

2 **L2 COVER STORY****L2 FEATURES**

Sure we needed a bit of rain to start the summer

→ Page 4

**ELECTION SPECIAL**

Every vote counts - detailed figures from the election

→ Pages 5-12

**ENTERTAINMENT**

Proud to see musical back on stage - McCourt

→ Page 24

**COMMUNITY**

Emma Ryan has special welcome for tourists

→ Page 25

**SPORT**

Reeves: 'Local fight is definitely going to happen'

→ Pull-out Inside

**MOTORS**

Discover new adventures this summer

→ Back of Sport

**CHRONICLE**

Athea ready for Limerick Fleadh Cheoil

→ Pages 15 & 54



Legendary DJ's 2FM celebration this weekend

Many couples fell in love to the music played by DJ Micky Mac, Limerick's voice on national airwaves for over 40 years

His distinctive, polished voice is one of the most recognisable not only in Limerick but nationally.

Michael McNamara, better known to his fans as Micky Mac, who started his career at 15 - while pretending to be 18 - will headline 2FM's 40th birthday celebrations with Will Leahy and Decks and Drums at the After Madness party at Dolan's this Friday, May 31.

"I remember being hooked on radio in the late 60s as a child listening to pop music on radio Luxembourg and BBC Radio 1. Radio Éireann (RTE) did not have any pop music - except a few sponsored shows with Larry Gogan, Brendan Balfe and Mike Murphy," he recalled this week.

"So anyone growing up in Limerick in the late 60s and 70s had to wait until the wind was blowing the right way to tune into DJs like Tony Prince, Alan Freeman on Radio Luxembourg and BBC Radio 1. BBC in fairness recognised the demand for young people's music radio and launched BBC Radio One in 1967 with its first song Flowers in the Rain by The Move," he explained.

Ireland had to wait until May 31, 1979 - forty years ago this month for its first national young people's radio station.

"From 1976 the sheer frustration of not having pop and rock on the radio was softened by the emergence of Pirate Radio. In Limerick we had the iconic John the Man Frawley whose station Radio Luimni could have had up to 60,000 listeners on AM. Mike Richardson also set up an excellent station which sounded so professional. These two stations were the kindergarten for a new generation of Limerick broadcasters - Len Dinneen the rugby commentator being the most well known and others who are still



Off with a bang: Micky Mac goes live on Radio 2 (now 2FM) on opening day, from the Limerick studios in May 1979. Note the vinyl

working in local radio.

"I myself applied to Radio Éireann on my 21st birthday - and was called for interview for the post of presenter - they

would not call you a DJ in those days."

He was interviewed by Liam Devally who went on to be a member of the judiciary;

and Billy Wall who was Gay Byrne's radio producer.

"I could not believe my luck when I was offered my first radio gig on national radio presenting Airs and Races from Fairyhouse... this was followed by four weeks on a music programme between Mike Murphy and Gay Byrne - 9-10 on Tuesday mornings. I remember the producer telling me 'don't think of one million people listening to you - just think of one person'. In those days over one million tuned into Radio Éireann every day - there was no competition....nothing else on the dial."

When he joined Radio Éireann the only DJ in his 20s was the late Vincent Hanley. They did not have to wait long though as it was announced that RTÉ would launch RTÉ Radio 2 on May 31 1979. Every DJ in the country applied for

Question time for Micky Mac...

You have a few nicknames, tell us more..

Mickey Mac...Micky Rave. Mickey Mac (with the 'e') is from my 2FM career given to me by a DJ colleague Jim O'Neil. Mike Rave goes back to Old Crescent Fernandes - '70'

What was the first record you bought?

Baby I Need Your Loving - The Four Tops (and still is in my all time top 5).

When and where did you play your first gig as a DJ?

The Big C, Post Office Lane as warm up to Thin Lizzy

You made a name for yourself at the 3-6 in the George and everyone talks of you playing Nights in White Satin

Yes I did - it was from the sleeve of the Moody Blues album - Days of Future Passed -and I know at least three couples who fell in love on the dance floor and are still in love.

What is your favourite song?

It changes all the time - at present I think Shot Gun by George Ezra is possibly the best pop song in ages.

Who was the most impressive

person/group you interviewed or met?

Noel Redding - late bass player with Jimi Hendrix, and Chrissie Hynde of The Pretenders.

You had a legendary mum and your son Conor has made a big name for himself soccer commentating with the BBC...

My mum Nora was an inspiration and a mentor to so many people attending the High School. My dad Michael was a radio fan and loved to do sports commentator imitations - everyone from Michael O'Hehir to Peter O'Sullivan. Unfortunately, he did not live to hear his grandson commentate for BBC Match of The Day and Radio Five Live. Conor commentates for TV on the Champions League Final in Madrid this Saturday. My youngest son Brian has followed his grand mother into third-level education in the UK.

You must know the great Larry Gogan very well, he is a true legend..

I met Larry on my first stay at RTE. He is exactly as he is on the radio. He is the consummate professional - always arriving two hours before air time. I am so proud to be working with him now on RTE Gold. He still has the enthusiasm, voice and knowledge.

L2 COVER STORY 3

the 25 jobs - and it saw the arrival of the generation who became real stars - Ronan, Marty, Dave Fanning, Mark Cagney, Gerry Ryan. Ian Dempsey and Tony Fenton joined later.

"On launch day I broadcast live with Marty Whelan from Bank House in Limerick. My first track was Boogie Wonderland by Earth Wind and Fire. It was the start of 21 amazing years presenting Solid Gold Saturday, Ireland's Choice on Sundays in the 80's - and then re-inventing myself with Micky Mac's Dance Show in the 90s at weekends on the station which was renamed 2FM."

2FM recruited Limerick's Lorcan Murray and Will Leahy both of whom went on to be household names nationwide and who still work with RTE. At one stage there were three Limerick jocks on 2FM Lorcan, Will and myself.

"Among the amazing Limerick memories were the Beats on the Street run in Limerick between 1986 and 1998 - when each year saw 40,000 dance on the streets of Limerick. 2FM was highly committed to live bands and always encouraged Limerick bands to do studio recordings and in those days were heavily played on the station. I remember hearing Cranberry Saw Us performing at the famous Studio 8 sessions with Dave Fanning in 1990 and other Limerick Bands being



DJ Micky Mac says he is not quite ready to sign-off
PICTURE: MICHAEL COWHEY

championed by the station - Reform, Tuesday Blue, The Groove, The Hitchers, and so many more.

"I hope that others from

Limerick who have the talent are encouraged to work in radio - and keep the tradition of Limerick voices on national radio - and follow the lead and inspiration of the legendary Limerickman Terry Wogan."

Micky Mac broadcasts still on RTE Gold on Saturday afternoons 4-6pm, and on Clare FM. He will be celebrating 2FM's 40th birthday at Dolans with Will Leahy and Decks and Drums at the After Madness party at Dolans on May 31



Micky Mac and Mr Spring launching his Top 30 Dance Hit which spent three weeks in the Top 30 in 1995



Micky Mac live on 2FM from Trip to Tipp in 1990

ALEX FINDLATER
- & COMPANY LTD -
- THE GRILL ROOM -



Three Course
Dinner Menu €29.00

Tuesday to Friday

For Reservations
Call 061- 516450

Alex Findlater & Co

109 O'Connell Street, Limerick City
+353 (0)61 516 450 | info@alexfindlaterandco.ie