

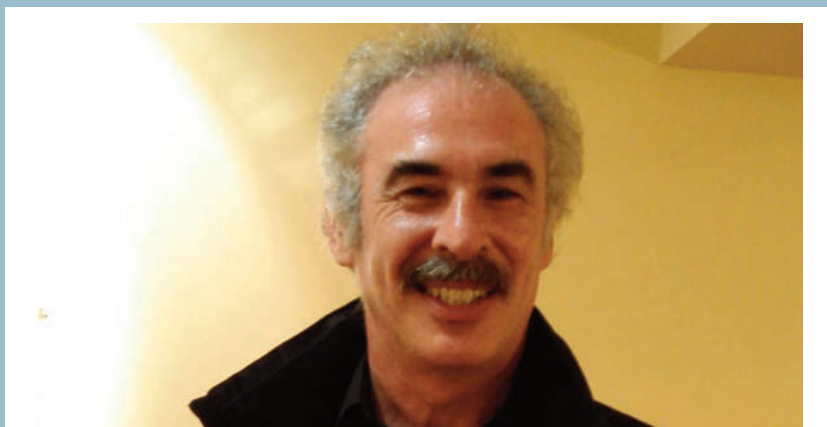
Sound Post

VOLUME 16 NO.3 - Autumn 2018



Death of Greg Boland, leading rock guitarist and MUI Founding President

The death occurred in Dublin, on 16th August 2018, at the age of 63, of Greg Boland, one of Ireland's greatest rock guitarists and a progenitor and founding president of the Musicians' Union of Ireland (MUI). An Executive Committee member of the Union from 2003 to 2012, Boland served as President from 2003 to 2007 and Vice-President from 2009-2011. The MUI extends its deepest sympathy to his family and friends. An obituary of Greg Boland will be published in the next edition of *Sound Post*.



Greg Boland

MUI seeks 'meaningful discussions' on future structure of RTÉ NSO

The Government has decided, in principle, that the National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) should be removed from RTÉ and come under the remit of the National Concert Hall (NCH). To facilitate the implementation of this decision, which was taken at a cabinet meeting on 5th July 2018, an oversight group, involving RTÉ and the NCH, is to be established. According to RTÉ, the group will include consultation with the employees of both the NSO and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra. Chaired by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the oversight group will also involve the Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment.

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MUI RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra members, Paul Fanning, Rosalind Brown and Elena Quinn, NCH, 24th May 2017. Photo: Barry Cronin/RTÉ

MUI seeks ‘meaningful discussions’ on future structure of RTÉ NSO

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The government decision followed the release, on 23rd April, of an RTÉ-commissioned report on the two RTÉ orchestras, by Helen Boaden, a former Director of BBC Radio and of BBC News,

with the support of strategy consulting firm, Mediatique. Entitled *RTÉ Orchestras: Ensuring a sustainable future*, the report recommended that the RTÉ NSO should be a national cultural institution in its own right or within the NCH.

In a press release of 6th April, the Musicians’ Union of Ireland (MUI) responded to the Government’s announcement, expressing concern and disappointment with the decision to move the control of the RTÉ NSO from the broadcaster to the NCH.

MUI Organiser, Graham Macken, said that the decision “was made without prior consultation with the main stake holder in the RTÉ NSO, that is the union which represents the members of the Orchestra...The cabinet decision that the RTÉ NSO should be moved to the National Concert Hall is premature. Our members have not formed a view as to where they should be placed in order to develop artistically, to engage in educational activities, to have secure funding and to provide continued job security.” He added: “The other options, which should not be ruled out at this point, include its moving control of the orchestra to a separate cultural entity or it remaining within RTÉ, with the necessary additional funding required made available.”

“It is essential”, he said, “that the Orchestra members and their representatives are involved centrally in any negotiations... The MUI and SIPTU call on both RTÉ and the Government to enter into meaningful discussions to ensure the best outcome for the orchestra while being mindful of the requirements and responsibilities of a fully functioning public service broadcaster.”



Choir Master, Paul Walsh, and the People’s College Choir, being greeted by President Higgins and Sabina Higgins at Áras an Uachtaráin, at a garden party, on 29th June 2018, to highlight Sustainable Development Goals, and to celebrate the many people who contribute to the lives of their communities in Ireland. Photo: Maxwell Photography

A Rising Tide for women in music

By Frank Connolly

A large number of singers, musicians and other performers gathered in Dublin for the 'Rising Tides' conference and concert in Liberty Hall in early September. Organised by the Fairplé campaign and the Musicians Union of Ireland (MUI) the event highlighted issues of concern to women working in Irish traditional and folk music.

Exploitation, sexual harassment and bullying in the largely male dominated music industry featured in the wide-ranging discussions while emerging artists were given advice by more experienced performers on finding their way in the music business.

In her opening address Fairplé co-founder and MUI member, Karan



Performers give a final encore at the Rising Tides Concert in Liberty Hall on Sunday, 9th September. Photo: Cathal Mac an Bheatha

Casey, described how the campaign seeks to "change the working environment for women in the worlds of traditional and folk music."

"We are advocating for deep societal change, an improvement in the imbalance of line-ups that discriminate against female performers particularly instrumentalists, an end to sexual harassment and to the macho cultural bravado that is endemic within the community," Casey said.

Other participants complained about the disappointing number of women performers on the line up for music festivals and other major concerts and events.

Among the speakers were singer-songwriter, Eleanor McEvoy, who is chairperson of the Irish Music Rights Organisation (IMRO), folk singer and Fairplé co-founder, Pauline Scanlon, film maker, Nuala O'Connor, musician and manager, Eamon Murray, and the Head of the Worker's Rights Centre in SIPTU, Paul Henry.

Many of those present sang and played at a well attended concert in Liberty Hall theatre on Sunday 9th September, including harper, Úna Monaghan, who created a powerful piece of art about gender balance entitled "What we haven't Heard?" performed with Pauline Scanlon, Niamh Dunne and Karan Casey.

Other acts included Sile Denvir, Muireann Mic Amhlaibh, Donal Lunny and Barry Kerr; Emma Langford; the Friels; Niamh Parsons and Graham Dunne; Atlas; and John Spillane.



Harper, Úna Monaghan. Photo: Cathal Mac an Bheatha



**RAISE
the
ROOF**
On October 3rd
**Homes
For All**

Rally

at Leinster House
Wednesday Oct 3rd
@12.30-2pm

Trade unions, political parties, students' unions, housing agencies & community and campaign groups have joined forces to demand action on the housing crisis.

Join us
on October 3rd
and make
your
voice heard



President Higgins, with Sabina Higgins, after unveiling of sculpture, The Plough and the Stars, in the grounds of Áras an Uachtaráin, on 1st May 2018. Executed by Dublin-born sculptor, John Behan, the monument commemorates the 1913 Dublin Lockout. Photo: Áras an Uachtaráin



Matthew and Robin Jolley pictured at the launch of the National Concert Hall International Concert Series 2018-2019, in the NCH, on 10th May 2018. Photo: Mark Stedman/NCH



Pictured at the launch of the RTÉ NSO Season 2018-2019, in the NCH, on 25th May 2018, l-r, Helena Wood and Nathalie Stutzmann, respectively, outgoing Leader and Principal Guest Conductor, RTÉ NSO. Photo: Orla Murray/SON Photographic Ltd.

MUI and Irish Equity support call for boycott of Eurovision Song Contest, 2019, in Israel

On 27th June last, a campaign was launched to boycott the Eurovision Song Contest in Israel in 2019. The Irish campaign is made up of human rights activists, artists and other public figures. Among those supporting the campaign are Eurovision winner, Charlie Mc Gettigan; Irish broadcaster and former Eurovision commentator, Mike Murphy; former Eurovision presenters, Carrie Crowley and Doireann Ní Bhriain; musicians, Mary Black, Paul Brady, Frances Black, Donal Lunney, Honor Heffernan, Cormac Breathnach, Dee Armstrong, Steve Wall and former MUI President, Andy Irvine; composers, Raymond Deane and Trevor Knight; artists, Robert

Ballagh, Jim Fitzpatrick and Felim Egan; and comedians Barry Murphy and Kevin Gildea.

Speaking at the launch, renowned Irish artist and *Riverdance* set designer, Robert Ballagh, said:

"When Nelson Mandela visited Dublin soon after his release from prison in Robben Island, I asked him what role the international boycott of South Africa played in the ending of apartheid there. Mandela told me that 'the boycott was one of the most important weapons in the struggle against apartheid.' As it was then, so it remains today. This is why I fully support this call for an Irish boycott of the Eurovision 2019 in Israel. We must show the same solidarity to Palestinians living under Israeli apartheid as we did to black people under South African apartheid."

Actor and former Eurovision (1997) presenter, Carrie Crowley, said:

"For all sorts of cultural and historic reasons we identify deeply with the Palestinians.

Their treatment – or mistreatment – at the hands of the State of Israel is horrendous. If by boycotting a significant global television event we can draw attention to this injustice, it might help start changing the attitude and the damage being done on a daily basis. I believe many Irish people feel the same way."

The Musicians Union of Ireland and Irish Equity are happy to endorse this boycott.

Padraig Murray
President
Irish Equity

**Musicians' Union of Ireland
RTÉ National Symphony
Orchestra Section Committee,
2018-2019**

**David Clark, Elaine Clark,
Sinead Farrell,
Mark Jenkins, Francis Magee,
Niall O'Loughlin, Katie Tertell
and Mary Wheatley**



The launch in Dublin, on 27th June 2018, of a campaign to boycott the Eurovision Song Contest, 2019, in Israel, from left: 1. Cllr Cian O'Callaghan 2. Senator David Norris, 4. Carrie Crowley, 6. Eamon Murray (Vice-President, MUI), 7. Pádraig Murray (President, Irish Equity), otherwise, unidentified.

A.J. Potter (1918-1980): composer, arranger, orchestrator, educator, critic

By Sarah Burn

“He has a marked talent for the incisive damning phrase, yet basically he has the same angry compassion that has distinguished Irishmen like Swift and Beckett. With his almost formidable gusto goes a quiet, immediate sensitivity; under it all is a mixture of humility, the capacity for surprise, and a high seriousness that is often found in the very greatest artists.”

So wrote ‘Michael George’ (the pseudonym of Alec Reid) in the *Irish Tatler & Sketch* in May 1964 in his profile of the composer Archibald James Potter (Archie), the centenary of whose birth occurs on 22nd September 2018. Reid’s insightful assessment shows a rare understanding of Potter’s many-faceted life, personality and music. Potter settled near Dublin in 1951, beginning his mature career as a professional musician after a uniquely varied early life.

Potter’s father was a blind piano tuner and organist in Belfast and family circumstances led to Potter going, aged ten, to live with relatives in Kent. He gained an education through winning scholarships: as a chorister in the world-renowned All Saints’ Church in Margaret Street, London, as an organ scholar at Clifton College, Bristol, and to the Royal College of Music where he was a composition student of

One of his finest and most personal works, his *Sinfonia “de Profundis”*, was written to a commission from RTÉ in 1967. Potter wrote it ‘as a thank offering for a happy personal issue out of one of those little local difficulties’ and, as he wrote in the programme, because ‘There comes a time in most people’s lives when the bottom of hell falls out and you drop through it’.

Vaughan Williams until 1938. War service followed until 1946, then employment with the United Africa Company in Nigeria. He decided to try to get back into the music profession and was appointed a bass lay Vicar Choral in the Choir of St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin in 1951.



Archie Potter, with Liberty Hall, Dublin, in the background, 1976 Photo: RTÉ Photographic Archive



Archie Potter in Cork while adjudicating at the Cork International Choral Festival, May 1978 Photo: John O'Reilly

During this period he won a number of composition competitions in Northern Ireland and in the Republic, marking him out as a promising rising composer. His talents as a composer, arranger and orchestrator were soon recognised by Radio Éireann /Radio Teilifís Éireann (RÉ/RTÉ), with whom he had a mutually beneficial relationship until his death on 5th July 1980. Irish traditional music was perceived as being at risk of being forgotten in the late 1940s/early 1950s, and Potter was available to assist RÉ in fulfilling the Government's directive that traditional music should be popularised through orchestral and choral arrangements. It was a useful source of bread-and-butter income, but he was constrained by the restrictions imposed on him in terms of harmonic adventurousness and the ensembles' abilities. Also, such work reduced the number of original compositions, of greater musical worth and individuality, that he could have written.

One of his finest and most personal works, his Sinfonia "de Profundis", was written to a commission from RTÉ in 1967. Potter wrote it 'as a thank offering for a happy personal issue out of one of those little local difficulties' and, as he wrote in the programme, because 'There comes a time in most people's lives when the bottom of hell falls out and you drop through it'. The public and critical response to the first performance of the Sinfonia "de Profundis" on 23rd March 1969 was overwhelming and Potter received a special Jacob's Award. The Sinfonia "de Profundis" was performed in the landmark 2016 'Composing the Island' series, using Sarah Burn's new edition, and it will next be performed by the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra (RTÉ NSO) on 12th October 2018 in the National Concert Hall.

Potter was influential as an educator. He taught singing at the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) from 1952, obtained his Doctorate in Music from Dublin University in 1953 and was appointed Professor of Composition at the RIAM in 1955. He was a member of the Board of Governors of the RIAM and of the Music Teachers' Association, an affiliate of the ITGWU (now part of SIPTU). Through his series of radio broadcasts, particularly 'Listening to Music' and 'The Young Student's Guide to Music' (produced by Jane Carty), he reached an appreciative nationwide audience. Thus, he brought his international perspective to bear on music in Ireland and through his own compositions, teaching and examining, helped to bring the music of Irish composers to a wider international audience.

He worked tirelessly to improve business conditions for composers and to increase public understanding of their profes-

sionalism. He was active on several committees, including the Composers' Group of the Music Association of Ireland, the Joint Copyright Council, and the Performing Right Society, as well as pursuing causes individually. These included holding RÉ/RTÉ to account over inaccurate logging of performances and broadcasts, commission rates, and the paucity of performances of works by Irish composers, lobbying TDs and winning a personal battle with the tax authorities who thought he should pay VAT on everything he wrote. He represented the Irish Federation of Musicians and Associated Professions (IFMAP) on RTÉ audition panels for orchestral musicians and so helped shape many careers.

His talents for speaking extempore and authoritatively made him a popular choice as a radio broadcaster. He wrote in 1959, "I function on the radio as a talker on as many controversial aspects of music as possible and also as a press critic for various newspapers." 2018 is the centenary of his birth and a fitting opportunity to hear more of his music and to evaluate his many achievements.

Since 1979 Sarah Burn has provided music support services, including music copying, typesetting and editing, oboe teaching, orchestra librarianship, programme note writing and programme editing. She has belonged to IFMAP, SIPTU and the TUI. She was awarded an MA in 2008. Her PhD in 2018, supervised by Dr Eibhlís Farrell at Dundalk Institute of Technology, on the creation through critical editing of new perspectives on Potter's Sinfonia "de Profundis", includes a new edition of the symphony.



Sarah Burn Photo: Jennifer Blair

The Cork Orchestral Society 1938–2018: Eighty Years a-Growing

By Ruth Fleischmann

The Cork Orchestral Society was founded by Aloys Fleischmann on 13th November 1938, four years after he had become Professor of Music at University College Cork. The Society's first circular explains why:

'The Cork Orchestral Society has recently been formed for the purpose of supplying a long-felt want in the city, namely, a regular series of concerts each season. For some years past, Symphony Concerts and Chamber Music Recitals have been held at University College Cork, and the increasing success of these concerts has encouraged the promoters to inaugurate a series on a more ambitious scale in the town, where they will be readily available to the general public... Soloists of international reputation as well as local soloists will be engaged for the performances, while it is hoped to produce a new work by a contemporary Irish composer at each successive concert.'

Patrons of the Society were the Lord Mayor, the President of the University and the composers, Arnold Bax and E. J. Moeran; there were 137 members. Two concerts were given in the spring of 1939 by the Cork Symphony Orchestra, one of which was the



Cork Orchestral Society logo Image: Gabriel Hayes/Courtesy of the Fleischmann family

first schools' concert in Ireland as part of the Society's scheme to build audiences. The third event was a chamber recital with the Kutcher String Quartet of London and Tilly Fleischmann (piano); new Irish works were premiered at both. But the advent of the Second World War put an end to the Society's activities until 1947.

All 620 performances of the Cork Symphony Orchestra given during Fleischmann's lifetime were sponsored by the Society. From 1947 it supported the Cork Ballet Company, and its annual Ballet Week from 1948 to 1993, with new music frequently written by Irish composers for ballets choreographed by the company's founder, Joan Denise Moriarty.

In 1949, the Society began bringing orchestras to Cork: the Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra was the first professional symphony orchestra to visit the city. Its visits became a regular event on the musical calendar, with two concerts annually until 1962; for the following thirty years between five and seven per year, from 1994 reverting to two.¹ The experience of these concerts by a professional orchestra led to a

vigorous campaign being mounted in 1953 by the Cork Orchestral Society, in conjunction with forty-two civic bodies, for the setting up by Radio Éireann of a radio orchestra resident in Cork. After a six-year battle, Radio Éireann appointed a professional string quartet to reside in Cork. The presence of those professional musicians in the city for fifty-five years was of enormous benefit: their frequent recitals, participation in the Cork Symphony Orchestra and the quality of their teaching had a lasting impact.²

The Government's discovery of the potential economic benefits of promoting culture led to its establishing the Arts Council in 1951, and to the inauguration of the national festival of An Tóstal in 1953. The Orchestral Society seized the opportunity and – with funding from the Tóstal Council, the Arts Council, Cork Corporation, individual firms and the Cork Jewish community – brought internationally renowned foreign orchestras to the city during the Festivals of Cork between 1953 and 1961. They ranged from the Hallé to the Vienna Philharmonic, the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, the Boston to the Hague Symphony Orchestras, together with half a dozen illustrious soloists. It was probably the most extraordinary decade in the Society's history.



Aloys Fleischmann, Cork, 1936 Photo: Courtesy of the Fleischmann family



Cork Symphony Orchestra, Leader, W. F. Brady; Soloist, Charles Lynch; Conductor, Aloys Fleischmann, rehearsing in the Aula Maxima of University College Cork for concert on 9th December 1938. Photo: Irish Independent-Fleischmann Papers, Archives, UCC

These achievements did, however, constitute a drain on its finances. In 1956 the Cork solicitor Gerald Y. Goldberg devised a novel fundraising scheme, inviting the public to sponsor the individual instruments of the Cork Symphony Orchestra, its conductor and his baton.³ The Orchestral Society's debt was discharged and a sound financial footing was established – at least for a time. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s it continued to bring international orchestras and ensembles to Cork.

After Fleischmann's death in 1992, Dr Geoffrey Spratt, Director of the CIT Cork School of Music, succeeded him and was for twenty-one years a most energetic chairman. The Society's membership and the number of events per season increased, reaching a climax in 2005 with forty-two events when Cork was a European Capital of Culture with artists from all member

states giving recitals in Cork. Since 2007, most Orchestral Society events take place in the splendid new School of Music premises with its state-of-the-art facilities. In 2013 Nicki French-Davis became chairwoman and, together with her team, has continued the tradition of the Society with its eighty years of selfless service to the cause of classical music in Cork city. The Society now has about 400 members, receives grant-aid from the Arts Council and the Cork City Council and can look back with pride on its contribution to the thriving musical life of Cork today.

¹ The RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra has now ceased touring the provinces.

² The second city of Ireland still has no professional orchestra – though half a dozen amateur ones. Since 2014 the RTÉ-funded string quartet no longer resides in Cork.

³ 'Cork Jewish Community's Tribute to Conductor – New Scheme to Defray Orchestral Society's Debt', *The Cork Examiner*, 24th April 1956, p. 8. Goldberg explained to the newspaper why the Jewish community was paying this tribute to Fleischmann: at the beginning of the Second World War he was the first of the university staff to sign a letter of protest against the discrimination of Jewish professors and students at German universities and 'his enthusiasm in supporting the cause earned him the gratitude of the Jews in Cork'.

Dr Ruth Fleischmann, born in Cork in 1942, is a UCC graduate. From 1981 until her retirement she held a lectureship at the English Department of Bielefeld University, Germany. Her field of research is Irish cultural studies. She is a member of the trade union, Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft.



Dr Ruth Fleischmann

Catherine Hayes – The Trailblazing Irish Soprano

By Gavan Ring

There can be no denying that Ireland has an uncanny reputation for producing world-class operatic sopranos. Names like Margaret Burke-Sheridan, Veronica Dunne, Suzanne Murphy, Orla Boylan and Celine Byrne are some of the more immediate examples of the Irish tradition for turning out the very best in the higher of female vocal fachs. Burke-Sheridan's exploits in the early part of the twentieth century probably makes her the most famous Irish soprano ever to have graced the world stage but, on 4th November 1845, seventy-three years before Burke-Sheridan made her legendary début as Mimi in Puccini's *La bohème* at the Constanzi Opera House in Rome, a young Limerick woman by the name of Catherine Hayes made her sensational début at La Scala Milan singing the title role in Donizetti's *Linda di Chamounix*. Hayes' career would eventually lead her to unrivalled fame and fortune whilst simultaneously circumnavigating the globe with her great talents to countries as diverse as Peru and Australia.

Born into abject poverty on 25th October 1818 at 4 Patrick Street in the city of Limerick, Catherine Hayes was the third child of Arthur and Mary Hayes (née Carroll). Catherine's father was a musician, a bandmaster attached to the local militia, but he abandoned the family in 1823 leaving Mary to raise the family on her own on her meagre earnings

from employment by the Earl of Limerick. It is reputed that when the eighteen-year-old Catherine was heard casually singing in the garden of the Earl's residence by Bishop Edmund Knox, the hugely impressed Knox took it upon himself to organise a fund for Catherine to be trained formally under Antonio Sapio in Dublin. In 1839, she gave her first public performance at the Rotunda rooms – now the Gate/Ambassador Theatre where she sang pieces by Balfe and Mercadante to some impressive reviews:

'...the debutante made her first appearance as a vocalist of promise and before long she would stand high the profession ... she sang most effectively with a voice of considerable volume and compass...' – *The Evening Packet*, 4th May 1839.

After gaining notable popularity and prominence in Ireland, Hayes began studying with the renowned Manuel Garcia in Paris in 1842 where she spent two years under his tutelage. Satisfied that he had

taught her everything he could, Garcia advised Hayes to travel to Milan to undertake further study with the distinguished vocal tutor, Felice Ronconi, learn Italian and, crucially, gain professional operatic experience. In February 1845, Catherine sang in a concert in Milan where the great former prima donna, Giuseppina Grassini, was in attendance. Although long since retired, Grassini was still an important figure in the musical scene in Milan. She was greatly impressed with Catherine's performance and suggested that Catherine audition for the director of Marseilles Italian Opera, Giuseppe Provini. After hearing Catherine, Provini booked her for three leading roles for the 1845 season at the Théâtre Grand in Marseilles with her début role as Elvira in Bellini's *I Puritani*. *La Fama*, a Milanese newspaper reporting on Hayes' début in Marseilles on 16th June 1845 states: 'Caterina Hayes a young prima donna of Irish nationality had high success ... with a voice of delicious quality.'



Catherine Hayes at the time of her La Scala debut in 1845



Catherine Hayes during her Australian tour, 1854

1845 was proving a crucial year for Hayes. Following her acclaimed performance in Marseilles, she returned to Milan to sing in another concert scheduled by her tutor, Ronconi; Bartolomeo Merelli, director of La Scala, was in attendance and immediately recognising Catherine's immense talents, booked her to sing in the on-going season at La Scala – the world's premiere opera house. Raucous success in the title role of Bellini's *Linda di Chamounix* at La Scala brought Hayes to the attention of the international press. The London-based *Musical World*, reporting on her début, wrote:

'A Miss Hayes, a soprano vocalist, native of Ireland, has made a great sensation as prima donna at the Scala...'

Engagements to sing leading roles in all of the world's major opera houses followed (including

attracting the attention of Giuseppe Verdi for his opera *Masnadieri*, with Catherine making her début at Covent Garden in 1849 again in the title role of *Linda di Chamounix*. During her time in England she also sang at a concert at Buckingham Palace for the young Queen Victoria and Albert. Her incredible career brought her all around the world, performing in the Americas, Asia and Oceania; she was, in fact, the first great European opera star to visit and sing in Australia.

In 1856, after five years of travelling the world, she returned to England and the following year married her manager, William Avery Bushnell, whom she met and signed with in America. While Hayes continued to sing regularly in concert, the operatic scene in London had changed quite rapidly since her début in 1845 and Hayes was, unfortunately, 'persona non grata' with the dominant management com-

pany, Cramer & Beale, following a law-suit to the sum of £4,000 in New York in 1852. In 1858, however, Bushnell, who was suffering from consumption, died in Biarritz in France as the couple in vain hoped the Mediterranean Sea air would alleviate Bushnell's condition. Catherine was heartbroken and not long after died of a stroke on 11th August 1861. She was laid to rest in Kensal Green Cemetery in London where her grave still remains.

The New Grove Dictionary describes Hayes as 'a true soprano, with more than an average share of the middle voice, which enabled her to sing music beyond the means of ordinary sopranos'. In truth, Hayes was no ordinary soprano; her rags to riches, Cinderella-like rise to fame is as remarkable as it is unique. As her biographer Basil Walsh aptly states, she was an 'Irish woman who embodied all of the spirit, tenacity and perseverance of her race and who made a very important contribution to Irish musical history.' She was, in essence, the trailblazer for the many, great Irish sopranos who subsequently followed in her footsteps.

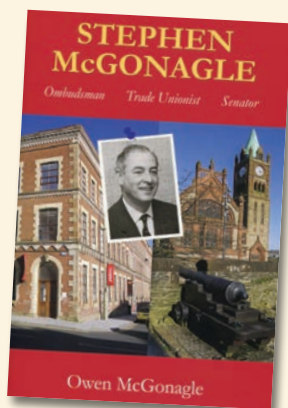
Dr Gavan Ring is an international opera singer and musicologist. He has performed leading roles at The Royal Opera, Glyndebourne and Opéra Royal de Versailles with conductors such as Sir Mark Elder and Sir Simon Rattle. A graduate of Dublin City University, the Royal Irish Academy of Music and the National Opera Studio in London, Gavan's recent, ground-breaking PhD work on Robert O'Dwyer's Irish language opera *Eithne* led to its first performance since 1910 with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra last October. For more see www.gavanring.co.uk



Dr Gavan Ring

BOOK REVIEW

By Emmet O'Connor



Stephen McGonagle: Ombudsman, Trade Unionist, Senator

By Owen McGonagle

(Umiskin Press, Dublin, 2018)

Price €35 (hardback)

(Available at kmcginley@tcd.ie)

Stephen McGonagle was one of the few union leaders to address Labour's Northern question in a way that was both Irish and realistic. Born in Derry in 1914, the son of an activist in the Plumbing Trades Union, McGonagle followed his father into the trade. His appointment as an official of the British-based National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers in 1947 made him the key union man in Derry's staple industry. When the Northern Ireland Labour Party came out in favour of partition in 1949, McGonagle, with so many others, joined the Irish Labour Party, which became an all-Ireland party for the next twenty-three years. In 1952 he launched the breakaway Clothing Workers' Union, and one

year later the Clothing Workers' Union merged with the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU). It amounted to the biggest transfer of members from a British to an Irish union in the history of Northern Ireland, and gave Irish Labour the chance to lead, politically and industrially, in the North's second city. But before long McGonagle had concluded that, for all its rhetorical anti-partitionism, Irish Labour had no practical policy for what it termed 'The Occupied Area'. He resolved to concentrate on union work and make Northern Ireland work for all its people, in the belief that it was the only way to avoid a sectarian divide in trade unionism. Declining to join the civil rights movement, he served on the Irish Congress of Trade Union's Northern Ireland Committee and in several public roles, notably as Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (1974-9). He refused an OBE, and in the 1980s he represented Labour in Seanad Éireann and in the New Ireland Forum.

Owen McGonagle, a former Head of Design and Creative Media at Letterkenny Institute of Technology, has penned a worthy tribute to his late father. It's an extensive study, and more a semi-popular life and times account than a narrowly focused biography. Neither does the author make a claim to objectivity. Yet while the content is uncritical, the tone is not hagiographical, and the book is a welcome addition to the slim body of work on Stephen McGonagle. North-west readers in particular will enjoy what is in some ways a political and social history of Derry, and all students of labour history will benefit from the observations on the often strained relations between nationalism and Labour and McGonagle's difficulties in dealing with

clerical opposition. Few communities in Ireland were as tightly policed by the Catholic Church as nationalist Derry before the 1970s, and fears of communism were regularly invoked against Labour whenever it challenged the Nationalist Party; fears which miraculously disappeared when Labour confronted the Unionists.

It's unfortunate that the author doesn't say more on the controversies surrounding the break-away Clothing Workers' Union, which might shed light on the puzzle of how a united, secular trade unionism is able to function in the working class, where the North's sectarian divisions are deepest. He does however illustrate some paradoxes, such as the fierce loyalty to the amalgamateds in certain nationalist quarters. Unlike colleagues who papered over the contradictions with clichés about class unity against orange and green Tories, McGonagle addressed the contradictions, and then had the sense to see that some of his solutions were unworkable and the commitment to keep trying. Hopefully, this very readable book will encourage more searching studies on an exceptional Labour leader, and Umiskin Press is to be congratulated on a handsome production.

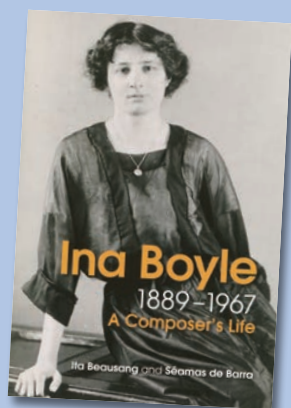
Emmet O'Connor is a senior lecturer in history in Ulster University. He has published widely on labour history, including *Big Jim Larkin: Hero or Wrecker?*, and is a member of the University and Colleges Union and the Irish Labour History Society.



Emmet O'Connor

BOOK REVIEW

By Axel Klein



Ina Boyle (1889-1967): A Composer's Life

By Ita Beausang and Séamus de Barra

(Cork University Press, Cork, 2018)

Price €29 (hardback)

Available from good bookshops
or from the publisher

Ina Boyle is one of those names that most Irish (classical) musicians have heard of – and often not more than that. This new book provides the necessary background to a reappraisal.

Not long ago, the number of biographies of Irish composers was few, far between, about males, and confined to emigrants. This has changed considerably in recent years. A study of Ina Boyle seemed particularly overdue since she is interesting from a number of viewpoints. She was one of the most prolific composers of her generation in Ireland and the earliest significant female composer in the country – yet, at the same time she was one of the most obscure figures

in early 20th-century Irish music. Boyle's case is especially strange and interesting for the fact that she worked as a female composer in a conservative, male-dominated society, which is a partial explanation for her long neglect. Therefore, the present study by Ita Beausang and Séamas de Barra must be welcomed and appreciated. For the first time, musicians and concert-goers in Ireland as well as the wider musicological community can form their own opinion based on a thorough study of the life and music of this long-neglected composer.

Luckily, at the same time as this book there appeared the first ever CD devoted exclusively to orchestral music by Ina Boyle (Dutton Epoch CDLX 7352). With this material at hand, the foundation is laid for a thorough reappraisal of Ina Boyle. One of the myths that this reviewer had fallen for in the past, for instance, is that it was her shy, withdrawn character that prevented her from promoting her music, but this book is full of examples of her efforts to have her music performed in England and Ireland. Was perhaps her rather conservative style a greater obstacle to her career than her superficial shyness?

The book is divided into a first part of five chapters written by veteran musicologist Ita Beausang and an essay entitled 'The Music of Ina Boyle' by Séamas de Barra. On the surface, this looks like a biographical part by Beausang and a musical assessment by de Barra, and I wished it would have been that clear-cut. There is a history to why that is so, but it does not explain why the two parts have not been moulded into one. As it stands, there is a first part of 60 pages, an 'essay' of 67 pages, and

appendices of another roughly 40 pages.

This is short enough to be read without excessive effort. But there is a nuisance involved in it that consists of two issues. One is that the two parts just do not differ as clearly as would be desirable. And combined with the user-unfriendly habit of Cork University Press to provide end-notes way back at the end of the book rather than footnotes on the page they refer to, readers have to switch back and forth to at least three places to find what they are looking for.

Beausang worked extensively with sources like diaries and notes of lectures archived in TCD as well as newspaper reviews. Yet, it is odd that we learn comparatively little about the human being that Boyle was, what she did in her day-to-day life, why (for instance) the Easter Rising, Civil War and Irish independence seems to have passed her by without any effect. De Barra concentrates on the music, but also on (often the same) reviews. As a result of the non-division of labour, there is a lot of duplication. But on the plus side, readers interested in an overview will be happy with Ita Beausang's part, musicians will be more content with de Barra's text.

Axel Klein is a Frankfurt-based musicologist specialising in the history of Irish art music; see: www.axelklein.de.



Axel Klein



Pictured at the conferring ceremony, l-r, Maurice Manning (Chancellor of NUI), Michael D Higgins (President of Ireland), Pádraig Yeates, Sabina Higgins, Diarmaid Ferriter (Professor of Modern History, UCD), Simon Yeates, Geraldine Regan and Erika White. Photo: NUI

Pádraig Yeates conferred with NUI's highest degree

Pádraig Yeates, historian and former *Irish Times* journalist, and *Sound Post* contributor, has been awarded the National University of Ireland's (NUI) highest degree for his extensive research on Irish social and labour history. On 12th June, in the NUI offices in Dublin, Dr Maurice Manning, Chancellor of NUI, conferred Pádraig Yeates with the degree of Doctor of Literature (DLitt) on published work. *Lockout: Dublin 1913*, Yeates' highly regarded first book, which was first published in 2000, was followed by several other significant works on the social, cultural and trade union history of Dublin. Guests of honour at the conferring ceremony were the President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins and Sabina Higgins.

TIMES PAST



Irish Federation of Musicians and Associated Professions (IFMAP), 40th (actually 42nd) Anniversary Dinner Dance, Burlington Hotel, Dublin, 7th November 1978, l-r, Peter Pringle (Vice-President, IFMAP), Dermot Doolan (Secretary, Irish Actors' Equity Association), Michael Mullen (General Secretary, Irish Transport and General Workers' Union), Mrs Monica Kennedy, Noel Coade (General President, IFMAP), Fintan Kennedy (General President, ITGWU) and Maurice O'Doherty (President, IAEA). Photo: IFMAP/Pringle Collection



Liam O'Flynn

OBITUARY

Liam O'Flynn (1945-2018)

The death of piper Liam O'Flynn, just before St Patrick's Day, came as an enormous blow to pipers around the world who had been drawn into Irish music, and uilleann piping, by his playing. The news of his serious illness had circulated for many months, spreading gloom and foreboding within the piping community.

For O'Flynn was regarded as a standard-bearer. He brought an integrity to all his performances, in whatever musical field he found himself. People who had before only listened to 'ballad groups', or classical music, or rock and roll, or country music, first heard piping through his playing, and were captivated. Surveys that have been conducted by Na Píobairí Uilleann (NPU - Society of Irish Pipers) revealed that piping enthusiasts, from Ireland to the four corners

of the world, cited the sound of O'Flynn's piping as the hook that first revealed to them the beauty of piping and of Irish music.

The third quarter of the 20th century was the period in the post-war west when tradition bearers themselves became conscious and articulate about the worth of their music, and outsiders began to recognise that worth. Three masters dominated the piping community of that period – Seamus Ennis, Leo Rowsome and Willie Clancy. Their different approaches to piping all had firm, long roots in traditional piping, roots that could be traced to pre-Famine practice, and the differences enriched uilleann piping repertoire and style. O'Flynn learned from all three. Through his mother's relationship to the fiddle-player Junior Crehan he came to know the world of Clare music and Willie Clancy. He attended piping classes for years with Leo Rowsome, and played a set of Rowsome's pipes throughout his career. He also shared a flat with Seamus Ennis for several years before Ennis's death. Ennis valued the relationship with O'Flynn to such a degree that he bequeathed his famous Coyne set – made in the 1830s in Dublin – to O'Flynn upon his death.

This absolute grounding in, and attachment to, tradition was the touchstone of O'Flynn's piping. As mentioned before, he made converts to piping and Irish music through his work in various fields – through his membership of the innovative Planxty, his role as soloist in Shaun Davey's compositions for orchestra and uilleann pipes, and his many musical contributions in film music, avant-garde music, country music, and more. To all

these ventures he brought his true piping style, working on the basis that real piping was the most valuable contribution that he could make, and found always that each different project was enriched by that truth.

For lovers of piping, his own solo albums were a treasure. Those who had first entered the wood at the sound of his playing with Planxty, or in *The Brendan Voyage*, discovered in his own albums deeper riches that drew them further and further in. The present time is seeing an extraordinary flourishing of the art, with never before seen levels of virtuosity on the instrument, in terms of numbers playing, geographical spread, technical ability, deep connection to tradition, and imaginative engagement with the instrument and music. Most of these top-shelf players cite O'Flynn as inspiration and model.

He was a founder member of NPU, one of the pioneers who attended a general meeting of pipers in 1968, called to consider how to halt the apparently final decline of uilleann piping. The turnaround in the fortunes of the form since then was marked last year by the UNESCO decision to include Uilleann Piping on its list of world heritage. Many factors led to this change in the fortunes of the art, but O'Flynn's influence must be considered a significant one.

Terry Moylan



Peter Sweeney

OBITUARY

Peter Sweeney (1950-2018)

The distinguished organist, teacher, choral director, and musical entertainer, Peter Sweeney, died unexpectedly in Dublin on 18 March 2018 at the age of 67.

Peter Alan Sweeney was born on 7 April 1950 in Dublin, where, following in a strong family tradition, his musical talents were nurtured as a boy chorister of St Patrick's Cathedral under the exacting tutelage of the cathedral organist, Sydney Grieg, who became his first organ teacher. Concurrently, piano, theory and harmony were studied at the then VEC College of Music. After school Peter studied for a Mus.B degree at Trinity, a period that saw him developing and maturing as an organist, winning many major Feis Ceoil prizes. After graduation he was awarded a Swiss Government Scholarship

which took him to Geneva for a year of study at the Conservatoire with the renowned Swiss organist, Lionel Rogg. Peter emerged from Geneva with highest honours and went on to win second prize at the Manchester International Organ Competition of 1978. It is sad to reflect that the winner of the first-prize of that competition, John Scott, and Peter are now both (prematurely) deceased.

On returning to Dublin Peter was appointed organ teacher at the College of Music (later DIT) where he taught for some 35 years, and where he was loved and revered by students of all range of abilities. He concurrently worked as a church organist, most notably at the Jesuit Church, Gardiner Street, and subsequently at Christ Church Cathedral where, as director of music for 11 years, he reformed and revitalized the cathedral choir and was responsible for the installation of the Kenneth Jones organ in 1984. From the late 70s onwards Peter became increasingly in demand as an organ recitalist, both at home and abroad, and was noted for playing that had immense flair, energy and colour. He had a special commitment to contemporary music, and he gave notable premiere performances with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra of new organ concertos by John Buckley and Ian Wilson.

For 27 years he was involved in school music education projects, most notably in the long-running 'Music in the Classroom' series in which he worked closely with his life-long friend, Gearóid Grant. In this annual series Peter was able to deploy his humour, theatrical flair, comic genius,

and great musical ingenuity to the greatest effect, having both children and adults rolling in the aisles.

Perhaps his most lasting achievements were (a) his joining with the author of this obituary and John Dexter, then organist and director of music at St Patrick's Cathedral, to found the Dublin International Organ Festival in 1980 (later the Dublin International Organ and Choral Festival whose title was subsequently and sensibly abbreviated and changed to 'Pipeworks'), succeeding the undersigned as the festival's artistic director for a period of six years from 1990, and (b) his sharing of the performance of the entire organ *oeuvre* of JS Bach (also with the undersigned) in a series of 16 weekly recitals in St Michael's Church, Dún Laoghaire, over the summer months of 1985.

Peter Sweeney is survived by his former wife, Vanessa Grocock and his former partner, Helen Roycroft, by two children, Nicky, a violinist with the London Mozart Players and ICO, and Richard, a web designer and the-orbo player now living in Sweden, and by his brother, the composer and organist Eric Sweeney.

Gerard Gillen



John Carroll

OBITUARY

John F. Carroll (1925-2018)

On retiring from SIPTU in January 1990, John Carroll had served the Union for forty-six years. He will be remembered however, not for his longevity but for his breadth of vision, dedicated and unstinting hard work, his loyalty to the working class and unwavering commitment to fairness at work and justice in society. As an Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) Head Office Official he pioneered new methods of wage bargaining, prompted significant and advanced structural changes within the Union – industrially and in support services, and finally, repaired a blighting wound by securing the creation of SIPTU from its fractured parts.

John Francis Carroll was born into a working-class family in an old coach-house in Summerhill, Dublin, on 8th January 1925. His father, John, a Dublin Corporation labourer until incapacitated by injury, was 'clearly identified with the Communist Party and the ITGWU'. John's mother worked to support her family then living in Parnell Street in conditions of significant poverty, although, 'no worse than most of our neighbours'. Carroll's parents' and his

community's struggles profoundly influenced him, his mother's selflessness generating a strong commitment to women's equality.

Carroll was educated at St Canice's and O'Connell Christian Brothers. His father brought him for lessons with the ITGWU Brass & Reed Band. A gifted clarinetist, Carroll's talent was recognised by the Band's Director, Adolf Gebler, and he was invited to join him for Radio Éireann broadcasts. Later, Carroll acted as Musical Director for the ITGWU Band, and was part of the 1954 Band that won the World Championship in Kerkrade, in the Netherlands. In 1944, Carroll became Branch Assistant, ITGWU Dublin No 4 Branch (Hotels & Catering), moving on to Dublin 6/8 Branches (Clothing and Tailoring), Head Office and, briefly, as Carlow Branch Secretary. In 1958, he became Head of Industrial Movements, drafting proposals for the National Industrial Group Secretary system which he headed from 1964. He gained a Diploma in Industrial Engineering from Columbia University, New York, giving him an understanding of the complexities of work study and payments systems. He was strongly associated with the creation of national bargaining mechanisms.

Elected Vice-President in 1969, Carroll became the ITGWU's last General President in 1981. In 1972, he helped create the Development Services Division, a radical departure that provided education, research and industrial engineering expertise to officials and members. He appeared constantly on radio and television and within the print media, drawing strong criticism from right-wing commentators but impressing the broad public. His was an appealing presence that forced audiences to think. He served on the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Executive from 1971-1990 and as President, 1986-1987. With Bill Attley, Carroll was Joint President of SIPTU from 1st - 8th January 1990. For

Carroll, ITGWU and Federated Workers' Union of Ireland reunification was a crowning achievement.

A long-standing Labour Party member, he served as Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald's nominee to the Fifteenth Senate, 1981-1982. His commitment was, however, primarily to the Union. Beyond workplace issues, he was famously associated with:

- challenging the influence of foreign multinationals
- attempts to build international trade union solidarity
- opposition to nuclear energy and global arms proliferation
- the defence of Irish neutrality
- opposition to Apartheid
- the fight for civil and human rights within Ireland and for black America
- opposition to imperialism and for equitable Third World development

Initially opposed to Ireland's entry to the European Economic Community, Carroll became persuaded of the European Project, fighting for a Social Europe and contributing to its development through the EU Economic and Social Council.

Considered 'aloof' or 'distant', Carroll did not suffer fools gladly, demanding unstinting loyalty and commitment. He was a challenging colleague and provocative adversary in debate. He brimmed with ideas, restlessly so, seldom dwelling on achievements. He improved thousands of lives by raising family incomes, securing better employment rights, and challenging inequality and prejudice.

All that said, Carroll was arguably most at home when playing a clarinet or holding a baton. He approved of the Musicians' Union of Ireland, wishing it success and the widest possible recognition. He was, after all, always a musician himself.

Francis Devine

RTÉ records loss of €6.4 million for 2017

Published in late June, RTÉ's annual report for 2017 reveals that overall losses were reduced by €13 million to €6.4 million. However, commercial revenue fell from €158.2 million to €151.5 million, a drop of 4%. These figures include reductions in television advertising and sponsorship revenue of €5.1 million, or 6 per cent, to approximately €90 million, and €500,000, or 2 per cent, in radio.

While licence fee income of €186.1 million was up by 7 per cent on the 2016 figure of €179.1 million, the annual report states that some 15 per cent of the 1.55 million homes with a television do not pay the licence fee. This is one of the highest evasion rates in Europe, costing the national broadcaster €36 million annually.

At €337.6 million, overall revenues in 2017 were unchanged on the previous year, while savings resulted in reducing losses from €19.4 million to €6.4 million.

The overall surplus for 2017 was €42.1 million, but this included a once-off €78.5 million payment for the sale of part of RTÉ's Donnybrook site to a property developer.

Explaining the downturn in advertising revenue, the annual report identifies Brexit-related currency weakness and business uncertainty in the Irish advertising market as well as the absence of special events, such as the Olympic Games, which generate considerable additional revenue.

RTÉ's Director General, Dee Forbes, has warned the Government that failure to reform the licensing system was costing €50 million a year.



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For further details of MUI services and benefits, check the MUI website: www.mui.ie or contact the MUI office, tel: (01) 8586404, email: mui@siptu.ie, MUI twitteraccount@mu_Ireland

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.

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INTERVAL QUIZ

1. *Tahiti Trot* is the title of Shostakovich's orchestration of which famous song?
2. *Pothole in the Sky* is the title of a 2016 album of which Irish female singer-songwriter?
3. Who played bandleader, Glenn Miller, in the 1954 film, *The Glenn Miller Story*?
4. Which composer was described by the *New York Times* 'as the most commercially successful composer in history'?
5. Name the trade union formed recently following the merger of IMPACT and two other unions?
6. Which famous Wagner opera includes *The Sailors Chorus*?
7. *Living the Dream* is the 2017 autobiography of which well-known Irish vocalist?
8. In which year were Bach and Handel born?
9. With whose songs is former Irish tenor, Brendan O'Dowda, most associated?
10. Name the composer of the operetta, *The Student Prince*?

1. *Tea for Two*. 2. Lisa Hannigan. 3. James Stewart. 4. Andrew Lloyd Webber. 5. Försa. 6. *The Flying Dutchman*. 7. Daniel O'Donnell. 8. 1685. 9. Percy French's. 10. Sigmund Romberg.

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