**Hot Press and 25 IBI Radio Stations Join Forces for Irish Music Month in October**

A major new initiative to promote Irish artists and bands, funded under the BAI Sound & Vision scheme and supported by XL Retail group will see significantly increased radio play across 25 independent radio stations – and €100k being paid directly to Irish artists. Announced this morning by Independent Broadcasters of Ireland and Hot Press this campaign to promote and support Irish Music will run throughout the month of October.

Twenty-five independent radio stations from all over Ireland have signed up for what is the biggest ever programming event undertaken by local stations, since the foundation of independent radio in Ireland, in 1989. The event is supported by the BAI, under its Sound & Vision scheme. Other supporters of the project include XL Retail group, MCD Concerts, IMRO and RAAP.

With the joint input of twenty-five independent radio stations, and Hot Press as a national anchor, the whole event will see stations:

– Assist in the national campaign to **support the live music industry in Ireland** from grass roots upwards

– **Play more Irish music**, in all its wonderful diversity – and provide a significant additional boost for the profile and status of Irish artists

– Help to generate a fresh buzz of excitement about**the work of Irish artists, musicians and performers**

– Run a major national talent search, under the **A New Local Hero** banner, that will involve the**direct payment of €100k to Irish artists**

– Assist in **boosting sales**of Irish merchandising and other band and artist products through a major **free on-air advertising**campaign

– Create additional exposure for Irish artists in Hot Press and across other **Irish and international media**

"Irish Music Month is a huge statement of support for Irish musicians and artists by Ireland’s independent radio stations and by the BAI,” Hot Press editor Niall Stokes said. “The support from the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland for the initiative is hugely welcome. We are also thrilled with the level of support and commitment shown by Ireland’s independent stations, with a massive 25 radio stations getting involved."

John Purcell, chair of IBI, welcomed the initiative as an opportunity for stations to show the unique power of radio in Ireland. “I was really pleased at just how enthusiastic everyone was about getting involved in Irish Music Month,” John Purcell said. "I believe it is going to a powerful and hugely beneficial initiative. The past 18 months have been very difficult for Irish musicians and for the events industry. If we learned anything from the pandemic, it is that we are all stronger if we support one another, and so all of twenty-five independent stations are stepping up to the plate now and doing their bit to support Irish artists – and hopefully to speed up the recovery of a sector that is vital to Irish life. It is an opportunity for radio stations, which are so important to their local communities and audiences, to show what they can do – and they will really relish that.”

“When we heard about Irish Music Month, we immediately saw the fit,” Paul Bealin, Sales Director of XL Retail group, said. “XL and our independent retailers are all about serving and supporting local communities – which is what is so attractive about Irish Music Month. It is brilliant to have 25 local radio stations showing their support for Irish music and Irish musicians – who are so important to local communities all over Ireland. Building on our pledge to offer ‘a great deal more at your local store’, we hope that the support of XL will help Irish Music Month to achieve its goal of lifting the spirits of Irish musicians, and of audiences all over the country, as we all recover from the devastating impact of the pandemic.”

BAI Deputy Chief Executive, Celene Craig, said: “The BAI is delighted to support this fantastic initiative through our Sound & Vison funding scheme. After a very challenging period for both the broadcasting and Irish music sectors, this collaboration will help to provide a boost to our established musicians and performers and will help to shine a light on up-and-coming local talent, while bringing the best of Irish music to radio listeners across the country. We wish every success to those participating in Irish Music Month.”

“Irish Music Month is a brilliant initiative,” Denis Desmond of MCD Productions said. “There are so many great new Irish artists coming through, and to see them and their work being supported in this way by 25 radio stations working together is of immense importance. We need to support and encourage Irish artists in every way we can, which is what makes Irish Music Month so important."

The benefits of Irish Music Month for artists are immense.

• €100k will be going directly to musicians and performers.

• A €125k radio campaign to buy Irish music, and Irish music merchandising, running across the 25 stations, will also result in additional revenue going directly to Irish artists

•There will be significantly increased radio play for Irish music across all 25 stations

• Extensive support from Hot Press will drive additional exposure, sales and revenue for artists

• A major talent search that will launch the recipient of the A New Local Hero Award onto the national and international stage.

Numerous Irish artists have already recorded messages of support for Irish Music Month, including recent Hot Press cover stars James Vincent McMorrow, Andrea Corr and Elijah Hewson of Inhaler, as well as The Script, Kodaline, Una Healy, Villagers, Soulé, Mary Black – and many more.

“Irish Music Month requires a huge commitment from every individual station, and from the staff, programme makers and broadcasters,” Niall Stokes added. "But I think this is a moment, when that kind of collective action, supporting our artists and musicians – who haven’t been able to work for all of 18 months – is especially important. Hopefully it will have a really positive impact, after what has been a very difficult time for live music, and for the musicians who make it."

The IBI is the representative body for Ireland's independent commercial radio broadcasters. Its stations broadcast to 2.449 million listeners across Ireland every day. They include national, multi-city, regional and local radio stations. 25 of these stations have committed to taking part in Irish Music Month, with additional support from Newstalk via the Tom Dunne Show.

This project is unique in bringing the power and the reach of 25+ of these stations together for the first time.

**• Irish Music Month is supported by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland under its Sound & Vision Scheme.**