



Birr Festival of Music

30 APRIL –
4 MAY 2026

Birr
County Offaly

Featuring **The Trench Award**



birrfestivalofmusic.com



FRIDAY
1 MAY



The Merry Band @ RHSI Bellefield

*Bellefield House & Gardens, Shinrone | 1pm | €20**

This outdoor concert brings together four of Ireland's most acclaimed musicians for a sparkling, high-energy performance full of colour and charm; **Deirdre O'Leary** (clarinet), **Susan Doyle** (flute), **Dermot Dunne** (accordion) and **Malachy Robinson** (double bass).

Optional garden tours with Head Gardener Paul Smith at 11:30am & 2:30pm



The Niall Kinsella Orchestra The Golden Age of Jazz & Swing

*St Brendan's R.C. Church, Wilmer Rd. | 8pm | €25**

Join **The Niall Kinsella Orchestra** and Irish jazz diva **Stella Bass** for *The Golden Age of Jazz & Swing* - a concert featuring the best of American Songbook standards by Gershwin, Rodgers & Hart, Cole Porter, and instrumentals of Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller, Count Basie and others.

Schools & Community Outreach

The Big Sing! Led by dynamic choral director **Mary Amond O'Brien**, children from primary schools across County Offaly come together for a joyful day of singing workshops.

SATURDAY
2 MAY



Sing It! Community Choir The Road Home

St Brendan's Church of Ireland, Oxmantown Mall
3pm | €12 / Children FREE

Sing It! Community Choir is joined by special guests **Pascal Kennedy** (baritone) and **Sarah Luttrell** (mezzo-soprano). A heartfelt programme of traditional airs, folk songs and works by Ralph Vaughan Williams and Herbert Hughes.

Celine Byrne Songs of Inspiration & Hope

*Birr Theatre & Arts Centre | 8pm | €25**

Join world-renowned Irish soprano **Celine Byrne** for a stirring night of favourites from stage and screen. Accompanied by **David Munro** (piano), **Nicole Hudson** (violin) and **Siobhán Lynch** (cello). Featuring classics like *What a Wonderful World*, *You'll Never Walk Alone* and *Climb Every Mountain*.



Pop-up Performances

In various locations around Birr including:
Birr Young Voices | Sunday 12 noon | Memory Lane
See Festival Social Media for times & locations.

Music for Life *International duo Bruno Caproni (baritone) and Julian Evans (piano) visit local second-level schools, offering senior music students a glimpse into professional life through engaging Q&A sessions.*

Memories in Music
Cherished melodies and timeless classics brought to clients, families and staff at Birr Community Nursing Unit.

SUNDAY
3 MAY

Opera at Birr Castle

*Birr Castle Lawn | 3pm | €20**

TU Dublin Conservatoire presents Henry Purcell's *Dido & Aeneas*. Performed by 30 of the Conservatoire's vocal and music students under the direction of **Dr Sandra Oman-Farren**. Set against the stunning backdrop of Birr Castle, this outdoor opera tells a tale of love and tragic destiny. Featuring Dido's haunting lament, *When I am laid in earth*.



The Trench Award Gala Concert

*Birr Theatre & Arts Centre | 7.30pm | €18/€16**

Six outstanding singers and instrumentalists, selected through a highly competitive application process, take to the stage for an evening that has become one of the highlights of the festivals. Recipients of The Trench Award, Birr Lions Club Bursary, Canto Al Serchio Prize, Connolly Award, Lumcloon Energy Award and the Tullamore Gramophone Society Bursary (new this year) will be decided by an esteemed panel of industry experts.

Accompanist | **Dearbhla Brosnan**



The Trench Award 2025

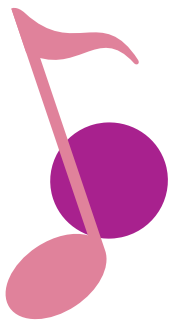
MONDAY
4 MAY



Masterclasses

Birr Theatre & Arts Centre
10.30am-1.00pm | Free

Observe The Trench Award finalists in vocal and piano masterclasses given by **Bruno Caproni** and **Julian Evans**. Open to all; music students and teachers are especially welcome.



Baroque Classics

@ Kinnitty Castle Hotel

For Festival Patrons & Sponsors | 3pm

In grateful acknowledgement of Birr Festival of Music Patrons, Sponsors and Friends, the stunning Kinnitty Castle Hotel plays host to a concert of Baroque arias and chamber music by Bach, Purcell and Handel.

Featuring **Katy Kelly** (soprano), **Niall Kinsella** (harpsichord), past Trench Award winners and guests.



BECOME A FESTIVAL PATRON

Exclusive entry to Baroque Classics
@ Kinnitty Castle Hotel and
The Trench Award Gala Concert.
More info birrfestivalofmusic.com



Birr Festival of Music

MAY
BANK HOLIDAY
WEEKEND 2026

Marking its 10th anniversary this year, Birr Festival of Music has grown into a vibrant annual celebration of classical music in County Offaly presenting a dynamic programme of concerts, masterclasses, street performances, and special events.

Committed to making classical music accessible to all, the Festival supports emerging artists in their training and development and fosters a strong choral tradition through Birr Young Voices for children and the Sing It! Community Choir for singers of all ages.

Birr Festival of Music is immensely grateful to The JVM Trench Will Trust for its continued and generous support. We are delighted to welcome Canbe as our Hospitality Partner and RHSI Bellefield and Kinnitty Castle Hotel as our new Venue Partners in 2026.

Niall Kinsella | Artistic Director

Conductor and pianist, Niall Kinsella has established himself as one of Ireland's most exciting, versatile and sought-after musicians. He has served as Artistic Curator of Birr Festival of Music since 2023 and undertook the role of Artistic Director in 2025.

Tickets: birrfestivalofmusic.com
Box Office: (057) 91 22911

**Booking fees will apply at time of purchase*

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