



SMALL PRINT

Festivals: they haven't gone away, you know

FESTIVAL SEASON may feel like a summer pursuit but, as September arrives, the calendar of events is almost at its busiest.

It's a month of firsts for some festivals, with established ones also driving home their quality. Theatre buffs, art lovers, and music fans, get ready for a packed month.

Mountains To Sea September 1st-9th
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown's literary festival punches well above its weight in terms of scale, with Sebastian Barry, Emma Donoghue, Melvyn Bragg and more hitting the southside shore for readings, talks and workshops. There's also a very decent family programme. mountainstosea.ie

Electric Picnic September 2nd-4th
There's not much more to be said about the much-loved music and arts festival that takes over Stradbally Estate in Laois except that it has its strongest music line-up in years, along with the theatre, spoken word and Body and Soul areas. The last hipster hurrah of the summer. electricpicnic.ie

Dublin Contemporary September 6th - October 31st
Positioned as a huge visual arts festival of which Ireland has never seen the likes of before, Dub Con has a dizzying number of

artists. Away from its main space at Earlsfort Terrace, there's also sculpture park in the Iveagh Gardens. dublincontemporary.com

Dublin Fashion September 8th-11th
Dublin Fashion Festival takes up residence in the old Waterstones building on Dawson Street in Dublin 2, transforming it into its "Fashion HQ" for a series of fashion shows, masterclasses in styling, and talks from the new design collective Project 51.

Absolut Fringe September 10th-25th
One of Ireland's best festivals has an almost never-ending programme of contemporary and alternative theatre, a lot of which graduates to other festivals following first showings in Dublin. This is the beating heart of cutting edge Irish theatre, so get on it.

Galway Oyster Festival September 21st-25th
It often feels as though there's a festival in Galway every five minutes but that's because the city lends itself to nothing better than a good old shindig. The 57th International Oyster and Seafood Festival is such a party, filling the streets with locals and tourists keen on shellfish and the pints that go with them.

Culture Night September 23rd

Thirty towns and cities throw their doors open for the public to discover and wander through galleries, museums, historic buildings, cultural centres, studios and more, in this hugely successful exchange between the public and venues. culturenight.ie

Spirit of Folk September 23rd-25th
A new family-friendly folk festival in Dunderry Park, Co Meath brings together folk music, spirituality, storytelling, experimental archaeologists and craft-making. Looks like a good addition to the festival calendar, with a well-devised niche.

Green Village September 24th
Castletown Geoghegan's Mount Druid parkland plays host to a family-oriented one-day festival with music (The Stunning, Ryan Sheridan), political debate and poetry, country and bluegrass, surrounded by 200,000 trees. greenvillage.ie

Ulster Bank Dublin Theatre Festival September 29th - October 16th
The key event on the theatre calendar has one of its most intriguing programmes in a while, along with panel discussions, public interviews and workshops. A thoughtfully constructed series of productions and events. dublintheatrefestival.com - **Una Mullally**