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# UNITED STATES UNITED IRELAND

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## One Good Thing About Music

### A letter from Ireland

a Chara,

"One good thing about music, when it hits you feel no pain," sang Bob Marley on "Trench Town Rock." That phrase has echoed through the past week since we learnt of the death of Glen Hansard.

I have listened to his various bands and solo records for the last twenty-five years. I'd seen him play many times, including fundraising gigs for various causes. He was quintessentially Irish. The guy with the guitar in the late-night session, leading a chorus of Irish ballads, Bob Dylan numbers and rocking out.

My first reaction was to text a friend in the US who was a massive fan. His writing and voice were distinctly Irish but with a universal appeal. The power of music to unite, transcend borders and land on a common truth.

At the weekend I made my annual trip to the All Together Now festival in County Waterford. On Saturday afternoon, Christy Moore took to the stage as thousands packed the biggest tent on the site. When I was growing up in Belfast in the mid-eighties, Christy was the soundtrack to our summers: "Ordinary Man" and "Ride On", albums, and his band Moving Hearts were on constant repeat. His songs were staples of every Sunday Folk Night in the clubs across West Belfast. He sang of injustice, gave voice to the censored, and gave hope to struggling communities. He sang for us.

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under the sun. Christy started singing, and immediately the crowd responded. A spontaneous choir, united in song and stories of heartbreak and resistance. The crowd yelled out the words to "Back Home in Derry," a song written by IRA Hunger Striker Bobby Sands while on the Blanket Protest in Long Kesh Gaol. Bobby had written that "Our Revenge will be the laughter of our children." Forty-plus years on, and it is the singing of our children.

Later that night, Kneecap headlined the festival. They rap in Irish and English, telling the stories of their generation over hip-hop and rave beats. Their energy is infectious, and their message is uncompromising, opposing the genocide in Gaza, sectarianism and racism. They are proudly Irish Republican and drew the biggest crowd of the weekend. Twenty thousand leaping around, doing untold damage to their knees (or maybe that was just me.)

Kneecap are an unforeseen product of progress in the North of Ireland. The Irish language resurgence gathered pace as discrimination was challenged. A new confidence in Irish nationalism found expression in the language and culture. The Kneecap generation has demonstrated that the genie is not going back in the bottle.

The week ends back in Belfast for the Féile and the Fleadh. The Féile in West Belfast has been going since 1988. A festival established to provide a cultural and political programme to celebrate the community and promote dialogue and understanding. It is now the biggest community festival in Europe.

This is the first year that Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann has been held in Belfast. It is the world's largest festival of Irish traditional music and culture. Hundreds of thousands will throng the streets of Ireland's second city.

This is remarkable in a city that was once the Unionist Capital of the Northern State. A city that banned St. Patrick's Day Parades until 1997. It is now a shared city and better for it.

We have travelled far and created our own soundtrack, with republican ballads, the grace notes between the reels and jigs, with the beats of this generation.

Have a great weekend.

Is mise,

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**Ciarán Quinn is the Sinn Féin Representative to North America**

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## **New Issue of Éire Nua Out Now!**

The latest issue of Sinn Féin's online magazine dedicated to all matters relating to Irish unity - Éire Nua - is out now!

It features analysis, updates and perspectives on the growing conversation around Irish unity alongside contributions from across the movement and beyond.

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## Celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Catalpa's return to New York

Tickets are moving quickly - this event will sell out!

Can't make it to Belfast to learn about the 150th Anniversary of the returning of the Catalpa at Féile an Phobail? If you're in NY, you can join us at the New York Irish Center on August 19, 2026 to celebrate the anniversary! A special evening of story and song not to be missed!

[Tickets on sale now.](#)

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## **A celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the returning of the Catalpa**



**Join us for an evening of story and song to remember one of  
the most daring prison escapes and rescues in history!**

**Wednesday, August 19, 2026  
New York Irish Center  
7:00pm**

[PURCHASE TICKETS HERE](#)

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## **6th Annual Martin McGuinness Chieftains Walk NYC - Sun Sept 13**

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extraordinary legacy of leadership, peace, reconciliation, and the continuing journey toward a united Ireland.

This year, we are honored to welcome Martin's daughter, Gráinne Hargan, who will travel from Ireland to join us for the walk.

Whether you have walked with us before or are joining for the first time, we invite you to stand with friends from across the Irish-American community in support of the work of the Martin McGuinness Peace Foundation and our shared vision of peace, reconciliation, and Irish reunification.

## [MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION HERE](#)

**The Martin McGuinness Peace Foundation**

# 6TH ANNUAL CHIEFTAIN'S WALK

WALKING TOGETHER FOR PEACE, RECONCILIATION & A UNITED IRELAND

**SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 13 2026**

**SPECIAL GUEST**  
Gráinne Hargan  
Martin's daughter, traveling from Ireland to join us.

**PIER 25**  
West Street & N. Moore Street  
New York, NY

**9:00 AM**  
REGISTRATION & OPENING CELEBRATION

**10:00 AM**  
CHIEFTAIN'S WALK BEGINS

Walk with us along the beautiful Hudson River waterfront from Pier 25 to Pier 45 and back.

**HONORING MARTIN MCGUINNESS AND SUPPORTING THE WORK OF THE MARTIN MCGUINNESS PEACE FOUNDATION**

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