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# 'All I ever wanted to be was a DJ': Micky Mac looks back

## High-profile DJ Michael McNamara recalls the glory days of a long career

IT was during the iconic Summer of 1967, amid flower power and psychedelia, that I realised that all I wanted to be was a disc jockey.

The showband boom was beginning to peak and young Limerick teenagers wanted more than just cheesy waltzes - they were listening to Pet Sounds by The Beach Boys and Sgt Peppers by The Beatles. For me it was Motown, Atlantic Northern Soul and US West Coast. I just wanted to dance to the vinyl.

My first paid gig in Limerick was at the Big C Club in Post Office Lane where at 15 years of age - I pretended to be 18 - I was playing seven inch vinyl for an hour as a warm up to Orphanage, a band that featured a young Phyl Lynott.

Other groups I DJ'd with included Van Morrison with Them and Henry Mc Cullough - the only Irish musician to play Woodstock - with Eire Apparent. In the sixties Limerick



Nicky Woulfe and Micky Mac team up on December 22

had another beat club at The Mechanics Institute too.

Limerick at the time had some of the country's most talented rock musicians and soulful singers and they were already making their name with bands like Grannies Intentions and Sweet Street. There were hundreds of young bands playing rock, blues and good music all over the city.

In my very first DJ set at Post Office Lane I played The Four Tops, The Beatles, The Kinks, The Temptations, Pink Floyd The Troggs and The Who. At this stage for me and most of my friends showbands were history, they had left the building.

Today Limerick teenagers have wall to wall music - listen to some of the excellent music on Live 95FM or Spin South West and you realise how spoiled they are with such wonderful choice. It is incredible to think that in 1972 there was only 90 minutes of pop every week on RTE Radio. This was an insult to young Ireland at a time when The Beatles had conquered the world and The Doors and Jefferson Aeroplane and Rory Gallagher were massive.

Teenagers in Limerick in the sixties and seventies had to wait until it was dark to listen to pop on Radio Luxembourg on a dodgy AM signal. Indeed

us football fans did not get the English soccer full time scores on a Saturday night until 6.40pm on RTE, or had to form a queue outside the Limerick Leader office waiting for the results to be posted via teleprinter on the front window.

I remember it so well waiting to see how Preston North End, Manchester City and Leeds performed. I had discovered that if you walked near the canal bank with your transistor radio you might be lucky to listen live on a Saturday afternoon to sport on BBC Radio.

I spent my first year DJing in the beat clubs and then moved on to Old Crescent's Saturday night discos in Rathbane. I have memories of hundreds descending to dance to T-Rex, Bay City Rollers, 10cc, Led Zepelin and Deep Purple. At the same time ex-Mayor Pat Kennedy set up the 3 to 6 - a Sunday afternoon hop at the Royal George. I can name at



Micky Mac in full flow: The DJ is back in Dolan's on December 22

least 10 happy couples still today who fell in love on those wonderful Sundays dancing to Nights in White Satin by the Moody Blues.

Night life really changed when the hotels opened night clubs in the late seventies such as Poldarks at the Two Mile Inn, Marbella's at the Parkway, and my favourite residency Fernandos at the Royal George Hotel. The latter was the brain child of my two great mentors John Likely and Bobby Kennedy and city got its first real nightclub.

Running four nights a week, disco fans travelled from all over the country. Fernandos was at its peak when the movie Saturday Night Fever was released and everybody wanted to be John Travolta and Olivia Newton John. New Year's Eve

was the biggest night of the year. Tropics continued the disco journey at the Royal George where a very confident Will Leahy started his disco and very successful radio career at the age of 18. Geri Maye also made her debut there in the 90s. At this stage Lorcan Murray was making a name for himself at Teds before he joined 2FM.

One thing I was always impressed by were the number of disco venues in Limerick where you could go to listen to alternative music, particularly places like Termites and Costelloes. Limerick had an array of talented DJs in those days, many of whom gigged with me such as Brendan Murray, Ed McGuire, John Mc Meel, Jimmy Keogh, Mike Corry, Pat O'Mahoney, Pat Londra, Danny

Grehan, Greg Noonan, Paddy Brennan - the Legend of Limerick's Rock and Roll Club - and Nicky Woulfe.

My time at 2FM from 1979 to 2000 were such fun. It was a privilege to have a nationwide show with 300,000 listeners in the early eighties when there were no other legal radio stations. I worked alongside Vincent Hanley, Gerry Ryan and Tony Fenton - all no longer with us - and was there as disco changed to dance.

The final years at 2FM saw me embrace house, techno and dance. I presented the Dance Show at the most important and exciting years of that genre, doing the show from The Ministry Of Sound London, Cream in Liverpool and joining Pete Tong for Eurodance in 1996 from the POD on both BBC Radio One and 2FM.

The disco scene is still so vibrant today in local venues with excellent sound systems, trained door staff and guys and girls who like to dress up, are smart and know their music. I still like to go to clubs to keep in touch but wonder always: why no more Top 20 record charts at Savins and Clancy's? Why no more slow sets and why are all DJs silent and happy to mix?

Micky Mac, Nicky Woulfe and JP Dillon will celebrate Tropics and Fernandos at Boogie Wonderland in Dolan's Warehouse on December 22

## Hudson Taylor join the line-up for the Big Top in 2018

ALAN OWENS

E: [alan.owens@limerickleader.ie](mailto:alan.owens@limerickleader.ie)

IRISH DUO brothers Harry and Alfie Hudson Taylor have announced a tour for 2018 that will end at Limerick's Big Top.

Hudson Taylor will play the Milk Market venue on Sunday, April 1.

The multi-talented siblings are currently putting the finishing touches to their second album, which has



Members of Limerick Gospel Choir in preparation for their Christmas concert for charity

LIMERICK LEADER

# Christmas Cracker

## BOOGIE WONDERLAND

Returns to

# DOLANS

## Friday 22nd December 2017