



The Activism of FairPlé:
A Summary Report (2018-2020)

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Contents

Introduction to Summary Report

Aims & Objectives of FairPlé

History, Context and Evolution

A Brief History of the FairPlé Movement

A Call for Change: Onstage & Online

Public Meetings: Debate & Dialogue

FairPlé Day: A Day of Action

Stories & Conversations

Rising Tides: Two-Day Festival of Music & Ideas

Directory

Global Support Network

Additional Activism & Outputs

Work with the Arts Council

Presentations & Talks

Live at St. Luke's

Freedom Doesn't Fall from the Sky - National Concert Hall

Sounding the Feminists Symposium

Research Symposium at NUI Galway in collaboration with The Centre for Irish Studies

International Women's Day - Áras an Uachtaráin

Women's Work Festival

Voices of Culture

FairPlé Archive

Related Work by FairPlé members

Impact

Acknowledging the Network

Introduction to Summary Report

This summary report provides a synopsis of FairPlé's activities and initiatives from its establishment in early 2018 until February 2020. It has been compiled and edited by Dr Karan Casey (chair) and Dr Jessica Cawley (secretary). As FairPlé's main objectives have been fulfilled we are currently in a reflection and wind-down phase. While our strategic planning, activism, and events may be over, the impact and legacy of the movement – in terms of ideas, debates, and new perspectives – will continue long into the future.

Aims & Objectives of FairPlé

FairPlé is an inclusive, grass-roots organisation, founded to address gender balance in Irish traditional and folk music performance, production, and promotion. We advocate for equal opportunity and balanced representation for all. At the beginning of our journey FairPlé made a commitment to:

1. Initiate a discussion in relation to gender-balance, representation, and fair practice at work in all capacities.
2. Mentor others, advocate, and promote more equitable opportunities for women in the music industry and more broadly within the world of traditional music.

To achieve the above aims, FairPlé planned, worked together, and organised the following:

- **FairPlé Day:** A day of positive musical activism, promoting balance, inclusivity, and creativity to raise audience awareness and support our members.
- **Rising Tides:** A two-day event focusing on how to address the gender deficit in traditional and folk music.
- **A Directory** was compiled of female musicians for festivals, promoters, venues, musicians, and educators.
- **A global support network** was created through our website and social media.
- **Advocacy:** FairPlé also provided consultations, provoked conversations, and shared knowledge with the Arts Council, third level academics, and other stakeholders.

History, Context and Evolution

A Brief History of the FairPlé Movement

Beginning in 2017, strong, female voices within the traditional music community, like Pádraigín Ní Uallacháin, Niamh Dunne, and Karan Casey started to question and explore why there were so few women performers headlining festival line-ups and concert billings. These women, along with other founding members of FairPlé, started a campaign to advocate for appropriate gender representation on stage, paving the way for the next generation of artists and performers. As FairPlé gained momentum, female performers started to speak out and share their stories with one another. As women and men joined the movement, a feeling of solidarity began to grow into a community of musicians and singers hoping to make traditional and folk music a more diverse, vibrant, and representative sphere. The early formation of FairPlé was dynamic, enriching and empowering to all involved.

FairPlé developed into a coalition of people dedicated to changing the socio-cultural environment for women in the worlds of traditional and folk music. The voices and motivations of the group are varied, but members of the movement are bound together in their work in advocating for deep societal change. The organisation has worked to end sexual harassment, to improve working conditions, and address the gender imbalances so evident in concerts and festival line-ups.

The FairPlé movement developed in a transnational context of countless women who have begun to question, reframe, and take control of how they are treated in the workplace, artistic sphere, and in wider society. From *Waking The Feminists* and *Sounding the Feminists* here in Ireland, to the #MeToo movement which began in the United States, FairPlé was inspired by numerous campaigns groups and individuals. Within the context of Irish traditional and folk music FairPlé acknowledges the contribution of female musicians and note that numerous strong women have spoken out over the years, including the group *Macalla*.

A Call for Change - Onstage & Online

On stage in January 2018, Karan Casey found herself to be the sole woman among seventeen performers. She spoke out on that night about her experience as an artist in this milieu. In response, Síle Denvir and several other performers rallied around Karan and began discussing issues of gender. Following this, Karan voiced her experience on Facebook. The post was widely shared on social media and national radio; further fuelling discussion and debate around gender inequality. This moment in FairPlé's history is quite representative of the live and online nature of the network; the impact of our organisation was delivered both through live events and through the global support network made possible online and via social media.

Public Meetings: Debate & Dialogue

The first public meeting, held in Jury's Inn, Dublin on 28th January 2018, officially launched the FairPlé movement. This was the meeting where the name FairPlé was first suggested. Issues such as funding and grant options, a mission statement, social media outlets, mental health and equality issues, partnering with other women's groups and the gathering of statistics, research and data were also discussed.

From the very beginning, FairPlé invited participation from all members of the public, as we aimed to form an inclusive, grass-roots organization to reflect the true ethos of folk music; music by all, for all. For this reason, FairPlé hosted a series of public consultations, meetings, and discussions. Examples include:

- *6th February 2018 University of Limerick:* During this meeting, our strategic core group decided to apply for an Arts Council grant. Our proposal was ultimately successful, enabling us to organise **Rising Tides; our two-day event in Liberty Hall**. Pauline Scanlon, Úna Monaghan, Síle Denvir, Niamh Dunne, Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh and Karan Casey led FairPlé's core group. As well as the grant plan, other strategic objectives were voiced at this meeting, such as the directory, testimonies and website.
- *18th February 2018 in the Cobblestone (Dublin):* During this meeting attended by 40 people, the group decided to channel the frustrations of many women into an active campaign.
- *3rd May 2018 in the Cork Opera House:* A Munster collective of FairPlé members met in the Cork Opera House in May. At the meeting, we discussed many issues from commercial to

non-commercial musicians' experiences and planned a range of events and sessions for **FairPlé Day**.

It was not only FairPlé supporters we aimed to speak to; we hoped to spread the word and start a discussion on this important (yet often unspoken about) topic. The overall response was overwhelmingly positive, supportive, and constructive. However, during the meetings and debates, some FairPlé advocates experienced various levels of push-back and criticism, both in-person and online. In the early stages, we spent a lot of time explaining and defending to our sceptics why women needed and deserved equality. Perhaps this was part of the process to raise awareness; we first needed to communicate to the general public why it was an issue in the first place.

Those who would like to learn more about gender imbalance within traditional and folk music can read Úna Ní Fhlannagáin's statistical research (available at <https://una.ie/stats-on-gender-in-trad>).

The process ultimately paid off as the discourse and debate further clarified our mission. Indeed, interacting with people with opposing views highlighted the assumptions in society that our organisation aimed to address. Members of FairPlé have been unwavering in our assertion that everyone would benefit from a more just and equal society. As a volunteer organisation, advocates within the movement learned best approaches to activism 'on the job'. We realised that changing societal perspectives takes a long time; it is a gradual process which needs to happen in various stages. Our work always set out to provoke social evolution, rather than incite an overnight revolution.

FairPlé Day: A Day of Action

FairPlé planned and hosted a series of inclusive events on the 9th June 2018 to highlight women's involvement in all aspects of Irish traditional and folk music. This day of action – **FairPlé Day** – aimed to start community-led conversations, which were ultimately very successful in raising awareness of gender disparities within traditional and folk music. Twenty eight events took place worldwide from informal pub and kitchen sessions to formal events, including performances in the Mansion House in Dublin. From Ennis, Boston, New York, Belfast, Rostrevor, Vienna, and all around the world, the day was a resounding success which chimed out for the sisterhood and for change.

- FairPlé June 9th Events -

The Crane Bar - Galway - Time - 3pm	Druid Pub - Cambridge, Boston - 4pm
Conradh na Gaeilge Building - Galway -	The Center for Arts at the Armory - Somerville - 2pm
The Black Gate Cultural Centre - Galway - 8pm	Boston Public Library - Boston - 4pm
Brú House - Newbridge - 8pm	The Irish Arts Center - New York - 8pm
The Mansion House - Dublin - 1pm	Roots on the River Festival - Vermont - 2.20pm
Skelly's - Ballymahon - 10 pm	Riley's Pub - Missouri - 5pm
St John's Church - Hollyfort - 6pm	Canadian-American Club - Watertown - 7pm
The Courthouse - Dingle - 8pm	
The Rowan Tree Cafe Bar - Ennis - 11.30am	
The Corner House - Cork - 6pm	
Nellie Freds - Dingle - 9.30pm	
Nancy Blakes - Limerick - 1pm	
Crawford's Bar - Rostrevor - 2pm	
Marrison's Bar - Randalstown - 7pm	
St. George's Market - Belfast - 1pm	
The American Bar - Belfast - 5pm & 8pm	

All gig details on www.fairple.com

#FairPléDay
#Fairplé

Stories & Conversations

Conversations arising from FairPlé Day highlighted a plethora of issues related to gender inequality that needed to be understood and addressed. Gender imbalance onstage at traditional music concerts and festivals is quite an obvious problem, but it is also clear that there were many other concerns that needed public support and attention.

People began emailing stories. We reacted, responded, and shifted our focus from discussing gender balance and quotas to the more pressing and serious issue of sexual assault and sexual misconduct. Such issues were always spoken about privately within FairPlé's organisation, but the number of stories we received indicated that we truly needed to tackle this issue directly and without delay. This phase was extremely difficult for members of FairPlé. Sexual harassment is a stark and consistent reality for many female performers.



In addition to the noticeable bias on concert and festival stages, the brutal truth is that too many female musicians have to deal with demoralisation, demeaning attitudes, sexual innuendo, and/or sexual assault. This can happen anywhere, to anyone. It could be at the local pub where a player is socialising and playing for fun. Or it could be someone's place of work or potential work.

Such dark, offensive behaviours needed to be brought into the light. No one person can change this, everyone needs to change it. Considering the serious implications of what we were hearing, FairPlé contacted and took advice from the Musicians' Union of Ireland about how we might best support female performers in need.

Stories, narratives, and personal histories have power; they provide perspective on issues and can change people's way of thinking. Stories shared during FairPlé Day helped to clarify the issues that really matter to women within the world of traditional music. For this, we deeply thank the participants for sharing their experiences.



Rising Tides: Two-Day Festival of Music & Ideas

FairPlé's next large-scale event was our two-day festival of music and ideas, **Rising Tides**. Taking place in Liberty Hall in Dublin on 8th & 9th September 2018, *Rising Tides* was a culmination of seven months of work by advocates and volunteers within the FairPlé movement. The weekend was an opportunity to network, learn, connect, and consult with people within the traditional and folk music world in Ireland. Academics, students, professionals, amateur music-makers, and enthusiasts alike attended in great numbers for panel discussions and for the music itself. Created with thanks to Niamh Dunne and Seán Óg Graham, highlights from each of the three panels are now available (see the links in the descriptions of the panels below). FairPlé also wishes to acknowledge and thank Niamh Parsons and Úna Ní Fhlannagáin for transcribing and editing the panel discussions.



The poster features a dark blue background with a faint image of a person playing a traditional Irish instrument. The title 'Rising Tides' is written in a large, yellow, cursive font. Below it, the event details are listed in white and yellow text. The FairPlé logo is in the bottom right corner.

Rising Tides
2 DAY FESTIVAL of MUSIC and IDEAS
Liberty Hall, Dublin
8/9th September

FairPlé invites you to

The event will start on Saturday 8th with the panel discussions. This is an opportunity to share ideas, engage in the issues at hand, and move towards positive change. We want your input, and would very much like to see you there and hear your voice. These panel discussions will be free of charge and open to all. The initiative, supported by The Arts Council Of Ireland, and in conjunction with the Musicians' Union of Ireland.

Reserve a seat and get more info on our panellists at www.fairple.com

SATURDAY 8th Panel Discussions 10:30 - 5:30pm FREE adm.

FairPlé *The Story So Far* with Karan Casey 10:30am

She Means Business Making Music Work 11:45am - 1pm
Evaluate the role of women in the business of Irish traditional and folk music with our panel of key industry professionals. What are the big issues? What kind of challenges face women in the business? How do musicians and performers negotiate the politics and practicalities of making their art work for them?
Facilitated by Lynette Fay Panellists: Eleanor McEvoy, Peter Cosgrove, Liz Doherty & Dermot McLaughlin.

Playing with Power Sexual Harassment + Workplace Policy 2pm - 3:15pm
Join our panel of experts to address the issue of sexual harassment in Irish music. What are our rights and responsibilities as employers, promoters, agents, sound engineers, teachers, producers and performers of all genders? A great opportunity to get a unique insight into these panelists' life experiences.
Facilitated by Úna Monaghan Panellists: Ellen O' Malley Dunlop, Paul Henry & Pauline Scanlon.

Emerging Artists Shaping the Future 3:30 - 4:45pm
Is there a career in music for you? A session focussing on a blend of career advice and open floor discussion. Are there equal numbers of boys and girls learning and playing Irish music? Are men and women equally represented on our big stages? Identify the pitfalls and listen to advice from our expert panel.
Facilitated by Joanne Cusack Panellists: Muireann Nic Amhlaioibh, Ciara O'Leary Eamon Murray, Shane Gillen, Ciara O'Leary Fitzpatrick, Tola Custy & Nuala O'Connor.

Music Session in the Bar 5pm

SUNDAY 9th Concert 7:30pm €22.50 adm.
A gala concert featuring an impressive line-up of artists. Among others,
The Friel Sisters, John Spillane, Muireann Nic Amhlaioibh, Síle Denvir, Barry Kerr & Dónal Lunny, ATLAS, Niamh Parsons & Graham Dunne, Emma Langford, Úna Monaghan, Jane Walls, Amy Campbell and Séan McKeon will join to celebrate the creativity and diversity of women artists' contribution and highlight FairPlé's advocacy to achieve a more equitable gender balance in traditional and folk music.

FairPlé
Gender Balance in Irish Traditional & Folk Music

Panel 1: She Means Business - Making Music Work

Panellists: Eleanor McEvoy, Peter Cosgrove, Liz Doherty & Dermot McLaughlin. Chair: Lynette Fay.

This panel discussion with industry professionals evaluated the role of women in the business of Irish traditional and folk music. We discussed how musicians and performers negotiate the politics and practicalities of creativity, touring, recording and earning money through art. Through the lived experiences of the panellists, we explored questions surrounding women in Irish music and the conditions that lend themselves to a largely male dominated industry. For highlights of *She Means Business* see - <https://youtu.be/loWZhi-ZGOo> .



Panel 2: Playing with Power - Sexual Harassment & Workplace Policy

Panellists: Ellen O'Malley Dunlop, Paul Henry & Pauline Scanlon. Chair: Úna Monaghan

This panel discussion addressed the issue of sexual harassment in the arts and Irish music and focused on the self-employed status of musicians. Our participants explored the rights and responsibilities of employers, promoters, agents, sound engineers, teachers, producers and performers of all genders. For highlights of *Playing with Power* see - <https://youtu.be/XR9Vn9KPJl4> .

Panel 3: Emerging Artists: Shaping The Future & Open Floor Discussion

Panellists: Shane Gillen, Muireann Nic Amhlaobh, Ciara O'Leary Fitzpatrick, Tola Custy & Nuala O'Connor & Eamon Murray. Facilitator: Joanne Cusack.

A cursory look at participation in Irish music suggests that equal numbers of boys and girls learn music as children, yet at the level of professional performance, the public face is overwhelmingly male. Our panel of experts teased out this issue and offered early career advice to all participating musicians. For highlights of *Emerging Artists* see - <https://youtu.be/zye7YFnaGDE> .



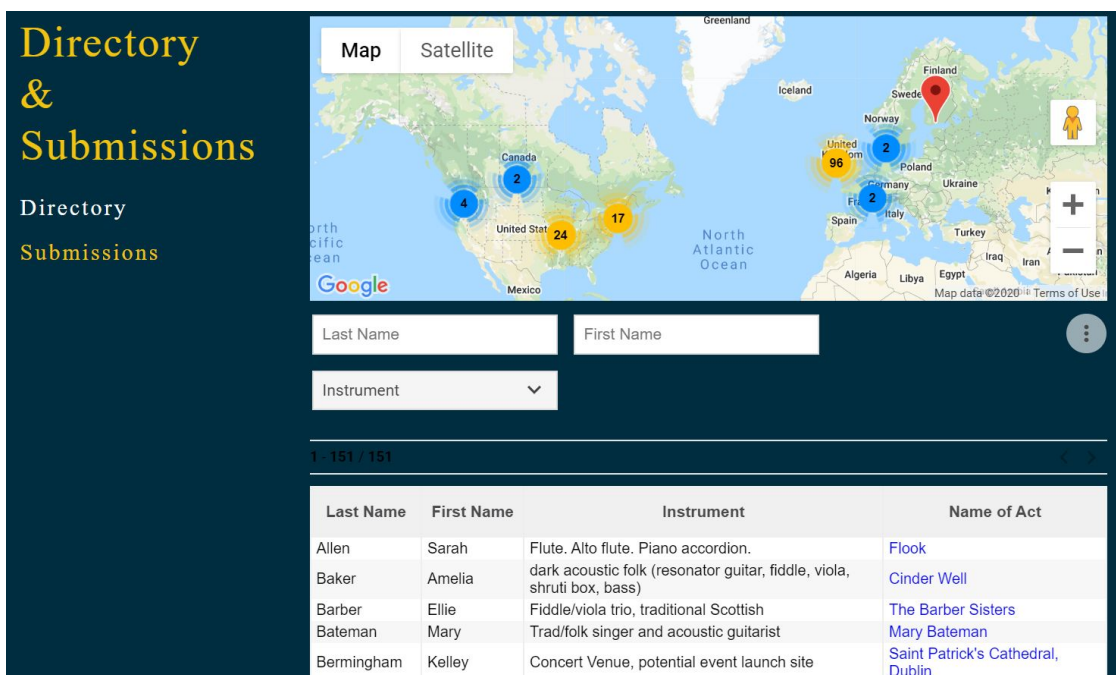
Rising Tides Concert

The Rising Tides concert featured leading folk and traditional artists and celebrated the creative contribution of women in Irish music. Taking place the night of Sunday 9th September, artists included The Friel Sisters: Sheila, Clare, Anna Friel, Marty Barry, Cathal Ó Curráin; Niamh Parsons, Graham Dunne, Emma Langford, Úna Monaghan, Pauline Scanlon, Niamh Dunne, Karan Casey and John Spillane, Atlas: Cillian King, Cillian Doheny, Lucia MacPartlin, Maria Ryan, Seán Warren; Síle Denvir, Muireann Nic Amhlaobh, Barry Kerr, Donal Lunny, Seán McKeon, Amy Campbell, and Jane Walls.



Directory

FairPlé's work highlights how artistic programming in Ireland tends to be unconsciously biased against women performers – a situation not dissimilar to several other countries and cultures around the world. Since the organisation's formation, our underpinning philosophy has been grounded in the belief that we need to work together with people in the community to articulate our point of view and bring people along with us to enact any real change. For this reason, we have reached out to festival and concert promoters to advocate more balanced line-ups and programmes. FairPlé also created a directory of women artists to make it easier for people within the music industry to find and contact women performers. At the time of writing, there are currently over 150 women represented on the Directory hosted on fairple.com.



Last Name	First Name	Instrument	Name of Act
Allen	Sarah	Flute. Alto flute. Piano accordion.	Flook
Baker	Amelia	dark acoustic folk (resonator guitar, fiddle, viola, shruti box, bass)	Cinder Well
Barber	Ellie	Fiddle/viola trio, traditional Scottish	The Barber Sisters
Bateman	Mary	Trad/folk singer and acoustic guitarist	Mary Bateman
Bermingham	Kelley	Concert Venue, potential event launch site	Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin

Global Support Network

Spearheaded by Pauline Scanlon and Eamon Murray, FairPlé created and managed a global support network through our website and social media. This work has been invaluable to the movement, particularly activists within FairPlé USA. Ciara O'Leary Fitzpatrick also deserves recognition for her work in sustaining and maintaining this online presence. Sites include:

- o www.fairple.com
- o Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FairPleMusic/>
- o Twitter: <https://twitter.com/FairPle>
- o YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfvRsSSTOYlkd9N2zUHHjng>
- o Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/fairple_music/

Additional Activism & Outputs

In addition to the larger events above, FairPlé members participated in many other festivals, concerts, research symposia, and events in the community to advocate for gender equality within traditional and folk music. Our organisation has also worked closely with the Arts Council to bring about change. This section briefly highlights and documents the variety of outputs to which our members have contributed in the past two years.

Work with the Arts Council



In addition to delivering our events **FairPlé Day** and **Rising Tides**, FairPlé attended a series of meetings and worked closely with the Arts Council to establish a code of practice based on dignity and respect for female artists. A copy of the Art Council's *Equality, Human Rights & Diversity Policy & Strategy* is available at: <http://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/EHRD%20Policy%20English%20version%20Final.pdf>

Presentations & Talks

Many members of FairPlé raised public awareness through various presentations and talks at symposia and festivals, including:

- 21st March 2018, Trinity College Dublin for the Trinity Traditional Music Club: Talk by Karan Casey and Tara Finn.
- 8th March 2018, University of Limerick for International Women's Day: Talk by Karan Casey.
- 8th March 2018, University College Cork for International Women's Day: Talk by Jessie Cawley.
- 23rd August 2018, Masters of Tradition: Talk and performance by Pauline Scanlon and Karan Casey.
- October 2018, O'Flaherty's Irish Music Retreat, Texas: Talk by Niamh Ní Charra, entitled "100 years of women in Irish Music, culminating in the work of the Fair Plé movement."
- 9th February 2019, Research Symposium at NUI Galway: (See below)
- 8th March 2019, Mary Immaculate College for International Women's Day: Talk and performance by Niamh Dunne.
- 16th of July 2019, Warwick Folk Festival: Talk by Niamh Dunne and Karan Casey
- 8th March 2020, University College Cork for International Women's Day: Talk by Ciara O'Leary Fitzpatrick

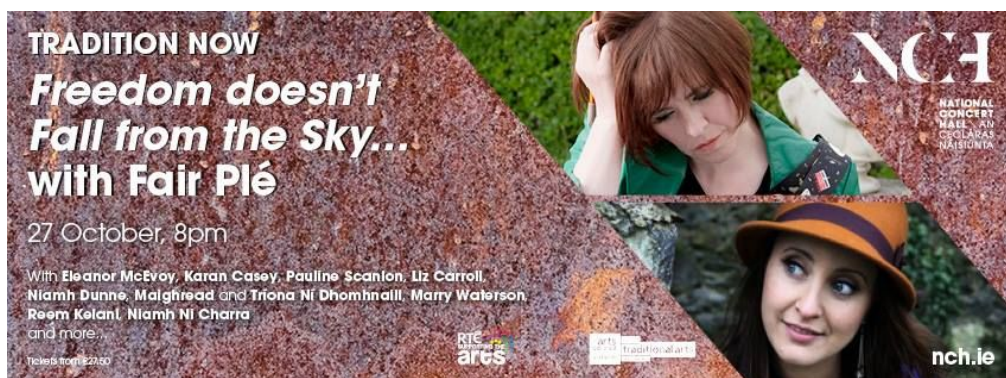
Live at St. Luke's

As part of Cork Midsummer Festival, FairPlé hosted a concert in association with Live at St. Luke's on 16th June 2018. The concert featured Mary Mitchell-Ingoldsby, Rosaleen O'Leary, Máire Ní Ghráda, Caoimhín Vallely, Robbie Overson, Stephanie Rainey, Karan Casey, Niall Vallely, Pauline Scanlon, The Whileaways, Kate Ellis, Anna Mieke and Julie Goo.



Freedom Doesn't Fall from the Sky - National Concert Hall

On 27th October 2018, FairPlé hosted a concert in the National Concert Hall entitled 'Freedom Doesn't Fall from the Sky'. Performances were provided by a diverse group of women and allies, including Eleanor McEvoy, Pauline Scanlon, Sean Óg Graham, Liz Carroll, Niamh Dunne, Eamon Murray, Maighread and Tríona Ní Dhomhnaill, Marry Waterson, Reem Kelani, Karan Casey, Niamh Ní Charra, Kevin Corbett, Niall Vallely, Kate Ellis, Louise and Michelle Mulcahy, Connor McCreanor, the Cloughanover Community Choir led by Nicola Joyce, Kate Barry, Síle Denvir and Niamh Parsons.



Sounding the Feminists Symposium: Women in Popular & Traditional Music in Ireland

On 23rd November, FairPlé participated in the *Sounding the Feminists Symposium* to share our knowledge, research and experience. The one-day symposium was organised and hosted by the Department of Creative Arts, Media & Music at Dundalk Institute of Technology, in association with Sounding the Feminists and the Centre for Creative Arts Research. Representing FairPlé, Niamh Ní Charra spoke on a panel, and Joanne Cusack presented a paper entitled, “A consideration of post-feminism in Irish traditional music with particular focus on the all-female band, The Bridies.”



Research Symposium at NUI Galway in collaboration with The Centre for Irish Studies

On the 9th of February 2019, FairPlé co-hosted a research symposium entitled “Women and Traditional|Folk Music”. The event was organised by the music research network Comhrá Ceoil, at the Centre for Irish Studies, NUIG, in partnership with (and in response to) FairPlé. An opportunity was provided to explore, challenge and react to the experiences of women in traditional and folk music. The symposium hosted an international field of presenters, including academics, musicians and singers, researchers and those involved with the archiving of traditional and folk music.



Twenty-two papers were presented, many of which are due to be published in a special issue of *Ethnomusicology Ireland 2021*, entitled ‘Women and Traditional|Folk Music’. Among the diverse topics presented were some in-depth statistical analyses of the position of women in Irish traditional music. An audio installation was presented by Úna Monaghan, featuring voice recordings of a

collection of 121 anonymous testimonies on gender and Irish traditional music. Dr Tes Slominski from Beloit College (Wisconsin, USA) gave the keynote address entitled ‘Shut Up and Play’: Aesthetics and the Silencing of Social Critique in Irish Traditional Music.’ For more information see Joanne Cusack’s Review in the 2019/2020 edition of Spéis (<https://www.ictm.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/SPEIS-2020-DIGITAL-version.pdf>).



International Women’s Day – Áras an Uachtaráin

On 8 March 2019, members of FairPlé performed for President Michael D. Higgins and Sabina Higgins in Áras an Uachtaráin marking International Women’s Day. Noriana Kennedy, Ciara O’Leary Fitzpatrick, Joanne Cusack, Aoife Blake, and Lisa O’Sullivan (pictured below), represented our organisation so well.





Women's Work Festival

On the 7th and 8th of June, FairPlé hosted a series of events including panel discussions and workshops as part of the 2019 Women's Work Festival in Belfast. This was funded by Help Musicians N.I. through the Women in Music Fund. Kate Barry and Jane Cassidy organised the FairPlé events in this collaboration, which included a workshop on career development with Inni-K (Eithne Ní Chatháin) and a workshop on live sound engineering for traditional music led by Úna Monaghan. The first set of events came in under budget and Help Musicians N.I. confirmed that the underspend could be used to run a further workshop with Úna Monaghan, which went ahead in February 2020.



WED. 05/06	THU. 06/06	FRI. 07/06	SAT. 08/06	SUN. 09/06
10am-1pm Jigsaw Counselling 121 OH YEAR	10am-12pm DIY Tribe Breakfast OH YEAR	10am-12pm DIY Tribe Breakfast OH YEAR	10am-12pm DIY Tribe Breakfast OH YEAR	10am-12pm DIY Tribe Breakfast OH YEAR
7pm-10pm 'Bad Reputation' Movie OH YEAR	7pm-9pm Getting To Know Hannah Peel OH YEAR	11:30am-2pm FairPlé Rising Tides#1 THE DUNCAIRN	11am-1pm GIRL DJ Workshop OH YEAR	1pm-2pm Women in Music Wrap Event OH YEAR
8am-9:30pm Principles of Podcasting OH YEAR	7pm-9pm 50 Years of Flower Power TROPICAL RAVINE	3:30pm-6pm HMNI Clothes Swap OH YEAR	11:30am-4pm FairPlé Rising Tides#2 THE DUNCAIRN	2:30pm-4pm Self Made Workshop OH YEAR
8:30pm-12am Jealous of The Birds THE EMPIRE	8:30pm-10pm Rooftop Session - Brigid O'Neill OH YEAR	5pm-7pm Revolution Radio OH YEAR	12pm-2pm GRSM Jam Session OH YEAR	7pm-10pm Start Together Party Queen Zee LIMELIGHT 2
	10pm-1am ELIXIR Women of Irish Hip-hop OH YEAR	7pm-9pm Collab THE 343	12pm-2pm Career Longevity Panel OH YEAR	7pm-9pm Write.Fight.Ignite OH YEAR
		8pm-10pm Stranded: Alana Henderson STRAND ARTS CENTRE	12pm-1pm Fine Tuning Your Live Experience - MU BLACK BOX	8pm-11pm The Mother Within Launch - DANI + Guests BLACK BOX

Voices of Culture

As part of the Voices of Culture event at Goethe-Institut Prague, Imogen Gunner represented FairPlé at the Brainstorming Session. Focusing on gender equality and gender balance in the cultural and creative sectors, Voices of Culture took place from the 4-5 September 2019. For more information, see the Voices of Culture report at (<https://voicesofculture.eu/2020/02/25/brainstorming-report-gender-balance-in-the-cultural-and-creative-sectors/>).

FairPlé Archive

From the very beginning of the movement to the present we were conscious of the need to preserve and collect material relevant to the FairPlé movement which might aid future research and cultural understanding. Our members and followers were encouraged to share and make their own work accessible. Niamh Ní Charra, a founding member of FairPlé and an archivist, has graciously agreed to gather and catalogue all relevant material. This will be donated to the Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA).

Other Work & Outputs by FairPlé members

'What Haven't We Heard?'

Written for and performed by Pauline Scanlon and Úna Monaghan

Song lyrics from the poem 'Weather Vane' by Maureen Boyle

In late 2017, Úna Monaghan composed a piece called "What Haven't We Heard?" about gender balance in Irish traditional music. It was first performed at IMBOLC Festival on 31 January 2018 and was also performed at **Rising Tides**. For more information about the piece see <http://www.unamonaghan.com/?p=445>, and a video of the first performance see <https://youtu.be/6Swf8NzRvRw>.

121 Stories: A collection of anonymous testimonies on the subject of gender and Irish traditional music

In 2018 Úna Monaghan launched a research project that aimed to increase understanding of the behaviours and contexts that contribute to gender inequality in Irish traditional music, through the thematic analysis of participants' experiences. She made an online call for anonymous testimonies, asking for "a true story that relates to gender in Irish traditional music". Using an online questionnaire, people were invited to share their narratives in a safe environment. The FairPlé network helped to promote the project, and we send our gratitude to Úna and to all the participants. People make sense of the world through sharing, listening, and understanding stories. Úna's work and research has helped our organisation understand the important issues of gender inequality in a more nuanced and holistic way. Úna's invitation for stories can be viewed at:

https://youtu.be/WmfQ2_BZpVM

The 121 testimonies cover a wide range of themes and topics. Voice recordings of these written accounts were made by volunteers, and the collection now exists as both an audio archive and in text. The work was funded by Newnham College, University of Cambridge. We are grateful to the volunteers who lent their voices to this project, and we are aiming to make it available to all via the Irish Traditional Music Archive. A publication is forthcoming on the initial analysis of the collection.

Impact

In addition to achieving the aims and objectives set out at the beginning of our journey (see above), the FairPlé movement has:

- Enabled women to share their stories and voice their concerns, sometimes for the first time. This in itself helps people feel that their traumas, setbacks and hurt have been heard and acknowledged. It is only after this process that people can begin to heal.
- Contributed to critical discourse on feminism in traditional and folk music, within academia and in Irish society.
- Advocated for women in leadership positions within the arts and music industry.
- Collaborated with the Arts Council to make traditional music a more inclusive artform.

We have observed that concert and festival organisers are notably more conscious about the gender balance of their billings. Many festivals embraced the call to change and actively used the FairPlé logo in a display of solidarity. This collective consciousness has resulted in a positive cultural shift. FairPlé acknowledges the support and work that many concert and festival organisers have done in relation to the issue of gender representation on stage.

We chose our name carefully; the word *plé* (Irish for 'discussion') was conscious and purposeful. We aimed to start conversations with enthusiasts, teachers, academics, singers, dancers, musicians, industry people, sound engineers, roadies, agents, advertisers, and people working in the media. We hoped to engage with the whole, diverse, wonderful gamut of traditional and folk music in Ireland – our sceptics and our followers alike. The diversity of views helped us to solidify our convictions, aims, mission, and our strategic planning. We quickly learned that in order to affect real change, we needed to work creatively and bring people on board with us.

The American civil rights activist, Marian Wright Edelman once said, 'You cannot be what you cannot see'. FairPlé's journey began with the dream that all people should be able to see themselves up on the stage, in the session circle, in the set. We want equality to be second nature, so embedded within our children that it is subconscious. Our new, inclusive Ireland is made up of women, men, non-binary, transgender, gay, straight, able and disabled, and a vibrant, diverse group of migrants and newcomers. Traditional and folk music has always been the music of the people. This music belongs to **all** the people of Ireland and the rest of the world.

The world of Irish traditional and folk music is full of extraordinarily talented women, vibrant and brimming with creativity. Many are highly trained, pushing hard at the glass ceiling. Others may have developed their musicality informally, perhaps playing tunes in their kitchen with as much expression as the best of them. Women deserve equal opportunities, a premise which has guided our every decision and action these past two years. We are proud of the voices that FairPlé have amplified, and the conversations that we have instigated.

While FairPlé has concluded our strategic planning and organised activism, the ethos and values we created together will continue long into the future as our members continue their musical, artistic, and social justice work.

Acknowledging the Network

All the above work would not have been possible without the numerous FairPlé members and grassroots supporters. And so, it is only appropriate to conclude with our deepest thanks to them:

Karan Casey, Pauline Scanlon, Niamh Dunne, Síle Denvir, Úna Monaghan, Kate Barry, Ciara O'Leary Fitzpatrick, Muireann Nic Amhlaóibh, Joanne Cusack, Niamh Parsons, Úna Ní Fhlannagáin, Aibhlín McCrann, Niamh Ní Charra, Mairéad O'Donnell, Tara Finn, Imogen Gunner, Méabh McCann, Jessie Cawley, Stu Fletcher, Jane Cassidy, Maurice Leyden, Mikey Smith, Eamonn Murray, Niall Vallely, Seán Óg Graham, Barry Kerr, Kieran Munnely, Nic Gareiss, Tola Custy, Beoga, Kevin Noone, Emma Harney, Ellie Byrne, The Cobblestone, Pauline and Tom Mulligan.

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- The Musicians' Union of Ireland for their moral support and use of Liberty Hall. Special thanks to Ethel Buckley, Frank Connolly, and Karan O'Loughlin.
- The National Concert Hall for hosting *Freedom Doesn't Fall from the Sky*. Our special thanks to Gary Sheehan and Olga Barry for programming the event, Mickey Quinn and Sinéad Doyle for their help with marketing.
- The Irish Traditional Music Archive for their support and for documenting Rising Tides and agreeing to accept our collection into the archive. Special thanks to Grace Toland.
- Former Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mícheál Mac Donncha, for his help in organising FairPlé Day at the Mansion House in Dublin.

FairPlé is so grateful to all the musicians and crew who supported our events: A special thanks goes to all who organised or supported an event on **FairPlé Day**.

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To conclude, FairPlé would like to thank and acknowledge the entire network of strong women and men who dedicated themselves to the cause. We are grateful to the men who engaged in the conversation; so many of them were brave enough to examine their own perspectives, support our call for a more equal society, and actively volunteer their time and effort to the FairPlé movement. Working together has been an honour. We would like to end by dedicating the movement, and this report, to all the strong women playing, singing, dancing, and finding their own voices through traditional and folk music. Being a part of this musical and social collective has inspired and motivated our organisation in all our endeavours.