Press Release
February 28, 2019

Launch of Séamus Ennis Centenary Celebrations

Year-long programme of events in Fingal Libraries marks the birth of Séamus Ennis 100 years ago.

Fingal Libraries is delighted to partner with the Séamus Ennis Arts Centre based in the Naul for a year of Centenary Celebrations to mark the birth of Séamus Ennis 100 years ago.

The Séamus Ennis Centenary Celebrations were launched on Friday 22nd February in The Atrium, Fingal County Hall in Swords, by piper Ronan Browne, along with special guests. The evening featured a performance from talented pipers on Séamus Ennis’ pipes and the reminiscences of people who knew him, including Ivor Browne.

Born 100 years ago, Séamus Ennis transformed the lives of those lucky enough to have known him. A world-class musician, singer, raconteur, mimic and linguist, he
was also renowned as a folklore collector for the Irish Folklore Commission. In a society rapidly becoming culturally indifferent, where the collection of surviving folklore was of paramount importance, the 23-year-old Séamus embarked on his first field trip for the Folklore Commission with little more than pen, paper, tin-whistle and bicycle. The songs, music and lore he collected now form part of the National Folklore Collection held in UCD. He continued to collect (and broadcast) songs and music from Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales and Cornwall, firstly for the Folklore Commission (1942-47), then Raidió Éireann (1947-51), the BBC (1951-58) and finally intermittently as a presenter on the newly-founded Teilifís Éireann. Séamus continued to perform in public up to his death in 1982.

Betty Boardman, County Librarian, commented: “This is a wonderful opportunity for Fingal Libraries to work with the Séamus Ennis Arts Centre, to help tell the story of this remarkable musician who left a lasting legacy of music, song and folklore for the nation”.

A series of concerts and presentations in honour of Séamus, curated by Ronan Browne, will take place in Fingal Library branches throughout the year and at the Fingal Festival of History in Swords Castle this October. The next event in the series is Music and Madness – Ronan Browne in Conversation with Ivor Browne, which takes place in Blanchardstown Library on Friday April 26th at 2 pm.

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