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SPEECH BY MR TED NEALON, T.D.,  
MINISTER OF STATE FOR ARTS AND CULTURE,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCHING OF A NEW MAGAZINE,  
"MUSIC IRELAND"  
ON THURSDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER 1985 AT 5.30 PM.  
AT CARROLL'S THEATRE, GRAND PARADE.

I am very happy to be here this evening to join in the celebration of the launching of a new music magazine "Music Ireland".

In common with much of the great art music of the world, the art music of medieval gaelic Ireland was a non-literate one. The harp was our

dominant and characteristic instrument in historical times, and as early as the 17th century it was adopted as the heraldic symbol of Ireland. This was surely a promising augury. We do not seem to have lived up to that early promise: this morning, I read in the newspaper that Carinal O Fiaich advised his fellow bishops only yesterday at their synod in Rome that "Irishmen sing enthusiastically only in pubs".

Music knows neither frontiers nor barriers. It transcends language differences. Today, we can enjoy instant access to a variety of music to an extent which was undreamt of by earlier generations. In the early years of this century, music lovers unable to be present at live performances began to experience the pleasures of listening to music reproduced on record or radio. It was a somewhat limited pleasure. The quality of sound reproduction was generally poor. The transmission power of radio stations was likewise poor. Listeners were generally confined to hearing the programmes of the local station. It was then somewhat academic to be told about the superior merits of music broadcast elsewhere as that music was simply not accessible. Today, all is changed. We live in a world which has been validly termed a "global village". Technology has made possible instant access to transnational media. This opportunity presents its own problems. The average discerning music lover has to be selective. The publication of a specialist music magazine such as "Music Ireland" will facilitate music lovers to make an informed

choice in planning their listening whether it is to live performance or recorded music. For that, we are indebted to those who are associated with the launching of this new publication.

In focussing public attention on music, "Music Ireland" will, of course, provide yet another alternative public platform for composers and musicians. My former newspaper colleague, the Late John O'Donovan, often noted that Irish musicians were more often highly esteemed rather than highly paid. "Music Ireland" has an initial readership target of 15,000 music lovers. This may be relatively small in numerical terms. The magazine is, however, geared towards opinion makers in the music sphere. A strong, articulate voice to represent the views of musicians and music lovers can help to ensure that our musicians are adequately rewarded in cash terms as well as being esteemed.

1985 is European Music Year as well as International Youth Year. It is also the year in which the report of the Curriculum Development Board acknowledged the need to ensure that music, among other art forms, should form part of the core curriculum of all young people at school. I am aware of, and fully appreciate, the importance of the input which the Arts Council has made to the work of the Curriculum Development Board. I, for my part, will endeavour to ensure that tangible progress is made to secure the rightful place of the arts in

our educational system. I anticipate that "Music Ireland" will be a valuable ally in that context.

"Music Ireland" is being grant-aided jointly by the Arts Council and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. This is yet another tangible example of practical co-operation on a cultural project which has self-evident merits. Both Councils are to be congratulated as are the publishers for producing a magazine which is of a very high technical standard. Too often in the past, our cultural magazines have been of a high artistic standard but were presented in an uninspired format. I have every confidence that "Music Ireland" will satisfy exacting criteria in both technical and artistic senses. I wish it many years of the success which it so richly deserves.