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# PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT Clár na gComórtas 2018



COMHALTAS

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# PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT Regeneration Programme 2018

Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann was founded in 1951 with the objective of keeping our unique cultural traditions in all forms alive and returning them to a prominent position in Irish life. Since its foundation, Comhaltas established strong roots within the community through a branch structure based, in many cases on the local parish. Today with 40,000 members; over 400 branches spread throughout the world and the movement providing services to over 3 million people annually, Comhaltas and the traditions are very much alive.

As we look to progress the success of our organisation into the future, we must continually analyse all aspects of our work, both past and present. Our RÉ NUA framework has become a platform for implementing this change and as an establishment we must embrace all change as a means for the betterment of our association. As part of An RÉ NUA we can have identified the need for a review of some aspects of Comhaltas Competition, in particular the PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT competitions.

In years gone by, PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT competitions were regarded as one of Comhaltas' greatest achievements with participants taking part from all over the country and overseas. The competitions were very competitive with many groups from overseas participating. These competitions have unfortunately seen a decline in support over the last number of years which has been a disappointment for many. The scope of this document is to set out a revised structure for both competitions and to take on board the suggestions that have been put forward by many on how we can improve both PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT. This document hopes to provide branches with an easy to follow structure on compiling a PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT programme and this is hoped with increase participation and restore these competitions to its status from many years ago.

The objective of PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT competitions is to provide activity, for as wide as possible a range of branch members, and to encourage initiative in the presentation of Irish Traditional Music, song, dance, Irish language, storytelling and recitation. The SCORAÍOCHT competition was particularly intended for those with a flair for inventive presentation and depends very much on the skill of a producer with knowledge of all principles of stage presentation.



Figure 1: 2017 PLÉARACHA Winners CCE Gorey Ballygarrett

# PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT

## *Overview of PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT*

The objective of PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT competitions is to provide activity, for as wide as possible a range of branch members, and to encourage initiative in the presentation of Irish Traditional Music, song, dance, Irish language, storytelling and recitation. The SCORAÍOCHT competition was particularly intended for those with a flair for inventive presentation and depends very much on the skill of a producer with knowledge of all principles of stage presentation.

If your branch is able to present 30 – 40mins of entertainment for a concert or related public event, then you are already has most of the ground work done for staging a PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT. Each branch around the country have many members that have individual skills and talents which can be incorporated into such a show. In addition, there are numerous benefits to a branch of participating on such competitions including:

- i. Fulfils several aims of Comhaltas
- ii. Promotes closer bonds between our members
- iii. Promotes our traditional heritage by presenting our music, song, dance and poetry
- iv. Involves many people performers and back-stage staff who would not otherwise find a place in a traditional competition
- v. PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT can be used as your showpiece – may be condensed or increased very easily to meet your requirements due to demand for tour show on various occasions
- vi. PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT shows form the basis of a stage presentation at a variety of functions
- vii. Ready-made show for the branch



Figure 2: 2017 PLÉARACHA Runner-Up Winners CCE Cleary Coyne



## 2018 Competition Dates and Qualification Procedure

- i. Provincial PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT competitions to be completed no later than Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2017. This will allow sufficient time for branches to finalise and submit branch membership. Location to be determined by each individual Provincial Councils.
- ii. All Ireland PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT Competitions will be held in Brú Ború on Saturday the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2018.
- iii. 1st and 2nd Place from each Province will go forward to compete at the All-Ireland Competitions, where all minimum specified standards are met.
- iv. No ties are permitted for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place.
- v. There are no recalls in either PLÉARACHA or SCORAÍOCHT competitions. A collective decision for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place will be made by the adjudicators.

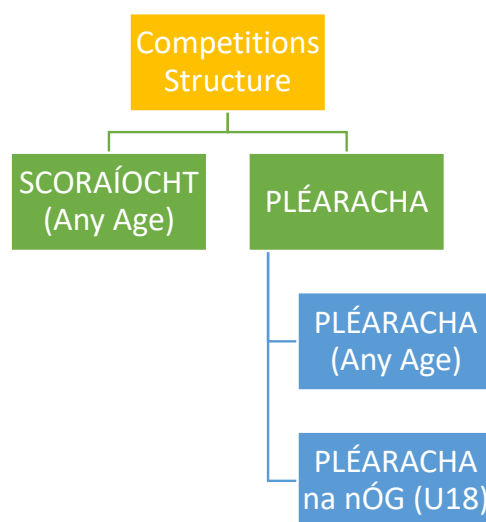
## Competition Procedures

### Entry Procedure

- i. Entries, in Gaeilge if possible shall be submitted to the CCÉ Provincial Secretary not later than five weeks prior to the first day of PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT Regional Competitions. Late entries shall not be accepted after the closing date.
- ii. Participants, confined to registered members of Comhaltas in PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT
- iii. All-Ireland Champions in PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT have the right of entry to the successive PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT All-Ireland Competition.
- iv. In both cases, a group may be drawn from a maximum of three branches within the same county
- v. Names and Membership number to be submitted on the entry forms.

### Age Groups

- i. PLÉARACHA competitions are divided into two categories:
  - a. PLÉARACHA na nÓG: this is for competitors under 18. Anyone whose 18<sup>th</sup> birthday or earlier occurs on the 1<sup>st</sup> January of that year.
  - b. PLÉARACHA: This competition is for any age however at least four or more members of this group must be over the age of 18.
- ii. The SCORAÍOCHT competition is open to any age.



### General Production Tips for both PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT

Engage the opinions of all group members prior to the selection of potential items for the show to:

- i. Ensure that all participants in the group are clearly visible
- ii. Ensure that quieter, softer instruments are positioned near the front of the stage where possible, as amplification is not provided in either PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT competitions.
- iii. Once the programme of events has been decided, a seating/standing plan should be devised ensuring that movement on stage is minimised. Where movement is necessary, ensure there are spaces between the seats to ensure there is minimal disruption to the flow of the performance.
- iv. Confirm that all instruments can be heard at all times throughout the performance.
- v. Try to make use of the platform that will be provided so as to increase to volume of the respective
- vi. General presentation guidelines should be adhered to:
  - a. Talking/Chatting on stage should cease on commencement of the programme
  - b. All members of each PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT should give their undivided attention to any solo performer.
  - c. All members should enjoy themselves while onstage and most importantly smile.
  - d. Mobile phones and other devices are not permitted on stage.



### Roles of the Organising PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT Committee

- i. It is the responsibility of the organising committee to provide a suitable venue for both PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT competitions
- ii. The organising committee will select a suitable Call Clerk to manage the general running of the PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT competitions. Their role includes but are not limited to:
  - a. Ensuring the competition runs as per the listed programme.
  - b. Ensuring that the times of both PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT competitions are strictly adhered to.
  - c. Ensures that no communication between adjudicators and individual groups are not permitted on the day of the competitions.
  - d. Ensures that no prompting or coaching of groups or competitors are permitted during the course of the competition.
- iii. Selects suitable adjudicators as per listed above in the various categories.
- iv. To return to return adjudicators comments in a timely manner
- v. Present cups and medals on the day of All- Ireland.



## PLÉARACHA Guidelines

### Main Objective

The basic principles of good stage presentation apply to both PLÉARACHA & PLÉARACHA na nÓG but the following, more detailed instructions will, it is hoped, prove assistance to all participants:

- i. PLÉARACHA & PLÉARACHA na nÓG do not have a central theme. It is important that they have a varied and imaginative programme to create and maintain audience interest.
- ii. They may have some identifiable setting, such as at a Fair, Kitchen, Crossroads, etc. but only portable or hand props should be used. Seating should be indicative of the subject.
- iii. Only plain standard lighting should be used and dress should be casual but colourful and tasteful as distinct from theatrical costuming.
- iv. Uniforms such as dancing costume, band outfits, should not be used.
- v. The time available should be apportioned between music (solos and groups), singing, dancing as well as storytelling, recitation, and items may be selected in accordance with the capabilities of the performers rather than in conformity with a basic theme
- vi. Attention should be paid to the grouping and movement of performers on stage.

### General Rules

The following rules apply to both PLÉARACHA & PLÉARACHA na nÓG competitions:

- i. Participating Groups will comprise of not less than 12 performers and a maximum of 45 per group. A group may be drawn from a maximum of three branches within the same county.
- ii. The duration of the programme for PLÉARACHA & PLÉARACHA na nÓG will be not less than 25 and not more than 30 minutes max. Penalties of one mark per minute or part thereof for groups who do not meet the lower 25-minute limit or exceed the 30-minute limit.
- iii. An Empty stage to be shown before any group takes to the stage. Once the curtain is closed the teams have a maximum of 40 minutes to set up the stage, perform their PLÉARACHA show and clear the stage after which the blank stage will be shown again. The production adjudicator will monitor this time from empty stage to empty stage and penalties will apply to those who exceed the 40 minute threshold.
- iv. Props limited to small, hand portable items that can be easily moved on and off the stage. These may include signposts, milk can, flags, emblem etc. which can all be easily transported on and off the stage.
- v. As per adjudication section above, a list of music pieces in the order to be played and a list of instruments shall be submitted by each PLÉARACHA & PLÉARACHA na nÓG Producer to the competition clerk prior to the performance.
- vi. Manager/Mentors/Teacher are not allowed to coach groups during their performances
- vii. Programme should try to co-relate music where possible i.e. music/song, music/dance etc.

### Presentation Method

- i. Groups to be encouraged to reflect and promote local music/songs/dances. This is to be factored into the adjudicators marking guidelines. This is to be included on the running order / schedule which is presented to the adjudicator.
- ii. Credit will be given for the inclusion of lesser known tunes, local ballads and songs in the Irish language, step dancing, figure dancing, traditional solo, dancing and sean nós dancing. Lilters and Whistler can be included.





- iii. A PLÉARACHA & PLÉARACHA na nÓG competition will be adjudicated on each of the following areas:
- a. Singing:
    - i. All singing shall be traditional in style. In rhythmic songs more than one voice may be used in the chorus.
    - ii. One song must be in Irish at a minimum.
    - iii. Harmony is permitted in lively songs only.
    - iv. Accompaniment permitted in lively songs only.
    - v. Traditional Sean Nos Style to be encouraged.
    - vi. The Singing Adjudicator will be asked to adjudicate the performance on the following suggested guidelines some of which include:
      - 1. Quality of Voice
      - 2. Song Choice
      - 3. Phrasing
      - 4. Tuning/Intonation
      - 5. Command of Traditional Style
      - 6. Ornamentation
      - 7. Diction
      - 8. Teamwork in the case of group songs
      - 9. Harmony in the case of group songs
  - b. Dancing:
    - i. Dancing should include some of the following in the performance:
      - 1. Sean nós
      - 2. Ceili
      - 3. Figure
      - 4. Set
      - 5. Sep dancing
      - 6. Two/Three/Four/Eight hand
    - ii. Old traditional step dancing to be encouraged
    - iii. The Dancing Adjudicator will be asked to adjudicate the performance on the following suggested guidelines some of which include:
      - 1. Arrangement
      - 2. Teamwork
      - 3. Quality
    - iv. Tips are not permitted except in the case of solo step dancing
  - c. Music:
    - i. All music selected shall be traditional in character and in conformity with the Clár na gComortas.
    - ii. Slow airs can be played by a solo performer or group.
    - iii. Liling and Whistling to be considered here.
    - iv. Attention should be given to the instrument arrangement and presentation of the music
    - v. Groups are permitted to use céilí drums and electronic piano however no other electronic instruments are permitted.
    - vi. Solos, duets, trios, group performances and combinations of each should be considered as part of the performance.



- vii. The Music Adjudicator will be asked to adjudicate the performance on the following suggested guidelines some of which include:
1. Tempo
  2. Rhythm
  3. Phrasing
  4. Tuning/Intonation
  5. Balance/Blend
  6. Style/ornamentation
  7. Arrangement
  8. Teamwork
  9. Choice of tunes
  10. Instrumentation
- viii. Tunes selected should include some of the following so as to provide as much variety as possible:
1. Air (Slow or lively)
  2. Reel
  3. Polka
  4. Hornpipe
  5. March
  6. Jig (Double, Single, Slip, Hop)
  7. Slide
  8. Set Dance
  9. Mazurka
  10. Planxty
  11. Fling
  12. Barn Dance
  13. Schottische
  14. Waltz
  15. Clan March
  16. Highlands
  17. Germans
- d. Storytelling/Recitation/Poetry/ Scéalaíocht
- i. Appropriate stories to be encouraged which are fitting with the nature of the competition

#### Adjudicators Marking of PLÉARACHA & PLÉARACHA na nÓG

Each Adjudicator selected to adjudicate either a PLÉARACHA & PLÉARACHA na nÓG competition must apportion their marks as follows:

Item	Percentage
Music	35
Singing / Scéalaíocht	25
Dancing	25
Production	15





## SCORAÍOCHT Guidelines

### Main Objective

The basic principles of good stage presentation apply to SCORAÍOCHT but the following, more detailed instructions will, it is hoped, prove assistance to all participants. There are two distinct methods of approach to presentation of a SCORAÍOCHT each with equal validity:

- i. The dramatic or script type approach in which the producer chooses his/her theme and writes, a detailed script which identifies each character in the cast whether performer or actor, and by means of the dialogue into which are suitable woven the various items of music, song, dance, story, recitation etc. – the theme is developed to its conclusion
- ii. The approach by which the chosen theme is developed through the medium of the music, songs and dance, stories, recitations etc. In this case the producer apportions his/her allotted time between singing, dancing and music, as distinct from time used to accompany the dancers and having selected the pieces appropriate to the theme and based on the capabilities of the performers, proceed to weld these into a continuous entertainment package with a minimum of dialogue
- iii. The set should be suitably dressed, in accordance with the dictates of the theme. Props should be carefully selected bearing in mind transport difficulties and they must be capable of being assembled in 10 min and removed in 5 mins
- iv. A simple lighting plan should be devised. Elaborate lighting plans can cause problems including delays in unfamiliar halls and should be avoided
- v. Special attention should be paid to grouping of artists on stage and where there is a large cast it may be necessary to use different levels to ensure that all performers are seen and heard. All movements should be natural and purposeful and masking should be avoided at all costs. The basic rules of action should be explained to all performers and they should be taught to pay complete attention to the happenings on stage at all times
- vi. Groups to be encouraged to reflect and promote local music/songs/dances. This is to be factored into the production adjudicators marking guidelines.
- vii. Theme to be developed for SCORAÍOCHT competitions by the producer. Sample themes can include:
  - a. Fleadh Seisiún
  - b. Threshing Day
  - c. Fair Day
  - d. St. Patrick's Day
  - e. St. Stephen's Day (Wren Boys)
  - f. Emigration
  - g. Rambling House
  - h. American Wake
  - i. Delayed flight
  - j. Boat trip
  - k. Local Radio Station



## General Rules

The following rules apply to SCORAÍOCHT competitions:

- i. Participating Groups will comprise of not less than 12 performers and a maximum of 45 per group. A group may be drawn from a maximum of three branches within the same county.
- ii. The duration of the programme for SCORAÍOCHT will be not less than 30 and not more than 35 minutes max. Penalties of one mark per minute or part thereof for groups who do not meet the lower 30 minute limit or exceed the 35 minute limit.
- iii. An Empty stage to be shown before any group takes to the stage. Once the curtain is closed the teams have a maximum of 50 minutes to set up the stage, perform their SCORAÍOCHT show and clear the stage after which the blank stage will be shown again. The production adjudicator will monitor this time from empty stage to empty stage and penalties will apply to those who exceed the 50 minute threshold.
- iv. Suitable clothing should be used where possible to make the performance and stage as bright and cheerful as possible. No Irish Dancing wigs are permitted.
- v. The set should be suitably dressed, in accordance with the dictates of the theme.
- vi. Props should be carefully selected bearing in mind transport difficulties and they must be capable of being assembled in 10 min and removed in 5 mins
- vii. As per adjudication section above, A list of music pieces in the order to be played and a list of instruments shall be submitted by each SCORAÍOCHT Producer to the competition clerk prior to the performance.

## Presentation Method

- iv. Groups to be encouraged to reflect and promote local music/songs/dances. This is to be factored into the adjudicators marking guidelines.
- v. Groups are permitted to use céilí drums and electronic piano however no other electronic instruments are permitted.
- vi. Credit will be given for the inclusion of lesser known tunes, local ballads and songs in the Irish language, step dancing, figure dancing, traditional solo, dancing and sean nós dancing.
- vii. A SCORAÍOCHT competition will be adjudicated on each of the following areas:
  - a. Singing:
    - i. All singing shall be traditional in style. In rhythmic songs more than one voice may be used in the chorus.
    - ii. One song must be in Irish at a minimum.
    - iii. Harmony is permitted in lively songs only.
    - iv. Accompaniment permitted in lively songs only.
    - v. Traditional Sean Nos Style to be encouraged.
    - vi. The Singing Adjudicator will be asked to adjudicate the performance on the following suggested guidelines some of which include:
      1. Quality of Voice
      2. Song Choice
      3. Phrasing
      4. Tuning/Intonation
      5. Command of Traditional Style
      6. Ornamentation
      7. Diction



8. Teamwork in the case of group songs
9. Harmony in the case of group fast songs

b. Dancing:

i. Dancing should include some of the following in the performance:

1. Sean nós
2. Ceili
3. Figure
4. Set
5. Step dancing
6. Two/Three/Four/Eight hand

ii. Old traditional step dancing to be encouraged

iii. The Dancing Adjudicator will be asked to adjudicate the performance on the following suggested guidelines some of which include:

1. Arrangement
2. Teamwork
3. Quality

iv. Tips are not permitted except in the case of solo step dancing

c. Music:

i. All music selected shall be traditional in character and in conformity with the Clár na gComortas

ii. Slow airs do not have to be played by a solo performer.

iii. Attention should be given to the instrument arrangement and presentation of the music

iv. Liling and Whistling to be considered here.

v. Groups are permitted to use céilí drums and electronic piano however no other electronic instruments are permitted.

vi. Solos, duets, trios, group performances and combinations of each should be considered as part of the performance.

vii. The Music Adjudicator will be asked to adjudicate the performance on the following suggested guidelines some of which include:

1. Tempo
2. Rhythm
3. Phrasing
4. Tuning/Intonation
5. Balance/Blend
6. Style/ornamentation
7. Arrangement
8. Teamwork
9. Choice of tunes
10. Instrumentation

viii. Tunes selected should include some of the following so as to provide as much variety as possible:



1. Air (Slow or lively)
2. Reel
3. Polka
4. Hornpipe
5. March
6. Jig (Double, Single, Slip, Hop)
7. Slide
8. Set Dance
9. Mazurka
10. Planxty
11. Fling
12. Barn Dance
13. Schottische
14. Clan March
15. Highlands
16. Germans
17. Waltz

d. Storytelling/Recitation/Poetry/Scéalaíocht

- i. Appropriate stories to be encouraged which are fitting with the nature of the competition

#### Adjudicators Marking of SCORAÍOCHT

Each Adjudicator selected to adjudicate SCORAÍOCHT competition must apportion their marks as follows:

Item	Percentage
Music	30
Singing / Scéalaíocht	20
Dancing	20
Production	30



### *Adjudication and Competition Clerk*

- i. Suitable Judges will be selected based on their competencies within the specific areas of both PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT shows. These adjudicators will be specifically sought from the following areas:
  - a. Music
  - b. Singing
  - c. Dancing
  - d. Production
- ii. All adjudicators will be suitably trained and be familiar with the requirements of both PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT. Where possible, judges will have competed or produced PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT groups previously.
- iii. No communication with the Adjudicators is permissible on the day of the competition at the venue except through the call stewards
- iv. Adjudicators must not compete in any of the PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT competitions of that year.
- v. At All-Ireland PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT competitions, an adjudicator may not be used in the same competition on two consecutive years where possible.
- vi. The competition clerk must receive a running order in advance of each group taking to the stage. This list should contain the background to the group, piece selection, relevance to their location, instrument types and numbers breakdown, and any other information the producer feels relevant to the performance. This will be subsequently given to the adjudicators for review throughout the performance.
- vii. The call steward will terminate the competition after the completion of the performance of the last competitor. All groups in both PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT will participate as listed on the competition programme. Once the Call Steward has closed the competition it cannot be reopened.
- viii. The call steward is responsible for preparing the adjudication sheets and shall return to the organising committee as appropriate. This includes all completed adjudication sheets, results sheets and any other relevant documentation
- ix. Marking scheme to be followed by the adjudicators for both PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT as listed below.
- x. Sample Adjudication Sheets for Music, Singing, Dancing and Production listed below in Appendix

### *Video and Audio Recordings*

- i. Video and Audio Recording of both PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT are strictly forbidden without prior written permission of group.
- ii. The organising committee or individual(s) nominated by such committee shall consider all applications for such facilities.
- iii. Recording permits will be presented to the call steward prior to the commencement of the competition
- iv. The overall performance will be recorded by a Comhaltas designated Person and this show will be available to purchase on request. Recording to be made for inclusion in the Comhaltas Archive.

### *Adjudication Sheets*

- i. Adjudication sheets will be sent to each group, seven days after the PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT competitions have been completed. An original adjudication sheet will be retained by the Organising Committee Secretary for a period of three months.



### *Competition Prizes*

- i. The official Comhaltas Trophy or medal shall be awarded to prize winners of both PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT competitions
- ii. Prizes to be awarded at County, Regional and Provincial PLÉARACHA & SCORAÍOCHT competitions shall be as follows:
  - a. First prize: Perpetual Trophy (where available) together with gilt medal
  - b. Second Prize: Silver Medal
  - c. Third Prize: Bronze Medal
- iii. Perpetual Trophies will be presented to the winners at the competition venue. In any event all trophies and prizes shall be distributed to the winners within One month of the termination of the competitions. All-Ireland Trophies must be returned to CCE Head Office (Culturlann, 32 Belgrave Square, Monkstown, Co Dublin) before 30<sup>th</sup> October
- iv. The county, provincial or CEC as appropriate shall arrange for the winners of perpetual trophies or their group leader in the case of PLÉARACHA na nÓG, to sign an undertaking to return these trophies to the officer designed in the Bunreacht, on the written demand of this officer in the case of an objection being upheld.
- v. PLÉARACHA, PLÉARACHA na nÓG & SCORAÍOCHT All-Ireland winners will showcase their performance at Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann.





