

# Irish Studies Guest Lecture Series 2023

Prof. P.J. Mathews (University College Dublin)

## *Vinyl Revival: The Re-Invention of Irish Folk Music, 1951-2021*

Tuesday, 16 May 2023, 16.15-17.45 (Filozofski fakultet u Rijeci, F-230)



Fifty years after the founding of Ireland's national theatre (The Abbey Theatre) in 1904, an extraordinary revival of Irish folk music took place. From the 1950s to the present day, it has produced a wealth of gifted artists of national and international significance, and a grassroots movement of vigour that utterly transformed the scale of participation in Irish folk music, at home and beyond.

This movement has its roots in an earlier cultural revival of the nineteenth century associated with the rise of interest in Gaelic games and the Irish language. Many of the leading figures in the music revival had connections with the theatre. However, the rise of Irish folk music also coincided with, and was informed by, a revolution in popular music that was taking place across the Western World in the years after World War II. This revolution was made possible by the capabilities and availability of audio technology, most notably the vinyl LP and its later derivative, the audio cassette-tape. Important too, were the musical influences of Eastern Europe which have left a deep imprint on the rhythms and sounds of contemporary Irish folk music.

**P.J. Mathews** is a founding member of the Creative Futures Academy and Director of the CFA at University College Dublin, where he is Professor of Irish Literature and Culture. He has written widely on Irish literature, theatre, music and cultural history. He is co-editor (with Declan Kiberd) of *Handbook of the Irish Revival*, published by the Abbey Theatre Press and nominated for an Irish Book of the Year award in 2015; editor of *The Cambridge Companion to J. M. Synge* (2009); and author of *Revival* (Field Day, 2003).

He has worked on a number of television projects as Executive Producer (*The Flourishing*, RTÉ/Tyrone Productions, 2021); as script writer and Literary Advisor (*Voices of Ireland*, Sky Arts/Red Shoe Productions, 2021); as Cultural Advisor (*Centenary*, RTÉ / Stillwater Communications, 2016). Prof. Mathews is a member of the governing board of RTÉ, and the Founder and Director of Academic Podcasting for *UCDscholarcast*. He has previously served as a Visiting Professor of English at the University of Notre Dame. He was Academic Director of the W.B. Yeats Winter School in Sligo (2017-20) and the Parnell Summer School in Avondale (2002-05).

This guest lecture is kindly sponsored by the Embassies of Ireland in Croatia and Slovenia.



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