

## Features

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What's going on around Limerick

### Thursday

THE Belltable plays host to Decadent Theatre Company's production of *The Quare Land* this Thursday.

Written by John McManus and directed by Rod Goodall, *The Quare Land* is set in a house in Cavan where "Hugh Pugh is about to take his first bath in four years". Disrupted by a NAMA developer, the piece is a parable of the Celtic Tiger and examines motivation, greed and money in a humourless, caustic and incisive way.

*The Quare Land* runs in the Belltable this Thursday at 8pm and tickets are still available. See [www.belltable.ie](http://www.belltable.ie) for more details.

LOCAL rocker Mark O'Connor is the special guest at the Limerick SongWriters session in Foley's Bar this Thursday.

The popular local open mic sessions invite all aspiring songwriters to attend, with all types of music and singers welcome.

The monthly sessions feature a regular special guest, and this Thursday it is Limerick musician, producer, writer and performer Mark O'Connor, renowned for playing with local acts including Veneer, Moonboot, Tooth and Golf, as well as his own solo material.

The SongWriters Sessions take place this Thursday in Foley's Bar, Sarsfield Street, from 9pm and admission is free.

### Friday

MUSIC Network presents Love: Live Music 2011, Ireland's national music day, in association with RTE Lyric FM.

A celebration of all forms of music in Ireland promoted through free nationwide music events, one of two flagship events taking place as part of the day will run in the Belltable, as Lyric's John Kelly hosts his radio show live from the theatre.

But there are a number of other events also taking place, with a tradition Irish music workshop in the Granary, a CoMA concert in the Hunt Museum and a singalong in the Milk Market among the events happening in Limerick.

See [www.lovelivemusic.ie](http://www.lovelivemusic.ie) for more.

### Saturday

A COMBINED choir of over 120 singers, featuring the Limerick Choral Union and Mary Immaculate College Choral Society, will perform Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in the University Concert Hall this Friday.

Joining the choir will be the Limerick Choral Union Orchestra and four guest soloists, all under the baton of Gareth Cox and the directorship of Malcolm Green.

# Spirit of Hartnett lives on

*"It's the Courtenay boys straight out of Newcastle West. It's a past pupil who stood the test of time. Never afraid to spit a rhyme As a poet you know it, Michael Hartnett is the best."*

HOW he would have chuckled. Oh yes, how Michael Hartnett would have chuckled to know that long, long years after he sat at a desk in the Courtenay Boys NS, pupils from that school would be "rapping" in his memory.

And as sixth-class pupil Jack Downey explains: "Some of the words from his poems are going to be in the rap."

Homage indeed from a bunch of boys whose noses crinkle at the idea of poetry. But rap? That's different. That's awesome.

"And it's fun," grins Cian Cremin.

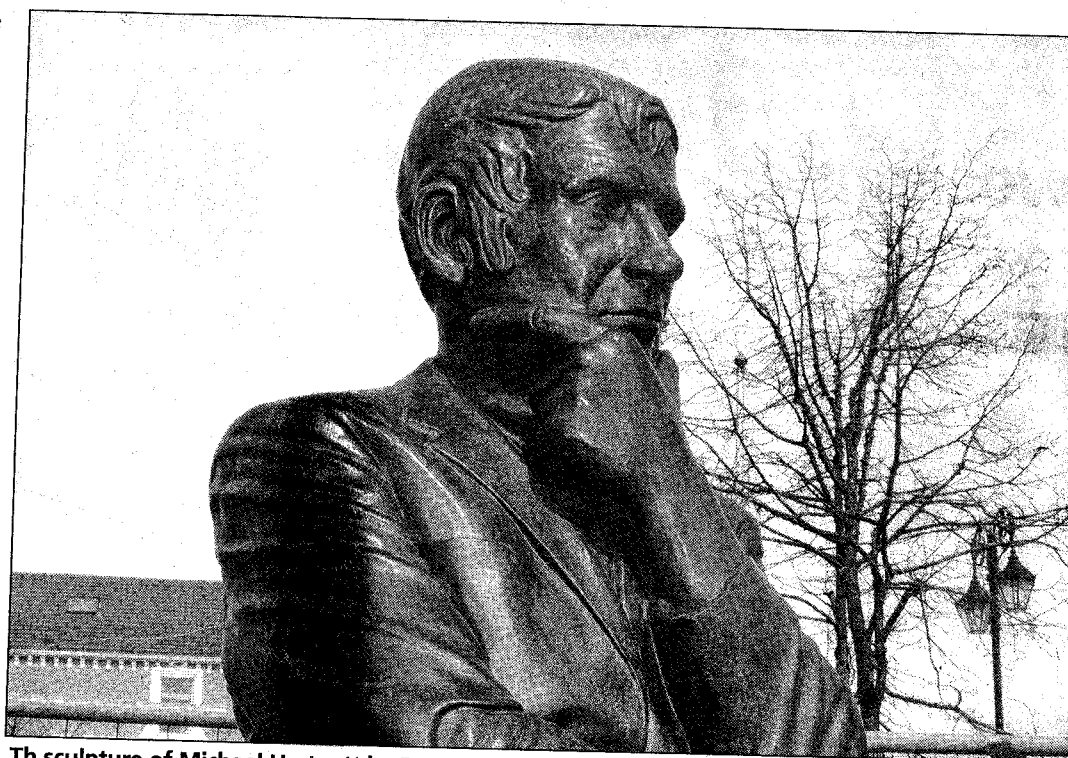
For the past several weeks, a group of 40 or so boys from fourth, fifth and sixth class have been working with rap-duo Size2Shoes, aka Moley and Eoin O'Suilleabhain on their "Hartnett UnRapped".

"They make poetry a lot more exciting," says sixth-class teacher Shane Kelly. "The boys absolutely love it."

"It is a brilliant experience for the boys to be working with two fabulous musicians," says fifth-class teacher Diarmuid O'Connor.

The workshops with Size2Shoes have involved composition, beatbox as well as singing in harmony and the boys have learned a lot about Michael Hartnett along the way, school principal Rene Culhane explains. "It is a very strong link with the past," she says of the undertaking. "And they identify with people who went before them in the school."

The boys will premiere their "rap" at the official unveiling of the Michael Hartnett sculpture on Saturday week, April 16, during Eigse Michael Hartnett. The ceremony will be performed by Hartnett's great friend and fellow-poet Paul Durcan and Niall Hartnett, son of the poet, will also speak.



Th sculpture of Michael Hartnett by Rory Breslin was commissioned by Newcastle West Community Council with the support of West Limerick Resources

"Spirit and imagination are at the heart of this year's Eigse Michael Hartnett," says Joan MacKernan, County Limerick arts officer and director of the literary and arts festival.

But music runs like a river of sound through it also. Aside from "Hartnett UnRapped", there are also performances by Brian Kennedy, by Juliet Turner and by the Limerick Co Youth Choir.

A particular feature of this year's Eigse, Joan continues, will be the chance to hear some of Hartnett's poems put to music.

"Sibelius in Silence is one of Hartnett's most haunting poems and the County Limerick Youth Choir, under director Maire Keary Scanlon, will perform a powerful interpretation of this. We are also delighted that another Hartnett poem, *Poem for Lara*, 10, has been put to music by Limerick's Bill Whelan (of Riverdance fame) and this will also be performed by the choir," Joan MacKernan explains, adding that the *Lara* of the poem, Hartnett's daughter, is

expected to be in attendance.

Coincidentally, yet another of Hartnett's poems – *Gne na Gaeltachta* – was set to music, also by Bill Whelan, and performed by the National Chamber Choir for President Barack Obama on St Patrick's Day.

This year's Michael Hartnett Poetry Award winner is Peter Sirr and he will be officially presented with the award at the opening ceremony at 8pm on Thursday, April 14.

"It's very important to me, because Michael Hartnett is a poet whose work I value highly and to receive an award created in his memory is a pretty singular honour," Mr Sirr said earlier this year. "When I was a student in Trinity College I invited Michael to come and read at Eigse na Tríonóide, and I'll never forget the impression he made, the energy, the fierce determination, the absolute confidence in himself as a poet and in the importance of poetry. He was the first real poet I had ever met and I followed his

poetry and translations closely in the years that followed, and met him again many times. For me he was a model of a certain unyielding dedication."

David Whyte, the internationally-renowned poet and motivational speaker will deliver this year's Michael Hartnett Memorial Lecture on the theme "Walking with Ireland through the dark wood". Mr Whyte will also give a reading of his poetry, along with Irish poet Theo Dorgan on Saturday, April 16 when they will be joined by singer Brian Kennedy.

Co Tyrone singer Juliet Turner will perform in partnership with poet Jo Slade at an event on Friday night.

Columnist and writer Fintan O'Toole and broadcaster and children's rights campaigner Fergus Finlay will also attend Eigse.

Many of the events of Eigse are free, Joan MacKernan stresses, and others are very reasonably priced.

## Eigse Events

■ Fergus Finlay will be the keynote speaker at the official opening of Eigse Michael Hartnett which takes place at 8pm on Thursday, April 8. This event is free. Following this, Peter Sirr will accept the Michael Hartnett Poetry Award 2011 for his book, *The Thing Is* and will give a reading.

■ Fintan O'Toole, journalist and writer, will launch *Poems of Faith and Doubt* by Moyvane poet, Gabriel Fitzmaurice. Cartlidges Bar, Maiden St, 10pm. Free.

■ Day Dream Believers is an unusual blend of integrated dance, beatbox, rap, poetry and song involving residents of Rathfredagh Cheshire Home, students of Scoil Mhuire agus Ide and rap-duo Size2Shoes in what is described as a journey of much hilarity and high jinks. Courtenay Lodge Hotel, Friday, April 15 at 12noon. Free.

■ Carry on Casablanca, performed by the Carnation Theatre Company will perform at St Ita's Hospital at 3pm.

■ Poet Jo Slade and singer/songwriter Juliet Turner team up to perform at the Courtenay Lodge, Hotel at 8pm. €10 charge.

■ The Co Limerick Youth Choir will perform two of Hartnett's poems set to music in the County Council Area Office at 10pm. €7 charge.

■ The Michael Hartnett Memorial Lecture will be delivered by poet and internationally acclaimed motivational speaker David Whyte on Saturday morning, April 16 at 11pm. He has chosen as his theme: "Walking with Ireland through the Dark Wood." €10 charge.

■ Hartnett Unveiled will see the unveiling by poet Paul Durcan of the sculpture of Michael Hartnett in the Square. The fun begins at 2pm at the County Area Office with a procession along Maiden Street and "Hartnett UnRapped".

■ The Hartnett Viva Voce begins at 3pm. There is a prize of €300 for the best original poem and €100 for best rendition of a Hartnett poem. Cartlidges Bar, Maiden St. Free.

■ Brian Kennedy joins poet Theo Dorgan and David Whyte on Saturday, April 16 at 8pm. €10 charge.

■ Hartnett scholar James Lawlor will visit various schools speaking on the importance of place in the poet's work and Peter Sirr will visit and read at selected schools.

■ For full details, pick up a programme at Newcastle West library or log onto [www.eigsemichaelhartnett.ie](http://www.eigsemichaelhartnett.ie).