

## Carlow Local Authorities Arts Office - An Opera For Carlow

Press Release – April 23 2010 – For Immediate Release

Carlow Local Authorities announce one of the largest ever public art music commissions in Ireland and the first opera ever to be commissioned by an Irish local authority – a project devised by Carlow Local Authorities Public Art Working Group.

An Opera For Carlow will be a large-scale multi-media choral project with a performance company of 150 made up of a wide cross section of participants from all walks of life.

Opera is often seen as an elite artform only populated by singers with formidable reputations and diva like personalities. This opera has a different philosophy entirely. It will harness the broadest possible bandwidth of human experience and present it in a unique collective artistic endeavour.

This is an opera like none before it. Written by Belfast composer Brian Irvine and Welsh writer Peter Morgan Barnes, this work will also involve film from Belfast filmmaker John McIllduff who will direct the production. The opera will be reflective of County Carlow and will take themes and issues raised by the public of Carlow as the starting point for its dramatic structure.

The opera will be performed by a specially assembled choir of participants some of whom will be existing singers, while others will be completely new to music and to performance.

Singers of all backgrounds are encouraged to take part in the large community choir that will rehearse on a weekly basis from September 2010 to May 2011 under the guidance of leading Irish conductor Fergus Sheil. Public auditions are scheduled for June 26<sup>th</sup> in Carlow and June 27<sup>th</sup> in Tullow and Bagenalstown

An innovative partnership with County Carlow VEC will provide a tailor-made training course for participants new to music performance. Learners from throughout the different VEC areas of operation will come together for technical and musical training over the course of a full academic year.

Carlow's new opera will be performed in May 2011 in the new GB Shaw Theatre, Carlow. The performance company will also involve Aspiro Choir (formerly the Carlow Young Artists Choir). The full performance company will be partnered by the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra.

In addition to singers, the project also requires volunteer support for technical staff, stage management, set construction, costume making, wigs and make up technicians, administration, marketing, publicity and web development.

The opera's progress will be tracked by a 7-part documentary for RTÉ Lyric FM, broadcast monthly on In Tempo with Paul Herriot. The radio programmes as well as full opera broadcast will be made by Athena Media supported and part funded by the BAI Sound and Vision broadcast funding scheme. The project will also be covered locally by KCLR96fm Radio.

To register your interest in taking part in the opera, please contact: Carlow Local Authorities Arts Office on 059 9170301 or email [ascully@carlowcoco.ie](mailto:ascully@carlowcoco.ie)

Ends.

For further press information or project photographs please contact: Sinead Dowling, Arts Officer, Carlow Local Authorities on 059 917 0301 or 086 820 0247  
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