



# Galway Sister City Presentation

Sister Cities Committee, 2017



Galway Bay



Milwaukee



# Milwaukee Irish Fest History

- Irish Festivals, Inc. has been planning and coordinating Milwaukee Irish Fest since 1981
- Mission of Milwaukee Irish Fest:
  - To preserve, promote and celebrate all aspects of Irish, Irish American and Celtic cultures, and to instill in current and future generations an appreciation of their heritage
- 16 stages of music and entertainment, a cultural village, and travel booths
- Over 3,000 Volunteers from Milwaukee using their skills and time to put on the festival.



- Rebranded in 2015 to better reflect the mission and vision of Irish Festivals, Inc.
- Supporting year round cultural knowledge and economic activity from the CelticMKE Center on Wauwatosa Ave.
- Irish Fest School of Music offers musical instrument lessons twice per week during the Fall, Winter and Spring.
  - Local instructors as well as guest instructors from around the world.
- Irish Fest Summer School offers courses in language, music, and arts during the summer.
- CelticMKE books concerts with performers coming locally from Milwaukee all the way to groups from Ireland.
- Celtic Boutique (annually in November) offers artisans a chance to sell their goods

# 20 years with Galway

- Milwaukee and Galway entered into a Sister City agreement in 1993, formalizing the agreement in 1997.
- Over the last 20 years, Irish Fest (now under CelticMKE) has brought in hundreds of tourists or performers from Ireland to Milwaukee
- We Banjo 3 has performed multiple times at Irish Fest and year-round at the CelticMKE Center as a part of Culture Ireland.



- Their album “String Theory” debuted at Number 1 on Billboard’s World Music chart
- Their album “Live in Galway” peaked at Number 3 on the Bluegrass chart

# Galway VIPs in Milwaukee

- 2016: Sean Kyne, TD, Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs & Natural Resources
- 2016: Mayor Noel Larkin
- 2016: Brendan McGrath, Galway City Manager





# Galway Delegates in 2017

A large delegation from Galway traveled to Milwaukee in August to participate in Irish Fest and celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the Milwaukee-Galway Sister City relationship. The individuals responsible for the partnership were recognized at the Opening Ceremonies.



The Galway side of the partnership was started by Keith Finnegan, Clem Walsh, and Gerry Rabbitt.

All three are involved in various aspects of radio and tourism in Galway, and a part of “Spirit of Galway” - a group that promotes partnerships based around culture and travel.

L-R: Billy Lawless, Senator representing the Diaspora; Jim Shannon, MP; Ciarán Cannon, TD; Pearce Flannery, Mayor of Galway; Tom Barrett, Mayor of Milwaukee; Michael Murphy, Milwaukee Alderman; Bob Donovan, Milwaukee Alderman; Dan Devine, Mayor of West Allis.







A Sister City reception was held on Friday, August 18<sup>th</sup> at the Performing Arts Center. Mayor Tom Barrett welcomed the delegation to Milwaukee, joined by Aldermen Michael Murphy and Bob Donovan. Mayor Pearce Flannery spoke of the importance of the twinning with Milwaukee.







*In recognition of **Twenty Years** of  
cultural exchange through the  
Sister City Partnership between*

**Spirit of Galway and Irish Festivals, Inc.  
Galway, Ireland and Milwaukee, Wisconsin,  
United States of America**

**1997 - 2017**

*May the sound of happy music, and the lift of  
Irish laughter, fill your heart with gladness,  
that stays forever after*



# Touring the Ward Irish Music Archives



The delegation toured the collections of the WIMA. Established in 1992, the Ward Irish Music Archives houses one of the largest public collection of Irish music in America. The collection ranges from the early 19th century to modern singers and bands including Bing Crosby and U2.

The archives consists of more than 50,000 pieces, including Irish recordings; paper ephemera such as postcards, sheet music and song books; instruments; photos; concert memorabilia; rare 78s, 45s and LPs; and even music recorded on wax cylinders!





Minister Cannon  
joined the music!



As an accomplished musician, Minister Cannon joined fellow Galway musicians We Banjo 3 on stage during Irish Fest. He also proved that our piano really does need tuning during his tour of the WIMA



# Lectures

- The Galway delegation participated in a Hedge School lecture during the festival, educating a crowd of over 100 attendees. Their panel was called “Understanding Brexit”, and they talked about the changes that will come with the decision.



# International City of Culture



Galway has been selected to be the European Capitol of Culture in 2020.

Plans have begun to recognize that distinction in Milwaukee in advance of the recognition, starting with talks about a **Galway 2020** Showcase in conjunction with Milwaukee Irish Fest at the 2019 Festival