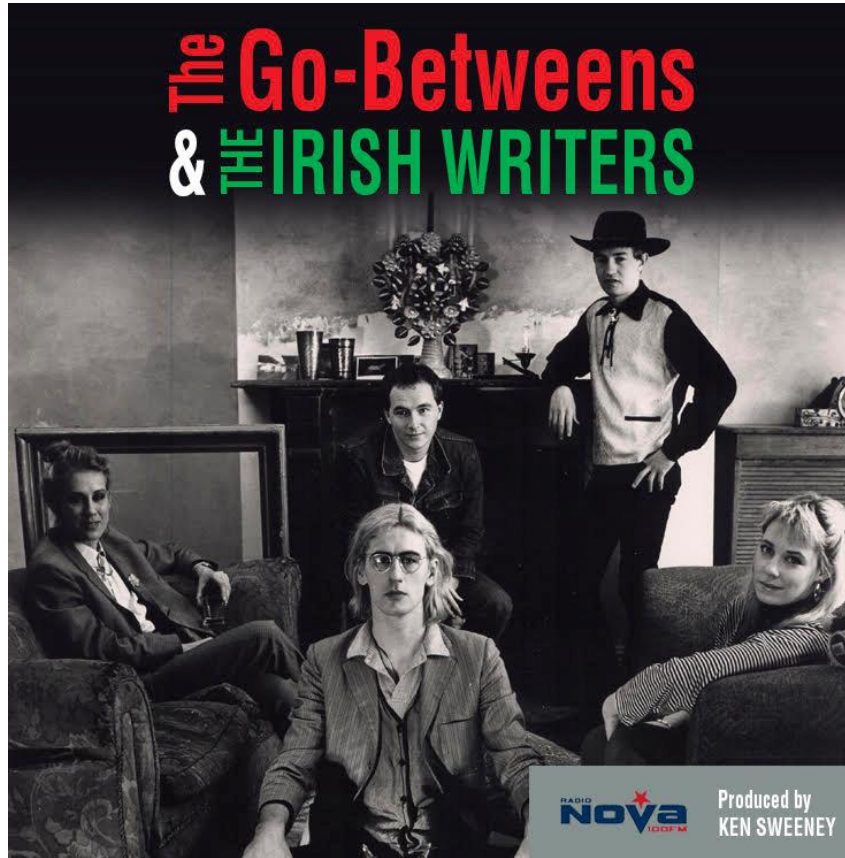


The Go-Betweens & The Irish Writers airs on Radio Nova at 9pm New Year's Day

"A lovingly produced ode to one of Australia's greatest bands featuring poignant and candid interviews from Robert Forster and the late great Grant McLennan", author and curator Leagues O'Toole



Radio Nova Music Documentary explores how Irish writers and playwrights inspired Australian band The Go-Betweens to write about their own surroundings in classic songs such as Cattle and Cane, selected by Australasian Performing Right Association (APRA) as one of the Top 30 Australian songs of all time.

Features exclusive interviews and acoustic performances from Robert Forster, and an interview with the late Grant McLennan.

The three most influential bands of the 1980's were The Smiths, REM and The Go-Betweens. This New Year's Day Radio Nova airs 'The Go-Betweens & The Irish Writers' at 9pm which tells their story and also explains the influence of Irish writers and playwrights on the song-writing of Forster and McLennan.

The 50 minute documentary, produced by award-winning documentary maker Ken Sweeney features brand new interviews with Robert Forster, and other ex-members of The Go-Betweens but also a recently unearthed recording of an interview Grant McLennan gave to Ken in August 2000.

Former members of The Go-Betweens also contribute to the documentary including bass player John Willsteed who performs an exclusive recreation of their best known song 'Streets of Your Town'.

The documentary explores the origins of 'The Go-Betweens' unique songs and how Irish writers like James Joyce - whose work Grant and Robert studied in Queensland University - inspired The Go-Betweens to write about their own country, Australia in classic songs like 'Cattle and Cane'.

While the Australian group never enjoyed anything like the same success as their rivals, founding members Robert Forster* and bandmate, the late Grant McLennan have been hailed as 'the Lennon & McCartney of indie'. Their music inspired bands from Franz Ferdinand to Teenage Fanclub and remain favourites of music journalists.

Life long Go-Betweens fan and documentary maker Ken Sweeney, (RTE Radio's 'REM Out Of Athens' and 'In Search Of The Blue Nile') asked Robert Forster to join him at Beacon Studios in Dublin to tell their story and play some of the Go-Betweens classic songs on acoustic guitar. Coupled with an interview Ken did with his song-writing partner Grant McLennan in Dublin before his death in 2006.

Both men tell the story of The Go-Betweens in a wonderful and inspiring, bittersweet tale of artistic success and enduring influence in the face of bad luck and commercial failure.

Ken said: "It's very moving listening back now to Grant talking about his group's lack of commercial success but his belief The Go-Betweens' music would stand the test of time and be celebrated in future years".

Recent years have seen 'Right Here', an acclaimed cinema documentary about the band by director Kriv Stenders, screened around the world. While 'The Go-Betweens' music has been re-released in two extensive box sets by Domino Records, to a rapturous reception by the music press, with a third yet to come.

The programme also acknowledges the huge contribution of fellow Go-Betweens members Lindy Morrison and Amanda Brown to the group's unique sound, and pushes both Robert and Grant to explain their reasons for disbanding the group in 1989.

On a lighter note, Ken recalls: "I asked Grant in 1999 if he was aware how many Go-Betweens fans ended up as music journalists. Grant replied: "I have heard that story..that the people who listened to the Velvet Underground formed bands, and people who listened to The Go-Betweens became music journalists. If that is the case, ...I apologise to the world.."

Speaking on the upcoming documentary, Kevin Branigan, CEO, Radio Nova said, "It's an honour to be broadcasting a production of such high-quality from a documentary maker as skilled as Ken. His passion and knowledge of 'The Go-Betweens' shines through in his work, balancing the joy of a devout fan with the critical commentary of a great music journalist."

*Robert Forster plays The Button Factory, Dublin on March 24 2023.

Radio Nova

Radio Nova broadcasts to Dublin, Kildare, Meath & Wicklow with 161,000 listeners, making it one of the largest radio stations available. It's also available nationally via its smartphone apps (iPhone & Android), its website Nova.ie and via the Irish Radio Player.

The Go-Betweens

The Go-Betweens were formed by Robert Forster and Grant McLennan in Brisbane, Australia in 1978 while studying at the University of Queensland. The duo, augmented by various drummers and guests, recorded a series of acclaimed singles for seminal Australian labels such as their own Able Label and Missing Link. After a sojourn to London and Glasgow that led to their brief relationship with the legendary Postcard label, they were joined by their more permanent rhythmic counterpart, drummer Lindy Morrison, upon their return home prior to recording their debut album, Send Me A Lullaby. That release brought them to the attention of Rough Trade and a lengthy re-location to London. It was then the band recorded

their breakthrough album, *Before Hollywood*. Produced by John Brand (Aztec Camera, The Waterboys), the album contains some of the group's most beloved recordings, including McLennan's "Cattle And Cane" and Forster's "By Chance". Shortly thereafter, McLennan would hand off bass playing duties to new member Robert Vickers, who joined the group prior to the recording of *Spring Hill Fair*.

During their initial phase, the group went on to record three additional albums for *Beggars Banquet* before splitting up in 1989 in spite of their greatest commercial success with the album *16 Lovers Lane*. Forster and McLennan went on to extensive solo careers before reuniting in 2000 and making three more *Go-Betweens* albums together, including the ARIA-winning finalé, *Oceans Apart*. Sadly, the reunion came to a sudden end when McLennan passed away on May 6th, 2006 from a heart attack and *The Go-Betweens* disbanded for good.

It would be hard to overstate the shadows cast across the musical landscape of the last three decades by the *Go-Betweens*' self-ascribed "striped sunlight sound". The duo of McLennan and Forster ranks alongside the best of the best songwriting partnerships, influencing younger musicians both expected (such as Belle & Sebastian who reference the group on "Shoot The Sexual Athlete") and unexpected (as with the late, great Jay Reatard's fiery cover of "Don't Let Him Come Back").

Ken Sweeney

Ken Sweeney is a former musician, who recorded two albums under the band name *Brian*, for the London based Irish label *Setanta Records* in the nineties. His music docs include, PPI Gold winning 'Michael Jackson's Irish Driver', 'In Search of The Blue Nile' and 'REM Out Of Athens' which won silver at the New York Radio Festivals.

His first radio drama, *Wogan's Sweet Sixteen* was runner up in the PJ O'Connor Awards 2020, and won two silver awards at the New York Radio Festivals.

