

ECHOOPINION**WE SAY****The Echo's viewpoint**

IT was 84 years ago today that Terence MacSwiney lost his life in the cause of a free and independent Ireland.

This great Corkman and Irishman, who was born in North Main Street 125 years ago, died on the morning of October 25, 1920, after seventy-four days on hunger strike in Brixton Prison. His name reverberated around the world and even influenced the likes of Gandhi, who saw for the first time how the might of the British empire could be faced down in the cause of freedom.

In MacSwiney's own words: "It is not they who can inflict the most, but they who suffer most will conquer."

There is an argument that MacSwiney was our greatest ever Irishman, but that is a debate for another day.

What is important is that MacSwiney is accorded the respect that his

Timely tribute to a great Corkman

dignified life and death deserve.

That is why we welcome the decision today to rededicate a Cork city quay in his name.

The quay across from the City Hall,

formerly known as Albert Quay after Queen Victoria's husband Prince Albert, has been renamed in honour of the martyred Cork freedom fighter.

Terence MacSwiney's daughter, Máire,

her husband Ruairí, and their son, Cathal Brughá, attended the ceremony.

Although the quay was named the Terence MacSwiney Quay a number of years ago, no official name plaque was erected.

The honour is best summed up in the words of Máire: "The MacSwiney family has died out in Cork, and it is important that there be some official recognition for this man who put Cork on the map. It is a very proud and a very happy day for Cork."

TALKING HEAD**Blowing the trumpet for jazz greats**

YOU know how it is. Cornered at a party by someone whose name you have already forgotten, then there's the lull in the conversation that comes in the period between introductions and the exchanging of bawdy jokes, and so the subject of music is brought up.

"So, what music do you like?" one of you will ask. On occasions, I have even been asked do I like music? That one has always bemused me. Who exactly would answer no? "No, I prefer regular discordant sound really. Traffic, etc. Music isn't really my cup of tea."

But "what music do you like?" is a silly question too. I always try to give as true an answer as possible, that my favourite music would be one searing long note from a woodwind instrument that arcs and descends and descends until it intersects with a lone violin which plucks a simple melody before an explosion of brass...

That usually finishes the conversation there and then.

If my interlocutor (the person what I'm talking to) persists in trying to pigeon-hole my musical tastes, I will give in and say that I like jazz. This answer can be a good conversation stopper as well,



Rob O'Shea pays tribute to the jazz weekend that has taken over Cork

as a few people now seem to think the response includes a connotation: "I like jazz. I am on a higher intellectual plain than you."

Then there is the odd jazz enthusiast who is delighted to find another. I remember one guy excitedly asking me what kind of jazz I liked and having never had to answer that question before I just picked out the first person from New Orleans who entered my head.

"Fats Domino," I ventured. The face of the gentleman I was talking to slowly turned red and he growled in a low voice, "He's rhythm and blues."

So, what I've learned is to keep my trap shut about my fondness for jazz. Even writing about it here makes me slightly uncomfortable; music journalism is something that has always bypassed me: you either like a piece of music or you don't, what's there to write about? The day I start writing seriously about music is the day people start dancing to literature.

But then, of course, there

are a few things not so serious written about music. My favourite is not concerned with jazz, but is a story told by the classical Italian composer Arturo Toscanini who died 50 years ago. Toscanini was once conducting an orchestra at a concert in a small town and after the show he received the following note from a farmer who had attended the performance: "Dear Sir," it read, "I wish to inform you that the man who played the long thing you pull in and out only did so during the brief periods you were looking at him."

That, I would say, was the single greatest piece of music criticism offered during the last century.

But back to jazz, what with the weekend that's in it and all. If you are interested in it, you've probably been to something at the festival — tonight is your last opportunity if you haven't.

But while I may be reluctant to write about jazz, there is no reason to hesitate when it comes to the characters that inhabit its world.



LEGEND: The late Ronnie Scott with Cleo Laine

Jazz musicians are usually the most interesting of all performers. And you would get little argument from most aficionados if you claimed that Ronnie Scott was the greatest, and funniest, character of all.

Scott (who was a tenor saxophonist) and a man named Pete King founded the jazz club named after Ronnie in Soho, London in 1959 and it is now the most famous in the world.

The atmosphere there can be cathedral-like. I have been there only once, a couple of years back, and that night a man got kicked out for whispering while the percussionist was performing a drum solo.

The greats have performed at Ronnie Scott's: the diverse sounds of Sonny Rollins, Dizzy Gillespie, Sarah Vaughan, Ben Webster and Stan Getz have echoed off its walls and the club has no problem stretching the label of jazz to invite the likes of Elkie Brooks and Tom Waits on occasion.

The reason Ronnie Scott's came to mind this jazz

weekend was because it's 45th anniversary party was held on Saturday night.

At the time of the 20th anniversary of the club, the normally unsentimental Ronnie spoke a few words, saying: "If it hadn't been for Pete, these last 20 years would have been a whole lot easier."

Ronnie died eight years ago ("When I die" Ronnie would say, "I would like my ashes scattered over my lawyer.") but Pete still presides over the club.

This year though, as Pete was approaching his 75th birthday ("I'm a 75-year-old man with the body of a 76-year-old,") and recovering from heart surgery, the club's landlords doubled the rent. It took the financial intervention of the Hollywood actor Kevin Spacey — a regular in the audience at the club — to help keep Pete and the club in business, and one of London's greatest modern landmarks open.

And there I was thinking that the greatest thing Spacey would ever do was open Mena Suvári's blouse in *American Beauty*.

YOU SAY**Keep pets safe at Halloween**

● HALLOWEEN may be fun for children but it can be a traumatic and even dangerous time for your pet. Here are a few common sense tips to protect your pet on Halloween:

1. Keep your pet away from the front door. Keeping your pet in a separate room during the trick-or-treating hours is best.

2. Don't leave your pet out in the yard (front or back) on Halloween. There are plenty of stories of thugs who have injured, stolen, and even killed pets on this night.

3. Trick-or-treat sweets are not for pets. Chocolate is poisonous to many animals, and tinfoil and cellophane wrappers can be hazardous.

4. Be careful of pets around candles and lit pumpkins. These may be knocked over and cause a fire.

5. Don't dress your pet in a costume unless you know he loves it. This may put added stress on the animal. If you do dress up your dog, make sure the costume isn't constricting or annoying. Be careful not to obstruct his vision, even the gentlest dog can get snappy when he can't see.

Remember your pets are depending on you to keep them safe from the more dangerous ghouls this holiday brings out.

John Tierney, Animal Concern, PO Box 4734, Dublin 1.

● MY name is Stevie G and I DJ in clubs around Cork and on Red FM. As I play mainly black music I have always had a strong relationship with the black community in Cork. It upsets me greatly to see racism of any kind and I just want to drop a line to say thanks for such a passionate article by Des Breen (October 18). If it causes even one person to take a look at his own racist views you will have done a good job.

Fair play and keep up the good work.

Stevie G, Cork.

* All letters must include a full name and address, which may be withheld on request. We reserve the right to edit letters. Our contact details are at the foot of the page.

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THE LAST WORD

"First it is necessary to stand on your own two feet. The next thing a man should do is reach out his arms."

Kristin Hunter