

**Maynooth College Gala Concert
'Celebrating 225 Years of Sacred Music'**

Featuring the combined choirs of Maynooth College joined with Professor Gerard Gillen as solo organist.

Sunday 16th February

Venue: St Patrick's College, Maynooth – College Chapel

The magnificent Gala Concert in the College Chapel on 16th February was a perfect blend of everything that is best at Maynooth and indeed a very worthy celebration of 225 years of sacred music in the College. The grandeur of the College Chapel was a perfect setting for the very carefully prepared renditions of Gregorian chant. The chants chosen by Darina McCarthy from the office of Saint Patrick were particularly appropriate. The singers clear and precise intonation made the chant sound almost effortless and allowed the intrinsic beauty of the song shine through. The choice of music sung by the seminary choir was also very appropriate with its mixture of pieces and arrangements by those who have been so long associated with the choir from Heinrich Beyer to John O'Keeffe and some older pieces. The choir was in top form with its very distinctive sound of well-controlled energy. Another highlight of the concert was the most impressive new setting of the Reproaches by Martin O'Leary. This is a difficult and challenging text to – Martin caught the spirit of the words beautifully in his spacious choral writing. The College Chapel Choir tackled other difficult repertoire with great success including Messiaen's *O Sacrum Convivium*. The other repertoire was very thoughtfully chosen including Ronan McDonagh's *Behold, a virgin bearing Him*. The idea of interspersing the choral works with organ pieces was very successful. Gerard Gillen's carefully chosen pieces were matched with excellent performances. It is a long time since I had enjoyed a concert as much as this so please give my congratulations to all involved and I wish you good luck with the rest of the celebrations during the year.

Kerry Houston
Director of Chapel Music
Trinity College Dublin