**Press Pass Awards 2015**

 **Features Category**

**Second Place**

***Nathan Carter***

***A sit down with one of the nation’s leading country artists***

**By Ali Cousins, St Mary’s College, Naas**

Entering the grounds of the Lyrath Hotel in Kilkenny, for the second of two sold out shows, it appeared obvious to me that the Nathan Carter (25) hype was not just solely for a definite age group or target market. The queue of people, eagerly waiting to storm the hotel lobby and madly dash to the front of the hall, in an attempt to obtain the precious front row seats, was stuffed with people of all different ages, genders and backgrounds. The determination of these people standing outside the hotel for hours, in the lashing downpour, weighed down in cowboy hats and boots, illustrated the commitment and devotion Nathan Carter sparked in these people.

I made my way inside to the hotel, a few hours before the tides of people would descend upon the hall. Walking into the concert area I was greeted with the sight of Carter and his band finishing up with sound check. Carter continued diligently preparing for the concert, until everything was set to go, and we began to speak.

**With so many sell out gigs and concerts all over the world, how do you cope with such a hectic schedule?**

“Well I find it pretty easy because I love doing what I do. I don’t think I could do anything else. I wake up and I instantly think about music or gigs, or something that’s happened to do with my job. I love it and it never gets boring. I wouldn’t change it for anything,” Nathan responded.

**Your television special went really well over Christmas and I hear that there’s rumours of a new series on RTE. How did you find it different being the interviewer, rather than the interviewee?**

“Yeah, that was the bit that seemed daunting to me. I mean I’d never interviewed anyone and I had to find out lots of information about the guests and the singers that were on, but I found it easy enough after about ten minutes of doing it with Mary Black. She was

the first one that I interviewed. She was great and I settled down after that. But yeah, it was definitely different, because I’m used to being the interviewee, instead of the interviewer, but it was good fun,” Carter told me.

**Walking in here into the venue, I’ve seen that your audience is made up of all different ages and types of people. Has it always been like this or has there been a sudden shift in your target market?**

“No, it’s always been a mixture of age groups, from children to teenagers, mums and dads, and nannies and grannies,” Carter said. “You know, I’m very lucky in that way, because it makes the show very interesting for me and it’s a very family orientated show, which is something I always wanted.”

**During your career, have you had any out of the ordinary fan experiences?**

“No, nothing too mad. I do get underwear thrown up every now and then, which is always a bit surprising, no matter how many times it happens,” Carter remarked, laughing at the memory.

**As a highly successful artist, who have been your biggest influences?**

“Probably people like Garth Brooks and Carrie Underwood, countrywise. Then, I suppose, closer to home, artists such as the Dubliners and Johnny McEvoy have also been a great influence to me. I mean, I’ve loved folk music all my life so I’ve always wanted to go in that direction. I’d say mainly Brad Paisley is my favourite country singer, so I’d say he’s a big influence,” Carter stated.

**Before your shows do you get nervous or do you have any preshow rituals that you would do?**

“I do get nervous. Just about a minute before I go on stage I end up shaking backstage. Once I get onstage though, within ten seconds I’m fine. It’s kind of strange, but I think that if you don’t get nervous it’s a bit of a problem. It’s a good natural thing to get a little anxious and I don’t let the nerves overcome me. Ritual wise, we do have one. It’s a bit strange but one of the guys from the crew will get onto his head and drink a pint upside down,” Carter claimed. “It sort of gets everyone on the team excited and ready.”

**Judging Panel Citation**

*As a journalist, you want to stand out from your competitors. You want to get the scoop, the story, the exclusive. This doesn’t just apply to news stories. When it comes to features, you want to secure the interview that no one else could get and the student who wins second place in this category did just that.*

*We’re not sure how she did it but getting an interview with country music star Nathan Carter is no mean feat, especially for a student journalist. This determined lady aimed high in her pursuit and it delivered.*

*Her questions were well thought out and we the reader found ourselves right there in the Lyrath Hotel in Kilkenny as she captured the atmosphere and excitement.*