



Trustees Report

Dungannon Music and Drama Festival 2023

Dungannon Festival 2023 took place from 27 February to 08 March 2023. It was wonderful to be able to welcome performers back to our stage for the first time since March 2020 and although entry numbers were slightly down on previous years, it still represented an encouraging response given the negative impact of COVID as well as the retirement of some teachers in the local area and it was felt that this could be built upon in the coming years.

Representing Mid Ulster Council, Mr Sean McGuigan, officially opened the Festival on the morning of Monday 27 February and was able to welcome a large number of parents, friends and young performers. Opening speeches were made by Miss Vi Leckey for Music Week and Mrs Erika Hill for Speech and Drama Week. In these speeches, we paid tribute to the late Miss Pearl Dowd, Honorary President, and spoke of her sterling contribution to our Festival over many years. We also expressed our regret at the passing of Mr Ronnie Forbes and Mr John Little, two very dedicated committee members who were sorely missed.

Music week took place in Drumglass Parish Centre, St Anne's Church and was adjudicated by Mr Richard Yarr MBE, who made a welcome return to Dungannon. As Senior Producer of Arts and Music at the BBC and having been awarded an MBE in 2022 for services to music in Northern Ireland, Mr Yarr was able to provide professional, concise and encouraging feedback to the young musicians. In his adjudication he gave invaluable advice and guidance which was very well received by teachers, parents and performers alike. Mr Yarr was a pleasure to work with and advised that he thoroughly enjoyed his time in Dungannon. The accompanists,

Mrs Marilyn Nesbitt and Mr Orly Watson performed well and, as always, were very much appreciated.

Speech week commenced on Monday 06 March in Dungannon Presbyterian Church Halls, with our two adjudicators, Mr Arthur Webb and Mrs Patricia Irvine, making a welcome return to our Festival. Both adjudicators are members of the British and International Federation of Festivals and highly qualified and experienced in Speech and Drama. Mr Webb and Mrs Irvine were well placed to provide professional feedback and give expert guidance and teaching points to the young performers and help them to bring their performances to the next level. They were both delighted to return to Dungannon and very much enjoyed their time with us.

We would wish to record our thanks to Drumglass Parish and the Presbyterian Church for the hire of their halls, provision of refreshments and assistance in setting up. We would also wish to thank Dungannon Primary School for the use of their portable stage, the Probus Club for manning the doors and, last but not least, our own committee members for their invaluable help and support throughout.

Special Awards Music:

Most Promising Performer – Jamie Creaney

Most Promising Young Singer – Eve Boyle

Most Promising Pianist – Actin Au

London College of Music Examination Cup for the Most Memorable Performance in the Graded Piano Classes – Catherine McLaughlin

Special Awards Speech:

Most Promising Performer 12 years or over – Katie Haughian

Most Promising Performer 11 years or under – Joel Somerville

Competitor showing Most Promise in “Speech from a Play” – Cala McCrory

Most Versatile Competitor 12 years or over – Aoife McCormick