Fireworks to ensure Euro parties start with a bang

Paul Melia

CELEBRATIONS marking the accession of 10 new states to the European Union will kick off on Saturday night with a huge fireworks display on Sunday morning in Dublin.

The display, which thousands of spectators are expected to attend, will begin at 6am today. But the celebrations aren't limited to the capital.

Instead, a music concert featuring Irish and Polish musicians, while the Last Concert of Old Europe will take place in Galway with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra and the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra.

On Saturday, Merrion Square in Dublin will host a European Fair, transforming the city centre into a European bazaar.

Outlookers can expect to see moving European masterpieces, Austrian folk-dresses, Romanian street theatre and the racy old Mr Punch in a traditional Punch and Judy show.

Children's sports events will also be given out by former D'Unbelievables' star Joe Kenny.

Vocational Elevation, the world's largest interactive art project on O'Connell Street, continues over the weekend, allowing people to design their own light sculptures over Dublin's sky.

People can design their own installations at www.vocational-elevation.com.

Waterford, which hosts Malta, will see a European Fair on Saturday along with the Kilcrea Gospel Choir and Collins News and Limes Restaurant at Christchurch Cathedral.

Cork, which hosts Slovakia, will see the Euro dance theatre anti-maneuvers and a shop window with an installation inspired by the flag of Slovakia.

King John's Castle in Limerick will welcome Slovenia with a clay-toned music festival, while Drogheda will host Latvia as the Colpo theatre company revives, reconsiders and performs a new multimedia theatre piece - all in the space of one day.

In Sligo, host town to Hungary, the celebrated Sligo Operatic Theatre company in conjunction with Down Syndrome Ireland will present an adaptation of the Hungarian folks tale Kuna Jai Miholics (The King's Little Michael).

Kilkenny will host the Parade of Colours, inspired by the symbols and imagery of Ireland and the Czech Republic, with street-theatre group Red Belt.

Bray, Co Wicklow, will welcome Cyprus with a seafront carnival while Kilkenny will host music from Ukraine, internationally-acclaimed Lithuanian folk musicians, who will provide lively conclusions to the European Fair.