

22 January 2019

Dublin City Honours Music Legend Luke Kelly

One of the most famous sons of Dublin, music legend and activist Luke Kelly will be honoured by his beloved Dublin City, friends and family in celebration of his life, with the unveiling of two individual Luke Kelly statues, one on either side of the city, on 30th January 2019 to mark the 35th anniversary of his death. Organised by Dublin City Council, the official unveiling of both sculptures will be undertaken by President of Ireland Michael D Higgins, in the presence of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Nial Ring.

From the streets of north Dublin to stages all over the world, Luke Kelly built his career on his ability to connect with the Irish people through story and song. Luke's impact on the Dublin and Irish music scene revival of the 60s/70s is immense and inspiring a new generation since his death, his voice is as relevant today as it was 50 years ago.

Speaking on behalf of organisers Dublin City Council, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Nial Ring said "Luke's presence is still felt on the streets of his birthplace Sheriff St and the pubs and haunts of the literati circles around Grafton St/Baggot St where he frequented. This is a unique celebration for a very unique man. To this day he inspires Irish and international artists through his words, songs and activism. It is only fitting that we celebrate the man, the music and his immeasurable impact on the Irish music scene and wider Irish culture. "

The first sculpture was created by one of Ireland's most prominent figurative sculptors, John Coll, who has also created the city's Patrick Kavanagh and Brendan Behan statues. Due to be unveiled at 2pm on 30th January 2019, it features a life-size bronze, seated Luke Kelly singing and playing banjo and was donated to the city by the late Gerry Hunt and will be located on South King St. The second sculpture, a marble portrait head of Luke Kelly, created by award winning portrait artist Vera Klute, will be unveiled at 3.30pm on Royal Canal, Guild St/Sheriff St. Vera's piece, which was commissioned by Dublin City Council, is over two metres high and was unanimously selected as the winner of a limited competition established by the then Lord Mayor, Christy Burke in 2014.

Family friend and author of Luke Kelly A Memoir, Des Geraghty said "The voice of Luke Kelly rang out loud and clear in the early 1960s to lift up the heart and soul of a dismal Dublin city. He captured the latent spirit of the Irish people and gave new hope and inspiration to the poor and oppressed in many a distant land. Like Joe Hill, the great American Union organiser and folk singer, his voice and passion for justice and liberty will never die."

Plans are also in advanced stages within Dublin City Council to host a concert in Liberty Hall Dublin on the evening of 30th January 2019 to celebrate the unveiling of the two statues and to celebrate Luke's contribution to the Dublin and Irish music scene. Leagues O'Toole from Aiken Promotions has been appointed Director of the concert that will feature Ireland's best loved singers and musicians whose lives have been influenced by the life and music of Kelly and the Dubliners. The full line up and ticket sales website are due to be announced closer to the time. Enquiries should be directed to artsoffice@dublincity.ie.

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Vera Klute

Vera Klute is a multi-disciplinary artist. She was born in Germany but is based in Dublin since 2001. Exhibited widely in Ireland and abroad, Kute's work is part of both private and public collections. In 2017, she has had her first major survey show at the RHA. Most notably her work has been included in the Portrait Collection of the National Gallery of Ireland as well as the National Self-portrait Collection. In 2015 she won the Hennessy Portrait Prize at the National Gallery and she was awarded the Hennessy Craig Scholarship at the RHA Annual Exhibition. She has received several Arts Council Bursary Awards (2008, 2009, 2011, 2013), the K+M Evans Award (RHA Annual, 2013) and the Emerging Visual Artist Award (Wexford Arts Centre, 2009). In 2018, the artist was elected Associate Member of the RHA. Currently, she is engaged by the Children's Hospital Group to develop a group of large sculptures for entrance hall of the new Children's Hospital. The artist is represented by the Molesworth Gallery, Dublin.

John Coll

After initially studying marine biology, Coll turned to sculpture full time 33 years ago. Since then, he has developed into one of Ireland's leading figurative sculptors. He has exhibited abroad in Europe and the USA. His work can be seen in the collections of NUI Galway, The National Library of Ireland, Dublin, Stanford University, California and Boston College. Nationally, his public works include a 4.5 meter monument to Countess Markievicz in Rathcormac, Co. Sligo and a life size monument to the racehorse "Bobbyjo" in Mountbellew, Co. Galway. In Dublin, he has completed a monument to the writers Patrick Kavanagh on the Grand Canal, Baggot Street and to Brendan Behan on the Royal Canal, Dorset Street. Most recently, he completed a sculpture of Dr. Michael Smurfit for the campus of University College Dublin and the official bronze portrait of President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins.