublin, Donegal and Belfast, on a mixture of phones and studio mics. This EP is a collection of songs old and new from Ireland, England, Scotland and America.

[Listen here!](#)



Masters completed!

Congratulations to our Singing & Piano Teacher Raimonda Zal on completing her Masters in Music Therapy! Raimonda has recently graduated from University of Limerick and has also participated in a three day training of Neurologic Music Therapy (NMT) allowing her to use NMT techniques in her music therapy practice.

Musical Codemaker

The challenge is to come up with as many words as you can using only letters of the musical alphabet. After you have written the words in the blanks below the staff, turn them into code by writing the words in music notes on the staff above the word!




C D E F G A B C

Blank musical staves for writing words and their corresponding musical codes.



Print your own Sheet at [this link.](#)

Send your answers to lea@fingalacademyofmusic.com

Source: www.makingmusicfun.net