

## ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

# TG4-BBC tribute concert to US Country great George IV

**T**HE late great George Hamilton IV frequently appeared in concert and on TV here, and now TG4 and the BBC collaborate in a tribute concert for TV here next month with his singer-songwriter son George V and 18-year-old grandson George VI among the guests.

Fans from Galway, and all over Ireland, will travel to Derry on Wednesday June 19 to the Millennium Forum when Opry le Daniel, TG4 television's most successful music series, features the life, songs and music of George IV who died in September 2014 aged 77.

Daniel O'Donnell will be on hand to introduce George's son and grandson, George V and George VI, accompanied by Sandy Kelly, Charlie McGettigan and Mick Flavin, who have their own personal connections to George IV.

Having begun performing in the late 1950s as a teen idol and later switching to Country, George recorded *A Rose and a Baby Ruth* which was a million seller for him in the US Pop charts. He toured with Buddy Holly, The Everly Brothers, Eddie Cochran and other Rock 'n' Rollers but his heart was in Country and in 1960 he moved to Nashville.

George's Country breakthrough hit was the 1961 song *Before This Day Ends* and his biggest hit came two years later with his number 1 song *Abilene*, followed by *Fort Worth, Dallas or Houston*, *Steel Rail Blues*, *Early Morning Rain*. Over here and in Canada his biggest hit was *Canadian Pacific*.

Other big hits followed during the 1960s including *Truck Drivin' Man*, *Urge for Going*, *She's a Little Bit Country* and in more recent years *The Way Old Friends Do*. The latter was a duet with Sandy Kelly who also recorded the duet *The Woodcarver* with

TG4 and BBC collaborate to create a TV concert tribute to the late great **George Hamilton IV** also **Chris Meehan's Redneck Friends** are back with a new album



## Country Crossroads by Tom Gilmore

Johnny Cash at the same time in Nashville.

A man with a strong social conscience on racial equality, George along with Willie Nelson and others was very supportive of Charley Pride when he became the first black singer to make it big in Country. George was also chosen as the warm-up act for 45 minutes during the late Bobby Kennedy's US Presidential campaign at the Vanderbilt Memorial Gym in Nashville in 1968 which the singer later described as "a highlight" of his musical career.

To date his son, George Hamilton V, has released six albums of his original material and his song *We Will Meet Again* was written while visiting Dublin, to appear on *The Sandy Kelly TV Show*. Now his son George VI, who is 18, is one of the young Country-Rockers in Nashville and carrying on a family music tradition.

The Derry concert is one of seven being filmed during June with one major star and five or six support acts every night.

The first show on Sat June 15 features Margo and friends followed by US star Crystal Gayle and friends on Sunday June 16, a showband tribute night with Dickie Rock, Red Hurlley, Paddy Cole, Gina and Jimmy Buckley on Monday 17, Mike Denver and friends on Tuesday 18, the George Hamilton IV tribute show on Wednesday 19, a Glen Campbell tribute show featuring his daughter Ashley, Michael English, Cliona Hagan and friends on Thurs 20, and Tommy Fleming with Eleanor Shanley and The Celtic Brothers on Friday 21.

**To book your tickets now for any of the Derry concert you can contact the box office from here on 04871 264455 (02871 from N.Ire) or at [www.millenniumforum.co.uk](http://www.millenniumforum.co.uk).**



**THE late George Hamilton IV with his son George V and grandson George VI (now 18) on the cover of the booklet celebrating George IV's 50th anniversary in music some years ago.**



**Do you have a gig or music event that you would like to see on these pages, please contact Tom at [tomggilmore@gmail.com](mailto:tomggilmore@gmail.com)**

## Redneck Friends are on the right side of the law



CHRIS Meehan's Redneck Friends are not gun slingers but law-abiding musicians whose leader is a barrister in Dublin by day.

After a lengthy hiatus, perhaps in some cactus covered wilderness west of Roundstone (the name of the record label) those Rednecks are back with a new album titled *Last Train to Memphis*.

Well known around Galway for their live gigs in the past, their many fans from Caherlistrane to Clifden and from Tuam to Tynagh will be happy to sample a new album from the Dublin-based Redneck Friends led by Leitrim-born legal eagle Chris.

It kicks off with a song about The King of Rock 'n' Roll, Elvis which was written by Bobby Charles who also penned such hits as *See You Later Alligator* for Bill Haley and *Walking to New Orleans* for Fats Domino. It has great lines such as "the King is gone but he still lives on in the hearts of the people".

Chris belts out the piano intro with gusto while he also shares the vocals with Bobby Kelly and there is a poignant sounding outro on harmonica by Eamon Murray.

Bobby is back on lead vocals with the

County Roots sounding Rock 'n' Roll classic *She's Not You*. But the stand-out track for me is the Texas-Swing song *Yearning Just for You* on which Chris discards his legal robes and doffs his cowboy hat in honour of the King of Western Swing, Bob Wills.

The instrumental *Fat Boy Rag* is also from the Bob Wills catalogue while the lead vocalist Michelle Rayfus, and the players, on *Brickyard Blues* take the listener down a Bluesy-Jazz route. Her sweet-swinging voice is to the fore too on *What's The Use of Wonderin'*.

This is an album on which many musical genres mingle and integrate very well including Country, Blues, Jazz and Honky-Tonk of course.

Even the cover looks a little left-of-centre for a Redneck record. It has a caricature of a character who looks like Chris at the steering wheel of a minibus chasing along and obviously trying to catch *The Last Train to Memphis*! But seriously, folks, the CD cover was designed by well known musician Johnny Moynahan, formerly of Sweeney's Men and Planxty. The album is available on line from [claddaghrecords.com](http://claddaghrecords.com)