

MUSIC GENERATION IS NOW ACTIVE IN SIX COUNTIES

ACROSS IRELAND. TODAY, CHOIRS, ORCHESTRAS, BANDS,

ROCK SCHOOLS, AND MUSIC LABS, ENCOMPASSING

ALL STYLES OF MUSIC, ARE BEING ESTABLISHED THANKS

TO MUSIC GENERATION.



MUSIC EDUCATION FOR
CHILDREN ACROSS IRELAND

A Music Network initiative,
funded by U2 and The Ireland Funds





WHAT IS MUSIC GENERATION?

Music Generation is a wonderful opportunity to ensure that the next generation is a musical generation. Ireland's new National Music Education Programme, **MUSIC GENERATION**, which was initiated by Music Network and funded by U2 and The Ireland Funds, is now helping thousands of children and young people access performance music education (vocal and instrumental) in their own locality. U2 has donated €5 million and The Ireland Funds are raising another €2 million in support.

AT THE 2012 WORLDWIDE IRELAND FUNDS CONFERENCE, SUPPORTERS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET A GROUP OF YOUNG MUSICIANS AT THE NORTH MON IN CORK CITY TO HEAR FIRST-HAND THE MUSIC THAT THE PROGRAM WAS MAKING POSSIBLE. THE INCLUSIVE ENSEMBLE WAS MADE UP OF PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS FROM UCC, CIT, MUSICIANS FROM COMMUNITY MUSIC INITIATIVES, AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS WHO PERFORMED USING SOUNDBEAM®—A DEVICE THAT USES SENSOR TECHNOLOGY TO TRANSLATE BODY MOVEMENT INTO DIGITALLY GENERATED SOUND. THEY PERFORMED AN ORIGINAL COMPOSITION WRITTEN BY CILLIAN MCSWEENEY, A YOUNG MAN WITH CEREBRAL PALSY WHO USES SOUNDBEAM® AND AN IPAD TO COMPOSE MUSICAL SCORES. THOSE IRELAND FUND SUPPORTERS WHO WITNESSED THE DAY'S PERFORMANCE CAME AWAY TOUCHED NOT ONLY BY THE BEAUTY OF THE MUSIC, BUT BY THE TALENT AND DETERMINATION OF THE GROUP.



Cillian's original composition was performed for visitors from The Worldwide Ireland Funds Conference in Cork

HERE, CILLIAN MCSWEENEY, ONE OF THE DAY'S PERFORMERS AND THE COMPOSER OF "EQUAL", SHARES THOUGHTS ON HIS WORK AND THE DIFFERENCE THAT MUSIC GENERATION IS MAKING TO HIS MUSICAL LIFE.

Q. *Cillian, have you always had an interest in music?
As a composer, how does music affect your life?*

A. I have always loved listening to music. As a child, I would watch music videos and listen to CDs all day long. I attended a school for physical needs in Cork called Lavanagh where I first dabbled in writing lyrics and completed my first Fetac Level 3 in music appreciation. I found for the first time in my life I could express myself through writing lyrics. I joined Gráinne McHale in SoundOUT, and with her help and encouragement I came to see that I had a talent for this. She introduced me to Soundbeam® and I was able to perform alongside other musicians to different styles of music, which was exciting as I am disabled as well as nonverbal. I had just never imagined there was another world out there! When I hear my name I feel proud of myself. I still have to pinch myself when I am introduced as a "composer." Since I began composing, I find that I listen more intently to the words of the songs, especially if the song has any relevance to me or my life.

Q. *How did you learn about Music Generation?*

A. Gráinne introduced me to Music Generation and informed me of this exciting new initiative that would help young people to have access to music education in our own locality. It means a lot to have such an organization. Last year I wrote a song called "Equal" and was in the Knocknaheeny Youth Music Initiative, a band of young musicians in a local community who put music to my lyrics with the added bonus of me using Soundbeam® as an instrument. We even got to perform in the Áras for President McAleese. It was followed by some interviews in our local papers and I was on the local TV news; it was all very exciting.

Q. *What has Music Generation done for your musical training and education?*

A. Music Generation has given me the opportunity to perform my music locally. With the support of Music Generation, I can now access other training such as one-to-one songwriting lessons. This has meant a lot to me. I have also just started to write my own music with an iPad and application called Garageband. I struggle a bit as I can only use a head pointer to access the iPad. It is hard work but I love it and it

will help me achieve my dream: to write and/or perform my music with someone famous. I want to show people what can be done with determination.

Q. *You had the opportunity to perform an original composition in front of visiting donors from The Ireland Funds during the Worldwide Ireland Funds Conference in Cork. What was that like?*

A. That was a fantastic day! I usually get very nervous before a performance, but on that particular day, there was a warm feeling from the audience. I could feel they were enjoying it as much as we were. I was the last to perform when Grainne introduced me as the "composer" as well as a musician; I thought I would burst with pride. I loved every bit of that performance and wished I could go on playing. The reaction from the visitors was amazing and it will go down as one of my proudest moments.

Q. *Where do you see your music education going?
What are your plans for the future?*

A. Now that Music Generation is on board, I feel confident that the resources will be there in order for me to continue with my music education. With big names like U2 and The Ireland Funds behind it, it's going to make such a difference. It will open up a whole new world to young musicians in Ireland. It can only encourage others like myself who may not have access to music because of their disabilities. Music Generation Ireland has helped to show the world that everyone is equal and deserves an opportunity to express themselves through music.

Q. *Anything else you'd like to share?*

A. I have been working the lyrics and music for a new song that I'm excited about. I hope to record it in the autumn. I must mention another very important person in my life—my personal assistant, Brian. He has been with me from the start of my music career and has become a very special friend to me and my family. He has helped me to start up a new venture called Cork Music Zone, an outlet run by volunteers to help young musicians. We just got news that Music Generation has donated an amplifier to get us started and I want to say "thank you."

EQUAL by Cillian McSweeney

Equal judging people

Equal everyone's the same

Equal everyone's equal

Got a lot more to give so get on with the game

Look into your heart

Change the way you see me

Don't judge me from the start

Try to get to know me

What do you say, what do you say when I turn away

What do you say, what do you say...say it to my face

Try to get to know me try to get to know me

...know me