



How teenagers outsmarted Australia's social media ban, by a mother and her daughter, 13

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FLATLEY ACCUSED OF TRYING TO 'HIJACK' LORD OF THE DANCE

Company that now runs lucrative tour seeks injunction against dancer

By **Helen Bruce**
and **Michael O'Farrell**

MICHAEL FLATLEY has been accused of trying to 'hijack' the highly successful Lord of the Dance tour – in order to strip it of cash to fund his debts and personal lifestyle.

The allegations are set out in affidavits before the High Court in Belfast in injunction proceedings brought by Switzer Consulting Ltd, the company that now runs the multimillion-euro tour.

The company has won a temporary order from the court blocking the dancer, who created the show 20 years ago, from interfering in any way.

Switzer Consulting Ltd has accused the Riverdance star of allegedly having a 'dreadful financial reputation' and of allegedly asking Aiken Productions and other promoters to divert deposit funds for booked shows directly to him.

Switzer alleged this could put the

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Connolly's presidential campaign paid €30k to US PR firm

PRESIDENT Catherine Connolly's campaign team paid almost €30,000 to a US PR firm linked to Zohran Mamdani, which provided her election team with 'tactical insights' from his successful bid to become mayor of New York, the Irish Daily Mail can reveal.

A review of filings by the former Independent TD for Galway West shows that, under the heading 'campaign workers', Solidarity Comms was paid €28,900.

The Solidarity Comms website prominently shows footage from Ms Connolly's campaign and co-founder Dan Albright confirmed they worked with Mr Mamdani.

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Flatley has been notified about injunctions and will be able to offer a response

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whole tour in jeopardy, which it claimed would be 'catastrophic' for the cast, production and tour management who rely on Lord of the Dance for their livelihoods.

Switzer, which is registered in Northern Ireland, is also accusing the American-born, Monaco-based dancer, who sprung to fame with Riverdance in 1994, of alleged breach of contract, negligence, trespass and conspiracy to cause loss.

In a sworn statement before the court, experienced music producer Joe Gallagher said he had first become involved in running the tour in December 2022, after being approached by Flatley's then-agent Des Walshe.

'I was initially reluctant, as the

Since then, the tour has thrived

defendant's [Flatley's] industry reputation, particularly in finance, was and is very poor,' he alleged.

However, he said he agreed to run the shows with Switzer, which had put together a strong team to restart the tour business post-Covid. He subsequently became a director of Switzer.

A formal service agreement was agreed between Switzer and Flatley in July 2024, he said.

Since then, the tour has thrived, with 260 shows booked this year, across eight to ten countries, with a similar number planned for 2027, and a second troupe of dancers employed. The tour has a contract value of £4.5m (€5.2m) this year and £5.7m (€6.6m) next year, Mr Gallagher claimed.

All bookings are done through a contract between a promoter or client and Switzer, he said.

He attributed the turnaround in a 'failed business' to the hard work done by himself and Switzer, noting that new costumes and a new set were in the pipeline for the first time in ten years.

'Historically speaking, instead of reinvesting, the defendant has consistently stripped the business of monies to support his personal lifestyle,' Mr Gallagher alleged.

'...It is only since the plaintiff assumed control of commercial matters that there has been a structured approach to the operation and development of the business.

'Staff are paid up to date, suppliers are fully paid, taxes are paid on time and in full. In an overall context, the business is being run properly.'

He said Flatley was benefitting from this, as he receives the royalties from each tour, paid directly into his bank account.

However, Mr Gallagher alleged that in recent months, Flatley had been seeking to interfere with the business, putting it 'in real jeopardy'. He said he believed this was due to financial difficulties faced by Flatley.

Last month, he said Flatley had set up a new Irish-registered business, Feet of Flames, which he believed the former Riverdance star intended to try to use to run the shows.

Mr Gallagher said he had also received a text from Flatley's current agent, Denis O'Sullivan, telling him he would have no further involvement in anything to do with the Lord of the Dance shows.

Over Christmas, he alleged Flatley had contacted Peter Aiken of Aiken Promotions, asking him to divert deposits from booked shows directly to him.

'It is my view that the defendant will try to hijack all existing contracts, and instead of running the business correctly, will strip the business of cash to support his debts and lifestyle,' he alleged.

He said this ignored the legal position of the 2024 contract and could cause all shows to be cancelled.

'Furthermore, any of the pro-

'Serious financial difficulties'

motors currently dealing with [Switzer] will not deal directly with the defendant, as he has a dreadful financial reputation within the industry,' he alleged.

He also accused Flatley of having asked cast and crew members of the show to block Switzer contacts, and of having asked promoters in the UK, Eastern Europe and America to redirect money to Feet of Flames.

Mr Gallagher alleged contracting agents 'throughout the world' would not deal with Flatley, due to his history of not paying bills.

'Therefore the shows simply won't go on and will be cancelled,' he said.

Mr Gallagher said he believed Flatley was in serious financial difficulties, and alleged that his 'lenders are effectively controlling his affairs'.

He said Flatley's debts related to his Co. Cork mansion, Castlehyde, which is the subject of two



Dance star: Michael Flatley with his wife Niamh in Dublin

Commercial Court actions in Dublin relating to allegedly faulty renovations.

Flatley has been ordered to pay €1.1million into court following a ruling regarding potential legal costs.

Mr Gallagher alleged Flatley had admitted in a meeting last November that he was 'broke'.

The application for an injunction to prevent Flatley from cancelling, postponing or interfering with the tour was made on

Monday morning on an ex-parte basis, meaning that only Switzer was represented in court.

An injunction was also requested to prevent him from contacting venues, promoters or any other person with a business involvement in the tour.

Flatley has since been notified about the injunctions, and will have the chance to respond when the case is mentioned again before the court tomorrow.

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Ten ministers still haven't paid off their tax debt

TEN current Government ministers, who potentially owe the State thousands in unpaid tax, have yet to have yet to make a single repayment, it has been revealed.

The issue relates to an admin error detected last year which saw incorrect amounts being paid in pre-tax pension deductions in public sector pay slips.

Minister for Public Expenditure Jack Chambers yesterday urged the ten senior and junior ministers, who are still in repayment negotiations with the

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National Shared Services Office (NSSO), to pay the money back as soon as possible. He said he did not know the total outstanding balance but added: 'What I've said very clearly is anything that is owed must be repaid.'

Mr Chambers told the Oireachtas Finance Committee he cannot intervene at this stage as ministers are still

engaging with the NSSO - which is the agency responsible for public payrolls.

He added that 34 current ministers were eventually found to have anomalies with their deductions, with just two being owed money from the State.

He said that he is not aware of any cases where senior politicians have challenged the NSSO's findings, which came after the agency examined pension deductions last year.

Further reviews of pension deductions

of up to 13,000 ex-State workers were carried out after the 'administrative errors' were first noticed in June 2025.

Several former ministers and retired senior civil servants were later found to have outstanding pension-related anomalies at that point.

At the time, Mr Chambers said that the overpayments which were recorded ranged from the hundreds of euro to up to €30,000. Other ministers were owed up to around €20,000.