CHAPTER 7

1954-1968

WORK IN PROGRESS

The School proceeded during this period with a continued raising of standards and an increasingly wide range of teaching and social activities. An attempt by the Department of Education to amalgamate the Municipal School and the Royal Irish Academy of Music was opposed by the City of Dublin VEC.

Expansion of String School

The most notable development is signalled in the following Minute:-

That provision be made in the School for the teaching of violin and viola beyond the stage at present catered for, thus bringing the students to the highest level of concert performance and orchestral proficiency, the appointee to be qualified as an outstanding instrumentalist of proved teaching ability.

The appointment was subsequently recorded:-

Jaroslav Vaneček, Graduate of State Conservatory of Music, Prague, as permanent whole-time teacher (higher technological grade) as from 1st September, 1954 . . . has passed test in Irish as required by the Department of Education.

Mr Vaneček proved an outstanding teacher and he was soon awarded a pay increase:-

In view of the nature of additional duties and responsibilities which he has undertaken since he took up duty as teacher of violin and viola in the School of Music, viz:

(a) the training of senior students for posts as professional musicians (such students have already obtained employment with Radio Éireann and in educational institutions)

(b) the complete training of talented students to a standard which reduces or obviates the necessity to award scholarships for tuition abroad.

The success of this strategy is reflected in a report to the Principal, Michael McNamara, from Cedric Sharpe, Royal Academy, London, on the Professional Examination held on 9th June 1956:-

As promised I write you a short report on your professional class. I can only say that I have learnt to have a very sincere admiration for Mr Vaneček for his most talented teaching and I must congratulate you on having him on your staff. I must also congratulate you, personally, Dr O'Reilly and the entire staff on the magnificent work you are doing for music as a whole. It has been a revelation to me.

And thank you very much for your kindness and courtesy during my visit to Dublin which I enjoyed very much.

Order – Noted with appreciation.

Drama

An interesting specification for a part-time teaching post in 1954 was as follows:-

Drama (Musical Students’ Union)

Syllabus embraces lectures and training in Dramatic Acting, Speech Craft, Mime, Stage Movement, Make-up, Voice Production and Theatre.

Potential students were specified in a corresponding recommendation:-

That a Dramatic Acting class be included in the School curriculum. The Principal advised
that training in the technique of Acting would be desirable for students who have completed the Elocution course, also students who showed promise as operatic or stage artists. Students of other Vocational Schools with acting possibilities could also be accommodated in this class. The fee to be 10/- per term and membership confined to students of Vocational Schools.

Sub-Committee Meeting 1956
Minutes of a meeting of the School of Music Local Sub-Committee held on 27th April 1956 were submitted:

Order – Noted. The recommendation therein was approved that the Concerts by Senior and Junior students be held in the Aberdeen Hall, Gresham Hotel, on dates to be arranged during month of June, the usual expenses were sanctioned, viz., hire of hall, hire of piano, printing, cartage, advertising, and for professional musicians (if required), and the following admission charges agreed to: Junior Concert, 2/-; and the Senior Concert, 3/-.

A Symphony Orchestral class was proposed in 1956 to be conducted by Miss Terry O'Connor, and the Minutes of a meeting held on 13th July 1956 referred to the proposed Symphony Orchestra:

As a preliminary to the formation thereof, it was recommended:

(a) That a Military Band (advanced players) be established at the earliest possible date.
(b) That special advanced tuition be provided for certain selected wind players.

The Sub-Committee requested that the memorandum compiled by Mr McNamara (Principal) and Mr P. Malone (member of Sub-Committee) be circulated to members of the Vocational Education Committee.

The Sub-Committee congratulated the teaching staff on the excellent results achieved in Feis Ceol, Father Mathew Feis, Cork International Choral Festival and annual examinations.

Male Voice Choir
The activities of the Male Voice Choir were also noted:

1. That classes for Male Voice Choir in the School of Music be continued on two evenings each week during the month of July, 1956.

2. That the 34 members of the Male Voice Choir of the School of Music, winners of the Choral Competition at the International Choral Festival Cork, the £75 prize for which has been lodged to the Committee’s accounts be each recouped £2.5.0 travelling expenses

Summer Schools of Music
When the Department Summer Schools ended in 1956, the Municipal School of Music made arrangements for the provision of a short Summer Course of two weeks’ duration for teachers in the training of School Choirs and Orchestras at the Municipal School of Music in July 1957. Michael McNamara and Leslie Regan, F.R.A.M., F.R.C.O., were employed as lecturers for these courses which continued for a number of years.

Prize-winners 1956

**Pianoforte**

Grade I (5/-) Marion Doherty,
Patricia Fay
Nuala Breen

Grade II (5/-) Daniel Lynch,
Deirdre Duffy

Grade III (10/-) Audrey Carr,
Eugene O'Mahony

Grade IV (10/-) Kathleen Brennan
Grade V (10/-) Raymond O'Toole
Grade VI (10/-) Frances Mooney
Grade VII (20/-) Margaret MacKenzie,
Darina Gibson

Grade VIII (20/-) Mary Wymes,
John Peelo
Nuala Levins,
Veronica McSwiney
John O'Mahony,
Sylvia Farrell
Michael Grant

**Flute**

Grade V (10/-) Eithne Delany

**Clarinet**

Grade VIII (50/-)

**Eliman Prize**

Thomas Atkinson
Violin
Grade I  (5/-)  Audrey Carr
Grade III (10/-)  Patrick Hayes, Vanessa McMahon
Grade IV  (10/-)  Michael Hanley
Grade V  (10/-)  Patricia Higgins
Grade VI  (10/-)  Loretto McGrath
Grade VIII  (20/-)  Sheila O'Grady

Viola
Grade VI  (10/-)  Maureen Carolan

Violoncello
Grade III  (10/-)  Veronica McSwiney

Scholarships
Pianoforte
Under 12 Years
Margaret Doherty
Marion Doherty
Nuala Gillen
Audrey Carr
Paul Conroy
Raymond O'Toole

Under 16 Years
Michael Grant
Eugene O'Mahony

Senior
Nuala Levins

Violin
Under 12 Years
Brian McNamara
Teresa Kelly
Niamh Ni Liathain
Liam Fitzgerald

Under 16 Years
Loretto McGrath
Patricia Higgins

Senior
Sheila O'Grady

The award of an additional scholarship is recommended in respect of Yvonne McGuinness.

Violoncello
Junior
Veronica McSwiney

Viola
Maureen Carolan

Singing
Brendan McNally
Eily Markey

Extern Scholarship Awards
Pianoforte
Junior
Brian O'Mahony

The award of an additional scholarship is recommended in respect of Ronan Douglas.

Senior
Josephine Shine

Violin
Junior
The award of an additional scholarship is recommended in respect of Jean MacKenzie.

Violoncello
Maura Hudson

Singing
Gerard Murray
Carmel Burke

Second Year Scholarships
Pianoforte
Darina Gibson
Niamh Ni Liathain
Deirdre Levins
Gerard Gillen
Veronica McSweeney
Mary Wymes
Sylvia Farrell
Florence Austin
Claire O'Mahony

Sub-Committee Meeting 1957
A typical report of the School reads as follows:-

Minutes of Meeting of Local Sub-Committee held on Friday, 25th October, 1957, at 4.00p.m.

Present: Rev. Father C. Collins (Chairman) Councillor M.G. Dempsey, Mr M. Clarke, Mr S. Delany, Mr F. Flanagan, Dr. J. J. O'Reilly, Mr McNamara (Secretary). Apologies for non-attendance were received from Madame K. Roddy and Alderman John McCann.

1. Minutes of previous meeting were read and signed.
2. A letter from the Secretary of the Irish Transport & General Workers' Union was read and appreciation of generous offer of a scholarship (£25 per session) was expressed. It was recommended that the application of the scholarship be left to the discretion of the Principal and his Assistant.

3. Enrolments for the first term, Session 1957/1958, were noted with satisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Enrolments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pianoforte</td>
<td>665</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organ</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Violin</td>
<td>236</td>
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<tr>
<td>Violoncello</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harp</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Double-Bass</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percussion</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elocution</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uilleann Pipes</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,508</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The enrolments are principally composed of young students – a very healthy sign for the future of the School.

4. In connection with the annual prize distribution, the following recommendations were made:
   (a) That the function be held in the Round Room, Mansion House, on Monday, 10th December, 1957, at 7.45 p.m.
   (b) That Alderman John McCann be requested to present the prizes.
   (c) That an admission charge of 2/- be made.
   (d) That refund be given for all necessary expenses, i.e., hire of Hall, hire of piano, printing, haulage, etc.

5. Letter from Miss Steer, St. Brighid’s Convalescent Home, Kilternan, was read, and her very considerate gesture of bequeathing two violins to the School of Music was appreciated by the Committee. The Secretary to convey to Miss Steer the Committee’s thanks.

6. The Committee considered that the provision of three good pianos for use in the piano section is a matter of greatest urgency.

7. The successes obtained by Dr O’Reilly’s pupils at the Southport Festival were noted and the Committee’s congratulations were tendered to Dr O’Reilly.

8. The Committee expressed great satisfaction at the selection of Miss Margaret Hayes to appear as soloist at the Radio Eireann Prom Concert on 17th October. Miss Hayes has just completed her Professional Violin Course in the School of Music under Jaroslav Vaneček.

9. A vote of sympathy was passed to Madame Kathleen Roddy on the death of her husband. The meeting then terminated.

Teaching Staff 1959, 1967
Teachers were central to the development of the School and among the many appointments noted in 1959 were the following:

Temporary Whole-time
Singing
Michael O’Higgins
 Violoncello
  Betty Sullivan

Choral Work
  Maura Tyrrell

National Conservatoire
A proposal to change the name of the Municipal School of Music to the Irish College of Music was rejected:-

The Chairman estimated that, in the matter of the altered title for the Municipal School of Music, he had received a letter from the Minister for Education to the effect that the Minister would have no objection to the use of the title "College of Music". Accordingly, it was agreed that, in future, the Municipal School of Music should be known as the "College of Music" and not as the "Irish College of Music" as originally proposed.

A more radical proposal discussed at a high level meeting in 1962 was recorded as follows in the Minutes of the City of Dublin VEC:-

The Chief Executive Officer presented the following memorandum of a meeting with representatives of the Departments of An Taoiseach, Finance and Education and of the Board of Works, on 6th April, 1962:-

The meeting was convened, at the request of the Departments named, to examine the possibility of co-ordinating all Schools of Music, with special reference to the Municipal School of Music and the Royal Irish Academy of Music.

Report of Chief Executive Officer
At the outset I might mention that both Mr McNamara and I received the impression that the representatives of the Departments concerned were primarily interested in the formation of a co-ordinating committee under which the various Schools of Music would be linked together. The Committee's representatives were not altogether convinced that this would be in the best interests of the development of musical training in the country.

It was stated by one of the officers of the Department that the R.I.A.M. Diploma was recognised in Great Britain. An inspection of
the schedule of qualifications accepted by the English Ministry of Education shows that the R.I.A.M. Diploma does not appear on this list.

The question of teacher-training for the country and the provision of a teacher-training centre was raised. In view of the fact that the number taking the Teacher's Diploma is very limited each year, and the number taking advanced training is equally limited, it would appear that to set up a Conservatoire as a separate establishment would be most uneconomical. In time the Municipal School of Music may, and probably will, develop on these lines, i.e. a national Conservatoire. In the interim period it would surely be more economical to send promising students to a Conservatoire abroad for advanced training.

Mr O'Leary (Department of Education) referred to the fact that the Summer School of Music for the training of conductors for choirs and orchestras, originally sponsored by the Department of Education, is now being conducted annually in the School of Music.

In respect of wind instrument playing, it was suggested that the Army authorities should be approached with a view to having expert tuition provided for the young musicians in the Army School of Music. Accommodation, equipment, etc., are available in the Municipal School of Music and it is a pity that the fullest use is not made of such facilities.

I stressed the fact that the Municipal School of Music is primarily responsible for the musical education of the masses. At the same time, if any student possesses the talent and has the desire to become a professional musician, the staff is available to give the necessary tuition. Of the total number of students enrolled in the Municipal School of Music, 90% are from Dublin.

A co-ordinating committee can only be successful when it has a definite responsibility to a statutory established body. We suggest that, under the Vocational Education Committee, 1950, such a co-ordinating committee could be effected.

Though nothing became of this proposal at the time the seeds of future ambitions had been sown.

**Premises**

An extension to the College was undertaken in the early 1960's and by October 1965 the Clerk of Works reported good progress with the addition of:

- A large teaching room for chamber music groups.
- Two smaller teaching rooms for piano or violin.
- Toilet facilities.

**Scholarships 1960-1965**

Reports were received on the progress of scholarship-holders abroad:

It was recommended that Brendan O'Reilly's scholarship be increased to enable him to continue his studies under the distinguished violinist, André Gertler, in Brussels. Brendan O'Reilly has recently passed with distinction his final examination in the Royal Academy, London; furthermore, in the recital class he was awarded first place and the Marjorie Hayward prize for the best performance by a string player.

That the Music Scholarship of Miss Veronica McSwiney be continued for session 1960/61 in view of the satisfactory report submitted by Professor Anthony Hughes, U.C.D. She was also awarded a summer scholarship to Salzburg.

The Intern Scholarship lists contain many familiar names:

**1960-1961**

**Piano**

Under 12
- Emer Buckley
- Gertrude Carberry
- Gearóid Grant
- Maeve McSwiney
- Honor O'Brolcháin
- Nora O'Donnell

Under 16
- Marion Doherty
- Catherine Gleeson
- Hilary O'Donovan
- Miceál O'Rourke
Senior
Derek Carew

Violin
Under 12
Ian MacKenzie

Under 15
Teresa Kelly
Philip Jordan

Senior
Maire Ni Chuilleanain

Violoncello
Junior
Margaret Rush

Viola
Pádraig O’Connor

Singing
Paul Deegan
Eily Markey

Wind Instrument Section
Peter Roth
Oliver Keating

Max Elliman Prize
Margit Stainbert
Edward Beckett

Second Year Scholarships
Piano
Emer Diskin
Noel Healy
Niamh O’Sullivan
Barbara Cronin
Patricia Doyle
Mary Fitzpatrick
John O’Conor
Brian McConnell
Hilary Macnamara
Gerard Gillen

Violin
Jeanne-Marie MacKenzie
Niamh Lyons
Eileen McShane
Marion Doherty
Sunniva Fitzpatrick
Ruth O’Donovan
Vanessa McMahon
Marion Murray

Viola
Noel Hudson

Violoncello
Hilary O’Donovan

Singing
Fr. Arnold Murphy
Paul Foster
Josephine Shine
Deirdre Grier

Extern Scholarships
Pianoforte
Emer O’Brien
Niamh Doyle

Violin
Moninne Vanecek
Teresa Costello

Singing
Roger Kelly
Ann Weafer

1964/65
Piano
Under 12
Patrick Fitzgerald
Declan Fitzpatrick
Eithne Graham
Brid Grant
Grace Kelly
Miriam Sanfey

Under 16
Paul Buckley
Gertrude Carberry
Gearóid Grant
Maeve McSwiney

Senior
Catherine Gleeson

Piano Trio: Miceál O’Rourke, Hilary O’Donovan, Brian McNamara
Lorcan Sherlock Medal and Scholarship
Mícheál O'Rourke

Violin
Under 12
Catherine Briscoe
Teresa Costello
Dermot Crehan
Thérèse Jordan

Under 16
Eilish McShane
Moninne Vaneček

Senior
Teresa Kelly
Máire Ni Chuillleanán

Viola
Deirdre Levins

Violoncello
Senior
Christine Cooley

Organ
Paul Conroy

Singing
Thomas Wilson
Sheila Maloney

Wind Instruments
Peter Roth (Trumpet)
Liam Tierney (Clarinet)

Second Year Scholarships
Piano
Margaret O'Sullivan
Dorothy Allen
Mary Breslin
Anne Cramer
Niamh Doyle
Donal Graham
John O'Conor
James O'Neill
Denis P. O'Sullivan
Mary O'Sullivan
Niamh O'Sullivan
Elizabeth Short

Violin
Patrick Fitzgerald
Sunniva Fitzpatrick
Joan Mooney
Brian McNamara
Clodagh McSwiney
Uinsionn O Donnabháin
Donough O'Donovan
Teresa Timoney

Viola
Kitty Dalligan

Violoncello
Ann Redmond

Organ
Michael Doherty

Singing
Mary Carmel Egan
Annette Ni Mhealláin
Deirdre O'Grady
Anne-Marie O'Sullivan

Wind
Patricia Cheatle
Arthur Keating

Extern Scholarships
Pianoforte
Eibhlín Grant
Catherine Hamill
Mary Martin
Thérèse O'Doherty

Violin
Rita Wall

Violoncello
Helen Hughes

Singing
Pauline Williams
Eileen Fitzgerald