John Kelly, chief executive of the Irish Chamber Orchestra, with the plans for the €3m building

OK for €3m ICO HQ

By ANNE SHERIDAN

PLANS for a €3million state-of-the-art building for the Irish Chamber Orchestra, based at the University of Limerick, have received the green light.

"This new home will further cement the orchestra's distinguished national and international reputation and enable the ICO to provide a first-class chamber orchestra to audiences across Ireland," said John Kelly, chief executive of the Irish Chamber Orchestra.

The orchestra, which is funded by the Arts Council of Ireland has made significant progress in raising and sourcing funds for their new premises.

Last September the Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism announced it would make a €1.7 million contribution towards the cost of the building.

The University of Limerick is also making a significant contribution towards the overall cost in addition to significant private funding.

The orchestra's permanent home will comprise of modern facilities such as purpose-built rehearsal and recording studios for up to 18 people. The building will offer the Irish Chamber Orchestra freedom and flexibility in developing its artistic programme and its education and outreach activities.

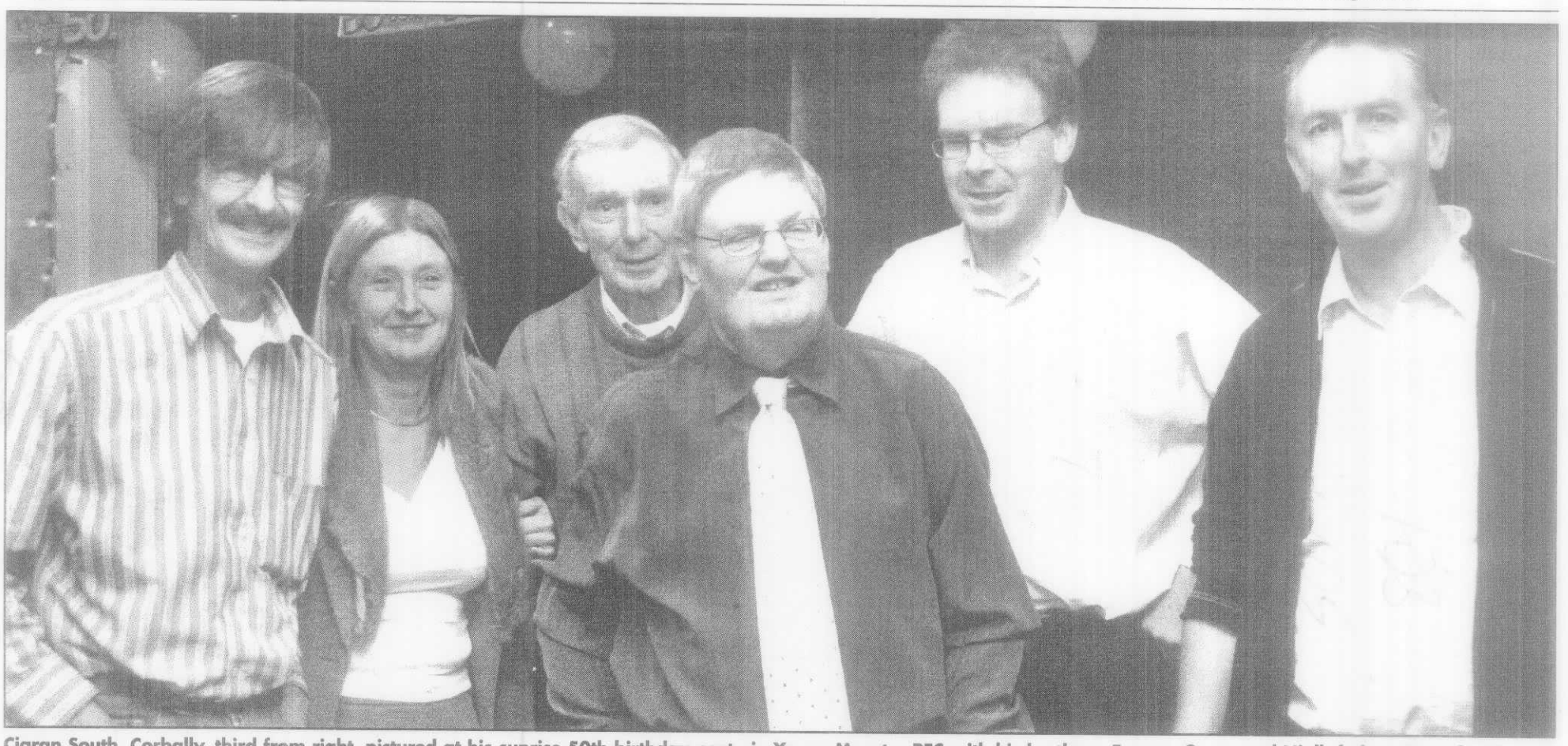
Due to a decade of dynamic leadership by John Kelly, the Irish Chamber Orchestra is acknowledged internationally today as one of Ireland's leading cultural assets.

The orchestra benefits from high profile corporate supporters, including RTE, which provide more than €400,000 annually in cash and in-kind support. "In this business you live close to the edge financially - it's a fact of life in the arts world. We need patrons, government and corporate support to survive," said Mr Kelly.

With funding and planning permission in place, construction on the eagerly awaited building is expected to commence shortly.

Architectural plans for the project were recently presented and approved by the ICO Board, including Mary Robinson, Chair, Dr. Edward Walsh, Vice Chair, John Kelly, Chief Executive and Michael Buckley, board member.

The Irish Chamber Orchestra comprises of 20 contracted musicians and a staff of six. Regular international tours to Europe, the USA, Australia and China, have put the orchestra on the world map and have drawn positive reviews for their performances at leading concert halls including New York's Carnegie Hall, London's Wigmore Hall, the Barbican Centre and the Kennedy Centre in Washington DC.



Ciaran South, Corbally, third from right, pictured at his suprise 50th birthday party in Young Munster RFC with his brothers, Fergus, Owen and Niall, father, Gerard and sister Deirdre (LL)