

spring in the step

patrick's day is the day when the world is irish and the irish are drinking, but there's more to it than that. limerick co-ordination office bring springfest to the city. | leg looks at the line up!



springfest | city centre | march 17

Limerick Co-ordination Office has announced details of this year's St. Patrick's Spring Fest, entitled 'One City, A World of People'. The festival will welcome the participation of 60 groups and over 1,600 individuals, counting people from 105 non-EU nationalities who are currently living in Limerick City.

Aside from the traditional St. Patrick's Day parade to take place on O'Connell Street, Springfest will feature the Limerick Rugby Fun Relay, the 'Carnival at the Castle' and will have two Grand Marshalls in the familiar shapes of Celia Holman Lee and Jim Williams.

The parade will feature a number of marching bands, including the Roosevelt High School Rough Rider band, travelling 7,253 kilometres to participate, with more Wyoming's Worland High School band arriving just before them, having travelled 7,222 kilometres to be here.

The carnival in the castle will take place after the parade, and will feature Irish-African group De Jimbe along with face painters and kids activities, with the Rugby Relay taking place before the parade.

THE TIMETABLE FOR THE DAY IS AS FOLLOWS

11am - 11.15am : Rugby Fun Relay

What to look out for: One big impressive fella leading off the race (that would be Jim Williams, former Captain of Munster Rugby) Then, lots of little fellas sprinting like crazy down O'Connell Street using a rugby ball as a baton in a relay race. Starts at the O'Connell Monument, finishes at the Review Stand in front of Roches Store.

11.30am - 12.30am : St Patrick's Day Parade

What to look out for: The two must-see highlights will be the giant animated pig and a pianist playing Chopin on a grand piano on the back of a flat bed truck. Look out for stilt walkers, belly-dancers, people in costumes from around the world, go-karts, street performers, flags, flags and more flags. Think of this year's theme - One City, A World of People - and you'll start to get the picture.

12.30am - 15.30am : Carnival at the Castle

What to look out for: Irish-African group Di Jembe will be doing a gig at the Castle. The band, which has played in festivals in New York, Japan, France, Germany and Cuba, creates a fusion of traditional Irish, Caribbean and West African music. The Carnival at the Castle should prove to be an attraction in its own right, with storytellers, face-painters and Di Jembe - come along and dance or just chill out.

For further information on Springfest 2005, contact festival director, Jessica Colleran, on 061-400225 or at jessica@mail2go.com

mono band | the warehouse | march 13

solo berry

Limerick's most famous musical export may be on a break, but Noel Hogan has been more than active | leg listens in mono

You will hear something familiar about Noel Hogan's Mono Band, the trademark guitars and melodies bear the unmistakable imprint of his years with The Cranberries, Limerick's and one of the world's most successful bands. But his new music sounds fresh and different, too, from the subtle electronic touches and inventive programming to the wide and varied range of singers who give voice to his songs on Monoband's album.

The band came about by accident. The project's origins lie in discussions the Cranberries began two years ago to plan their next album. "I had an idea to take the songs in a different direction," Noel recalls. "For a long while I'd been listening to people like Beck and Moby and wondering how to incorporate the electronic side of things into my writing. We'd done the guitar-drums line-up over five albums and it was time to introduce something else." The first step came when Noel cut two tracks with the programmer Matt Vaughan. "They sounded very different from anything The Cranberries had done before and I was really excited about the potential direction in which the band could go," he says.

Yet in the end, The Cranberries decided to put the next album on hold. After more than 12 years of touring and promotion which had seen them clock up album sales in excess of 38 million and play to hundreds of thousands around the globe, the band decided it was time for a break. The official line is that they are on a two year sabbatical. But Noel had new songs that simply wouldn't wait around. "So I continued down the road I'd started with Matt and the Mono Band album is the result. It wasn't really planned as a solo album at all. But the break allowed me to work full-time on it and everything happened in a very organic way."

"I'd grown very comfortable working with the band and initially I found being solo nerve-wracking. There was nowhere to hide and nobody there to reassure me when the doubts crept in," he confesses. "But at the same time it was exciting, too. There was something very liberating about being in my own little studio rather than a formal band environment."

Several of the new songs were written in conventional style on guitar. But Noel also began to write drum and rhythm tracks, building up songs in the studio. "That was a completely new way of working for me and I embraced it. I was experimenting in a way that opened up all kinds of new possibilities," he says.

The Mono Band's debut album will be released in early 2005 but first up are live dates. "I've had so much fun making the record but I'm now putting together a bunch of people to tour it," Noel reveals. Among those playing with him will be bassist and younger brother Mike Hogan, so that half of the Cranberries at least will be reunited on stage. "Messing about in the studio's great, but what I've always got the biggest buzz from is playing live."

monoband play upstairs at dolan's on sunday, march 13. contact the warehouse on 061-314483 or log on to www.dolanspub.com for ticket enquiries or more details.