

WELCOME

It is both a great pleasure and honour to welcome you to The Liberties Festival. This community gathering has been happening in the beating heart of city since the early 1970s. Since assuming the role of Director in early May, I have become acquainted with this special tapestry of history, institutions and, most importantly, people or characters who make and define The Liberties as such a vibrant hub.



My ambition this year is to try and cement stalwart events such as the Blue Rinse Ball and the legendary Gardaí vs Traders match as well as bringing back some cherished ones such as Bingo in St Catherine's Church. We launch the festival with a special 15th anniversary screening of The Liberties, a documentary which created a series of intimate vignettes of characters in the area. We will reflect with some of the participants on the night and remember those no longer with us.

Another specific focus is on enriching the lives of teenagers in the areas too who often find themselves at a loose end over the summer months. With thanks to the likes of Fighting Words and Foróige, there will be workshops for them to undertake as well as a pop-up library in the gorgeous surrounds of St Catherine's Park. Photography is a great passion of mine and I am delighted to have Pablo Marin Garcia photograph the stallholders of the Liberty Market. Also, we welcome Eimear Lynch to create a special 'Girls Night' pop-up for local teenagers where they will be styled and have their portraits taken.

Another highlight will be Liberties X - Community Got Talent, a show at the Jesus statue on Reginald and Gray Street. Whether it is samba dancers, emerging youth bands, local Ukrainian singing groups or the St James Street Brass Band - they will all be there to entertain you.

I hope you find something to enjoy and welcome feedback as I aim to evolve and develop this great community staple in the coming years. Many thanks to the team here at SICCCA/Robert Emmet, all our partners and supporters and everyone who has met for a chat and assisted with input on this programme. This is the beginning.

- **Michael McDermott, Festival Director**

