



SOUTH COUNTY

BY LEO McMAHON

Far from the land debut album from Paddy Homan

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If you enjoy a good Irish song performed with passion and feeling, get yourself a copy of 'Far from the land', the debut CD album of Cork tenor Paddy Homan which was officially launched by Lord Mayor of Cork, Sean Martin at the Mercury Lounge, Washington Street, Cork recently.

Described as "the emerging voice of Ireland", Paddy was at his harmonious best when performing some of the tracks from the album prior to his fourth tour to the USA over the St. Patrick's Day holiday period where he sang at six concerts.

The launch was a concert in itself and guests were welcomed by Paddy's good friend and colleague from Mercy University Hospital when he was studying at UCC, Tony O'Regan from Bandon.

"The theme which weaves together these songs on my first CD is a love of Ireland expressed through her ancient and contemporary songs," said Paddy who thanked everyone associated with it, especially his family. "That love and passion were carried across the oceans by the emigrant Irish, reinvigorating the musical traditions of those who remained at home. These are songs I learned in my youth and in my travels and I hope that your enjoyment is as great as mine has been in making them available to you"

A native of Fair Hill on Cork city's north side and a post pupil of North Monastery schools, Paddy Homan, a social worker based in Portlaoise, has performed in the tenor role in the opera 'Carmen', delighted audiences at numerous benefit concerts, performed at Maynooth College before former President Mary Robinson and former US Ambassador to Ireland, Jean Kennedy-Smith and sung at 60 venues in the USA.

Paddy sang 'Roisin dubh', 'Macushla', 'The bells of Shandon' which are on the album, and also 'Boalavogue' and 'The banks of my own lovely Lee' He was accompanied by talented Kerry musicians Tom O'Connor on flute and Thomas O'Sullivan, uilleann pipes and also Cork pianist Eleanor Malone.

Other songs on the 13 tracks album, each of which are described on the inner cover, are 'She is far from the land', 'By the short cut to the Rosses', 'Mna na hEireann', 'An island Sheiling son', 'Beautiful dreamer', 'Bantry Bay', 'Star of

the County Down' and 'Danny boy' while Tom and Thomas finish with Fr. O'Flynn's jig selection.

'Far from the Land' was produced by Paddy Homan and Bob Lyons under the label Fair Hill Records, mastered and recorded by Ruairi O'Flaherty, Co. Kerry, and Blarney Recording Studio and the album was designed by Eoghan Bourke.

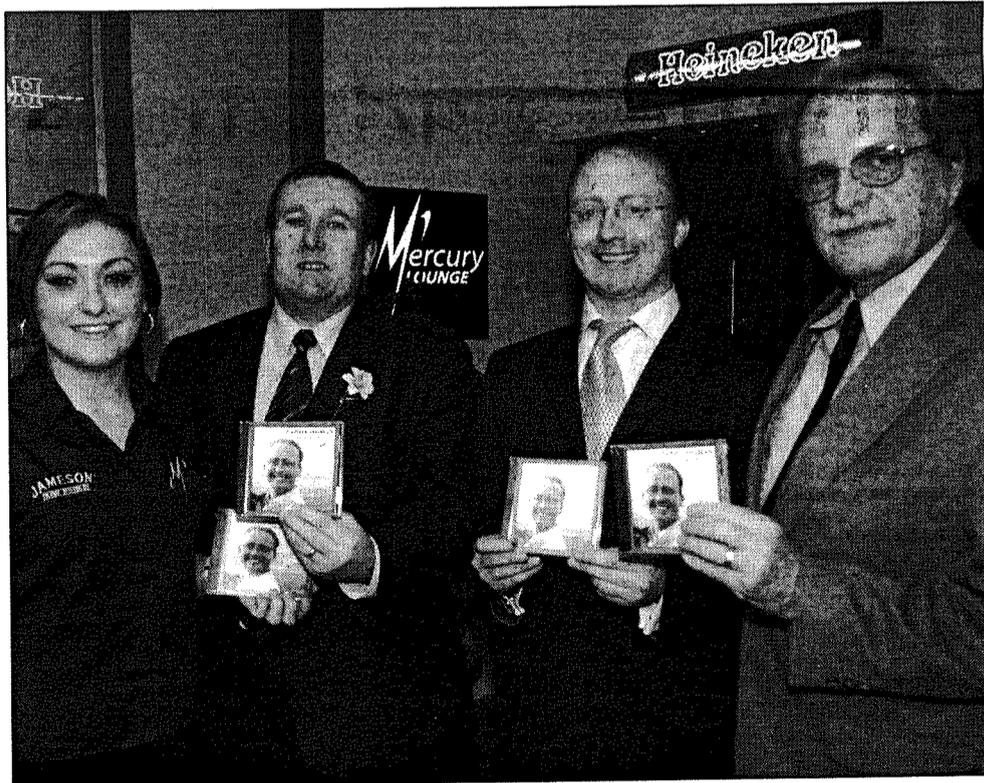
Congratulations was extended by the Lord Mayor on what he said was another important contribution to Cork 2005 European Capital of Culture years and by special guest John Spillane from Glenbrook who recalled how impressed he was on hearing Paddy for the first time three years ago at 'An Spalpin Fanac' bar at a function for Munster Literature Centre. John also delighted the audience by singing 'The cherry tree', 'The mad woman of Cork' and 'Hey dreamer' title track of his new album. Other entertainers were Paddy's Feis Maitiu award winning niece Aisling O'Leary who appropriately played 'Dochas linn Naomh Padraig' on the recorder and Big Mo O'Connor of Cork band Natural Gas.

Co-producer of 'Far from the Land', Bob Lyons from Kennebunkport, Maine, USA, said he first heard Paddy Homan in a Dingle pub four years ago and was astounded by the brilliance and clarity of his voice. After introducing himself, they became great friends and coincidentally Paddy was a social studies student at UCC where his (Bob's) wife Nona was working. It was Nona who chose the title of the album which is now on sale in 'The Living Tradition' music store, MacCurtain Street, Cork or on the internet at www.paddyhoman.com

Excellent fare from chef Conor and staff was served at the impressive new Mercury Lounge, owned by Bob and Frances O'Leary and run by Mark O'Regan directly opposite the refurbished Cork Courthouse.

Guests included Prof. David Morgan, UCC and his wife Deirdre; John McCarthy, Finbarr and Anne Moloney of Concern, one of many deserving causes Paddy has benefited through his singing which also include Cancer Care. Cork poet Paddy Galvin; Jack O'Leary, Castlelyons; singer Alison Arnopp from Bandon, Paddy Murray, Blarney; Mary Johnson, Jim Walsh of Cork Singers Club; Dan O'Leary of City of Cork Male Voice Choir; Rosarie Raymond, Paddy's mother Elizabeth and his sister Margaret O'Leary who was very busy selling the CDs with Josephine McCaughy.

Present also was retired head of singing at Cork School of Music, Bobbie Beare from Bandon, who, on again hearing the voice of his former student declared: "Now that's what singing is all about. This man sings from the heart and from his whole being". Praise indeed!



Frances O'Leary, Mercury Lounge; Tony O'Regan, Bandon, master of ceremonies; Paddy Homan, singer and co-producer and Bob Lyons, co-producer, at the launch of Paddy Homan's CD 'Far from the land' at the Mercury Lounge, Washington Street, Cork.

(photo B.L. MacGill)