

Table of Contents

	Page
A MESSAGE FROM AN CATHAOIRLEACH	2
Licensing	3
- Public Performance Revenue	3
- Broadcasting, Satellite & Cable.....	3
- RTE.....	3
- TV3	3
- Independent Radio.....	3
- Satellite & Cable.....	3
Membership	4
- Increase in Membership Numbers	4
- Members Meetings	4
- Repertoire.....	4
- Repertoire Details	4
- International Standard Work Code (ISWC).....	4
- On-Line Registration	5
- Songwriter Collaboration/Composing.....	5
- Sponsorship.....	5
- Support for music events	5
- College prizes.....	6
- Information Services On-Line.....	6
- Information for members	6
- Information for customers.....	6
- On-Line research facilities.....	6
- On-Line intellectual property information	6
International Activities.....	7
- CISAC	7
- GESAC.....	7
- Exemptions in US Copyright Legislation	8
Looking Forward	8
- Promotion of Irish Music Abroad	8
- MIDEM.....	8
- South By South West	8
- Tin Pan South	8
- Agreement with Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann.....	9
- Collaborative Songwriting/Composing – Clifden	9
- CISAC Conference in Dublin.....	9
- Congratulations	9

Message from An Cathaoirleach

1998 was the year IMRO formally arrived! At the official launch which took place in March we were honoured by the attendance of An Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern.

In his address Mr Ahern said...

"We are truly blessed here in Ireland with so many composers and writers of great talent in the past and present who have given us a unique treasury to interpret and reinterpret for each succeeding generation..." "In IMRO's case, a large part of the battle has been to educate and make people aware that music, like any resource or property, needs to be funded and paid for just as any other consumer service is paid for. To IMRO's credit, I believe that they have won the arguments and the process of public education is well on its way."

We are very pleased to perform this vital role and the importance we attach to it is reflected in our continued growth and development. The financial performance in 1998 was, again, exceptional. The amount available for distribution to our members and to members of our affiliated societies increased by 9.9% to IR£12,812,880 (€16,269,001).

As well as ensuring that we maximise royalty collection and distribution, we have always been concerned about ways of supporting our members in their songwriting and composing activities.. November 1998 saw a major initiative aimed at encouraging collaborative songwriting among members. It was an enormous success and we intend to become much more involved in arranging and supporting such activities in the future.

The fostering of creativity, in music as in other areas, is closely linked to respect for intellectual property rights and we have consistently lobbied for improvements in copyright legislation. We welcome the general thrust of the Copyright and Related Rights Bill in strengthening copyright protection, although regrettably it falls short in certain areas, particularly in its failure to include a blank tape levy and moral rights.

In all our activities the interests of those we represent are paramount and one of the objectives of the Board is to establish closer links with our own membership. I was particularly pleased to be able to meet many of our members at the meetings held in various locations around the country and I look forward to further opportunities to develop these contacts in the coming year.

We have had another very successful year and, on behalf of the Board of Directors and the membership in general, I would like to express heartfelt appreciation to the Chief Executive, Hugh Duffy, and his management team and staff for their continuing dedication and outstanding work on behalf of all of us and of the members of our affiliated societies. I would also like to thank my colleagues on the Board for their support and encouragement and, in particular, Mike Hanrahan for his work as Leaschathaoirleach and as Chairman of the Public Relations Committee, and Donagh Long, for his work as Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The support of our members is crucial to our success as a company and, on behalf of the Board and management, I would like to thank our members for their encouragement and interest in what we are endeavoring to achieve.

Shay Hennessy - Cathaoirleach

Licensing

- **Public Performance Revenue**

Our public performance revenue in 1998 was IR£6,237,677 - an increase of IR£520,253 (9%) over the 1997 revenue figure of IR£5,717,424. Public performance revenue now accounts for 40% of total licence revenue and over 43% of total domestic licence revenue.

Agreements are currently in place between IMRO and all major music user bodies and this has resulted in a reduction in the need to resort to litigation in order to enforce copyright protection. There has been a consequent reduction in legal costs which, however, still remain at the unacceptably high level of IR£142,079, which is 5% of net operating expenses.

The new tariff agreed with the Vintners' Federation of Ireland, which was introduced on 6th January 1998, is working very well and any major disputes which may arise in the future will be dealt with by the Arbitration Tribunal, further reducing legal costs.

The number of public performance licences increased in the year by 18% to just over 26,000.

- **Broadcasting, Cable & Satellite**

- ◆ **RTE**

Negotiations were successfully completed in 1998 between IMRO and RTE. The new agreement, effective from 1st January 1999 for 4 years, has been extended to include the new classical music and arts channel, Lyric FM, the ASTRA satellite service and RTE on the web. During the negotiations RTE was represented by Mr Gerry McLaughlin, RTE Director of Legal Services, who retired at the end of 1998. IMRO had established a solid working relationship with Gerry and we wish him well in his retirement.

- ◆ **TV3**

The first independent national television service, TV3, was introduced during the year and IMRO successfully negotiated an agreement with the operator. Part of that agreement requires TV3 to produce a full census of all music broadcast.

- ◆ **Independent Radio**

Income from national commercial radio remained steady during 1998. The local radio industry enjoyed a buoyant year and royalties received by IMRO from this sector showed a very healthy increase.

- ◆ **Satellite & Cable**

The agreement between the Irish Cable Owners Association and the rights owners, including IMRO and UK terrestrial broadcasters, was renewed during 1998 for a 4 year period. IMRO acts as the administrator of this agreement.

Licences with the various satellite service providers have continued in place.

Membership

- ***Increase in Membership Numbers***

Membership of IMRO has continued to grow and we have currently over 2,400 members.

- ***Members Meetings***

As part of our commitment to keeping our members informed about their organisation, a series of regional meetings took place during the months of November 1998 and January and February 1999 in Athlone, Kells, Kilkenny, Killarney, Limerick, Sligo and in three separate venues in Dublin.

Members who attended had an opportunity to meet directors, management and staff in a relatively informal setting. The aim was to inform members of new developments within the organisation and to provide a forum for discussing matters of specific interest to them. We greatly value members' input into the running of the organisation and a number of excellent suggestions and ideas were put forward.

Among the many topics covered was how members could get the most out of their membership. Following the meetings, a set of guidelines was circulated to members informing them about the areas where we can provide information, assistance and expertise and also reminding them of the information we need to receive from them in order to work most effectively.

We intend to hold additional meetings this year and we will also be holding a series of one day clinics throughout the country in order to afford members further opportunities to contact us and to get to know more about what we are doing.

- ***Repertoire***

It is our on-going mission to improve service to members by making royalty distribution faster, more accurate and cheaper.

Key elements in achieving this objective include obtaining complete and accurate works information from our members and participation in the International Standard Work Code numbering system.

- ◆ ***Repertoire Details***

In June 1998 we embarked on a project aimed at ensuring that we had complete and accurate repertoire details in relation to our members. Lists of works were sent to our members for comment on their accuracy. The response was very positive and the first updated listings were sent to members in May 1999.

- ◆ ***International Standard Work Code (ISWC)***

The international standard work code is a numbering system for musical works, similar to the ISBN system used for books. The allocation of an ISWC

to a work will mean that all societies will refer to the work by the same number thus reducing conflicts and inaccuracies in payments between societies. This numbering system forms the corner stone of societies sharing their works information in a common database. We have been using this system for over a year and will continue to press our sister societies to keep up with this vital initiative.

- ◆ ***On-Line Registration***

As increasing numbers of our members go “on-line”, we intend to maintain our position at the forefront of technology by providing them with access to an on-line registration form. Members will be able to register their works with us by entering the work details on this registration form, which will be accessed using a password. The form is already in development and will be linked to our web site from June 1999 at www.imro.ie.

- ***Songwriting/Composing Collaborations***

We are continually looking at ways of encouraging our members’ creative activities. For many years, we have funded song contests and events such as the IMRO/Ennis Summer School which is dedicated to the study of music composition in the classical area. Collaborative songwriting/composing, although common in the United States, is fairly new to Ireland and we were very pleased to be able to provide an opportunity for our members to experiment with this type of creativity.

In November we provided facilities for a number of our songwriter members to collaborate with each other in an environment totally geared to the creative process. Over 70 members participated in a series of four weeklong collaborative songwriting workshops in Killarney. More than 130 songs were written and recorded in a specially provided demo studio. Members not only benefited from their collaborations but they also had a wonderful opportunity to perform together and to showcase their new works.

During the fourth week a challenge was set to write a song, register it, record it and broadcast it during the Gerry Ryan 2FM radio show. Rosie Byrne, a 2FM listener, provided the inspiration for the song, her baby daughter Abbie. Liam Reilly, John Hurley and Gerry Ryan’s co-presenter, Brenda Donohue, who was in Killarney to lend a hand, managed to complete the task and the track ‘Leaving Abbie’ went on to achieve a No. 19 spot in the Irish Top 20 in the week before Christmas.

Further collaborative events are planned for the future and details will be announced in the Membership Newsletter.

- ***Sponsorship***

- ◆ ***Support for Music Events***

As part of our public relations programme we supported a large number of music events throughout the country. One of the main events was the IMRO Showcase Tour which provided a platform for up and coming young bands to showcase their talents before representatives of the recording industry and

the music press. The event culminated in three bands, CO.UK, Asterix and Hooky, showcasing in London.

IMRO also provided prize money for a number of song contests and festivals during the year.

◆ **College Prizes**

As part of our sponsorship of prizes for excellence in legal, marketing and hotel management studies, we funded a prize of £2,000 for the best student on the BA course in Hotel and Catering Management attending the Galway/Mayo Institute of Technology. The prize was presented to Cormac Stuart by Eamon Shackleton, IMRO Director of Services, at the graduation ceremony which took place in November.

• **Information Services On-Line**

The IMRO web site (www.imro.ie) has expanded considerably in the past year.

◆ **Information For Members**

Our Membership Booklet is available on-line, in Irish and English.

To keep our members up to date on events both nationally and internationally, we have linked to the web site of the "Irish Music Magazine", which provides up to date information on song contests and festivals around the world. We also provide links to sites promoting events such as MIDEM, the Emergenza Band Competition and other music industry events.

We have links to both the BMI Hyper Repertoire Database and the ASCAP Searchable Repertoire Database, which allow users to search for information on works.

◆ **Information For Customers**

Our information booklets, "Music Means Business" and "Music, the Law and You", are available on-line, in both Irish and English, and there is also comprehensive information on our tariffs and contact information regarding accounts and licensing.

◆ **On-Line Research Facilities**

We have an extensive database of reports and documents which may be perused in the IMRO office by anyone interested in accessing them for research purposes. A list of these reports is available on the web site. We have also made available on-line for the first time the International Licensing Revenue Survey for the years 1996 & 1997. This survey contains revenue information from the European societies and from the Australian, Japanese, Canadian and American societies.

◆ **On-Line Intellectual Property Information**

IMRO is a member of the Copyright Association of Ireland (CAI) which was formed by a group of people who have an interest in copyright law (as legal practitioners, creators of copyright works or as academics). The CAI runs

events during the year and details are available on the IMRO web site. Copies of papers and speeches are available via our link to the CAI web site.

We also keep our site up to date on developments in copyright legislation both at home and abroad with press releases and links to official documents and sites, such as the European Commission, WIPO and CISAC.

International Activities

- **CISAC**

Copyright has an international dimension and issues that affect the copyright community worldwide are addressed at meetings of CISAC, the international confederation of societies of authors and composers.

For many in the international copyright community new technology and the internet are a major preoccupation and we attended a CISAC conference on this subject in Vienna in November. Although no clear consensus emerged as to how the copyright community would respond to the new environment, we argued very strongly that the interests of those whom we represent must be protected and must not be eroded or diluted through multinational deals between the 'majors'.

In July we used the opportunity of the CISAC meeting in Mexico to challenge the methods used by many overseas societies in judging the efficiency of their operations. Our approach was generally welcomed and later in the year Hugh Duffy, IMRO's Chief Executive, was invited to visit a number of continental societies to explain and expand upon our views.

Berlin was the venue in September for the biennial CISAC World Congress. Again, the focus was on copyright in the information age and there was a series of presentations on how the administration of songwriters' and composers' rights could be improved to suit the needs and demands of electronic licensing.

- **GESAC**

The role of GESAC, the body formed by the European societies to lobby the European Commission on pan-European legislative measures, has become more vital. It is working very closely with the European Commission to ensure that the interests of copyright owners are protected.

A major initiative was the introduction of a number of draft European directives relating to copyright and related rights in the information age. Electronic commerce was also the subject of a draft directive as this was seen as having tremendous potential for business within the European Union. These directives are of fundamental importance to owners of copyrights as music, in particular, will form an essential part of much of this activity. The extremely aggressive lobbying by those who intend to use copyrights in the electronic environment is a major concern but we are greatly encouraged in the knowledge that the European Commission is committed to the maintenance of a high level of protection for copyright.

- ***Exemptions in US Copyright Legislation***

The performing right organisations in the United States are confronted by many hostile groups determined to undermine and cut back the rights of composers and authors and we were very disappointed to see the expansion of exemptions from copyright control in that territory by the introduction of the 'Fairness in Music Licensing' Act 1998.

However, our efforts to challenge these exemptions, which we believe to be in breach of the US' international obligations, are proceeding very satisfactorily and the European Commission continues to be totally supportive of our complaint in this area. The World Trade Organisation has now been asked to investigate and adjudicate on this matter and a decision is expected later this year.

Looking Forward

- ***Promotion of Irish Music Abroad***

We are very mindful of how important it is for our members to be able to promote their music abroad, particularly in view of the small size of the local market, and we endeavour to provide assistance where possible.

- ◆ **MIDEM**

We, again this year, provided financial assistance for a number of members attending MIDEM in Cannes. Those who attended found it very worthwhile and an excellent means of marketing their music.

We were also pleased to sponsor the Irish Club at which IMRO members, Sack and Kaydee, performed. The Irish Club has become an important part of the Cannes festival and we look forward to seeing it develop further in future years.

- ◆ **South By South West**

In March this year we co-sponsored with Hot Press a stand at the South by South West trade fair which took place in Austin, Texas. There were 21 Irish companies represented on the stand and 15 Irish bands and performers played at showcase gigs during the festival. As with MIDEM, the participants felt that the festival afforded them excellent business opportunities for promoting their music.

- ◆ **Tin Pan South**

In April we provided sponsorship for a number of members to participate in songwriter showcase gigs as part of the Tin Pan South festival in Nashville. The participants found this a hugely worthwhile experience which provided them with a unique opportunity to air their songs to a very discerning audience of enthusiasts and world class writers.

- ***IMRO Agreement With Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann***

Earlier this year IMRO and Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann completed a cooperation agreement for the promotion of traditional Irish music, song and dance. The agreement will help to promote traditional Irish music, song and dance both nationally and internationally. It will also assist artists – musicians, composers, arrangers, singers and dancers – who are making a very valuable contribution to an integral part of our culture. Traditional Irish music is winning new audiences all over the world and this agreement will contribute further to its development in all its forms.

- ***Collaborative Songwriting/Composing - Clifden***

In April this year we organised a collaborative workshop aimed specifically at members writing and arranging music in the traditional and folk genres. This event took place in Clifden and 24 IMRO members attended. Over 45 new works were written and recorded during the week.

- ***CISAC Conference in Dublin***

Dublin was the location for the 1999 meeting of the CISAC Distribution Technical Committee. Representatives from all the major societies throughout the world gathered to discuss royalty distribution issues and problems. Eoin Colley, IMRO's Director of Distribution and Membership, delivered a paper on sampling versus census in radio logging.

Minister Tom Kitt, who is responsible for copyright legislation, gave the opening address and complimented IMRO and the other societies on providing a very valuable service to music creators.

- ***Congratulations to...***

- ◆ The Chieftains – Grammy Award Winners for Best international Folk Album
- ◆ The Corrs – Brit Award Winners for Best International Group
- ◆ Clannad – Grammy Award Winners for Best New Age Album
- ◆ Tommy Peoples – Winner of the National Traditional Music Award
- ◆ Gerry Simpson – Composer of Winning Entry in Cavan International Song Contest
- ◆ Mai O'Higgins on the release of her Biography
- ◆ Cormac Stuart – Winner of IMRO Prize for Excellence, BA in Hotel and Catering Management Course at Galway/Mayo Institute of Technology
- ◆ Cathy Horan – Winner of IMRO Prize in International Marketing & Languages, Dublin City University
- ◆ Peter Bolger – Winner of IMRO Prize in Legal Essay Competition, LLM Course, University College Dublin
- ◆ Lucy McMahon – Winner of IMRO Prize for Excellence on the Higher Diploma in Hospitality Management/BSc (Mgmt) Course, Dublin Institute of Technology
- ◆ Michael Sheary – Winner of IMRO Prize, Shannon College of Hotel Management
- ◆ CO.UK – One of the 3 bands to appear in the IMRO London Showcase Gig - on securing a deal with Mercury Records