

Sound Post

NEWSLETTER • OF • THE • MUI: MUSICIANS' UNION OF IRELAND

€200,000 Musical Capital Scheme and Music Day Grants

The Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Jimmy Deenihan, TD, recently confirmed capital funds of €200,000 for the Music Capital Scheme and love:live music/national Music Day 2013. Both initiatives are managed by Music Network.

The Music Capital Scheme provides funding for the purchase of musical instruments to both non-professional performing groups/ensembles and professional performing artists; love:live music, Ireland's National Music Day, celebrates the value of music in communities throughout the country on 21st June each year.

Commenting on the Minister's announcement, Sharon Rollston, Chief Executive Officer, Music Network, said: 'Music Network is very pleased to be able to continue the Music Capital Scheme in 2012, as one of a range of supports we offer to Irish musicians. As well as individual artists, among others the scheme supports youth bands, ensembles, orchestras, community initiatives and resource organisations working in a diverse range of genres including rock, pop and contemporary as well as classical, traditional Irish, Baroque, jazz and electronic music. The high number of applications to the scheme each year brings home the level of need that exists in the area of capital provision for music.'

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Dublin Symphony Orchestra (DSO) Concert, NCH, 9th June, 2012, l-r: Polly Ballard (cello), Elaine Clark (violin), David Clark (piano), soloists in Beethoven's Triple Concerto, with Simone Orr (Chairperson, DSO) and Fergus O'Carroll (Conductor). (see also page 5)

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€200,000 Musical Capital Scheme and Music Day Grants

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Rollston added: 'love:live music almost doubled in size this year on last year's event, with over 300 free live music events and an estimated 45,000 people taking part. Again, we are delighted to receive confirmation of the continued support of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for this initiative in 2013'.

Information, application packs and guidelines are available at: www.music-network.ie/musicians/funding/.



Sharon Rollston (Photo: Music Network)

Music Royalties Revenue Decline

The Irish Music Rights Organisation (IMRO) has reported a fall of 4% in revenue last year to €36.5 million. Commenting on this development, Vincent Finn, Chief Executive, said the slight fall-off had been expected and reflected the overall economic climate. 'IMRO tends to track the economic performance of the hospitality, broadcasting and live music sectors, which continue to be affected by the downturn', he said.

Last year, IMRO paid €32.16 million in royalties to its 8,500 members. Some 37% of IMRO's revenue derives from public performance sources, such as shops, bars, offices and live concerts; radio and television broadcasters pay about 33%; and the balance comes from cable providers and overseas sources.

IMRO, which is owned by its members, employs fifty staff. Its operating costs of €4.69 million last year were fractionally lower than the €4.73 million recorded the previous year.



Paul Brady

Among IMRO's board of directors well-known singer-songwriters as Paul Brady, Eleanor McEvoy and Charlie McGettigan.

New MUI RTÉ NSO Committee

The recently elected MUI RTÉ NSO Section Committee for 2012-2013 is composed of Polly Ballard, Matthew Billing, David Clark and David MacKenzie. Earlier this year, an interim committee comprising Ballard, Billing, Clark, Chris Long, Niall O'Loughlin, Connie Tanner and Edward Tapceanu served for several months.

I wish to join the Musicians' Union of Ireland

(BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE)

Name: _____

Address _____

E-mail: _____

Tel: _____

Please return completed form to the Musicians' Union, Liberty Hall, Dublin 1.

MUI RTÉ Freelance Orchestral Daily Rates

Effective from 29 June 2009

Tutti: €149.49

Sub-Principal: €159.72

Principal: €173.18

UNION DUES/ARREARS

MUI members paying union dues by cash/cheque, who may possibly be in arrears, are requested to contact the MUI office as soon as possible to ensure that they remain benefit members of the Union.

SOUND POST AND FREE EXPRESSION

A forum of free expression, *Sound Post* welcomes material from MUI members. Unless explicitly stated, the views expressed in this newsletter, including goods and services promoted in advertisements, are not necessarily endorsed by the Union.

Sound Post is compiled and edited by John Swift, former MUI Secretary, and produced by the Communications Department of SIPTU. Material may be e-mailed to John Swift johnpswift45@gmail.com or forwarded to the MUI office.

Chris Long, Union Activist, Resigns from RTÉ

Chris Long, who resigned from the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) in September, was a leading union activist over many years. Following his musical education at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, Kent-born Long worked as a freelance double bassist in Britain from the mid-1980s to 1990. In May 1990, he was appointed as a double bass player with what is now the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra (NSO).

A member of the (British) Musicians' Union from 1984-90, Long joined SIPTU in 1990. Over the last couple of decades or so, he has been a member of the SIPTU-MUI RTÉ NSO Section Committee for some ten years, including four as President.

In 2003, Chris Long was elected founding Vice-President of the Musicians' Union of Ireland (MUI) and, at the time of his retirement, he had served as an MUI Executive Committee member for some seven years, including four as Vice-President.

Long was actively involved in all the major union events since 1990, including the RTÉ musicians' lockout, 1991, the RTÉ strike, 1992, the founding of the MUI in 2003, the successful MUI campaign of the mid-2000s for the employment of indigenous musicians at Wexford Festival Opera, and the ongoing campaign for the removal of restrictions on the negotiating rights of freelance musicians. Moreover, it was on Long's initiative that the MUI affiliated to the



Chris Long

Irish Anti-War Movement (IAWM) in 2004. A regular participant in the IAWM's many public demonstrations in Dublin, Long was elected as the MUI's representative to that body.

In more recent years, Long has been centrally involved in the protracted and ongoing negotiations relating to RTÉ's major financial crisis which has led to jobs losses and reduced pay and conditions. He was also a contributor to the MUI newsletter, *Sound Post*.

The departure of Chris Long, who is returning to Britain after a period of twenty-two years in Ireland, is a major loss for the MUI.

European Court of Justice Favourable Sick Leave Ruling

The European Court of Justice issued a ruling in June 2012 that a worker who becomes ill while on paid annual leave is entitled to claim back, at a later date, the time he or she was sick.

The ruling followed a case taken to the Spanish supreme court by a group of Spanish trade unions under the 2003 Working Time Directive. The Spanish Court referred to the European Court a question on the interpretation of the leave provision of the directive.

The European Court ruled it was irrelevant at what point an illness arises. It said entitlement to paid annual leave must be regarded as a particularly important principle of EU social law, which is expressly enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.



Tim Kirwan (Photo: Pat Gantley)

Sounds Impressive

...The concert included an extra, when violinist Timothy Kirwan, appearing for the last time before retirement after a remarkable 48 years of service, took over the leader's chair for an invigoratingly sharp, fizzy and precise performance of Glinka's 'Russlan and Ludmilla' Overture.

Michael Dervan, Music Critic, the *Irish Times*, 15th May 2012, on the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra concert at the National Concert Hall, Dublin, on 4th May 2012.

Russian Teenager Wins Dublin International Piano Competition

Nineteen-year-old Nikolay Khozyainov, a native of Russia, won the first prize of €15,000 at the Dublin International Piano Competition in May. Second prize of €10,000 went to Jiayan Sun from China; third prize of €7,500 was awarded to Andrejs Osokins from Latvia; while fourth prize of €5,000 was won by USA-born Alexander Bernstein.

The highest placed Irish competitor, Nadene Fiorentini, won a series of



Nikolay Khozyainov

prizes, including the €3,500 Seán O'Connor Bursary, the €1,500 Charles J. Brennan Prize, and the RTÉ and National Concert Hall Prizes of a concerto with the RTÉ NSO and a début recital, respectively.

The next Dublin International Piano Competition will take place from 15th-26th May, 2015.

Vita Cortext Workers Supported by Christy Moore

Not for the first time, singer-songwriter, Christy Moore, paid tribute to the former SIPTU Vita Cortex workers by inviting them to appear at his live gig at the Marquee concert in Cork in late June. Four months earlier, Moore had played a fundraising concert for the twenty-three workers during their five-month occupation of the Cork plant in pursuit of redundancy payments.

Support for the SIPTU campaign came from many quarters and, aside from Christy Moore, who dedicated his song, *Ordinary Man*, to the workers, many other well-known figures pledged their support, including Sir Alex Ferguson, manager of Manches-



Christy Moore

ter United; Katie Taylor, World Champion boxer; Cillian Murphy, the actor; former Irish international soccer player, Paul McGrath; and Noam Chomsky, the philosopher, historian and human rights campaigner.

The dispute, which commenced on the 16th December, 2011, was finally resolved in May when the Vita Cortex workers received their final redundancy payments.

Daniel O'Donnell Honoured

In what he described as the biggest honour of his career, popular Irish singer, Daniel O'Donnell, received the freedom of Co. Donegal in June. The award was in recognition of 'his contribution to music and the ambassadorial role he has undertaken for Donegal for decades'.

The fifty-year-old singer is only the fifth person to be so honoured, the previous recipients being the Irish international goalkeepers, Shay Given and Packie Bonner; songwriter, Phil Coulter; and the Brennan family of Clannad.

At a ceremony marking the occasion in the County House, Lifford, O'Donnell was joined by many guests, including songwriter, Pete St. John, and the Canadian Ambassador to Ireland, Loyola Ahern. Daniel O'Donnell said he was genuinely overwhelmed by the honour: 'This is a privilege that I never expected and I am delighted and thrilled...I am honoured and humbled'.



Daniel O'Donnell



Tommy Makem

Makem to be Honoured

Tommy Makem, the renowned Irish folk singer, is to be honoured in his native town of Keady, Co. Armagh, by a new, multi-million community and arts centre which is to be named after him. Work on the new facility is scheduled to commence early next year. It has also been proposed that the town square in Keady be renamed 'Makem Square'.

Makem made his name in Ireland and overseas as a solo artist and with the famous Clancy Brothers.



Larry Cunningham

Death of Larry Cunningham

One of the legends of the Irish showbands scene, Larry Cunningham, died at the age of seventy-four on 28th September. Born in Clooneen, Granard, Co. Longford, in 1938, Cunningham was a carpenter by trade. Initially a part-time musician, he played with a céili band in Derby for a period before returning to Ireland where he performed with the Grafton Showband.

His breakthrough came in June 1963 when he was fronting the Mighty Avons Showband at the Orchid Ballroom, Lifford, Co. Donegal. Playing support to Jim Reeves, who walked off stage over an out-of-tune piano, Cunningham consolidated his status as Ireland's Jim Reeves by completing the American singer's set. When Reeves was killed in a plane crash the following year, Cunningham honoured him with his recording, *Tribute to Jim Reeves*, which sold 40,000 copies within a fortnight in Britain. It was also with that recording that Cunningham became the first Irish-based artist to break into the British pop charts.

Further success followed with what was probably his most popular hit, *Lovely Leitrim*, which was inspired by his mother, a sean-nós singer from Leitrim. The song was No. 1 in Ireland's Top Ten for four weeks. In 1966, Cunningham and the Mighty Avons attracted a crowd of 6,850 at the Galtymore Ballroom, Cricklewood, London.

In a music career spanning half a century, Cunningham performed at the Royal Albert Hall, Carnegie Hall and Grand Old Opry and played with the likes of Johnny Cash, Hank Williams junior and Loretta Lynn.

For many years, Cunningham was a member of the trade union, the Irish Federation of Musicians and Associated Professions.

Larry Cunningham is survived by his wife, Beatrice, and their four children.



The Dublin Symphony Orchestra Gala 40th Anniversary Concert, National Concert Hall, Dublin, 31st March 2007.

The Dublin Symphony Orchestra - Making Overtures for 45 years

By Simone Orr

In 1967 Lyndon B. Johnson was leader of the 'free world', while in Ireland Éamon de Valera occupied the Áras and Fianna Fáil was in power with Jack Lynch as Taoiseach. It was a year of new innovations and a time of optimism.

In South Africa, Christiaan Barnard performed the first heart transplant. The first live television satellite link-up in the world featured the Beatles performing *All You Need Is Love* to an audience of over 400 million people. It was the year Francis Chichester became the first man to sail around the world single handedly. Elvis married Priscilla. Dustin Hoffman got seduced by Mrs. Robinson in *The Graduate* and the first disco opened in London. You could say it was the summer of love and the winter of our discotheque.

Modern classical music was following its own peculiar path and the world was exposed to what was termed 'minimal music' as epitomised by Steve Reich and Philip Glass.

It was against this backdrop, forty-five years ago, that the Dublin Symphony Orchestra (DSO) stepped on to the stage of the Eccles Street convent hall on Sunday, November 12th, 1967, and under the baton of Colin Block performed its first concert. The programme included the *Egmont* Overture by Beethoven, the *Rosamunde* ballet music by Schubert, the Piano Concerto in A minor by Schumann (with soloist Veronica McSwiney), and Brahms' Symphony No. 2.

Admission was five shillings (students 2 shillings and sixpence) and the programme notes sold for a reasonable three pennies. By all accounts, the concert was very well received and so began a musical journey that continues to this day.

Three members of the Orchestra who played in that concert still perform with us and coincidentally, they all play in the first violin section: Caitriona McKenna, Margaret Mulvey and Seirse McCraith. Each has also led the orchestra on many occasions in their own inimitable style.

Three other members who have been with the orchestra for over 40 years are David K'Eogh (trombone), Stephanie Griffith (leader of the viola section), Rosney Nulty (leader of the second violin section and orchestra archivist) and Howard Freeman (trumpet). It is this amazing dedication that has held the Orchestra together for so many years.

The orchestra attracts members from many walks of life, many of whom have affiliations with various unions such as the ASTI, CWU, IMPACT and the INO, to name but a few.

The DSO has enjoyed a special relationship with RTÉ through the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO), or RTÉ Symphony Orchestra as it was known back in the 1960s. Three of our principal conductors have been members of the NSO: Colin Block (horn) was the first conductor (1967-77), Pdraig O'Connor (viola) the second (1978-1983), John Hughes, Music Department, RTÉ, the third (1984-1997), and Fergus O'Carroll (Section Principal Horn), our present conductor, who has guided us since 1997.

From 2005 until 2007 we performed with Ciaran Crilly as our Principal Guest Conductor. Ciaran is also a guest conductor with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra.

John Kinsella who was Head of Music in RTÉ until 1988 is a patron of the DSO and also has been a member of our viola section. He has composed a huge body of work including ten symphonies. John composed the Celebration Overture especially for the DSO to commemorate the Orchestra's 40th anniversary in 2007.

One big change from the ensemble that made its debut 45 years ago is the multi-national make up of the present orches-

tra. We now have members from Europe and beyond such as Bogdan Rusin (Poland), Gundula McKeever (Germany), Noemie Soules (France), Vincent Riou (Brittany), Martin Smutny (Czech Republic), Philip Ilten (USA), Nicolaus Gregory (Malaysia) and Karolina Jabezula (Poland).

Over the past number of years, we have welcomed many foreign students and wandering minstrels who have found themselves at our door through our website (www.dublinsymphony.org). Our rehearsals take place weekly from September to June and we perform a number of concerts every year.

So what induces fifty or so amateur and semi-professional musicians to brave the elements and congregate every Tuesday night in St Louis' School in Rathmines to play music composed a couple of centuries ago? I think the answer lies in Berthold Auerbach's lovely quote: Music washes away from the soul the dust of every day life.

And that's it. We rehearse. We perform. We are purified.

I would like to thank Brian Foley (Principal Double Bass) for his archival work in relation to this article.

The next concert by the DSO will be held in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, in December.

Dublin-born Simone Orr (2nd Violin) is Chairperson of the Dublin Symphony Orchestra. A general practitioner nurse, she is a member of the trade union, the Irish Nurses' Organisation (INO).



Simone Orr

Next year, 2013, marks an important anniversary of the trade union movement, a time of major upheaval in Liberty Hall when prevailing circumstances brought matters to a boil, causing radical changes which represented new hope for many, and a new outlet of expression for the downtrodden worker was born. I am speaking of course about the founding of the Clé Club in 2003. What? The Lockout? Oh well of course there is that too... but we'll get around to that in due course.

It is sad to say that Dublin is sometimes looked down upon by certain institutions of traditional music. At times it seems that Dublin is "not quite as Irish" as, for instance, Clare, Sligo or Kerry, each of which boasts long histories of distinctive styles and highly regarded native musicians, but Dublin has a right to take its place among the great cultural centres, with its own crop of unique musicians, not least of which would be the Potts family, from the Liberties, and the O'Connor family. During the 1960s, Mick O'Connor was the leader of the Castle Céilí band and since those days he and his wife, Ann, have produced a new generation of fine musicians, including internationally renowned fiddler, Liam O'Connor.

Liberty Hall also has a long tradition of facilitating culture in the city centre. The trade union movement worldwide has always had its share of musicians, singers, poets and writers who have understood that the battle for better wages and conditions does not stop there, but represents a constant striv-



Seán Tyrrell

ing towards human fulfilment, for which culture plays a central role. James Larkin and James Connolly were known to have vision in this regard, Connolly commenting on the founding of a new theatre in Liberty Hall in February 1916 as: "Next to the revolution, the greatest event of 1916." Delia Larkin, sister of Jim, formed the union choir in February 1912, which led to the formation of a drama group four months later. The Irish Workers' Dramatic Class (trained by Delia Larkin) made its debut on St Stephen's Night 1912 with four one-act plays.

As part of the millennium celebrations, in 2003, SIPTU decided to renovate and re-

THE CLÉ CLUB

TRADITIONAL MUSIC

A Decade of

By Nora Geraghty

structure the cultural space in Liberty Hall. This was seen as a means of reviving the historic role of that venue in the cultural life of the city and honouring the founders of the ITGWU.

Traditional musician and MUI member Des Geraghty, then president of SIPTU, resolved that the new space should be a welcoming location for all those interested in the arts, and put a particular emphasis on community and trade-union based traditional music and song.

The Clé Club was founded to correspond with the opening of the new theatre and bar. Founding members included: Sally Corr; Tom Crean; Séamus Dooley; Nóra Geraghty; Jimmy Jordan; Jimmy Kelly; Mary Maher; Jerry O'Reilly; Manus O'Riordan; Noel Pocock; and Kathleen Smyth. It was the unanimous feeling of the founding committee that the different strands of culture should not be kept separate, as is often the case where you have music sessions, singing circles, céilithe or poetry readings, but that the Clé Club should offer a well-rounded variety of themes and artists through different disciplines.

It was agreed that to facilitate full participation, a focus on the "living tradition" should be encouraged and that singers, musicians, poets and dancers, dabblers and aficionados should all be welcome to contribute performances. Although this "open door" policy may have seemed like a gamble at the time, it has so far worked very well, possibly because the high standard set in the early years established a norm, and the respectful attention paid to all who contribute has consistently given newcomers the confidence to rise to that standard.

Another important principle of the club from the outset has been affordability. This is reflected in the low cover charge (currently €5) which is maintained no matter who the invited guest might be, and there have been some very prestigious guests indeed!



Nora and Des Geraghty

CLÉ UB



MUSIC AND SONG

of Culture

Nóra Geraghty

Among those who have performed at the club are: Roisin Elsafty, Niamh Parsons, Peadar Ó Ceannabhain, John McEvoy, John Wynne, Liam O'Connor, Sean McKeeon, Mary Mac Partlan, Thom Moore, Paudie O'Connor, John O'Brien, Cathal McConnell, Vinnie Caprani, Peter "the Racker" Donnelly, Sibéal Davitt, Joe Aitken, Geordie Murison, Noel O'Grady, Damien Dempsey and Andy Irvine. This list is by no means exhaustive, but gives a flavour of the diversity and richness of culture embraced by the Clé Club.

Larkin was famously described by Seán O'Casey as a man who would put a rose in a vase as well as a loaf of bread on the table, and it is this ethos that the Clé Club has nurtured over the years, providing entertainment for the masses and an impressive display for visiting trade unionists from other countries, who have always been most impressed with the club and many of whom have kept in touch often sending others who have come with high expectations and left satisfied.



Manus O'Riordan in full voice

The Clé Club house band, Liffey Banks, has played at trade-union events including fundraisers, conferences and demonstrations all over Ireland and internationally. Members of the Clé Club have come to regard the club, its band and many contributing singers as something of a "cultural wing" of the trade union movement.

In 2009, to correspond to the anniversary of the founding of the ITGWU by Jim Larkin, the club set up an annual festival, The Larkin Hedge School. Now in its fourth year the festival, which is based in Liberty Hall, has provided top-quality lectures, classes, workshops, concerts, poetry readings and sessions, and all with the same emphasis on affordability and

full participation. The festival was chaired by Séamus Dooley, Irish Secretary of the National Union of Journalists, and run by a small but committed group. From the outset the LHS had the support of SIPTU, the NUJ and other unions as well as Poetry Ireland, which has been an enthusiastic provider of poets and sponsor of poetry events. Mick O'Connor was the first Hedge Master, giving an illustrated talk on the history of that famous Dublin institution the Pipers' Club.

In 2011 the LHS changed its date from June to May in order to join forces with the ICTU and run events in conjunction with the Congress May Day festival, a week-long series of cultural trade-union events.

Also in 2011 the LHS added an ambitious project in the form of the schools outreach programme, sending musicians into the classrooms to talk to teenagers about music and song. SIPTU's Tony Murphy made overtures to local school the Larkin Community College and the response was encouraging. The initial project was well received and it was decided to broaden the scope in 2012. Poetry Ireland agreed to support a project to have poet Macdara Woods and piper Néillidh Mulligan combine forces to keep the youngsters entertained and evoke their curiosity.

The Clé Club has moved house a couple of times since 2003, moving to the Stag's Head, No. 1 Dame Court, in 2011 after a spell in The Flowing Tide. Committee membership has changed over the years, as has membership of the house band, Liffey Banks, but the club continues to offer excellent value. Although it has attained a certain amount of prestige and is certainly well known in trade union and traditional music circles, earning its own entry in the second edition of Fintan Vallely's Companion to Irish Traditional Music, it has maintained an informal, relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. A great place to relax after a hard day fighting for the rights of workers!

Information about the Clé Club and the Larkin Hedge School can be found on the club's website www.cleclub.wetpaint.com or you can contact the club at cleclub@gmail.com.

Nóra Geraghty is a member of both the MUI and the NUJ. Editor of 'Irish Journalist', official newsletter of the NUJ in Ireland, she is also Equality Officer of the NUJ's Dublin Branch.



Nóra Geraghty



Banjofest, l-r: Seán Óg McKenna, Pdraig Drew and Barney McKenna

Arts Sector Supports Thousands of Jobs

According to a new independent report published on 7th October, public funding through the Arts Council supports almost 2,270 jobs in the sector. The report states that the posts generate annual turnover of €184 million and a return of €41.8 million in terms of tax revenues, including income tax, PRSI and VAT. The wider arts sector supports 20,755 jobs and contributes €336 million in taxes.

The report, Assessment of the Economic Impact of the Arts in Ireland, which was written by Indecon and published by the Arts Council, reflects the position in 2011 and updates Indecon's 2009 report on the sector.

Over the five year period up to 2012, the Arts Council's grant-in-aid has been reduced by €22 million or 25%, resulting in 'very significant job losses since the 2009 report and proportionate losses of VAT and other taxes to the exchequer. In 2011, total Arts Council funding amounted to €60 million.

The latest Indecon report states that the ability of arts organisations to support employment is directly related to overall income of the arts organisations. Pat Moylan, Chairperson of the Arts Council, said that the report showed that, 'with smart invest

ment, the arts are capable of stimulating more job creation and economic activity at a time we need it most'.

When the impact of the creative industries, including film, video, publishing, advertising, software, radio, television, libraries, archives museums, etc., is included, the arts contribute €4.7 billion to the economy, supporting some 77,000 jobs.



Pat Moylan (Photo: Arts Council)

Sounds Impressive

It has been said of the American opera sensation Danielle de Niese that, with her around, "not much else matters". The remarkable thing about her Irish debut, with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra..., was that the whole performance, and not just the star attraction, mattered very much indeed.

...Under its regular guest conductor Neil Thomson...they [the RTÉ Concert Orchestra] collectively dispatched the accompaniments with versatile stylistic aplomb and ensured that their own four numbers, by Mozart, Gluck, de Falla and Donizetti, were immeasurably more than programme fillers.

Andrew Johnstone, Music Critic, the *Irish Times*, 29th August, 2012, on the RTÉ Concert Orchestra concert at the National Concert Hall, Dublin, on 24th August, 2012.



RTÉ Concert Orchestra (Photo: RTÉ)



Tim Kirwan (Photo: Pat Gantley)

RTÉ NSO Violinist, Tim Kirwan, Retires

Following a remarkable career of some forty-eight years as a violinist with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra (NSO), Tim Kirwan retired on 4th May last. Having first performed with the Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra (RÉSO) as a freelance player in 1964, Dublin-born Kirwan was appointed in August 1968 as a member of what was by then the RTÉ SO. Co-Leader of the RTÉ SO from 1984-87, Kirwan led most of the concerts during the years 1985-86. Blessed with stamina and good health, Kirwan hardly missed a day through sick-leave and displayed outstanding commitment, professionalism and dedication throughout his forty-eight years as an orchestral player.

Prior to embarking on a musical career, Kirwan studied the violin at the Municipal School of Music (now the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama), Dublin, where his teachers were Clara Greene and Jaroslav Vaněček.

At the time of his retirement, Kirwan had been a union member for almost half a century. He joined the Irish Federation of Musicians and Associated Professions in 1964 and, for seven successive years from 1969-76, and again for the two-year period from 1977-79, he was a member of the Federation's Dublin No. 2 Branch (RTÉ Orchestral Players and Singers) Committee. For the final three years of his career, he was a member of the MUI RTÉ NSO Section Committee.

Among union achievements during Kirwan's period on the Committee in the 1960s and 1970s were significant special pay awards for musicians and singers in 1969 and 1974; and the introduction of supplementary fees for musicians participating in public concerts in which RTÉ was collaborating with external bodies or individuals, and for which there was an admission charge.

His more recent period on the MUI RTÉ NSO Section Committee was dominated by the repercussions of the major financial crisis in RTÉ, including job losses and pay reductions.

William Vincent Wallace (1812-65)

A Bicentenary Appreciation

By Dr. David Grant

William Wallace was probably the greatest musician to come out of Ireland in the 19th century, being a virtuoso of international renown on both violin and piano. He made a trail-blazing world tour in the period 1835-45, the first known virtuoso of any nation to do so. On his eventual arrival in London, in 1845, he achieved fame overnight as a composer with his first opera *Maritana* which, becoming among the most popular operas in English worldwide, made his name internationally. However, its very popularity has obscured Wallace's versatility as a composer (for example, he published some 200 piano pieces and many songs), and has eclipsed his five later completed operas, one of which, *The Amber Witch* (1861), is among the most ambitious grand operas in English of the whole 19th century.

Wallace was born on 11 March 1812 in Waterford city, where his father, Spencer, was stationed for a year as a musician with the North Mayo Regiment of Militia from Ballina, his home town. Wallace's mother was Elizabeth McKenna of Limerick, where the couple married in August 1810. In 1816, following Waterloo, the regiment returned to Ballina, where William grew up in the years to 1823, when his father joined the 29th Regiment as bandmaster. At that stage, there were four children: a second son Spencer Wellington, born 1814, with daughters Susanna and Eliza following in 1818 and 1820 respectively. Susanna probably died young, but the others, under their father's tutelage, all became professional musicians. William far outshone his siblings in musical ability, however, and when the family left the army in 1826 and moved to Dublin, he developed his talents on violin and piano to virtuoso level. In this he was greatly influenced by the internationally-known exponents J.B. Logier on piano, based in Dublin, and the visiting virtuoso, Niccolò Paganini, who played at the Dublin Music Festival of 1831. Hearing Paganini made Wallace determined to become a violin virtuoso, and in 1834, before he left Dublin for Australia, he played a violin concerto of his own at a concert in the Rotunda. The death of the Wallaces' mother in Dublin c. 1830 was probably why William married, at age 19, the even younger Isabella Kelly of Blackrock, a decision which brought much unhappiness to both of them subsequently.

The Wallaces, including the father's sec-

ond wife and young family, emigrated to Australia in 1835-36, where William stayed two years. Being the first virtuoso to visit Sydney, he was hailed there as "the Australian Paganini". His marriage in disarray, Wallace, leaving his wife and son Willy there with relatives, crossed the Pacific and travelled on northwards to the Caribbean in the years 1838-40, and finally entered the United States. He was fêted as a virtuoso on violin and piano in New York in 1843-44, where his first compositions were published. After the success of *Maritana*, the ambitious Wallace moved into the field of grand opera with his subsequent works *Matilda* (1847) and *Lurline* (1847-48) for London. But the first proved only a critical success, and the second had to be shelved for various reasons, and was not staged until 1860. In January 1848, Wallace, assisted by Franz von Suppé, had the distinction of conducting the continental première of *Maritana* at the prestigious Theater an der Wien in Vienna.

In the years 1850-60, Wallace returned to New York along with his sister Eliza, where he lived with his second partner, the German-born pianist Héléne Stoepel. They had two sons. He earned a living principally as a successful composer of salon music, but worked away steadily at opera composition. He attempted no less than nine further operas after *Lurline* but, following its eventual success at Covent Garden in 1860, only three of them, *The Amber Witch*, *Love's Triumph* and *The Desert Flower* were subsequently staged on his return to



William Vincent Wallace

London with his second family in the early 1860s.

In 1864, in his early fifties, Wallace developed a heart condition, and spent his last 18 months in Paris undergoing treatment. Not recovering, however, and with the end in sight, Héléne had him moved to the south of France, to the Château de Bagen in the Haute Garonne, in sight of the Pyrenées, the home of her sister, the Baroness Marie-Thérèse de Saintegême. It was in this romantic location that Wallace died, surrounded by his second family, on 12th October, 1865. His embalmed remains were brought back to London, and he was buried in Kensal Green. Héléne returned to the USA with their sons, Clarence and Vincent, and died in Brooklyn in 1885. Isabella Wallace lived on in Dublin until 1900, when she died aged 87 in Phibsborough. Apart from the composer and his immediate family, the rest of the Wallaces who went to Australia died there eventually.

David Grant has just completed a PhD on Wallace as a retirement project with the Open University (2010). His thesis includes a new edition of the Viennese version of *Maritana* (1848)



Dr. David Grant

Obituary: Doris Keogh

(16th April 1922 - 10th August 2012)

The music world lost one of its leading lights on August 10th 2012 with the sad passing of Doris Keogh, an inspirational and uniquely committed teacher. Professor of flute and recorder at the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) from 1969-1993, she also taught at the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama. Treating her pupils as her other "family" she gave of her time, life and home as though we were all blood relatives. In her beloved Capriol Consort several generations of flute and recorder players performed music, song and dance of the renaissance and medieval era in full authentic costume, all painstakingly researched by Doris during visits to the great libraries of the world.

Born in Dublin in 1922, the daughter of a professional flautist, her early music studies were with her father and later at the Municipal School of Music, Dublin, where she met her future husband Val Keogh. She performed in the

Abbey and Lantern Theatres, and was first flute of the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, Orchestra. Working regularly with the Radio Éireann Orchestra, she was unhappy that women were paid less than men and campaigned for equal pay. In 1988 she received a Millennium Award for her contribution to music in Dublin and in 1993 was awarded an honorary fellowship of the RIAM.

On September 8th, many of her former students gathered with her Irish friends and family in Dublin to pay tribute to her memory. A feast of music and song ensued amid heartfelt personal tributes. It is a testament to Doris' enduring impact on the international flute world that Sir James Galway wrote an extensive tribute that was read aloud at the gathering.

Her students will never forget her and the profound difference she has made to their lives, giving them the opportu-



Doris Keogh

nity to forge careers that would never have been possible or imaginable without her. We thank her family for their indulgence in allowing us to invade her life to such an enormous extent. Above all, we remember her irreverent sense of humour and infectious enthusiasm for the flute and all things musical.

*Catriona Ryan
Flute Section Leader, RTÉ National
Symphony Orchestra*

TIMES PAST



The Joe Hayes' Terpsichorean Band, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick, 1929, l-r: Mick Hayes, Gerard Roche, Sam Prendergast, Jack Hayes, Maureen Hayes, Tommy Fry, Joe Hayes (Leader) and Jim Hayes. Joe Hayes was Treasurer of the Irish Federation of Musicians from 1962-65 (Photo: Hayes' Collection).

William (Willy) Hoffman - Violinmaker and Restorer

By Helen Ledwidge

William (Willy) Hofmann was a descendant of the famous Hofmann family of violinmakers from Markneukirchen in Saxony. He was widely respected for his knowledge and skill as a violinmaker and restorer. His father William Georg Hofmann was an apprentice to Ernst Glasel from one of the oldest violin making families in Markneukirchen. In 1906 William Georg came to Dublin to work as a violinmaker in Gustav Meinel's workshop; on the outbreak of the First World War he was sent to a prisoner of war camp on the Isle of Man.

After the war he returned to the shop in Dublin and later he was made a partner in the business. William Georg set up a workshop in 1924 at Lincoln Place and in 1928 he married Violet Lane, their only child William (Willy) was born in 1929. At the age of twenty, Willy joined his father in the business, father and son working alongside each other in their shop opposite the Dental Hospital in Dublin. Willy didn't enjoy making fiddles, as he preferred restoring them. The Hofmanns' honoured craftsmanship brought 'love and skill' to their work. Once, William Georg proudly repaired one of Ireland's two Stradivari. Willy refused money for a repair to a Guadagnini because he said, 'It was a privilege to have been able to examine it'. The Hofmanns were proud of the wood they used, wood that was dried between thirty and fifty years, then cut with precision across the grain, maple from Mittenwald, Swiss and Argentinean pine.

Clients who visited their shop all commented that you would stand in awe at the collection of instruments hanging up and displayed in cabinets. One client, well-known violinist Geraldine O'Grady, said: "It was a magic cave filled with the smell of wood shavings, mentholated spirit, and Willy's cigars. Both men wore green aprons, the shop walls were cluttered from ceiling to floor with all kinds of stringed instruments, some behind glass doors. Violins, violas were displayed, and the walls were lined with framed photographs of clients."

Willy's father died in 1966. In his lifetime he made twenty-six violins and one cello. In his old ledgers his list of clients included nearly every Convent Orchestra in the country. His ledger confirms that he sold a Joseph Rocca violin in 1926, a Jacob Steiner violin and a cello made by Tobin. Willy noted against each page of a small red book when his father's violins came up for sale and who was the owner of each instrument; the book was updated until Willy's death.

Willy closed the shop in Lincoln Place in 1972 and transferred his clients to his new workshop at Sydenham Road, Dublin. The five bed-roomed house soon became cluttered with instruments. One observer who visited the house regularly said: "The amount of instruments in the house was astonishing. There were fiddles everywhere about the house, they had a board over the bath that held five cellos."

After work, Willy played in Theatre Orchestras, the Gaiety, the Royal, the Capitol, and the Olympia. At first he started playing on the violin, then changed to the viola 'the love of his life' and then the double bass. Willy's mother Violet died in 1974. Three years later Willy married Aine, who played the cello, and they sometimes played in the same orchestra. They were happily married for 25 years.

In 1980 Willy moved to Kilpedder in County Wicklow and set up a workshop at his home. He worked at his father's old workbench, using the same tools that were passed down to him. Willy was very proud of his father's work and had managed to acquire a cello made by him. It was one of his most treasured possessions.

In the early 1990s, Willy and Conor Russell formed a working partnership and they opened a workshop in Greystones. A lifetime of inhaling dust and smoking took its toll on Willy, who developed bronchial asthma, and emphysema and needed oxygen daily. Willy retired from the workshop in Greystones in 1998, but he still worked from his cottage in Kilpedder.

A gentleman well known for his sense of humour, he took an avid interest in young musicians and attended Feis Cheoils on a regular basis. Years after the Berlin wall was taken down, Willy was invited to an exhibition in Markneukirchen, Germany, his father's hometown. The organisers asked him



Willy Hofmann (Photo: By kind permission of Aine Hofmann)

to display one of the violins his father had made after he left Germany. A group of Willy's clients organised a tribute night for him in Merrion Square. His old clients from Ireland and abroad gathered to pay tribute to his craftsmanship. Willy Hofmann died in May 2003 aged 73 years.

Somewhere out there are twenty-six violins and one cello, written on each label Place of Origin Dublin and signed by William G Hofmann. The Hofmann tradition that had stretched from Saxony to Dublin died too.

Helen Ledwidge lives in Kilpedder, County Wicklow, and presently works as a Genealogist. Her recently published local history book 'Kilpedder a History of its People' includes an extended article about Willy Hofmann's life.

Helen would like to thank Aine Hofmann for their lovely chats about Willy's life. If you would like to purchase a copy of her book please send your details to ledwidgehelen@gmail.com.



Helen Ledwidge



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Gross Annual Earnings	Annually	Monthly	Weekly
Over €26,000	€244.40	€20.37	€4.70
Over €16,900, up to €26,000	€208.00	€17.33	€4.00
Over €10,400, up to €16,900	€145.60	€12.14	€2.80
Over €6,640, up to €10,400	€98.90	€8.24	€1.90
Up to €6,604	€52.00	€4.34	€1.00
Unemployed Rate	€15.60	€1.30	€0.30

INTERVAL QUIZ

1. What is the title of Christy Moore's autobiography?
2. What nationality is Alan Buribayev, Principal Conductor of the RTÉ NSO?
3. True or false? Elvis Presley performed in Ireland.
4. Which character did Liza Minnelli play in the 1972 musical film, *Cabaret*?
5. Who composed the well-known Dance of the Hours from the opera, *La Gioconda*?
6. From where does popular vocalist, Imelda May, hail?
7. Name the presenter of *Jazz Alley* on RTÉ Lyric fm?
8. When did the RTÉ female orchestral players secure equal pay with their male colleagues?
9. What is the new name of Dublin's Grand Canal Theatre?
10. Who wrote the lyrics of the song, *Raglan Road*?

Answers below

Answers

1. *One Voice*. 2. Kazakh. 3. False. 4. Sally Bowles. 5. Ponchielli. 6. The Liberties, Dublin. 7. Donald Helme. 8. 1966. 9. Bord Gáis Energy Theatre. 10. Patrick Kavanagh.

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