
Bray Arts Journal

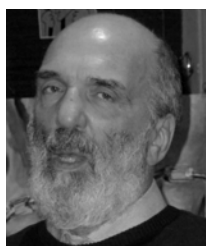
Issue 4

December 2011

Volume 1



Christmas Message from Cearbhall O'Meadhra, Chairman of Bray Arts



On behalf of the committee and myself, I wish all our friends and associates a warm and happy Christmas and the strength to endure the coming year. We will continue to provide the best entertainment each month to help lighten the load and relax the minds of all that we can reach.



Bray Arts Gala Variety Show

Bray Arts comes to the Mermaid for Christmas.

On the Night of Sunday the 18th of December, at Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray Arts will present its Gala Performance, commencing at 8:00 pm.

A wonderful array of acts will be introduced by **The Racker Donnelly**, the Irish Folk Poet, as Master of Ceremonies. His verses and songs, mostly comic, are about anything that comes to his fertile mind and whatever you're having yourself.



Wyvern Lingo



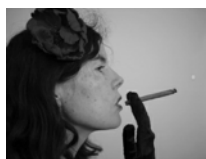
Three young Bray women who compose, play instruments, and sing. They were a support for Juliet Turner in the Mermaid. A very talented group who are becoming well known. A real treat in store.

The Old Codgers Theatre Company

Featuring Frank O'Keeffe and Justin Aylmer in "The Presidency". Two old codgers putting the world to rights. Maybe there is a vacancy in the árus for one of them in the future!



Rose Lawless



A comedienne with a poetic grace and wit, she invokes the raw spirit of PARISIAN FIRE. In her dynamic solo show, she re-interprets the Spirit of Cabaret, for our time, with a unique and powerful vision.

Reuben the Entertainer

One comedian plays dozens of characters simultaneously without props, costumes or WORDS. This unique comedy act, based on body language and voice intonation, has been seen on The Late Late Show, in his one-man show in Vicar Street and in many international theatres.



Blind Yakety

This very popular nine-piece band brings a unique sound. has a distinctive style in experimental folk, straddling the outer limits of noise rock, jazz, classical and middle eastern soul. Their energetic live performances always leave the audience in a daze, begging mercilessly for more.



The whole production will be directed by Derek Pullen, award-winning theatrical entrepreneur.

This is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the peak of entertainment in a magnificent setting just before Christmas. We urge all supporters of Bray Arts to come along to this important fundraising event. We want a full house so bring all your friends for the experience of a lifetime. Tickets are available at the Mermaid Theatre priced €16 and €14 (concession).



Front Cover:
The Adoration of the Shepherds
by El Greco

El Greco (1541 – 1614) painter, sculptor and architect of the Spanish Renaissance, was born on Crete, which was at that time part of the Republic of Venice, and the centre of Post-Byzantine art. He spent the early part of his career in Venice and Rome before moving to Toledo, Spain, in 1577, where he lived and worked until his death.

El Greco's dramatic and expressionistic style was met with puzzlement by his contemporaries but found appreciation in the 20th century. El Greco is regarded as a precursor of both Expressionism and Cubism, while his personality and works were a source of inspiration for poets and writers such as Rainer Maria Rilke and Nikos Kazantzakis. El Greco has been characterized by modern scholars as an artist so individual that he belongs to no conventional school. He is best known for tortuously elongated figures and often fantastic or phantasmagorical pigmentation, marrying Byzantine traditions with those of Western painting.

The Adoration of the Shepherds demonstrates El Greco's mastery of composition that conveys movement, passion and emotion. He very deliberately stepped outside the traditional and conventional style of his period. There is an unmistakable move towards what would be referred to as impressionism almost three centuries later.

Uhuru

by Eileen Mayer

I love someone
who looks at the moon
and thinks it's noisy
when no-one lives inside,

who waves at watching stars
and laughs helplessly
at carrot noses on a plate,
cursing the vicar on a Sunday.
Thinking clouds
are giant meringues
on their way to a movable feast,
watching trees test
out their tickles ready
for the rabbit hop and drop.
Knowing a smile
should last a lifetime,
flinching at
a jagged goodbye.
Known to dance with
the rhythm of a ring tone
out there, all alone.
My unusual child,
arms outstretched,
tripping over the wind
singing, *Since I stay
I am also away.*

(Uhuru... is Swahili for Freedom or Star.)

Sleeping With You On Gracepark Road

By Oliver Marshal

I slept with you on Gracepark Road.
It was my first year at university.
Not that much happened. Irish
Catholicism was like a watchful mother

Standing over us. So we didn't go the
Whole way. But I remember your pale
Beautiful face, the red hair that drew me.
I woke up to the beginning of what felt

Like being an adult. It was like landing
At an airport in a new city.
One summer, in a field, I remember
Your green slacks. I kissed your mouth

And face, thinking I loved you deeply.
I think your mouth came out in blisters.
But that may have been
Someone else.

Then there was the long
Push-off, as if I was a crumb
On your dress, and you were
Trying to get rid of me.

You went with someone else.
Years later, the pain broke out
Inside me, like the tip of an arrow
That had never been quite removed.

Chasing you only made it worse.
It was like dancing with you at night,
To find you left me at the last dance,
To dance in someone else's arms.

Stars of Winter Light

I was woken by a dream recently. My father is very ill at the moment and I wrote this after I woke at 3.00 am. I felt my Grandmother's presence and the night was so bright for November.

Máire Morrissey-Cummins

The stars are so close-by,
I can almost touch them.
They shimmer in an ebony sky,
scattered above the tree tops.
The heavens, icy still,
this bright winter night.

I hear my father calling,
his life drawing to a close.
I whisper a prayer,
my breath wafts the air
opening a path to paradise,
time to set him free.

His mother is waiting,
I saw her in a dream.
She was in her garden,
the sun lit up the hall.
She held a pink carnation
to welcome him home.

He will live on eternal
in the brilliance of night.
Held forever in my heart,
I grant him his surrender
to a place beyond the trees.
The stars are so close-by.

"I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round, as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys.

Charles Dickens

Skellig

by Shane Harrison

On the western edge of Europe, two stone sentinels point to the



Skellig Islands

heavens. These are the Skellig Islands, Skellig Michael and Small Skellig, always home to a multitude of sea birds and in times past the refuge of visionary monks and, more recently, lighthouse keepers. The Skelligs perch eight miles off the coast of the Iveragh peninsula in Kerry. A holy land in the early middle ages, they now draw pilgrimages from scientists and tourists. But it is no certain place of pilgrimage. The rocks are perilous of themselves, but the sailing from Portmagee is dependent on benign weather conditions.

This year has not been benign, underlining the fascinating isolation of the rocks but frustrating the would-be visitor. This is my second attempt at the Skelligs but, again, it was not to be. The last time mist was the enemy, this time it was the simple savagery of the sea.

The Skellig Experience on Valencia Island was as close as I could get. The heritage centre gives a comprehensive account of the various aspects of the island, well illustrated with models, photographs and a video presentation. I learned of the arrival of monks in the sixth century, the purity of their faith and the skill of their constructions. They built three stairways to the pinnacle, some 750 feet above the surface, over two thousand steps in the original stairway to heaven. Their unique beehive huts still function today as do the wells they built to collect rainwater. Indigenous plants, fish and seabirds were their bounty, augmented by some gardening and local trade. Above all, the joy of their faith sustained them.

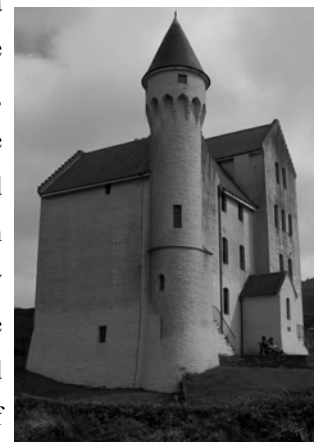
Despite their isolation, they suffered several attacks from marauding Vikings. Some holy men were killed, others enslaved. Still, the community survived. In fact, in the eleventh century a medieval stone church was built here, but the standardisation of

the faith meant this robust style of worship was on the wane. Sea storms contributed to the demise of the community and the island returned to the birds for seven hundred years.

In the 1820s people returned. Two lighthouses were built on Skellig Michael and the island remained colonised by intrepid men, and women, for a century and a half. The exhibition recreates a portion of the lighthouse interior, setting the scene at midnight, 21st April, 1987, the eve of the lighthouse crew's final departure. The modern lighthouse is now automatic, with only the occasional visit for maintenance purposes.

I am reluctant to leave the centre, as if by staying there longer will magically transport me to those elusive rocks. It is close enough, as good as it gets for now. Meanwhile, I must make my own adventure in this spectacular location.

The drive through the Ballaghbeama Pass is hair-raising enough, the view at the foot of Carrauntoohil, Ireland's only thousand meter peak, breathtaking. It's late September and the ocean crashes on an emptying shore. Derrynane gathers its cloak of crumpled forest, still whispers the story of the Liberator, Daniel O'Connell. The only layman with a church named for him, it's in the regional capital of Cahirciveen, massive but uncrowned by the spire you would expect. Also unexpected is the gothic castle of the 19th century barracks, with its homely museum it stands on a perch above the once spectacular, lamented railway. Of an evening I can sing of the 'Boys of Bar na Sraíde', put my anchor down in the Anchor Bar, with ex pats and locals, from London, Scotland and Zanzibar.



Museum

(19th Century Barracks)

I will leave it now for another year, but the vision in my mind is indelible, two jagged islands like stone hands clasped in prayer. One day I hope to go there and see what those wild monks saw, the poetry of God written in stone on a sheet of boiling sea and sky. They were drawn to the endless ocean, beyond that last horizon where God weaves sea and sky into the cloth of heaven.

*Information on Shane's short story collections at
www.fortyfootpress.com*

My Mind to Me a Kingdom

My mind to me a kingdom is;
Such perfect joy therein I find
as far exceeds all earthly bliss
That God or Nature hath assigned ;
Though much I want that most would have,
Yet still my mind forbids to crave.

Content I live ; this is my stay :
I seek no more than may suffice.
I press to bear no haughty sway ;
Look, what I lack my mind supplies.
Lo ! thus I triumph like a king,

Content with that my mind doth bring.
I see how plentie surfeits oft,
And hasty climbers soonest fall;
I see that such as sit aloft
Mishap doth threaten most of all.
These get with toil and keep with fear ;
Such cares my mind could never bear.

Some have too much, yet still they crave ;
I little have, yet seek no more.
They are but poor, though much they have ;
And I am rich with little store.
They poor, I rich ; they beg, I give ;
They lack, I lend ; they pine, I live.

I wish but what I have at will;
I wander not to seek for more ;
I like the plain, I climb no hill;
In greatest storms I sit on shore,
And- laugh at them that toil in vain
To get what must be lost again.

I kiss not where I wish to kill;
I feign not love where most I hate ;
I break no sleep to win my will;
I wait not at the mighty's gate.
I scorn no poor, I fear no rich ;
I feel no want, nor have too much.

My wealth is health and perfect ease ;
My conscience clear my chief defence ;
I never speak by bribes to please,
Nor by desert to give offence.
Thus do I live, thus will I die ;
Would all did so as well as I !

Sir Edward Dyer

Review of Bray Arts Night on Monday November 7, 2011

This occasion marked the culmination of the two-week Phantom Galleries dedicated to “*Freedom of Spirit in the Spirit of Freedom*” in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Amnesty International. The larger than usual audience experienced a rich artistic evening featuring painting, sculpture, photography, poetry and music in a unique encounter between human rights activists and living artists.

The highly acclaimed artwork of Aoife Hester, Darren Nesbitt, Gibb, Gizelbertus, Gwen Jeffares, Kerensa D'Arcy Barr, Lorraine Whelan and Roisin O' Meadhra on show in the vacant windows in Bray Main Street was projected on screen throughout the evening. Artist Brigid O'Brien opened with a return to nature and the peace and quiet of the Enniskerry allotments as samples of her forthcoming show at Signal Arts.

Rosy Wilson, Shed Poet, gave a brief description of the role of Amnesty International in its fight for the right to freedom. She skilfully Illustrated the impact of confinement on human nature in mental hospitals where “Crazy people made sane people crazy” or industrial schools where boys suffered in a prison-like confinement in big stone buildings. **Maureen Perkins**, Shed Poet, was unable to attend so Rosy read her poem on the devastation of losing a child. **Marguerite Colgan**, Shed Poet, followed with the deprivation and



Rosy Wilson

imprisonment of prisoners of conscience and the impact of capital punishment.

Bernie Kenny, Shed Poet, reflected on the futility of war and the fragility of peace “walking on eggshells”. She likened the persistence of the **u n w a n t e d**, downtrodden poor to a thistle”etched tall against the garden shed it throws a shadow grotesque” after the attempt to cut it down. On a lighter note, Bernie read about the youthful Jogger “racing onward and upward dismissing the elderly “; urging him to “Jog on young man, go places! Youth hold all the aces”.

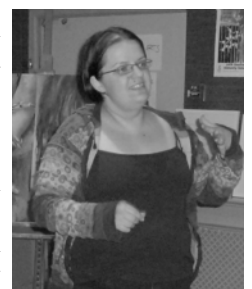


Bernie Kenny



Marguerite Colgan

Magdee changed the mood with an exposition of her jewellery making and personalised wedding cake toppers. She lets the wire-based pieces find their own shapes and Passed pieces around for people to experience for themselves. Her main product line is in cake toppers. These are tiny replicas of the bride and groom together with whatever mementos they specify as an accurate souvenir of the great day.



Magdee

Returning to the conflicting human values of peace and war, **Judy Russell**, Shed Poet, brought up the abuse of human freedom in Iraq, Guantanamo Bay and the disaster of 911. With the allegory of “the Jasmine in flower” as the symbol of peaceful co-existence whose “petals tremble on the eve of war” she pointed up the vulnerability of people. Protestors like Mary Kelly who “took an axe; hit the bomber with a whack” find themselves arrested by societies in the name of peace. People protesting that “It should not be happening here” forget that it should not be happening elsewhere either.



Judy Russell

Carol Boland, Shed Poet, provided a rhythmic accompaniment to her words with a Cuban drum of African origin. She turned to a Subjective exploration of stereotypes as seen in “The dinner party” where a woman on her own is an odd number who, in darker days, would have been “burned in hazel woods”. The orphanage for baby elephants symbolised the innocence of children and the destruction of their freedom that results from conflict and war. Lightening the mood, she closed with thoughts of how we trap ourselves with distracting pleasures of the “hum of the dancing fridge” that invites one to “join the party with TV and DVD”



After the interval, the Chairman of Bray Arts introduced the



Roisin O'Meadhra

closing ceremony for the Phantom Galleries and paid tribute to **Roisin O'Meadhra's** design of the windows and the high quality of the works on show. He reported that the event achieved great success and a positive public response. Rosy Wilson then *Carol Boland* introduced the North Wicklow Branch of Amnesty and presented a cheque to the Executive Director of Amnesty International in Ireland, **Colm O'Gorman**.

Welcoming the invitation to participate with the Shed Poets in the Bray Arts performance evening, Colm paid tribute to the richness of the poetry presented and its reflections on the happiness of life and the trauma of the loss of Human freedom. He applauded the high quality of the artwork displayed in the two shop fronts and welcomed their interpretation of the Phantom theme that Amnesty International shares in its struggle for human freedom at home and abroad. The chairman then invited Colm to accept the gift of a painting by **Darren Nesbitt** which the artist wished to donate to Amnesty International on behalf of Bray Arts.



Darren Nesbitt & Colm O'Gorman

Returning to the last item on the performance programme, **Zan** announced that Eric Noone was indisposed and could not make an appearance.



Zan

After an interval, **Niall Cloak** took the floor and presented a hilarious comic routine that engaged the whole audience and totally relieved the loss of the guest artist. **Alistair Davis** then volunteered to sing



Niall Cloak

a number of classical songs including “Non piu andrai” and finishing with “Mustang Sally”. The audience was stunned to silence and enthralled by his beautiful singing. His incredible accuracy and rich voice control made the whole experience very special. The evening closed in ebullient mood and a sense that the



Alistair Davis

great effort had been worthwhile in the quality of the phantom Galleries, the richness of the poetic tribute to Amnesty International and the spontaneous talent of the members of Bray Arts in rising to the occasion when needed.

Cearbhall E. O'Meadhra

Micro Fiction

Freedom Is A Breath Away

by Mari Maxwell

She waits. She knows she should behave. And really she'd like to but the wind is restless. The dried up foliage skulks across the pathways. She does so love a walk in the brisk outdoors. The wave to neighbours, shoo to dog and the fresh air upon her face. Soon the nights will be longer.

It will envelop house and self. Blanket the sounds of fist against flesh.

She'd rather savour that breeze one more time. Just once more before he traps wrist to bedpost.

“Who's my little pet?” he'll ask. “Fatty.”

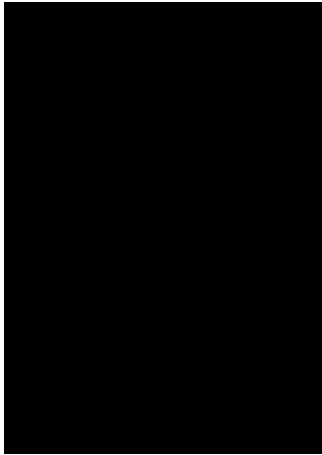
She will comply. Not lurch for the day old toast beyond her grasp. Be grateful she's got her health. Her mind. Her hearing. It is that which picks up the peeling door chimes, the banging at the window, the splinter of wood. Feels the gentle scoop of arms gathering her up in time to witness the last summer rose skitter to the ground. “The wind is picking up,” she says, hair fluttering in the draught.

Mari Maxwell's work has appeared in Boyne Berries, First Cut, Revival, online and print publications in Ireland and the USA.

Meitheal at Signal Arts2011

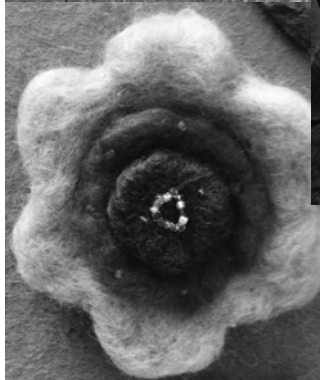
From Tuesday 6th to Saturday 24th December 2011

Following on from our very successful fundraiser – pop up tea rooms and crafts sale – we are hoping that this years annual Meitheal will be bigger and better than any that has come before.



Meitheal refers to the traditional practice and celebration of community endeavour and in that vein we will be showing art work, ceramics and crafts from the staff of Signal Arts Centre. All work will be supplied by staff and ex-staff.

We propose to have even more elaborate crafts such as felt work, personalised embroidery,



metalwork, ceramics, jewellery and some fashion items. Due to the success of our tearooms we have encouraged a few bakers to supply goodies, which will be on

sale for the duration of the show, with tea, coffee and hot chocolate in abundant supply.

The artwork will be reasonably priced and an excellent choice of Christmas present for even the most difficult of recipients.

SUBMISSIONS FOR 2013

Signal Arts Centre is now accepting submissions for exhibitions to be held in 2013.

Closing date for submissions Friday 30th March 2012, 5pm

When submitting your application please include the following:

- A minimum of six images (clearly marked with your name and title of picture), photographs or images on CD (all images should be suitable for print reproduction (300dpi) jpeg format, not exceeding 5mb in size)
- A submission proposal – covering what you would hope to exhibit if you are successful. Include proposed sizes of work where possible.
- Artists CV (art related only)
- Artist Statement (for PR purposes)
- Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you require your photos etc. returned to you

Please feel free to call into the gallery at any time to assess size, dimensions etc. We usually hold openings every two weeks on a Thursday or Friday evening that you would be more than welcome to attend, no invitation necessary, just ring and ask any of our staff if we have an opening that week.

There is an exhibition fee of €250 when selected

**Contact: Signal Arts Centre
1A Albert Avenue
Bray
Co. Wicklow**

**Phone: 01 - 2762039
email: signalartscentre@eircom.net**

A Christmas Wish at Mermaid Theatre

Boil in the Bag Productions.

Sometimes wishes really can come true! A Christmas Wish is a heart warming tale of three children and their talkative cat! They all go on a magical journey on Christmas eve, filled with adventure, laughter and wonderment, where together, they discover the real meaning of Christmas! This hysterical performance combines music, song, dance and mime, and explores the twilight world of our imagination.

To Book for this event please contact the box office directly 01 2724030



A Christmas Carol (PG) at Mermaid

Film - 17 Dec @ 2pm

Robert Zemeckis directs this animated version of the Yuletide classic A Christmas Story. The story centers on Ebenezer Scrooge (Jim Carrey), a penny-pinching miser who cares nothing for the people around him, least of all his hopelessly downtrodden employee Bob Cratchit (Gary Oldman) and infectiously optimistic nephew, Fred (Colin Firth). On Christmas Eve, after a frightening encounter with the ghost of his deceased business partner, Jacob Marley, Scrooge is visited by three spirits -- the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Yet to Come -- who take him on an eye-opening journey to expose the truths he is reluctant to face.

Christmas Shopping

Ceramics, Woodcraft, Jewellery, Metalwork, Millenery. Why not shop locally for your Christmas presents. A new retail store with a large collection of craft work has been set up in the old Heritage Centre beside the Royal Hotel. This enterprise under the aegis of Absolutely Wicklow has been created to showcase some of the high end handmade crafts that are exclusively made in County Wicklow. See website

www.absolutelywicklow.ie

Dental Care Ltd (Mr. Joseph Coleman Adv. Orth.)
Prosthetics(Dentures), Orthontics,
And Snoring Appliances.

40 Main Street., Bray, Co. Wicklow
Tel: 2762883/ 086 826 0511



Submission Guidelines

Editor : Dermot McCabe : editor@brayarts.net

Creative Writing Editor : Anne Fitzgerald :
annefitz3@gmail.com

Email submissions to the above or post typed submissions to :

Editor Bray Arts Journal

'Casino'

Killarney Rd.

Bray

Co. Wicklow

Copyright remains with the contributors and the views expressed are those of the contributors and not the editorial board.

Bray Arts Gala Variety Show

Mermaid Theatre

18th Dec 8:00

Admission: €16 / €14 concession

For full programme see Page 2

Mermaid Booking Office : (01) 2724030

Bray Arts is grateful for the ongoing support of Bray Town Council and Heather House Hotel.
Printed by Absolute Graphics, Bray www.agraphics.ie

If undelivered please return to:
Editor, Bray Arts Journal
'Casino'
Killarney Road
Bray
Co. Wicklow