

LegenDerry Irish dancer remembered at Mayor's annual céilí

By Staff Reporter, Derry Now



Set dancers from across Ireland gathered in Derry to commemorate one of the city's legendary Irish dancers - Frankie Roddy Sr.

Organised by Derry City Set Dancers, which Frankie co-founded, the céilí in his honour took place in the Guildhall earlier this month.

The event was also a fundraiser for Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council Patricia Logue's chosen charities, Foyle Hospice, and the Ryan McBride Foundation.

Adding to the fantastic atmosphere, music on the afternoon was provided by the All-Ireland winning Blackwater Céilí Band.

Frankie's daughter Noeleen said she was "absolutely delighted" her father was honoured in his home town, on the twentieth anniversary of his death. Noeleen said: "Myself and my family were there. My father was very precious to us as a family, as you can imagine. He was also very much admired in the town because he did a lot for the town and the people here. He did a lot of work for charity.

"He taught Irish dancing, céilí dancing, set dancing and ballroom dancing. I was actually in his ballroom formation team. Dancing was just everything he ever wanted to do.

"Nothing came before his dancing. Dancing was my father's entire world and he saw potential in everybody. He had great patience, especially for somebody as he described it, with two left feet. He could have given you a left and a right by the time the night was over.

"He was also known as the first man to be arrested, by Phil Coulter's father, for dancing on top of a car outside a cinema in Shipquay Street. He led the audience out of the film *Rock Around the Clock* (1956) and they were all jiving in the street. That was my father."

Mayor of Derry, Cllr Patricia Logue said the céilí was a "special event".

"It was a brilliant afternoon of music and dance under the beautiful backdrop of the Guildhall's Main Hall," she said.

"Frank Roddy's Derry Set is a staple of Ceili dances up and down the country and I'm delighted we got the chance to honour and celebrate that in his home town.

"It was a great afternoon's craic, all in aid of the two chosen charities for my year in office, the Ryan McBride Foundation and the Foyle Hospice who both play a key role in community life in our city."