



SOOTHING SOUNDS: After the madness and unpredictability of the Donald Trump era, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris winning the US Election was the calming news the world really needed. PICTURE: AP

Biden election success is melodic music to the ears of the world

SING along:
It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas
Everywhere you go,
Take a look at the five and ten, it's glistening once again
With candy canes and silver lanes that glow
It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas
Toys in every store,
But the prettiest sight to see is the holly that will be
On your own front door

The melodic, swooning voice of Michael Bublé seduces you on the most unlikely of contexts – in the podcast of the US's most famous alternative documentary maker and arch-critic of the establishment, Michael Moore.

Moore chose Bublé's rendition as an *Ode of Joy* to President and Vice-President elect Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, and the people of the US who, in Moore's booming words of delight: 'You did it. We did it. You stopped the madness. We now have hope and relief. Congratulations'.

And the 'hope and relief' travelled like a Mexican wave instantaneously around the world when it became irreversibly clear that Donald Trump was defeated and that Joe Biden would be the next president of the US.

And here, in Ireland, people felt the euphoria, the sense of great relief. Biden-Harris's victory made people feel lighter, feel safer.

That was the sentiment I picked up from colleagues, friends and neighbours. Wherever I went people were talking about the results. What they would mean for the world. What it would mean for Ireland and its people.

It took time for these hope-filled, trans-Atlantic feelings to emerge and confidently settle.

People desperately wanted to believe what they were hearing and watching, that Biden was winning, but doubt and fear ran deep.

There was the memory of the 'hanging

Jim GIBNEY



chad' chicanery in 2000 when the legitimate winner Al Gore was declared the loser by the Supreme Court. But closer in time was the depression that set in, just months after the disastrous Brexit referendum, when Donald Trump, a loud, ignorant, sexist oaf took office, played to xenophobia and racism, reneged on international treaties, threatened international peace, and became the poster boy for populist leaders around the world.

There was a feeling that a heavy burden had been lifted off people's shoulders; that a dark and belligerent spectre had suddenly become like a deflated beach ball lying lifeless on the sand.

Now, a gentle, moderate, understanding and soothing voice with a broad smile was being heard – a Michael Bublé voice, without the music.

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Just what the people of the world and especially the US needed in the grip of a deadly pandemic that is ravaging millions of lives.

So, it is not at all surprising that President-elect Biden should speedily move and set up a national task force to contain the spread of the virus and the ever-increasing death toll.

The deliberate mishandling of the virus by Trump is emblematic of a malaise at the heart of his administration – a malaise which seeped into every area of life – especially the life of black and brown people.

And so it was of monumental importance that African Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans responded to the Biden-Harris campaign and boy did they mobilise!

The result in the State of Georgia tells the story in all its glory of their part in the victory of Biden-Harris.

They flipped Georgia from a republican to a democratic state. The civil rights leader Martin Luther King was born there; the recently deceased civil rights leader Senator John Lewis was elected from there, and it was Lewis who had recommended Kamala Harris to Joe Biden as his running mate.

And it was another black Georgian woman, Stacey Abrams, the founder of 'Fair Fight Action' who registered 800,000 people to vote there.

"What are your thoughts?" black CNN commentator Van Jones was asked.

Fighting back tears he said: "It's easier to be a parent this morning. It's easier to be a dad. It's easier to tell your kids character matters, truth matters. Being a good person matters. It wasn't just George Floyd who couldn't breathe. Lots of people felt they couldn't breathe. It's a good day for this country; a good day for the people of this country."

And it is a good day for all the people of Ireland.

Because Ireland will be once again a priority for the incumbent in the White House.

ON THIS DAY

NOVEMBER 16 1970

'Honourable Baptism' for SDLP

THE St Anne's [Belfast] by-election, which was won yesterday by the Unionist candidate, Mr John Laird, was described last night as an 'honourable baptism' for the Social Democratic and Labour Party by their candidate, Mr Gerry Lavery.

St Anne's was the SDLP's first electoral test. The result – in a 60 per cent poll – was:

John Laird (U) ... 8,204;
Gerry Lavery (SDLP) ... 2,881;
William Ritchie (NILP) ... 863;
Unionist majority ... 5,323.

Observers saw Mr Laird's success a big boost for the Right Wing of the Unionist Party. Mr Lavery said: 'The SDLP are the only viable alternative to the discredited Unionist power machine.'

Death of Nationalist Intellectual

PROFESSOR James Scott, who has died aged 57, was one of the most controversial figures of Queen's University, Belfast.

Professor of Dental Anatomy at the university, he was a convert to Catholicism and a Nationalist who spoke and wrote fearlessly as an advocate of the National ideal but at the same time he was adamant that the border should remain while a majority in NI were in favour of it.

A philosopher and poet, he marked his appointment to the Chair of Dental Anatomy at QUB five years ago with a 5,000 word poem on man's inhumanity to man.

He believed fervently that students should be active in playing a full part in attempting to cure society's ills.

However, he came in for sharp criticism for the advice he recently gave to students at the University.

After telling dental students to understand art, music and social life, he added: 'You should all learn to drive a car, preferably a Jaguar, and you should all learn to get drunk – find out how much drink you can take.'

Professor Scott was born in Dundalk of Presbyterian and Methodist stock.

(A committed Nationalist, intellectual and controversial figure, Jimmy Scott urged Northern nationalists in the early 1980s to abandon sterile abstentionism and play a constructive role in the public life of the state. As his obituary in this paper noted: 'His background enabled him to embrace gratefully the diverse traditions in Irish life and value each individually.')

EDITED BY ÉAMON PHOENIX
e.phoenix@irishnews.com