

metro life

Staying In & Going Out

ABOUT TOWN

GIG Paul Simon

Five years on from his sell-out show at The Point, the legendary singer-songwriter kicks off his European tour with old favourites and new tracks from *So Beautiful Or So What*

Tonight, Vicar Street, 58-59 Thomas Street D8, 7.30pm, €81.25 (sold out). Tel: 0818 719 300. www.paulsimon.com



CONCERT Orchestra Of The Age Of Enlightenment

Simon Rattle follows up his sell-out concert with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra two years ago with works by Haydn and Mozart – and pianists Katia and Marielle Labèque

Tonight, National Concert Hall, Earlsfort Terrace D2, 8pm, €40 to €85 (sold out). Tel: (01) 417 0000. www.nch.ie

GIG What The Folk?

Every Monday three bands battle it out before a public vote, the winner of which will make the final heat at the end of the month. Tonight's contenders are Miss Paula Flynn, Marianne Lee and The Travelloes

Tonight, Workman's Club, 10 Wellington Quay D2, 8pm, free. Tel: 0818 719 300. www.theworkmansclub.com

BOOK NOW

CONCERT

Lord Of The Rings

One of the many reasons why Peter Jackson's LOTR trilogy was so awesome was composer Howard Shore's spine-tingling score, which helped bring the fantasy of Middle Earth vividly to life. This autumn more than 200 performers, including the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, Our Lady's Choral Society and RTÉ Cór na nÓg, are sharing the bill in a unique live performance to accompany the film

Nov 18 & 19, Grand Canal Theatre, Grand Canal Square, Docklands D2, 7.30pm, €39.50 to €69.50. Tel: 0818 719 377. www.grandcanaltheatre.ie



THE HOTTEST TICKETS IN TOWN

We have two pairs of tickets to see **LORD OF THE RINGS**

Nov 18, Grand Canal Theatre

For your chance to win, just answer the question below and text **LIFE** followed by your full answer, e-mail address and name to **53133** (texts cost €0.60 + standard network charge).

Q After an attack from the Ringwraiths in LOTR, Frodo seeks refuge where?

A Rivendell **B** Mount Doom

Terms & Conditions: The competition closes at noon today. The winner(s) will be chosen at random from the entries received and notified by telephone. Entrants must be over 18 years of age. Usual Metro Herald rules apply. The editor's decision is final. SP, Oxygen8, 4th Floor, Malt House North, Grand Canal Quay D2. Customer service number: 0818 286 606.



Art Interview Dublin Art Tours Culture challenge

Cathy Roche tells Lucy White about her mission to wrestle art from the clutches of academia with her gallery tours

A second language has evolved around the art world that can be quite off-putting. There's the sense that if you don't have that language to express yourself then you're somehow incapable of actually enjoying the artwork. My aim with Dublin Art Tours is to take the pomp and pageantry out of art viewing, and get people to simply relax and enjoy what they see.'

I'm in Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane, and Cathy Roche is explaining to me the reason behind her new venture. We're stood in front of Philip Guston's 1969 painting, *Outskirts*; a ruddy, neo-expressionist work of strange, amorphous shapes, cartoonish lines and flat planes. We ponder the flesh tones and hard lines before she adds: 'When people first see this they often think, "A child can do this". But when they really look at it, and they're given the background – that the hooded figures are the Ku Klux Klan, who were active during Guston's childhood in Los Angeles – they start to see it in a different light.'

Historical context certainly helps 'understand' an artwork although Roche, who offers a chronological journey through art history in both The Hugh Lane and the National Gallery (once its refurbishment is completed), is just as keen to encourage a more gut instinct approach. She says: 'Ultimately, you either like an artwork or you don't. It either speaks to you or it doesn't. There's a common misconception that there's a right or a wrong way of looking at art, which is very sad – and is why I'm trying to blow off the cobwebs, bring art back to the general public. It's not just for academics and historians.'

All said, she clearly knows her Arp from her Albo. As a former art student myself, I tell her to assume total ignorance on my part – and her canny

'Sean Keating – a principal painter of the Irish free State – was of the opinion that modern art would destroy art'

knack of making art accessible without dumbing down is impressive. Starting with print-outs of Raphael's *The School Of Athens*, and the optical concerns of the Renaissance artists, she then leads me to Corot's *Rome From The Pincio*, a curious little preparatory painting in gallery six, which, with its obscured view of St Peter's Basilica, is a powerful study of light and shade. And then on to Impressionism (of which Hugh Lane was a keen collector, including Monet's luminous *Lavacourt Under Snow*), a then-radical art movement that has since become 'pop', with water lilies appearing on everything from playing cards to tea towels.

But while French painters were rendering water lilies and working girls across Europe's parks and brothels, Irish art was in the dark ages. 'For art to flourish you need peace and prosperity – and Ireland had neither for a long time,' explains Roche, as we approach Osbourne's sun-dappled *Tea In The Garden*, which stylistically looks more like the south of France than south Dublin, borrowing from Manet, Monet et al. 'Obviously, we have *The Book Of Kells*, and Celtic art, but around the time of this movement going on in Europe, and the phenomenon of the Grand Tour, nothing was happening here because a lot of money left Ireland and went to England. Unless you were from a very wealthy family, such as John Osbourne and Mainie Jellett, you couldn't afford to go to Paris to study.'

'And when Jellett came back to Ireland to display her abstract art she was highly criticised. Sean Keating – a principal painter of the Irish Free State and one-time president of the Royal Hibernian Academy – was hugely influential here but he was of the opinion that modern art would destroy art. So the work that students were studying at the foundation of the State was very classical, all portraits and landscapes. But the students revolted in the 1960s and began to study all kinds of art, and now of course we've really come on in leaps and bounds.'

And if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. In addition to Roche's gallery tours, she offers the Complete Art Experience, which involves a morning tour followed by an informal painting session with Dublin artist Karen Ebbs.

I wonder if she and Karen have spotted any emerging talent out of these sessions. 'It's very interesting to see what people do,' admits Roche. 'No one goes in there thinking, "I'm going to paint a Caravaggio". But see Monet; he can make a door with three lines. When you look closely at the gaps in his paintings, the brush strokes, you see how he put it together. And if Monet can show you the image of a door like that then it makes you think, "Well, so can I".' Now that sounds like a challenge...

For more info on Dublin Art Tours, or to make a booking, visit www.dublinarttours.ie



ART ATTACK

How to work an art gallery by Cathy Roche

- Start with a brochure of the gallery, which in most instances has Top Ten highlights. From that, work out what you want to see and where.
- Work your way around your action plan and then...
- Have a coffee break! What is the most important thing about art? It's coffee. You must have a break because people try to see too much otherwise, and then come out

- feeling confused.
- Go back to your list and ask yourself if you've seen everything you wanted to see. Go back in, and stand in the middle of the room. Look around you and pick out something that really speaks to you. Go over, see it in detail, the size of it. Ask yourself: What am I looking at? Why has the artist put those lines there? What do they want me to see? Examine it, enjoy it – and leave!



Picture: James Abbott McNeill Whistler at Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane