

Discovering
Jimmy Kennedy



**The Songwriter Who Made
Music Come To Life!**





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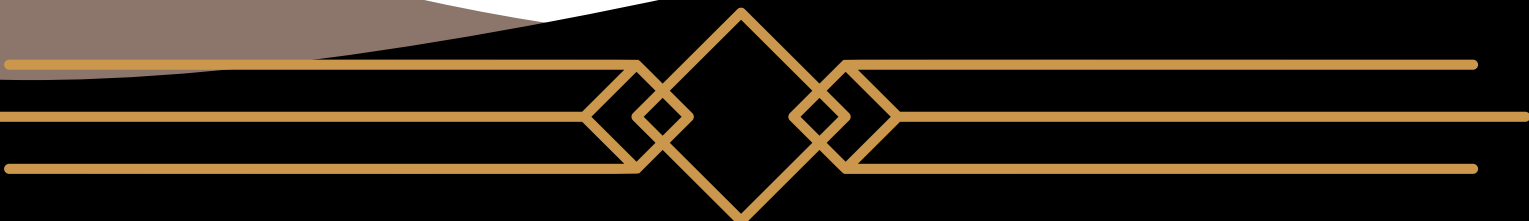
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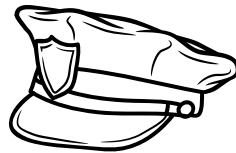
“Join us on a musical adventure with Jimmy Kennedy! Let’s sing, create, and have fun!”



Introduction to Jimmy Kennedy



- Jimmy Kennedy born on 20th July 1902 in Omagh (Pretoria Terrace now known as the Brookmount area). His mother came from Ardara, Co.Donegal and was a school teacher by profession.



- Jimmy's father was Joseph Hamilton Kennedy, a police officer in the RIC, a native of County Derry/Londonderry and former farmer.



- Jimmy learned to read & write at the local school, possibly Omagh Model, but as his father was a policeman, the family soon began moving to different locations. Jimmy was a keen scholar with a thirst for knowledge. After primary school, he studied at Cookstown Academy from which he won a university scholarship to Trinity College, Dublin.



ACTIVITY

Draw your favourite memory related to music or a song you love.

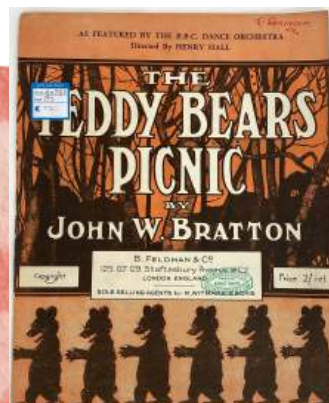
Listen and Learn

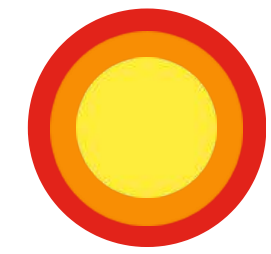
Brief descriptions of three of Jimmy's famous songs!

The Birth of the Teddy Bears Picnic

In 1907, as the charismatic Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt was gearing up for his 1908 presidential campaign, he embarked on a whirlwind tour across the Middle West. During his travels, Roosevelt took a brief detour to the Dakota Hills for a bear hunting expedition. Amidst the hunt, a bear cub wandered into his sight. The seasoned hunter and nature enthusiast couldn't bring himself to harm the small bear. This touching moment was captured in a popular cartoon that swept across American newspapers, endearing the public even more to their beloved Teddy.

Inspired by the cartoon, Morris Michtom, an enterprising toymaker, crafted a plush toy bear with button eyes and movable arms. He aptly named it the "Teddy Bear" and sought Roosevelt's permission to use his name as a trademark. The Teddy Bear soon became a cherished childhood companion, symbolizing both warmth and compassion.





Teddy Bears' Picnic: A Song's Journey

Fast forward to 1932

When Henry Hall, the director of the BBC Dance Orchestra, was on the hunt for a charming children's song. One day, his colleague Jimmy Kennedy was tidying his desk when Hall inquired about a particular piece of music. Jimmy replied, *I've just written words for it, and it's going to be a big hit.* True to his word, Jimmy handed the song to Henry Hall, who performed it to great acclaim.

The very next day, Hall's manager was overwhelmed with requests for copies of the song via telephone calls and telegrams. However, a conflict arose. Jimmy had avoided his manager, Mr Feldman, and directly approached Hall.

As a result, Mr Feldman, feeling slighted, denied Jimmy any royalties from the song. For the next 15 years, from 1932 until Feldman's death in 1947, Jimmy Kennedy received no royalties for his creation.

The song, beloved by many, continues to echo through time, reminding us of the whimsical and sometimes complicated history behind our favorite tunes.



Red Sails in the Sunset



In the summer of 1933, Jimmy returned to his hometown of Portstewart for a holiday. One serene evening, he and his sister Nell stood on the doorstep, captivated by the sight before them: the small sailing boat, 'Kitty of Coleraine', with its billowing sails, bathed in the golden evening light pouring down over the distant Donegal hills.

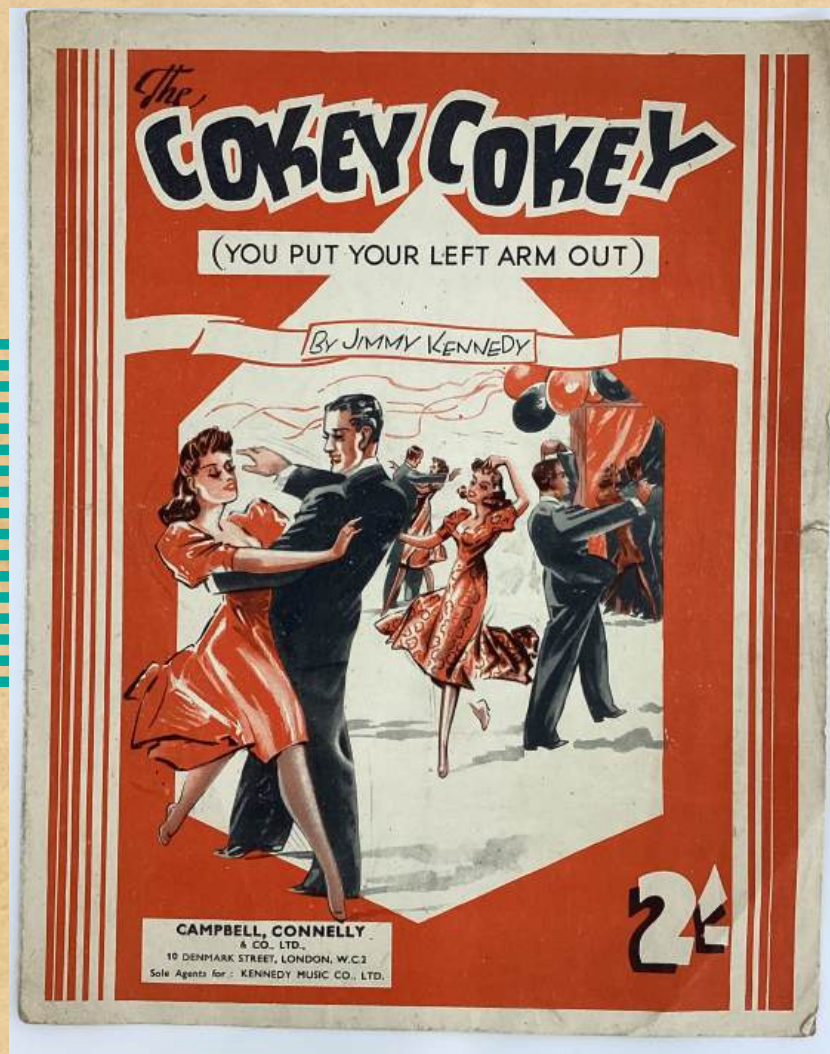
Jimmy turned to Nell and suggested, *Why don't you sketch that boat in the magnificent sunset?* Nell replied with a playful challenge, *Why don't you write a song about it?* Nell never painted the sunset, but Jimmy took her suggestion to heart.

The song he wrote captured the beauty and emotion of that moment, resonating deeply with listeners. Over the years, an estimated 53 artists, including legends like Bing Crosby and Perry Como, have recorded *Red Sails in the Sunset*, ensuring its place as a beloved classic in musical history.



The Hokey Cokey - 1942

In 1939, when war broke out, Jimmy enlisted in the Royal Artillery. As the war affected every aspect of life, this influence is reflected in the songs from that period. While stationed in Wales, Jimmy took leave and traveled to London, visiting a familiar club from his Tin Pan Alley days.



At the club, he encountered a group of Canadian soldiers who began a sing-along. One particular Canadian folk song captivated Jimmy's imagination. Inspired, he later composed his own version of the song and even devised a dance to accompany it. This creation became known as the *Cokey Cokey*, which would later be renamed the *Hokey Cokey*.



ACTIVITY

Song Reflection:

- Space to write down how each song makes you feel, what it reminds you of.
- A short summary of the song.

Teddy Bears Picnic

Hokey Cokey

Red Sails in The Sunset

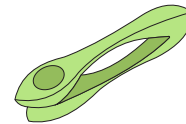
ACTIVITY

Listening Challenge: What instruments do you hear?
Circle them!

Teddy Bears Picnic-



Hokey Cokey-



Red Sails in The Sunset-



Songwriting Workshop

What Makes a Good Song?



- **Catchy Melody:**

A good song has a melody that you can easily remember. It's like a tune that gets stuck in your head! Think of it as a fun musical line that makes you want to sing along.

- **Fun Lyrics:**

The words of a song (called lyrics) should tell a story or share feelings. Good lyrics can make you laugh, feel happy, or even make you think. They should be interesting and sometimes even a little silly!

- **Rhythm and Beat:**

Every good song has a rhythm or beat that makes you want to tap your feet or dance. It's the pattern of sounds that gives the song its energy. A good beat can make you feel excited and ready to move!

- **Emotion:**

A great song makes you feel something—whether it's joy, sadness, or excitement. The best songs can touch your heart and help you express your feelings.



- Chorus:

The chorus is the part of the song that repeats, and it's usually the catchiest part. It's like the song's main idea, and it's where you can sing along the loudest! A good chorus sticks in your mind and makes you want to join in.

- Instruments and Sounds:

Different instruments (like guitars, drums, or pianos) add layers to a song and make it unique. A good song mixes different sounds to create a fun listening experience.

- Creativity:

Good songs often have something special that makes them stand out. It could be a cool rhyme, a surprising twist in the lyrics, or an unexpected sound. Being creative helps a song feel fresh and exciting!

Remember:

Every song is different, and what makes a good song can vary for everyone. It's all about what you enjoy! So listen closely, sing out loud, and find the songs that make you happy!





ACTIVITY

Write Your Own Song:

Choose a melody from below. Create a title and write lyrics!

- 1.) Twinkle Twinkle Little Star
- 2.) Happy Birthday
- 3.) Teddy Bears Picnic

Rhyme Finder:

A list of common words with space to write down rhyming words.

Cat -

Dog -

Light -

Sky -

Rain -

Ball -

Home -

Sun -

Star -

Blue -

Happy -

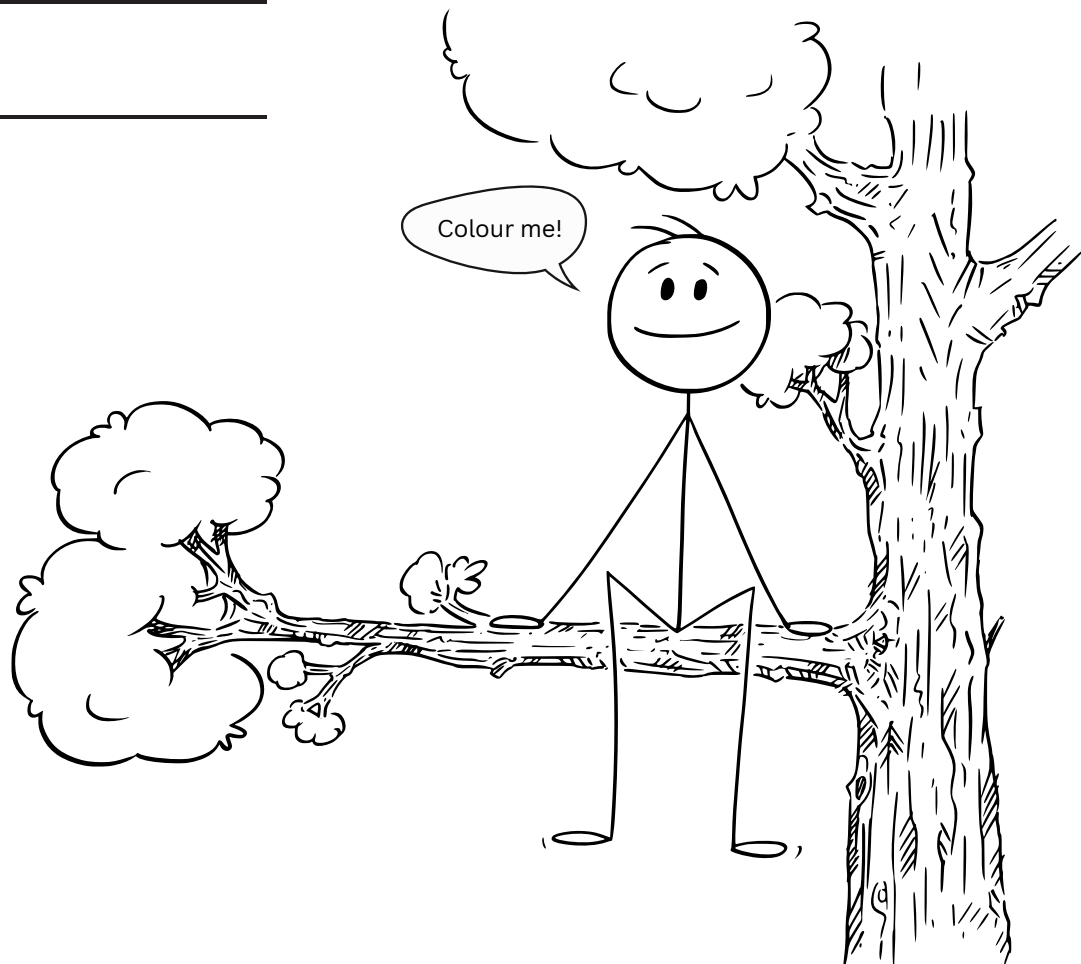
Angry -

Excited -

Lonely -

Confused -

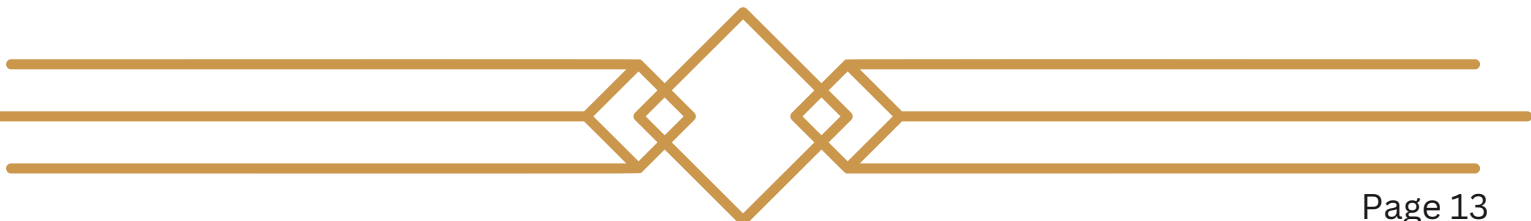
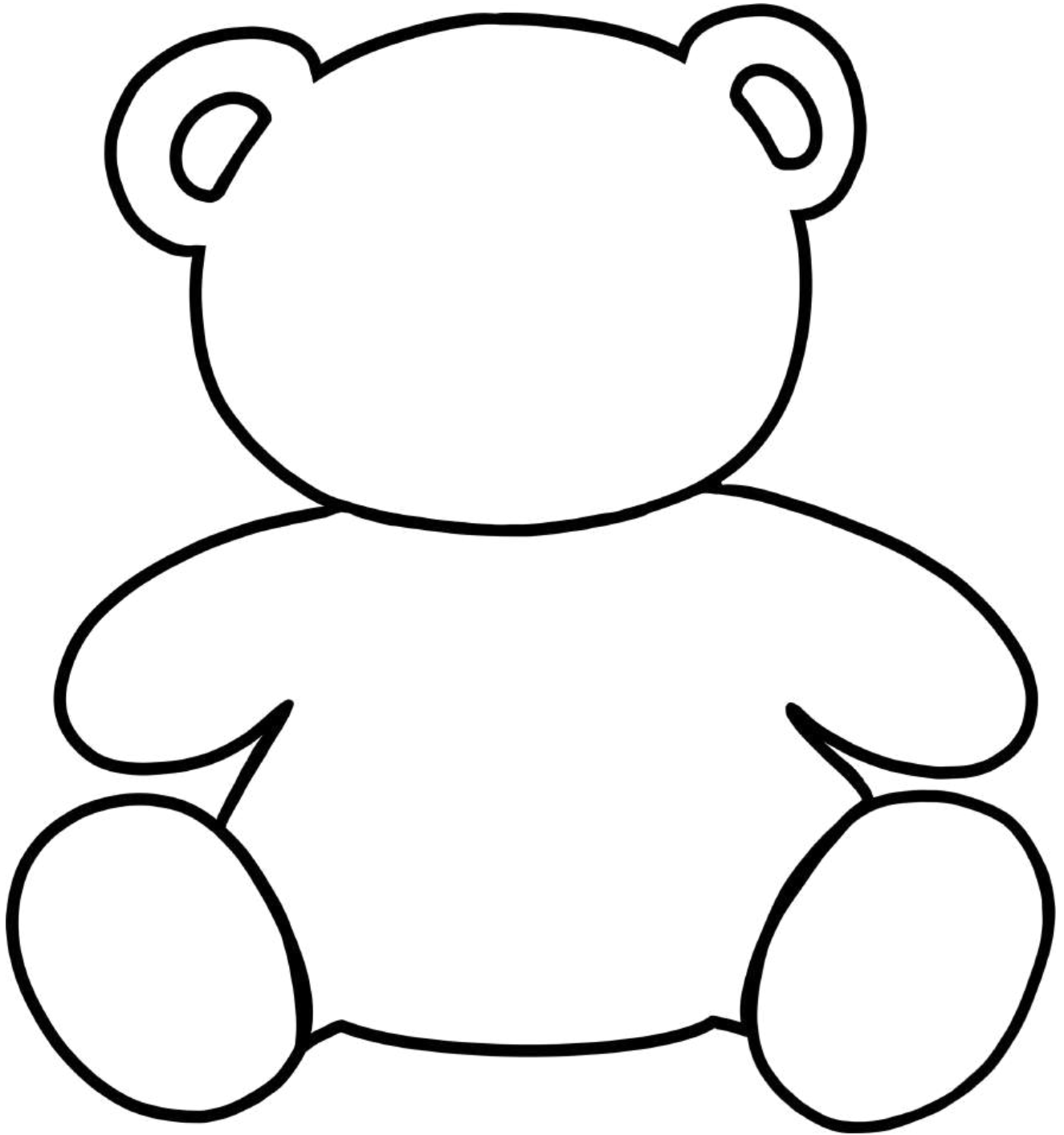
Love -



Teddy Bear Activity

Design Your Teddy Bear:

Decorate with colours, patterns, and accessories.



Teddy Bear Picnic Story:

A few lines for kids to create a short story about a picnic with a teddy bear(s).



Fun Facts and Puzzles

Timeline Fun Facts About Jimmy Kennedy And His Songs



1902 – Jimmy Kennedy born on 20th July 1902 in Omagh (Pretoria Terrace).

1925 – Obtained an MA degree in Trinity College, Dublin.

1927 – Accepted an appointment with the Colonial Service in Nigeria & took up a temporary job teaching in Dorset while waiting for the appointment to be finalized.

1933 – ‘Teddy Bear’s Picnic’ was a big hit on both sides of the Atlantic.



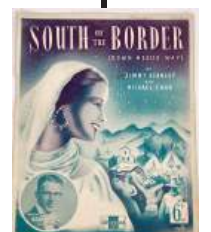
1934 – Saw the publication of the ‘Isle of Capri’ inspired by an English newspaper report that the famous singer Gracie Fields was on holiday in her villa on the Italian island of Capri.



1935 – ‘Red Sails in the Sunset’ was a major hit. Jimmy had travelled to Portstewart to visit his parents. As he gazed out to sea from their home on Strand Road, he watched the yacht ‘kitty of Coleraine’ sail gracefully into Portstewart Bay, its red sails framed in the setting sun. Inspiration for one of his most famous songs!



1939 – ‘South of the Border’ was written – the inspiration from Jimmy’s sisters Nell & Nina who were travelling in Southern California.



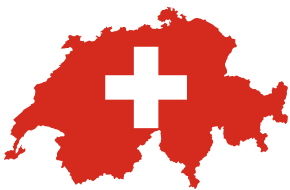
1940 – During the war, Jimmy’s commanding officer was Dennis Thatcher. A lifelong friendship developed and Jimmy was best man at Dennis’ wedding to Margaret Thatcher.



1950 – Jimmy continued to write music throughout the 1950’s but his work out was reduced.



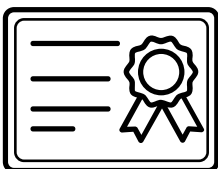
1954 – Jimmy’s younger brother Hamilton, also a songwriter. A fatal accident in London cut his career short.



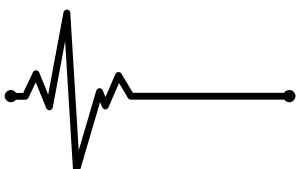
1960 – Feeling unhappy with a new change in the USA and having to pay extra taxes, Jimmy decided to move to Switzerland.



1971 – Jimmy received the highest prize in the songwriters guild the Ivor Novello Award for ‘Outstanding services to British music’.

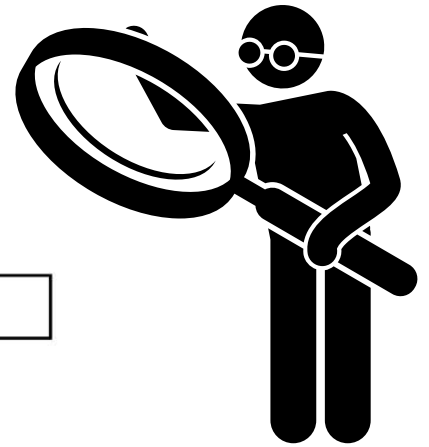
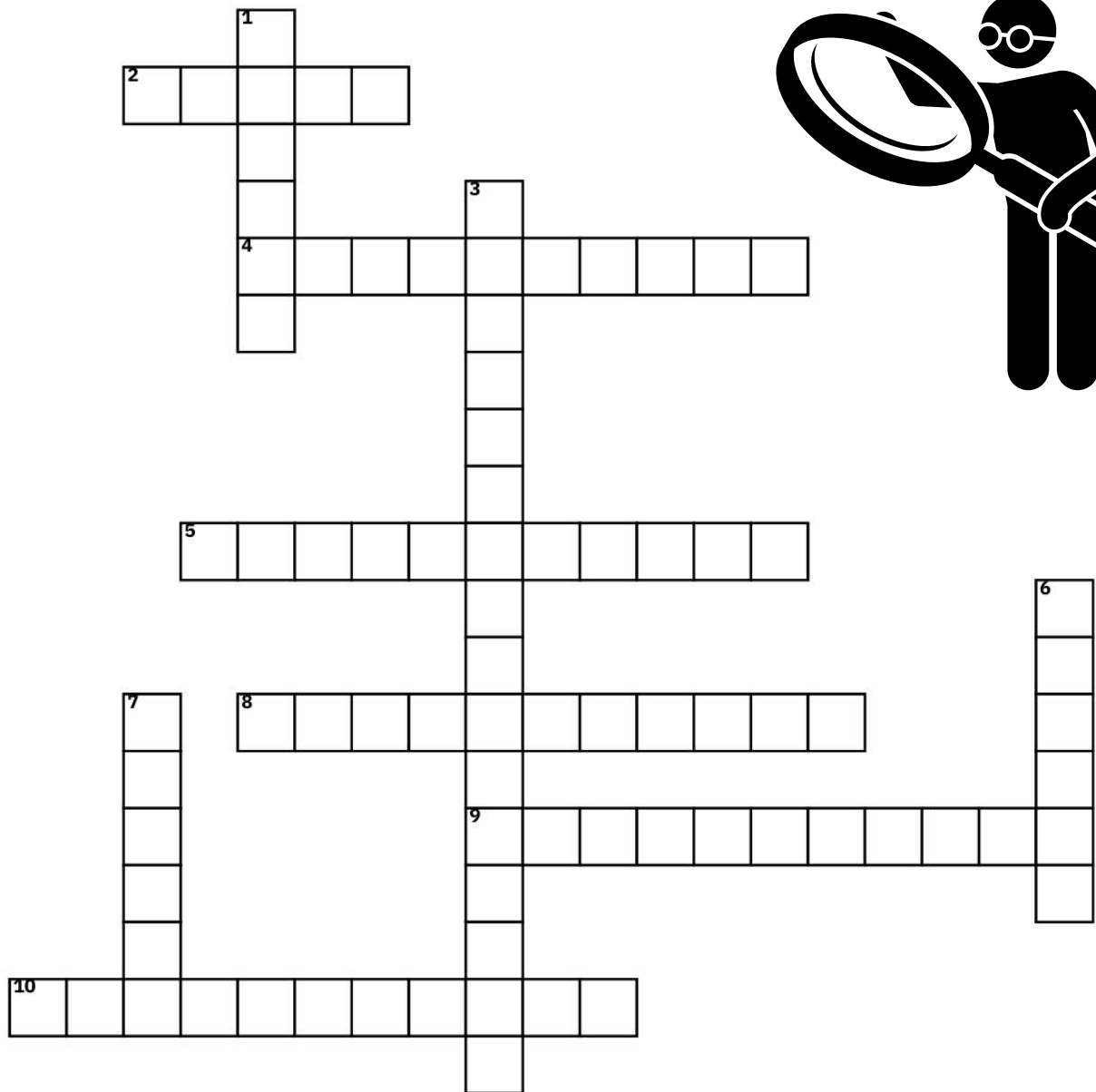


1978 – Jimmy Kennedy received a honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of Ulster.



1984 – Jimmy Kennedy died in Cheltenham. Before he died, he was given a special award called an OBE for his great work in music.

Jimmy Kennedy Crossword



Across

- [2]** Jimmy's birth town **[4]** A place of study, after high-school.
[5] Where did Jimmy move in 1960? **[8]** Where was the "Kitty of Coleraine" sailing to? **[9]** Something that sparks creativity or new ideas **[10]** The phase of music creation where lyrics and melodies are crafted

Down

- [1]** When someone is very well known
[3] Which song was a big hit on both sides of the Atlantic?
[6] A very famous person, often admired for a long time
[7] The capital of Ireland

ACROSS
 2 - OMAGH
 4 - UNIVERSITY
 5 - SWITZERLAND
 8 - PORTSTEWART
 9 - INSPIRATION
 10 - SONGWRITING

DOWN
 1 - OMAGH
 3 - UNIVERSITY
 6 - SWITZERLAND
 7 - PORTSTEWART



Reflections



Activity:

Write about your favorite part of the book and why you liked it!

Thank You, Jimmy!

Express what you enjoy about Jimmy Kennedy's music and why.



Jimmy Kennedy Collection

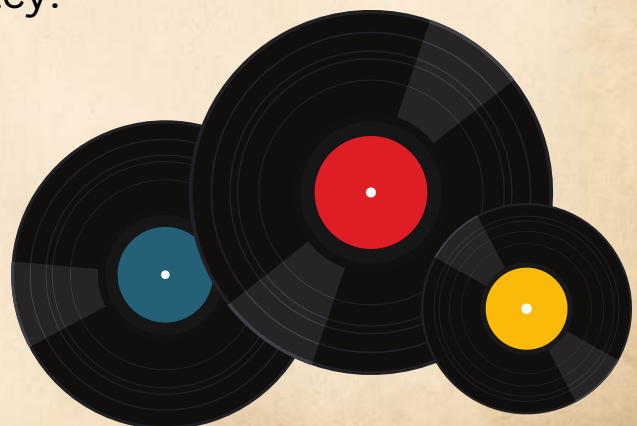
For many years, J.J. Tohill dedicated himself to collecting and archiving a remarkable array of materials that celebrate the musical genius of Jimmy Kennedy.

From records and broadcasts to television shows, newspaper clippings, and song sheets, this extensive collection captures the legacy of one of Omagh's most influential musical figures.

In 2024, J.J. generously gifted this collection to Fermanagh & Omagh District Council, ensuring that Jimmy Kennedy's story will be preserved and shared for generations to come.

We are thrilled to showcase these items and explore their significance through ongoing interpretation.

To kick things off, we've developed a fun and engaging education programme inspired by Jimmy Kennedy's music and legacy.



Appendix

Descriptions

Page 1



A **scholarship** is a special gift of money that helps someone go to school or college. It's given to people who do really well in their studies, are good at something like sports or music, or need extra help to afford school.

Page 4



Royalties are payments someone gets when other people use their work, like a song, book, or invention. For example, if someone writes a song and it gets played on the radio, they get a little bit of money each time it's played.

Page 15



Colonial service was a job where people worked for their country to help run and manage other places that their country controlled a long time ago.

Page 16



Margaret Thatcher was the first woman to be the **Prime Minister** of the **United Kingdom**. She led the country from **1979 to 1990**. People called her the "**Iron Lady**" because she was very strong and determined in her decisions.



Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council
Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

This activity book layout will engage children through various interactive activities while educating them about Jimmy Kennedy's contributions to music. The activities promote creativity, reflection, and enjoyment, ensuring a comprehensive and entertaining experience.