

Celebrating Culture in Cork since 1995

The Ireland Funds Support
Literary and Musical Greatness
Through the
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Campaign.

Pekka
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B

etween June and August, the bookshops, tearooms and restaurants of Bantry, including the storied Bantry House, are filled with audiences who come to enjoy world-renowned musicians playing classical and traditional music. In addition, critically-acclaimed authors from around the world make their way to this corner of West Cork to offer readings, seminars and workshops to all ages in celebration of all that

is literary. The West Cork Chamber Music Festival in particular has grown from a small gathering to being regarded as one of the leading festivals of its kind in Europe.

Francis Humphrys, Chief Executive of West Cork Music, has a deep passion for the music and literary gifts that Bantry offers the thousands of festival attendees each year. He is a founder of West Cork Music and each year devotedly authors hundreds of pages of detailed guides that have come to be cherished by Festival visitors. But his passion does not stop at Mozart, Haydn or Beethoven. One of the aspects he is most excited about is the proven economic impact that the festivals have had for this part of Ireland. "Especially in rural areas of Ireland, you find communities struggling," says Humphrys. "We are proud to say that here in Cork, we see the difference that West Cork Music is making.

The Festivals have not only created jobs, but continue to bring investment and much-needed income to this area of Ireland."

In 2012, an economic impact survey administered by University College Cork showed that for every €200,000 invested, the economic return to the community was between five and six times that amount. With thousands of visitors attending the festivals and as many as 30% of the visitors to the Chamber Music Festival coming from overseas, the hotels and restaurants are full during the summer season thanks to West Cork Music. This success has also been shown in attendance that continues to increase each year.

West Cork Music also organizes year-round programs in Cork schools. Tuning Up is their initiative which brings children access to top musicians and broadens their exposure to all styles of music with an interactive and engaging approach. West Cork Music has brought Tuning Up to 50 schools.

Over the years, The Ireland Funds have assisted West Cork Music through both Donor Advised gifts—including the Mary Daly Fund—and The Ireland Funds Grant Round. In 2012 a grant was made to the Masters of Tradition Festival and most recently, funding was provided for the West Cork Literary Festival. The work of West Cork Music is proof that long-term investment in cultural initiatives can bring long-term benefits to local communities.

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