

Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney reads poetry at Centre Culturel in Paris

Thursday 13th June, 2013: Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, will today attend the Centre Culturel in Paris for a reading by Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney.

This reading is taking place as part of *Culture Connects*, the programme of cultural events which has been organised to mark Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Minister Deenihan will welcome guests to the reading which is taking place in the Centre Culturel and will later host invited guests at the Irish Embassy in the French capital.

Tonight's event will involve readings by Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney with contributions from Jacques Darras, a French poet, essayist and translator who is the current Président of the Marché de la Poésie and Patrick Hersant, Heaney's translator.

Speaking in advance of the reading Minister Deenihan commented:

“During Ireland’s Presidency of the European Union, Irish artists have performed in every member state of the EU. Paris has been a key city in our programme. For example, we have paid tribute to the extraordinary work and life of Eileen Gray in the capital this year, and later this month Irish musicians will take part in that wonderful night of music which takes place each year in Paris - the Fête de la Musique.

“The Centre Culturel has also hosted a diverse programme of events during the Presidency, and tonight we are honoured to hear Seamus Heaney, a man of whom we are deeply proud. His poetry captures the ordinary and makes it universally extraordinary, and he is without doubt one of the greatest exponents of Irish literature of our time.”

The Irish Presidency has focussed on stability, jobs and growth and Minister Deenihan has reminded those attending the event that the culture and creative sectors contribute significantly to the achievement of this objective.

Addressing the audience at the Irish Embassy Minister Deenihan noted that some 8.5 million people are employed across Europe in the cultural and creative sector, generating 4% of the EU's GDP.

“The arts allow us to demonstrate and celebrate our diversity in a way which fosters understanding and tolerance, but are also instrumental in supporting the creative and innovative economy that Europe needs right now,” concluded Minister Deenihan.

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