



**Tommy Tiernan joins Gay Byrne in the National Concert Hall  
to raise funds for Russian orphans**

Tommy Tiernan will join Gay Byrne in the National Concert Hall to raise much needed funds for Russian orphans on Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> at 8pm. The star-studded gala evening of entertainment, music, comedy and chat in aid of Irish charity, To Russia with Love will feature some of Ireland's best loved personalities and entertainers including Boyzone's Keith Duffy, novelist Marian Keyes, celebrity chef Neven Maguire, world class pianist Finghin Collins, Naked Camera's Maeve Higgins, Brendan O' Connor, editor of the Sunday Life Magazine and famed You're A Star judge, top Irish soprano Cara O'Sullivan, spiritual singer Noirin Ni Riain, Irish band Kila and Irish singers Moya Brennan and Eleanor Shanley.

On the night, Keith Duffy will talk about his recent trip with the charity to Western Russia and Brendan O' Connor will prove he's a star with his amazing Elvis impersonation, accompanied by Ronan Johnston on the piano. Inspirational founder of To Russia with Love, Debbie Deegan, will also share her incredible personal journey from adopting a Russian orphan to setting up To Russia with Love. All proceeds on the night will go directly to the charity to continue providing essential supports to Russian orphans.

"The gala evening with Gay Byrne promises to be an excellent evening with a fantastic line-up" says Debbie Deegan of To Russia with Love. "All the artists have given their time and services freely, which we greatly appreciate."

To Russia with Love was founded by Clontarf resident Debbie Deegan in 1998 to help the thousands of orphaned and abandoned Russian children in the Bryansk region of Western Russia. To date the organisation has helped over 5,000 orphans through education and development programmes and provides necessities such as clothing, health and dental care to 12 orphanages in the region.

Upon leaving orphanages in Russia, orphans are typically left to fend for themselves and are vulnerable to trafficking, prostitution, drugs and crime. In response, To Russia with Love has introduced its 'Final Steps' programme supporting those who leave the orphanages into third level education. Only 4% of children leaving state care in Russia go on to further study. In contrast, To Russia with Love's 'Final Steps' programme has a 100% success rate with those on the programme studying professions such as business, medicine and law.

"In the past 10 years we have helped over 5,000 Russian orphans and given them a brighter future through our educational programmes. While these initiatives are extremely worthwhile, they are very costly to run. We need to raise a lot more money in 2009 to continue making a difference to the lives of these Russian orphans and would invite people to support us and enjoy our gala evening in the National Concert Hall on February 25<sup>th</sup>" says Deegan.

Tickets are available from €50 from the National Concert Hall Box office on 01 4170000 or see [www.nch.ie](http://www.nch.ie). For further information on To Russia with Love see [www.torussiawithlove.ie](http://www.torussiawithlove.ie)

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