

Cecilians plan a huge party for their 75th anniversary

By MAIRÉAD NALLY

One of Limerick's best known musical societies will celebrate its 75th anniversary this year.

Since 1919, the Cecilian Musical Society has contributed to the musical, cultural and social life of Limerick. The dedication and perseverance of the members of the society over 75 years, with all their changes of taste and interest, are reasons for congratulations and pride.

The society have staged 111 shows and 1,000 performances since they began. Over 20,000 people have been involved in the productions and the audiences would number in the tens of thousands.

The society will launch 1994 with a grand ball in the Limerick Inn on January 29. It is hoped that both past and present members will go along and take a stroll down memory lane.

Their first production was "The Greek Slave" in May 1919. It was presented by the then Crescent Operatic Society in the old Theatre Royal.

Fr. Robert Dillon-Kelly, S.J., Fr. William Paul O'Reilly, S.J. and Fr. Laurence Potter S.J. were the priests attached to the Crescent College and church during the early productions and they were in the main responsible for organising and directing the

Cecilians at that time.

With the completion of the new assembly hall at Crescent College in 1947, the society once again revived stage shows, and in December of that year opened its productions with a pantomime. At this time Fr. Vincent Dennehy S.J. and Fr. William Saul, S.J. guided the destinies of the Society but were later replaced by Fr. Mortimer Glynn, S.J. and Fr. Joseph Kavanagh S.J.

The society was rapidly making a name for itself during the early 1950's, notably with the presentation of "The Quaker Girl" in March 1951. Shortly afterwards, Fr. Thomas MacMahon, S.J. took over the direction and continued as musical director until 1961. Under his directorship there was a minimum of two productions per year, and that pattern has remained to this day.

During the 1970's the structures of the society changed with responsibility passing more into the hands of the members. The first chairman of the society, the late Jim Griffin, was elected in 1973. He was succeeded by Aidan Boucher, Joe Donnellan, Marion McLaughlin, Joan Looney, John Ryan, Tony Daly, Breda Enright, Phil O'Neill, Geraldine Byrnes and the present chairperson Anne Quin.

The Cecilians look forward to the future with renewed vigour, and to carrying on the great work which began in 1919.

The Cecilians got their name in honour of St Cecilia, the patron saint of music.



Three quarters of a century of musicals is the proud boast of the Cecilian Musical Society. TSB bank hosted a reception to announce details of the society's forthcoming celebration ball, to be held at the Limerick Inn on Saturday, January 29. Included are: Declan McGrath, TSB; Brid Enright, Cecilians; Natalie Ahern, TSB; Anne Quinn, chair, Cecilians; Dave Nelson, TSB; Anna Gibson-Steele and Sean Crowley, TSB. (LL)

LIMERICK LEADER

The biggest-selling Mid-West newspaper

5 TITLES
WEEKLY

