

After the Light



PHOTOS: AOIFE HERRIOTT

Canadian visitor **Beverley Thorpe** gives an account of her first *After the Light* parade...

After the Light. What was that eventful night all about, I ask myself? I had no expectation as I donned my white mask and black cloak. I felt like a Death Eater from the *Harry Potter* films – I felt I could scare small children by just slowly turning toward their upturned faces and silently outstaring them.

In reality it was them boldly reaching up and banging me on the nose shouting 'Who are ye?' as they ran next to us, pretending they were not scared at all.

Were we meant to be terrifying spectres or colourful characters? Were we meant to be part of an age-old tradition or a new ritual that banished the spectres of past sad histories and looked anew to the dawning of a new enlightenment?

Or was it just for the craic



itself? Whatever the intent we were all there: children young and old, adults and artists from all the local schools.

We were a strange costumed procession that circled twice around Connemara West and along the road following the drummers who led our rag tag bunch of masked ghosts, death ships, spiders, and jelly fish.

We were there to carry the sacred light to the Keeper of the Light, resplendent in his

white cloak, deer antlers and his two mesmerising electrified eyes – eyes I had seen before in the Inagh Valley as car headlights swept by sheep's eyes along the side of the road under a black starry sky. Magic repeating itself.

As the fire sculptures grew brighter around the Keeper of the Light and the multicoloured smoke swirled to the sound of Ravel's *Bolero*, a great happiness swept through us all. The laser lit balloons went up.



the sculptures burned even brighter and the families all milled around until it was time for us all – my scary mask included – to troop off for hot tea and juices.

I still have no idea what I was a part of that night but I felt I was an impressive character on a movie set that would have given Hogwarts a run for its money.

As for the mystical wonderful creative energy of *Sea Week* – long may it continue!

REVIEW

Kylemore Choral Concert

IT was a beautiful sunny Saturday afternoon as we made our way to the new Church at Kylemore Abbey and it seemed only right that we were looking forward to a concert of choral music and solo pieces.

The first thing to be said is that this is the ideal venue for such an event and it adds immeasurably to the spectrum of activities that fall under the umbrella of *Sea Week*.

If one of the consistent priorities of *Sea Week*, and other such weeks, is to afford a platform for young and emerging local talent, then this fits the bill exactly.

So then, a fine venue and an array of talent on offer – what could go wrong?

Nothing did. Everything was just right! It was a very fine musical presentation.

Under the guidance and baton of Sr. Karol, her newly formed all female choir gave a lovely rendering of a number of spiritual songs. Their harmonies, the tone balances and the pitch of their voices seemed to float in unison into the air to create an ethereal atmosphere.

Without diminishing this rich listening experience we could catch the play of light and shadow on the nearby surrounding mountain side through the top windows of the Church, and this gave a lovely audio visual dimension to the choral melodies and harmonies.

It is clear that this choir are being coaxed

and encouraged into a very high order of choral singing by Sr. Karol and both she and the choir are to be congratulated on their achievement.

May we have the opportunity to hear them again? I can only hope so.

We were then treated to a series of solo singers and instrumentalists.

Rebecca Mullen from Renvyle sang two popular songs – very well indeed – and she was followed by Rachel Halpin from Westport on recorder.

Rachel was later joined by her mother, Aedin, who is also her teacher, and their playing together was delightful.

Annabella Lydon from Moyard sang a few opera classics and demonstrated what a real emerging vocal talent she is, and no doubt we will be hearing a lot more from her in the future.

The cello solo from Melanie Higgins was ideally suited to the occasion and matters became lively when Plunkett O'Toole played the flute and proved that his recent high placing at Fleadh Cheol na hEireann was richly deserved.

This concert was savoured and appreciated by a good listening audience who enjoyed the benefits of the wonderful acoustics of the church.

This added immeasurably to the quality of the occasion for both singers, players and listeners alike and lets hope we can look forward to more concerts like this one in the future.

Donal Rogers

REVIEW

Eddi Reader

SCOTTISH singer Eddi Reader took to the stage on October 27 in the company of Alan Kelly (piano accordion) and Steph Geremia (vocals, flute and whistle) of the Alan Kelly Gang, Ian Carr (guitar) and Jim Higgins (bodhrán and snare drum).

Arrangements were imaginative, with sets that comprised pieces not commonly heard together, and transitions between pieces of different tempos and origins were



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faultless. All the musicians were extremely comfortable with each other, and provided the audience with a very tight, balanced performance.

In between sets Eddi Reader performed a selection of contemporary and traditional ballads. These included *I Hung my Harp upon the Willow* and the traditional Scottish ballad, *My Love is like a Red Red Rose*.

This concert was enjoyed by all and it is to be hoped that these extremely talented and personable musicians can be enticed back to Connemara again!

RM and SH