

time he has been donning. "It has done me proud. When I told my manager last year that I wanted to dress as Napoleon, she had a semi-fit, but I insisted. And it ended up looking really quite dashing, I thought - even my mother thought so," he laughs.

The inspiration came from

a pop star - like a Prince, or a Bono, or a Neil Hannon," he laughs. "We are all of the smaller stature, shall we say, and I think it helps put that across in the song by wearing the clothes."

Neil's infectious glee is palpable - his no-nonsense style apparent on the 11th studio album of his career.

National Express for a wonderful example. He talks about a fixation with '60s orchestral stuff, "a bit of Gainsbourg", but the title track on the album was a Irish traditional sounding, which he readily admits was "not like me at all".

"I always just choose the musical sound palette that suits the idea of the lyric

really must knuckle down and reach my full musical potential', but then again, maybe this is my full musical potential.

"I am so lucky that people have liked what I have done over the years at all, so sometimes it feels like pure ego to think that I really need to do something proper and adult."



Neil Hannon of The Divine Comedy, who play the UCH on Tuesday, December 5. See www.uch.ie for more information

Limerick to Canada: An ambient journey

FINTAN WALSH

E: fintan.walsh@limerickleader.ie

FOR FOUR years, Paddy Mulcahy has foraged the earth in a bid to find a secure home in which to plant a seed for his ambient and post-classical soundscapes.

This week, the Limerick-city composer is Montreal-bound once again, his luggage filled with high aspirations and a new 18-month record deal with well-known distributors, Believe Digital.

Everything was local for the 24-year-old when he was a teenage dubstep hopeful, under the moniker of "nubus". But that changed after absorbing a knack for sound engineering at Limerick Institute of Technology.

For the past three years, Paddy has travelled Europe learning from top producers and engineers in his field, acquiring a taste for unique sounds, only achieved with certain instruments, in spe-

cific places.

And what could have been a bit of a palaver, Paddy Mulcahy's EP, *From Water*, with Believe Digital appears to be a visceral phantasmagoria of percussions, keys, synths, and recordings.

The 17-minute, five-track EP won't be hitting the shelves until January or February 2018, but the electronic overture *You Could Walk Across the Shannon* is enough to whet an audiophile's appetite.

The EP - made with mixed media of an MS-20 synth, Juno synth, Analog drum machine, and other elements - was written and recorded while in his flat in Mount Kennett, overlooking the tides by Steamboat Quay.

Like the title, there was always an underlying theme of "being inspired by water", he says. After all, he is a self-proclaimed, Kilkee Pollock Hole "water baby".

Whether the EP was a form of cathartic relief or,

simply, inward observation, Paddy admits that *From Water* was a "very emotive" experience.

"The last year, I have noticed a lot about my mental health and I have been trying to make improvements on that because I'd been battling a lot of anxiety and different versions of stress that come along as an independent musician, with little support, and trying to make this pipe dream a reality. A lot of the music on the EP is very emotive, and I do think the music came from a sad place," he explains.

After travelling to London to sign the record deal contract, Paddy returned to his hometown for a flying visit. During which he presented a workshop to students at LIT, and performed an intimate gig at the Stormy Teacup in the city.

But the visit has been a poignant one, as he once again realised that Montreal is where the opportunities



Ambient and post-classical musician, Paddy Mulcahy, has secured an 18-month record deal with Believe Digital

are for independent artists.

"The music audience in Limerick seems to be somewhat uneducated when it comes to these contemporary styles of electronic music," he comments, adding that just 12 people turned up to his recent performance in the city centre.

"It is somewhat disheartening to see a lack of interest at this moment," he says.

He agrees that Limerick is prospering in the independent landscape, but admits that his style, though accessible, is more leftfield.

On the flipside, he says, the European scene, where it is more accepted, is becoming "saturated" with ambient, post-classical and neo-classical musicians.

"We are coming from an environment where there seems to be little interest. And what's the other option, to go somewhere where there is too much interest and you are never going to get discovered?"

He adds that he doesn't want to be in a situation where he is "dragging a crowd to a show" either.

"I want them [the audience] to be genuinely interested. I want people to want to come and hear my music. I have been trying to do it for four years here in Limerick, and it's just not happening."

But despite challenges, Paddy says that he is "always going to be inspired by Limerick" in his musical endeavours.

"I definitely can see, in the future, it could be five years down the line, but I can envision a solo headline show in UCH or something like this, with some local support acts - keep it homegrown. I am always going to do a homecoming show; Dolan's, UCH, Ormston House, and I played with Lubomyr Melnyk there."

Paddy first moved to Montreal in June, where he has since set up a home studio. The artwork for the new record was, in fact, done by his girlfriend Kristina Brooke, a Canadian fiddler and singer, who recently completed her MA in Traditional Irish Music at UL.

He concludes: "One thing I notice about Limerick is that we inspire each other. We all kind of bounce off each other. Inspiration is inspiration, and I think that is never going to leave."

To listen to Paddy Mulcahy's work, visit his website at www.paddymulcahy.com

25TH NOVEMBER 2017 PAGE 4