

In brief

Live shows bring an extra €1.7bn

Live entertainment events in Ireland — music, arts, theatre, and comedy, as well as attractions and exhibitions — generated €1.7bn of additional revenue over 12 months, supporting employment for nearly 11,500 people, according to a major new report. The income came from more than 4m people attending live events, including nearly 300,000 overseas visitors to Ireland. In all, live entertainment events were responsible for 3.7m bed nights in hotels and guesthouses, the equivalent of over 54 All-Ireland finals at Croke Park. The figures are revealed in 'Let's Celebrate 2017 The Cultural and Economic Contribution of Live Entertainment Events in Ireland.' The report, the first time a detailed study has been carried out into the industry in Ireland, was undertaken by communications consultant Justin Green, with economic research conducted by London-based international firm, BOP Consulting. The research showed a total of €669m in additional gross revenue value was produced by event goers, while for every €1 spent on a ticket, an additional €6.06 of revenue was generated within the economy.

Gigs, festivals and theatre rake in a €1.7bn live bonanza

Melanie Finn

IT'S music to the ears of event promoters everywhere.

Live entertainment events in Ireland generated a massive €1.7bn in revenue over a 12-month period as people flocked in their droves to concerts, festivals and theatrical shows.

This was in addition to the actual ticket price of the event, and means that for every €1 spent on a concert or show, some €6.06 is generated in the rest of the economy.

More than four million people attended Ticketmaster events on this island between March 1, 2015 and February 29, 2016, creating employment for nearly 11,500 people.

This included almost 300,000 overseas visitors.

In total, live events were behind some 3.7m bookings in Irish hotels and guesthouses,

Foo Fighters played to a sold-out crowd in Slane in May 2015



the equivalent of 54 'sold out' All-Ireland finals at Croke Park.

The findings were revealed in a new report, 'Let's Celebrate 2017: the Cultural and Economic Contribution of Live Entertainment Events in Ireland'.

It saw contributions from some industry greats, including former U2 manager Paul

McGuinness, MCD co-owner Caroline Downey, as well as chart-toppers Robbie Williams and Michael Bublé.

When it came to the Republic alone, some €1.3bn was generated by live events, which were attended during that 12-month period by 3.4m people, of whom nearly 440,000 came from the

North or overseas. Justin Green, of Wide Awake Communications, who carried out the study, said the entertainment industry was "frequently overlooked" when it came to its importance to the economy.

"It is not always respected as the viable and tangible professional industry that it is, unlike many other similar fields," he said.

Of the nearly three million tickets sold for live events in the Republic during the period covered, some 2,262,090 were for music gigs, 860,946 were for arts, theatre and comedy events, and 293,375 were for family events and exhibitions.

Music events in the State drummed up €900m in additional revenue, while arts, theatre and comedy generated €300m.

Family events created a surge of €61m to the economy.

The report does not represent

the total attendance at live events in Ireland, given that it only covers Ticketmaster sales.

It does not take into account the estimated 100,000 people who went to free live events during that 12-month period.

The average age of most attendees at events in the Republic was 25 to 34 at 30pc, with just over 25pc in the 35 to 44 age group, and 20pc in the 16 to 24 age group.

When it came to rating their experience at Ticketmaster events in Ireland, most attendees gave them the thumbs-up.

Of nearly 6,000 respondents surveyed, they gave an average rating of 8.8 out of 10 for the quality of the event.

Some of the biggest concerts during the time period covered would have included Fleetwood Mac at the 3Arena, rockers AC/DC, and Foo Fighters, who played a huge gig at Slane Castle in May 2015.

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Live events give stellar financial performance



Hugh Linehan

Culture Editor

Concerts and shows generated €1.7bn in revenue, report on industry finds

How much is the live entertainment industry in Ireland actually worth to the country? How many people go to concerts, plays, comedy and other forms of performance? A report, *Let's Celebrate: the Cultural and Economic Contribution of Live Entertainment Events in Ireland*, launched with some fanfare in Dublin yesterday afternoon,

aims to answer those questions for the first time.

Given the subject, a bit of razzmatazz is to be expected, although the glossy report in parts reads like a promotional brochure. Celebrity testimonials litter its pages. "When the recession hit Ireland I changed all the big screens in *Lord of the Dance* to show off the landscape and promote the country," writes Michael Flatley. "As an artist I felt it was important to do that."

Others are more measured, with some of the biggest names in Irish arts and entertainment rallying to the cause.

Under-explored subject

Although it is described as a "farm to fork" study, there's not much information about the provenance of the work which people pay to go and see, what types of production are most popular or on how domestic acts measure up against international touring performances.

But the study, conceived, written and co-ordinated by vet-

eran music promoter Justin Green with research from London-based research company BOP Consulting, offers interesting nuggets on a previously under-explored subject. Although the data is based solely on Ticketmaster records, that company is such a huge presence in the Irish market (accounting for close to half of all

"I changed all the big screens in 'Lord of the Dance' to show off the landscape and promote the country"
Michael Flatley

sales) that it can be taken as representative of overall trends with some confidence.

Covering the 12 months from March 2015 to February 2016, the report shows over four million people attended live events – including nearly 300,000 overseas visitors to

the island of Ireland. In all, it says, these events were responsible for 3.7 million bednights in hotels and guesthouses (which seems surprisingly high), generating €1.7 billion of revenue and supporting employment for nearly 11,500 people. And it claims that, for every euro spent, an additional €6.06 is generated in the economy.

Dublin's dominant position

The regional breakdown between Dublin and the rest of Ireland may also be surprising. Events in Dublin achieved three million attendees, with 629,000 in Northern Ireland and only 400,000 in the rest of the Republic outside Dublin. This seven-to-one disparity may reflect Ticketmaster's vice-like hold on major venues in the capital as much as it does the city's dominant position on the nation's cultural landscape.

These are intriguing times for live events. The digital revolution has upended the traditional business models of the

■ **Entertainer Mario Rosenstock and music promoter Justin Green at the launch of the report.** PHOTOGRAPH: ERIC LUKE

music industry, so that live performances rather than recordings now form the main source of revenue for performers. A broader trend of younger consumers preferring to spend their disposable income on "experiences" instead of "stuff" indicates that real opportunities exist for growth.

The report surveyed 5,764 Ticketmaster attendees about their experience and received overwhelmingly positive responses. But questions remain about value for money, handling fees and the thorny issue of ticket touting. However, the *Let's Celebrate* report will form a useful base camp for the mainstream live entertainment industry as it argues its case for sympathetic treatment in discussions on the Government's much vaunted but as yet unrealised Creative Ireland strategy.



Fiona Looney

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We love the arts but we expect it all for free

A FEW years back, I was in an art gallery when a woman I'd never met before approached me. We had mutual friends, she explained, and she'd heard great things about a play that I had running in the Olympia Theatre. 'Who,' she demanded, 'should I talk to about getting free tickets for that?'

She wasn't the first person to ask me for free tickets for one of my shows – and God knows, she wouldn't be the last – but with that perfect stranger, something inside me snapped. 'You could ring the PR person,' I suggested, smiling. 'Or better again, why don't I just give you a tenner from my own pocket and you can save yourself the bother of having to leave the house?'

I presume she never went (though given her brass neck, it's quite possible she simply overlooked my second suggestion). And lest you all reach for a keyboard and inspiration right now, I should clarify that my cut on the ticket price for my plays was more like €1 than €10 (a tenner just suited my mini-rant better) – but the point is that, not for the first time, I was struck by the odd disconnect in Irish minds between paying for live entertainment and the artists who provide it being remunerated for their work. Most people would never consider trying to get work done in their homes for free; yet when it comes to the arts, our initial instinct seems to be to attempt to avoid paying for it. The music industry, as we all know, was dragged to its knees by illegal downloading and the film industry is currently fire-fighting in the Irish courts to try to address a similar trend.

And when it comes to live performance – be it theatre or live music – many of us seem to believe we have a moral duty to at least attempt to get something for nothing. Consider the number of competitions that offer free tickets to concerts as prizes and then imagine how odd it would be if the prize was a technician coming to fix your washing machine; that's how skewed our relationship with the arts is. We're Irish, so we love music and performance. We just don't want to pay for it.

So that's why long-time music promoter Justin Green has done the State some service with his new report, the uncatchily titled Let's Celebrate: The Cultural and Economic Contribution of Live Entertainment Events in Ireland. In the far-reaching study, the first to attempt to – amongst other things – properly financially evaluate live per-

VIEWERS seem to be incensed by the sheer size of the utility room in Dessie and Kelly Dolan's dream home, as designed by Dermot Bannon on *Room To Improve*. Given that we've lived with a tumble drier in a cupboard in our den for nearly 20 years, I must admit to a spot of utility-room envy myself at the spatial room.

formance in this country, the bean-counters conclude that for every euro spent on tickets in Ireland, another €6.06 enters the economy. That certainly rings true to my ears – when I was researching my last play, about the cancelled Garth Brooks concerts, I came across a fairly startling statistic: the five cancelled concerts by Brooks and the 400,000 tickets sold were estimated to have cost the economy €50million. In other words, each ticket-holder would, in addition to the price of their ticket, have spent an additional €125 over the course of their night out. If you take into account Green's report's claim that the 4million people who attended live performances between March 2016 and February 2017 – the period surveyed – accounted for 3.7million bed nights, the money starts to mount up.

You can still stay in a hotel without paying for a concert ticket, you might counter, but here's the thing: unless enough people pay for their tickets, the acts won't show up in the first place. When I worked in the music industry, a hundred years ago, record sales accounted for most of an act's revenue and touring was considered mainly a promotional tool.

NOW that bands no longer make money from recorded music – streaming means most musicians now make less from recordings than authors do from books borrowed from libraries – playing live is their main revenue stream. It's a hugely expensive and risky business – and for every millionaire musician stalking the stadium stages, there are a million others trying to eke out a modest living in local bars. It's all the same industry. It doesn't matter how impressive the washing machine; the technician still needs to be paid.

I know that ticket prices are sometimes extortionate in Ireland. I get as angry as the next music fan when mysterious booking fees mount up on my Ticketmaster account, and as infuriated when I fail to secure tickets for popular shows and then see them show up, seconds later, for private sale for hundreds or even thousands of euro. The system of



Left-leaning: Laura Whitmore at the Baftas

Right legs in, left legs out for celebs

SUNDAY might have been a bumper evening for awards ceremonies, but it wasn't much of a night out for celebrity right legs. At the Grammys, Solange Knowles and Celine Dion both chose slashed dresses that showed off their shapely left pins, while in London, Sophie Turner aired her left

leg on the Baftas red carpet, and Laura Whitmore dazzled in a white dress from which her left leg was also keen to escape. Meanwhile, there wasn't a right leg to be seen. Could it be that Angelina Jolie's famous slit dress at the 2012 Oscars saw us reach peak right-leg exposure right there?

DES Bishop sounded something of a sour note after being voted off *Dancing With The Stars* last weekend, calling the public vote 'such an odd thing', and dismissing some of the remaining contestants as 'dead weight'. While Bishop was undeniably one of the better dancers, he probably should have watched the UK version before he signed his contract: long runs in the competition by twin left-footers like John Sergeant, Anne Widdecombe and Ed Balls would have told him that the public vote is sometimes very odd indeed.

SPEAKING of No-Longer-Dancing Dessie, I'm taking a salutary note of his suggestion that the parochial nature of the *Dancing With The Stars* vote means the contest

will be won by whoever has the 'most cousins'. Leaving aside my total inability to dance, given that I have just three cousins, I suppose I should sit the next series out.

Jamie's smile-high club

IT'S probably not what the marketing department had in mind, but was I the only viewer who reckoned that when Jamie Dornan revealed to Graham Norton that he simulated orgasm during filming of the idiotic *Fifty Shades Darker* by recreating the Ryanair fanfare, he just made the film about a million times more interesting?

AN internet forum devoted to commonly mispronounced words has suggest that 'library' is the abused word that gets most people's

blood boiling. However, that's a let-off for all those RTE reporters who, quite bafflingly, insist on calling Westminster 'Westminster'.

I SEE that scientists have confirmed what housewives have known for decades: adding a drop of white vinegar to a whites' wash can restore their gleam. Now, if only science can figure out how to get those whites bright without smelling like a fish and chip shop at the same time, we'd be reaching for the bottle.

JOHN Grimes of Planet Jedward has told Ray Darcy that he didn't mind when Geordie Shore star Chloe Ferry rubbed her naked bottom up against him in the

Celebrity Big Brother house. 'We're all humans,' he confirmed, 'I feel like it was a bit of craic.' There's really no need for me to add a punchline, is there?

THE eye-watering list of goodies in this year's Oscar nominees' gift bags has been revealed – with the chosen few being offered nine free holidays. Given that amount of potential for over-indulgence, it's probably just as well that further down the list, a DIY course in CPR is also included for the A-listers.

A clash of the ash?

AFTER Derry club Slaughtneil's impressive victory over St Vincent's, the GAA has said it won't oblige any players to compete in two finals on one day, should the tiny club's hurlers – featuring eight of the same players as the football team – also win their semi-final. To be fair, nobody would expect the Derrymen to step up to the mark twice in one afternoon – and anybody reminding them that former taoiseach and hurler Jack Lynch, inset, once played – and scored – in three games on one day is probably just from Cork.



READ FIONA'S KITCHEN SINK DRAMAS IN **MAGAZINE** ONLY IN **The Irish Mail**

ON SUNDAY

STARS SING PRAISES OF IRISH SCENE

NOW THAT'S SHOW BUSINESS

High note . . .
Robbie and
Michael, below,
love to visit Ireland



By RUAIRI COTTER

ROBBIE Williams, Michael Buble and Simon Cowell have been singing Ireland's praises — after it emerged live events boosted the economy by €1.7 billion last year.

A study shows more than four million people attended live music events here last year.

That included 280,569 overseas visitors who came to see big gigs by the likes of Bruce Springsteen, Beyonce and Ed Sheeran.

Robbie Williams, who is set to rock the Aviva Stadium in June, said: "Playing in Ireland is always one of the highlights of my tours."

"The crowd is always amazing and there seems to be an incredible connection between audience and performer."

The survey by communications expert Justin Green found that every €1 spent on gig tickets generated a further €6.06 for the overall economy.

A total of 8,723 jobs were created as a result of live events last year, and 3,119,725 bed nights were generated in hotels and B&Bs.

X Factor boss Simon Cowell said: "Amazing artists have come out of Ireland through the decades and I know there is young talent to be discovered here."

"It's the reason we brought the X Factor back to Dublin."

Canadian crooner Michael Buble, who has played sold-out shows at Dublin's Aviva stadium and the 3Arena, said: "It's not just good for people's bottom line, it's good for culture, so congratulations."



Talent . . . Cowell

Gigs rake in billions for economy

Entertaining cash boost

OUTSIDE of the 63-10 rugby victory over Italy, we had another number to celebrate over the weekend - €1.7bn.

That's the massive amount generated for the economy by live entertainment between March 2015 and February last year as people flocked to concerts, festivals and theatres.

It means that every €1 spent generated €6.06 in the wider economy.

A newly-released report, Let's Celebrate 2017, found that it also generated 3.7 million bookings at Irish hotels and guesthouses, the equivalent of 54 'sell out' All-Ireland finals at Croke Park.

Now that's definitely something to celebrate

Ticket to the limit

BY SHARON MCGOWAN
Showbiz Reporter

LIVE gigs and shows across Ireland generated at least €1.7billion in one year, a new report reveals.

More than four million people in the Republic and the North bought tickets in a 12-month period between 2015 and 2016.

For every €1 spent on a ticket, €6.06 more was generated in the economy, supporting 11,331 jobs and filling 3,728,441 hotel beds.

The figures are based on sales by Ticketmaster Ireland over the

Gig-goers bring €1.7bn to Irish economy, PR chief's entertainment dossier reveals

12-month period and a survey of more than 5,700 customers – and the total could be even higher.

The report, the first of its kind in Ireland, was spearheaded by Wide Awake

6.06

The additional amount in euro generated by one euro spent on a gig ticket

Communications chief and former head of public relations at concert promoters MCD, Justin Green.

Mr Green said yesterday: "I suppose it came out of the perception that the industry isn't a

viable, tangible business.

"It's about whether you're working in something like set design in a theatre and you go in for a loan.

"What we wanted to do was create a document that was on par with any other industry document but we didn't want to do it in a 300-page text document."

Mr Green added singer Michael Buble tried to commission a similar report and although he wasn't successful, the PR boss said the star can use his format.

Buble backed the report, saying: "I tried to express how important it is to our economy, for even local musicians and local promoters, giving people jobs, whether that's helping to set up an arena or a theatre, everything from making records to packaging them."

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CONCERT POLL IS

Not a bad

€1.7 billion

THAT'S WHAT LIVE ENTERTAINMENT HAS POURED INTO ECONOMY IN PAST YEAR



BACKING: Hozier contributed to the report and (right) Justin Greene

AN EXTRA €1.7 billion came from Ireland's live entertainment industry in just 12 months, according to a major new report by entertainment experts.

The income came from more than four million people — including nearly 300,000 overseas visitors — going to a Ticketmaster concert or live event in Ireland between March 1, 2015 and February 29, 2016.

During this time, a total of 4,045,771 people attended Ticketmaster events on the island of Ireland — 3,416,411 in the Republic and 629,360 in the North. Of these, 280,569 were attendees from overseas.

And of the nearly 3.5 million tickets sold for live events in the Republic during the period between 2015 and 2016, 2,262,090 visitors attended music gigs, 860,946 attended arts, theatre and comedy events and 293,375 went to family events, attractions and exhibitions.

This led to music events in the Republic generating €900 million in revenue;

arts theatre and comedy generating €300 million and family events, attractions and exhibitions generating €61 million.

Live events were also responsible for 3,728,441 million overnight stays in hotels and guesthouses and for creating 11,331 jobs in the country in one calendar year.

The researchers acknowledge that the report does not represent the total attendance at live events in Ireland, as it covers Ticketmaster sales only — which only account for 45 per cent of the market — and it does not capture the estimated 100,000 attendees at free events.

Justin Greene, co-ordinator of the Let's Celebrate 2017 report, said the survey was conducted because people didn't think that entertainment was a "tangible business".

"It took 18 months to do. It came out of the fact that the perception of the industry isn't

■ Sandra MALLON
Showbiz Reporter

viable or tangible business," said Mr Greene.

"So we made a very consumer-friendly document. We got really rich data that we got back."

Mr Greene went on to add that even superstar Michael Buble wanted to commission a similar report — but wasn't able to do it.

Buble, meanwhile, congratulated Mr Greene on the new report, saying: "I've actually tried to do the same thing."

"I tried to express how important it is to our economy, for even local musicians and local promoters, giving people jobs, whether that's helping to set up an arena or a theatre, everything from making records to packaging them."

Industry

The report features contributions from many musicians and industry figures.

These include former U2 manager Paul McGuinness, Riverdance creator Moya Doherty, pop supremos Louis Walsh and Simon Cowell, Lord of the Dance Michael Flatley, broadcaster Larry Gogan, singers Hozier, Daniel O'Donnell and Robbie Williams, presenter Laure Whitmore and comedian Brendan O'Carroll.

Flatley said: "When the recession hit Ireland I changed all the big screens in Lord of the Dance to show off the Irish landscape and promote the country."

"As an artist I felt it was important to do that."

While Bray native Laura Whitmore added that nobody does a live performance "like the Irish".

"Ireland has always had a strong sense of itself, especially its creative and musical ability," the former Strictly Come Dancing star said.

"Some of the best performers and talents in the world have hailed from this tiny island and I feel so proud to see the reach it has all over the world."



SEE THE FULL LET'S CELEBRATE REPORT AT **buzz.ie**

MUSIC TO OUR EARS

gig for



REPORT: (L-r) Richard Naylor of BOP Consulting with Chair of Business Studies at Trinity College Professor Andrew Burke, Justin Greene of Wide Awake Communications and Niall Stokes of Hot Press magazine



SUPPORT: (Top l-r) Walsh, O'Donnell and O'Carroll; (bottom l-r) Laura, Flatley and Gogan; (right) Robbie Williams; (far right) Buble

Samantha McCaughren

Juicy exchanges with Keelings

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The patriot game: Terry Clune v IDA

Warning ditching reward scheme will hit jobs

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Believing the consensus on strong dollar may be costly
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DEARBHAIL McDONALD
One thing is for sure, drivers can't bank on insurance regulation alone
See page 4



ADRIAN WECKLER
'Refried news' will save Irish jobs from Trump
See back page



KBC
Belgian bank KBC has said it will retain its business in Ireland and is committed to "long-term investment" here

BAD WEEK



HP
The global tech firm announced 500 job losses at its Leixlip, Kildare site

Credit Suisse advances plan for Dublin move ahead of Brexit

Investment bank laying groundwork for Dublin expansion, write **Samantha McCaughren** and **Ronald Quinlan**

INVESTMENT bank Credit Suisse has taken significant steps towards increasing its presence in Ireland ahead of the March deadline for triggering Brexit.

A number of sources have said that the bank is laying the groundwork for expanding its operations in Dublin.

Late last year, the company registered a new Irish subsidiary — Credit Suisse Fund Services (Ireland) — and over the last four weeks the group has submitted several new documents to the Companies Office in relation to this entity.

A new constitution for the company has been filed stating it would “provide all services” connected with the administration of investments, the management and/ or advisory of companies and the issuing of shares.

Ulrich Roth, a senior Credit Suisse portfolio manager, has also been appointed as a director of the new company.

The bank launched a trading floor in the Irish capital in



Noreen Doyle of Credit Suisse

January 2016 to service hedge funds, creating 100 jobs in the process. It is understood that the bank may more than double its workforce here.

The *Sunday Independent* also understands that Credit Suisse is being aggressively pursued by developer Johnny Ronan's company, Ronan Group Real Estate (RGRE), to expand its Dublin presence.

The company has its Dublin trading floor at the RGRE-owned Kilmore House

at Spencer Dock in the IFSC.

While the building wouldn't have the capacity to meet Credit Suisse's additional requirements in the event of its expansion in Dublin, sources familiar with the matter said that RGRE may offer the company new premises at Spencer Dock capable of accommodating both its existing Dublin employees and any new employees.

RGRE is developing one million square feet of offices, residential and leisure space at Spencer Dock.

Credit Suisse has also considered moving jobs to Frankfurt as a result of the Brexit vote.

Board member Noreen Doyle said last month that the lender was in the “early stages” of exploring alternative locations to London and was “very pleased” with its operations in the Irish capital.

To date Credit Suisse has said it does not have any preferred location. Several other banks are considering Ireland for expanded operations.

Sage chiefs review Irish arm as firm mulls global sell-off

Simon Rowe

MAJOR employer Sage Group is considering the future of its Irish-based payments unit as part of a global review at the FTSE 100 software giant.

The UK accounting and payroll software firm employs more than 500 staff at Dublin offices in Citywest, Dun Laoghaire and Sandyford.

Last December, Sage said it was exploring a potential sale of its US payments unit.

But the company's chief financial officer Steve Hare has said that in addition to mulling the sale of its North American payments operation, the software giant could exit payments entirely by disposing of its businesses in Ireland, the UK and South Africa.

“Although the primary purpose of the review was to assess footprint in the US, we have extended that to considering how we best offer our payment or movements of money payment receipts and also payments out and across all our major geographies,” Hare told analysts on a recent conference call.

“So, we are looking not just in North America, but more generally. But I would emphasise we haven't made a decision and it's not necessarily the case that if we sell the North American payments business that we would immediately sell the other payments businesses. All we are saying is it is under review and we will make a decision based on what we think optimises our

ability to deliver those services to our customers.”

The US-based payments division of Sage is estimated to be worth €470m (£500m).

The businesses in Ireland, the UK and South Africa are significantly smaller, with combined revenues of around £40m of revenue a year.

Sage is Europe's second-largest technology company, producing accounting, payments and payroll software primarily for small business.

Although a Sage Group spokeswoman said the strategic review is currently focused solely on the US payments business, Hare told analysts “we will make sure we take what we are learning from our US review and apply that globally”.

Virgin Media backs new €3m TV3 drama

Samantha McCaughren

TV3 has secured funding from the Virgin Media group for a new €3m drama, as the broadcaster further develops its indigenous programme output.

Pat Kiely, managing director of the TV3 Group, said that Virgin's London-based content unit has agreed to come on board as co-produc-

ers of the ambitious six-week contemporary series. TV3 is owned by Virgin Media in Ireland and this co-production is an example of how the television station and the group will develop closer ties.

TV3 also houses Virgin Media Solutions for the UK and Ireland, which is working on new 'addressable advertising' for the Virgin TV platform. This will allow it to tailor ads

to individuals. Kiely said that the TV3 Group has performed strongly in January, buoyed by *Coronation Street* and *Emmerdale* which returned to TV3 after it bought UTV Ireland.

Kiely said that the group's share of viewing was up 54pc in January and that its share of commercial impacts was almost level with RTE.

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Beyonce performs during her Formation World Tour which she brought to Croke Park in Dublin. Photo: Daniela Vesco/Parkwood Entertainment)

Economy benefits to tune of €1.3bn from live music and arts sector

Simon Rowe

THE Irish economy benefits to the tune of €1.3bn annually from the booming live entertainment sector, a major new study reveals.

The study, believed to be the first of its kind for the Irish entertainment industry, estimates that every €1 spent on a ticket generates an additional €6.06 for the wider economy.

Backed by independent research, the 48-page analysis by London-based consultants BOP quantifies revenue generated directly by people attending live events including music, theatre and exhibitions across the island of Ireland, and the wider economic benefits from indirect spend on hotels, restaurants and pubs.

The findings, which will be launched later today in a report entitled Let's Celebrate 2017, reveal that live entertainment events, north and south of the Border — including music, theatre, comedy, family attractions and exhibitions — generated €1.7bn of additional revenue over a 12-month period, excluding actual ticket purchases. A total of 3.7 million people attended live entertainment across the island of Ireland in this period and a further 280,000 came from overseas, generating an extra 3.1 million bed nights.

Commissioned by industry expert Justin Green with Fáilte Ireland and IMRO, the report estimates the sector supports 8,700 jobs.

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One of the strongest growing economies in the EU. Made in Ireland.

Ibec. Taking care of business.

Live entertainment industry demands centre stage

It employs more than Google, Apple, Yahoo and Twitter combined and contributes €1.3bn to the economy — but big hitters like former U2 manager Paul McGuinness say politicians only pay lip service to the arts and entertainment. Now a new report that highlights its success has been welcomed, writes **Simon Rowe**

IRELAND'S live entertainment scene is one of the most vibrant in Europe, with tickets for top-selling artists and festivals selling out in minutes. Now the industry's big hitters have taken to the political stage to show that the live events business is a big ticket item for the economy too.

Leading figures such as former U2 manager Paul McGuinness and promoter Denis Desmond have backed new research highlighting the scale of the live entertainment's financial impact here.

According to the study, the Irish economy profits to the tune of €1.3bn from live entertainment, supporting over 8,700 jobs. In addition it estimates that an extra 3.1 million bed nights are generated from these events.

The independent research, by London-based consultants BOP, was commissioned by former MCD promotions executive Justin Green in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland and Irish music rights body IMRO.

It quantifies how much revenue is generated directly by people attending live events including music, theatre and exhibitions across the island of Ireland, and the wider economic benefits from indirect spending on accommodation, restaurants and pubs.

The findings in 'Let's Celebrate 2017' reveal that live entertainment events, north and south of the Border — including music, theatre, comedy, family attractions and exhibitions — generated €1.7bn of additional revenue over a 12-month period, excluding actual ticket purchases.

A total of 3.7 million people attended live entertainment across the island of Ireland in this period and a further 280,000 came from overseas.

The report also estimates that every €1 spent on a ticket is worth an additional €6.06 of revenue to the wider economy in the Republic.

All the big hitters of Ireland's live entertainment industry have welcomed the new report, with many saying it's time for the industry to blow its own trumpet for once.

Former U2 manager McGuinness is among those who say that the arts and entertainment sector has been playing second fiddle for too long when it comes to the allocation of state funding.

In a foreword to the report, McGuinness is damning in his assessment of government support for the arts.

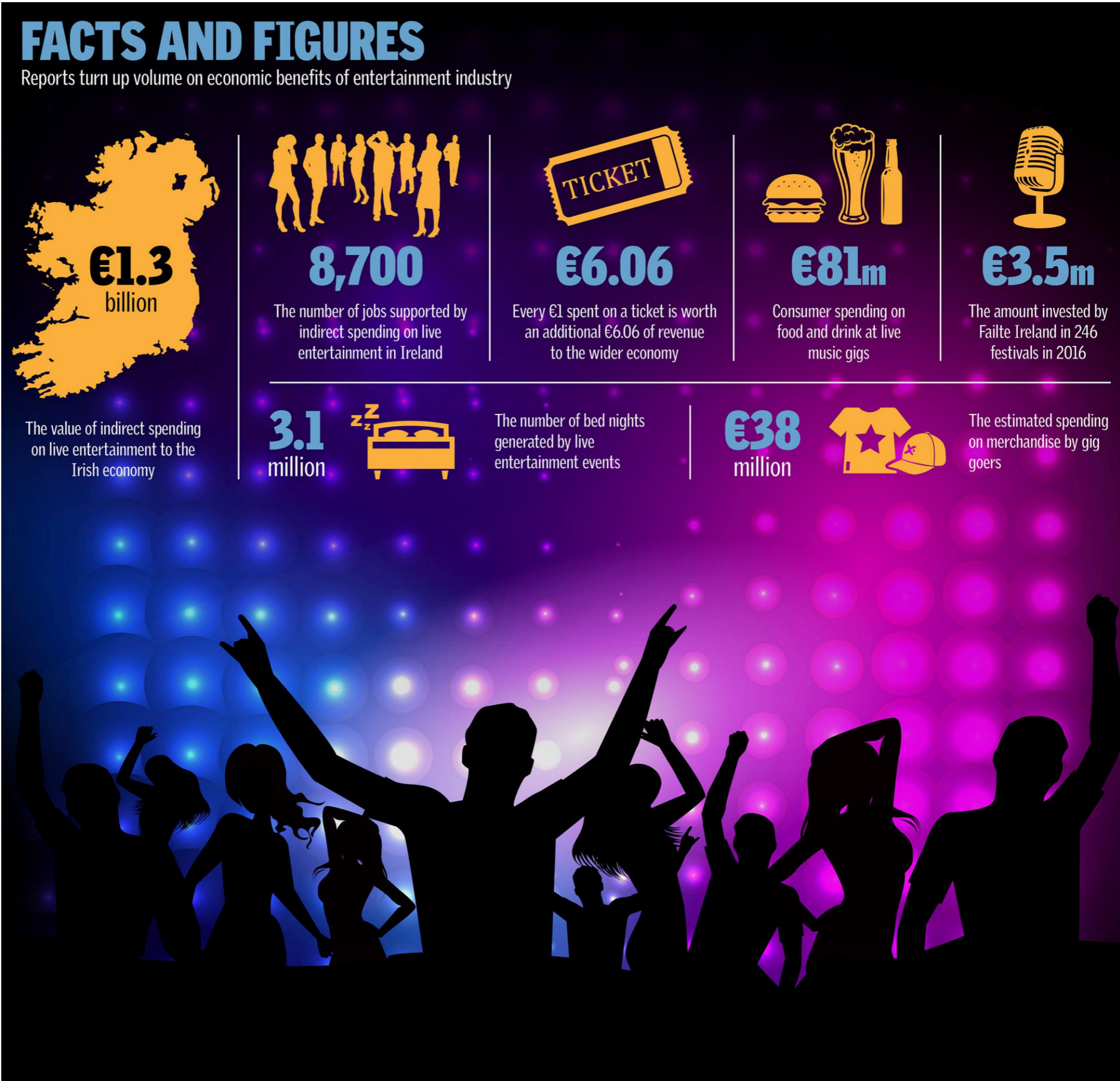
"It's a regular disappointment when politicians, as they do routinely, pay lip service to the importance of the arts in our culture and then continue the steady reduction of funding to music, film, theatre and the visual arts," he wrote.

"Everyone in the arts dreads those encounters with politicians. The casual downgrading of the arts portfolio and the subsequent attempts to say it hadn't really been downgraded were sadly typical."

Denis Desmond, of MCD Productions, said he was keen to see the industry get more recognition for the 11,500 jobs it supports island-wide.

"The entertainment industry employs as many people in Ireland as Google, Apple, Yahoo and Twitter combined. While events are sometimes an inconvenience for a short period, what's often underestimated are the benefits to our economy."

Green said the initiative "emerged from a belief that the entertainment industry is frequently overlooked and not always respected as the viable and tangible professional industry that it is.



This is considered particularly disappointing by everyone in the industry".

BOP Consulting, which has conducted similar economic impact studies for the London Games 2012 and Edinburgh Festival, was given access to Ticketmaster Ireland sales figures over a 12-months up to February 2016.

The number of tickets sold by Ticketmaster and audited in the report represent only a small fraction of the overall value and importance of the live entertainment events that took place during the relevant period as Ticketmaster supply less than 50pc of tickets that are captured within the report.

Neither does the report take into consideration the economic impact of the 100,000-plus people who attend free music sessions across the island.

With 3.4m tickets sold in the Republic over the

period under review by BOP, the report does show that music events were the biggest draw with 2.2 million attendees, followed by arts/comedy/theatre drawing more than 860,000, and attractions and exhibitions drawing 293,000.

Figures for the North show that 473,719 attended music events, 61,675 attended arts/theatre/comedy events, and attractions and exhibitions drew 93,966.

Consumer spend on food and drink at live music gigs amounted to €81m, the biggest figure for indirect spending. This was followed by an estimated €38m spent by gig-goers on merchandise.

The BOP study also involved a detailed survey of over 5,700 ticket attendees across relevant events.

As well as established festivals such as Cat

Laughs in Kilkenny, Cork Jazz, Electric Picnic in Laois, world-class venues such as Vicar Street, the 3Arena and the Bord Gais Energy Theatre, stadiums such as Croke Park and the Aviva host regular big-name acts every summer in the capital.

As a result, festivals and events have been identified as being an important component of the Irish tourism product offering in the year ahead.

Fáilte Ireland invested €3.5m in 246 festivals in 2016, meanwhile, the Arts Minister Heather Humphreys hit the right note last year when she announced increases in funding for a range of arts and cultural bodies.

Overall arts funding was up by €18m in last year's Budget and was increased across all the main agencies and cultural institutions,

including an additional €5m provided to the Arts Council.

However, McGuinness and others clearly feel this is not enough. Professor Andrew Burke, Dean of Business Studies at Trinity College, said one of the reasons why the live entertainment sector in Ireland was overlooked in the past was probably due to a lack of hard economic data.

"There is a saying in economics that, 'if it is not measurable then it does not exist'.

"Economists need numbers and as a result, industries without data just get ignored. It is like they don't exist or are not important," he said.

"This has been the main reason why live performances in music and the arts have been so overlooked when it comes to industries that count – or can be counted."

Taxation

Trump wants to reduce US corporation tax? We should do the same

IN the recent movie *Sully*, Tom Hanks says: "Everything is unprecedented until it happens for the first time." And now a fundamental corporation tax challenge has happened for the first time. We have a new US President to the right of us, Brexit to the left, the EU and OECD all around us and we're in an unprecedented and perfect tax policy storm.

President Trump wants to reduce the US corporate tax rate by more than half to 15pc, which isn't a million miles away from our own cherished 12.5pc rate. There are those who speculate it will end up around 18-20pc but that's still a nosedive in tax rate terms — and there's also a US border tax on imports to contend with. Meanwhile, in her Brexit speech, the UK Prime Minister Theresa May said she envisaged a Britain that "would have the freedom to set the competitive tax rates and embrace the policies that would attract the world's best companies and biggest investors to Britain".

The two core aspects to her statement concerned the virtues of an attractive tax rate, and an attractive tax regime. In Ireland we know this blueprint works. Welcome to the new normal.

So in response, why not adopt the John Maynard Keynes approach — "when the facts change I change my mind, what do you do sir" — and consider reducing our own rate. In December 2016 corporation tax receipts were much higher than had been expected, up 7pc (€480m) year-



on-year even after a reported €150m repayment due to one company. This would make changing our minds a little easier from a corporate tax rate perspective, particularly when you consider that the corporate tax receipts for January (which isn't a big corporate tax month) were €64m; €40m up on the same period last year. So we should endeavour to keep these levels sustainable.

There are those who would argue that changing a rate that we have held onto for so long sends a wrong message, but does that really hold? In light of developments in the UK and US, it sends a message that we value foreign direct investment (FDI) here and want to ensure that international (and all) companies based here can continue to benefit here, even when the facts change. We all know the benefits brought about by multi-national companies here.

Furthermore, the UK's Prime Minister noted in her speech that "we will take back control of

our laws and bring an end to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice in Britain... and those laws will be interpreted by judges not in Luxembourg but in courts across this country". Many tax decisions I've read from that court say that national laws must comply with EU laws. However, once outside the EU and following their enactment of the "Great Repeal Act", which is in the works, the UK may not be restricted by EU state aid considerations that prevent member states from benefitting certain business or sectors through State action. Similarly, the four EU freedoms allowing free movement of goods, people, capital and services.

The downside for them will be the well-rehearsed "passporting" difficulties that will restrict the ability of UK-based financial services businesses to operate in the EU. This may allow us benefit from relocations, given our position as an English-speaking gateway to the EU.

Ireland has always competed on tax through the "three Rs" — rate, reputation and regime. The UK's Prime Minister mentioned two of those Rs — rate and regime — in her speech, with the US president adopting a similar approach.

On regime we've already sent a strong message to the EU in connection with its proposed common consolidated corporate tax base (CCCTB). The CCCTB effectively takes profits from each member country and allocates them around Europe for tax purposes based on sales by des-



American President Donald Trump

tination, assets and employees by location. This would be detrimental to our economy and tax regime for both FDI and indigenous industry operating across borders. Denmark, Malta, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK have given similar responses. This proposed EU tax regime would rewrite tax law. Under CCCTB we would no longer have been able to attract FDI on the basis of having a different tax regime, as all EU member states would have the same regime. Take R&D as an example. Paul O'Neill, former US secretary of treasury, once said "go find someone who says they'll do more R&D because they can get a credit for it, you'll find a fool". You can see his point. R&D will always happen, but the R&D

tax regime is a factor in determining where that R&D happens. We have a "best in class" R&D tax regime, according to the Department of Finance — and it is more effective than what is suggested in the EU proposal. If you own a jet why trade it in for a four-door saloon? Yes, both are great transporters — but which would you rather keep?

In our response to the EU (known as a "reasoned opinion") we said that the proposal offended the concept of "subsidiarity" within the EU treaty itself. Subsidiarity requires decisions to be taken at the level of individual states rather than at EU level, unless only EU action will achieve the required result. So subsidiarity is a "when all else fails, we don't" type approach by the EU. CCCTB goes beyond what is necessary and disagrees with OECD approaches which the government has supported. The EU proposal was first reviewed in 2011 and we've gone back this time with the same answer as we did the last time, so maybe it's time for the EU Commission to heed Disney's counsel in *Frozen* and "let it go".

There is one set of facts at one point in time but the facts change over time and minds can change. To change our corporation tax rate to bring long-term benefits to taxpayers and the Exchequer is to all our benefit. Given our position in the perfect storm, it's time to look at this again.

Tom Maguire is a tax partner in Deloitte and this is the first of his monthly columns on tax



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We love the arts but we expect it all for free

A FEW years back, I was in an art gallery when a woman I'd never met before approached me. We had mutual friends, she explained, and she'd heard great things about a play that I had running in the Olympia Theatre. 'Who,' she demanded, 'should I talk to about getting free tickets for that?'

She wasn't the first person to ask me for free tickets for one of my shows – and God knows, she wouldn't be the last – but with that perfect stranger, something inside me snapped. 'You could ring the PR person,' I suggested, smiling. 'Or better again, why don't I just give you a tenner from my own pocket and you can save yourself the bother of having to leave the house?'

I presume she never went (though given her brass neck, it's quite possible she simply overlooked my second suggestion). And lest you all reach for a keyboard and inspiration right now, I should clarify that my cut on the ticket price for my plays was more like €1 than €10 (a tenner just suited my mini-rant better) – but the point is that, not for the first time, I was struck by the odd disconnect in Irish minds between paying for live entertainment and the artists who provide it being remunerated for their work. Most people would never consider trying to get work done in their homes for free; yet when it comes to the arts, our initial instinct seems to be to attempt to avoid paying for it. The music industry, as we all know, was dragged to its knees by illegal downloading and the film industry is currently fire-fighting in the Irish courts to try to address a similar trend.

And when it comes to live performance – be it theatre or live music – many of us seem to believe we have a moral duty to at least attempt to get something for nothing. Consider the number of competitions that offer free tickets to concerts as prizes and then imagine how odd it would be if the prize was a technician coming to fix your washing machine; that's how skewed our relationship with the arts is. We're Irish, so we love music and performance. We just don't want to pay for it.

So that's why long-time music promoter Justin Green has done the State some service with his new report, the uncatchily titled Let's Celebrate: The Cultural and Economic Contribution of Live Entertainment Events in Ireland. In the far-reaching study, the first to attempt to – amongst other things – properly financially evaluate live per-

VIEWERS seem to be incensed by the sheer size of the utility room in Dessie and Kelly Dolan's dream home, as designed by Dermot Bannon on *Room To Improve*. Given that we've lived with a tumble drier in a cupboard in our den for nearly 20 years, I must admit to a spot of utility-room envy myself at the spatial room.

formance in this country, the bean-counters conclude that for every euro spent on tickets in Ireland, another €6.06 enters the economy. That certainly rings true to my ears – when I was researching my last play, about the cancelled Garth Brooks concerts, I came across a fairly startling statistic: the five cancelled concerts by Brooks and the 400,000 tickets sold were estimated to have cost the economy €50million. In other words, each ticket-holder would, in addition to the price of their ticket, have spent an additional €125 over the course of their night out. If you take into account Green's report's claim that the 4million people who attended live performances between March 2016 and February 2017 – the period surveyed – accounted for 3.7million bed nights, the money starts to mount up.

You can still stay in a hotel without paying for a concert ticket, you might counter, but here's the thing: unless enough people pay for their tickets, the acts won't show up in the first place. When I worked in the music industry, a hundred years ago, record sales accounted for most of an act's revenue and touring was considered mainly a promotional tool.

NOW that bands no longer make money from recorded music – streaming means most musicians now make less from recordings than authors do from books borrowed from libraries – playing live is their main revenue stream. It's a hugely expensive and risky business – and for every millionaire musician stalking the stadium stages, there are a million others trying to eke out a modest living in local bars. It's all the same industry. It doesn't matter how impressive the washing machine; the technician still needs to be paid.

I know that ticket prices are sometimes extortionate in Ireland. I get as angry as the next music fan when mysterious booking fees mount up on my Ticketmaster account, and as infuriated when I fail to secure tickets for popular shows and then see them show up, seconds later, for private sale for hundreds or even thousands of euro. The system of



Left-leaning: Laura Whitmore at the Baftas

Right legs in, left legs out for celebs

SUNDAY might have been a bumper evening for awards ceremonies, but it wasn't much of a night out for celebrity right legs. At the Grammys, Solange Knowles and Celine Dion both chose slashed dresses that showed off their shapely left pins, while in London, Sophie Turner aired her left

leg on the Baftas red carpet, and Laura Whitmore dazzled in a white dress from which her left leg was also keen to escape. Meanwhile, there wasn't a right leg to be seen. Could it be that Angelina Jolie's famous slit dress at the 2012 Oscars saw us reach peak right-leg exposure right there?

DES Bishop sounded something of a sour note after being voted off *Dancing With The Stars* last weekend, calling the public vote 'such an odd thing', and dismissing some of the remaining contestants as 'dead weight'. While Bishop was undeniably one of the better dancers, he probably should have watched the UK version before he signed his contract: long runs in the competition by twin left-footers like John Sergeant, Anne Widdecombe and Ed Balls would have told him that the public vote is sometimes very odd indeed.

SPEAKING of No-Longer-Dancing Dessie, I'm taking a salutary note of his suggestion that the parochial nature of the *Dancing With The Stars* vote means the contest

will be won by whoever has the 'most cousins'. Leaving aside my total inability to dance, given that I have just three cousins, I suppose I should sit the next series out.

Jamie's smile-high club

IT'S probably not what the marketing department had in mind, but was I the only viewer who reckoned that when Jamie Dornan revealed to Graham Norton that he simulated orgasm during filming of the idiotic *Fifty Shades Darker* by recreating the Ryanair fanfare, he just made the film about a million times more interesting?

AN internet forum devoted to commonly mispronounced words has suggest that 'library' is the abused word that gets most people's

blood boiling. However, that's a let-off for all those RTE reporters who, quite bafflingly, insist on calling Westminster 'Westminster'.

I SEE that scientists have confirmed what housewives have known for decades: adding a drop of white vinegar to a whites' wash can restore their gleam. Now, if only science can figure out how to get those whites bright without smelling like a fish and chip shop at the same time, we'd be reaching for the bottle.

JOHN Grimes of Planet Jedward has told Ray Darcy that he didn't mind when Geordie Shore star Chloe Ferry rubbed her naked bottom up against him in the

Celebrity Big Brother house. 'We're all humans,' he confirmed, 'I feel like it was a bit of craic.' There's really no need for me to add a punchline, is there?

THE eye-watering list of goodies in this year's Oscar nominees' gift bags has been revealed – with the chosen few being offered nine free holidays. Given that amount of potential for over-indulgence, it's probably just as well that further down the list, a DIY course in CPR is also included for the A-listers.

A clash of the ash?

AFTER Derry club Slaughtneil's impressive victory over St Vincent's, the GAA has said it won't oblige any players to compete in two finals on one day, should the tiny club's hurlers – featuring eight of the same players as the football team – also win their semi-final. To be fair, nobody would expect the Derrymen to step up to the mark twice in one afternoon – and anybody reminding them that former taoiseach and hurler Jack Lynch, inset, once played – and scored – in three games on one day is probably just from Cork.



READ FIONA'S KITCHEN SINK DRAMAS IN **MAGAZINE** ONLY IN **The Irish Mail**

ON SUNDAY