

Cecilians are ready to head for 42nd street

By ANNE SHERIDAN

IT PROMISES to be the show to end all shows. As part of the celebrations for the

Cecilian Musical Society's 90th anniversary, they will stage 42nd Street at the University Concert Hall for three nights from November 26.

Chairperson of the Cecilian's, Niamh Morrison O'Brien, said this will be one of their biggest productions to date and "definitely one of the most energetic."

Some 60 people are involved in the production, and rehearsals are continuing apace six nights a week.

"It really is a show within a show. It's going to be a very lively show, and a toe-tapping performance," said Ms O'Brien, adding that she hopes the Cecilian's will remain strong for another 90 years.

42nd Street is regarded as the quintessential 'backstage' musical, tracing the history of a Broadway musical comedy, from casting call to opening night.

It follows the story of famed director Julian Marsh, who despite failing health is determined to stage one last great production.

It is perhaps the most famous of Warner's early 1930s Busby Berkeley musicals, and features musical set pieces including 'We're In The Money', 'Lullaby of Broadway', and 'Dames'.

The Cecilian Musical Society is the second oldest society in the country, formed in May 1919 by the Jesuits in Limerick.

Over the past 90 years, the society has highlighted and encouraged the acting ability of many stars, including one of Limerick's most famous sons, the late Richard Harris, the opera singer Suzanne Murphy, actor Liam O'Brien, and Amanda Minihan, who recently starred in The Producers in the West End.

Aidan Boucher, the



Catherine Clohessy, Ray Burke, Niamh Morrison/O'Brien, Chairperson of the Cecilian Musical Society with Colm J Healy, at the launch of 42nd Street
PICTURE: BRENDAN GLEESON

first lay president of the society, said quite a few marriages over the years had their genesis in the society, as well as many long-lasting friendships.

Mr Boucher became a member of the society in 1968, and in the past 41 years he has been a part of some 30 of the society's 140 productions.

The Cecilians drew huge crowds to the productions in the 60s, but thereafter the advent of the mass media threatened to take a slice of their market.

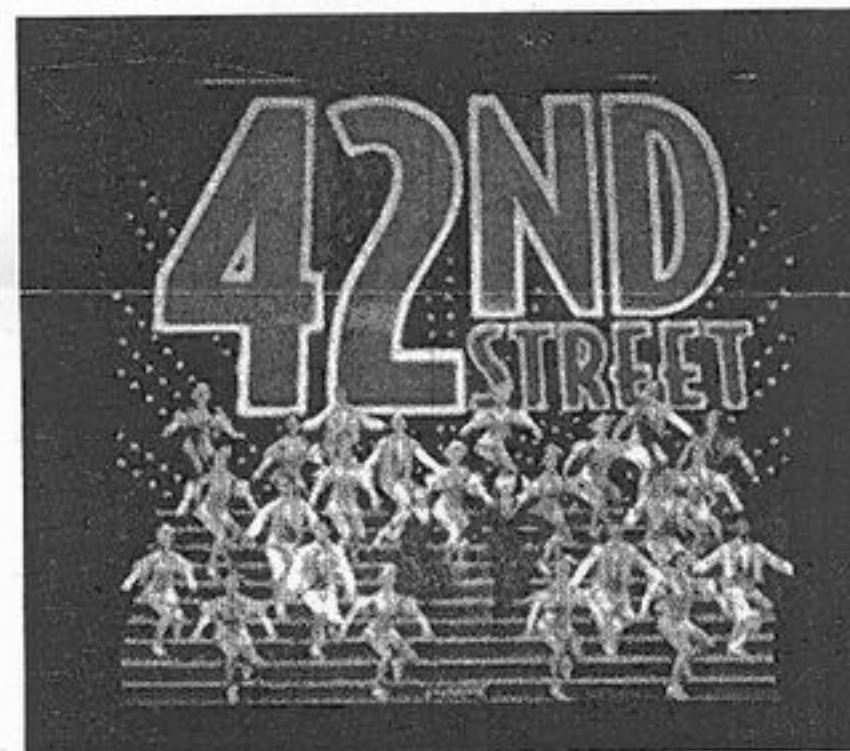
"With such a variety on offer now, you have to pick shows that appeal to audiences number one

and make sure that your standards are of the highest.

"It has to be up to mark to bring people in, and get them to get up and go out at night," said Mr Boucher.

Their latest production, 42nd Street, should signal further success with the experienced team of Des Henn producing, Barbara Meany as choreographer and Noel Lennon as musical director.

A black tie gala ball, which was due to be held in the Strand Hotel on November 21, has now been postponed until the new year.



Annmaire Mulcahy, Laura Henry, Shirley Getlevog, Mary Healy and Olivia Parkinson, members of the Chorus, at the press launch of 42nd Street which takes place on November 28 next at the UCH.
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