

Sound Post

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

Unions sanction talks on RTÉ's financial situation

RTÉ trade unionists have voted for the opening of discussions with RTÉ on the organisation's financial situation.

On 7th January, 2011, RTÉ's outgoing Director General, Cathal Goan, said that management was seeking to extend the cuts because of changes in the last Budget, and RTÉ's commitment to the introduction of digital terrestrial television which will cost €70 million.

RTÉ estimates that the Budget costs alone will total €17 million annually, €10 million of which will go directly to TG4. With the Government no longer paying the television licence fee of new pensioners, a loss to RTÉ rather than the pensioners themselves, a further €3 million loss will accrue, and a further €4 million will be lost in tax and PRSI payments.

RTÉ's financial position was outlined to staff by independent financial adviser, Eugene McMahon, from Mazars.

Staff had voted in June 2009 by 57 to 43% to accept temporary pay cuts ranging from 2.6 to 12.5% until 31st December, 2010. The cuts had been sought to bridge a €68 million shortfall in RTÉ's budget as a consequence of a dramatic fall in advertising revenue.

At the meeting on 7th January, 2011, management also proposed to cease paying salary increments to staff. These had been withheld for a year in respect of staff earning €40,000 or more per annum, but had been reinstated in 2010.



Cathal Goan (Photo: RTÉ)

Competition Authority freelance issue for ILO

In the previous issue of *Sound Post*, it was reported that the outgoing Government had reneged on a commitment to the ICTU to publish in 2009 legislation exempting session musicians, voice-over actors and freelance journalists from competition law. The outgoing Government also later reneged on its renewed commitment of last September to publish a Bill in late 2010 or early 2011.

Essentially at issue is the Competition Authority's ludicrous definition of freelance workers as 'undertakings', thereby depriving them of collective bargaining rights.

In a new initiative to progress the matter, the ICTU has decided to lodge a formal complaint with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations' agency which seeks to promote social justice and internationally recognised human and labour rights.

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Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin

TG4 Gradam Ceoil Awards 2011

MUI member, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, composer, musician and Director of the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, has been awarded the prestigious TG4 Gradam Ceoil Musicians' Award. The Musician of the Year Award went to Noel Hill (concertina). Other winners were Pádraig Keane (uilleann piper), Young Musician of the Year; Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh (singer), Singer of the Year; Liz Carroll (composer), Composer of the Year; and Ben Lennon (fiddle), Lifetime Achievement Award.

The 2011 TG4 Gradam Ceoil awards' ceremony and concert will be held at Wexford Opera House on Saturday, 2th April, and will be broadcast on TG4 on Easter Sunday, 24th April, at 9.30 pm.

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 of Ireland, Liberty Hall, Dublin 1.

Irish Music Festivals Win European Awards

Irish music events won several major awards at the European Festival Awards which were announced in the Netherlands on 12th January, 2011. Electric Picnic, Oxygen and the new Temple House Festival in Co. Sligo all won awards.

Electric Picnic, in Stradbally, Co. Laois, was voted best medium-sized European festival and was shortlisted for the artists' favourite festival award. Oxygen in Punchestown took

the prize for the best European festival line-up. Temple House Festival, which was held in Temple House estate near Ballymote, was named best new festival.

The awards are decided by a combination of a public vote and industry juries. More than 350,000 votes were cast by fans to decide the winners. Festivals are weighted by their attendance to give smaller events a fair chance against ones that are much larger.



RTÉ Concert Orchestra Principal Conductor, David Brophy, leads the charge towards the orchestra's debut appearance at the Electric Picnic Festival, at Stradbally Estate, Co. Laois, on 5th September, 2010. (Photo: RTÉ)

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 edited by John Swift, former MUI Secretary, and produced by the Communications Department of SIPTU. Material may be e-mailed to John Swift johnpswift@eircom.net or forwarded to the MUI office.

MUI RTÉ Freelance Orchestral Daily Rates

Effective from 29 June 2009

Tutti: €149.49 Sub-Principal: €159.72
Principal: €173.18

French Horn For Sale

Compensating Student Model



Paxman Style - Recently overhauled

€700

Contact: Pam Forde
087 2340611

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. Tel: 01-8486403.

Death of RTÉ NSO Cellist, Stephen Sensbach

The death occurred in Dublin on 3rd January, 2011 of the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) cellist, Stephen Sensbach. He was 56.

The eldest son of Werner Sensbach, originally from Mannheim in Germany, and Gladys Frederiksen, of Danish and Baltic origin, Stephen Sensbach was born in Utica, New York, in 1954. In 1966, the family moved to Charlottesville, Virginia.

Sensbach was the author of *French Cello Sonatas 1991-1939*, a pioneering 2001 study of some 130 French cello sonatas and their composers. He also contributed articles to *Strad* magazine in Britain, and, more recently, wrote the programme notes for a new CD of French music, *Fleur de Paris*, performed by the cello section of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

A cellist with the orchestra in Bremerhaven, Germany, Sensbach for four years toured the world with the European Community Chamber Orchestra. He was a member of both the RTÉ NSO and the Orchestra of



Stephen Sensbach (Photo: Katie Donovan)

St. Cecilia, joining the former in June 1997. Throughout his RTÉ career, he was a member of the Musicians' Union of Ireland.

In an appreciation at his funeral service in Glasthule, Co. Dublin, his long time friend and colleague, Niall O'Loughlin, spoke of Sensbach's 'delving nature which came from a deep curiosity and passion for life'. Having found apt an earlier description of Sensbach as 'inspirational', O'Loughlin said: 'So Stephen you were inspirational. You are an inspiration, a hero. We salute you and thank you for coming among us'.

Many were the other tributes to Sensbach, both spoken and musical, the latter performed by a quartet of his RTÉ NSO cello colleagues, Niall O'Loughlin, Violetta Muth, Martin Johnson and Una Ní Chanainn. There were also solo performances by Niall O'Loughlin, and Sensbach's pupil, Caitriona Finnegan.

The Musicians' Union of Ireland was represented at the service by former Secretary, John Swift.

At a subsequent service in Camolin, Co. Wexford, Sensbach's friend, RTÉ NSO violinist, Anne Harte, performed Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending*.

The Musicians' Union of Ireland extends its deepest sympathy to Stephen Sensbach's wife, Katie Donovan, his children, Phoebe and Felix, and other members of his family.

Competition Authority Freelance Issue for ILO

Continued from page 1

Denying the aforementioned musicians, actors and journalists the right to collective representation by their unions, the Competition Authority has defined such workers as individual 'undertakings' who must compete for work. Freelance agreements are viewed as a form of price-fixing and unions are precluded from even providing guidance on pay rates.

The issue first emerged in 2004 when Irish Equity was forced to abandon a collective agreement in respect of voice-over actors. It was made clear to the union that failure to comply would lead to a criminal prosecution of the union, with the union official facing imprisonment on conviction.

Since then the NUJ and SIPTU have led a relentless ICTU campaign for reform of the law. A major breakthrough was the commitment secured under the national agreement, Towards 2016, the Government giving a specific commitment to introduce legislation by the end of 2009. As already stated, the outgoing Government failed to honour that undertaking.

Apart from its ILO initiative, the ICTU will be raising the matter with the incoming Government at the earliest opportunity.

Sounds Impressive

'...The music began as a segue out of the orchestral tuning, with Lindberg [Christian Lindberg, Swedish trombonist, conductor and composer] first heard offstage, and then making an entry while still playing. *Echoes of Eternity* is an orchestrally lush, romantic, colourfully theatrical piece, which looked and sounded to be as much fun as two trombonists might have in front of an orchestra. The non-conducting soloist, the NSO's own Jason Sinclair, took everything in his stride...'

Michael Dervan, Music Critic, *The Irish Times*, 19th January, 2011, on the performance by trombonists Christian Lindberg and Jason Sinclair of Jan Sandström's *Echoes of Eternity* with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Lindberg, on 14th January, 2011, in the National Concert Hall, Dublin.



Jason Sinclair

Workers shocked by budget cuts

The full extent of the budget assault on wages and incomes hit home when workers opened their wage packets and pay slips in January. The new Universal Social Charge (USC), which includes the health levy, coupled with tax changes, has affected all middle and lower income earners, with those on the lowest pay being hardest hit.

The latest ERSI projection of economic growth of just 1.5% this year, the continuing decline in employment and the likelihood that 100,000, mainly young people, will emigrate over the next two years is a shocking indictment of the out-

going Government's economic policies.

The USC merges the income levy and the health levy. The latter was previously included in PRSI. Consequently, workers may have noticed a decrease in the PRSI deduction for their wages but this is counterweighted by the imposition of the USC.

The USC applies to gross income from all sources, with some limited exemptions, at the following rates: 2% on income of €4,004 per annum or €77 per week; 4% on income between €4,004 and €10,036; and 7% on income over €16,016, excluding income earners over 70 years of age, and medical card holders, where there is a cap of 4%. Self-employed people will pay an additional surcharge of 3% on income over £100,000.

Minimum wage cut only preliminary target of employers

By Michael Halpenny

Before he turned off his office lights and headed for the foothills of retirement, one of the last acts of the outgoing Minister for Enterprise Trade and Innovation, Batt O'Keeffe, was to sign the Order to cut the National Minimum Wage by €1 on 1st February, taking €39 a week out of the pay packet of nearly 50,000 vulnerable low paid workers.

Despite strenuous opposition from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and most parties in the Dáil, not to mention many right-thinking people of all political hues and none, this last act by the departing Minister represented yet another step by Government to aid employers in their bid to dismantle worker protections.

This move was all the more galling in that it was implemented a full four months before any EU/IMF requirement to do so, and a matter of weeks before the election of a new Government which will be composed of parties which declared themselves publicly against the proposal.

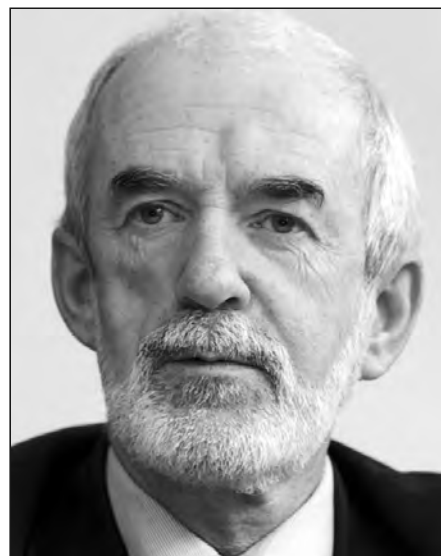
It has been well argued that the proposal also lacks any justification, hits at the most vulnerable in the workforce on top of other austerity measures and represents a significant transfer of wealth away from the

very low paid to the employers, with no benefit to the State.

What has not been pinpointed much in public debate (except by workers and their unions) is that the Minimum Wage is just the preliminary target of the employers. The actual primary targets are the other mechanisms for the protection of workers in vulnerable areas of the economy – the Registered Employment Agreements (REA's) and Employment Regulation Orders (ERO's).

These are legally enforceable standards of pay and conditions agreed between employers and workers through their unions which establish a 'level playing pitch' for employer and worker alike and which also ensure fair competition and stable industrial relations. They generally apply in vulnerable sectors of the economy such as hotels, catering, construction, agriculture, and security and so on, where left to their own devices, employers have been shown to compete with each other by forcing down wages.

This is no coincidence, either, in that these areas are precisely those which have been identified by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in their 2005 Report as being the very sectors globally which are



Michael Halpenny

most exposed to exploitation of workers in all its forms.

While unions, on their own account, and the National Employment Rights Authority (NERA), on behalf of the community, have been pursuing the application and, where required, enforcement of the wages and conditions under the REA's and ERO's, some employers have been busy lobbying both privately and publicly to dismantle them altogether.

Their intention is to relieve themselves of the burden of complying with the law by removing the 'offence' altogether!

The effect of this would be to open the way to mass exploitation of workers in these parts of the labour market to the point at which even decent employers who want to observe reasonable standards will not be able to compete and will believe they have to join 'the cheap labour brigade' in the 'race to the bottom'.

If there is a way out of the current banker and property speculator-led crisis, it can certainly not be on the backs of the most vulnerable workers.

It was lack of regulation at the top that got us into this unprecedented mess.

Cutting the pay of low-paid workers and dismantling the regulation of pay and conditions will not get us out.

SIPTU will continue to campaign vigorously to defend these protections, and we are calling on all union members to unite behind this campaign.

(There are 19 EROs in total covering more than 300,000 workers. The REAs deal with industries such as the construction, printing industries and with electrical contractors.)

Michael Halpenny is Head of SIPTU's Legal Rights' Unit

Baritone, Peter McBrien, dies aged 81

The death occurred on 7 October 2010, at the age of 81, of the Dublin-born baritone, Peter McBrien.

Winner of the Feis Ceoil gold medal for boy soprano in 1943, he was later awarded a scholarship and studied with several eminent teachers. He joined the Radio Éireann Singers, then under Hans Waldemar Rosen, subsequently participating in several of their tours abroad, including Munich in 1965 and 1972.

In addition to his Radio Éireann commitments, he sang in a wide range of opera roles and in recitals, concerts and oratorios. He performed regularly at



Peter McBrien

Wexford Opera Festival and in Dublin's Theatre Royal and Gaiety Theatre. On more than fifty occasions, he played the title role in Mozart's opera, *Don Giovanni*.

While in the Radio Éireann Singers, McBrien was a member of the Irish Federation of Musicians and Associated Professions. From 1975-1978, he was a member of the Federation's RTÉ Orchestral Players' and Singers' Branch Committee.

To his wife, Angela, and daughter, Ciara, the MUI extends its sympathy.

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1732 - 1809)

Complete Symphonies – 1st Series 2011

Newman University Church, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin
Sundays January 30th – February 6th, 13th & 20th – March 6th & 13th
At 3.30 pm

In March of last year, the Orchestra of St. Cecilia (OSC) completed an epic ten-year Project of performing all 200 of Bach's Church Cantatas. This artistic venture was an unqualified success and brought before the public, in live performance, much beautiful, profound and rarely heard music.

The OSC is now commencing another huge artistic undertaking, namely to play ALL 108 symphonies by the great Austrian composer **Franz Joseph Haydn**.

Haydn is rightly credited with being the composer who made the most significant contribution to the development of the classical symphony. Although he is often described as 'the Father of the Symphony', he did not invent the genre. Before he began to compose his symphonies, he had already encountered the Italian sinfonia and the Viennese symphony while he was working as a freelance musician in the Austrian capital in the 1750's.

Most of Haydn's symphonies were written for the artistically discerning aristocratic Esterházy family which, in 1761, appointed the composer as Kappelmeister at their palace in Esterháza, then a remote region in Hungary and which, even today, is not easy to visit by public transport. There, isolated from the wider musical community, for nearly thirty years, he wrote his symphonies for a hand-picked resident orchestra and this isolation, in his

own words, left him with 'no choice but to become original'.

Haydn's symphonies are one of the supreme glories of Western music, yet many of them have seldom been performed in Ireland with the result that Irish concert-goers have not the opportunity to experience the full extent of Haydn's originality and genius. Those small number of symphonies which are regularly performed, include late works such as the 'London' symphonies (1792/95), the 'Paris' symphonies (1785/87), some of his turbulent middle-period works such as the 'Farewell' symphony (1772), and the early trilogy Le matin, Le midi and Le soir (1761). This is less than a quarter of his complete symphonic output!

In presenting these concerts, it is our aim that the general public will become aware of how wonderful a composer Haydn is, and accord him the recognition due to a Master.

What we did for Bach Cantatas in Ireland, we now wish to do for Haydn Symphonies.

The plan is to play three symphonies per concert – early, middle and late period – surveying the entire development of Haydn's astonishing symphonic output from 1759 to 1795, some thirty five years of constant creativity. Progressing at the rate of six concerts a year, it will take no less than six years, six series and thirty six

concerts to complete the project! This promises to be a most rewarding and revealing experience for performers and audiences alike.

The 1st Series of Haydn Symphonies will take place in the lovely Newman University Church, with its distinctive architecture, exceptional decoration and excellent acoustics.

The musical interpretation of all the symphonies in this series will be in the hands of the distinguished Irish conductor, **Proinnsias Ó Duinn**, who has a deep and abiding love for Haydn's music, and who directed such a fine Haydn 200th anniversary concert with the OSC in November 2009 in the National Concert Hall.

This Project needs substantial financial assistance, corporate, cultural, personal and private. I hope very much that this support will be forthcoming to enable us to continue and conclude this truly special musical journey.

Lindsay Armstrong,
Manager/Artistic Director
Orchestra of St. Cecilia

Lindsay Armstrong is a former Vice-President of the Union's RTÉ Branch



The Orchestra of St. Cecilia at the final concert of a decade-long series of performances of Bach's complete Church Cantatas, in St. Ann's Church, Dawson Street, Dublin, on 7th March 2010.

Mayo Bow-maker Scoops Triple Gold

Gary Leahy from Newport, Co. Mayo, last November won three gold medals at the Violin Society of American bow-making competition in Cleveland, Ohio. Cleveland is the biggest bow-making competition in the world and Leahy won gold for viola, violin and cello bows.

One of only two bow makers in Ireland, he makes bows for both classical and traditional musicians.

It takes about a week to make a bow and the retail price ranges from approximately €3,000 to €10,000. His bows are exported all over the world.

Commenting on his remarkable success, Leahy said: "Winning this, well, it's good for your reputation. It's an indication that you have half an inkling about what you're doing. It also indicates Ireland produces unique, quality craftsmanship."

Congratulating Leahy, Laura Magahy, Chairwoman of the Craft Council of Ireland, stated: "Ireland has a long craft of musical-instrument making and this international award is a testament to Gary's skill and craftsmanship".

Phil Lynott Exhibition in Dublin

To mark the 25th Anniversary of the death of Irish rock musician, Phil Lynott, an exhibition is being held in St. Stephen's Green Shopping Centre, Dublin, throughout March.

It will feature guitars, flight cases, lyric books, school reports and the musician's shares in Manchester United Football Club, as well as personal letters, cards and other items collected by his mother, Philomena Lynott, and friends over the years.

Supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport, the Dublin UNESCO City of Literature, Dublin City Council, Dublin Tourism and RTÉ 2fm, the exhibition is being curated by Hot Press magazine.

Reacting to the announcement of this event, Philomena Lynott said: "I'm absolutely thrilled that the exhibition has become a reality. There is a huge feeling of goodwill out there towards Philip and so I think this is going to be an inspiring event for all of the Irish people who loved my son and his music. I'm really looking forward to it."



Phil Lynott Monument

Death of former Union Branch President, Frank Bourke

Frank Bourke, who died suddenly in Limerick on 31st October, 2010, at the age of 92, was for many years a member of the Irish Federation of Musicians and Associated Professions. A native of Irishtown, Limerick City, he was President of the union's Limerick Branch in 1953-54. It was also during the 1950s, that he demonstrated great loyalty to the union in a protracted, difficult strike or lock-out at St. John's Pavilion.

The multi-talented Bourke, who played drums, piano and piano-accordion, was also a baker and member of the Irish Bakers', Confectioners' and Allied Workers' Amalgamated Union.

Among the many ensembles with which he performed was the Askeaton-based Donie Collins Band.

He continued to play music up the end. One of his last concerts was with the Boherbuoy Brass and Reed Band in their 160th Anniversary Concert in the Redemptorist Church, Limerick, on 11th June, 2010. In a programme note on the band, it was stated: 'Ages range from between 12 and a very youthful 92...', the latter figure a clear reference to Bourke. The MUI extends its condolences to his family.



Frank Bourke

€35.8 million Royalties paid to musicians in 2009

Musicians received €35.8 million in royalties for 2009, an increase of five per cent over the previous year, from the Irish Music Rights' Organisation Ltd. (IMRO). IMRO's twelve directors, including leading Irish performers Paul Brady, Eleanor McEvoy and Christy Moore, were paid an aggregate €191,300 in royalties for the same period.

IMRO, a not-for profit organisation, has 5,000 members and collects payments by charging users such as broadcasters, venues and businesses a licence fee. The proceeds are distributed to the copyright owners.

Ceol – An Enlightened Musical Programme

by Carmel Dunne

The working class suburb of Ballyfermot, seven kilometres west of Dublin City Centre, is not necessarily the first place you would go looking for musical excellence and educational innovation. However, the music project called Ceol is doing just that.

My social consciousness came when I was an active Regional Executive member of IMPACT trade union for twenty years in the seventies and eighties and was on the Women's Committee of ICTU and was author of ICTU's submission on Childcare. I retired from the health services in 2002. Prior to that I taught piano and ran Ceol in my spare time.

It began for the simplest of reasons: a recognition that today's children did not have access to the musical education I had enjoyed. I had played piano as a child with Mrs Howard from Blackditch Road and with Mother Athenatius, Dominican Convent, and finished my Teaching Diploma late into adulthood.

So, I went back to the area in which I'd grown up and got in touch with parties that I thought would be interested in making Ballyfermot a beacon of light in music education terms. The school principals were delighted.

Ceol's beginnings were humble: just doing tin whistle on one level in all the schools. But, within a short space of time, all our 8-10 year-olds could play the instrument. This stage was supported by Derek Fowler, local businessman and Cllr. Vincent Jackson, ex-Lord Mayor of Dublin.

Emboldened by early success, together with Gerard Flanagan of the Vocational Education Committee and Rita Eyre, Ceol began offering after-school teaching on other instruments. Low key and localised though the programme was in its early years, its success attracted the attention of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland (SEI), an organisation created to support innovative socially-aware projects. By 2006, I had received an award from SEI in recognition of Ceol's achievements thus far; some 3,000 children nationally (2,000 locally) had participated in Ceol's programmes. That figure is now well in excess of 13,200 nationally (2,500 locally).

From 2002 on, other organisations – Vocational and Educational Committees, Dublin's Youth Services' Board and Drugs' Task Force, Dormant Accounts, Department of Education & Science and the European Union's Urban II Regeneration Initiative



Presentation of the All-Ireland Ulster Bank Achievers' Award, 2009, to Ceol, from left: Ali Giusti, Unidentified (Ulster Bank manager), and Carmel Dunne

included – were supportive. SEI's involvement helped us to think on a national scale. Happily, the SEI challenge coincided with Ali Giusti coming on board. Ali had experience in developing music programmes for 3-18 year-olds in Wales. Within weeks we could see that what she was doing was absolutely magical. It introduced adult and child participants alike to rhythm, pitch, form, texture, timbre, dynamics, tempo and the myriad other building blocks of musical awareness. More importantly, it stressed the excitement and enjoyment of involvement, the lessons' emphasis on performance disguising and enhancing Giusti's conceptual underpinning.

Closely collaborating, Giusti writing detailed lesson plans and my proofing, editing and organising the strategy, the two of us developed what became the Ceol Programme. The strategic vision and planning has been greatly assisted by a very professional board, including Ger and Tempy Cummins from an organisation called Vision to Reality.

Now the teachers train, via on-line or with DVD professional development sessions, every six weeks. It's designed to ensure that they're always a step ahead of the children. It's all intended to build incrementally, with each of the year's 30 weekly lessons clearly mapped out.

Ceol also provides its own resource materials for schools. Books, illustrative aids, CDs and DVDs aimed at the child, all complement the programme's pedagogic imperatives. It's a package unlike any other, says a retiring principal with a 30-year career: 'I've never seen anything like it. Nobody's doing this the way Ceol is doing it'.

Certainly, the Ulster Bank seemed to think so in 2008, when Ceol picked up one of its

Business Achievers' Awards in the Community/Social Entrepreneurship category and received the All-Ireland Award on Thursday, 12th March, 2009.

Although still in its own relative infancy, Ceol has already produced four tiers of its programme, the first aimed at junior infants, the second at senior infants, third at first class and so on. They represent the start of a long-term project, due to be completed in 2015, that will map out musical provision across the full eight-year span of primary schooling in Ireland north and south, in Irish and in English.

Though the scheme's profile is steadily increasing, with some 12,000 teachers across the island as potential participants, there is considerable room yet for growth. Interestingly, parents are beginning to ask for the Ceol Programme to be implemented in their children's schools.

All public grant sources have now dried up. Currently, Ceol survives on sales of its programme materials, which cost schools €375 for every participating teacher, equivalent to about 50 cents per child per week, so it represents real value for money.

We're a slow burner, but we're dynamic and evolving, and at the moment we're growing through word of mouth. We're passionate and constantly developing and planning to cross the border into Northern Ireland and cross the sea into Wales, England and Scotland.

www.ceolireland.ie

Carmel Dunne, Executive Director of Ceol, is a social entrepreneur. A native of Dublin, she is a former Regional Executive member of the trade union IMPACT.

Book Review

By Charles Callan

Dear Comrade, SIPTU 1990-2010

Dr. Jack McGinley (Editor)

The Union's first two decades are celebrated in the compendium *Dear Comrade, SIPTU 1990-2010* by Dr. Jack McGinley (Editor) which was launched in late 2010.

Twenty-one years ago, in January 1990, SIPTU (Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union) was brought into existence by the democratic decision of the members of the Federated Workers' Union of Ireland and the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union.

It was not merely the coming together of the two major Irish trade unions, for in a more general sense it was the high point in heralding the modernising of the Irish trade union movement.

Over the fifteen years leading to 1990 many and diverse trade unions had already merged into both the FWUI and the ITGWU. Although the creation of SIPTU was in many ways the confluence of the major streams in the Irish trade union movement of the twentieth century, the process had started before then. The gold and silversmiths (NUGSAT), shoe and leather workers (ISLWU), rural workers (FRW), women workers (IWWU), the wonderfully named 'stationary engine drivers' (USED), actors (IAE), musicians (IFMAP), and others had merged into either the FWUI or the ITGWU in the 1970's and 1980's.

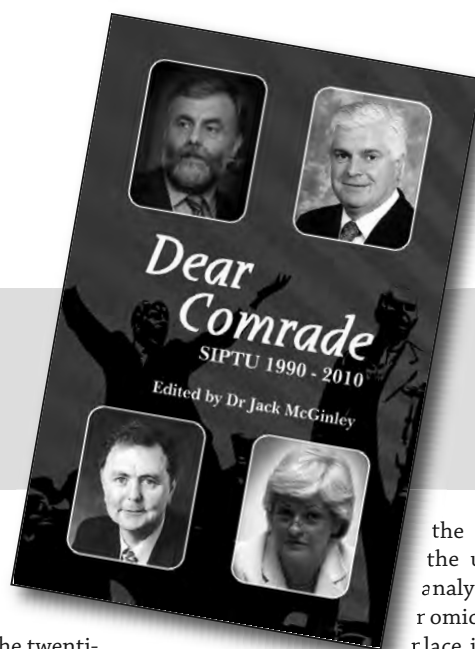
The process did not stop with the creation of SIPTU in 1990. Since then other organisations that merged into SIPTU included one of Ireland's oldest unions the painters' and deco-

rators' (INPDTU), as did the printers and bookbinders (IPU) who celebrated their bi-centenary in 2009. More 'youthful' organisations, dating from the first half of the twentieth century, including the automobile drivers and mechanics (AGEMOU) and port workers (MPGWU) have also merged into SIPTU.

Dear Comrade is an unusual book in that unlike most publications emanating from the labour movement, it is neither concerned with



This cartoon was published originally in *Opus*, Vol. 1, No. 1, June 1957, journal of the Irish Federation of Musicians.



the history of the union, the analysis of economic or workplace issues, nor with statistical data. Rather, *Dear Comrade* is a celebration of the union's first twenty years.

It is a rich miscellany of sixty-nine items by thirty-eight contributors including a wide range of articles, poems, songs, cartoons, documents, drawings, images of paintings and works of art, photographs and commemorative pieces on SIPTU, its people and its fore-runners. It has a profusion of illustrations including twenty-six in colour.

The Editor of *Dear Comrade*, Dr. Jack McGinley, who works in the TCD Library and serves on the Board of Trinity College, is a long-time activist in the SIPTU Education Sector. Having served and held office at branch and regional levels in the union, he has been elected as a member of the union's National Executive Council for some years now and was ideally equipped for the creation of this miscellany.

For anyone with an interest in Irish trade unions affairs in the broadest sense, their shelves will be the poorer if they do not have a copy of *Dear Comrade*.

Dear Comrade, SIPTU 1990-2010 (ISBN 978-0-9557249-4-7) 200 pages (including twenty-four of illustrations) was published by Watchword Limited and is available directly from watchwordinfo@gmail.ie at €20.00 paperback and €27.00 hardback (prices include post and packing). A small number of numbered copies of the limited hardback edition are still available.

Charles Callan is a former President of Dublin No. 15 Branch, Federated Workers' Union of Ireland (now SIPTU), and a former President and Secretary of the Irish Labour History Society. A labour historian, he has written widely on the subject and is the author of 'Painters in Union', and co-author of the recently published 'Irish Labour Lives', both available from Watchword Ltd., e-mail: watchwordinfo@gmail.ie at €20 paperback. 'Irish Labour Lives' is also available in hardback at €30.

Sounds Impressive

'...The sounds [of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony] were projected with clarity and power, and the musical argument was always cogently presented...There was also a kind of interior illumination, a musical chiaroscuro, which has long been Marriner's trademark, and which rendered clear and vital so much that's often allowed to remain muddy in this most uplifting of symphonies.

The audience loved it, and clearly wanted more.'

Michael Dervan, Music Critic, *The Irish Times*, 3 November 2010, on the performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony by the Orchestra of St. Cecilia, conducted by Neville Marriner, on 1 November 2010, in the National Concert Hall, Dublin.

Johann Strauss – An Artist's Life

by John Swift

Without its associations with such composers as Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms and Mahler, the City of Vienna would be inconceivable. The Austrian capital would be even more difficult to envisage without the 'Waltz King', Johann Strauss. That today, more than a century following his demise, Strauss still is synonymous with Vienna, for so long the world's musical capital, is a measure, not alone of his unique standing in that city, but the boundless appreciation of his music throughout the world. Best known as the composer of the world's most famous waltz, the *Blue Danube*, and *Die Fledermaus*, generally regarded as the finest operetta ever written, Strauss' repertoire comprises a host of waltzes, marches, polkas, mazurkas, operettas and other compositions.

Born in Vienna, on 25th October, 1825, Johann Strauss was the eldest of six children of Johann and Anna Strauss (née Streim). Strauss senior, famous for his celebrated *Radetzky* March, was an incredibly popular composer and conductor of 'light' music. When Strauss junior was nine, the elder Strauss fathered the first of a further seven offspring with another partner, later abandoning his original family.

Despite Strauss senior's opposition, Anna Strauss arranged a musical education for her son. Having studied composition and the violin, the eighteen-year-old Strauss made his début as a composer and conductor of his own orchestra on 15th October, 1844, in Dommayer's Casino, in Hietzing, then a village outside Vienna. Conducting works by himself, his father and others, he achieved a spectacular success. Thus, Vienna found itself with rival Johann Strauss orchestras! Absent, alas, from Strauss junior's début was the elder Strauss, apparently unable to countenance his son's defiance.

Despite his encouraging début, Strauss encountered difficulties developing his career. For one thing, his father had exclusive contracts with Vienna's most prestigious ballrooms, confining the younger Strauss to more modest venues in the city's outskirts. To counter this, Strauss junior toured abroad where he made quite an impression.

Another impediment to his career was the revolution that swept Europe in 1848, an event that further divided Strauss father

and son, the former siding with the monarchy, and subsequently composing his famous *Radetzky* March, marking the defeat of the Italian insurgents by the Austrian Army under its Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Radetzky. A bandmaster of the National Guard, Strauss junior supported the revolutionaries. However, convinced that his radical stance would impede his career, he subsequently ingratiated himself with the aristocracy, flattering them with musical dedications and performances in their homes.

Following his father's death, in 1849, the 23-year-old Strauss merged his own and his father's orchestras and was soon performing in the finest Viennese establishments. His dynamic conducting style, embracing brisk and expansive gestures, appealed to audiences. Moreover, in an innovation, he would substitute his violin for the conductor's baton, leading in certain passages, facing the audience. That there was substance as well as style is evident from Brahms's observation many years later: 'There is a master – such a conductor that one can never lose a single tone from any instrument'.

A lifelong workaholic, Strauss' hectic schedule led to a deterioration in his health, obliging him to rest intermittently for weeks and sometimes months. To cope with this development, his under-rated brother, Josef Strauss, was inveigled into becoming a conductor and composer of the Strauss Orchestra. Several years later, another brother, Eduard Strauss, followed suit.

Russia featured prominently in the tours of Johann Strauss. For twelve consecutive years, commencing in 1856, sometimes assisted by his brothers, he enjoyed highly successful concert seasons at Pavlovsk, some twenty miles from the then Russian capital, St. Petersburg.

Having already eclipsed his father, Strauss matured greatly as a composer during those years, producing in the late 1860's such classics as his waltzes, the *Blue Danube*, *Artist's Life*, *Tales from the Vienna Woods* and *Wine, Woman and Song!* Premiered in Vienna, in 1867, where it was a moderate success, the *Blue Danube* was a major triumph for Strauss when, later that year, he conducted the orchestral version during



Johann Strauss

the International World Exhibition in Paris. The *Blue Danube* rapidly became what it remains today, almost 150 years later, the world's most famous waltz.

Having conquered Paris, Strauss conducted a highly successful season of concerts that year at the Royal Italian Opera House, Covent Garden, London.

Five years later, in 1872, Strauss performed at the World Peace Jubilee and International Music Festival in Boston, Massachusetts. With all the hallmarks of American excess, he found himself the principal conductor of an orchestra of a thousand! Promoting this bizarre event, with audiences of some 25,000, was the Ballygar, Co. Galway-born bandmaster and impresario, Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore.

A year earlier, the first of Strauss' sixteen operettas was staged in Vienna. Although only two survive in the mainstream repertoire, significant extracts from others remain popular. An explanation proffered for his many failures in this genre was his inability to select inspiring librettos. Whatever the reason, he more than made amends with his masterpiece, *Die Fledermaus*, and the *Gypsy Baron*.

Meanwhile, in 1862, Strauss had married Henriette Chalupetzky, or Jetty Treffz as she was known professionally, the retired, internationally renowned, Viennese mezzo-soprano. Seven years his senior, the 44-year-old, previously unmarried Jetty had, with several partners, given birth to seven children. It was chiefly Jetty Treffz who persuaded the hesitant Strauss to compose for the stage. The marriage ended after sixteen years, in 1878, with Jetty's death. With his life-long terror of illness and death, Strauss was ill equipped to cope with such a development. Having failed earlier to attend the obsequies of his mother and brother, Josef, Johann Strauss absented himself from his wife's funeral and fled abroad.

Continued on page 10



Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore (Photo: Library of Congress, Washington DC)

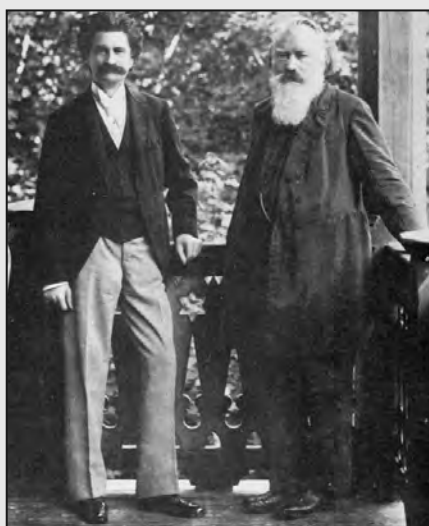
Johann Strauss – An Artist's Life

Continued from page 9

However, less than two months later, Strauss, now fifty-two, married Angelika 'Lili' Dittrich, a German actress of little more than half his age. Four years later, however, she abandoned him for the 29-year-old theatre director, Franz Steiner. Almost immediately, Strauss entered a new relationship with the unrelated Adele Strauss (née Deutsch), a 26-year-old Viennese widow and mother of a two-year-old daughter. While Strauss had secured a civil divorce from Lili, papal consent to re-marry had been refused. Undeterred, the Catholic-baptised Strauss, whose paternal grandparents were Jewish, abandoned his nationality and religion, became a citizen of the German dukedom of Saxe-Coburg Gotha, adopted the Protestant faith of the formerly Jewish Adele and, in 1887, when he was 61, married her, in civil and Protestant ceremonies, in Coburg.

Although for the final three decades of his life Strauss composed primarily for the stage, he continued to produce orchestral works of the highest artistic standard, among them his acclaimed waltzes: *Vienna Blood*, *Roses from the South*, *Voices of Spring* and the *Emperor*. It was at the première of his *Vienna Blood* Waltz, in 1873, in Vienna's Musikverein, that Strauss made his conducting début with the legendary Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.

With the advancing years, Strauss, who apparently was of friendly and pleasant disposition, became increasingly introspective and reclusive, seldom venturing out



Johann Strauss and Brahms, Bad Ischl, Austria, 1894

and being visited in his home by a small circle of mainly artistic friends, among them Brahms, whom he had first met in the 1860s.

Strauss' final public appearance was on 29th May 1899, in Vienna's Court Opera House, when he conducted the overture to *Die Fledermaus*. Having contracted pneumonia shortly thereafter, Johann Strauss died in his home on 3rd June, 1899, at the age of seventy-three. Virtually the whole of Vienna turned out for his funeral which was held in the city's Evangelical Church, in Dorotheergasse, followed by interment in the Central Cemetery, in a grave of honour close to those of Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms.

It was no less a luminary than Wagner who declared that Johann Strauss had 'the finest musical brain of his era'. His other significant admirers included Verdi,

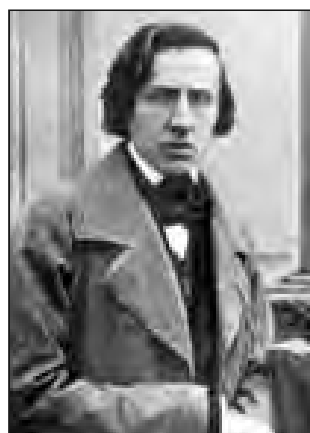
Brahms, Mahler, the unrelated Richard Strauss and Sibelius. A keen exponent of music by the great masters, Strauss was exceedingly modest about his own contribution, describing it as 'the extension of form', a reference to his development of the Viennese waltz through an extended introduction and a coda. Leaving aside his contribution to other musical genres, particularly operetta, this assessment acknowledges merely a technical advance. But was Strauss's contribution to music merely technical in nature? Was it not, essentially, through the high quality musical content that Strauss made a symphony of the waltz, compelling the public to listen as well as dance, thereby elevating the waltz from the ballroom to the concert hall?

Aside from its spontaneity, elegance and refinement, the music of Strauss is characterised by colourful and inventive orchestrations, intriguing and intoxicating rhythms, and, above all, inspired, original and exquisite melodies. It is for this contribution, more than any technical innovation, that, more than a century following his death, Johann Strauss remains the world's greatest composer of 'light classical' music.

This is a revised and edited version of an article entitled *Johann Strauss: An Artist's Life*, by John Swift, published in *Vienna Music*, No. 84, Winter 2002, journal of the Johann Strauss Society of Great Britain.

John Swift is a member and former Secretary of the Musicians' Union of Ireland. He is currently researching and writing a trade union history of musicians in Ireland.

Epilepsy possible cause of Chopin's trances



Chopin

Chopin's tendency to drift off while at the piano was interpreted by his partner, the writer, George Sand as 'the manifestation of a genius full of sentiment and expression'.

This may be wide of the mark for, in a new analysis, Spanish doctors say Chopin's hallucinations may have been due to a temporal lobe epilepsy rather than a surfeit of artistic imagination. They acknowledge, however, that without brain imaging or other tests, this will be virtually impossible to prove.

Having analysed descriptions of Chopin's hallucinations from those close to him, the doctors

suggest that the French-Polish composer suffered from a type of epilepsy that produces conscious hallucinations lasting from seconds to minutes.

They cite an extract from Sand's memoir, in which she recalled returning to the home she shared with Chopin, along with her son. Chopin had been playing one of his preludes and told Sand he was lulled to sleep while at the piano and saw

himself drowned at the bottom of a lake.

Another composer to experience hallucinations, both auditory and visual, was Robert Schumann. These were believed to be the product of his musical genius.

Although plagued by various health ailments such as tuberculosis, severe headaches and insomnia, there is no evidence that Chopin was diagnosed with any neurological problems.

U2 fund Children's Music Education Scheme

Music Generation, the organisers of a music scheme for school children, hopes that 10,000 of them who would otherwise not have received a musical education will be able to do so over the next three years.

Funding for the €7 million scheme has come from leading Irish rock band, U2, and the Ireland Fund, which are contributing €5 million and €2 million, respectively.

The money will go to a series of local music education partnerships which will involve established music teachers, musicians and administrators.

School children will be offered music lessons either in or out of the classroom without cost or at a subsidised rate. It is hoped that a dozen partnerships will be established nationally. Each one must have the support of a statutory body, particularly a local authority or VEC, to qualify for up to €200,000 a year in funding over the next three years.

The Department of Education and Skills has made a commitment to fund the scheme after 2015. By then, organisers hope the



U2

scheme will be established well enough to offer every child a chance of a musical education.

Music Generation Director, Rosaleen Molloy, said Ireland was trailing far behind the European average with only 1% of secondary school children receiving tuition in instrumental or vocal performance. The European average is between 6% and 8%.

Rejecting the widespread belief that music education is a luxury, she described as 'shock

ing' the lack of commitment to a musical education in Irish schools. "Not only does it give you the technical skills of learning to play an instrument, a music education gives you the skills that you need for life, a great sense of confidence, discipline and team-working. The gift that U2 and the Ireland Fund have given to our young people goes way beyond musical skills. It gives them an empowerment and a belief in themselves", said Molloy.

TIMES PAST

The Four Provinces House Ballroom Orchestra, c. 1946, from left: Paddy Malone, Ted Johnson (Leader), Cecil Bell, Bobby Lawless, Unidentified (Vocalist), Jack Gregory, Johnny Devlin, Joe Coughlan, Billy Kane, Dave Issacs and Al Cohen.

Employees of the Irish Bakers', Confectioners' and Allied Workers' Amalgamated Union, proprietors of Four Provinces House, the musicians were members of the Irish Federation of Dance Musicians (the Federation). Malone was the Federation's Secretary/General Secretary from 1939-52 and 1954-77; Devlin was President in 1947-48; Lawless was Vice-President from 1953-57; and Kane was a Trustee from 1943-62, 1976-77 and 1978-79, and Treasurer from 1975-81. (Photo: Swift Collection)



Out of this World Gig

Unlikely as it may seem, the latest venue to have hosted a live performance of Irish traditional music is the International Space Station orbiting the Earth. Performing the music was American NASA astronaut, Catherine ‘Cady’ Coleman, who blasted off from Kazakhstan for a six-month stint on the station on 15th December 2010.

She took with her a priceless traditional flute belonging to the acclaimed Irish flautist Matt Molloy of The Chieftains and Planxty.

Coleman, a flautist herself, had met Molloy at an informal music session following a gig. The pair became friends and Coleman became a huge fan of Molloy’s music.

Responding to her request for a flute she could play while on the space station, Molloy gave her one of his most prized possessions, his E-flat flute, the

instrument he had played on his landmark début solo album made with Dónal Lunny in 1976. ‘It was made in the late 1890s or early 1900s and I couldn’t possibly put a value on it but it’s very special to me. Cady is a fine accomplished flute-player, so it will be in good hands’, said Molloy.

A former USA Air Force colonel, with a doctorate in science and engineering, Coleman is a veteran of two space shuttle flights with 500 hours in space behind her.

Accompanying Coleman on her epic journey to the space station, crewed by two Russians and an American, were Russian cosmonaut Dmitri Kondratyev and Italian Paolo Nespoli.

Before her departure, Coleman said to Molloy: ‘Your music always brings me to a special place, so I thought I’d bring yours to one’.



Matt Molloy



Catherine Coleman
(Photo: www.space-facts.de)

Sounding Off!

The secret of my piano playing is that I always make sure that the lid over the keyboard is open before I start to play.

Artur Schnabel

Union Dues 2010-2011			
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

- Who composed the theme music of RTÉ’s television dramatisation of James Plunkett’s novel, *Strumpet City*?
- Name the first Irish artist to reach the UK pop charts?
- Which well-known Country and Irish vocalist, and MUI member, is a native of Banagher, Co. Offaly.
- In which year was the present Musicians’ Union of Ireland established?
- My Hobby My Life* is the 2009 autobiography of which well-known Irish vocalist?
- Which famous composer conducted the Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra in Dublin in 1963?
- Name the ditty sung by Peter Sellers and Sophia Loren in the 1960 film, *The Millionairess*?
- Which famous composer was born at Rohrau in Austria?
- Name the RTÉ Lyric fm presenter of *Movies and Musicals*?
- Which one of these composers performed in Ireland: Mendelssohn, Liszt, Offenbach or Lehár?

Answers below

Answers

1. Proinsias Ó Duinn. 2. Larry Cunninghamham. 3. Johnny McEvoy. 4. 2003. 5. Val Doonican. 6. Stravinsky. 7. *Goodness Gracious Me*. 8. Haydn. 9. Aedin Gormley. 10. Liszt.

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