# **The FairPlé Festival Line-up Challenge**

## **June – December 2022**

**Introduction**

When FairPlé was established in 2018, one of the first things we looked at was the gender balance of Irish traditional and folk festival line-ups. Last year, we looked at festival line-ups from January–June of 2022. These line-ups provide a useful snapshot into the progress towards gender balance on our stages and in our performance spaces.

Now, we have a follow-on report. This follow-on report looks at the line-ups of 40 folk and traditional festival events which took place from June-December of 2022. The gender breakdown of total performers for each festival is given, along with the breakdown for headline acts where known.

So, where are we at?

On average, women make up 36.2% of the performers and 27.6% of headline acts. From the information available, we did not identify any non-binary performers.

Although more work needs to be done, we are encouraged by the overall improvement in gender balance, and we can clearly see where some festivals have worked hard to improve their programming. However not every festival has got the message! To see how your favourite festival did, read on. There is more work to do

## **Gender Breakdown**

**1. Féile Áras Chrónáin**

Overall: 41% Women 59% Men

Headliners: 19% Women 81% Men

## **2. McKenna Festival**

Overall 13% Women 87% Men

\*No information on performers who accompanied Michael O’Brien in his session and on rest of session trail

## **3. Skerries Trad Music Weekend**

Overall 28% Women 72% Men

## **4. Galway Folk Festival**

Overall 28% Women 72% Men

Headliners: 15% Women 85% Men

## **5. Baltimore Fiddle Sessions at Body and Soul**

Overall 48% Women 52% Men

## **6. Mist and Mellow Music**

Overall 100% Women 0% Men

## **7. Smithfield Fleadh**

Overall 42% Women 58% Men

Headliners 20% Women 80% Men

\*No information on breakdown of Fingal Mummers, Ceoltóirí Chluain Tarbh, Balfolk, The Balaclava Sessions and the performers who accompanied Sibéal Davitt, Pádraig Óg MacAodhagáin, Fiachra Mulligan or Sinéad Kennedy

## **8. Pilgrims and Players Trad and Folk Festival**

Overall 17% Women 83% Men

## **9. Ceol Am Lón**

Overall 59% Women 41% Men

## **10. Traditude**

Overall 8% Women 92% Men

Headliners 0% Women 100% Men

\*incomplete breakdown for the Briar Hotel big Band. No information for The Buckleys, or White Grass

## **11. Willie Clancy Summer School**

Overall 44% Women 56% Women

## **12. Earagail Arts Festival,**

Overall 48% Women 52% Men

\* incomplete breakdown for Trá Pháidín

## **13. South Sligo Summer School**

Overall 41% Women 59% Men

## **14. Ceol na Coille Summer School**

Overall 50% Women 50% Men

## **15. Joe Mooney Summer School,**

Overall 45% Women 55% Men

## **16. Phil Murphy Weekend**

Overall 42% Women 58% Men

Headliners 11% Women 89% Men

## **17. Meitheal Summer School**

Overall 33% Women 67% Men

## **18. Belfast TradFest**

Overall 35% Women 65% Men

Headliners 21% Women 79% Men

\* No information on performers who accompanied Gino Lupari and Gerry O’Connor

\*\* Headline Acts Fri-Sun. Not counting a Thursday night All-Women concert which had 6 Women performers.

## **19. Scoil Acla**

Overall 38% Women 62% Men

Headliners 44% Women 56% Men

## **20. Fiddler's Green Festival,**

Overall 24% Women 76% Men

\*No information on 20 singers – 20 Songs, or Music of Healing

## **21. Ballyshannon Folk and Trad Music festival**

Overall 21% Women 79% Men

Headliners 11% Women 89% Men

\*No information on the breakdown of the Phil Rooney Comhaltas Group, or the performers who accompanied Brian Sweeney

## **22. James Morrison Traditional Music Festival**

Overall 47% Women 53% Men

\*Participants listed all given equal billing.

## **23. O'Carolan Harp Festival & Summer School**

Overall 32% Women 68% Men

Headliners 20% Women 80% Men

## **24. Feakle Int Trad Music Festival**

Overall 36% Women 64% Men

## **25. Coleman Trad Fest**

Overall 38% Women 62% Men

Headliners 0% Women 100% Men

\*Information on Ceoltóirí Coleman incomplete.

## **26. Keep Her Lit Folk and Trad Festival**

Overall 29% Women 71% Men

Headliners 57% Women 43% Men

## **27. Dun Laoghaire Folk Festival**

Overall 58% Women 42% Men

Headliners 44% Women 56% Men

## **28. Masters of Tradition**

Overall 52% Women 48% Men

## **29. Gerry Whelan Memorial Weekend**

Overall 44% Women 56% Men

Headliners 42% Women 58% Men

\*No information on the performers that accompanied Ray Lawlor or Geraldine Whelan O’Meara.

## **30. Johnny Doherty Music and Dancing Festival**

Overall 62% Women 38% Men

\*Incomplete information on breakdown of Duntally Céilí Band

## **31. Cork Folk Festival**

Overall 38% Women 62% Men

Headliners 41% Women 59% Men

\*Incomplete information on breakdown of Fiddlesticks

## **32. Ace and Deuce of Piping**

Overall 60% Women 40% Men

\* This is not counting the Women MC Áine Ní Bhreisleáin.

## **33. Gig'n The Bann**

Overall 50% Women 50% Men

Headliners 42% Women 58% Men

## **34. Féile Liam O'Flynn**

Overall 37% Women 63% Men

Headliners 39% Women 61% Men

\*No information on the breakdown for the Kildare Youth Folk Orchestra, for the performers that joined Sandi Purcell’s session, or for the friends and family of Liam O’Flynn that joined the Crehans’ session.

## **35. Foxford Trad Weekend**

Overall 62% Women 38% Men

Headliners 30% Women 70% Men

\*Incomplete information on Mayo Teenage Trad Ensemble

## **36. Ed Reavy Trad Music Fest**

Overall 42% Women 58% Men

Headliners 100% Women 0% Men

## **37. Patrick O'Keeffe Traditional Music Festival**

Overall 24% Women 76% Men

Headliners 8% Women 92% Men

## **38. Ennis Trad Fest**

Overall 31% Women 69% Men

Headliners 5% Women 95% Men

## **39. Scoil Cheoil na Botha**

Overall 27% Women 73% Men

Headliners 0% Women 100% Men

## **40. William Kennedy Piping Festival**

Overall 18% Women 82% Men

## **41. Éigse Dhiarmuid Uí Shúilleabháin**

Overall 13% Women 87% Men

Headliners 39% Women 61% Men

\*Incomplete information on the breakdown of Cor Chúil Aodh. No information on the performers who accompanied Jimmy Doyle or Shane Creed.

**What is missing?**

The figures here are still only a part of the bigger picture and they don't tell the full story. We cannot see the diversity of the festival crews, the sound technicians, the programmers and organisers. The figures could be broken down further to look at disparities in opportunities between singers and instrumentalists.

This report is focussed on gender, only one aspect of diversity. We recognise that a complete picture on the inclusivity of our festivals would also include race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class/socio-economic background and disability. We would welcome broader, intersectional studies into the diversity of our festivals and acknowledge the limitations of only examining one aspect.

We note (again) that where festivals include workshops and classes, gender is more evenly balanced, and these festivals have increased the overall average. This disguises the need for work to be done by the traditional (non-summer school) festivals. We also note some festivals held events with all women line-ups often on the theme of celebrating women. FairPlé advocate a more balanced approach. Women on stage should be part of the overall mix, not a novelty.

The stage is big enough for all of us!

**What is happening?**

There are many reasons why our festival line-ups do not reflect the gender diversity of our population and not all of them are within the festivals' control. However, our festivals can be part of the change and this is our challenge to festival organisers, their sponsors and funders and to all of us in the audience.

**What can ORGANISERS do?**

Think about balance across every level of the festival programme: diversify from the headliners all the way down. Be aware: consider the gender balance within the bands you are booking and support diverse groups. Consider what type of slot you are giving your artists - are the same people always getting the lunchtime slots, the mid-week slots, the headline slots? Make your festival the safest space possible: implement anti-harassment policies and procedures; train your staff and crew.

Think inclusivity at every point: who is on your programme, who is on your crew, who is missing? Collect data and be transparent: disclose your gender and diversity breakdowns, even if you don’t think they look great. Be part of the conversation.

**What can FUNDERS and SPONSORS do?**

Collect data: ask the festivals you support to provide details of gender and diversity breakdowns for their events, both on and off stage. Change your criteria: make your funding contingent upon meeting substantive gender balance targets.

**What can AUDIENCES do?**

Feedback: let festivals know that you want to see greater diversity. Protest with your wallet: stop supporting festivals that consistently fail to improve their gender balance and support the ones that are making a change. Diversify: support a diverse range of artists, support music and art made by women and non-binary artists.

Be part of the change

***#FairPlé #FairPléChallenge***

**Our methodology - how we counted**

We have calculated the gender balances on these line-ups based on publicly available online information about the bands and acts. Where musicians have taken part in multiple events at a festival, they are counted only once. Where we have not been able to obtain details of any acts, we have noted that in our report. If you are able to provide details so that we can complete our data, please do contact us.

**Our methodology - gender**

We have determined gender based on how people present or are presented, which is an imperfect method. We recognise the difference between someone's own gender identity and their public gender expression. This does mean that we may have made some errors and in particular, we may have misgendered people who identify as non-binary. If you believe that we have misgendered anyone in our reporting, please do let us know. We are very conscious that the statistics are very much on the binary and we are happy to correct any errors we may have made.

Show Your Support and Share this Challenge!

**#FairPlé #FairPléChallenge**