

Press Release

The Leaves Festival of Writing & Music 2024

6th -9th November 2024

The Leaves Festival 2024 brings the best of Irish writing and music to Co Laois this November. The Leaves Festival is a Laois Arts Office and Laois Library Services initiative and is curated by Marina Rafter.

Festival highlight event is an evening of music and poetry with Paul Muldoon, Caoimhín Ó'Raghallaigh and Brendan Begley.

Our festival highlight is guaranteed to be an unforgettable evening of poetry and music featuring Pulitzer and T.S. Eliot prize winning poet Paul Muldoon, master fiddle player Caoimhín Ó'Raghallaigh and the legendary accordionist Brendan Begley. Highly regarded as one of the most significant poets of our time Paul Muldoon makes his first appearance on a Laois stage. Experience the magic as Muldoon's evocative verses intertwine with the rich and traditional sounds of Ó'Raghallaigh's fiddle and Begley's accordion. This unique collaboration of three extraordinary talents in St Peter's Church of Ireland promises to transport you through an intricate tapestry of words and music.

Reading and Song with novelist Niall Williams and Stockton's Wing Mike Hanrahan.

Readings from Niall's new novel, *The Time of the Child* will be interspersed with the soulful vocals and intricate guitar playing of Mike Hanrahan. *The Time of the Child* is set in the fictional town of Faha, Co Clare. It's approaching the Christmas of 1962, and a baby is found in the town after the annual cattle fair. It's left in the care of GP Dr Robert Troy who lives with his daughter Ronnie. As the winter passes, father and daughter's lives, the understanding of their family, and their role in their community are changed forever.

Set in the majestic setting of Abbeyleix's Preston House this is guaranteed to be an evening to remember.

Conversation and insight with two inspirational women Barbara Scully & Eleanor Mills.

Former Sunday Times editor Eleanor Mills and renowned Irish broadcaster Barbara Scully come together for a unique event that promises to be highly enlightening and entertaining. With a career spanning over two decades at the Sunday Times, Eleanor has interviewed some of the world's most influential figures and now leads the empowering community, NOON, which supports women in midlife. Famous for coining the phrase "Queenager", Eleanor's mission is to change the narrative around older women in our culture to something more positive and fit for purpose. Broadcaster and columnist Barbara Scully, celebrated for her candid and humorous take on navigating the complexities of modern womanhood will join Eleanor in conversation as they discuss how women can and should embrace midlife as a time of transformation and opportunity.

Rick O'Shea in conversation with novelists Caoilinn Hughes and Cathy Sweeney

This highly engaging event will feature a conversation between, broadcaster and founder of Ireland's largest book club, Rick O'Shea and two very compelling, fresh voices in Irish Literature, Caoilinn Hughes, and Cathy Sweeney. The evening's conversation will focus on the recent cultural shift that has seen women writers dominate the world of contemporary fiction.

Leaves Festival will also host:

- **Award winning novelist Donal Ryan Donal in conversation with Claire O'Brien, presenter of Encore. Midland 103's Arts and Culture show.**
- **Workshops with children's authors Eve McDonnell and Sinead O'Hart**
- **A spoken word poetry event with spoken word poet with Dagogo Hart and special guests.**
- **Making Mythology with children's author**
- **A film screening of *Widow Clicquot* which tells the true story of Barbe-Nicole Ponsardin, who marries into the Clicquot winemaking family.**
- **The Launch of 'Words Unlaoised' the Laois Writers Group Anthology**
- **A masterclass with renowned poet and novelist Mary O'Donnell**

***Youth* by Kevin Curran (Leaves Writer in Residence) is the Leaves Festival One County One Book for Laois. Kevin will be reading in various locations around the county including Portlaoise Prison, Mountmellick Library and Dunamaise Arts Centre**

Please join us 6th – 9th November 2024.

For tickets or to check out the full programme of events see www.leavesfestival.ie or www.dunamaise.ie . Tickets can also be booked directly from Dunamaise Box Office, Tel: 057 8663355.

Leaves Festival 2024 is brought to you by Laois Arts Office, Laois County Library Service, Dunamaise Arts Centre and is funded and supported by Laois County Council, the Arts Council, Laois Tourism, Laois Chamber Alliance and Creative Ireland Laois.

**For all media enquiries. Please contact Cormac Kinsella on 086 8199874/
cormac.kinsella@gmail.com**