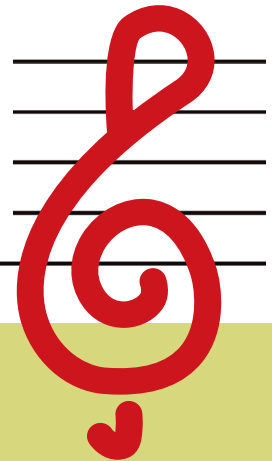


Sound Post



VOLUME 14 NO.3 - AUTUMN 2016



At Leinster House, 6th July 2016, l-r, Pádraig Murray, President, Irish Equity; Senator Ivana Bacik; Karan O'Loughlin, National Campaigns and Equality Organiser, SIPTU; and Bryan Murray, Executive Committee member, Irish Equity. Photo: Dan O'Neill

Freelance Collective Bargaining Rights a Step Closer

The Government has accepted the principle behind the Competition (Amendment) Bill which was tabled by Labour Party Senator, Ivana Bacik, in January 2016. The Bill seeks to nullify a bizarre ruling by the Competition Authority (a precursor of the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission), in 2004, that an Irish Equity collective agreement embracing pay rates for voiceover artists was in breach of competition law. Each actor, it decreed, was a 'business undertaking' and it was unlawful for undertakings to agree to fix prices. This ruling, which, of course, had implications for other freelance workers such as musicians and journalists, carried the threat of a fine of up to €4 million unless the rights of collective bargaining were abandoned. Hitherto, unions had been at liberty to establish and publish freelance rates in respect of their members.

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Bill Seeks Quota for Irish Music on Airwaves

The Musicians' Union of Ireland (MUI) has welcomed the introduction of a Bill in the Dáil which seeks to establish a quota for Irish music of all genres on the Irish airwaves. First raised in the MUI over a decade ago by Founding President, Greg Boland, Executive Committee member, Danny McCarthy, and others, the setting of such a quota remains a major objective of the union.

Introduced by Labour Party TD, Willie Penrose, in July, the Bill involves amending the Broadcasting Act, 2009, by the insertion therein of a new section 65A, which provides that "it is a condition for the awarding of all sound and broadcasting contracts under 65(8) that at least 45 per cent of the aggregate amount of transmission time allocated to music content in the programme to be provided under the contract shall be reserved for musical components that relate to some distinguished element of the culture of the island of Ireland".

Introducing the Bill, Penrose said that he had had detailed discussions on the matter with numerous musicians, including Stephen Travers, Danny McCarthy and Johnny Duhan, who has written extensively on this issue and 'compellingly debunked' the bureaucratic responses to the suggestion of a quota. "The position adopted by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources does not stand up to any independent scrutiny", Penrose added.



Willie Penrose, TD

"The hoary old chestnut of a reply that there is no clear definition of what constitutes contemporary Irish music in all its diversity that would convince the EU authorities that we have legitimate case for legislating for a quota in Ireland is wrong. Why was it possible for France to do it?"

"Surely the Department is aware that the EU authorities have already sanctioned the definition of contemporary Irish music submitted by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland to the Commission in the last decade of the last century." That proposal was blocked by the independent Irish radio sector where the quota is down to 3 per cent, even though the original contract has provision for 30 per cent.

Fergus O'Carroll Appointed Head of Faculty, RIAM

Fergus O'Carroll, hitherto Professor of French Horn and Director of Wind Ensembles, has been appointed Head of Faculty, Wind, Brass and Percussion, at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, effective from September 2016.

He resigns, in September, as Acting Section Leader, Horns, of the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, a post he has occupied since 2010. Among other positions he held during his forty-one-year career with the national broadcaster was that of Principal Horn of the RTÉ Concert Orchestra from 1977 to 1984. Briefly, in the mid 1980s, he was Section Leader of the Bilbao Symphony Orchestra.

O'Carroll also held the post of Musical Director and Conductor of the Dublin Symphony Orchestra from 1997 to 2012, and currently holds similar positions with the Mullingar Choral Society and the Dublin Concert Band.

A union member throughout his RTÉ career, Fergus O'Carroll served as President of the RTÉ Musicians' and Singers' Branch of the Irish Federation of Musicians and Associated Professions from 1980 to 1982, and as a SIPTU RTÉ Orchestral Players' Section Committee member for the year 2000 to 2001.



Fergus O'Carroll



FIM's 21st Congress, Reykjavik, 7th to 9th June 2016, l-r, Roméo Dika, Cameroon, Vice-President (VP); Benoît Machuel, France, General Secretary; Anders Laursen, Denmark, VP; John Smith, UK, President; Déborah Cheyne, Brazil, VP; and Beat Santschi, Switzerland, VP. Photo: Patrik Stenström ©/FIM

FIM's 21st Congress Tackles Key Issues

Hosted by the Icelandic Musicians' Union, the 21st Congress of the International Federation of Musicians (FIM), to which the Musicians' Union of Ireland is affiliated, was held in Reykjavik, from 7th to 9th June 2016.

Among resolutions adopted was one dealing with the exclusion of performers from income generated by the rapid growth of distribution platforms such as Spotify, Deezer and Apple. FIM's existing *Fair Internet Campaign* was re-affirmed as the best means to obtain minimum remuneration for performers in both the sound and audio visual sectors.

As regards the transporting of instruments on planes, it was decided to place online a list of airlines indicating their policies and to award a prize annually to the company with the best practice.

In the election to FIM's Executive Committee, outgoing President, John Smith, General Secretary of the British Musicians' Union, was

re-elected for a fourth term, for four years. Five Vice-Presidents were also elected: Déborah Cheyne (Brazil), Roméo Dika (Cameroon), Ray Hair (USA), Anders Laursen (Denmark) and Beat Santschi (Switzerland). Reflecting the truly international character of FIM, the remaining eighteen Executive Committee members elected come from eighteen countries on six continents.

Freelance Collective Bargaining Rights a Step Closer

Continued from page 1

For well over a decade, the Musicians' Union of Ireland, Irish Equity, SIPTU and the National Union of Journalists, actively supported by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, have campaigned vigorously for the full restoration of collective bargaining rights in respect of freelance workers.

As part of its campaign to challenge this blatant injustice, the unions made persistent

representations to politicians of all persuasions to take whatever steps were necessary to remedy the situation. Despite specific commitments from Ministers and other TDs to address the freelancers' grievance, nothing tangible has so far emerged.

In July 2016, however, in a Senate debate on the matter, Mary Mitchell O'Connor, TD, Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, said she believed the House could agree on the principle behind the Bill but that it would have to be amended. The Government's amendments, she said, would be introduced at the Seanad report stage, by October.

Welcoming the Minister's support for the Bill, Senator Bacik, said: "We will be very anxious to see the shape of the amendments and to ensure they do not undermine the purpose of the Bill."

Commenting on the Bill, SIPTU Arts and Culture Sector Organiser, Karan O'Loughlin, said: "The Government made the right decision in not opposing this Bill which seeks to return the right to collective bargaining to a section of workers. It is particularly welcome that Senator Ivana Bacik, the Bill's sponsor, and Senator Frances Black, one of its key supporters in the Senate, will work with the Government and all interested parties to ensure there is consensus on any future amendments to the Bill and to achieve its passage into legislation after the summer."



Karan O'Loughlin

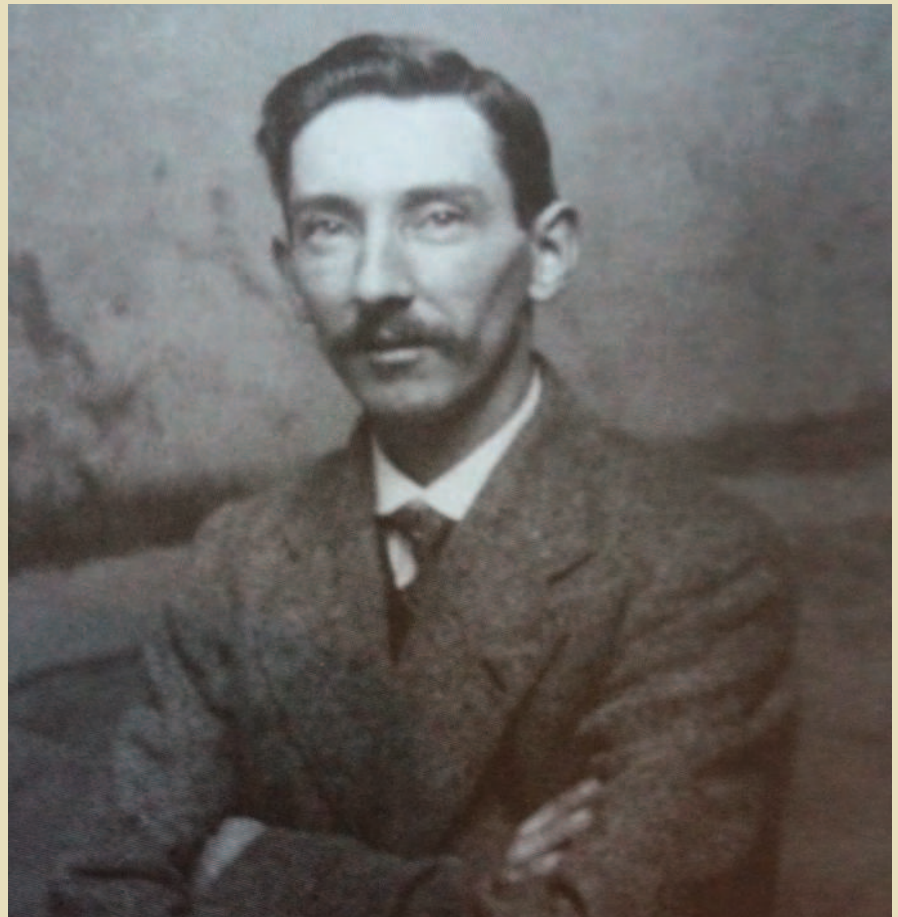
“The Starry Heavens Oer Us”: Peadar O’Cearnaigh (Peadar Kearney) and the Irish Revolution

By Michael Halpenny

In the match programme for this year’s Men’s Leinster Senior Gaelic Football Final there was a special section devoted to the approximately 300 Dublin members of the GAA who took part in the Easter Rising. Among them is a man whose presence is felt even today in Croke Park, less for his prowess on the field than for his authorship of the National Anthem which is the prelude to every game - Peadar O’Cearnaigh, revolutionary, poet, songwriter, house painter, dramatist, trade unionist, Gaelic language activist, hurler, uncle of Brendan and Dominic Behan and Dubliner.

Born into a radical family in Dublin’s Dorset Street in 1883, he was introduced at an early age to Ireland’s revolutionary backstory. After school he worked at a variety of jobs but took up the trade of a house painter.

He was propelled along a trajectory of revolutionary culture and action in what he called a “moment of transformation” on the death in 1901 of leading thinker and separatist, William Rooney. He joined the Gaelic League, eventually acting as a tutor and organiser and counted Sean O’Casey among his pupils. It was



Peadar O’Cearnaigh (Peadar Kearney) Photo: Abbey Theatre ©

during this period that he was sworn into the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and rose to become head of his IRB circle, connected enough to be on terms with Tom Clarke, once urging him to recruit Patrick Pearse to the movement. He was also involved in the foundation of the Irish Volunteers in 1913 and in the Howth gun running in July of the following year.

Throughout all this he was steeped in theatre and music in a parallel stream of revolutionary cultural activism. When the new Irish National Theatre Society took over the Mechanics Institute in Old Abbey Street, Dublin, he was one of the first to become involved. While his role was more backstage and painting, it also involved the occasional walk-on part and this supplemented his work in theatre elsewhere with his brother-in-law, PJ Bourke.

He had been present at the first-ever performance of Yeats’ patriotic play, *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, in 1902, the work of which the playwright later asked “Did that play of mine send out / Certain men the English shot”. In fact the play was due to be performed again on Monday 24th April 1916 in the Abbey, starring Captain Sean Connolly of the Irish Citizen Army. As we know now its performance was abandoned due to a more pressing engagement with history that Easter Week.

When news of the impending Rising reached him, O’Cearnaigh was working at the Royal Court Theatre in Liverpool. He packed his bags immediately and reported to the 2nd Battalion of the Irish Volunteers at the Jacob’s Factory Garrison, but evaded capture after the surrender.

But it was in song-writing that O’Cearnaigh found his real metier. In 1907 he wrote the lyrics to *The Soldier’s Song* to a melody by himself and Patrick Heeney. While it captured the spirit and expectations of a new generation in the now re-energised IRB, the separatist anthem of choice was still the 1867 Fenian call to arms *God Save Ireland*. Even among some later separatists it found little favour and historian Fearghal Mc Garry tells how Arthur Griffith even refused to print it in his newspaper *The United Irishman*.

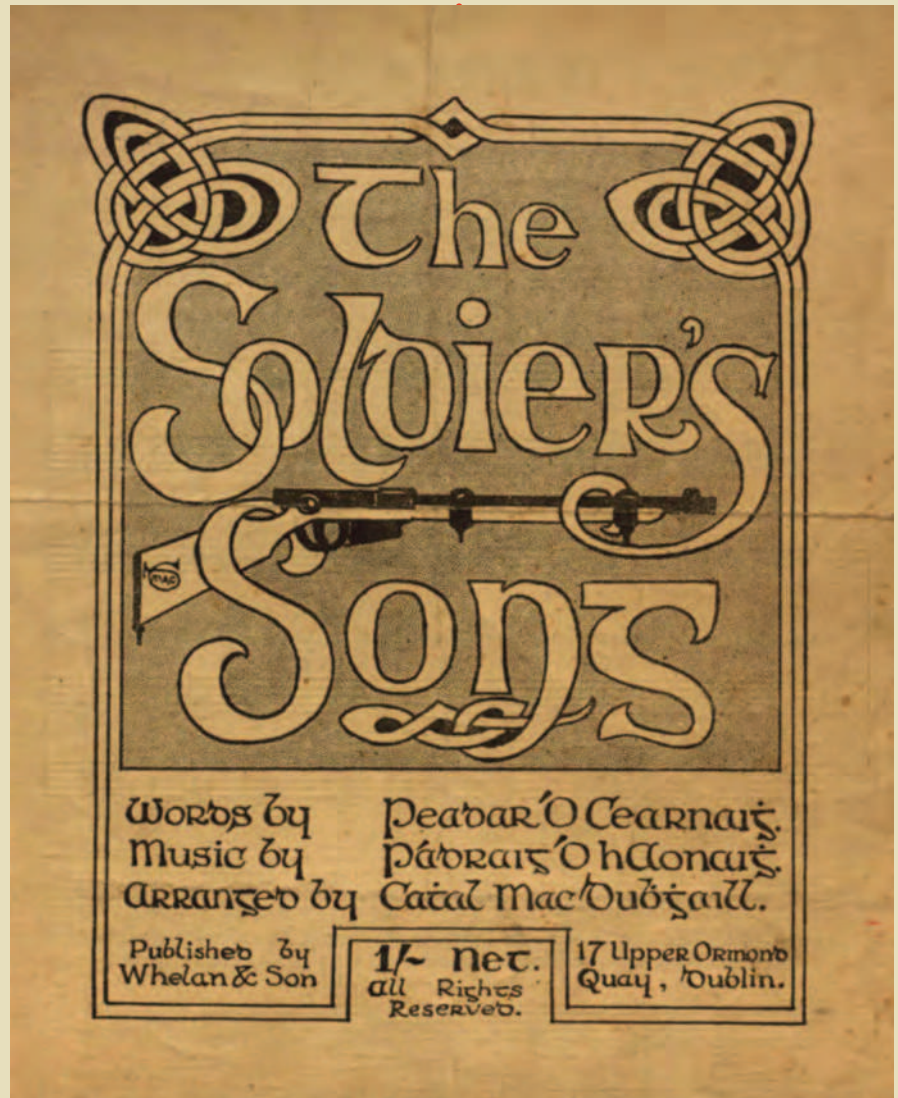
Its popularity was established, first by the Fianna, and then grew with the expansion of the Volunteers.

However, it was Easter Week and its adoption by the prisoners in Stafford, Wakefield and Frongoch POW Camp that made *The Soldier’s Song*. At home, the people took it as their own and it became a weapon in the arsenal of post-Rising defiance and resistance. It was sung at every Volunteer and Sinn Féin meeting and concert. Children sang it just to goad the crown forces. People were even convicted for singing it.

The intervening years saw an exhilarating period of activity for O’Cearnaigh as an activist in the reorganised IRA and then a correspondingly painful and debilitating period for him, his wife Eva and their two sons when he was imprisoned, first in Collinstown camp, and then in Ballykinlar.

Yet, before post-Treaty disillusionment and illness drove him into a life of relative obscurity, he had to his name a corpus of work of which any songwriter would have been proud.

Most are songs of struggle in one way or another – the guttural *Row in the Town* about Easter



1916 edition of *The Soldier’s Song* Photo: ITMA ©

Week and the prisoners defiant *Ballykinlar March*. There is the masterfully ironic *Whack Fol the Diddle* with his old collaborator Cathal MacDowall and one of two barbs at the British Prime Minister of the day, the anti-conscription *Here’s to Lloyd George* which follows in the vein of his other anti-recruiting song *Sergeant William Bailey*.

His working class roots show in the little song *Labour’s Call* (to the air of the *Red Flag*) and his rebel soul in *The Devil’s Crew*.

But there was tenderness and charm too in his ode to two Dublin sweethearts in *Down by the Liffeside*, and both love and revolution in equal measure in *The Three Coloured Ribbon*.

If anyone could be called the Poet of the Revolution it must surely be Peadar O’Cearnaigh – his legacy is part of the national DNA. In more than one way he and his family suffered for his art and his just reward is for his life’s work to be on the lips of a people and for his mortal remains to sleep where the Fenians sleep in the Republican plot in Glasnevin with the starry heavens oer him.



Michael Halpenny

Michael Halpenny is a former Head of the Legal Rights Unit and a former National Industrial Secretary of SIPTU.



The RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, National Concert Hall (NCH), Dublin, 26th May 2016, with, second row, centre, l-r, Simon Taylor, Chief Executive, NCH; Moya Doherty, Chair, RTÉ Board; Heather Humphreys, TD, Minister for Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts and the Gaeltacht; and John Horgan, Chairman, Bord Na Móna. The RTÉ NSO will be among many leading Irish performers participating in the *Composing the Island* festival of Irish music at the NCH, from 7th to 25th September 2016. Photo: Mark Stedman, Photocall Ireland/RTÉ

Major Festival of Music by Irish Composers

A major new centenary project, *Composing the Island: A century of music in Ireland 1916-2016*, was launched by Heather Humphreys, TD, Minister for Regional Development, Rural Affairs, Arts and the Gaeltacht, in Dublin, in late May. Over a three-week period from 7th to 25th September, the Festival will include twenty-nine concerts of orchestral, instrumental, chamber, song and choral music by Irish composers written between 1916 and 2016.

Sponsored by Bord na Móna and presented by RTÉ and the National Concert Hall as part of RTÉ 1916 and Ireland 2016, the Festival will celebrate classical music by Irish Composers written over the past century.

How this music developed, and the times and circumstances in which it was written, will unfold over the three weeks of concerts, which will include six major orchestral concerts performed by the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra. Over the course of the Festival, almost 200 works by some ninety Irish composers will be performed and recorded for broadcast. There will be additional concerts of choral, chamber, song, mixed ensembles and in-

strumental music recitals, alongside a series of supporting talks, related events and an accompanying book.

Aside from the two RTÉ Orchestras, many of Ireland's other leading performers will participate in the Festival, including the Vanbrugh Quartet, RTÉ Contempo Quartet, Fidelio Trio, Band of the Defence Forces School of Music, Crash Ensemble, Concorde, Chamber Choir Ireland, RTÉ Philharmonic Choir, RTÉ Cór na nÓg, David Adams, Elaine Clark, Clóna Doris, William Dowdall, John Feeley, David Leigh, Cormac Ó hAodáin, Iarla Ó Lionáird, Michelle O'Rourke, Hugh Tinney and Robin Tritschler.

The Ulster Orchestra: Celebrating Fifty Years

By David Byers

In this year of anniversaries, here is one more: it's time to celebrate the remarkable achievement of the first fifty years of the Ulster Orchestra. 'Remarkable' because with so many funding and societal uncertainties across that half century, it often seemed this anniversary might not have been attainable. Finding a satisfactory financial model to sustain the Ulster Orchestra has been a constant struggle across its fifty years.

The BBC created the first professional orchestra in Northern Ireland in 1924 and most of its nineteen original players also provided the backbone of the Belfast Philharmonic Society's Orchestra. The BBC's orchestra disbanded on the outbreak of war in 1939 and was reconstituted as the BBC Northern Ireland Light Orchestra in 1949. The following year, the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (the forerunner of the Arts Council) and the Belfast Corporation funded the newly-created part-time City of Belfast Orchestra (CBO), with BBC players providing the CBO's professional nucleus. Its annual season of around eight concerts, plus six Philharmonic concert evenings, was well-supported, with regularly full houses in the Ulster Hall.

However, when the BBC announced plans in 1965 to make greater broadcasting use



The Ulster Orchestra, Soloist Igor Oistrakh (violin), Leader Meyer Stolow, Conductor János Fürst, Festival '69, Whitla Hall, Queen's University, Belfast, 14th November 1969. Photo: UO Archive

of its Belfast-based orchestra, something had to change. The players would no longer be readily available for the CBO.

At that point, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, guided by its Chairman, Capt. Peter Montgomery (himself a conductor), and Director, Michael Whewell (a former bassoonist), took the brave decision to create its own ensemble, the Ulster Orchestra (UO), a replacement for the CBO, though significantly smaller at thirty-seven players. "The object of the Council in forming the Orchestra is to bring the highest standards of music to every town in the Province ... a fully professional orchestra 'on the road'."

A measure of continuity was provided when the CBO's conductor Maurice Miles became the UO's first Principal Conductor. And he was certainly busy in that inaugural season of 1966 -1967. Following the UO's inaugural concert at Belfast City Hall, on 28th September 1966,

the new orchestra, with many recruits from Dublin, including its leader, János Fürst, and sub-leader, Yvonne McGuinness, gave a substantial Belfast season, including many lunchtime concerts, six Philharmonic concerts, six nights for the Grand Opera Society of Northern Ireland and, amazingly, sixty-five regional concerts – a total of 123 performances. Plus two more: a trip to the Athlone Festival with tenor Louis Browne (30th June 1967) and a concert in the RDS at Ballsbridge (2nd July 1967) with pianist John Ogdon.

It was great value: regional towns and cities from Derry to Armagh, from Omagh to Newtownards, were only charged £25 for each visit. Presumably that introductory offer was withdrawn the following season: there was a 40 per cent drop in performances – a total of seventy-five. Financial reality had hit home. Then followed the onset of the 'Troubles'.

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The Ulster Orchestra: Celebrating Fifty Years

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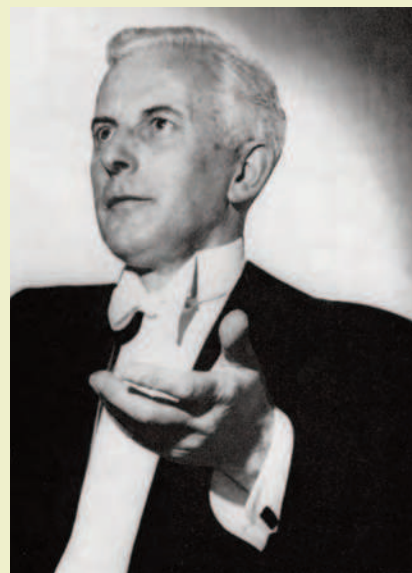
In April 1969, a Northern Ireland Ministry of Finance report found that from the outset the UO had been underfunded. Musicians' salaries had been "to some extent underestimated". With great prescience, the Ministry's mandarins noted that "it is a fairly safe forecast that this state of affairs will be with us for as far ahead as one can envisage". Indeed so. Right to the present day.

Pointing out that an orchestra cannot survive on box office receipts alone, particularly if it is to play in small-scale venues and provide a healthy mix of repertoire, the report concluded that despite increased grants, the Orchestra would be faced with a sizeable deficit at the end of the financial year 1968-1969. "To an extent the situation is outside the

hands of the Arts Council in that Orchestra receipts are disappointingly low and outside engagements uncommonly rare". One solution was "to induce the BBC to wind up its regional orchestra in Northern Ireland and to rely on the Ulster Orchestra for a number of broadcasts".

Only in 1981 did that finally come to pass. An imaginative mix of public and private funding – Arts Council, BBC, Belfast City Council and Gallaher – offered a new direction: an Ulster Orchestra of fifty-four and eventually sixty-three players with a charismatic conductor in Bryden Thomson, a Chandos recording contract, a specified allocation of BBC recordings, eventual invitations to the BBC Proms, increasing support from other sponsors, additional funding from some regional councils, international touring supported by the British Council and the Industrial Development Board. All seemed set fair.

Life of course never runs smoothly. There have been ups and downs, more one than the other in financial terms, but the one constant has been the excel-



Maurice Myles

lence of the UO musicians. Fifty years ago, the number of concerts in schools was quite remarkable, and across those years the UO has won many awards for its imaginative education and outreach work in all communities, building the audiences and supporters of the future. With a new management team in place this year, the Ulster Orchestra seems to be well-positioned for the next fifty years. But it needs more support in word, deed and financial investment from that essential mix of public and private.

So raise a glass to the continued excellence of this fine Orchestra.

But wait! Even as I write, the Northern Ireland Assembly's new Department of Communities is in the news: it's cutting the funding of the Arts Council by just over 4 per cent – and that's on top of last year's 11 per cent reduction.

David Byers is a composer, musicologist, writer and broadcaster. After twenty-five years at the BBC where he was Chief Producer, Music and Arts, he took early retirement in 2002. He was then appointed Chief Executive of the Ulster Orchestra, retiring in September 2010.



David Byers with the Ulster Orchestra, BBC Proms, Royal Albert Hall, London, 13th August 2003. Photo: John Harrison

Former Musicians' Union Official and Artists Honoured

NUI Galway, has awarded honorary degrees to Eamon Gilmore, a former musicians' union official, Labour Party Leader and Tánaiste, and to a number of arts sector figures, including the Contempo Quartet musicians, Andreea Banciu, Adrian Mantu, Ingrid Nicola and Bogdan Sofei; Marie Mullen, Druid Theatre co-founder and actor; and Brendan Flynn, Clifden Arts Festival founder. The degrees were conferred at a ceremony at NUI Galway, on 10th June 2016.

A native of Caltra, County Galway, Eamon Gilmore served as Branch Secretary of, among others, the RTÉ Orchestral Players' Section of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union from 1985 to 1989. His professional association with the musicians ended in 1989 with his election to Dáil Éireann as a Workers' Party TD for the Constituency of Dún Laoghaire, County Dublin.

Following his resignation from the Workers' Party, in 1992, Gilmore co-founded New Agenda, later re-named Democratic Left, served as Minister of State at the Department of the Marine in the 'Rainbow' Coalition Government of 1994 to 1997, was one of the chief negotiators of the merger of Democratic Left and the Labour Party in 1997, was elected, unopposed, Leader of the Labour Party in 2007, and led that Party to its greatest ever electoral success in the General



Conferring of Honorary Degrees, NUI Galway, 10th June 2016, l-r, Bogdan Sofei, Ingrid Nicola, Brendan Flynn, Adrian Mantu, Eamon Gilmore, Marie Mullen and Andreea Banciu. Photo: Aengus McMahon/NUI Galway

Election of 2011. In the Fine Gael-Labour Coalition Government that followed, Gilmore was appointed Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade. He resigned from those positions and as Leader of the Labour Party in July 2014.

Dublin City Council Bans Buskers' Backing Tracks

Under revised bye-laws, which came into force on 1st August 2016, Dublin City Council has banned the use by buskers of backing tracks on the capital's streets and the use of "lewd, offensive or racist language or conduct", including in song lyrics. A two-week visiting performers' permit for €10 now applies, as does a six-week probationary period for performers with a one-year permit. Performances by large acts,

such as dance troupes, are restricted to the top of Grafton Street. Street performers will be restricted to an hour on the street, with performances beginning and ending on the hour. Also, singers and musicians are now required to have a repertoire of at least thirty minutes without repetition.

In a report to councillors, management said that despite the introduction of Street Performers Bye-Laws in April 2015, street performance continued to cause "significant daily problems and discomfort for businesses, residents and members of the public". Of the 230 or so complaints received about busking during public consultation, the majority were about noise generated by amplifiers and backing tracks. Councillors were informed that the introduction of a "maximum decibel level" had only a partial effect and was "extremely difficult to enforce". The Council decided that the use of amplifiers would be considered separately next year.

The Theatre Royal – Dublin's Greatest Theatre

By Conor Doyle

Dublin's last Theatre Royal was a magnificent art-deco building that opened on 23rd September 1935 in a blaze of publicity. The building was enormous by Dublin standards and dwarfed everything else in the surrounding area of Hawkins Street and Poolbeg Street.

The Royal cost £250,000 to build (approx. €10 - €11 million today) and employed two hundred people in a Dublin still recovering from the conflicts of just over a decade earlier, coupled with the Great Depression and the Economic War in the 1930s with the UK. This was a huge enterprise by any standards. With an audience capacity of 4,000 – 3,700 seated and 300 standing – it was one of the largest theatres in Europe.

The first person to sing from the stage was Count John McCormack and the first song was *Bless this House*. Jimmy Campbell was the orchestra leader on the first night as he was on the last night almost twenty-seven years later.

Within two years of its inauguration, the Royal had been sold to the Elliman family and was now fully a cine-variety theatre. For a few pence you could gain access to the theatre at 2.30 p.m. There would be an afternoon show followed by a singalong with an organist – Alban Chambers being the first and the last was Tommy Dando – on a huge Compton organ which had been installed. This in turn would have been followed by a film. Finally, there



The Theatre Royal, Hawkins Street, Dublin, circa 1940s. Photo: Conor Doyle, Theatre Royal Historian ©

would be a second show, with the day's entertainment finishing at approximately 10 p.m. – 10.15 p.m. just in time to get the last bus or tram home.

With the outbreak of the Second World War or "The Emergency", the Elliman family decided to keep the Royal open and held the ticket prices as low as possible, thus giving Dubliners a place to escape to in those dark days. Noel Purcell is quoted as saying that, during the War, it was cheaper to bring your whole family to the Royal and keep them warm than to keep them at home, as their coal ration had

run out. As no international acts were able to travel to Ireland, Irish acts were given a huge opportunity. These included such household names as Jimmy O'Dea, Jack Cruise, Frank Blowers, Noel Purcell, Eddie Byrne, Peggy Dell, Mike Nolan, Maureen Potter, Dick Forbes and many others who served their time and perfected their stage craft in this amazing venue. The shows still changed every week with new material having to be written, dance routines and costumes changed, not an easy thing to do in a rural Ireland cut off by neutrality from the rest of the World.



The Jimmy Campbell Orchestra, foreground, with, background, unidentified vocalist, flanked by the Royalettes troupe of singer-dancers, in rehearsal, Theatre Royal, Hawkins Street, Dublin, circa 1961. Photo: Courtesy Dublin City Library and Archive ©

With the cessation of the War things slowly started returning to normal and international travel began to improve, international acts were able to return to Ireland. The world's greatest stars of stage and screen, such as George Formby, Bob Hope, Danny Kaye, Bill Haley and the Comets, Nat King Cole, Judy Garland, Jimmy Cagney, Lena Horne, Walt Disney, Betty Hutton, Gigli, Ann Blyth, Maurice Chevalier, Liberace, Sean Connery and many more famous performers played the Royal.

As the 1950s progressed Dublin started to change. Much of the population of the inner city, which provided the backbone of the Royal's audiences, was starting to be re-housed in better homes in newly developed suburbs. The introduction of television had a huge impact on numbers going to the Royal. People now living in new suburbs were uninclined to leave their cosy fireside with *Sunday Night*

at the *London Palladium* on their new, expensive televisions.

In the mid-1950s, the Elliman family sold a large part of their theatre and cinema portfolio to the Rank Organisation in London. In early 1962, J. Arthur Rank ordered the closure of the Royal. It has only come to light recently that Louis Elliman (or Mr Louis, as he was known) had fought for several years to keep the Royal open. However, this time Rank was not for turning.

So, on Saturday 30th June 1962, the "Royal Finale" took place. Many of the great Irish artists who had starred on this, the most famous stage in the country and one of the four major variety theatres in Europe, performed in the Finale. Cecil Sheridan and his foil Mickser Reid, Jack Cruise, Frankie Blowers, Milo O'Shea, Noel Purcell, Pauline Forbes, the Royalettes, Tommy Dando, Peggy Dell, Sean Mooney and, as he had done on the Gala Opening night, Jimmy Campbell

led the orchestra, and the final music he and his comrades played was *Now is the Hour*.

A few months later the whole building was demolished, leaving the city bereft of the greatest theatre it ever had.

There is still a huge sense of loss by Dubliners – of a certain age – about the falling of the Royal. However, over fifty-four years later, with the proposed plans to demolish Hawkins House I will be leading a campaign to have the planned street/mall through the site named "Theatre Royal Way" or have the immortal words of Tommy Dando "Keep Your Sunnyside UP" etched on the footpath!



Conor Doyle is an author, radio presenter and historian and leading expert on the Theatre Royal, Dublin. A nephew of Ursula Doyle and Jimmy O'Dea, he is contactable at conorjaldoyle1@gmail.com

Conor Doyle



Cairde na Cruite (Friends of the Harp), Annual International Harp Festival, Termonfeckin, Co. Louth, 27th June 2016, concert by ensemble of festival tutors, l-r, Kathleen Loughlane, Gráinne Hambly, Máire Ní Chathasaigh, Anne-Marie O'Farrell, Cormac de Barra, Dearbhail Finnegan and Áine Ní Dhubhghaill (Festival Director). Photo: Kieran Cummins

Cairde na Cruite Actively Promoting Irish Harp

Since its establishment in 1960, Cairde na Cruite (Friends of the Harp), has played a central role in the revival and development of interest in the Irish harp. It has also made a significant contribution to the development of a vibrant, dynamic role for the instrument, and its positioning within Irish traditional music.

Currently, the society is involved in promoting interest in the Irish harp nationally and internationally, continuing to integrate the wire and gut strung harps with mainstream Irish music, facilitating the provision of teachers of the Irish harp, introducing a wider audience to the ancient courtly harping tradition through the provision of information and the recording and performance of the music, publishing music for the Irish harp, and facilitating harp-hire on a short term basis for beginners.

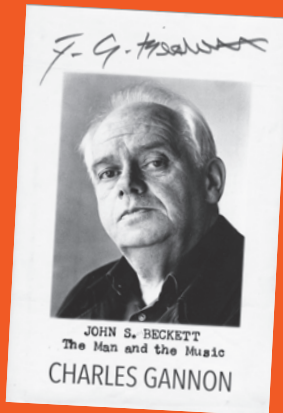
Each year, Cairde na Cruite organises its international harp festival, An Chúirt Chruitireachta, and two student concerts. It also publishes a members' newsletter annually and collections of music for the Irish harp, most recently, *Rogha na gCruitirí, Harpers' Choice, 100 Traditional Tunes for the Irish Harp*.



Author, Charles Gannon, right, at the launch of his book, *John S. Beckett: The Man and the Music*, with Séamus Crimmins, Music Adviser to the Arts Council, at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Dublin, 26th May 2016. (Book review page 13)

BOOK REVIEW

By Clíona Doris



John S. Beckett: The Man and the Music

By Charles Gannon

John S. Beckett was born ten minutes after his twin sister, Ann Margaret, on 5th February 1927 in Dublin and died on his eightieth birthday in Greenwich. He achieved significant outputs in all his musical roles, as a performer of distinction, a broadcaster for RTÉ and the BBC, a composer of contemporary dissonant music mainly for radio plays and documentaries, and as a committed teacher. He was a driving force for early music performance practice in Ireland and the UK. In London, he played a leading role together with his Irish colleague Michael Morrow, in the establishment of the early music ensemble, Musica Reservata, known for its spirited and pioneering performance style of Medieval and Renaissance repertoire. He returned to London in 1983 as a radio producer for BBC Radio 3. Dublin's musical life benefitted for his highly regarded Bach

Cantatas concert series at Saint Ann's Church, Dawson Street, from 1973 -1983, and from his considerable influence on the next generation of Irish musicians as a teacher at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. However, he is perhaps best remembered for his arresting and uncompromising performances on harpsichord and as a conductor, in particular for his interpretations of works by Bach and Purcell.

Charles Gannon knew John Beckett through his father, Cathal Gannon, the harpsichord builder and restorer of pianos. Later, Gannon had first-hand experience of Beckett's inspirational teaching when he commenced viola da gamba lessons. Gannon meticulously traces John Beckett's life, through personal reflections, interviews, diaries, letters, concert programmes, broadcasts, recordings, reviews and archival materials.

While the primary focus of the book is a profile of 'The Man and the Music', Gannon also explores his interactions with a wide circle of friends and colleagues in music, literature and the arts. The book also provides insight into the workings of the classical music broadcasting industry in both Ireland and the UK. Born into an illustrious family, a lifetime of personal and professional interactions with his celebrated cousin, the playwright and author, Samuel Beckett, are of particular significance, from informal music-making in the family home in Greystones to composing music for BBC radio plays. The book for the first time cites previously unpublished correspondence between Samuel Beckett and his cousin and the wider family circle.

This engaging and personal book is organised chronologically, providing a rich context through consideration of personalities, influences and connections within Beckett's wider artistic and family circles. The detailed appendices in themselves provide an indication of the immense productivity of this musician, in composition, discography, broadcasts and concert performances for Musica Reservata and the Dublin Bach Cantata Series.

Gannon provides a rare extended portrayal of an Irish performer in classical music and the reader has the opportunity to appreciate Beckett's complex, multilayered and often uncertain career as a gifted musician. It is a fascinating study of the man, of his strongly held views on music and other art forms, of his forthright and determined personality echoed in his performances and recordings, and above all his devotion to transmitting quality music through performance, recording and broadcasting.

John S. Beckett: The Man and the Music, 547pp, is published by the Lilliput Press and is available from all good book shops, price €40 (hardback).



Clíona Doris

Dr. Clíona Doris is Head of Orchestral Studies at DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama.

JOURNAL REVIEW

By Pádraig Yeates



Saothar 41: 1916 Special Issue, 2016

Co-edited by Sarah-Anne Buckley, Francis Devine and Brian Hanley

This commemorative volume of *Saothar* is not so much a special issue as a book, with over 300 pages packed with articles on the Rising, as well as the usual menu of notes on sources, essays, book reviews and obituaries, the latter including Jim Quinn and Tom Redmond, who will be sadly missed.

It is impossible to do justice to all the contributions so I select a few to give a flavour of the whole.

In the editorial Sarah-Anne Buckley, Francis Devine and Brian Hanley nail their colours unashamedly to the mast. They rightly question the uncritical 'inclusivity' that has marked much of the 2016 commemorative programme. They also refuse to accept a simplistic vision of labour's role in the Irish revolution. This will be needed as we move on to assess, as well as commemorate, the 'red flag'

years from 1917 to 1924. Especially difficult but essential to confront will be issues such as partition and the Belfast pogroms.

Nor should we ignore the important role played by the British labour movement, including the infant Communist Party, in mobilising British public opinion against the regime of terror unleashed by Churchill and Lloyd George in 1920, not to mention the impact of the Irish revolutionary movement further afield, as Kate O'Malley does in her excellent piece on Indian Nationalist Reactions to the Rising, and Bruce Nelson in his article on Caribbean radicals.

Donal Fallon's portrait of Joseph Connolly is a model of how to combine academic sources with oral history to elicit information from Connolly's family and then apply his own in-depth knowledge of Dublin life and the fire service to illuminate this significant figure usually overshadowed by his older brother Sean, who was an Irish Citizen Army (ICA) commander at City Hall in 1916. Fallon provides a vivid picture of how militant nationalism and industrial unionism manifested themselves through this younger Connolly, who not only served in the Citizen Army, but organised his fellow fire fighters to demand better pay and conditions, participated in the Easter Rising himself, and in other major events of the period, before eventually serving as Dublin's Chief Fire Officer.

Conor McNamara has done everyone interested in labour history a service with his essay on manuscript sources for the ICA. Particularly useful is the list of Military Service Pension Appli-

cations, which includes not alone where ICA members served in 1916 but their subsequent service, if any. Hopefully, this will encourage those descendants of members who are still holding onto family papers to lodge them with the Irish Labour History Society (ILHS) before they are lost.

Monographs such as Francis Devine's on Winifred Carney, Ed Penrose's on material in the ILHS, Cecile Gordon's on the wider Military Service Pensions Records, and various contributors on reactions to the Rising at home and abroad all repay reading. Shay Cody, Chloe Alexander and Martin Maguire's are particularly good. They all cast a sympathetic but critical eye at efforts by people such as William O'Brien, John McLean and Harry Nicholls to find a way forward in the aftermath of 1916. These pioneers soon found there were no easy answers. The signatories of the Proclamation left a good deal of rhetoric behind them but not much by way of practical suggestions.

Saothar 41: 1916 Special Issue, 2016, 320pp, is published by the Irish Labour History Society and is available at www.irish-labourhistorysociety.com, with PayPal facility, price, including postage, €37 (paperback) and €48 (hardback).



Pádraig Yeates is a journalist, author and trade union activist.

Pádraig Yeates

TIMES PAST



The Dublin-based wind quintet, Les Amis de la Musique, concert at the Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music, Examination Hall, Trinity College, Dublin, 11th January 1971, l-r, Gilbert Berg (bassoon), André Prieur (flute), Brian O'Rourke (clarinet), Helmut Seeber (oboe) and Victor Malirsh (horn). Photograph: Malirsh Collection

New History of British Musicians' Union

A new history of the British Musicians' Union, *Players' Work Time: A Social History of the British Musicians' Union*, is scheduled to be published by Manchester University Press in September.

Co-written by Dr. John Williamson and Professor Martin Cloonan of the University of Glasgow, the research draws on a range of sources, including the union's archives, housed in the University of Stirling, and interviews with significant figures in and around the Union stretching back to the 1940s.

It was the authors' hope to reflect the manner in which the union has played a significant part in the shaping of musical, cultural and political life in the UK throughout its history.

An earlier history of the British Musicians' Union, *Always in Tune with the Times: The Musicians' Union 1893-1993 A Centenary Celebration*, by Mike Jempson, was published by the Union in 1993.



FREE REHEARSAL SPACE

MUI members may avail of a free rehearsal space in Liberty Hall, Dublin.

Those wishing to avail of this facility should contact the MUI office (email: mui@siptu.ie, Tel: 01-8586404) to make a booking and to check that all musicians concerned are benefit members of the union.



Helmut Seeber

OBITUARY

Helmut Seeber (1931-2016)

Helmut Seeber, who died in Dublin on 3rd July 2016, was the second youngest of eleven children. Born on 18th August 1931, in Thüringen, later to become part of East Germany, he studied at the Liszt Hochschule in Weimar and further musical studies followed at the Berlin Hochschule.

In 1954 he joined the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra as oboe and cor anglais player, retiring in 1991. He met Patsy (née Davy) his future wife in Dublin. They married in 1958 and had four children, a girl and three boys.

A founding member of the RTÉ Orchestral Players' and Singers' Branch of the Irish Federation of Musicians, in 1960, Helmut remained a union member up to his retirement. He served as a Branch Committee member from 1964 to 1969.

At Helmut's funeral on 8th July, many warm and affectionate tributes were paid by Karlheinz – Helmut's eldest son – and by two old friends and colleagues, Teddy Pritzel and Brian O'Rourke. We remembered his impeccable musicianship, his caring teaching at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, his kindness, his patience, his modesty, his sweetness of temperament, his impish sense of humour, his courage throughout a prolonged and debilitating illness, his deep love for his wife and children.

In addition to his RTÉ duties, Helmut played principal oboe in the New Irish Chamber Orchestra, perform-

ing throughout Ireland and undertaking many foreign tours including the USA and Russia. He was also a member of the distinguished and long-established chamber music ensemble, Les Amis de la Musique.

In the latter part of his life, Helmut poured his considerable musical gifts into creating a masterly series of arrangements for Oboe Quartet and Trio. Particularly ingenious are his versions for three oboes and cor anglais of some movements from the Bach Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin. A hauntingly beautiful setting of *Silent O Moyle* for Oboe Trio was played at the end of his funeral service.

To Patsy, Hildegard, Karlheinz, Kilian and Rolf and to all of Helmut's wider family, we express our sincere condolences and sadness at his passing. A shadow has fallen on our musical landscape. We have been privileged to know him, to have made music with him and to have been guided and influenced by him.

Lindsay Armstrong



Victor Malirsh

OBITUARY

Victor Malirsh (1928-2016)

In 1971, I sat on the library steps in the basement of the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) waiting for my first lesson with my new teacher, Victor Malirsh. I was a little anxious, but I had no need to be as I would never hear him raise his voice in any way except to implore me to think about the music - "It's all about the music" he used to say, and he said it often and repeatedly, "It's all about the music".

Victor, who was born in Maribor, Slovenia, on 31st March 1928 and died in Dublin on 15th July 2016, was Principal Horn in the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra from 1954 to 1980, when his playing career was cruelly cut short by the sudden onset of Bell's palsy. He subsequently served as Librarian, and later Manager of the RTÉ Concert Orchestra up to his retirement in 1991. His wife, Mejci (née Freeney), predeceased him and he is survived by his son, Vitya, and daughter, Andreja, Principal Harp in the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra.

Victor performed with many other ensembles, including the New Irish Chamber Orchestra and the Dublin-based wind quintet, Les Amis de la Musique, and taught at the RIAM for an astonishing sixty-one years.

In 1960, he was a founder member of the RTÉ Orchestral Players' and Singers' Branch of the Irish Federation of Musicians, retaining his membership throughout his orchestral career.

Famous for his horn playing, revered as a teacher, respected and admired as an orchestral manager and librarian, all of these facets of Victor's career added up to one indisputable realisation, that Victor Malirsh was a world class musician. It **was** all about the music, no matter what activity he was involved in, and I was lucky enough to have worked with him in every capacity.

When Victor came to Ireland in 1954, he brought with him the influence of centuries of European horn playing tradition, rich in both musical shaping and a very pure and beautiful sound. Over the following decades, he schooled many generations of horn players in that beauty of sound and the importance of shaping, phrasing and expression. He was singularly successful in passing on his message, his passion and his legacy - "It's all about the Music".

Whenever I hear beautiful music, I will smile and remember and thank and praise Victor Malirsh.

Fergus O'Carroll



Musicians' Union of Ireland

Ceardchumann Ceoltóirí Éireann

In affiliation with SIPTU

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Sound Post

AND FREE EXPRESSION

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Material may be e-mailed to John Swift: johnpswift45@gmail.com or forwarded to the MUI office.

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INTERVAL QUIZ

1. Where is the railway station named after the union leader, musician and 1916 leader, Michael Mallin?
2. Name the venue of the annual New Year's Day Viennese concert by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra?
3. *I Gave My Wedding Dress Away*, sung by Eileen Reid, was the most famous song of which Irish showband?
4. Name the principal actors in the 2016 film, *Florence Foster Jenkins*, 'the world's worst opera singer'?
5. Name the five original members of the Beach Boys?
6. Who wrote the music and lyrics of the musical, *Once*?
7. *The Dance of the Blessed Spirits* is part of which famous opera?
8. Name the author of *Playing for Time*, the 1980 television drama about a women's orchestra in Auschwitz?
9. Who composed the *Academic Festival Overture*?
10. With which famous composer is Irish concert pianist, John O'Connor, most associated?

Answers
1. Dún Laoghaire. 2. The Musikverein. 3. The Cadets. 4. Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant. 5. Brian, Dennis and Carl Wilson, Mike Love and Al Jardine. 6. Glen Hansard and Markéta Irglová. 7. *Orpheus and Eurydice* by Gluck. 8. Arthur Miller. 9. Brahms. 10. Beethoven.

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