

TRADITIONAL MUSIC & SONG

fomm

Vol. 2 No. 2 Spring 2023



Ómós: Simon Emmerson

Magical Mary at Scoil Samhraidh

about **fonn**

fonn is the Irish for an air or a tune. But it can also mean desire or enthusiasm. This magazine is enthusiastic about airs and tunes - traditional music and song.

Our approach to traditional music and song is respectful. We respect those who work to preserve the tradition. Equally we respect those who explore the boundaries of the tradition by collaborating with musicians in other genres and styles.

We believe in parity of esteem for both of these movements within traditional and folk music. They are complementary - not incompatible.

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Ratoath Co. Meath
Ireland

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GALWAY FOLK FESTIVAL
JUNE 13TH-18TH 2023

STEVE EARLE • TEENAGE FANCLUB • INHALER • THE WHILEAWAYS • NIAMH REGAN
KÍLA • PA SHEEHY • LISA LAMBE • SEÁN KEANE • GER O'DONNELL & TREVOR SEXTON
SHARON SHANNON • THE RAINES • SKINNY LIVING • ISPÍNÍ NA HÉIREANN
FERGAL SCAHILL & RYAN MOLLOY • ENDA SCAHILL & SHANE HAYES • PADRAIG JACK
BRÍDÍN • MYLES O'REILLY • BRAD HEIDI • PADDY DENNEHY • DYLAN FLYNN & THE DEAD POETS
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New tunes from 'the women'

A unique tune book, *Folk Tunes from the Women*, featuring over 150 contemporary tunes from 100 female composers from Britain and Ireland, is to be published in May.

Curated by Northumbrian piper and fiddler, Kathryn Tickell, the project began



Composer: Niamh Ní Charra

when she was unable to respond effectively to a request from a friend looking for female-composed material to teach to her fiddle group. When Kathryn put out the call, the composers answered in droves.

Featuring a wide selection of jigs, hornpipes, reels, airs, marches, polkas, waltzes, mazurkas, the book also includes many tunes which do not fall into a natural category.

One of the main aims of the project is to make the book useful to both teachers and players while also recognising the wealth of material being composed by female musicians.

Website

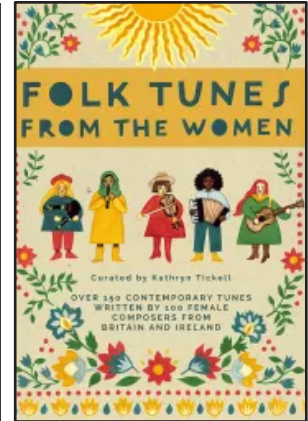
It is also part of a wider scheme in which all the contributors have agreed to forego their individual

royalties and pool them through the charity, Hands Up for Trad, in order to set up a website to promote and celebrate female composers.

The Irish composers who have contributed to the book include Grainne Brady, Mairéad Carey, Adele Commins, Zoe Conway, Clí Donnellan, Maeve McCann, Éadaoin Ní Mhaicín, Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh, Niamh Ní Charra and Róisín Ward Morrow.

Among the many other contributors are Sarah Allen from Flook, Lady Maisery's Rowan Rheingans and, of course, Kathryn Tickell, herself.

All of the tunes are presented as melody lines with chord symbols, making it the most useful book for teachers and players alike.



Composer: Kathryn Tickell

New York gala concerts celebrate Mick Moloney's legacy



Celebrating Mick Moloney: Brenda Castles (second from right front) leads the singing accompanied by Donie Carroll (fourth from right back) among on stage at the Irish Arts Centre in New York (Photo: Tom Farley).

Over two dozen performers – who acknowledged the late Mick Moloney as a key influence on their artistic development – came together recently to play to full houses at the Irish Arts Center in New York in a three-night musical celebration of his remarkable life and legacy.

The unique event was directed by Mick's former Green Fields of America bandmates, Athena Tergis and Séamus Egan.

The featured artists

due to appear in the show over the three nights also included Joanie Madden, Liz Carroll, Brenda Castles, Liz Hanley, James Keane, Mirella Murray, Billy McComiskey and Jean Butler, as well as Tim Britton, Nora Brown, Darrah Carr, Donie Carroll, Stephanie Coleman, Mary Coogan, Rosemary Copper, Tony DeMarco, Cheick Hamala Diabate, Brendan Dolan, Megan Downes, Donny Golden, Ivan Goff, Jefferson Hamer, Kieran Jordan, Tamar Korn, Dan Levinson, Dan Neely, Eamon O'Leary, Niall O'Leary, John Roberts, Leni Sloan and Caitlin Warbelow



A master musician with the parchment to prove it!: Peadar Ó Riada
(Photo: UCC)

Peadar is a present master

Composer and choir director Peadar Ó Riada was recently conferred with an honorary Masters in Music from his alma mater, UCC, to recognise his significant role in Ireland's cultural landscape.

The musician from the Músraí Gaeltacht received the award almost 50 years after his primary degree from the Cork university.

Director of the renowned male choir, Cór Chúil Aodha, since the death of his father, Seán, in 1971, Peadar subsequently created the women's choir, Cór Ban Chúil Aodha.

He has also released a number of albums involving collaborations with fiddlers, Martin Hayes and Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh, and the singer Seán Ó Sé, who

performed with Ceoltóirí Chualann – led by his father.

Among Peadar's other recent musical interests is the *Continuing Traditions* project – an exploration of the shared musical heritage and cultural history of India and Ireland – with the acclaimed Indian classical musician and composer Ustad Wajahat Khan.

Peadar also produces and presents the traditional music programme, *Cuireadh Chun Ceoil*, on RTÉ Ráidió na Gaeltachta on Friday evenings.

He is the driving force behind the prestigious Bonn Ór Sheáin Uí Riada – an annual music competition, focussing on a different traditional instrument every year with a first prize of €2,500 and a gold medal dedicated to the memory of his father.



Nomination: Pauline Scanlon

Pauline's radio doc nominated for Celtic media award

Pauline Scanlon's RTÉ Radio 1 documentary, *The Unquiet – Songs For My Mother*, produced by Elizabeth Laragy, has been nominated for a Torc Award for Best Documentary at the Celtic Media Festival.

The focus of the documentary is Pauline's recent album of the same name – which addresses the joys and heartbreaks of the life of her mother, Eileen, while also exploring the place of women in traditional music.

The Unquiet, which is Pauline's fourth solo album, also explores themes around unequal power relationships – leading to varying degrees of sexual harassment escalating to violence and even murder.

In this way the themes of many of the traditional songs covered on the album take on a striking contemporary resonance.

The documentary also features contributions from Pauline's partner, Eamon Murray, and musical collaborators, Barry Kerr, Damien Dempsey and the album's producer, John Reynolds.

The Torc award winners will be announced at the Celtic Media Festival which this year takes place in Dungloe in Co. Donegal from June 6-8.



Ademar is Fiddler of London

Ademar O'Connor was crowned as the new Fiddler of London in the annual competition at the Irish Cultural Centre in Hammersmith on Saturday May 2023 15.

Ademar, who succeeds last year's winner, Una McGlinchey, was one of ten players to qualify for the final which was judged by Louth fiddle virtuoso, Zoë Conway.

Ademar, from Edenderry in Co. Offaly is a multi-instrumentalist with 18 underage All Ireland titles to his name for fiddle, banjo, button accordion, melodeon, piano and miscellaneous.

He also won the junior Fiddler of Dooney title in 2016 and the junior Ed



Take a bow: Adjudicator, Zoë Conway presents the Fiddler of London trophy to this year's winner, Ademar O'Connor from Offaly (Photo: Zoë Conway).

Reavy competition in 2017. He has performed in concerts and sessions all over Ireland and in France, USA

and Canada with his two brothers, Theodore and Arthur. He has also guested with Sharon Shannon.

Folk and trad music conference to return next year

After the success of its first edition in January, *The Your Roots Are Showing Conference* – the folk, roots and traditional music gathering – is already planning for next year's event, scheduled for January 17-21 in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dundalk.

Over five days and four nights, participants and international guests will take part in networking sessions, panel discussions, social gatherings and mentoring sessions.

The conference provides opportunities for both established and aspiring professional musicians to showcase their talents and network with music industry professionals from home and abroad.

Among the speakers already confirmed for the 2024 events are Rounder Records founder, Ken Irwin; Tom Besford of English Folk Expo; Barry Stapleton of Milwaukee Irish Fest; Ben Mandelson of Womex; Gay McKeon of NPU; and Daithí Kearney of Dundalk Institute of Technology as well as musicians, Ron Block, Niamh Parsons, Gabriel Gonzalez, Jessica Willis Fisher and Gráinne Hunt.

Further information on the conference (including booking application) is available from <https://www.showingroots.com/>

More folk on Radio Ulster

While much about the re-organisation of its broadcasting operations by BBC Northern Ireland has been regressive with cuts to many local services, one small bright spot has been the extension to Lynette Fay's *Folk Club* on Radio Ulster. Moving from Fridays from 10.30pm until 11.35pm, her new slot will be on Saturday from 8pm until 10pm.

The other traditional music programme, *Blas Ceoil* with Caoimhe Ní Chathail – which preceded *Folk Club* on Fridays – has now moved to Thursday evening at the earlier time of 8pm.

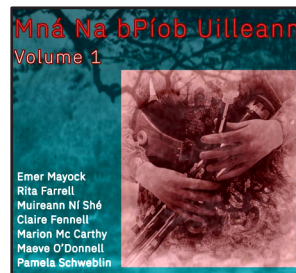
If you miss either of the programmes, you can catch up with them on BBC Sounds – either through the website or the app.

NPU issues first compilation album of female pipers

The first volume of *Mná na bPíob Uilleann* has just been released by Na Píobairí Uilleann.

The album is the first in what is intended to be a series of records showcasing the many women – both in Ireland and globally – who are now playing the pipes – an instrument once considered to be an almost exclusively male preserve.

The artists featured on *Mná na bPíob Uilleann* represent a wide range of styles, reflecting their influences and geographical locations as well as their own



personalities and musical tastes.

The seven uilleann pipers who appear on this impressive album are Emer Mayock, Rita Farrell, Claire Fennell, Muireann Ní Shé, Marion McCarthy, Maeve O'Donnell and Pamela Schwebelin.



Queen of harps: Lauren O'Neill (Photo: Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland)

New CEO for Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland

Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland has announced the appointment of Lauren O'Neill as the new Chief Executive Officer of the organisation.

Lauren is a sought-after traditional harper, teacher and researcher from Glenuillin, Co. Derry, who has performed both nationally and internationally as a traditional musician.

Having completed her undergraduate degree in Irish Language and Literature with Music followed by a Masters in Music, Lauren's keen interest in historical and contemporary Irish harp practices was reflected in her recently completed practice-led PhD research into the Gaelic bardic poetry and harping traditions of Ireland.

Throughout her doctoral research she presented her work at various events such as the Joint SMI/ICTM Post-graduate Conference, *Aduaidh: Comhdháil Cois Laoi ar Dhúchas Uladh 2018* and as a part of the TG4 Gradam Ceoil Fringe events with the Irish Traditional Music Archive.

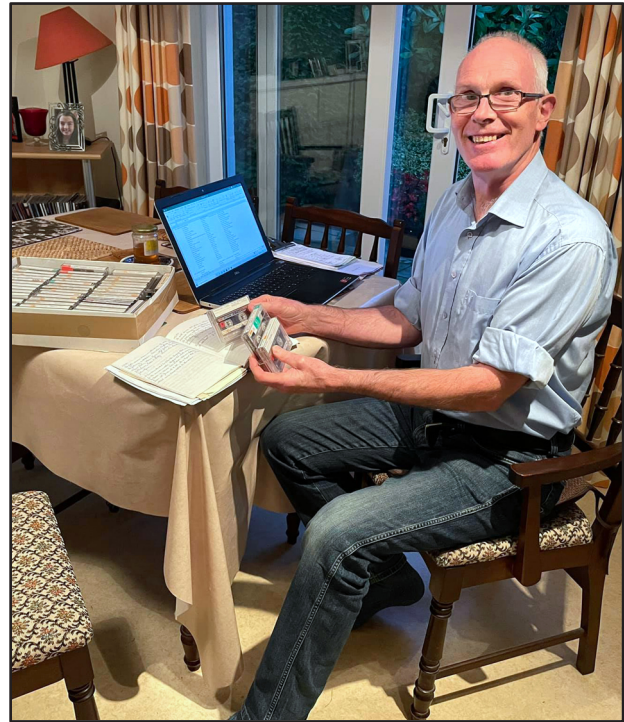
Lauren received the Degenhardt scholarship in

2018 enabling her to travel to Scotland to explore historical harp music manuscripts and present her work at the Association of Celtic Students Annual Conference 2019.

Throughout her sixteen years' experience as a harper, she has performed for dignitaries such as President Michael D. Higgins and the European Parliament.

Along with TV and radio appearances in both Irish and English on programmes such as Seth Lakeman's 2020 *Folk Map of the British Isles*, the TG4/BBC Alba series *Sruth* (2021) and ILBF/TG4/BBC Gaeilge *Beart Bunting*, Lauren has been invited to perform and teach at festivals throughout Ireland, Europe and North America.

Lauren is a director of both the Derry and Inishowen Harp Ensembles and has been a member of the Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland Advisory Group on the promotion of harping.



Song archive: John O'Byrne with his collection of cassette tapes which Michael Fortune has now digitised (Photo: Michael Fortune)

Traditional singing archive now online

Recordings of 876 traditional songs originally made in the early 1990s have been saved from digital deterioration and made available for free to the public.

Produced by folklorist Michael Fortune, the County Wexford Traditional Singers Archive has preserved 876 tracks recorded over a five-year period from January 1991 to February 1996 by John O'Byrne and Phil Berry from the County Wexford Traditional Singers.

John and Phil have been organising traditional singing sessions throughout Wexford for over 30 years and with his trusty tape recorder in hand, John managed to record songs in both English and Irish by over 150 singers.

In September 2021 John O'Byrne handed a box of cassettes to Michael Fortune, who carefully digitised and re-mastered the collection into audio files. Some of the tapes had deteriorated over the years, but the majority

of the recordings remained in good condition.

In 2022, Fortune and the group secured further funding from the Arts Department of Wexford County Council via their Creative Communities Scheme.

The audio files were then transferred to video format – complete with each song chapter marked with details of the singer, the song and the date of the recording.

The recordings have now been made available to the public via the YouTube pages of Wexford Traditional Singers and of Michael Fortune (folklore.ie), where each recording has been catalogued with singer, song and their location, and additionally chapter marked so the listener can easily skip from song to song.



Doctor in the House: Dr. Verena Commins (left) congratulates Máirtín O'Connor, on his honorary doctorate from the University of Galway (Photo: Verena Commins).

Doc Máirtín

Master accordionist, Máirtín O'Connor was conferred with an honorary doctorate by the University of Galway, recently.

In an address to mark the conferral, Irish Studies lecturer and fellow musician, Dr Verena Commins noted that Máirtín O'Connor has a “trademark deceptive ease

of performance, belying the dexterity and technical skill within his playing. The “magic of what happens between fingers and keyboard” is central to “the O'Connor oeuvre.”

She noted that Máirtín changed “the trajectory of the button accordion in Ireland, bringing a new harmonic sensibility both within and without the tradition.”

Cáirde na Cruite Festival

This year's An Chuirt Chruitreachta international harp festival – organised by Cáirde na Cruite – will take place at An Grianán, Termonfeckin, Co. Louth from Sunday June 25 to Friday June 30.

The festival programme – which will include public concerts as well as workshops and talks will be confirmed shortly and posted online at <https://www.cairdenacruite.com/festival-schedule>



Honouring Woody's Legacy: Nora Guthrie

Whose land?

The family of the late Woody Guthrie has strongly disavowed the use of the singer's classic composition, *This Land is Your Land*, by a Republican legislator in the US Senate.

After Sen. Josh Hawley referenced Guthrie's 1940 song when introducing the This Land is Our Land Act, S. 684 – which would “ban Chinese corporations and individuals associated with the Chinese Communist Party from owning United States agricultural land,” Guthrie's daughter, Nora, said the family rejected Hawley's use of the song.

“In this particular case, the co-opting or parodying of the lyric by those not aligned with Woody's lyrics – i.e., misrepresentation by autocrats, racists, white nationalists, anti-labor, insurrectionists, etc – is not condoned,” she said.

While the family recognised that *This Land is Your Land* would be used

for political purposes from time to time, Nora added: “we do not consider Josh Hawley in any way a representative of Woody's values. Therefore, we would never endorse or approve of his reference to Woody's lyrics.”

Her father's song, she said, is “more of a vision of democracy. The song simply reiterates the concept, by the people, for the people,” she said.



Vision of Democracy: Woody Guthrie in March 1943 (Photo: Al Aumuller/New York World-Telegram & the Sun/US Library of Congress)



Traditional Artist in Residence: Barry Kerr

Barry 'resides' at UCC

Barry Kerr has been named as Traditional Artist in Residence at University College Cork for 2023 by the Arts Council, in association with the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences (UCC) and the School of Film, Music and Theatre (UCC).

The musician, composer and visual artist will deliver a series of concerts, workshops, and classes during his one-year residency.

Originally from Lough Neagh in County Armagh, Barry is an alumnus of the Armagh Pipers' Club, and – like the club's co-founder, Brian Vallely – Barry is not only an exceptional multi-instrumentalist but also an acclaimed exponent of the visual arts.

His recent work, such as his film, *Fuascail*, released in 2022, has explored connections between these two complementary creative impulses.

As a performer, Barry has played on some of the most prestigious stages in the world, from Radio City Music Hall in New York to the Greek Theatre in Los Angeles as well as Dublin's National Concert Hall.

As a composer, his tunes and songs have been recorded by a number of bands and artists including Flook, Beoga, Karan Casey and Brian Finnegan.

In 2020 Barry received the prestigious Liam O'Flynn award from the National Concert Hall and the Arts Council – which included an NCH residency after which he released *Cairn*, an album of original compositions.

At UCC Barry will join a team of acclaimed artists including Karan Casey, Máire Ní Chéilleachair, Bobby Gardiner, Mary Mitchell-Ingoldsby, Colm Murphy, Connie O'Connell, Conal Ó Gráda, Jack Talty and Niall Vallely.

Loughran to lead Folkways



Director and Curator: Maureen Loughran (Photo: Clare Loughran).

Former Irish Traditional Music Archive staffer, Maureen Loughran, has been named as the new director and curator of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.

The Washington native holds a PhD in ethnomusicology from Brown University. A career music producer, archivist and scholar, she has also served as deputy director of the Center for Traditional Music and Dance in New York.

Homeward bound



Marie O'Byrne returns to glór as its new Director (Photo: glór)

Ennis native, Marie O'Byrne, is returning to her home town to take up the position of Director of the glór arts centre.

In an earlier stint at glór Marie was responsible for traditional arts programming as well as production management before leaving to become Director of the Hawk's Well Theatre in Sligo in 2011.

With masters qualifications in Music Technology and Traditional Irish Music Performance, she has also worked in technical and production roles with major events such as Open House Festival Belfast, Doolin Folk Festival and Éigse Carlow.

Seeger records 'her song' again



Classic: Peggy Seeger

Veteran folk singer, Peggy Seeger has re-recorded *The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face* – the song written for and about her by Ewan MacColl, based on the Scottish folk song, *Friendless Mary*.

Peggy first recorded the song in 1957 and it was subsequently covered by Roberta Flack in 1969. But Peggy cut the song from her live set in 1989 after MacColl died. But she now feels able to sing the song again.



Livestreamed from Dunquin: Cormac Begley (Photo: Fonn)

Other Voices aim to capture hearts and minds

The Other Voices team is launching a new project, *Anam – Songs for Hearts and Minds*, to run through May. The multi-genre series of concerts will be streamed via othervoices.ie every Thursday.

The event of most interest to fans of folk and traditional music is likely to be the last in the series on May 28 when a stunning line-up of Ye Vagabonds, Cormac Begley, Sam Amidon, Muireann Nic Amhlaoiabh, Gerry Byrne and Billy Mag Fhlionn will perform at the Blasket Centre (Ionad an Bhlascaoid) in Dunquin in Co. Kerry.

Produced in partnership with the Republic's Office of Public Works and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the series will feature three more heritage sites – Castletown House in Kildare, Desmond Castle in Newcastlewest and Cahir Castle in Tipperary – as fine backdrops to the music.



Collaboration: Uilleann piper, Mark Redmond (right) with pipa player, Constance Wong.

From Gorey to Hong Kong – from the pipes to the pipa

Gorey uilleann piper, Mark Redmond, has just completed a trip to the other side of the globe to share a stage with Chinese pipa performer Charmaine Wong in a special cross-cultural exchange.

The two virtuoso players played a concert in Hong Kong on Sunday, May 30.

The pipa is a four-string plucked lute in use in China since the fourth century AD. Originally held like a guitar, the pipa's silk strings were plucked with a large triangular plectrum before musicians eventually used

their finger-nails to pluck the strings, while holding the pipa in a more upright position.

Now the strings are mostly made of nylon-wrapped steel and are usually played with short picks attached to the fingers. While it is a staple of the orchestra for Chinese opera, the pipa is often featured as a virtuoso solo instrument.

At the concert in Sha Tin Town Hall – organised by Hong Kong's Avant Music Group Association – Mark and Charmaine will perform a programme of Irish traditional airs and Chinese

music respectively, before playing together in an innovative collaboration involving arrangements and original works by Hong Kong-based composer, Dr. Yip Kim-Fung, and by Dublin-based composer, Dr. David Bremner (who previously worked with Mark Redmond on the album, *L'Air du Temps*, in 2014).

As well as the original compositions and the Irish and Chinese traditional pieces, the programme may also seek to find common ground in elements of tango and jazz.

Karan's album is international hit

During March singer-songwriter, Karan Casey was the most-played artist on folk radio in the US; had the top album (*Nine Apples of Gold*); and had four of the top 10 songs, according to charts compiled by Folk Alliance International (FAI) based on radio play-lists submitted to FOLKDJ-L – an electronic discussion group for DJs and others interested in folk-based music on the radio.

Her four top ten tracks were *The Rocks of Bawn* at No.4, *Sister I Am Here for You* and *Nine Apples of Gold* sharing No.6, and *When the Moon Gets Tangled* at No. 10.

A leading advocate for gender justice in folk and traditional music, Karan was one of co-founders of FairPlé. These concerns are reflected in the themes of some of the songs on the album.

The FAI's March albums, songs and artists charts are based on 12,727 airplays



reported on 428 playlists submitted by 120 different folk DJs.

Based in Kansas City, Missouri, the FAI is a non-profit organisation that aims

to serve, strengthen, and engage the global folk music community through preservation, presentation and promotion.

For review see page 58.

Joe wins Bonn Ór



Twenty-year-old Joe de Georgeo (*left*) from Minneapolis, Minnesota, won the recent Bonn Ór Sheáin Uí Riada competition, broadcast live on RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta in February.

This year's competition – which was focussed on the fiddle – brought fourteen finalists from both sides of the Atlantic to contend for the medal and the €2,500 first prize.

Among the high quality field were last year's Fiddler of London winner, Úna McGlinchey from Omagh, and this year's Ceoltoir Óg Gradam winner, Méabh Smyth from Armagh.

The judges for the competition were renowned fiddlers: Connie O'Connell, Éamon McGivney and Ciarán Ó Maonaigh.

For the final, Joe played two reels: *The Primrose Lass* and *The Bloom of Youth*.

Speaking after his success, Joe said: "Some amazing

musicians have won this in the past, and I'm really honoured, especially coming to it as an American, to now be part of that group of musicians. Playing in a solo competition like this was a new experience for me, and to win it was incredible."

Joe began taking violin lessons when he was four. He encountered Irish traditional music at the age of five when his family moved to Galway for a year.

On returning to the US, Joe and his sister began taking lessons with Jode Dowling at the Center for Irish Music in St Paul. As well as Dowling, his influences include James Kelly and flute player Seán Gavin, a former winner of the Seán Ó Riada competition.

Established in 2010 by Peadar Ó Riada, in honour of his father, Seán, with the support of RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta, the competition focuses on a different instrument – or set of instruments – each year.

Maynooth to host new research project on medieval singing

A prestigious European Research Council award of €2 million is to be made for a research project at Maynooth University on medieval music communities in Ireland and Britain, with the aim of revealing the meaning of music and singing in day-to-day life.

Professor Karen Desmond will recruit and lead a research team at Maynooth University's Department of Music that will explore approximately 100 surviving manuscripts of polyphony – songs where two or more melodies are sung at the same time.

As many of these manuscripts are now damaged and fragmentary, they will require significant digital reconstruction and re-imagining.

Professor Desmond's *Brokensong* research project will examine singing in medieval Ireland and Britain during a transformative period of western music history, from about 1150-1350, when there was an exponential growth in the number of manuscripts devoted to polyphony.

Using methods from music and medieval studies, and digital humanities, the project will aim to answer the question: What does it mean for a culture to write its music down?



Professor Karen Desmond

The research project will investigate why medieval singers increasingly used music notation in their creative activities, and what this act of 'writing-down' meant to, and for musical communities and cultural heritage.

Professor Desmond will commence her research project at Maynooth University in July. She is currently Professor of Music at Brandeis University in Massachusetts, USA.

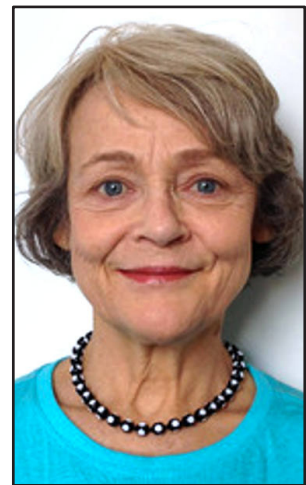
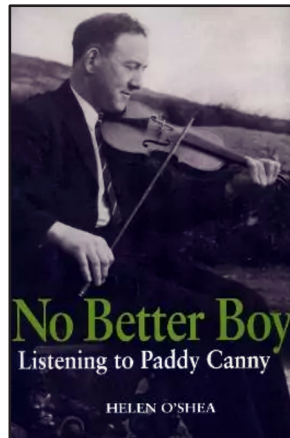
Set up by the European Union in 2007, the European Research Council is the premier European funding organisation for excellent frontier research. It funds creative researchers of any nationality and age, to run projects based across Europe.

New Paddy Canny biography to be launched at ITMA

A new biography on the East Clare fiddle maestro, Paddy Canny, written by the Australian ethnomusicologist, Helen O'Shea, is to be launched by recent Gradam Ceoil recipient, Fintan Vallely, at the Irish Traditional Music Archive's Dublin headquarters on May 15.

O'Shea's *No Better Boy* tells the remarkable story of Paddy Canny, whose music was famed for its virtuosity and sophistication.

In the 1950s, when he was in his thirties and at the pinnacle of his career, Canny became a national radio star, played solo in Carnegie Hall, toured England with the renowned Tulla Céilí Band, and made a much-loved recording – all a far cry from his youth on a small farm when the gramophone records that fired his musical imagination had to be borrowed from neighbours.



Author: Helen O'Shea

In *No Better Boy* O'Shea distils the stories of success and adversity that Paddy Canny told his family and friends, radio interviewers and historians – stories that illuminate rural life in mid-twentieth-century Ireland at a time of major social and economic change, including the decline and revival of traditional music and dance.

The book also includes annotated transcriptions of music played by Paddy Canny and his contemporaries, sourced from archives and personal collections as well as commercial recordings.

No Better Boy is the latest in a series of books and research papers written by Helen O'Shea on various aspects of Irish traditional music, including her well received book, *The Making of Irish Traditional Music* (2008).

Death of Gordon Lightfoot announced

As we go to press, we have learnt of the death of the Canadian folk singer, Gordon Lightfoot.

Aged 84, Lightfoot died of natural causes in Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto on May 1, according to his publicist, Victoria Lord.

He had been troubled by ill-health recently: in April he was forced to cancel all of his planned gigs for the rest of the year.

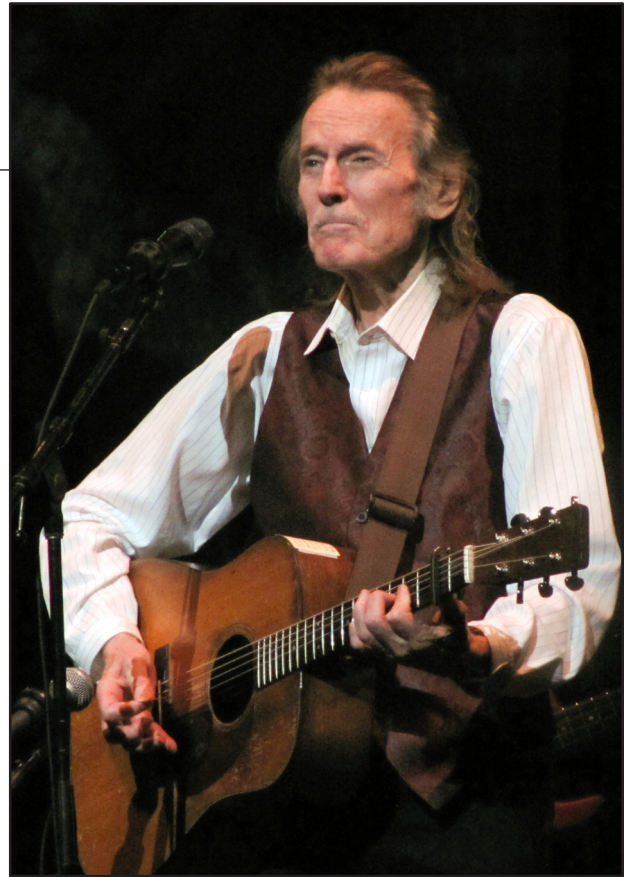
Earlier in his career, he underwent extensive hospitalisation in 2002 after suffering an abdominal aortic aneurysm. He had previously suffered a bout of Bell's palsy in the 1970s and had overcome alcoholism in the 1980s.

In 2006, he suffered a minor stroke in the middle of a show, which affected his right hand. But in typical fashion, he persevered with physiotherapy until he eventually regained full use of his hand, and began performing again within a year.

Outside Canada, Lightfoot is better known as a songwriter with over 400 songs to his credit.

His breakthrough international hit was the 1971 song, *If You Could Read My Mind*. His song, *Early Mornin' Rain*, has been covered by a variety of other artists ranging from Judy Collins and Bob Dylan to Elvis Presley.

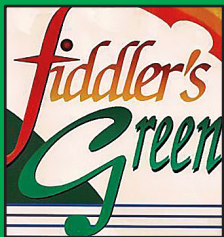
But Lightfoot's favourite among his own compositions was the more traditionally



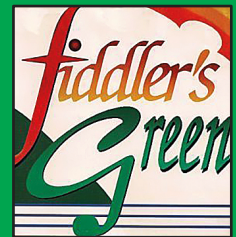
Gordon Lightfoot (Photo: Aimielee CC BY-SA 3.0).

oriented *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald*, a dramatic retelling of the story of the sinking of an

American freighter on Lake Superior, which claimed the lives of 29 crewmen in 1975,



Fiddlers Green
International Festival 2023
Rostrevor, Co. Down. July 26-30



Dervish | Luka Bloom | Sands Family
Mike McGoldrick, John McCusker & John Doyle
Bríd Harper, Dermot Byrne & Jim Murray
Archie Fisher | The London Lasses | Sven Erik
And many more



Paying the Piper

Basic Income for the Arts pilot scheme reaches important milestone

After six months of operation, a milestone has been reached in the Republic's landmark Basic Income for the Arts pilot scheme as participants will now be invited to engage in a research programme which, over the three-year lifespan of the scheme, will assess the impact of the payment system for artists, creative arts workers and the arts sector.

The first in a series of six-monthly questionnaires will issue to all participants in the Basic Income for the Arts (BIA) scheme in the coming weeks.

The collection of this data will provide invaluable insights into how the BIA scheme impacts on elements of the life and practice of an artist or creative arts worker, including:

- income earned from the arts and other sectors, as well as household income



'Innovative': Minister Catherine Martin

- personal expenditure and practice expenditure
- the living and working conditions of participants
- the nature of a participant's artistic or creative practice
- the participants' perceptions of working in the arts sector
- the time spent by participants on a variety of activities, and whether they are satisfied with the amount of time spent on these activities
- health, well-being and life satisfaction.

Through their contribution to the research programme, participants will provide the department's research team with invaluable evidence for the evaluation of the pilot.

The team outlined how the research programme would unfold in an online briefing to 230 scheme participants.

A comprehensive survey will be conducted every six months,

allowing the research team to examine and track responses over the duration of the pilot, and to compare responses from those who are in receipt of the BIA grant with those from other artists who have agreed to participate in a control group.

The Republic's Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gael-tacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin, said:

"I believe that the scheme, and the research programme will have a significant impact on the way Ireland supports artists in the future. This is truly innovative on a global level and I hope that other countries will follow Ireland's lead.

"BIA participants know too well the precarious and low-paid nature of a career in the arts and my ambition is that the basic income can remove that precarity and allow them to focus on creative practice."



TG4 announces 2023 Gradam Ceoil winners

The winners of six of the seven TG4 Gradam Ceoil awards for 2023 have been announced ahead of the winners' concert which will be broadcast live on TG4 on Sunday May 2023 23 from the University Concert Hall in Limerick.

Now in their twenty-sixth year the awards are intended to recognise artists who have advanced and preserved traditional music in Ireland.

TG4 Gradam Ceoil 2023 Recipients

Ceoltóir/Musician: **Mick O'Brien**

Amhránaí /Singer: **Síle Denvir**

Ceoltóir Óg/Young Musician: **Méabh Smyth**

Gradam Saoil/Lifetime Achievement: **Fintan Vallely**

Cumadóir/Composer: **Maurice Lennon**

Grúpa Ceoil/Music Group: **Mick, Louise and Michelle Mulcahy**

Gradam Comaoine/Outstanding Contribution **Frank McArdle**

Award winners: (back row from left): Fintan Vallely, Maurice Lennon and Méabh Smyth; (front row from left) Michelle, Louise and Mick Mulcahy, Mick O'Brien and Síle Denvir (Photo: TG4) ▲

Musician of the Year: Mick O'Brien ▶

Musician of the Year: Mick O'Brien

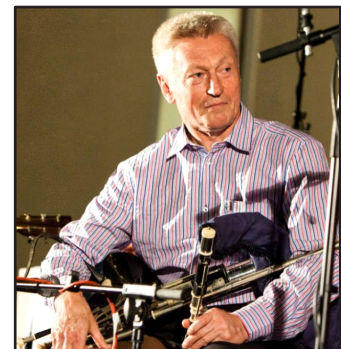
Born in Dublin in 1961, Mick O'Brien began learning to play the pipes at age 9 with Leo Rowsome, Seán Seery and Mick Touhey at the Pipers' Club in Dublin's Thomas Street. He later attended classes at Na Píobairí Uilleann and became inspired by the playing of Patsy Touhey.

Mick's father, Dinny, a noted accordion player, was also a significant source of inspiration.

As well as performing as a solo artist, in duos, trios and much larger ensembles – including orchestras, Mick has appeared on a number of albums with The Dubliners, Altan and Charlie Lennon, as well as his own albums *May Morning Dew* (1996) and *The Ancient Voice of Ireland* (1999).

His 2003 album *Kitty Lie Over* with fiddler Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh continues to be widely acclaimed, as does their 2011 album, *Deadly Buzz*.

More recently Mick has played as a member of a trio with Emer Mayock on flute and his daughter Aoife Ní



Bhriain on fiddle. The group has released two albums – *Tunes from the Goodman Manuscripts* (2013) and *More Tunes from the Goodman Manuscripts* (2021) – as part of an ongoing project to promote the music collected by Canon James Goodman in the southwest of Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century.

Singer of the Year: Síle Denvir

Sean-nós singer, harpist, and academic, Síle Denvir has been deeply influenced by her upbringing in Conamara and by the region's distinctive sean-nós singing style.

As well as performing as a soloist and in duos, Síle is a founding member of the band Líadan and has collaborated with many musicians such as The Chieftains, Martin Hayes and the Common Ground Ensemble, Úna Monaghan, Liam Ó Maonlaí and her husband, Barry Kerr.

In 2018, she sang with the National Symphony Orchestra in the world premiere of Mícheál Ó Suilleabháin's *Fill Arís*, alongside previous Gradam winners, Iarla Ó Lionáird and Lillis Ó Laoire. In 2020, her singing featured on *Rogha Raelach Volume 1*, the first compilation album from Raelach Records. *Anamnesis*, her new album of sean-nós songs – made with cellist Caroline Dale and producer John Reynolds – is due for release this year.

A lecturer at Dublin City University, Síle is particularly interested in Irish language song in a modern context. She has published two books on Conamara songwriters, *Tom a' tSeoighe: Amhráin* (2020) and *Ciarán Ó Fátharta: Amhráin* (2008).

Other projects include a video series on the work of Tom a' tSeoighe for *Molscéal* on TG4 in 2020 and a CD and booklet on the music from the plays of Patrick Pearse – *Caith-réim: Ceol agus Amhráin ó Dhrámaí an Phiarsaigh*.

Síle is a regular contributor to television and radio programmes and also serves as the musical director of the young sean-nós group, Bláth na hÓige.



Young Musician of the Year: Méabh Smyth ▶

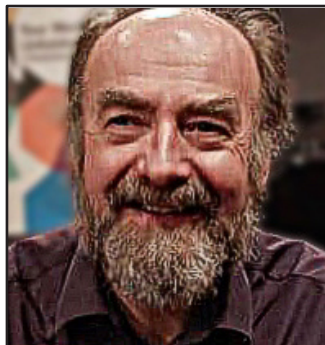


Young Musician of the Year: Méabh Smyth

Armagh fiddler, Méabh Smyth has been playing traditional music since she was 7. An alumna of the renowned Armagh Pipers Club, her playing is inspired by the rhythmic style of South Ulster and Donegal.

With two fiddle-playing parents, Méabh performs regularly in a duo with her brother, Tiarnán. They released a self-titled EP in 2017 – a year which also saw them reach the semi-finals of the BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Musician of the Year.

Méabh won the Ed Reavy Fiddle Player of the Year award in 2016, and first prize at the Fiddler of London competition in 2021. Earlier this year, she competed in the final of the Seán Ó Riada Bonn Óir competition alongside her sister, Annie Smyth. She also featured in *Sruth* – the TG4 series on young musicians. Méabh was recently named as one of six recipients of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Young Musicians' Platform Award.



Singer of the Year: Síle Denvir ◀

Lifetime Achievement: Fintan Vallely ▶

Lifetime Achievement: Fintan Vallely

Flute player, author, educator and songwriter, Fintan Vallely was born in rural Armagh in 1949. He has played whistle, flute and uilleann pipes from his teenage years. As well as performing throughout Ireland, and in Europe, North America, Asia and Australia, Fintan has recorded several albums, including *Fintan Vallely – Traditional Irish Flute Music* (1979), *The Starry Lane to Monaghan* (1992) and *Merrijig Creek* (2021).

He published the first tutor for the Irish flute *Timber – the Flute Tutor* in 1986, went on to study ethnomusicology at Queen's University Belfast, and from 1994–99 was *The Irish Times* and *Sunday Tribune* traditional music correspondent and reviewer.

He edited *The Companion to Irish Traditional Music* – an encyclopaedia of traditional music in Ireland involving more than 200 contributors. It was published in 1999. A second edition was published in 2011, with a third edition due to be published this year by Cork University Press. His latest book is a major history of the bodhrán.

His published work also includes biographies, and academic journal articles, chapters and reviews. He has organised major conferences in traditional music including the 1996 Crosbhealach an Cheoil/The Crossroads

Gradam awards

continued

Conference with Liz Doherty, Hammy Hamilton, Eithne Vallely and Cormac Breathnach.

He has also lectured in traditional music at NUI Maynooth, University of Ulster, Trinity College Dublin, Dundalk Institute of Technology, Queen's University Belfast and the University of Newcastle.

In 2012, he developed *Compánach*, an audio-visual concert interpretation of his *Companion* book, which he toured internationally with musicians including fiddlers Gerry O'Connor and Liz Doherty, and piper Tiarnán Ó Duinnchinn, along with singers Máire Ní Choilm, Róisín Chambers and Karan Casey, and dancers Sibéal Davitt and Emma O'Sullivan.

Compánach also features on CD and DVD. Fintan teaches flute at Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy in Co. Clare annually and also at workshops in Ireland and abroad.

Composer of the Year: Maurice Lennon whose late father, Ben, won the Gradam Ceoil for Lifetime Achievement in 2011 (Photo: TG4).



Composer of the Year: Maurice Lennon

Fiddle player and composer Maurice Lennon was born in 1958 into the Lennon family of traditional musicians in Co. Leitrim. His father was the well-known fiddle player and teacher Ben Lennon – who received the Gradam Ceoil Lifetime Achievement Award in 2011 – and his uncle, Charlie Lennon is a renowned composer, pianist and fiddle player who also received the composer award in 2006.

Lennon began playing traditional music at age 13. At

17 he won the Senior Fiddle Championship at the All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil in 1977. In the same year, he founded the folk-rock band Stockton's Wing with flute and whistle player Paul Roche, banjo and mandolin player Kieran Hanrahan, guitarist and singer Tony Callinan and bodhrán player Tommy Hayes.

The band achieved international success in the 1980s and 1990s and released many albums including *Stockton's Wing* (1978), *Take a Chance* (1980), and *Full Flight* (1986).

Gradaoiri: (from left) Michelle Mulcahy, Fintan Vallely, Méabh Smyth, Síle Denvir, Mi O'Brien, Louise and Mick Mulcahy, and Maurice Lennon (Photo: TG4)





After leaving the band, Lennon's solo career has seen him collaborate with singers Seán Keane, Johnny McEvoy, Ronnie Drew and Finbar Furey, as well as performing a central role in the music of Irish dance production *Ragús*.

His most famous composition *If Ever You Were Mine* was recorded by Cherish the Ladies and featured on their 1992 album, *The Back Door*, and also by Canadian fiddler, Natalie MacMaster.

Other artists to record his compositions include Noel Hill, the Kilfenora Céilí Band, Blazin' Fiddles, Brian Rooney, Karen Tweed, Pride of New York, Liam O'Brien, Jerry O'Sullivan, Cathy Vard, Liam Lawton and the London Lassies.

Lennon has released a number of acclaimed albums as a solo artist, including *Brian Boru – High King Of Tara* (2001) and his solo fiddle album *The Little Ones* (2013), which included compositions *The Road to Garrison* and *The Belltable Waltz*.

Music Group of the Year: The Mulcahy Family

Last year a new award was introduced, the Music Group award and this year it goes to The Mulcahy Family. Mick, Louise and Michelle Mulcahy are a family of musicians from Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick.

All three are successful solo musicians as well as being highly regarded as a trio. They have recorded four albums together, representing the styles and repertoires of Sliabh Luachra, Clare and East Galway – *The Mulcahy Family* (1999), *Notes From the Heart* (2005), *Reelin in Tradition* (2009) and *The Reel Note* (2016).

Born in Kilmainham, Co. Kerry, Mick plays B/C, C#/D, C/C# and D/D# systems of accordion, as well as the melodeon and concertina. He was a member of the Brosna Céilí Band – winners of the All-Ireland title in 1972. An acclaimed composer and performer, he has also released two solo albums, *Mick Mulcahy* (1976) and *Mick Mulcahy and Friends* (1990).

The Mulcahy Family:
(from left) Michelle, Mick and Louise Mulcahy. ▲

His older daughter, Louise, began playing the tin whistle at age 5 and later moved onto the flute, with Matt Molloy and Eamon Cotter key influences on her style.

At age 13 she started to learn the uilleann pipes – taught by Dave Hegarty in Tralee and in monthly master-classes at Na Píobairí Uilleann – and is now a highly regarded exponent on what has been a largely male-dominated instrument. In great demand as a performer, Louise also offers tuition in the pipes and flute, and has released a solo album, *Tuning the Road* in 2014.

She was selected for the Arts Council's Markievicz Award in 2021 and in 2022 she received the Liam O'Flynn Award jointly administered by the Arts Council and the NCH.

In 2021, Louise presented *Mná na bPíob* on TG4 – a feature-length documentary film based on her research into the history of women in piping.

Her sister, Michelle, also learned the whistle from age 5 and went on to play the harp, button accordion, concertina, melodeon, fiddle and piano.

In 2006 she was named as the Young Musician of the Year in the TG4 Gradam Ceoil.

As well as performing, Michelle is also pursuing an academic career. Her current PhD research topic, which explores the harp traditions of Burma and Ireland, is the first of its kind.

Outstanding Contribution: Frank McArdle

Frank McArdle is a musician, educator and founder of the St. Roch's Céilí Band in Glasgow. Having grown up in the small town of Dalmellington in Ayrshire, he moved to Glasgow and worked as a maths teacher in St. Roch's Secondary School where he founded a céilí band for students – the St. Roch's Ceilí Band – in 1978.

f

ITMA posts iconic *Ceol* journal online

Breandán Breathnach's family authorise public access

The Irish Traditional Music Archive has republished the late Breandán Breathnach's periodical *Ceol: A Journal of Irish Music* on its website for public access with the agreement of Breandán's family which retains the copyright of the magazine.

The eight-volume *Ceol* was published at intervals from June 1963 to July 1986, and featured articles, studies, song texts and music notation, as well as reviews of albums and books about traditional music.

Public access to *Ceol* via the ITMA website will enable researchers and interested readers to gain a unique insight into the renaissance of traditional music from the 1960s onwards through the eyes of one of its principal movers and his supporting contributors.

A civil servant with a family background in uilleann piping, Breandán Breathnach financed the launch of *Ceol*. Additional funding was secured subsequently from subscribers,



Authoritative voice:
The late Breandán Breathnach (Photo: ITMA) ▶



sponsors, advertisers and – eventually – the Arts Council. While Breandán was responsible for much of the content over the lifetime of the journal, additional material was provided by volunteer writers and researchers.

In 1965, his interest in traditional music was placed on a professional footing when he was transferred to the Department of Education to work on developing a national collection of traditional dance music – which he subsequently continued in the Department of Irish Folklore at University College, Dublin.

In 1968 he became the chairman of the newly created Na Piobairí Uilleann, which required Breandán to under-

take a variety of roles such as fundraiser, organiser and lecturer to establish the fledgeling body.

Breandán's drive and determination during this crucial formative stage sowed the seeds for the renaissance of interest in pipers and piping and helped to save the instrument from near extinction.

Along with editing the NPU's journal, *An Piobaire*, Breandán also contributed to Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy, and the Folk Music Society of Ireland.

The author of numerous articles and books, Breandán was widely recognised as the leading authority on Irish traditional music at the time of his death in 1985.

Author's voice: *Ceol Rince na hÉireann 5* – one of Breandán's many books. ◀

Conversation: Breandán Breathnach with sean-nós singer, Coilín 'Ac Donncha (Photo: Oidhreacht an Chláir). ▶





Ned Harrigan (top right) and Tony Hart (bottom left) on a poster for one of their touring shows. The lithograph was produced by Albert Clarence Lefman in New York (Image courtesy of the Harry T. Peters America on Stone Lithography Collection in the Smithsonian Institution). ◀

Irish Americans, Edward Harrigan and Tony Hart, who forged one of the best-known theatrical partnerships of the nineteenth century, along with composer, David Braham, have been widely acclaimed as pivotal figures in the creation of the American musical.

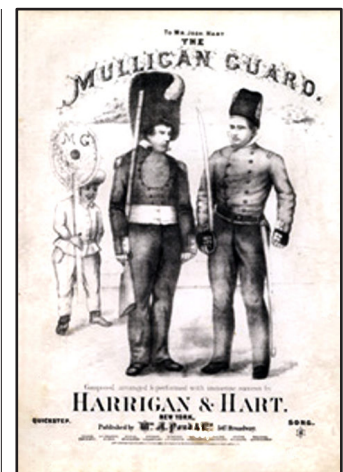
Born in New York, Edward Harrigan (1844-1911), often known as Ned Harrigan, was an actor, producer and songwriter. He was an apprentice in the shipbuilding trade before running away from home and launching a theatrical career in San Francisco, where he performed as a “sketch artist” in minstrel and variety shows working his way eastwards through the mining towns.

In time, he was not only an actor, but a director, producer and author of countless sketches, 33 plays and over 200 songs. William Dean Howells called Harrigan “the Dickens of America” due to

Fathers of the American Musical



Ted Harrigan and Tony Hart appeared in over 40 different shows in *The Mulligan Guard* series, written by Harrigan with music by David Braham. Many of the shows ran for over a hundred performances. ◀ ▶





his realistic writing about life in New York for working people and his role in creating a new native form of drama – telling a full story with music, rather than a show featuring a series of variety sketches.

He met Tony Hart (1855-1891) around 1870 in Chicago, and the two formed a vaudeville team that would last for the next 14 years. Harrigan brought his baritone voice and talent for writing witty comic dialogue to the team, while Hart was distinguished by his falsetto singing style, energetic acting, and talent for female impersonations. Harrigan's future father-in-law, Dave Braham, composed music for the act.

By the mid-1870s, Harrigan and Hart had relocated to New York, taken over management of their own theatre, and begun



Composer: David Braham

moving away from variety shows to full-length musical dramas. The shows reflected the ethnic diversity of New York at the time, depicting how Irish immigrant characters interacted – and often clashed – with the growing population of blacks and German Americans in New York at the time. Harrigan led the company as actor-manager.

In 1873, Harrigan and Hart scored a major hit with a song, dance and comedy skit set on the Lower East Side called *The Mulligan Guard*. It chronicled the adventures of an Irish neighbourhood militia, one of the pseudo-military groups popular at the time.

Harrigan played guard leader, Dan Mulligan, while Hart appeared as various characters, including the Mulligan son Tommy and the family's black maid Rebecca – a role he performed in a dress, wig, and blackface. They expanded on their success with some forty Mulligan Guard shows performed at Broadway's Theatre Comique, where they were co-managers. Many of the shows ran for over a hundred performances.

Portraying everyday people with humour and humanity, the Mulligan productions became especially popular among middle and working-class Americans. They won

accolades from critics for their accurate rendering of ethnic dialects and slang, as well as their realistic costumes and stage designs.

The songs Ned Harrigan co-wrote with Dave Braham were among the most popular of the era, including *The Mulligan Guard March*, *The Babies on Our Block*, *McNally's Row of Flats* and *Maggie Murphy's Home*.

The shows were also innovative in format, drawing on minstrel, burlesque and variety show traditions but also making greater use of connected story lines. After the Theatre Comique was torn down in 1881, the pair moved to the New Theatre Comique, but it was destroyed by a fire. The partnership dissolved after a dispute in 1885.

In 1890 Ned Harrigan opened Harrigan's Park Theatre (later to become the Garrick Theatre)



legacy : harrigan and hart

on West 35th Street New York and continued to write plays until 1910. Ill-health forced him to retire from the stage in 1903, and he died in 1911. But in 1908 his protégé, George M. Cohan (famously played by James Cagney in the film, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*), brought tears to his mentor's eyes with a tribute song: *H-A-double-R-I-G-A-N spells Harrigan!*

Tony Hart was born Anthony Cannon in Worcester, Massachusetts. He was said to be the shortest member of his Irish American family and fought back against teasing so fiercely that he was sent off to reform school.

He soon ran away to New York, where he sang and danced in saloons and worked with minstrel troupes and circuses before meeting Ned Harrigan. It was then that he changed his name to Tony Hart.

Hart was referred to as "joy and sunshine," and was mesmerising in both men's and women's roles. His female impressions were so good that the noted detective, Allan Pinkerton, refused to believe Hart was a man until he removed his wig.

According to *The Boston Traveller*, "Hart could play all the parts that seven Harrigans could write, and Harrigan could write what seven Harts could play."

Tony Hart married the actress, Gerta Granville, which started the friction leading to the break-up of his partner-

Before the break:
Ned Harrigan (*left*)
and Tony Hart



ship with Harrigan in 1885. Following the dissolution of his partnership with Harrigan and in stark contrast to the success of the *Mulligan Guard* series, Hart only played a few roles in rather disappointing plays. However, as he was now

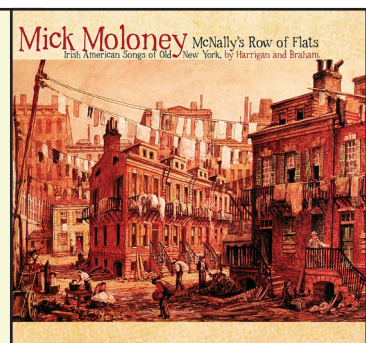
becoming increasingly unstable and was eventually committed to a mental institution – suffering from paresis, an inflammation of the brain caused by syphilis. Tragically he died at the age of 36.



Moloney and Harrigan

The late Mick Moloney (*left*) devoted a considerable amount of research capability into unearthing the songs that Ned Harrigan wrote in partnership with his father-in-law David Braham.

Mick then followed through by recording them for posterity on the album, *McNally's Row of Flats*, released in 2006, and continued to perform songs from the Harrigan repertoire throughout his life.





Tribute: (*above*) The simple inscription on the beach at Salthill in Co. Galway that was reportedly repeated on beaches around Ireland and in Marbella in Spain as well as in the snow in Boston and in Canada.

Ómós: Séamus Begley

Fans of traditional music around the world were devastated in January by the sudden death of one of their most beloved performers, Séamus Begley, from the Dingle peninsula who brought the music and folklore of West Kerry to international states – yet remained ever rooted to his local community.



Widely regarded as one of Ireland's finest accordion players and singers, Séamus Begley was born in Baile na bPoc in Corca Dhuibhne in the Dingle peninsula – the fifth of nine children – to a family surrounded by music. His father, Breannán, from nearby Baile na nGall, played the melodeon while his mother, Mary Ellen (née Lynch), was a fine singer in both Irish and English.

When his father opened a dance hall in nearby Muiríoch, the young Séamus and his brother, Breannán, became regular performers, driving the sets for the appreciative dancers.

In 2015, he told the *Irish Examiner* newspaper: “There was nine in the family. We sang all the time. In the evening, after milking the cows, there would be a huge sing-song. We also owned a dance-hall. The incentive was that if you learned a couple of tunes you’d to play at the céilí. I started when I was 13. It was fantastic.”

Begley’s love of music was infectious. His passion has been passed on to successive generations of his family – children



Séamus Begley

**Born: August 26
1949**

**Died: January 9
2023**

**Together again:
Steve Cooney and
Séamus Begley in
2014 ▼**

and grandchildren – while his younger brother, Breannán, is also an acclaimed accordion player and nephew, Cormac, is an award-winning concertina player.

Music gains traction

As the eldest son, Séamus inherited the family holding which he continued to farm alongside work as a silage contractor. He once conceded that his two great passions, apart from his family, were music and driving tractors.

So he was frequently seen out on the tractor with the accordion beside him in the cab to break up the work with a few tunes. He once confessed that when he was away touring abroad, he couldn’t wait to get home and get into his digger and do some-one’s garden. “I’m good at digging,” he said.

In recent years, Séamus converted an outhouse beside his family home into what he called a síbín, where he could welcome visitors from near and far for sessions.

Beneath what may have appeared to a stranger as a bluff and craggy exterior, Séamus possessed a marvelous sense of humour – earning a reputation as a master of mischief by deed and by word in both Irish and English at the heart of the company.

While he preferred to provide music to get his listeners on their feet dancing, he also possessed a uniquely beautiful singing voice, when he could be persuaded to sing – a voice so sweet and tender and with such feeling that he could weave a lyrical spell to quieten the room. Yet for many years, the voice was seldom heard by the wider world.



In praise of Séamus

It is with sadness that lovers of Irish music across the world will have heard of the death of Séamus Begley.

Séamus will be remembered as one of Ireland's finest accordion players as well as a beautiful singer. Growing up in a family rich in traditional Irish music in Baile na bPoc in the west Kerry Gaeltacht, his recordings and performances captured not only the music of his upbringing but also a knowledge of music far beyond these shores.

From his early albums with his sister Máire starting 50 years ago, to his landmark collaboration with Steve Cooney on the album, *Meitheal*, and in so many more works besides, including with Jim Murray and Tim Edey, Séamus has left us a lasting musical legacy.

Sabina and I had the pleasure of hosting Séamus for performances in Áras an Uachtaráin, including at the State dinner held in honour of their Majesties, the King and Queen of the Netherlands in June 2019, on which occasion he was accompanied on vocals by his daughter, Méabh, and on guitar by Donogh Hennessy.

As with all those who knew Séamus, we will remember him for his talent, his warmth and his sense of fun, that lasting impression which he left on all those who he met. He will be deeply missed.

May I express my deepest condolences to his wife Mary, to his children Breannán, Eoin, Niall and Méabh, to his extended family and to his wide circle of friends and musical colleagues.

Michael D. Higgins President of Ireland

He was a wild man. Ferociously unfettered. Music poured through him and found nothing to block it. We adored that wildness, and what it did to his music. And his singing. We loved the light and shade of it, the force and the tenderness... it was good to be around him.

Paula Carroll Clare FM

The finest of all Irish musicians, and perhaps the most beautiful singer I've ever heard, the great Séamus Ó Beaglaoich, known in the other tongue as Seamus Begley, has passed away. He was a friend, a king and a god. Travel on well, great spirit.

Mike Scott The Waterboys

We are truly heartbroken at the loss this evening of Séamus Begley, an absolute giant of music, song and fun for so many years. It has been such a privilege to spend many great times with Séamus on and off the stage and the joy he has left with so many all around the world, is a legacy that will be keenly felt and remembered for a long time. *Ní bheidh a leithéid arís ann. Guímid comhbhrón lena chlann agus a chairde ar fud an domhain.*

Téada

His first album, *An Ciarraíoch Mallaithe*, was recorded with his eldest sister, Máire, on the Gael Linn label in 1973. The duo's second album, *Planctai Baile na bPoc*, was released in 1989.

Meitheal

His extraordinary collaboration with Australian-born guitarist, didgeridoo player and composer, Steve Cooney, was transformative in establishing Begley as internationally recognised performer.

Their mould-breaking album, *Meitheal*, released in 1992, brought with it a new sensibility with its dynamic dance-inspired drive on the instrumental tracks counterbalanced by songs featuring Séamus' sensitive and subtle vocals supported by Steve's tasteful and crystal clear accompaniment. So influential was the album that it merited a re-release in 2015.

As Steve Cooney recalled recently to *The Kerryman* newspaper, "we played together from 1985 to 1998, and our tenure together coincided with the boom in set dancing. We had met before that and I'd played with his brother, Breannán, but we played together continuously, releasing the record *Meitheal* in that time.

"He was very generous. I was living in Dublin at the time and couldn't make a living from music, doing one gig a week, and he gave me a site [in Corca Dhuibhne] to put a caravan on top of a hill, or a clifftop even. He said he'd sell me the site for a shilling!"

The partnership effectively ended after thirteen years in 1998. "I left Kerry then," said Cooney, "and it was impractical to play together... We continued doing gigs but they were more intermittent.

"I saw him only a couple of weeks [before his death] and played a half-dozen tunes together in An Droichead Beag, [in Dingle] where it all kicked off for us, really. We had a few lovely tunes and a good, friendly goodbye."

Cooney added that performing with Séamus at Glastonbury was one of the musical highlights of their partnership.

After his collaboration with Cooney ended, Séamus went on to perform and record with two more master guitarists, Jim Murray and Tim Edey.

His partnership with Macroom native, Murray, not only led to performances on both local and international stages, it also produced the 2001 album, *Ragairne*, which was



Partners: Jim Murray (left) and Séamus Begley.



named as the Traditional Album of the Year by both *Hot Press* and *The Irish Times*. Mary Black also guested on the album singing a duet with Séamus, *An Ciarraíoch Mallaithe*.

Black, who had a house in west Kerry at the time, recalled that she had wanted to cry the first time she heard him sing *Bruach na Carráige Báine*.

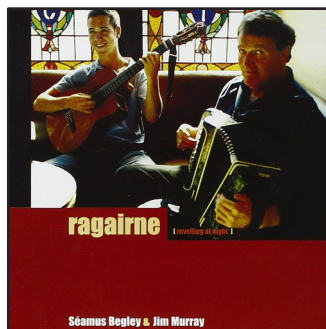
“It just moves you so much and he had that quality that just brought you right into the music...beautiful, a voice of an angel.”



Séamus's Sibirín Orchestra: (back from left) Jeremy Spencer, Gery O'Beime, Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh, Éilís Kennedy, Séamus, Pauline Scanlon, Donogh Hennessy and (front) Laura Kerr and Méabh Ní Bheaglaioich.

Murray and Begley recorded a second album in 2009 entitled *Éirí Go Lá* to continuing critical acclaim. The album featured a selection of polkas, slides, jigs and reels along with five songs including Séamus's glorious rendering of *The Mountains of Pomeroy*.

Disgrace Notes, Begley's 2010 recording project with the Scottish-based guitarist and accordion player, Tim Edey, also featured his daughter, Méabh along with Rita Connolly and Shaun Davey providing vocal



harmonies as well as a set of tunes composed by his son, Eoin.

A collaboration with Sligo fiddler, Oisín Mac Diarmada, initially gave rise to the album, *Le Chéile*, in 2012, and subsequently led to an invitation to join Mac Diarmada's band, *Téada* – an association which continued until his death.

Given the age gap between Begley and the rest of *Téada*, Séamus was wont to refer to them as his boy band.

As for his own musical heroes, Séamus cited two outstanding performers: the late Joe Burke from Galway, whose accordion playing he described as “unmatchable” and the late Paddy Cronin, the Sliabh Luachra fiddler whose playing was, in Begley's estimation, “unique and magic.”

Despite having such a wonderful voice to match his excellent musicianship, which was recognised in 2013 with the TG4 Gradam Cheoil award as Singer of the Year, Séamus did not record a full album of songs until 2015.

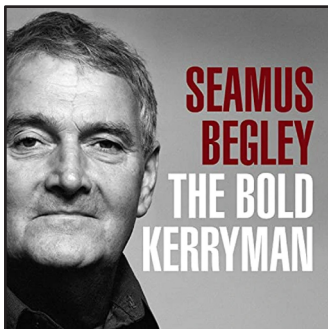
When *The Bold Kerryman* was due for release, he explained to Ed Power in *The Irish Examiner* newspaper why he had been so reluctant to exploit his undoubted talent: it was due to an abiding fear that his voice could let him down at any moment.

“I never know until I open my mouth whether the voice is there or not,” said Séamus.

“I have a very soft singing voice. I can be loud when shouting at the dog or what have you. But not when singing. It’s given me fierce trouble down the years and I’m slightly paranoid about it. I’m always worried about my voice. Sometimes I will take whiskey or honey – whether that is false courage or not, I don’t know.”

“I always played more than I sang. People have often said I should sing more. The truth is I didn’t do a lot of singing at gigs. I was mostly playing music that audiences could dance to – the gigs would be noisy and the crowd wasn’t necessarily interested in singing.”

He was finally persuaded to overcome his anxiety by record producer John Reynolds. “We recorded the entire thing in two days. It was great. John



Begley's Boy Band: (above) Téada with Séamus Begley.

has a three-storey house with its own studio. I drank loads of tea and relaxed and threw myself into it when I felt like singing. I can never depend on the voice, as I’ve said. I was lucky that it was very good while I was there. There have been times I’ve gone to the studio to record and the voice simply disappears. It’s horrific. This worked out fantastically.”

The Bold Kerryman revealed the breadth of Begley’s repertoire with Scottish songs, such as *The Lough Tae Boat Song*, *Will You Go to Flanders* and *Annie Laurie*, Irish language songs, *Táimse Im Chodladh*, *An Charraig Dhonn* and *Domhnaill Ó Conaill*, other English language classics and a duet with Damien Dempsey, *The Banks of the Sweet Primroses*.

His vocal collaborations also included memorable performances with near neighbours, Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh and Pauline Scanlon, along with other musicians in the Síbín Orchestra, named after his converted outhouse where they gathered for sessions. In an interview to mark his Gradam, Séamus also expressed an

ambition to sing with Dolly Parton.

His last album release was Téada’s *Coisceim Coiligh – As the Days Brighten* issued last year which included a duet between Séamus and American actor, John C. Reilly, on Percy French’s classic, *Eileen Óg*.

Séamus suffered a heart attack towards the end of December 2022 and was taken to hospital, where he was visited by box player, Sharon Shannon, who reported that he was in great spirits and looking forward to getting home.

Séamus had just returned home to play music when he died unexpectedly.

As his brother, Breannán, observed after Séamus’s death, “it’s the quality of life that’s our business, not its length.”

Séamus is survived by his wife, Mary, his children, Breannán, Eoin, Níall and Méabh and his granddaughter, Aibhín, as well as his seven siblings, Máire, Eibhlín, Seosaimhín, Kathleen, Bríde, Mícheál and Breannán. He was predeceased by his brother, John.





Brothers in Song: Damien Dempsey (left) and Séamus Begley.

The *Draiocht* of the Bold Kerryman

In an Instagram post, singer Damien Dempsey reflected on his friendship with “one of the greatest singers” – with whom he duetted on Séamus’ album, *The Bold Kerryman*.

An Ard Ri of mighty west Kerry has passed over the great divide, my friends, Séamus Ó Beaglaoich, one of the greatest singers to ever lift an audience towards the heavens with the sweetest most beautifully toned singing voice I ever heard on a man, and with his majestic soul-filled *ceol*, and that box playing from the heavens, and the intuitive lightning-fast Kerry wit and his way with the English language you could tell was rooted in his wonderful Gaeilge, as native speakers of the Gaeilge tend to speak a far more poetic version of English than anyone else in my experience. I can safely say, *ní bheidh a leithead arís ann*, we won’t see his likes again.

I had the honour of singing with the great man many’s the time, even though I haven’t got the best of voices he saw something genuine in me, and saw I sang with every fibre of my being, and I’m very grateful for the opportunities that I had to sing with him. He gave me great encouragement, and I sat at his feet in awe, and learned so much and felt encouraged, enamoured and mystified by his example.

I was chuffed to be asked to duet with him on his incredibly beautiful and mighty album *The Bold Kerryman*, that he made with our brother, the mighty John Reynolds, and he sang then on my album, *Union*, and I learned a lot about tenderness and being a big strong fella but bearing your soul and soft side in a song.

I first met the mighty Séamus in John Reynolds’ house in Kilburn. I heard a thick Kerry accent roar ‘geehup’, and I looked around to see a mountain of a man twenty feet away across the garden hoist up a massive piano accordion and

hurl it at me. It hit me square in the chest and I thankfully held onto it and didn’t drop it. I asked him later on that night: “is that how folks say hello in West Kerry? Turf a large accordion at you?”

It was John Reynolds fiftieth birthday that night and Séamus sang a song for him *as Gaeilge* in the early hours and his voice sounded thousands of years old, like it had been steeped in Kerry honey since before the Dé Danann landed.

It sounded like the sun lighting up the passage grave in Newgrange on the solstice, the soul of his ancestors rang true and clear in his ancient breath when he sang, and he was there in the song, he felt the ancestors pain, or joy, or anger and anguish. He could transport himself back in time to the songs’ true events. He felt it deeply: it was so beautiful to witness a singer doing this, *draoicht*.

Whenever I was down on the Dingle peninsula, if he wasn’t off touring, he



would insist on driving me to Farranfore airport when I was leaving, and we'd talk deep as the Atlantic and when he'd drop me at the airport, he'd get his accordion out of the back of the motor and play and sing me a farewell tune, that's Gaelic Ireland, that's the old warmth, the *draoicht, go hiontach ar fad*, majestic.

I recall being in an ale house somewhere in Dingle in the early hours of the morning with Séamus and his great pal, Lawrence Courtney, another great singer, and the legend Pauline Scanlon. We were singing a few songs, and I sang a Pecker Dunne song, and Lawrence said: "I know where the Pecker is living these days: he's up by Killimer in Clare," and Séamus says, "we should go up and drop in to the Pecker to say hello."

I thought nothing more of it till I get's woken out of my slumber at midday. Someone's banging down my hotel door. I hauled myself up and opened the door and Séamus is standing there fresh as a daisy. He'd been drinking water the night before, and he says, in a thick Dublin accent: "Are ye bleeding right or wha'? We're going to find the Pecker."

I was a big fan of Pecker so I got dressed in a flash and off we went tearing up over the Conor Pass on the way to Tarbert and the broad majestic Shannon. I was texting the mighty Declan O'Rourke who wanted to meet up that day in Kerry and was on his way.

I told him, change of plan, man, Séamus and myself are going to find the Pecker Dunne. Declan says: "I'm coming!" So he met us at Tarbert on the Shannon and the three of us got into Séamus's van and got on the ferry to the Banner.

We then drove towards the directions that Lawrence had given us (Pauline and Lawrence were busy that day otherwise they'd have been there) and got a bit lost. So we stopped a man at the side of the road to ask directions.

Séamus pulled up and said to him: "I've two very famous men here from Dublin, Declan O'Rourke and Damien Dempsey, and we're looking for the Pecker Dunne's house."

The man looked at me and Declan and says: "I've never heard of these two lads but you're Séamus Begley aren't you? Me and my family are all huge fans. You're the best singer we've ever heard, and your box playing beats the band. The Pecker's house is a right at the white cottage, and the second breen you see, take that past the woods till you can go no further and he's on the right."

We got to this white cottage with turf smoke curling out of it, and weren't sure we were where we needed to be, and we got out of the van and I hear a fiddle. I says to the lads, that's Pecker. No one ever played the fiddle like him and we walked around the back of the cottage and, sure enough, standing at the half door is the bould Pecker Dunne, playing the fiddle out into the ether.

We says howaya Pecker, and he's a bit wary, and we tell him who we are and we're all huge fans and just wanted to say hello, and were invited in for tea, with his lovely wife and beautiful family who arrive after a phonecall. We have an oul' singsong. Pecker couldn't sing be-ause of a tracheotomy but he played a little and told stories which was brilliant.

He knew Séamus and had a great chat about the old days and old players and fairs and the old ways. He didn't know me and Declan, but we sang a few of his songs to him and he had tears in his eyes, and his wife turned to us and told us that he hadn't picked up the fiddle in a year, but picked it up around thirty minutes before we arrived and went to the back half door and played it.

He knew we were coming, I reckon. And he passed over the great divide a few months later.

That was an example of the ancient *draoicht* of Séamus, his old soul and intuition and spontaneity.

I'm pretty sure Séamus had some of the greatest gigs and nights and craic that any mortal has ever experienced. So a celebration of the magic he brought to the world is in order, an incredible force of musical nature on earth.

More power to you Séamus, you *Laochra Gael*. Best of luck on your travels and may the great spirit hold you in the hollow of her hand. See you along the Rocky Road

Grá mór
Slán go foil. mo chara
Beannacht
Damien Dempsey



The healing power of music: In the cemetery at Séamus' funeral, his son Eoin (left) and brother, Breannán, play while daughter, Méabh, (middle) dances a set. (Photo: Valerie O'Sullivan)



Séamus Begley during a recent appearance on RTÉ's *Tommy Tiernan Show* with his brother, Breandán.

A void in the soul of the country

Séamus was larger than life and I think everybody I know is devastated by his passing, in fact it leaves a huge void on the traditional scene: he occupied a great space.

He was a beloved man. He was always up for the craic, as well as being a musician, a native speaker and being a beautiful singer as well as player, he was almost like a court jester, like a joker, he was full of fun and satire. He would subvert many a solemn occasion with some ridiculous joke which would bring the house down, he was a mighty figure.

He was a natural entertainer, and there was no real difference between his daily life and being on a stage, he performed all the time but in the most natural way. He never missed a bit of craic and he was beloved for that.

I remember the first time I heard the album he made with Steve Cooney called *Meitheal*. Hearing him sing in this beautiful angelic voice – a really beautiful voice Séamus had – and that was an amazing album that, I think, put him on the scene in a more general way.

With regard to the heritage, he was central to that as well. I think everyone is suddenly aware of how much space Séamus occupied in the soul of the country.

Dónal Lunny, musician

Soul and drive

The entire Irish music world is in shock tonight upon hearing of the sudden death of one of the true legends in Irish music, Séamus Begley. Séamus was my favorite Irish singer with a massive wealth of songs that came along with the heart and soul to sing them with such feelings that he would touch you to your very core.

Then, when he would finish singing these incredibly sensitive songs, he would grab the accordion with his strong and powerful farming arms and rip out polkas and slides for hours that would drive everyone to a frenzy because his music would make you want to leap out of your seat with the drive and sheer joy. He was full of craic and definitely one of a kind and I know we will never see the likes of him again.

My condolences to his wife, Mary his children, family and many friends. RIP Séamus

Joanie Madden

Life-affirming

This morning we mourn the loss of a truly magnificent musician and singer. Whether on stage or at home in Kerry, something life-affirming and beautiful always happened when Séamus was in the room.

Comhbhrón ó chroí do mhuintir Uí Bheaglaioich uilig.

John Kelly, broadcaster



Séamus Begley with Samantha Harvey and Oisín Mac Diarmada

Giant

Mo comhbhróin le chlann agus le chairde, Séamus Begley. We had so much ceol, craic agus downright pléicaíocht i rith na mbliana. I'm genuinely going to miss this giant of a man. What we wouldn't give for one last encore, ach tá sé ar shlí na firinne anois. Slán a chara.

John Creedon, broadcaster

Incredible musician

In the pantheon of accordion players he was up there with the likes of Joe Burke, Tony McMahon, Johnny O'Leary and Joe Cooley. His untimely death will leave a great void in Irish traditional music. We will miss his incredible accordion playing, his beautiful rendition of traditional and popular songs and the fun you had when you were in his company.

William 'Hammy' Hammond, Director of Cork Folk Festival

Pure down to earth

I honestly can't believe that Séamus Begley has left us. The first time I ever saw and heard him was at the Clifden Arts Festival in 1987 along with Steve Cooney and I was just blown away. I'll never forget it, upstairs in Guy's Bar. A few years later I had the privilege of meeting Séamus and from there on it was always magic to see him. He was my favourite male singer, my favourite polka player. Great craic always, such a character, pure down to earth.

A sad day. Thinking of his dear family and all his musical family too. Sleep well Séamus, Thank you for your beautiful voice and music. You'll never be forgotten. That's for sure.

Mirella Murray, musician



Séamus Begley with John C. Reilly

Legend

He is just a legend of a man and such a big loss for everybody. It's a shock because the last time I was on Séamus's farm with him, he was literally hand-lifting boulders out of the ground on to his tractor. Someone so strong and stout. It's just a shock to have lost him.

John C. Reilly, actor

Gifts

Séamus Begley was loved throughout Ireland, and in particular his beloved west Kerry. He was one of the most accomplished accordion players we have ever seen. He was a gifted storyteller and remained close to his Gaeltacht roots.

Renowned for his versatility, Séamus had an ability to collaborate with musicians who had no background in traditional Irish music. In doing so he helped to put our culture on the world stage. My sincere condolences to his wife, Mary, and his children. *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.*

Leo Varadkar, An Taoiseach



Séamus Begley with Tim Edey

He was good for your health

My God I just can't believe it, he was like a second father to me, I absolutely adored him, I idolised him. I have known him since I was 17, when I ended up in the Gaeltacht when I was studying Irish in UCC. I somehow ended up at his house playing tunes and he was so welcoming, always so welcoming to young musicians, and encouraging. We have been friends ever since.

His music had amazing power, he could lift the roof off any house or pub session, and made just a dynamite atmosphere anywhere he went.

Then when he would sing, it was the most beautiful, effortless singing that was really calm, you would hear a pin drop in even the most noisy pubs when he would start singing.

As well as all that, he was absolutely brilliant craic, really hilarious, incredibly quick-witted, he would make you cry laughing, you would belly laugh for hours when you were in his company. He was good for your health. The most enjoyable times in my life that I could think of was always in his company. He was funnier than any comedian.

I'm thinking of his gorgeous family: they must be absolutely heartbroken. They adored the ground that he walked on and vice versa. This loss is enormous for all who knew him. The bigger the personality the bigger the loss... and Séamus lit up every room that he ever walked into with his incredible energy and music and hilarious sense of humour.

[When I visited him in Limerick hospital] he was in great form and extremely grateful to have survived a heart attack and to be given a second chance. He was looking forward to loads more living. Unfortunately it wasn't to be. Rest easy my friend, Séamus.

Sharon Shannon, musician

All that beauty followed by some of worst jokes ever told

From the first time the Horse, Liz Carroll, and myself met you in TJ Daly's on 63rd Street back in 1976 you were a constant source of joy, joviality, jigs played in that jaunting juggernaut west Kerry style – followed by pure angelic passionate singing in Irish – which brought tears to the Horse's eyes and loving pangs to the hearts of Liz and I.

And all that beauty followed by some of the worst jokes ever told...

What more can anyone ask for? Oh boy, loved you, Séamus.

My condolences to Séamus' family and many friends around the world. Rest gently, Séamus
Jimmy Keane musician

Lifelong well-spring of energy

Séamus oh Séamus, you tower of strength, jester of life, you wit with the voice sweet as a blackbird, where have you flown? Over the cliffs and field you soar with an eagle's clear vision. The lifelong wellspring of energy and love that flowed through you with such grace has returned to the earth, the stones and the sky.

May your spirit float as light as an air on your last journey to the light.

We will never forget your boundless generosity in welcoming the Fooksbarn in the field of Baile na bPoc and will return in the future to stamp the ground and keep the craic going.

Our love pours out to his dear family who took us in as their own.
Fooksbarn Travelling Theatre



Séamus Begley: At home in Baile na bPoc (Photo: Clare Keogh)

Master of revels

Since the start of the Feakle Festival over 35 years ago, Séamus Begley has been adopted into our musical family in Feakle. It is with an extremely heavy heart that we have heard of his sad passing.

Séamus' presence in our village was always a highlight for us all – from some of the most memorable concerts in Smyth's hotel – gala concerts with his dear friends and family – to the late night sessions full of fun and revelry.

It was great to have Séamus back in Feakle last year where we enjoyed listening to his wit, songs and his infamous uplifting polkas and slides. Séamus will be truly missed in our world of traditional music.

We would like to pass on our sincere sympathies to all the Begley family, Séamus' musical family and friends. *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.*

Feakle Festival

Séamus in Session: Playing in Pepper's during the Feakle Festival in 2014 (Photo: Singersong Blog)





Séamus Begley (Photo: Michael Weilandt)

A gentleman of the highest order

A chance meeting at a session in Pepper's Pub during one of the early Feakle Festivals led to more than 30 years of friendship.

As I'm sure is the case with everyone who knew him, I am still processing the horrendously sad news of the sudden passing of the West Kerry legend, Séamus Begley.

Happy memories of times shared in Feakle, West Kerry and all over London with him include:

- Melting with the gorgeous sound of his singing voice
- Enjoying his sharp wit – his funniest jokes, limericks, pranks and stories
- Observing his warm, inclusive and fun way with our children ... with everyone really!
- Dutifully following his car three times round the roundabout in the early hours of the morning on the way home to his house, as I didn't have a clue of the way!
- Giggling at his 'moving wig' impersonation mid-session

- Admiring his complete passion for traditional Irish music and its heroes big and small, from spreading the love of his sheep-farming neighbour, Maurice Scanlon's beautiful jig, to doing whatever he could to encourage the right people to document Finbarr Dwyer's music and life in his later years
- Watching him resist lamping someone (who absolutely deserved it), because he was a gentleman of the highest order
- Crying with laughter at his perfect stage banter
- Processing his no holds barred, sometimes brutally honest, assessment of ... well, life in general.
- Not being able to sit still to his joyous music
- Witnessing the beautiful and unexpected bromance that was Séamus Begley and Danny Meehan
- Laughing at his dodgy impersonation of a London accent 'Awight dawlin!' and so much more...

It is hard to find another musician whose music is so deeply connected to dance – the dancers loved him and he loved the dancers – so much so, that he inspired a whole new approach to accompanying Irish dance music (particularly the music of West Kerry) through his partnership with the mighty guitarist, Steve Cooney, and subsequently with Jim Murray, Jon Sanders and Tim Edey.

He had the voice of an angel, and while he never claimed to be a sean nós singer, he brought the beauty of sean nós songs, his huge repertoire, emotion and love of the Irish language to the masses. He was wild, unpredictable, hilarious, the life and soul of the party – he would lift people's spirits on entering any room.

Those who were lucky enough to be close to him know, alongside his 'larger than life' character, he was also a very deep thinking, modest and sensitive soul. There will never be another quite like him.

My heart goes out to Mary, Méabh and the rest of his family, who he adored him. Séamus, old friend, may you rest in peace.

Karen Ryan, musician

Les Barker, poet, parodist and performer, died in January after a massive heart attack.

With a written output that including serious work as well as biting satire, Les was probably best known for his comic verse and parodies of both popular songs and traditional and folk ballads.

Born in Manchester, England, the only child of Miriam (née Crabtree) and George Barker, a newsagent, Les worked as an accountant at Manchester Town Hall until 1982 – when he decided to pursue his talent for writing.

He began to perform his comic verse at local folk clubs and soon became a regular at folk clubs and festivals all over Britain.

Among his most admired performance poems were *Déjà Vu*, *Jason and the Arguments*, *The Far off Land of Dyslexia*, *Spot of the Antarctic*, *Cosmo the Fairly Accurate Knife-Thrower* and *Captain Indecisive*.

Les also had several solo albums to his credit: *Dogologues*, *An Infinite Number of Occasional Tables*, *A Cardi and Bloke*, *Up the Creek Without a Poodle*, *Arovertherapy*, *The War on Terrier* and *Daydream Retriever*.



Les Barker

Born: January 30 1947

Died: January 14 2023



Ómós: Les Barker

Les and the Small Chair: Les competed with some success at eisteddfodau. He published an English translation of Daniel Owen's Welsh language classic, *The Trials of Enoc Huws*. He also became a regular contributor to the Welsh Wikipedia creating over 2,200 new articles.

Originally a solo performer, he created The Mrs Ackroyd Band – named after his dog – in 1989 along with Alison Younger, Chris Harvey and Hilary Spencer, putting his words to music. Barker's poem, *Guide Cats for the Blind*, became the title track of a double album raising funds for the British Computer Association of the Blind which led to a total of five albums, *Guide Cats for the Blind*, *Missing Persians File*, *Top Cat*, *White Tie and Tails*, *Cat Nav* and *Herding Cats*.

The albums included a number of parodies of folk classics – which Les managed to persuade leading folk artists to sing – including Tom Paxton, June Tabor and Waterson:Carthy. His efforts raised over £40,000 for BCAB.

His more serious poems like *The Civilised War* (with the opening line: “How goes the war on terror, George?”) and *The Church of the Holy Undecided* resulted in cancelled

concerts in America and the refusal of a work permit for a subsequent tour.

In 2003, Les left Greater Manchester for Bwlchgwyn near Wrexham, where he learnt Welsh and produced two books of Welsh poetry.

His folk fans launched an unsuccessful campaign to have him chosen as Britain's Poet Laureate in 2009.

After a heart attack in January 2008, Barker began performing also a soloist – occasionally working with Keith Donnelly as Idiot and Friend.

Facing chemotherapy after a cancer diagnosis, Les announced his retirement from touring in October 2022, while intending to maintain an online presence.

On January 14, 2023, after attending a match of The New Saints FC in Oswestry, Shropshire, he returned to his car where he died from an apparent heart attack.



Ómós: Kevin Mitchell

Kevin Mitchell, who many consider to have been the finest traditional singer to come out of Derry, passed away just before Christmas. With his distinctive voice and his extensive repertoire, Kevin was a firm favourite of audiences and fellow singers throughout Ireland, Britain and North America. In his recorded work he has left a significant legacy for future generations.



He sang that sweet refrain

Kevin was born in St. Columb's Wells, Derry City, in 1940 and grew up in Springtown Camp and the Creggan Estate.

Although there was no history of traditional singing in his family, he was interested in Irish culture from a very early age.

Through his interest in the Irish language, Kevin met Seán Gallagher, who, on discovering the Mitchell voice, encouraged him to enter the traditional singing competition at Derry Feis in 1959.

Seán helped him to learn two songs in Irish for the feis. The first, *Ar Maidin Dé Máirt*, was well received – but when Kevin struggled to recall the second, he offered to sing the first song again for the adjudicator – much to the amusement of the audience. But Kevin had the last



Back to the Source: Kevin Mitchell in Inishowen. ▶

Joined in Song: Kevin and his wife, Ellen, in 2001. ▼

laugh when he was awarded second place.

Seán also introduced him to several of his relatives who gave him ballads which he continued to sing throughout his career – including *The Mountain Streams where the Moorcocks Crow* and *Free and Easy to Jog Along*.

As Kevin was particularly drawn to local songs from Derry and Donegal, it was inevitable that he found his way to the

ballad sessions in Buncrana run by the Inishowen Traditional Singing Circle – where he met many fine singers with good songs, including Corney McDaid, sexton of Cockhill Church, Buncrana, who was a wonderful source of many fine ballads.

By the mid 1960s Kevin was entering various local ballad competitions including the John Player Ballad Competition in Belfast in 1965 – which he won. ↗



Corney McDaid
(Photo: Tom Munnally//National Folklore Collection, UCD)



Davy Hammond
(Photo: BBC Northern Ireland)



At the competition, he also met Davy Hammond for the first time. Davy asked him if he knew *Slieve Gallion Braes* (he did!) – most likely to check if he sang in English as well as Irish.

The encounter may also have been a factor in Kevin’s subsequent regular appearances on BBC NI’s folk radio programme, *Come Listen Here Awhile*.



Friend: Robert Morton

When Kevin took top spot in the prestigious Bellaghy singing competition in 1966, he came to the attention of the burgeoning Belfast folk scene frequented by Robin Morton and others. Kevin became a welcome guest at the city’s folk clubs.

He moved to Glasgow in 1969 where he worked as an industrial painter while continuing to immerse himself in the singing scene in Scotland.

He was particularly fascinated by the musical relationships between the country of his birth and his adopted home, observing that “it’s not always easy to separate Scottish and Irish music. It’s even harder with Scottish and Ulster music. I’m sure Ulster has been very heavily influenced by Scotland.”

His friendship with Robin Morton continued over in Scotland after Morton also moved across the North Channel in 1970. Robin acted as producer when Kevin recorded his first

In fine voice: ◀

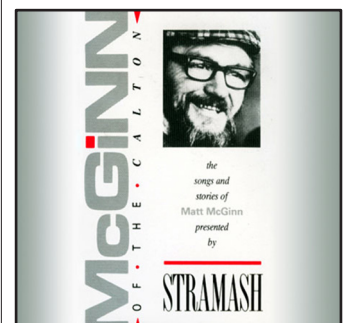
Kevin Mitchell sings at the Ballyliffin Singers’ Festival in 2001 (Photo: Tom Munnelly//National Folklore Collection, UCD)



album, *Free and Easy*, in Edinburgh in 1976 for release on Topic Records in 1977.

The album drew largely from the Ulster song tradition with a track list comprising the following:

Free and Easy (to Jog Along), *The Lurgy Streams*, *The Mickey Dam*, *Nancy Bell*, *The Boys of Mullaghbawn*, *Going to Mass Last Sunday*, *The Magherafelt May Fair*, *The Light Horse*, *The Moorlough Shore*, *Two Strings on a Bow*, *Seán Ó Duibhir a’ Gleanna* and *The Oul’ Grey Man*.





Lost in the Moment:
Kevin singing at Tyne-
folk in Newcastle
(Photo: Tynefolk)



Married in Song 1:
Kevin and his wife,
Ellen, pictured in
2018. ◀

As his reputation spread in Scotland, he was invited to join the band, Stramash [not to be confused with the later Glasgow-based 'Celtic/Folk/Rock' band] where he performed alongside Bob Blair (vocals and guitar), Adam McNaughtan (vocals), John Eaglesham (concertina), Finlay Allison (guitar, mandolin and fiddle) and the late Anne Neilson (vocals) for a number of years.

The band produced an album, *McGinn O' The Calton*, based on the songs, stories and poems of Matt McGinn, which was released on Greentrax in 1990 and continued to perform the McGinn programme in concert – including memorably at Celtic Connections in Glasgow on 2002.

As Stramash played together intermittently, Kevin continued to appear as a solo artist at clubs and festivals throughout Britain and Ireland. One such appearance evoked the following memory from Andy Turner:

I have a very distinct memory of a singing session at the National Folk Music Festival at Sutton Bonington in the early 1990s, when the Sussex singer Gordon Hall – a big, bluff man, but a real softy on the inside – was moved almost to tears by the beauty of Kevin's singing.

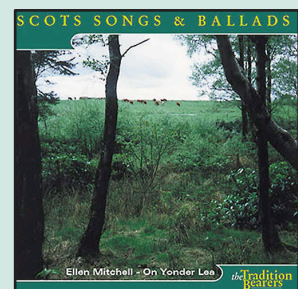
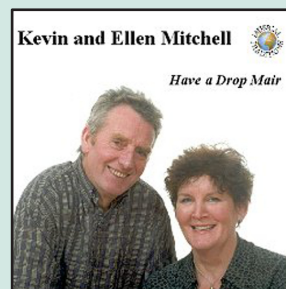
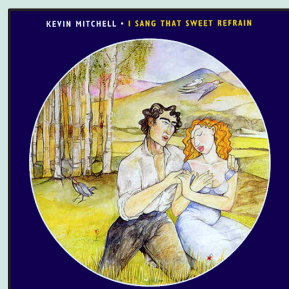
Kevin's second largely solo album, *I Sang That Sweet Refrain*, was issued on Greentrax in March 1996. While still drawing from the well of Ulster songs, the album included some

material from Scotland and England as well as an iconic Liam Weldon composition with the following tracks:

Paddy in Glasgow, The Maid of Ballydoo, Granuaile, The Banks of Brandywine, The Red-Haired Man's Wife, Inishfree, The Rangy Ribs I Bought From Micky Doo, The Blue Tar Road, Paudeen Roe, False Lover John, The Fanad Mare, The Mantle So Green, The Flower of Corby's Mill, Gosforth's Fair Demesne, The Granemore Hare and Johnnie Gallagher.

He recorded a double album, *Have a Drop Mair*, with his Glasgow-born wife, Ellen – an award-winning traditional singer in her own right – in 2001. ↗

...moved almost to tears by the beauty of Kevin's singing...





Married in Song 2: Kevin and his wife, Ellen (*seated*) at the Sunflower Folk Club in Belfast (Photo: Fergus Woods) ▲

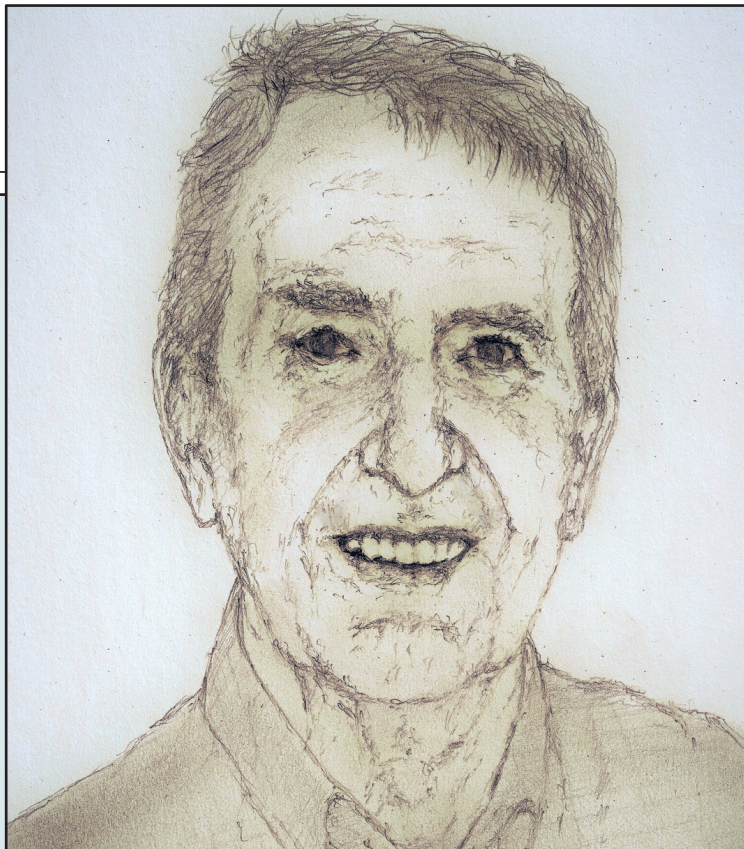
Produced by Rod Stradling for the Musical Traditions label, the release featured 39 tracks drawn from both the Irish and Scottish song traditions.

In 2001, Kevin also took part in the Folkworks *Sharper than the Thorn* tour, along with Martin Carthy, Norma Waterson and Alyth McCormack from the Isle of Lewis, “bringing to life the great narrative songs of these islands.”

Kevin also appeared on the album, *Folk Festival: A Celebration of Music Recorded at the Sidmouth International Festival Album*, released in 2004, singing *False Lover John*.

Continuing to perform as a soloist or in a duo with his wife, Ellen, Kevin continued to find and sing songs old and new – remaining a popular and beloved member of the traditional singing community in Britain and Ireland.

Kevin’s life was eventually cut short by mesothelioma – a form of lung cancer – believed to have been contracted during his career in the building trade. He died on December 22, 2022.



One singer by another: Pencil drawing of Kevin Mitchell by Ken Wilson.

TRIBUTES

Kevin Mitchell was the greatest singer that ever came out of Derry, and my main inspiration as a singer. I would never have been a traditional singer if I'd never heard Kevin sing. I still sing songs from his wonderful 1977 album, *Free and Easy*, which is a good description of both his singing style, and also his relationship with his beautiful wife Ellen.

I had the privilege over the last few years of meeting and visiting Kevin and Ellen during regular trips to Glasgow and one memorable night in Edinburgh. Like myself Kevin was a Season Book holder at Celtic, a proud Derryman, a man after my own heart.

My deepest sympathy to Ellen and the Mitchell family in Glasgow, Derry and beyond. A bright star has gone out, but his memory will never fade.

Vincent Doherty

What a man! What a voice! For 40 odd years it was my privilege and joy to sit alongside him in Stramash.

Bob Blair

What an awful start to the New Year! I feel devastated by this news. The death has been announced of one of my all-time favourite singers – Kevin Mitchell. Tina and I became great friends with Kevin and Ellen (also a great singer) and met up with them at various traditional music and folk festivals over the years.

They made the long trip down from Glasgow to Lewes to sing for us on a number of occasions. Lovely people as well as excellent singers, Kevin will be much missed. Our heartfelt commiserations to Ellen.

Vic Smith

Kevin was a great singer with a gorgeous tone, a sparkle in the eye and voice, an intriguing range of songs – particularly from the North West. Hearing Kevin sing was a joy and his company cheering. Kevin’s passing is a huge loss to the traditional singing community to which he contributed so much.

Francy Devine

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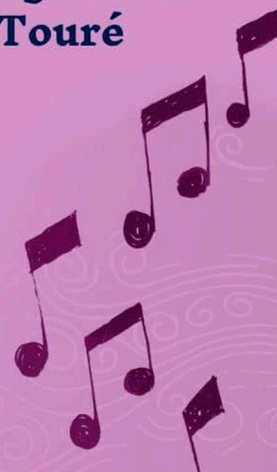
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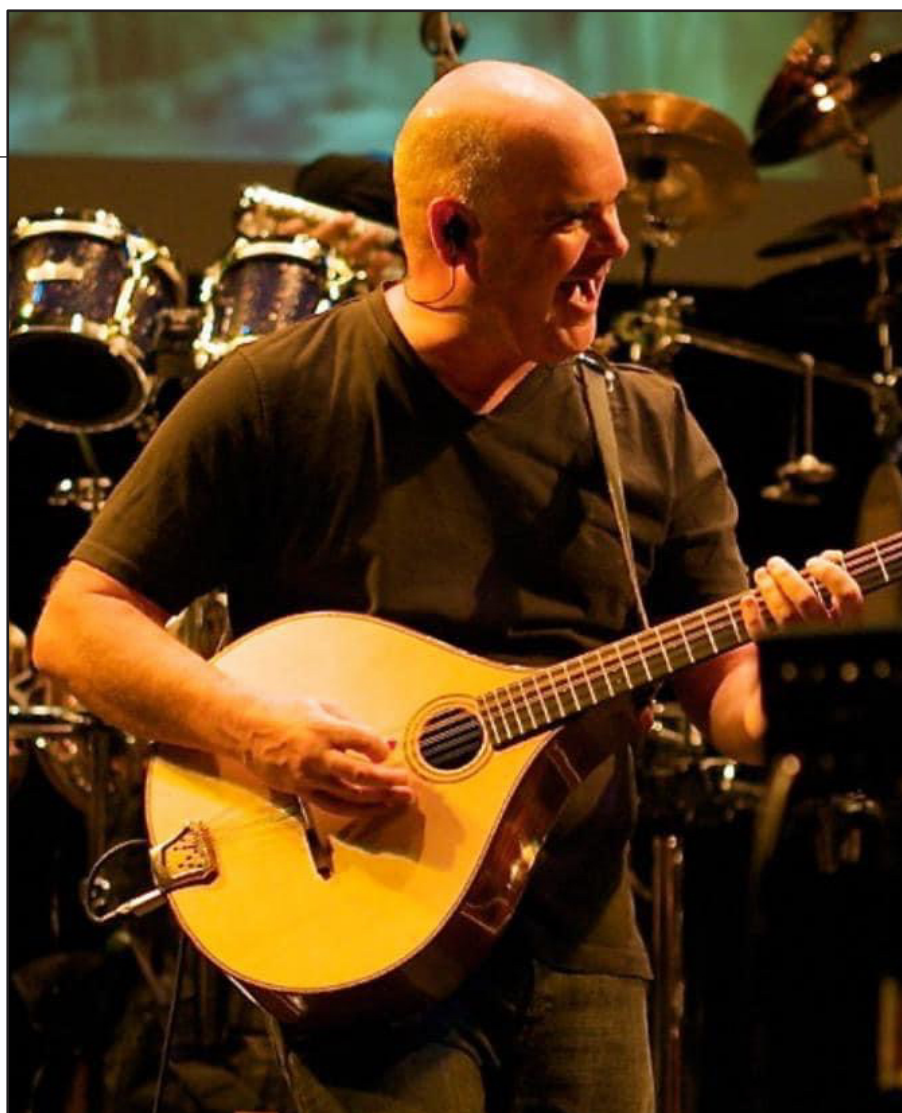
In alphabetical order

Aoife O'Donovan · Celtic Fiddle Festival (with Kevin Burke)
Christy Moore · Cinder Well · Claire & Sinéad Egan
Dirk & Amelia Powell · Ger O'Donnell & Trevor Sexton
Iarla Ó Lionáird & Cormac McCarthy · I Draw Slow
Lisa O'Neill · Luka Bloom · Máirtín O'Connor Trio
Méabh Ní Bheaglaoidh, Niamh Varian Barry
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Ómós: Simon Emmerson

English multi-instrumentalist, composer and Grammy-nominated producer, Simon Emmerson, died of cancer recently – on the day after his sixty-seventh birthday. He was the guiding spirit behind two major musical projects – Afro Celt Sound System and The Imagined Village – both of which explored the relationships between traditional music and the broader currents of world music within a soundscape shaped by electronica as well as acoustic instruments. In the case of the Afro-Celts, Irish traditional music was major inspiration while The Imagined Village drew from the well of English folk song.



Through these two projects, Emmerson collaborated with some remarkable musicians: from the Irish tradition, Iarla Ó Lionáird, Davy Spillane, Ríoghnach Connolly, Emer Mayock, Ronan Browne, Ciarán Tourish, James Mahon, Liam O’Flynn, Martin Hayes, Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh, Eileen Ivers, Michael McGoldrick and Mairéad Nesbitt; and from the English tradition, Martin and Eliza Carthy, Jackie Oates, Chris Wood, Billy Bragg, John Cooper and the Young Coppers.

The British Indian dhol drummer, Johnny Kalsi played with both bands – while the Afro Celts line-up has also included kora player, N’Faly Kouyaté from Guinea, Celtic harpist, Myrrdhin, Senegalese percussionist, Moussa Cissokho and Scots singers and pipers, Griogair Labhruidh and Ross Ainslie, as well as vocalists Peter Gabriel, Sinéad O’Connor, Robert Plant and Mundy. The Imagined Village also featured renowned sitar player, Sheema Mukherjee along with singers, Sheila Chandra and Paul Weller, and poet, Benjamin Zephaniah.

Simon Emmerson

Born: March 12 1956
Died: March 13 2023

Afro Celts: Simon Emmerson (left) and N’Faly Kouyaté

Working Week: once described as the premier jazz/pop band of the 1980s, the trio comprised (from left) Simon Emmerson (under the name, Simon Booth), Juliet Roberts and Larry Stabbins, pictured c1985.



While both bands underwent many changes of personnel and consequent shifts in direction, the glue that held them together musically and logistically was Simon Emmerson.

Born in London, the son of Architect, Alan Emmerson, and his sociology lecturer wife, Mercia, Simon attended Forest School Camps, as a child, where he is said to have developed his love of folk song, the environment and bird watching.

After completing a primary degree at Lancaster University, Simon studied for a doctorate at Canterbury. At the same time he became increasingly involved in music. After playing in two punk bands and briefly in Scritti Politti, he co-founded the jazz-influenced Weekend under the stage name of Simon Booth, and a couple of years later in 1984, he led the band Working Week, which recorded a number of albums and headlined at the Montreux and Nice Jazz festivals before they split up in 1991.

His love of jazz led him to engage with African music in the 1980s while he was working at Mole Jazz Records. At this time he was also involved in organising some of the Rock Against Racism concerts and, as a member of Working Week, toured with Red Wedge where he became friendly with Paul Weller and Billy Bragg (who would both become involved with the Imagined Village project many years later).

By the beginning of the 1990s, Simon had become increasingly involved in production – having worked with African musicians, Manu Dibango and Femi Kutie and in 1991 he went to Senegal to work on three tracks for Baaba Maal’s *Lam Toro* album which he co-produced.

Noting the similarity between a West African melody and an Irish air, he began to reflect on the potential connections between African and Celtic music. On his return to Britain, he met uilleann piper, Davy Spillane, to discuss the matter further.

As producer of Baaba Maal’s 1994 album, *Firin in Fouta*, which was nominated for a Grammy in 1995, Emmerson (who had now reverted to his birth name) worked with engineer, Martin Russell who was to become a key figure in the creation of the Afro Celt Sound System.

Afro Celt Sound System

In 1995 Emmerson invited a group of African and Irish traditional musicians to meet during Recording Week at Peter Gabriel’s Real World studios in Wiltshire. The group included Iarla Ó Lionáird, Davy Spillane and Massamba Diop, the talking drum virtuoso who had featured on *Firin in Fouta*, as well as Russell and multi-instrumentalist, James McNally, formerly of The Pogues. The album that eventually emerged from this assembly of talent –



Sound Magic (1996) – marked the debut of something quite new and quite different.

Afro Celt Sound System were more than the sum of their diverse parts: aside from the obvious Irish, African and electronic elements, there were also Arabic influences with a sprinkling of Indian bhangra and even reggae. But rather than creating a mish-mash of styles and genres, the magic of the Afro Celt project – based on superb musicianship – was to blend the most diverse elements into a coherent whole

“Prior to that first album being made, none of us knew if it would work,” James McNally told Larry Katz of the *Boston Herald*. “We were strangers who didn’t even speak the same language. But we were bowled over by this communication that took place beyond language.”

McNally, who was second-generation Irish, was an All-Ireland champion on piano. He also played keyboards, bodhrán, and bamboo flute.

“We had the finest musicians, singers and percussionists from all corners of the earth,” said James McNally. “In their own unique way, with their own unique talents, each played a vital part in the Afro Celt collaborative philosophy.”

Simon Emmerson in 2010 (Photo: Schorle, CC BY-SA 3.0)



Passion, excitement and ambition

Whether hidden in the bushes, twitching or creating extraordinary music, Simon Emmerson was always passionate, excitable and ambitious. It is all of these qualities that had led him, as an artist and composer, on an amazing musical journey through acid jazz, electro-acoustic music, Afro Celt Sound System and back to his own English folk roots with The Imagined Village project.

As a producer he worked with so many great artists from so many cultures and in each case found ways to connect, earn trust and help them realise all their musical ambitions; including Morocco’s Hassan Hakmoun, Maryam Mural from Somalia and Senegal’s Baaba Maal. In most recent years he ended up as musical director creating ambient and meditative music for Lush.

When we had artists, writers, and producers from around the world together for our 1995 Real World Recording Week, it brought all the studio to life in a wonderful way. Simon loved the idea of mixing everything up and came up with the idea of creating a brand new group specifically to mix African and Celtic musicians, the Afro Celt Sound System. Catching them in full flight was always a real treat for any open-minded music fan.

Simon had great breadth of knowledge of all the world of music and once he had set his passion and his heart on something, there was no dissuading him. As most who knew him well can attest, he could be an awkward and obstinate collaborator, but it was always about the mission – not about him – and his generosity and sense of humour would usually shine on through.

Looking back from when I first met him thirty or more years ago, I can see so many ways in which his aspirations, musicality and determination have touched all of us, changed things for the better and made our lives richer.

From all of us at Real World and WOMAD, you will always be remembered as a fundamental part of our family Simon. A very big thank you.

Peter Gabriel

Stand up: Simon Emmerson (right) and writer, Penny Rimbaud back the campaign to support the National Health Service in 2018 (Photo: Afro Celt Sound System).





“Our music never felt forced,” observed Iarla Ó Lionáird. “It just tripped out, very loose and clear, on everything from the Irish-tunes-on-acid to the gloriously languid stuff. You know that magic, unquantifiable, unpredictable thing that sometimes happens between musicians? That always happened with us.”

“Everything we did, we did with care,” said Ó Lionáird. “It wasn’t just about plonking a keyboard on a table and pressing a big fat finger down on a key. The drones were made as lovingly as you’d braid someone’s hair. I remember playing it to some tastemakers in Ireland and they could hear it. We had a quietly de-stabilising effect on people’s comfort zones with Irish traditional music, which I think is essentially good.”

“We were breaking down categories of world music and rock music and black music,” added McNally. “We left the door open to communicate with each other’s traditions and were able to negotiate a real musical discussion with people from other places.”

Some critics seemed quite frustrated at their own inability to place the band’s music within a specific genre. But generally the media reaction was overwhelmingly positive: “heady, heartfelt music,” declared *The Wall Street Journal*,

Afro Celts in Germany: ACSS at TFF Rudolstadt in 2010 (from left) Johnny Kalsi, Simon Emmerson, Iarla Ó Lionáird, Ian Markin, N’Faly Kouyate, Emer Mayock, James McNally, Moussa Cissokho. (Photo: Schorle, CC BY-SA 3.0) ▲

“a hurricane let loose” according to *Q Magazine* and “hearing is believing,” was the verdict of *Mojo*.

Although Afro Celt Sound System was only ever meant to be a time-limited project, the band quickly realised that it had a momentum of its own. A trip to Womad’s Australian festival, Womadelaide, was an eye-opener. Recalling the group’s first Womadelaide appearance in 1996, Emmerson noted:

“I think that those first Australian gigs were the point where we realised we could play on international stages, and that the band had very global appeal. Prior to that, we’d come out of this fairly obscure area of the London club, post-acid

house rave scene. We played Womad in the UK, which was fairly successful, but it was the trip to Australia, I think, that gave us the international vision.”

Over the next ten years, there would be five more albums – *Release* (1999), *Further in Time* (2001), *Seed* (2003), *Pod* (2004) and *Anatomic* (2005) – on Real World Records. Both *Release* and *Further in Time* received Grammy award nominations

When the tour following the release of *Anatomic* ended in 2007, the band went on a hiatus while members worked on other projects including Emmerson and Johnny Kalsi’s venture with The Imagined Village. ↗

New Celts: Part of the recent Afro Celt Sound System line-up with (from left) Johnny Kalsi, N’Faly Kouyate and Rioghnach Connolly ▶



In 2010 the Afro Celts got together for a series of gigs to promote the anthology, *Capture: 1995-2010*. They continued to perform intermittently until 2015 when an internal dispute caused the band to split in two with a stand-off over which grouping would use the band's name.

In 2016, it was agreed that Emmerson, Kouyate and Kalsi would continue using the Afro Celt Sound System name while Russell and McNally would now proceed under a new heading.

A new album, *The Source* was released in 2016, confirming the new departure. Former collaborators, Davy Spillane and Ronan Browne joined Emer Mayock on piping duties for the album. Vocalist and flautist, Ríoghnach Connolly, also joined the line-up both on the album and subsequent tours along with Robbie Harris on bodhrán, Seána Davey on harp and multi-instrumentalist and singer, Griogair Labhruidh.

On the back of *The Source*, the band was named Best Group in the Songlines Music Awards in 2017.

They returned to the studio in 2018 with *Flight*, which connected issues around the migration of humans to the migration of birds with contributions from an array of highly talented guests, including three choirs, the Amani Choir, the Stone Flowers and the African Gospel Singers.

Shady characters: (from left) James McNally, Simon Emmerson, N'Faly Kouyate and Iarla Ó Lionáird,

Award: N'Faly Kouyate, Simon Emmerson and Johnny Kalsi display the Songlines Award for Best Group in 2017 (Photo: Afro Celt Sound System).



Indefatigable musical curiosity

Many years ago now I walked into a nissen hut on the Realworld Records campus near the village of Box in Wiltshire for an event known as the Realworld Recording Week. I had been invited to attend this extraordinary gathering from the four corners of the globe by Peter Gabriel and his team at Realworld Records.

In this particular temporary studio (the site was dotted with them) were an eclectic bunch of music makers and among them the conceptualist and musical seer, Simon Emmerson. He had convened this coming together to explore a possible musical dialogue between the Celtic and West African musical traditions.

Back then I had barely begun writing songs but found an easeful yet exciting reception within the walls of that non-descript hut, working with so many talented artists and the music created that week would go on to sell millions of records worldwide for the soon to be established Afro Celt Sound System.

We went on to make many records with Simon at the helm as producer and in all my dealings with him he was encouraging and indefatigably curious in his pursuit of the musical moment. One could not have asked for a more positive enabler on the other side of the glass as it were and one got the impression that he loved every minute of it.

Over a year ago Simon sent me a track asking if I would be interested in writing once again for the band, having departed to pursue other musical interests over a dozen years ago. I told him that if the track registered with me I would certainly give it a go and though it sat dormant in my studio for many months, finally it spoke to me and with Simon I wrote a song called *Time* (*Am* in Irish). It meant a lot to him and because of that it meant a lot to me.

Slán leat Simon, a Chara Dhí. Thank you for for the many wonderful and life changing opportunities and experiences you created and shared with me and so many others.

My sincere condolences to his partner Karen and their children, Ted and Josie, and all of his many friends, fans and colleagues.

Iarla Ó Lionáird



Both *The Source* and *Flight* were released on ECC Records – the label Emmerson had co-founded with Mark Constantine of the cosmetics firm, Lush. Another album, *Ova*, was completed before Simon’s death but has yet to be released.

Alongside the excitement the Afro Celts generated on disc, they also enthused audiences as live performers in any of their various line-ups: and were always much sought after attractions on festival and concert stages both nationally and internationally.

The Imagined Village

During the hiatus in the Afro Celts’ recording work after *Anatomic*, Simon redirected his creative energy towards a parallel project, The Imagined Village, which began to take shape in 2007 with encouragement from Baaba Maal, Joe Strummer of the Clash and journalist Ian Anderson.

The project grew out of a discussion prompted by the BBC Radio 3 documentary *A Place Called England* which reflected the apparent lack of appreciation by many English people of their own musical heritage.

The project was also partly influenced by Georgina Boyes’ book, *The Imagined Village*, which considered the impact of Edwardian song collectors



on the development of the English folk canon.

“After travelling the world as a producer and musician, I thought it was time explore my own roots,” said Simon, “to look at the earth under my feet, dig the dirt of the homelands.”

Further conversations with his Dorset neighbour, Billy Bragg, about politics, birds and the meaning of Englishness, refined the concept further: the new project would respect the songs and tunes of the past while using modern electronic effects and ambient sounds to create new arrangements.

“In any village there’s a meeting between the custodians

The Imagined Village at Celtic Connections in 2010



of the past and the architects of the future,” explained Billy Bragg, “The Imagined Village reflects just that.”

The line-up on the first eponymous album included Eliza Carthy, Martin Carthy, Billy Bragg, Johnny Kalsi, Benjamin Zephaniah, Chris Wood, Sheila Chandra, Simon Emmerson, Paul Weller, The Young Coppers, Tiger Moth, The Glowworms, Transglobal Underground and Tunng.

The new band made its live debut at the Womad Festival in Malmesbury, Wiltshire, in 2007 while the track, *Cold Haily Rainy Night*, was recognised as the Best Traditional Song at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards in 2008.

The band’s second album, *Empire and Love* (2010), also included a number of English folk standards like *Byker Hill*, *Scarborough Fair*, *The Handweaver and the Factory Maid* and *The Lark in the Morning*, as well as a reworked version of *My Son John*, the anti-war song from the Napoleonic era (related to the Irish song *Mrs. McGrath*) – repurposed by Martin Carthy as a reflection on the recent conflict in Afghanistan.

The Imagined Village at the BBC in 2008





Uilleann piper, Ronan Browne (left) at home with Simon Emmerson (Photo: Ronan Browne).

Simon has left a massive legacy

Simon was always warm and inclusive. Excited by any new music he chanced upon, he wore that elation openly, and with glee. And it was the same for every aspect of his daily life, whether family activities, his relentless bird-watching, camping, or his beloved druidic pursuits, they were all given passion and attention – although he planned forwards and followed long-term goals, he lived in the moment, relishing every second with his heart on his sleeve; how wonderful to be in his presence, swept up in the whirl-wind of his lust for life. Interestingly, flying along at identical speed to that whirling dervish, was Simon's internal sense of peace and calm – how he juggled those two opposites, I shall never know!

A possible explanation for how Simon could be/do two things at once, might be *synaesthesia* (his ability to experience various things through multiple senses at the same time); I feel it came out strongly in how he could pick up nearly any musical instrument and, though just whacking at it, could make pleasing music from his attempts! Equally, he saw straight through to the best of music in each musician he encountered.

No mention of Simon can omit his fabulous, big-hearted wife Karen, who was with him through-out all his adventures. Being the partner of any creative artist is never easy but I cannot even begin to imagine living full-time with the hurly-burly of Simon's as he bounced about in the pin-ball machine that was his life – what I do know is that I was always exhausted after time spent with him!

Simon was a committed family man and he delighted in absolutely every achievement, that's the wrong word, he delighted in absolutely every single thing his son and daughter, Ted and Josie, ever said or did. And that followed back to my own life when he was ecstatic when Máire and I had children ourselves, always asking after them and about their progress through life.

In the Afro Celts, he deftly managed the massive egos that propelled the band, always keeping us on a vaguely even keel. He gave each of us space to make our own contribution to whatever piece we were working on, and he was scrupulously fair in apportioning writing credits, something that has always

been thin on the ground in situations where there was meaningful money to be earned from copyright ownership. He genuinely loved being on stage; he thrived on it, always giving huge energy and respect to his audience.

What an interesting musical journey he traveled, from the experimental post-punk bands Methodishca Tune and Weekend, soul/jazz with Working Week, world music of Afro Celt Sound System, to folk with Imagined Village and latterly, the music he made for Lush Cosmetics. He always had an interesting take on whatever was shown to him. I remember he made a few great suggestions when we were finishing up the CRAN album, *Lover's Ghost*, both with regard to the layout of the tracks and merging/morphing some of the tracks into each other.

Although Simon was hugely successful as a musician, composer, producer and band leader, he was humble to his core; he marvelled at the deep wealth of tradition that backed up the music of the musicians he met and with whom he played. Simon was always spellbound during our many long conversations about Irish music, and he supported me fully when I called time on my involvement in the Afro Celts – although he was sad to see me go, he understood that my heart lay in playing Irish music and that I was as happy with an audience of 300 as with 10,000 at an Afro Celts gig; he respected what I had to do. That said, we stayed in touch and he often called for me to collaborate again with the band, something I did for our 2016 album, *The Source*, along with an appearance at the Fleadh where the atmosphere was fantastic – it was as if I was the prodigal son, returned, with a fabulous welcome through-out my time both on and off stage. Although we spoke of doing more gigs, my own commitments didn't allow it at the time.

The world is a lesser place since Simon Emmerson left the stage, but he has left a massive legacy and many hearts, bruised at his departure, both his listeners and his fellow artists.

Ronan Browne

The third album, *Bending the Dark* (2012), followed a similar formula: songs from the traditional canon included *The Captain's Apprentice*, *The New York Trader* (recently recorded by Lankum), *The Washing Song* and *Sick Old Man* (a version of *The Raggle Taggle Gypsy*) as well as new compositions like *Winter Singing* and *Get Kalsi*.

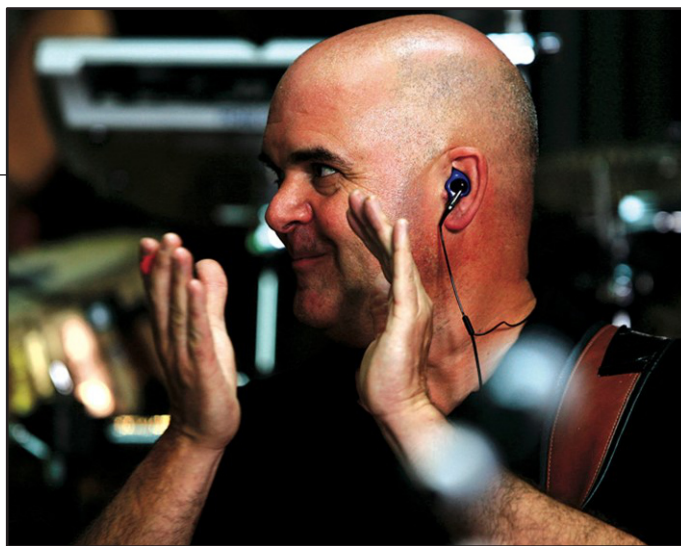
After touring *Bending the Dark*, the Imagined Village project was put on hold for a while. It was revived during the lockdown to record a socially distanced version of the classic, *The Quiet Joys of Brotherhood*, by the late Richard Fariña from New York whose mother, Theresa Crozier, was from Ardboe in Co. Tyrone.

The band re-united to play the Beautiful Days Festival at Ottery St. Mary last August – which turned out to be Simon Emmerson's last gig with The Imagined Village.

The Afro Celt Sound System had gone back on the road after the lockdown – playing major folk music festivals

Simon Emmerson
(Photo: York Tillyer)

Simon Emmerson
(Photo: Afro Celt Sound System)



including the Cambridge Folk Festival last July and Lakefest at Eastnor in August – which was also to be Simon's final performance with the band.

Among the many admirers of the Afro Celts were filmmakers, Martin Scorsese and Pedro Almodovar, who both used the band's music on the soundtracks of their films, *Gangs of New York* and *Live Flesh*, respectively, while *Mother* – their collaboration with Rwandan singer and genocide survivor, Dorothee Munyaneza on the album *Anatomic* – was featured on the soundtrack of the Oscar-nominated film, *Hotel Rwanda*.

"Our music was always very filmic," noted Iarla Ó Lionáird. "There's an expansiveness to some of our tunes that makes them rise up inside you, particularly on the instrumentals – which were one of our most recognisable signatures."

"But the most important thing about our music is the physical and spiritual effect it has. People find it enriching, find a positive and beneficial message in it, which is something that we didn't expect when we started."

Emmerson also wrote and produced music for two feature-length comedy films, *Super Grass* and *Out of Order* (as Simon Booth), and for the BBC *Arena* documentary, *Ligmalion*, (with Working Week) as well as many television advertisements.

Apart from his own bands, his production credits included

albums for Manu Dibango from Cameroon (1990) and Tarika from Madagascar (1997) as well as British bands, Show of Hands (2006) and Spiro (2009).

As a keen bird watcher, he also made field recordings of birdsong for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and in 2022 he produced a birdsong fusion piece to help promote the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch scheme.

Among the many tributes that have been paid to Simon, was Billy Bragg's description of him as "a visionary leader of projects that inspired many," while Eliza Carthy wrote: "Love you, my beloved boss and brother. Too soon."

The Afro Celt Sound System released the following statement after his death:

"It's with a heavy heart that we announce on Monday 13 March the peaceful passing of our dear Simon Emmerson, after a prolonged illness. Simon touched the hearts of millions of people through his music and infinite wisdom. His legacy remains with the amazing people he brought together, and they will continue to create the magic of his music with his guidance from above."

The band intends to organise a memorial tribute concert in his honour later in the year.

Simon is survived by his partner, Karen Murphy, and their children, Ted and Josie, and by his mother and his brother, Paul.



f

Magical Mary

Scoil Samhraidh to celebrate whistle maestro

The widely acclaimed tin whistle player, Mary Bergin, is to be honoured at this year's Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy – which returns for its fifty-first edition in Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare, from Saturday July 1 to Sunday July 9, 2023.

One of the highlights of Willie Week each year is the special tribute to an outstanding musician. This year's honouree, Mary Bergin, has long been recognised as one of the great masters of the tin whistle.

Born in Shankill, Dublin, to musician parents, Joe and Máire, who played melodeon and fiddle, respectively, Mary began playing the whistle at age 9 and as a youth was exposed to the music of many renowned musicians. Her style is particularly influenced by flute player Packie Duignan and the whistle playing of Willie Clancy.

She has won many awards in Oireachtas and Fleadh Ceoil competitions, including the All-Ireland Championship at Junior and Senior levels.

Tribute: (right) Mary Bergin (illustration: fonn) ▶



She moved to An Spidéal, Co. Galway, in the early 1970s and played with bands like Dé Danann and Ceoltoirí Laighean and was a co-founder of the Green Linnet Céilí Band.

For many years she played and toured with her sister and brother-in-law, Antoinette and Joe McKenna. In 1989, with Kathleen Loughnane and Dearbhail Standún, she formed the group Dordán. With its distinctive mix of traditional Irish and European baroque music Dordán has played to wide acclaim and received a National Entertainment Award in 1993.

She has released two solo albums, *Feadóga Stáin* (1979) and *Feadoga Stáin 2* (1992), both critically acclaimed and, in the words of musician and archivist Jackie Small, “ranked among the most influential albums of Irish music, ever.”

Described by Grey Larsen “as a leading influencer of the modern Irish whistling style,”

Bergin is credited with popularising traditional tin whistle playing.

Mary has toured Europe, the UK, USA and Australia, playing at concerts, festivals, colleges and universities and giving workshops and master classes. She has taught at Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy for many years.

She has released four CDs with Dordán, published two volumes of her landmark *Irish Tin Whistle Tutorial* and is currently working on the third and final volume.

In recognition of her outstanding contribution to Irish traditional music she received the TG4 Gradam Ceoil as Musician of the Year in 2000 and an Honorary Doctorate from UCD in 2022 for her contribution to the arts.

The Scoil Samhraidh tribute will be led by her long-time friend and fellow musician, James Kelly.

Traditional Music and All That Jazz at Willie Week

Following the official opening of this year's Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy by accordion maestro, Charlie Harris, the annual Breandán Breathnach Memorial Lecture will be given by fiddler and academic, Conor Caldwell, under the title: *'Against Christianity, learning and the spirit of nationality' - Jazz and Irish traditional music in the early twentieth century.*

In this illustrated lecture Conor will unpack the hidden story behind Ireland's dalliances with jazz and the unique sounds that were created in the early twentieth century.

From Scottish reels to Eastern European polkas and English-language ballads, Irish musicians have always been open to new musical forms. But the



Saving Ireland from Subversion: Conor Caldwell on the impact of jazz on the Irish music scene in the 1920s and 1930s. ▲

The Young Garech Browne: Painting by Anthony Palliser. ▼



music which arrived in the 1920s and 1930s has largely been written out of history.

As the jazz craze swept Ireland, traditional musicians did what they have always done and found ways to render its sounds and rhythms in the best way they knew how.

This allowed a hybrid Irish jazz style to briefly flourish before it was denounced by the power brokers of the day and finally swept away by the arrival of the showband era. Caldwell's presentation will be supported by some exciting previously unheard archive material.

Among the other talks confirmed so far will be one by Richie Piggott who will speak about his recent book, *Cry of a People Gone*, on the subject of Irish traditional musicians in Chicago from 1920 to 2020 (see *Fonn Vol. 2.1 p12*).

Claddagh Records chairman, James Morrissey, will reflect on the theme of Garech Browne, Willie Clancy and Claddagh Records. It will examine Garech Browne's close friendship with Willie Clancy, the recordings Willie released on Claddagh, and the Clancy's role in determining that Claddagh's objective would be to preserve, protect and promote Irish traditional music and the spoken word.

The talk will include extracts of correspondence from Ciarán Mac Mathúna, Willie Clancy, Garech Browne and Willie Clancy's widow,

Doreen. The talk will also detail the current revival of the Claddagh label, a project designed to fulfil Garech's wishes to "make available the Claddagh archive to anyone, anywhere, that might be interested..."

Pipe maker, piper and researcher, Hamish Moore, will deliver a lecture on *Restitution: the revival of Scotland's bellows blown pipes and its wider cultural significance.*

The revival of the bellows blown pipes of Scotland has challenged the piping establishment to recognise there was a legitimate Scottish piping culture before the late eighteenth century when the British army raised the Highland regiments, and competitions were first introduced bringing about the standardisation of Scottish pipe music. Before these events, Moore contends that piping in Scotland was truly an aurally transmitted folk tradition.

The talk will be illustrated by a display of historically important artifacts and some superb recordings.

The summer school will also feature a session entitled *Remembering Willie Clancy* in which the master piper will be recalled in conversations, reminiscences, music and song.

As well as the summer school's staple of classes and workshops in performance on

a variety of instruments, this year's Scoil Samhraidh will also include a programme of nightly recitals, as follows:

Sunday July 2: Éire 's Alba

A concert celebrating the links between Gaelic Scotland and Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy agus á chraoladh beo ar RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta. Line-up to be announced.

Monday July 3: Harp Recital

with Cormac de Barra, Paul Dooley, Gráinne Hambly, Laoise Kelly, Kathleen Loughnane, Aisling Lyons, Máire Ní Chathasaigh and guest performers.

Monday July 3: Fiddle Recital

with Kate Bevan-Baker, Paul Bradley, Tara Breen, Yvonne Casey, Zoe Conway, Dermot Diamond, David Doocey, Martin Dowling, Claire Egan, Séamus Glackin, Joan Hanrahan, Seán Keane, Michael Kelleher, James Kelly, John Kelly, Johnny Kelly, Leah Kelly, Denis Liddy, Nickey McAuliffe, Bernadette McCarthy, Oisín MacDiarmada, John McEvoy, Therese McInerney, Vinny MacMahon, Pat Mullins, Áine O'Connell, Connie O'Connell, Aoife O'Connor, Darach O'Connor, Donal O'Connor, Gerry O'Connor, Liam O'Connor, Aoife O'Keeffe, Maire O'Keeffe, Ciarán Ó Maonaigh, Anne Rynne, Joe Rynne, Siobhán Peoples, Jesse Smith, Joe Toolan and guest performers.

Tuesday July 4: Ceolchoirm Idirnáisiúnta/International Concert featuring traditional music, song and dance from Scotland, Wales and Brittany.

Tuesday July 4: Whistle and Flute Recital with Christy Barry, Mary Bergin, Cillian Boyd, Barry Conaty, Eamon Cotter, Geraldine Cotter, Seán Craddock, Mick Crehan, Eibhlín de Paor, Tara Diamond, Aoife Granville, Patsy Hanly, Marion McCarthy, Catherine McEvoy, Paul McGrattan, Louise Mulcahy,

Róisín Nic Dhonncha, Majella O' Beirne, Francis O'Connor, Mick O'Connor, Bríd O'Donohue, Marcas Ó Murchú, Seán Ryan, Anne Sheehy, Fintan Vallely, John Wynne and guest performers.

Wednesday July 5: Banjo Recital

with Muireann Banks, George McAdam, Brian Mooney, Jody Moran, Joanne O'Connor, Theresa O'Grady, Josh O'Loughlin, Keith O'Loughlin, Elaine O'Reilly, Brian Scahill and guest performers.

Wednesday July 5: Uilleann Pipes Recital

with pipers to be announced.

Thursday July 6: Button

Accordion Recital with Conor Connolly, Johnny Óg Connolly, Anne Conroy, Jackie Daly, Bobby Gardiner, Martin Donohue, Charlie Harris, Nuala Hehir, James Keane, Murdo MacDonald, Josephine Marsh, Mick Mulcahy, Paudie O'Connor, Bryan O'Leary, Diarmuid Ó Meachair, Joe Searson, Michael Searson and guest performers.

Thursday July 6: Old Style Step, Sean-nós and Set-Dancing Exhibition

with Brooks Academy, Mairéad Casey, Mary Clancy, Mary Kate Clancy, Rosie Davis, Noel Devery, Betty McCoy, Mick Mulkerrin, Paddy Neylon,

Playing at Scoil Samhraidh: (right) Edel Fox (Photo: fonn)



Maureen O'Reilly, Michael Tubridy, Aidan Vaughan and guest performers.

Friday July 7: Traditional Singing in Irish and English – Performers to be announced.

Friday July 7: Harmonica Recital with Noel Battle, James Boyle, Rick Epping, Pauline Gavin, Johnny Hehir, Sadhbh Jordan, Mick Kinsella, John Murphy, Pip Murphy and guest performers.

Friday July 7: Concertina Recital with Cormac Begley, Francis Cunningham, Edel Fox, Bernie Geraghty, Hugh Healy, Noel Hill, Mairéad Hurlley, Aoife Kelly, Claire Keville, Jacqueline McCarthy, Mary MacNamara, Michelle Mulcahy, Caitlín Nic Gabhann, Caoilfhinn Ní Fhrighil, Liam O'Brien, Lorraine O'Brien, Katie O'Sullivan, Michelle O'Sullivan, Jack Talty and guest performers.

Saturday July 8: Muiris Ó Rócháin Memorial Concert Line-up to be announced.

Na Píobairí Uilleann will hold lunchtime piping recitals from Monday to Friday, with a young piper and a senior piper each day.



Playing at Scoil Samhraidh: Tara Breen



Gaughan for a Song

The "Harvard" Tapes:
Dick Gaughan (Greentrax)

Dick Gaughan has been at the cutting edge of Scottish folk music for almost five decades. A singer, songwriter, guitarist, musical director, arranger, record producer, actor and engineer, he has been there and done it all. He is a brilliant singer with a passion in his wonderfully expressive voice which is allied to an amazing guitar technique.

In December 2009, Dick was honoured by being included in the Scottish Traditional Music Hall of Fame and within a year he was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards ceremony in London. He has received many other accolades but too many to mention here.

Dick has been a professional musician and singer since 1970. He has recorded extensively and his album *Handful of Earth* on Topic Records was chosen by a critics' poll in *fRoots* as the Best Album of the 1980s.

In addition to his successful solo career, Dick was an early member of The Boys of The Lough, Five Hand Reel and a founder member of the short-lived but quite extraordinary Clan Alba.

The Harvard Tapes contains a remarkable collection of songs and tunes and is Dick's seventh album for Greentrax.

The first ten tracks on this album were recorded live in 1982 in the Old Cambridge Baptist Church, next to Harvard University Campus



Dick Gaughan

in Cambridge, Massachusetts, by Brian O'Donovan, an Irish broadcaster and journalist who was living in Boston at the time.

Early in 2019 Brian came across the original tapes and sent a copy to Scotland to be used in any way to benefit Dick. Ian McCalman and Ian Green heard the recordings and agreed this was "vintage Dick Gaughan" and the recordings would make a wonderful live album. Dick Gaughan approved wholeheartedly, and Brian O'Donovan granted their use at no cost.

Many of Dick's classic songs are on the album including *Erin Go Bragh*, *Now Westlin Winds*, *Song For Ireland*, *Your Daughters and Your Sons*, *The Worker's Song*, a three-reel instrumental and more.

On *The Freedom Come All Ye* track, the late great Johnny Cunningham provides fiddle accompaniment – probably the first and only time Dick and Johnny shared a stage.

As the Cambridge tapes were rather short on playing time, Dick decided to add three bonus tracks: two previously unrecorded tracks, *Lemmings* and a second instrumental, *Sliabh na mBan*, taken from concerts in Milngavie in 2010 and 2012 and generously made available by the concert

organiser, Jason Smith, and *Connolly Was There* from the Greentrax archive.

Dick regards *The Harvard Tapes* as possibly the best live recordings of himself ever.

In October 2016, an MRI scan confirmed Dick had suffered a stroke several months previously, from which he is now gradually recovering but which has prevented him from touring. Dick will benefit from profits from *The Harvard Tapes*. Both Brian O'Donovan and Jason Smith are providing the tracks free of any charge or royalty, and production costs are being met by Ian McCalman and Ian Green with help from John Slavin. This will allow a large royalty to go to Dick in his enforced 'rest' from touring.

Track Listing:

1. Erin Go Bragh
2. Now Westlin Winds
3. Song For Ireland
4. Your Daughters And Your Sons
5. Glenlogie
6. On The Road
7. Reels: The Gooseberry Bush / The Chicago Reel / Jenny's Welcome to Charlie
8. The World Turned Upside Down
9. The Worker's Song
10. The Freedom Come All Ye
11. Lemmings [Bonus]
12. Sliabh Na mBan [Bonus]
13. Connolly Was There [Bonus]

At last...*The Fermanagh Blackbird*

Widely acclaimed singer and concertina player, Gabriel McArdle, from Kinawley in Fermanagh, has just released his debut solo album, *The Fermanagh Blackbird*.

With a vast and unique repertoire of traditional songs, 'Gabie' has long held iconic status in Ulster traditional singing circles. Yet remarkably, this is his first solo album.

"I am now in my seventy-fourth year, says Gabie, "and this is my first solo recording, although I have recorded previously with groups I was in, and with friends. Having been a joiner and carpenter since I was young, I came somewhat late to being able to devote most of my time to music.

The impetus to showcase his talents on record came from musician and producer, Dónal O'Connor, who urged him to undertake the project after producing a programme on Gabie for the *Sé Mo Laoch* series on TG4.

Dónal's is the guiding hand behind *The Fermanagh Blackbird* which also features Ciarán Curran of Altan on bouzouki, mandolin and tenor guitar, Newry's Daragh Murphy on uilleann pipes and whistles, Pat McManus of Mama's Boys and Fermanagh's own, Jim McGrath on the accordion.

With a selection of songs from the Fermanagh singing tradition such as *Devenish in Dreams*, *Far from Erne's Shore* and *The Waves of the Silvery Tide* as well as songs of a wider Ulster provenance like *The*



Gabriel McArdle (Photo: Dónal O'Connor)

Banks of Kilrea, the album also includes classics like *Erin Grá Mo Chroí* and *One Half Crown* and a tasteful selection of instrumental pieces like the title track and the sets, *I Buried My Wife* and *March of the Clann Maguire* which showcase Gabie's prowess on the concertina.

The album also includes some rare and previously unrecorded songs such as Johnny and Molly and Bessie the Beauty of Rossinure. Gabie also provide us with a fascinating alternate version of *William and Mary on the Banks of the Clyde* – which he previously sang with Ben Lennon and friends on the album, *The Bridge*.

Among the other albums Gabie has appeared on are *The Enchanters* with Na Draíodóirí (Robbie Hughes,

Jim Hoy, Gerry O'Donnell and Mal Whyte), on *Dog Big, Dog Little* with Ciarán Curran, Séamus Quinn and Ben Lennon, and on *Jig Away the Donkey* with Martin Quinn and Dónal's father, Gerry 'Fiddle' O'Connor.

Gabie has been active in music for most of his life. In the late 1970s he helped to establish a folk club in Enniskillen which was frequented by, among others, actor Adrian Dunbar, who has remained friends with Gabie ever since.

"Gabie's legacy," says Adrian, "will be that he came into Enniskillen from the country as a young man and brought a love of traditional music with him and especially traditional singing, great concertina playing too but great songs, reminding us of how

important our traditional heritage is. He has kept that flame alive in this area and that will be to his credit forever."

Among the guests who played for Gabie in Blakes of the Hollow was Andy Irvine.

"Gabriel McArdle," he says, "is one of the finest of all Ulster singers with a great repertoire of songs, many of which I have never heard anyone else sing. I treasure the memory of nights we had, playing together."

Another long-standing friend is Cathal MacConnell who grew up in Ballinaleck about six miles from Gabie's home in Kinawley.

"Our two houses were music houses," recalls Cathal, "where neighbours would come on their céilí almost nightly. There was no TV or anything like that so we would play tunes and learn from each other, so we would each build up our own collection of music to take with us into the future.

"Since I left Fermanagh, it has always been a pleasure to meet up with Gabie when I come home, to renew our friendship and play music together."

Track Listing:

1. Erin Grá Mo Chroí
2. The Banks of Kilrea
3. The Fermanagh Blackbird
4. Johnny and Molly
5. The Banks of the Clyde
6. Bessie the Beauty of Rossinure
7. I Buried My Wife and Danced on her Grave/The Drumshanbo Jig
8. Devenish in Dreams
9. The Cavan Road
10. Far from Erne's Shore
11. The March of the Clan Maguire/The Pikeman/Daniel O'Connell's Visit to Parliament
12. One Half Crown
13. The Waves of the Silvery Tide



Old friends: Cathal MacConnell and Gabie McArdle

Lankum's uneasy listening album

If you are like your traditional songs rendered in a style full of sweetness and light, then *False Lankum* by Dublin band, Lankum, is not the album for you.

Lankum's interpretation of songs that often feature inhumane, tragic and even monstrous actions is to reach for a sound palette that will underline the cruelty and heartlessness inherent in many of these songs.

In previous albums, this function has been largely filled by Ian Lynch's drones. But for this album the ambient soundscape has been beefed up by a range of dissonant sounds.

As if the victims, in Lankum's telling, are not prepared to wilt under the pressure of their mistreatment but rather they opt to resist and fight back with a steely determination.

So, with the assistance of producer, Spud Murphy, we are presented with a sonic landscape that is unflinching – relying heavily on the noise of



Lankum (Photo: Ellius Grace)

machinery, railway yards sirens and more, that rumble menacingly under many of the tracks before frequently overwhelming them.

Of course, many of these industrial sounds that are themselves becoming as increasingly anachronistic as the old ballads they accompany: as the service sector becomes pre-eminent within the economy and those factories that remain move to cleaner and greener production.

So the intense driven quality of the soundscape is an entirely logical, if somewhat unnerving, artistic choice.

The album includes one instrumental track, *Master Crowley's*, a reel made famous by Clare concertina

master, Noel Hill. For this album, Lankum, deploy a whole concertina ensemble with Radie Peat's sister, Sadhbh, adding more fire power along with the muscular heft of Cormac Begley's baritone concertina, which adds a percussive grunt alongside the dextrous fingerwork demanded by the tune.

Radie's searing vocals on *Go Dig My Grave* offer us a sense of melancholy mixed with resentment while maintaining an otherworldly ambience. She also takes the lead on *Newcastle*, popularised by Shirley Collins, although Lankum give a nod to the Dublin band, The Deadlians.

Radie provides tasteful harmony for Cormac Mac Diarmada's sensitive début



Lankum: (from left) Ian Lynch, Daragh Lynch, Radie Peat and Cormac Mac Diarmada

as lead vocalist on the Child ballad, *Lord Afore and Mary Flynn* – a traditional song presented in a traditional manner which ironically, provides a stark contrast to the tone of the rest of the album.

The New York Trader, which the band learned from Dublin traditional singer, Luke Cheevers, of An Góilín, is a maritime song – one of the Jonah Ballads – which affectively require one of those on board ship to be sacrificed in order to avoid misfortune on the voyage (for the rest of the ship's occupants!)

Though often included in nautical anthologies, Cyril Tawney's modern classic, *On A Monday Morning*, has a more universal resonance – standing in a bus queue, likely hung over, on the morning after a hectic weekend.

The album also features two more thoughtful songs from the pen of Daragh Lynch – *Netta Perseus* and *The Turn*.

False Lankum is not the kind of album you will 'get' in one listening. But the many layers of sound will continue to reveal new elements over time. The album challenges the listener: it is not intended for casual 'consumption.' But it is worth the effort.

Track Listing:

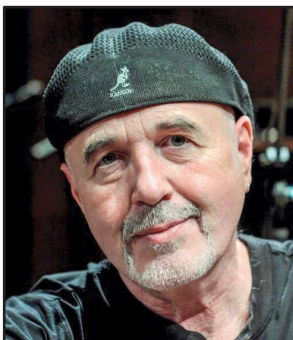
1. Go Dig My Grave
2. Clear Away in the Morning
3. Fugue I
4. Master Crowley's
5. Newcastle
6. Fugue II
7. Netta Perseus
8. The New York Trader
9. Lord Afore and Mary Flynn
10. Fugue III
11. On a Monday Morning
12. The Turn

Peggy's Dream another landmark recording

The first album from Martin Hayes and the Common Ground Ensemble, *Peggy's Dream*, has just been released. It is destined to be a landmark recording.

While Martin's latest project – which was stalled by the onset of Covid-19 – builds most closely on his recent musical adventure with The Gloaming, it also represents a flowering of some of the musical ideas he was exploring with the Martin Hayes Quartet and in his collaboration with the Brooklyn Rider string quartet.

The tone palette of the new line-up tweaks the sonic array of The Gloaming. While fiddle, guitar and piano remain as before, the hardanger d'amore has given way to the lower registers of the cello; and the harmonium (mainly used for accompaniment) has been replaced by another smaller reed instrument – the concertina which is capable of leading



Dedication: The late Dennis Cahill



Common Ground (from left): Brian Donnellan, Cormac Mc Carthy, Martin Hayes, Kyle Sanna and Kate Ellis

as well as supporting. The vocal dimension of The Gloaming has now been 'contracted out' to guests for live performances – but on record, the band's focus is solely on the tunes.

The new line-up is also more musically diverse in terms of their background genres, bringing jazz and contemporary classical sensibilities into the mix.

Despite the project's global appeal, *Peggy's Dream* is rooted in East Clare – not only through the presence of Hayes and his fellow Tulla Céilí Band alumnus, Brian Donnellan, with his East Clare style concertina playing – but even in terms of tune selection.

Peggy's Dream is jointly dedicated to Martin Hayes' mother, Peggy, and to his late musical partner, Dennis Cahill. The tune that gives the album its title, *Peggy's Dream*, is an air from the Goodman Collection.

The Glen Of Aherlow reel, composed by the Tipperary fiddler, Seán Ryan, had previously featured on an

album, released in 1959 by Martin's father, P.J., and uncle, Paddy Canny, who were both founder members of the Tulla Céilí Band.

Meanwhile the last track on the album features one of the classic reels in the traditional canon, *Toss The Feathers*, in a set with a tune dubbed by Martin Hayes as *The Magerabaun Reel*, since he could not find a title for an old tune which used to be played by two musicians, Joe Bane and Bill Malley, from the nearby townland of Magherabaun in East Clare.

The layered approach to ensemble playing – beginning with one or two voices/instruments and gradually adding more instruments – which was a signature of many of the Gloaming's

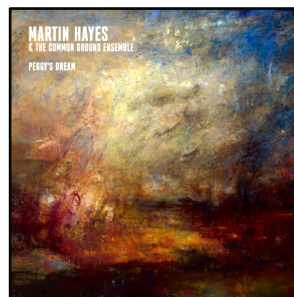
arrangements – is also evident on the Common Ground album. Indeed many of the tracks on this album would have fitted comfortably within the repertoire of his former band – though clearly without the same range of instrumentation.

The multi-layered approach with its depth of tone and texture also means that repeated listening will continue to reveal new surprises – even with otherwise familiar tunes from the traditional canon.

The album should have a very long shelf-life: a classic!

Track Listing:

1. The Boyne Water
2. The Longford Tinker
3. Cá Bhfuil An Solas?
4. Peggy's Dream
5. Johnny Cope/
Hughie Travers' Reel
6. Garret Barry's Jig
7. The Glen of Aherlow
8. Aisling Gheal
9. Toss the Feathers/
The Magerabaun Reel



Daoirí's fine wedding album extols joy of singing

Daoirí Farrell's fourth solo album, *The Wedding Above in Glencree*, confirms his status as the leading male traditional singer of his generation.

According to Daoirí, this album "combines the rawness of my first album, the impact of my second album and the beauty of my third album."

However, the rawness he speaks of has nothing to do with the quality of the recording: engineer/producer, Trevor Hutchinson, has delivered beautifully balanced and crisp audio. Perhaps by rawness, he means the freshness and enthusiasm which is just as evident on the new album as it was on *The First Turn*.

It is four years since his acclaimed third album, *A*



Daoirí Farrell

Lifetime of Happiness, produced by Dónal Lunny. Daoirí would probably have delivered the follow-up sooner if the pandemic had not intervened. But Daoirí used the enforced cessation in touring as opportunity not only to select what should appear on the album but also to hone his delivery of the chosen songs.

As Daoirí explained in an earlier interview in *fonn*, he likes to take time to get to know a song to decide if he can make it his own.

During the pandemic, he used his weekly *Covid Corner Sesh* – broadcast on social media channels for around six months in 2020 – as an opportunity not only to maintain contact with his fans on an international level but also to develop his relationship with a number of new songs as well as

drawing on his previously recorded repertoire.

The fruits of his labours are evident in a number of tracks on the new album like Pecker Dunne's traveller classic, *Sullivan's John*; the traditional emigration ballad, *Slieve Gallion Braes*; *Young Emmet*, popularised by Frank Harte; Thomas McCarthy's comic favourite, *Clasped to the Pig*; *Murphy's Running Dog*, popularised by Paddy Berry from Wexford; and Canon Charles O'Neill's 1916 lament, *The Foggy Dew*.

Both the vocal arrangements and the instrumental accompaniment on these and the rest of the tracks on the album are well polished.

Daoirí is well served by his collaborators: his touring trio comrades, Mark Redmond on uilleann pipes and whistles, Robbie Walsh on bodhrán and hand pan; along with Manus Lunny on guitar, bouzouki and bass bouzouki, Paddy Kiernan on 5-string banjo, Pat Daly on harmonium and fiddle, Alan Doherty on whistles, Geoff Kinsella on tenor banjo and Trevor

Hutchinson on string bass while special guest Jerry Douglas brings the dobro to the late Ron Hynes composition, *Sonny's Dream*.

Sonny's Dream offers a perfect illustration of Daoirí's outstanding ability to take songs which are familiar and uncover something new and unexpected.

The epic title track, *The Wedding Above in Glencree*, which, according to Daoirí, recounts "the tale of a chaotic wedding, celebrated to excess, that may well have been held in the Glencree valley" is one of many songs acquired by Farrell at An Góilin Traditional Singers Club where he remains a frequent visitor.

Daoirí has previously recorded a number of songs written by Liam Weldon – who was the subject of his college thesis. On this album he offers a fine rendition of one of Liam's favourite songs, *One Starry Night*, which he collected from singers from the Traveller Community.

The album also features two well known Wexford songs – *Murphy's Running Dog* and the 1798 ballad, *Father Murphy*. The latter has a distinctive Planxty vibe – perhaps reflecting many hours of 'imprinting' of Planxty and Bothy Band music on the young Daoirí by his father, Dessie.

Daoirí's long-awaited fourth is a beautifully crafted album.

Track Listing:

1. Father Murphy
2. One Starry Night
3. Sonny's Dream
4. Sullivan's John
5. Slieve Gallion Braes
6. Young Emmet
7. The Wedding Above in Glencree
8. Murphy's Running Dog
9. Clasped to the Pig
10. The Foggy Dew



Regular collaborators: Mark Redmond, Daoirí Farrell and Robbie Walsh



Young'Uns deliver big punch with *Tiny Notes*

The latest album from the Young'Uns, *Tiny Notes*, showcases more songs by Seán Cooney about the power of ordinary people to make a positive difference in the world.

In an age when celebrity is an increasingly debased commodity and words like legendary are losing meaning through overuse, the Teesside trio provide us with wonderful stories of real heroes, beautifully framed both in terms of the vocal arrangements and instrumentation.

While firmly rooted in the folk tradition – which the band have been deeply immersed for many years, Cooney has mastered the art of writing songs on modern themes – which, in turn, burn with righteous anger, ache with bitter-sweet poignancy and grin with wry humour.

The album is international in its outlook: on *Tiny Notes* we are transported from London to



Memorial: Lyra McKee



The Young'Uns (from left): David Eagle, Michael Hughes, Seán Cooney at Dublin Tradfest in 2020 (Photo: fonn)

Lockerbie, Ireland to Syria, Florida to North Yorkshire – in pursuit of previously unsung heroes who stand as beacons of courage, love and tolerance.

The album's title track was inspired by 22-year-old Paige Hunter's handwritten messages of hope tied to the railings of Sunderland's Wearmouth Bridge where many people had decided to end their lives. But her notes are thought to have saved the lives of some thirty people in the North East and her action has inspired others to leave similar messages on bridges around the world.

As for Cooney's treatment of the story, he gives us the killer line... "*tiny little notes tied on to the bridge, sometimes love's not enough, but sometimes it is*" – which sums up the message at the heart of the album.

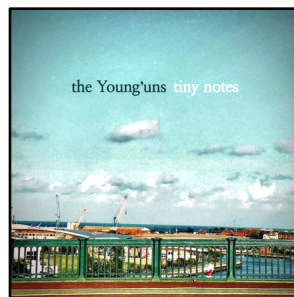
Utilising a variety of moods and rhythms, the album opens with *Jack Merritt's Boots* remembering the 25 year-old killed in a 2019 terror attack at Fishmongers' Hall in London.

It recalls the stories of other young lives lost like Tim Burman, killed in the Lockerbie bombing of 1988; and the Belfast-born journalist, Lyra McKee, who was killed in 2019 while observing a riot in Derry.

In the song *Three Dads Walking* the band also remember the daughters of Andy Airey, Mike Palmer and Tim Owen who tragically took their own lives.

Returning to Derry the album salutes the courage of *Richard Moore*, who was blinded as a child by an army bullet. It praises the resilience of the human spirit in a dramatic rescue tale from Panama.

In an echo of *The Manchester Rambler*, by Ewan



MacColl, the Young'Uns champion the right to roam in Seán Cooney's *Trespassers* (a song written for – but not included in – *The Ballad of Johnny Longstaff* album. The new album also recounts the remarkable story of David Nott, a Welsh trauma surgeon working in Syria.

Produced by Andy Bell, *Tiny Notes* avails of tasteful string arrangements by Jon Boden. It also features three female voices singing small vignettes between some of the tracks: local Teesside singer, Anne Lamb, Canada-based Lucy Farrell and Scot Karine Polwart.

Track Listing:

1. Jack Merritt's Boots
2. Book (Tiny Note)
3. Tiny Notes
4. Three Dads Walking
5. Richard Moore
6. Hand Over Hand
7. Bird (Tiny Note)
8. Lyra
9. Trespassers
10. Mountain (Tiny Note)
11. Tim Burman
12. Roseberry Moon
13. The Surgeon
14. Luventa

Karen's polished apples

Karan Casey's progressive life-affirming worldview is reflected in her latest wonderful album, *Nine Apples of Gold* – her twelfth so far.

Throughout her career in music, Karan has articulated a natural affinity with the underdog and has included many songs of struggle and protest in her repertoire.

In this album she has drawn on her own life experience to produce a fine collection of songs – in conjunction with long-time collaborator, Seán Óg Graham – which express her major pre-occupations about gender justice and the natural world.

Connecting these two concerns, the album could be viewed as a celebration of creative feminine energy.

Throughout the album, Karan embraces the sounds of nature – literally in the case of the songbirds of Portglenone (recorded by Graham outside his Bannview studio) and figuratively in songs which reference



Seán Óg Graham



Karan Casey

returning to the wild, the moon seen through branches and listening for a sleeping cuckoo.

The title track, *Nine Apples of Gold*, not only evokes an almost idyllic representation of the natural world but also testifies to the healing power of song.

But before the healing can take place, a thorough diagnosis of the illness is required. And for Karan one of the principal causes is the persistence of patriarchal power – which she indicts in the most effective way in the track *I Live in A Country* – a largely spoken piece with a striking chorus – on which she shares vocal duties with Pauline Scanlon, one of her fellow advocates in the FairPlé campaign for gender justice in folk and traditional music – to whom the album is dedicated.

The camaraderie which has characterised the FairPlé campaign finds a voice in Casey's up-tempo anthem to female solidarity, *Sister, I Am Here for You* – where Karan shares vocal duties with another FairPlé sister, Niamh Dunne of Beóga, who along with Graham has been a member of Casey's touring band in recent years.

With its chorus earworm, the song looks set to become an anthem for the FairPlé campaign – with its pointed endline: "And I am listening, too!" – which clearly resonates in the aftermath of #metoo.

In yet another duet, the poignantly tender song, *Daughter Dear*, takes the form of a conversation between a mother and daughter. On this track Karan is joined by the award-winning singer, Ríoghnach Connolly, an



Sisters in song: Niamh Dunne and Karan Casey (Photo: Fonn)



acclaimed alumna of the renowned Armagh Pipers' Club, which was founded by Karan's parents-in-law, Brian and Eithne Vallely.

Aside from the Casey-Graham compositions, the album includes one song from the traditional canon: the classic *The Rocks of Bawn* – reputedly the late Joe Heaney's favourite ballad in English.

In a beautifully tasteful arrangement, Karan demonstrates that, notwithstanding her growing reputation as a writer of songs on largely contemporary themes, she retains a remarkable ability to interpret traditional songs with sensitivity and respect while at the same time making them her own.

Throughout the album Karan is well served by her collaborators – who include the ubiquitous Kate Ellis on cello, Hannah Hiemstra on percussion, Ashley Hoyer on mandolin, Conor McCreanor on bass, John McCullough on keyboards and Alex Borwick on trombone.

Track listing:

1. Nine Apples Of Gold
2. Sister, I Am Here for You
3. I Live in a Country
4. Daughter Dear
5. By and By
6. The Weeping Time
7. Return to the Wild
8. When the Moon Gets Tangled
9. The Rocks of Bawn
10. I Thank My Lucky Stars

Album is triumph for Singer of Year, Síle

A*namnesis* is a remarkable new album of sean-nós songs by the singer and harpist, Síle Denvir, who has just been awarded the TG4 Gradam Ceoil as Singer of the Year.

The repertoire represented on the album reflects Síle's roots in Indreabhán in the Connemara Gaeltacht. The songs are all traditional – which have been sung in the west down through the generations and reflect an ongoing pre-occupation with place and with nature and the environment.

A native Irish speaker, her singing is very much rooted in the sean-nós tradition, and she has the ability to transform verses that are intrinsically local into songs with a global resonance.

The album's title – *Anamnesis* – refers to a concept, first advanced by Plato, that knowledge is innate and is rediscovered through inquiry and learning; it attempted to resolve a philosophical paradox



Cello Maestra: Caroline Dale



Remarkable: Síle Denvir

that to begin to learn we need to understand and to begin to understand we need to learn. Later use of the term suggests a form of recollection of the past that, while earnestly undertaken, is not always accurate.

And of course, by coincidence for the linguist, the first four letters of this Greek word spell out *anam* – the Irish word that can mean soul, spirit or warmth.

In *Anamnesis* Síle has created an album of sublime expressions of timeless yearning against a haunting ethereal backdrop created by producer. John Reynolds, with the cello of Caroline Dale bringing something more subtle than a drone to the mix.

While knowledge of the Irish language would be an obvious benefit to the listener, there is something so fundamentally universal about the overall soundscape and about Síle's vocal imagination that transcends any barriers of language.

Overall the effect exudes a state of almost meditative transcendence. Indeed even

with its more upbeat tempo, *Contae Mhaigh Eo* has an almost Oriental sensibility.

This remarkable album remains faithful to the spirit of sean-nós while at the same time presenting the music in a striking context that actually reinforces the otherworldly dimension of the genre.

Síle's approach to the performance of sean-nós singing is grounded in a parallel career in academe. A lecturer in Dublin City University, Síle has a BA in Music and Irish from NUI Maynooth, an MA in Irish from NUI Galway, an MA in Traditional Music Performance from the University of Limerick – where she also completed her PhD in 2012.



She has published two books on songwriters from Connemara, *Ciarán Ó Fátharta: Amhráin* (2008) and *Tom a' tSeoighe: Amhráin* (2020) as well as numerous articles on aspects of the Irish song tradition.

Síle has collaborated with some of the finest musicians in Irish music, as a founding member of *Liadan*, as a performer with The Chieftains and as a collaborator with Barry Kerr, Martin Hayes, Liam Ó Maonlaí and Úna Monaghan (with whom she also worked in the FairPlé campaign).

She is also music director for *Bláth na hÓige*, a TG4 series showcasing young sean-nós singers from various Gaeltacht areas.

Track Listing:

1. Eileanóir a Rún
2. Johnny Seoighe
3. Contae Mhaigh Eo
4. Cúirt Bhaile Nua
5. Baile an Róba
6. Amhrán na hEascainne
7. Dónall Óg
8. Seoithín Seo-hó
9. Tá na Páipéir Dhá Saighneáil



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A pair of livewires

Diad: Tim Edey & Ross Ainslie (Great White)

Multiple award-winning multi-instrumentalists Tim Edey and Ross Ainslie have been playing together for years now and the idea for *Diad* was to capture the duo in a live setting in the studio in one day, setting up and playing like a gig so it captures the way the guys like to play, live, spontaneous and free.

Tim is a double Musician of the Year (BBC Folk Awards 2012 and BBC Scotland 2020). He played guitar and accordion with the Chieftains for ten years as well as appearing with artistes like Ry Cooder and Paul Brady, Tim also has a long standing solo career.

Rated by many to be one of the world's best guitarists and melodeon players on the traditional music scene, Tim has also recorded and toured with Christy Moore, Altan, Natalie MacMaster, Julie Fowlis and Lúnasa.



Best known as a highland piper, Ross Ainslie has been thrice nominated as Musician of the Year at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards in 2013, 2016 and 2018. He won the award for Best Duo with Ali Hutton in 2017. He also won Composer of the Year in 2015 at the Scots Trad Music Awards.

He has performed with a number of acts including Jarlath Henderson, Brìghde Chambeuil, Capercaillie, Kate Rusby, Flook, Dougie Maclean and many more. He has made five solo albums: *Wide Open* (2013), *Remembering* (2015), *Sanctuary* (2017), *Vana* (2020) and *Live at the Gorbals* (2022).

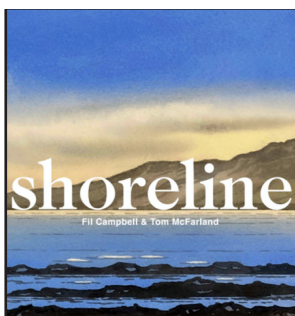
It's a shore thing

Shoreline: Fil Campbell and Tom McFarland

Just released is the third album from Fil Campbell and Tom McFarland. *Shoreline* is a collection of ten mostly self-penned folk songs sung by one or other of the duo with a couple of duets.

While the two routinely perform live as a duo, for this recording in their own Ballyneddan studio, they were joined by a very impressive line-up of 'backing' musicians – including Steve Cooney, Rod McVey, Nicky Scott, Nuala Curran, Ciara McCrickard, Jarlath Mulholland and Peter Benson.

Originally from Belleek in Co. Fermanagh, singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, Fil Campbell



has been performing as a musician and singer since her teenage years.

Since the 1990s Fil and her Belfast-born husband Tom McFarland, have played as a duo, blending guitar, percussion and vocals, in a repertoire of original compositions with traditional and contemporary folk songs.

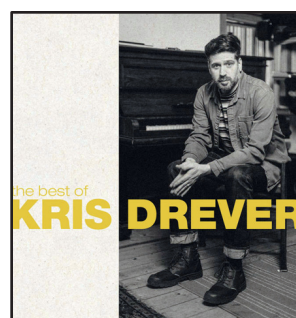
Drever on the double

The Best of: Kris Drever

This double album features over two and a half hours of music in the form of 36 lovingly curated songs (including three new ones) spanning the career of one of Scotland's most acclaimed singer-songwriters.

The recipient of a total of seven BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards – four of them as a member of Lau for Best Group in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2013 and three in his own right as Best Newcomer in 2007, as Singer of the Year in 2017 and Best Original Song in 2017 for *If Wishes were Horses*.

This anthology from the Orkney-born musician includes tracks from his solo albums as well as a selection from his work with Aidan O'Rourke and Martin Green in Lau.



The other special guests on the album include:

Eddi Reader, Kate Rusby, Andy Cutting, Louis Abbott, Boo Hewerdine, Heidi Talbot, Tim O'Brien, Ian Carr, Euan Burton, John McCusker, Phil Cunningham, Norman Blake, Megan Henderson, Eamonn Coyne, Roddy Woomble, Elysian Quartet, Rachel Lightbody, Yola and Joan as Police Woman.

The album will be released on May 19.

Thinking outside the box

Siúl na Slí: Diarmuid Ó Meachair

Cork's Diarmuid Ó Meachair is an award-winning button accordion player. He is also an accomplished melodeon player and sean-nós singer. In 2016, he won the Senior All-Ireland melodeon title at the Fleadh in Ennis at 19 years of age. At the All-Ireland Fleadh the following year he was invited to perform at a tribute concert in memory of Finbarr Dwyer.

He has also won many sean-nós singing competitions at the Oireachtas na Samhna, Corn Darach Ó Catháin and Corn Seosamh Ó hÉanaigh. He was named as the TG4 Gradam Young Musician of the Year in 2022.

His debut album, *Siúl na Slí* (Walk the Way), reflects Diarmuid's journey as a traditional musician.



While Ó Meachair clearly draws from the well of some of the great box-playing masters of the past, his energy and attack enliven his highly engaging and imaginative approach to all of the sixteen tracks on this album – both rare and familiar.

Produced and engineered by the ubiquitous Jack Talty, *Siúl na Slí* also features Paddy McEvoy on piano, Ruairí McGorman on bouzouki and Fergus McGorman on bones.



The best yet –

Burns fêted as Howth gathering returns

The Howth Singing Circle's annual commemoration of the Scots poet, Robert Burns, originated in the tightly-packed and very smokey confines of the old Pier House (now O'Connell's) with the aim of celebrating the close kinship between Scots and Irish music, song and dance.

That first themed event proved to be so popular that it has been repeated annually ever since – transferring first to the Sea Angling Club on Howth's West Pier – where monthly sessions are now held – and then, as now, to the Abbey Tavern. This year, as always, the night was sold out.

Songbird: Niamh Parsons sings *The Slave's Lament* by Robert Burns at the Burns Night in Howth (Photo: Colm Keating)

It is a 'Burns Night' – almost a Howth invention – and not a Burns Supper, the more formal event Scots would be familiar with.

Over the years special guests have included Paul and Shona Donaldson, The Tannahill Weavers, Dàimh, Robyn Stapleton, Siobhán Miller, Kathleen MacInnes and Sineag McIntyre, piper Fred Morrison, The Friel Sisters, Loïc and Guénahel Denis from Brittany and the Handsworth Longsword Dancers from Sheffield.

While the Burns Night 'house band' of John Kelly

(fiddle), Mick Mullen (guitar) and Larry Egan (accordion) always deliver a solid base of tunes to get the dancers up, a highlight for many is the entrance of the St Lawrence Howth Pipe Band to pipe in the haggis, which is then 'addressed' – usually by a visiting Scot – before being distributed with neeps (turnips) and tatties (potatoes) to all in attendance.

A lament by Pipe Major, Noel Kelly, was observed impeccably by a thoughtful silence as friends and kin were remembered



Sae Will We Yet: Francy Devine (standing) joins guests (from left) Gary West, Steve Byrne and Mike Vass on stage at Howth Singing Circle's Burns Night (Photo: Colm Keating).

With the Abbey Tavern resplendent with flags, sparkling lights, the HSC banner and a linen drape of Burns – a long-standing gift from Luke Cheevers – there was palpable joy at finally being back in person after Covid.

The theme for the night was *An I Think On Freens Maist Dear* – a line from Burns’ *The Slave’s Lament* – delivered in a wonderful arrangement by Niamh Parsons and Graham Dunne.

Performers ‘from the floor’ included Helen Lahert with *The Shores of Lough Bran*; former fisherman Paddy Daly reading *The Piece of Old Rope*, by the late Howth poet Pearse McLoughlin, and Loughborough’s John Bentham with *Time, Time, Time*, a set that reflected friendship and loss.

The night’s sentiment of opposing slavery, racism and xenophobia continued with Tom Finn and *Hard Times*; Ann Riordan with Frances Ellen Watkins’s *Bury Me In A Free Land*; Fergus Whelan with *Windy Old Edinburgh Town*, Bob Cooney’s seldom heard homage to James Connolly; and Laurence Bond, with *Let My People Go*.

Up next were special guests Steve Byrne (singer and multi-instrumentalist), Mike Vass (fiddle and vocals)



Connolly Tribute: Fergus Whelan (Photo: Colm Keating).

and Gary West (Highland pipes, small pipes, low whistle and vocals). Their set included *Marches in 4/4 time*, *Flett from Flotta*, *The Jedburgh Ba’ Game*, *Farewell Thou Stream*, and a hair-raising compilation of *Moving Hearts’ jigs*.

They sang *The Gairdner Wi His Paidle* (Burns, 1798), written to *Dainty Davey*; *The Trogger, a Heron Election Ballad, No. IV* (Burns, 1798); and *I Once Lo’ed A Lass*, a theme of unrequited love that permeated the night. Steve’s *The Noddin’ Song* had everyone ‘noddin, nid, nid noddin’ – and not just on the night!

Morag Dunbar from Balerno recited the *Address Tae the Haggis* before re-appearing with Dalkeith’s Janet Weatherston to sing *The Keltie Clippie*, a Howth favourite as evidenced by the ‘kazoo orchestra’ accompanying their final verse – forty kazoos had been quietly distributed throughout the audience.

Jack and Angela Plunkett sang *Green Grow the Rashes O* while Catriona Crowe gave a powerful rendition of *Ye Jacobites By Name*. Mary Doyle read Francis Devine’s poem, *The Sixth of January* before the main guests closed the night, Francy Devine joined them to sing *The Banks o Reid Roses* and *Tramps and Hawkers*.

Steve, Mike and Gary concluded with *The Moss o Burreldale/Daft Donal*; *Scots Wha Hae/North* (fiddle solo); *The Lea Rig*; *Is There for Honest Poverty*, *Catriona’s Welcome*; *The Last Trip Home* and *The Shepherd’s Wife*. Individually, proven and excellent musicians and singers, collectively they were regarded by most as ‘simply brilliant’. The final songs were *Sae Will*



Piping tribute: Noel Kelly, pipe major of St. Lawrence Howth Pipe Band – wearing the cap of his late father and fellow bandmate, Paddy (Photo: Colm Keating)

We Yet – a real roof raiser – *Auld Lang Syne* (to the old tune) and *The Parting Glass*.

The hall was slow to clear with much chat about the best Burns Nicht yet.

Steve, Mike and Gary stayed on for the *Fare Thee Weel* Session on the Sunday where special guests were An Corraiste/The Luck Penny – piper and guitarist Aodán Jaff Mac Séifraidh and Jackie Jefferies, vocals and concertina. This free session offered an opportunity for many Howth Singing Circle regulars and visitors to sing.

So, ‘the best Burns Nicht yet’ adds to the memories of Howth’s unique and highly entertaining annual tribute to Burns, his Irish connections and Irish-Scots music. Lang may it continue.

Francy Devine 



Máire Ní Bhaoil (Photo: Colm Keating).



Lúnasa: (from left) Kevin Crawford, Ed Boyd, Trevor Hutchinson, Seán Smyth and Cillian Vallely.

Lúnasa for Baltimore Fiddle Fair

Lúnasa will make a welcome appearance at the Baltimore Fiddle Fair on May 7 – fresh from their Spring tour of North America.

Playing together for over 25 years, Lúnasa are internationally renowned for the energy and drive they bring to the music which has lit up some of the world's major concert venues.

The band's current line-up features Cillian Vallely on pipes, Kevin Crawford on flute, Seán Smyth on fiddle, Ed Boyd on guitar and Trevor Hutchinson on double bass.

They will be supported at the Fiddle Fair by the multiple award-winning Finnish folk

band, ENKEL. Lunasa's 2023 Irish tour will also include dates at Lawlor's Hotel, Dungarvan (May 5), Monroe's, Galway (May 6) and The Black Box in Belfast (May 11).

Among the other artists featuring in a very strong line-up at the Fiddle Fair in West Cork – which runs over four days from May 4 to May 7 – are the small pipes and fiddle duo of Brighde Chaimbeul and Aidan O'Rourke (May 4), North American roots outfit, The

Foghorn Stringband (May 5), Duo Ruut from Estonia (May 5), Aoife and Deirdre Granville from Kerry (May 6), Liz Knowles, Niwel Tsumbu and Niall Vallely supported by the Scottish band, Blazin' Fiddles (May 6) and Ye Vagabonds supported by Allison de Groot and Tatiana Hargreaves (May 7).

Tickets for the events in Baltimore are available from <https://fiddlefair.com/tickets>



Duo: Brighde Chaimbeul and Aidan O'Rourke



Baltimore-bound: Liz Knowles



Trio: Daoirí Farrell, Robbie Walsh and Mark Redmond

Programme for fleadh at Forest Fest finalised

The Forest Fleadh – a veritable festival within a festival – will bring together an impressive line-up of traditional and folk musicians as part of the more genre-diverse Forest Fest programme – which will feature over 80 artists across four stages in Emo Village in Co. Laois on the weekend of July 21 to 23.

Hosted by Sharon Shannon, the Forest Fleadh stage will see performances by Paul Brady, Daoirí Farrell Trio, the ollam, Goitse, Kíla with Brass, Stockton's Wing, Blackie O'Connell and Cyril O'Donoghue, Carlos Sweeney McCartin, Cua, Greenshine, Alfi, Emer Dunne, Eric De Buitléir, Miadhachughain O'Donnell and Joe Campbell McArde, Two Time Polka, Buíoch, Trad Hits, Bog Bodies, Caoivín, Eva Coyle Band, The Grange Ceilí Band and

set dancing with Maureen Culleton, Darren Roche and Cillian Doheny, Splendid Isolation, Roo Elizabeth and Band, Tommy Fitzharris, Siobhán and Aoife Buckley, The Cardinal Sins, Music Generation Laois Trad Orchestra and the Offbeats Bodhrán Club.

Among the many other performers appearing on the other Forest Fest stages are The Proclaimers, BellX1, Big Country, Suzanne Vega, Róisín Ó, Alabama 3, Paddy Casey and Jack Lukeman.

Flexible day tickets for Forest Fest are €85 each with free admission for accompanying children aged 12 and under. The ticket provides access to the other three Forest Fest stages, as well as the Fleadh stage.

There are also weekend camping and glamping options.

For more information, check out <https://forest-fest.ie/forest-fleadh/>

Daoirí Farrell Trio, the ollam, Paul Brady and Sharon Shannon head impressive line-up



Triple Time: The Trio by Adolphe Lalauze

Uilleann pipers head to West Wales

Pibyddion Uilleann Cymru (the Uilleann Pipers of Wales) will hold a festival of piping in Ferryside in Carmarthenshire in West Wales from Friday May 12 to Sunday May 14.

Gŵyl Uilleann Glanfferi has been organised with the co-operation of Na Píobairí Uilleann and will include performances by uilleann pipers, Néilidh Mulligan, Jarlath Henderson and Rita Farrell, singer Julie Matthews and fiddle player James Carty. Ceri Rhys Matthews will also perform on the flute and the Welsh reed-pipe or *pibgorn* – which, though originally 'unbagged,' is often played now with a bag attached. Sam Lawrence will be on hand to provide advice on pipe maintenance.

The festival will follow the format of a piping tionól – with classes and lectures and three informal sessions.

The special guests will also perform at the Gala Concert on Saturday May 13 at St. Thomas Church, Ferryside. Tickets for the concert will be on sale at the door for £10/£8.

Ceri Rhys Matthews (pictured below) recently co-presented a talk in the NPU's *Notes and Narratives* series with piper, Rick Lines, titled *To-ing and Fro-ing: Exploring connections between regions in Wales and Ireland*. The talk is available online at <https://pipers.ie/npu-tv/>.



New show combines music and poetry

***My Father's Kind* is a unique collaboration involving Irish traditional music and the work of one of Ireland's most celebrated and acclaimed writers, Dermot Bolger.**

Based on a suite of poems by Bolger which depicts many twentieth century traditional Irish musicians including Séamus Ennis, Mary Ann Carolan and Johnny Doherty, *My Father's Kind* weaves a tapestry of music and words in celebration of a bygone generation of Irish artists, exploring not just their iconic music but the real lives and humanity behind the loved and celebrated figures.

*He survives on tins of steak and kidney pie,
On meals that he cooks at odd hours,
When he tells yarns and truly comes alive.*

*There is rent to pay, a meter to be fed,
Afternoon visits to the local launderette
Nights of wind rattling the rotting windows,*

*When he spreads his coat over his bed.
This is the price of making music,
Of living the life for which he was born...*

– excerpt from *Séamus Ennis in Drumcondra* by Dermot Bolger

Musicians taking part include fiddler and composer, Danny Diamond; traditional singer and composer, Macdara Yeates; and renowned piper, flautist and vocalist, Síle Friel.

The show will be presented at four venues during May: Séamus Ennis Arts Centre in the Naul, Co. Dublin (5th), glór, Ennis (11th), The Dock, Carrick-on-Shannon (12th) and An Droichead, Belfast (13th).



Macdara Yeates



Sheila Friel



Danny Diamond

macdara yeates presents

my father's kind

a collaboration of poetry and traditional irish music

with **dermot bolger** (poems)
danny diamond (fiddle)
sheila friel (pipes)
and **macdara yeates** (songs)

may 5 | séamus ennis arts centre | naul
may 11 | glór | ennis
may 12 | the dock | carrick-on-shannon
may 13 | an droichead | belfast

arts council galway funding traditional arts



Breakout: Amythyst Kiah (Photo: Liam Woods).

Amythyst Kiah to play dates in Belfast and Dublin

The break-out star of American roots music, Amythyst Kiah, is to play two gigs in Ireland as part of her European tour in August to promote her recent *Wary + Strange* album. Kiah will play the Black Box in Belfast on August 22 and Whelan's in Dublin on August 23 – as well as dates in Britain, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden before returning to Europe in November for further performances in Britain, Germany, Italy and France

An alumna of East Tennessee State University's Bluegrass, Old Time, Country Music programme, Amythyst Kiah came to international prominence as a member of the all-female band Our Native Daughters – delivering a critically acclaimed album for Smithsonian Folkways with fellow band-mates, Rhiannon Giddens, Leyla McCalla and Allison Russell.

Black Myself, one of Amythyst Kiah's contributions to the album, earned

a Grammy nomination for Best American Roots Song and was named Song of the Year at the Folk Alliance International Awards.

Produced by Tony Berg, *Wary + Strange* has received positive reviews with *Glide* magazine noting: *This album will be a centerpiece of conversation, not just this year, but in the years to come too...* while *Rolling Stone* magazine included it in their list of 25 Best Country and Americana Albums of 2021.



Four dates: Sam Amidon

Amidon to tour in May

American singer and multi-instrumentalist, Sam Amidon, is to tour Ireland in May.

In addition to his original compositions, Amidon has also reworked traditional British and Irish folk songs as well as American, hymns and work songs.

Known for his collaborations with composer, Nico Muhly, guitarist Bill Frisell, and percussionist Milford Graves, Sam has also played with major ensembles like the Kronos Quartet, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Britten Sinfonia and Ireland's Crash Ensemble.

He has guested with many other artists including Glen Hansard, John Prine and Emmylou Harris, as well as his wife, Beth Orton.

In 2015, he hosted a tribute to Pete Seeger at Dublin's National Concert Hall.

For the upcoming Irish tour, Sam will be joined by percussionist, Chris Vatalaro.

Tour Dates

- May 10 The Grand Social Dublin supported by Inni-K
- May 11 DeBarra's Folk Club Clonakilty, West Cork
- May 12 An Taibhdhearc, Galway supported by Tatiana Hargreaves & Allison De Groot
- May 13 The Duncairn, Belfast supported by David C. Clements

Tickets are available at samamidon.com

Máirtín O'Connor Trio for Fleadh by the Feale

The Máirtín O'Connor Trio will headline the featured concert at the Glórach Theatre in Abbeyfeale on Saturday May 29 as part of the Fleadh by the Feale.

Among the other events taking place during the fleadh from Thursday May 27 to Monday May 1 will be singing, storytelling

and music sessions, street performances by buskers and wren boys, céilidhe and a bones-playing competition.

The fleadh will also include six workshops: accordion with Daithí Gormley; fiddle with Tom Morrow; banjo with Elaine Reilly; flute with Brian O'Loughlin; concertina with Conor O'Loughlin and singing with Róisín Ryan.



Composed: Terry Reilly (Photo: P Squared).

Unique concert to give iconic classical piece *In C* traditional treatment

Terry O'Reilly's iconic modernist composition, *In C*, is to be recast in an Irish traditional mould by a stellar line-up of Zoë Conway, Donal Lunny, Máirtín O'Connor, Louise and Michelle Mulcahy, Mick O'Brien and Paddy Glackin in a unique performance in St. Nicholas Church in Dundalk on Saturday June 17 at 8pm.



Zoë Conway

Described by some as an infinite jam session, the 1964 composition by the American 'father of minimalism,' Terry O'Reilly, provides the framework for a structured improvisation in which all the participants have the freedom to take the lead as the music moves them and to repeat elements as they see fit.

Although the earliest renditions of *In C* did not even have an agreed time signature, later versions incorporated a beat to provide an underlying rhythm to unify the piece.

While originally hailed as a breakthrough within contemporary classical music, the piece's improvisational character means it should be perfectly accessible to traditional musicians – especially to those of the calibre of the magnificent seven who will gather in Dundalk in June – six of whom have been recognised with TG4 Gradam Ceoil awards.

The concert will conclude the Folks' Music weekend being presented by the Louth Contemporary Music Society.



Michelle Mulcahy



Máirtín O'Connor



Donal Lunny

Knowles, Tsumbu and Vallely combine for Music Network tour in May

Three musicians, multiple genres and an abundance of talent – Liz Knowles on fiddle and hardanger fiddle, Niwel Tsumbu on guitar and vocals and Niall Vallely on concertina – is the latest of the intriguing collaborations facilitated each year by Music Network. The trio are set for a ten-date tour in May which will take them to venues all around the Republic.

Liz Knowles

Liz Knowles from Kentucky has established herself as a world-renowned, dynamic performer and recording artist as fiddler with Riverdance, The String Sisters, The Martin Hayes Quartet and her trio, Open the Door for Three, with Pat Broaders and Kieran O'Hare.

Her compositions and arrangements have been recorded by many artists including Flook, Cherish the Ladies, Liz Carroll, John Whelan, John Doyle, Kieran O'Hare, Chicago's Metropolis Symphony Orchestra, Beolach, Bachue, Michael Black, Christa Burch, Pamela Wyn Shannon, K.P. Devlin and J.P. Cormier. Recently, Liz composed and produced music for two exhibits featuring Irish art at the Art Institute in Chicago and at Notre Dame's Snite Museum.

Niwel Tsumbu

Congolese-born, Irish-based guitarist Niwel Tsumbu has recorded with artists like Nigel Kennedy and Steve Cooney and performed with Sinead O'Connor, Buena Vista Social Club and Baaba Maal. In 2021, he played guitar on the Grammy award winning album, *They're Calling Me Home*, by Rhiannon Giddens and Francesco Turrisi.

Niwel's style is unique and exhilarating, drawing on influences as diverse as jazz, classical, rock, folk and rumba. Niwel also sings in his native Lingala as well as in French and English.

Resident in Ireland since 2004, Niwel has developed a long-term collaboration with percussionist Eamonn Cagney, which resulted in their highly praised 2022 release, *The Art of the Duo*.



Niall Vallely

Composer and concertina master, Niall Vallely, has toured and recorded with artists like Nomos, Buille, Karan Casey, Paddy Keenan, Tim O'Brien and Asturian band Tejedor.

An alumnus of the renowned Armagh Pipers Club – set up by his parents Brian and Eithne – Niall has been based in Cork for 35 years and recently earned a PhD in composition from his alma mater, UCC. A prolific composer, his work appears on more than 75 albums.

In November 2018, Niall premiered a major new commission in Dún Laoghaire entitled *78 Revolutions* combining live performance with pre-recorded audio material while in 2019 he completed two large-scale works: the *Concerto for Concertina and Orchestra*, premiered by the National Symphony Orchestra at the National Concert Hall in Dublin and *Macha*, a multi-media performance at Eamhain Mhacha/Navan Fort near Armagh. (see *Fonn* Vol 1. No.6).

Tour Itinerary

- Thursday May 4 7pm
The Malt House,
Stradbally, Co. Laois
- Friday May 5 8pm
Triskel Arts Centre, Christchurch,
Cork City
- Saturday May 6 8.30pm
Baltimore Fiddle Fair Marquee,
Baltimore, Co. Cork
- Monday May 8 8pm
Station House Theatre,
Clifden, Co. Galway
- Wednesday May 10 7.30pm
The Sugar Club, Lower Leeson
Street, Dublin 2
- Thursday May 11 7.30pm
The Large Room, City Hall,
Waterford
- Friday May 12 8pm
Riverbank Arts Centre,
Newbridge, Co. Kildare
- Saturday May 13 8pm
Roscommon Arts Centre,
Co. Roscommon
- Saturday May 14 8pm
Regional Cultural Centre,
Letterkenny

Event Diary

Mary Black – Pavilion Theatre, Dun Laoghaire, May 19; The Arklow Bay Hotel, June 2; Gleneagle INEC Arena, Kilkenny, October 20; Pavilion Theatre, Dun Laoghaire, October 29; Vicar Street, Dublin 2, November 4; Olympia Theatre, Dublin 2, November 17; Royal Theatre & Event Centre, Castlebar, Saturday, November 18.

Billy Bragg – All Together Now Festival, Curraghmore House, Portlaoigh, Co. Waterford, August 4; Cypress Avenue, Caroline Street, Cork, November 20; National Concert Hall, Dublin, November 21; Mandela Hall, Belfast, November 22.

Clare Youth Trad Orchestra with Eileen Ivers, Séamus and Caoimhe Uí Fhlatharta – glór, Causeway Link, Ennis, June 30

Zoë Conway and John McIntyre with Dónal Lunny and Máirtín O'Connor – Carlingford Heritage Centre, Carlingford, August 13

Zoë Conway and John McIntyre with Liam Ó Maonlaí – Carlingford Heritage Centre, Carlingford, August 20

Jimmy Crowley & Eve Telford – Triskel Arts Centre, Cork, May 6 – *Fundraising concert in aid of the mental health charity Grow Ireland*

Shaun Davey and Friends – Carlingford Heritage Centre, Carlingford, May 14

Damien Dempsey – The Arklow Bay Hotel, May 19; Judge Roy Bean's, Newbridge, May 20; Gleneagle INEC Arena, Killarney, May 26; Iveagh Gardens, Dublin, July 7-8

Niamh Dunne – The Green Room, Dingle, June 1



Lankum: (from left) Cormac Mac Diarmaida, Radie Peat, Daragh Lynch and Ian Lynch
(Photo: Sorcha Frances Ryder)

Lankum for Vicar Street

Buoyed by the critical acclaim – allied to the and commercial success – that has greeted their new album, *False Lankum*, released last month, Lankum will make a triumphant return to Dublin's Vicar Street at the end of May. The Dublin band will play three successive nights in the Liberties venue beginning on **Monday May 29**.

False Lankum follows their 2019 album, *The Live-long Day*, which garnered the RTÉ Choice Music Prize and an RTÉ Radio 1 Folk Award nomination for Best Album along with widespread critical acclaim at home and abroad.

With a repertoire made up of well researched traditional songs alongside their own compositions, the band deliver songs with a brooding intensity – underlined by the deep dark undertones provided by Ian Lynch's drones and ambient sounds of dissonance.

From the start, the band intended that *False Lankum* – their fourth album – should feel like a complete piece



rather than a collection of songs and thus bring the listener on an unfolding journey.

"We wanted to create more contrast on the record so the light parts would be almost spiritual and the dark parts would be incredibly dark, even horror inducing," they explain.

On the album's twelve tracks – which consist of ten traditional songs and two originals – the quartet use a new tonal palate to colour their sound in an increasingly experimental way, with the collaboration of longtime producer, John 'Spud' Murphy.

The three Dublin nights are reportedly close to being sold out as, indeed is the earlier date at Mandela Hall in Belfast on May 19.

After the Vicar Street dates, the band's next confirmed performance in Ireland will be at the multi-genre All Together Now festival in the Curraghmore Estate, Portlaoigh, Co. Waterford on August 4.

Event Diary



The Young'Uns: (from left) Séan Cooney, Michael Hughes and David Eagle.

The Young'Uns set to return to the Pavilion

Multiple award-winning trio, The Young'uns, make a welcome return to Dun Laoghaire four years after their last gig in the Pavilion Theatre – the acclaimed stage show, *The Ballad of Johnny Longstaff* – and three years after their last Irish gig during Dublin Tradfest at the Button Factory just before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Young'uns' live shows are renowned. With heart-on-the-sleeve storytelling, beautiful lyrics, warm harmonies and relentless repartee, Séan Cooney, Michael Hughes and David Eagle sing life-affirming folk songs for today as well as from the traditional music canon.

Born out of empathy, crafted with care, fired by hope and shared with joy, The Young'uns' songs have been described by *The Scotsman* newspaper as "a heartfelt secular hymnary for these troubled times and a rallying call for humanity."

The band have won three BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards (for Best Group in 2015 and

2016 and Best Album in 2018 for *Strangers*). They also enjoyed widespread acclaim for their brilliant stage show, *The Ballad of Johnny Longstaff*, which was performed to an appreciative audience at the Pavilion in 2019.

Twenty years after stumbling by accident into their local folk club as drunken teenagers (and gaining their increasingly anachronistic name in the process), these friends from Teeside in the North-East of England have never lost the joy of that first night of singing together.

Whether performing at Glastonbury Festival, writing a song about pigs with a group of school children or presenting a programme

on BBC Radio 4, Séan, David and Michael bring the same commitment, enthusiasm and sense of humour.

Taking its name from messages tied to the railings of a bridge in Sunderland, their new album, *Tiny Notes*, is a collection of songs that find hope and humanity in grief and despair with warm harmony and Séan Cooney's beautifully crafted lyrics.

One of the standout tracks on the album is the heart-rendingly beautiful, *Lyra*, inspired by the life and tragic death of Belfast-born journalist, Lyra McKee.

The Young'Uns play the Pavilion Theatre in Dun Laoghaire on Saturday, May 20, at 8pm.

Niamh Dunne and Seán Graham – The Workman's Club, Dublin 8, June 7

Frankie Gavin and Catherine McHugh – St. John's Theatre, Listowel May 24

Lumiere – The Duncairn, Belfast, May 20-21

Lúnasa – BallaghDream Arts Festival, Ballaghadareen, August 9

Martin Hayes – Patrick Kavanagh Centre, Inniskeen, Co. Cavan, May 20; glór, Causeway Link, Ennis, June 4; Killyon Manor, Hill of Down, Co. Meath, August 20; Royal Theatre and Event Centre, Castlebar, October 21.

Martin Hayes and the Common Ground Ensemble – Vicar Street, Dublin 2, October 20

Irish Concertina Orchestra with Michael McGoldrick, John McCusker, John Doyle, Cormac McCarthy – glór, Causeway Link, Ennis, May 6

Iarla Ó Lionáird and Cormac McCarthy – Butter Market, Kenmare, June 9

Iarla Ó Lionáird, Cormac McCarthy and Matthew Berrill – Pavilion Theatre, Dun Laoghaire, May 21

The Ollam - Mandela Hall, Belfast, July 28; Vicar Street, Dublin, July 29

Rónán Ó Snodaigh – The Well, Dublin 2, May 5

Pauline Scanlon – Glastonbury Festival, June 25

Pauline Scanlon & Barry Kerr – Áras Chrónáin, Clondalkin, Dublin, May 6; Rostrevor Folk Club at Crawford's, Rostrevor, May 22; St. John's Theatre, Listowel, June 10

FÉILE RÓISE RUA



Now in its fourth year, Féile Róise Rua returns to Arranmore Island off the coast of Donegal from May 19 to May 21.

Honouring the legacy of local singer, Róise na nAmhrán, this year's festival on the theme of An Maighdeán Mhara will include song, music and dance – with singing and dancing workshops, storytelling, sessions, a céili, a bus tour, a film and a concert.

The weekend will see performances by this year's TG4 Gradam Ceoil Singer of the Year, Síle Denvir, as well

as Ciarán Ó Gealbháin, Zoé Basha, Kevin McGonigle, previous Gradam winner, Edwina Guckian, Seán Gavin, Tara Conaghan, Jesse Smith, Peter Crann, Richie Piggott Eithne Ní Ghallchobhair and the Arranmore Youth Choir.

All of the guests will spend time on Arranmore before the festival begins in order to familiarise themselves with the island, its people and their music.



Síle Denvir



Edwina Guckian



Joe Heaney

Féile Joe Éinniú/Joe Heaney Festival

Féile Joe Éinniú/Joe Heaney Festival will celebrate one of the finest exponents of sean-nós singing from May 5-7.

As well as traditional singers, Carna in Co. Galway will also welcome some of Ireland's leading musicians for a series of concerts, music sessions and a céili.

Among the many guests appearing during the weekend are the winner of this year's Gradam for Musician of the Year, Mick O'Brien.

Other performers include Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh,

Liam O'Connor, Róisín Elsafty, Rosie Stewart, Liz and Yvonne Keane, Lillis Ó Laoire, Néilidh Mulligan, Ailean Domhnallach, Liam Mac Con Iomaire, Mícheál Ó Cuaig, Conor Connolly, Aodan Ó Ceallaigh, Róisín Nic Dhonncha, Jackie Mac Calum MacMillan, Pól Ó Ceannabháin, Donncha, MacDara Ó Curraoin, P.J. Ó hIarnáin, Orla Leavy, Nóirín Uí Shuilleabháin, Seán McKiernan, Páraic Ó Flatharta, Máirtín Ó Cualáin, Sarah and Riona Ní Chuirín, Aisling Ní Cheannabháin, Éadaoin Ní Mhainín and

Páraic, Gearóid and Colm Ó Dubháin.

Born in 1919 in Carna where he learned most of his repertoire of over 500 songs, Joe Heaney spent most of his adult life abroad, in England, Scotland, New York and Seattle. The Joe Heaney Collection of the University of Washington Ethnomusicology Archives was created after Heaney's death in 1984 and transferred to NUI-Galway, where it is freely available online.

The programme for the festival is outlined on the back page of this magazine.



Homecoming: Martin Hayes

Martin comes home to Feakle Festival

Martin Hayes and the Common Ground Ensemble (almost!) will headline the Feakle Festival of Traditional Irish Music in August. With two regular bandmates missing – Kate Ellis and Kyle Sanna, the remaining three members will be joined by bodhrán maestro, Jimmy Higgins.

Among the other artists appearing on a remarkable

line-up will be a strong contingent from the Dingle peninsula made up of Méabh, Eoin and Niall Begley, Muireann Moc Amhlaoibh and Donagh Hennessy and Lumiere (Pauline Scanlon and Eilis Kennedy).

The historic Tulla Céilí Band will also make an obligatory appearance.

Running from August 9-14, the East Clare Festival will feature concerts, talks, workshops and sessions.



West Cork bound: Sharon Shannon

Sharon Shannon for De Barra's in July

Sharon Shannon will be heading to Clonakilty in July for a special night at De Barra's Folk Club.

Accompanied by two highly accomplished musicians, Jim Murray and Jack Maher, Sharon will play the renowned Cork venue on July 30.

While she is known for her arrangements of traditional tunes and Irish influenced compositions, the Clare accordionist has always been willing to explore new styles in collaboration with musicians from many genres, including Cajun, rap, country and classical.

Among the many musicians Sharon has worked with during her career are The Chieftains, Jackson



Browne, John Prine, The Waterboys, Steve Earle, Kirsty MacColl, Shane McGowan, Willie Nelson, Nigel Kennedy, Natalie McMaster, Sinéad O'Connor, Seckou Keita from Senegal and the Kodo Drummers from Japan.

In 2018 Sharon recorded a traditional Irish music album with Irish rugby star Robbie Henshaw and his family and friends.

Tickets for the event are available from <https://debarra.ie/event/the-sharon-shannon-trio/>

36th International Festival of Traditional Irish Music

Feakle festival
Co. Clare

09th - 14th August 2023

Martin Hayes, Brian Donnellan, Cormac McCarthy & Jimmy Higgins | Meabh, Eoin & Niall Begley | Rick Epping, Seamie O'Dowd & Ruth Clinton | Danny O' Mahony & Michéal O' Raghallaigh | Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh & Donagh Hennessy | Lumiere Pólca 4 | Randal Bays & Frank Kilkelly | Edel Vaughan | Star of Munster | Conor Connolly & Andrea Palandri | Tulla Céilí Band | Music Generation | Fiddle Case and many more.

For more info visit www.feaklefestival.ie

Email: feaklefestival@gmail.com





Josephine Marsh

The Living Room Folk Sessions is a series of traditional and folk music performances combined with poetry and written word elements set up by musician, Mairéad O'Donnell.

Marsh to headline first of resumed Living Room sessions

Each session is curated around a particular theme with guest performers.

In the first edition of the Living Room Sessions since 2020, the Irish Writers' Centre (IWC) in Dublin's Parnell Square will host an event on May 17 on the theme of Bealtaine.

Former winner of the TG4 Gradam Ceoil as Composer of the Year, Josephine Marsh (on button accordion) and Paddy Buckenham (on guitar) will join Mairéad O'Donnell on fiddle and vocals along

with poets, Nithy Kasa and Christine Broe

Tickets costing €15 (€12 for IWC members) are available from Eventbrite.



Mairéad O'Donnell



Paddy Glackin

Glackin for Scartaglin

Renowned fiddler and broadcaster, Paddy Glackin, will join fellow former TG4 Gradam Ceoil winner, Nickie McAuliffe, in conversation about the Fleadhanna Cheoil na hÉireann in Listowel in the 1970s as part of the continuing *Handed Down Scartaglin* series of talks.

These two major figures in traditional music will meet on the eve of the annual World Fiddle Day

celebration in Scartaglin – which this year takes place on May 20.

As well as a number of music sessions and a bus tour of Sliabh Luachra, the celebration will include a fiddle recital in memory of Dónal Ó Laoire, hosted by Aoife Ní Chaoimh and Róisín O'Connor at 2pm in the Scartaglin Heritage Centre – which will be preceded by a photocall of fiddlers at the Ó Caoimh monument in the village.



Joanie Madden



Len Graham



Bríd Harper

Stars align for Belfast Tradfest

Belfast TradFest Summer Fest will return on July 23-29, full of traditional music, song and dance, with some of the best traditional musicians, singers and dancers from across these islands.

Featuring a week long programme of workshops and a full programme of concerts, talks, lectures, sessions, céilís and festival clubs, this week is the only one of its kind in Northern Ireland and brings together both the Irish and the Ulster-Scots musical traditions, in a shared celebration of culture & heritage.

While the oillam are confirmed for Mandela Hall

on July 28, the concert line-ups for the other evenings as well as the many daytime sessions are yet to be determined.

However, it is the practice at Belfast Tradfest that many of the tutors who teach at the various performance workshops during the day usually take part in one or more of the evening events.

Confirmed as tutors for the week so far are:

Mary Bergin (tin whistle), Conor Caldwell (fiddle), John Doyle (guitar accompaniment), Aimée Farrell Courtney (bodhrán), Ronan Eastwood (set dancing), Daithí Gormley (button accordion), Len Graham (traditional singing), Edwina Guckian (sean-nós dancing)

Bríd Harper (fiddle), Laoise Kelly (harp), Aisling Lyons (harp), Neil Martin (cello in traditional music), Mick McAuley (button accordion), John McCusker (fiddle), Gareth McLees (snare drum and pipe band percussion),

Joanie Madden (whistle), Fin Moore (smallpipes), Ryan Molloy (piano accompaniment), Mirella Murray (piano accordion), Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh (tin whistle), Lorainne Ní Bhriain (concertina), Niamh Ní Charra (concertina),

Cathal Ó Curráin (sean-nós singing), Lauren O'Neill (harp), Siobhán Peoples (fiddle), Méabh Smyth (fiddle) and Scott Wallace (bagpipes).

Dates for the Diary

Two important dates in the traditional music calendar each summer involve the fiddle virtuoso, Martin Hayes.

Apart from his other commitments in concerts and festivals in various parts of the country this year, Martin is set once again to curate the Marble City Sessions at the Kilkenny Arts Festival which runs from August 10- 20. The line-up for the sessions will be announced along with the full festival programme in June.

After a very short break, Martin swaps Kilkenny for Bantry in West Cork as festival director of Masters of Tradition which runs from August 23-27. The programme for the festival will be posted in due course on <https://www.westcorkmusic.ie/masters-of-tradition/>

FEILE NASC AIG

MAYHEM

SATURDAY MAY 20TH 2023 MARLAY PARK

KNEECAP

The Bonny Men
Róisín O
Ispíní na hÉireann

OVER 18S ONLY
4PM TO 10PM

arts council ealaíon festivals
O'HARA'S IRISH CRAFT BEER
Foras na Gaeilge
Comhairle Contae County Council

FEILE NASC AIG

LÁ CLAINNE

FEILE CEOIL DÚCHAIS AGUS TRADISIÚNTA
DÉ DOMHNAIGH, 21 BEALTAINNE, 2023 PÁIRC MARLAY

JIGGY

1PM-7PM

Rónán Ó Snodaigh & Myles O'Reilly
The Len Collective
Dave Munnely and Shane McGowan

Children's Activities
Forest Camp
Óga Yoga
Ceardlann Drumadóireachta
Picnic Teidí

arts council ealaíon festivals
O'HARA'S IRISH CRAFT BEER
Foras na Gaeilge
Comhairle Contae County Council

Celebrating Robert Noonan in debate, drama and song

A day-long festival of discussion and drama and songs will celebrate the legacy of Dublin-born writer, Robert Noonan, who, under the pseudonym Robert Tressell, wrote the classic book, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, beloved by successive generations of trade unionists.

As well as leading trade union figures like

the British Rail, Marine and Transport Workers (RMT) leader, Mick Lynch, and Irish nurses leader, Phil Ní Sheaghda, the festival will also include contributions from community activists, economists and musicians including Daragh Lynch of Lankum, the Dublin band Faró, and vocalist Niamh Parsons (President of the Musicians' Union of Ireland) who will sing at the opening session.



Daragh Lynch (Photo: Willie Dillon)

The Robert Tressell Festival in Dublin's Liberty Hall Theatre on Saturday, May 6, will be compered by historian, Donal Fallon.

Further information on all of the invited speakers and the the programme for the day is available at <https://tressellfestival.ie/>

Feile BINN ÉADAIR
Irish and traditional music festival **MAY 19TH-21ST HOWTH**

IARLA Ó LIONÁIRD WITH CORMAC MCCARTHY / BOG BODIES / DAOIRÍ FARREL / THE LEGEND OF LUKE KELLY DUBLINER
SIN A DEIR SÍ / SALTAIRE / MANGLAM PI / FLOG THE DOG / THE BOGS / THE CROOKED JACKS / LEO RICKARD / BILLY TREACY & THE SCOPE / GREEN WAVES / THE MACS / TRADIFY / STRINGS & THINGS / EACHTRA / THE DUBLIN ROVERS / HOWTH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA / DJ DANNY DEEPO / NIAMH PARSONS & SIOBHAN MOORE / DEREK COPLEY / THE DEAD IRISH / TRAD SESSION TRAIL

Sponsored by **ROCKSHORE IRISH LAGER**

Tickets for Iarla Ó Lionáird with Cormac McCarthy, Daoirí Farrell and The Legend of Luke Kelly available from tickets.ie

WITH FUNDING FROM **Comhairle Contae Fhine Gall Fingal County Council**

www.feilebinneadair.com

The Thrill of Howth

The North County Dublin village of Howth will ring to the sound of folk and traditional music over the weekend of May 19-21 as Féile Binn Éadair hits the harbour.

Much of the music over the three days will be free of charge, thanks to the support of Fingal County Council and commercial sponsorship.

However, three of the events will be ticketed: headliners Iarla Ó Lionáird and Cormac McCarthy; Chris Kavanagh's show, *The Legend of Luke Kelly Dubliner*; and finally, Daoirí Farrell. Tickets for these events are available from tickets.ie.

Details of the full programme for the weekend's events are posted on www.feilebinneadair.com

Usher's Island, Flook among acts heading for Earagail Festival in summer

Following the success of the TG4 series, *Féile Ealaíne an Earagail*, aired in early 2023, the Earagail Arts Festival in Letterkenny is hosting four more very special concerts in July which will again be filmed by Aniar TV for broadcast later on TG4.

An Grianan Theatre will welcome some of the finest traditional artists to play in four events over three days.

The Campbells: A Celebration + Brìghde Chaimbeul, Aidan O'Rourke and Saileog Ní Cheannabháin - July 14 (8pm)

One of Donegal's most influential musical families – which included the late lamented Glenties fiddle, Jimmy Campbell, will be celebrated in a special tribute featuring Peter Campbell, Tara Connaghan, Aidan O'Donnell, Denise Boyle, Martin McGinley, Fiona Gavin, Ronan Galvin

and Dermot McLaughlin, joined by dancers Anne Connaghan and Connie McKelvey.

Award-winning Skye piper, Brìghde Chaimbeul will be joined by fiddler Aidan O'Rourke of Lau and multi-instrumentalist and vocalist, Saileog Ní Cheannabháin for a unique collaboration.

Flook + Fídhil - July 15 (8pm)

With the flutes and whistles of Brian Finnegan and Sarah Allen, the guitar of Ed Boyd and the bodhrán of John Joe Kelly, Flook have achieved great acclaim as a result of their ability to unlock new understandings of traditional tunes by their stunning capacity for improvisation.

Meanwhile Fídhil from Donegal, comprising Aidan O'Donnell, Ciarán O Maonaigh and Damien McGeehan, have adopted a similar approach to the playing of just one instrument. Not content with



Usher's Island: (from left) John Doyle, Andy Irvine, Paddy Glackin, Michael McGoldrick and Dónal Lunny (Photo: D. Glackin)

relying solely on the bow, the trio use a variety of techniques including strumming, plucking, fingerstyle and percussion, to produce an exciting new sound which opens up new possibilities for the instrument while still being firmly rooted in the tradition.

Na Casadaigh - July 16 (1pm)

Na Casadaigh are renowned for their performances of classic Irish songs such as *Bó na Leathadhairce*, *Báidín Fheilimí*, *Peigín Leitir Móir* and *Beidh Aonach Amárach*.

The brothers' childhood in Gaoth Dobhair was immersed in music through their father, a long-time church choirmaster, learning piano or fiddle first, followed by other instruments including whistles, pipes, bodhrán and guitar.

Although the family moved on to Dublin and other parts of the country, Na Casadaigh and their extended clan, continue to celebrate the

traditions they learned in the West Donegal Gaeltacht.

In this concert, the group will celebrate the source of much of their repertoire, our country's favourite collection of songs, *Abair Amhrán*.

Usher's Island + Lisa O'Neill - July 16 (8pm)

Usher's Island brings together five of the most influential and acclaimed names in traditional Irish music: Andy Irvine and Donal Lunny, both founding members of Planxty, Paddy Glackin a member of The Bothy Band, Mike McGoldrick member of Lúnasa and Capercaillie and John Doyle who played with Solas.

Lisa O'Neill has built a reputation on the Irish and international scenes with her unique sound. Lisa's last album, *Heard A Long Gone Song*, has garnered huge acclaim, both at home and abroad.



Flook: (from left) John Joe Kelly, Sarah Allen, Brian Finnegan and Ed Boyd



Lisa O'Neill

Remembering Jimmy Murray

South Roscommon Singers Circle is to hold a special singing session in support of the Jimmy Murray Memorial fund in Murray's of Knockcroghery, Co. Roscommon, from 7pm on Saturday May 6.

Jimmy 'Jamsie' Murray captained Roscommon senior footballers to two All-Ireland titles in the 1943 and 1944, but he was also a renowned singer in the traditional style.

In his bar in Knockcroghery, Jimmy hosted the first of the Circle's singing sessions back in September 1991 and he continued to be a staunch supporter and source of enormous encouragement to the group until his death in 2007.

"A couple of songs/poems have been composed as tributes to Jamsie by sup-



Jamsie and Sam!

porters of the Circle over the years," explained Declan Coyne, "so we look forward to having the creators with us on the night as well as a host of singers and storytellers from all corners of the country – fellow Gaels, bards, songsters and rhymers – and sure, maybe a tune or two!"

Preparing for Frank Harte Festival

The Frank Harte Festival is still five months away but the Góilínistas are already making detailed preparations for the event in September.

The Daoirí Farrell Trio (in which the Bluebell Balladeer is joined by uilleann piper, Mark Redmond and bodhrán player, Robbie Walsh) are set to headline the festival's grand concert.

Other performers confirmed for the festival over September 22-24 are Meath singer, Róisín Ní Ghallóglai; The Voice Squad's Gerry Cullen from Drogheda; Dublin singer, Annie Hughes, An Góilín stalwart, Antaine Ó Faracháin; and Eva Carroll.



From its base in the Teachers' Club in Parnell Square, Dublin, the festival is expected to follow the regular format with singing sessions, singing workshop and lecture and a singing and walking tour as well as the grand concert.

More information – including ticket options – is available on <https://frankhartefestival.ie/>

Celebrating Mary Ann Carolan and John Sheil

The remarkable legacy of two great figures in the history of Drogheda – the song-carrier, Mary Ann Carolan, and the song-maker, John Sheil – will be celebrated by the Howth Singing Circle on May 4.

With support from a number of singers from Drogheda, including Mary Ann's son, Pat Carolan, and grandson, Stuart, the session in the Sea Angling Club on the West Pier will be hosted jointly by Howth's Francy Devine and Seán Faulkner from Drogheda.

Learned from her father, Patrick Usher, Mary Ann Carolan was the source of a number of traditional ballads from Britain and Ireland – some previously thought to have been lost – and thus became an important figure in the transmission of songs for the next generation of singers like the renowned Watersons from Yorkshire.



Mary Ann Carolan

Also included in the Usher-Carolan repertoire were many songs written by the Drogheda-based weaver-poet, John Sheil, who composed hundreds of songs for ballad sheets produced by local printer, Patrick Kelly.

While many of his songs were written for commercial purposes, Sheil also produced songs with a directly political outlook like *The Rights of Man* and *Sweet Liberty*.

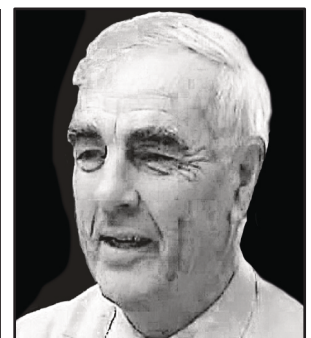
Honouring Garry McMahon

The Garry McMahon Traditional Singing Weekend will take place in Abbeyfeale in October.

The annual event, which is organised by the West Limerick Singing Club, will run from Friday October 13 to Sunday October 15.

The event resumed last year to an enthusiastic reception after a two-year hiatus caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Garry McMahon Singing Weekend was established in 2009 a year after his death to honour Garry's outstanding contribution to the performance and composition of songs and ballads.



Garry (pictured above) was an acclaimed traditional singer and won an All Ireland singing title to match the All-Ireland Gaelic Football medal won with Kerry.

He was also a talented song writer, following the example of his father, Bryan, the renowned author.

SINGING SESSION DIRECTORY

The directory lists regular weekly and monthly singing sessions with the day they usually meet. But, to be sure that a session is actually taking place, you are advised to check by clicking the link to the organiser's website, phone or social media account. If you have a session for inclusion in the directory, send details to info@fonn.online.

Belfast Singing Circle, Garrick Bar, Chichester Street, Belfast. *First Wednesday of the month.* <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100054573964706>

Bray Singers' Circle, Tennis Club, Vevay Road, Bray. *Third Saturday of the month.* <https://www.facebook.com/braysingers.circle>

Chapel Gates Singers Club, Tubridy's, Cooraclare, Co. Clare. *Last Friday of the month.* <https://www.facebook.com/chapelgates.singersclub>

Ciorca na nAmhráin, Shamrock Bar, Falcarragh, Co. Donegal. *Third Wednesday of the month.*

Clé Club, Liberty Hall, Dublin 1, *Third Wednesday of the month. Second Thursday of the month on Zoom.* <https://www.cleclub.org>

Cork Singers Club, An Spailín Fánach, Main Street, Cork. *Weekly on Sunday.* <https://www.facebook.com/corksingersclub>

Croonerista Social Club, CIE Sports & Social Club, Inchicore Square North, Inchicore, *Second Friday of the month.* <https://www.facebook.com/crooneristasocialclub>

Crown and Shamrock, Crown and Shamrock Inn, Antrim Road, Belfast. *Second Tuesday of the month*

Drogheda Singers, Fairgreen Bar, Drogheda. *Weekly on Wednesday.*

Down Singers' Circle, Rice's International Bar, Frances Street, Newtownards, Co. Down. *Third Saturday of the month.*

Dundalk Singing Circle, The Wee House, Anne Street, Dundalk. *Weekly on Tuesday.* <https://www.facebook.com/dundalk.singingcircle>

Ennis Singers Club, The Copper Jug, Steele's Terrace, Ennis. *Second Friday of the month.* <https://www.facebook.com/Ennis-Singers-Club-461696563932299>

Góilín Traditional Singers, Teachers' Club, Parnell Square, Dublin. *Weekly on Friday.* <https://goilin.com/>

Howth Singing Circle, Sea Angling Club, West Pier, Howth, Co. Dublin. *First Thursday of the month.* <https://howthsingingcircle.com/>

Inishowen Traditional Singers' Circle, alternating between North Pole, Drumfries, Inishowen and McFeeley's Bar, Clonmany, Inishowen. *Second Friday of the month.* <https://inishowensinging.ie/>

Kinvara Singing Circle, The Community Centre, Kinvara, Co. Galway. *First Monday of the month.* <https://www.facebook.com/eugene.lambe1>

Limerick Singing Session, The White Horse Tavern, Limerick. *Third Monday of the month and on Zoom every Monday (except third).* <https://www.facebook.com/LimerickSingers>

Malahide Singing Circle, St. Sylvester's GAA Club, Malahide, Co. Dublin. *Last Thursday of the month.* <https://www.facebook.com/malahide.singingcircle>

Navan Singing Circle, The Lantern, Watergate Street, Navan. *Second Tuesday of the month.* <https://www.facebook.com/NavanSingingCircle>

Night Before Larry Got Stretched, The Cobblestone, King Street North, Dublin 7. *First Sunday of the month except for January, July and August.* <https://www.facebook.com/thenightbeforelarrygotstretched>

Nightingale Singing Session, American Bar, Dock Street, Belfast. *Third Tuesday of the month.*

North Wexford Traditional Singing Session, French's, Main Street, Gorey. *Last Tuesday of the month.* <https://www.facebook.com/NorthWexfordTraditionalSingingCircle>

Rainbow Singing Session, McHugh's Bar, Glenfarne, Co. Leitrim. 5pm-8pm. *Fourth Sunday of the month.* <https://www.facebook.com/Rainbow-Singing-Circle-Glenfarne-521767114857837>

Robbie's First Friday, Cnoc na Gaoithe CCE Cultural Centre, Tulla, Co. Clare. *First Friday of the month.* <https://www.facebook.com/RobbiesFirstFriday>

Shanaglish Singing Session, Whelan's, Shanaglish, Gort, Co. Galway. *Last Friday of the month.*

Shillelagh Singing Circle, Parkview House, Shillelagh, Co. Wicklow. *Fortnightly on Wednesday from January 11.* Contact Derek Robinson at 087-1685128

Singing in the Crane, Crane Bar, Sea Road, Galway. <https://www.facebook.com/david.larkin.3975>

Skerries Folk Club, Upstairs in Joe May's Pub, Harbour Road, Skerries. *Last Sunday of the month*

Sliabh Liag Singing Circle, Evelyn's Central Bar, Carrick, Co. Donegal. *Usually once a month. For precise date check* <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100069613394114>

Sligo Traditional Singers' Circle, Durkin's Bar, Ballinacarrow, Co. Sligo. *Second Wednesday of the month*

South Roscommon Singers Circle, Murray's Bar, Knockcroghery, Co. Roscommon. *First Thursday of the month*

Sunflower Folk Club, Sunflower Bar, Union Street, Belfast. *Weekly on Thursdays.* <https://www.facebook.com/sunflowerfolk>

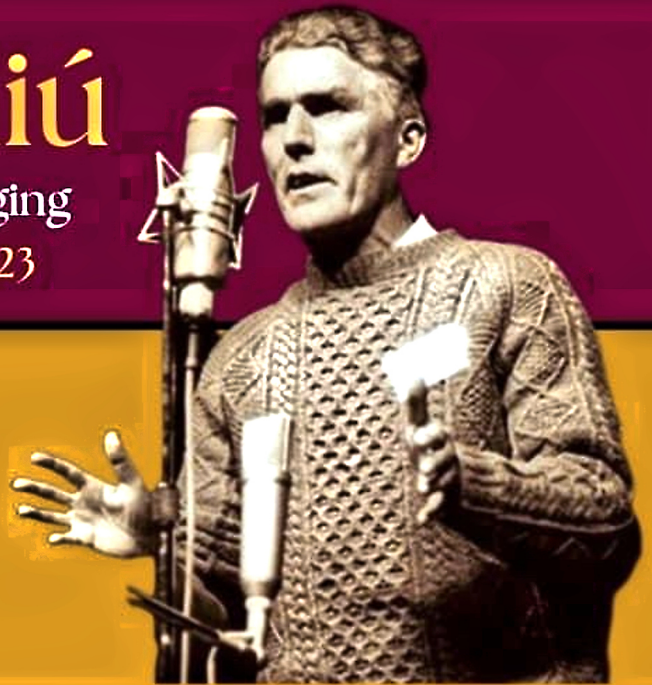
West Limerick Singing Club, Ramble Inn, Main Street, Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick. *First Friday of the month.* <https://www.facebook.com/mary.oconnor.33483>

Wexford Traditional Singers' Circle, Mary's Bar, John's Gate Street, Wexford. *Third Friday of the month.* <https://www.facebook.com/countrywexfordtraditionalsingerscircle/>

Féile Joe Éinniú

Joe Heaney Festival of Traditional Singing

Carna, Conamara | 5-7 Bealtaine 2023



Dé hAoine 5 Bealtaine

20:00 Ionad Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge

Fáiltiú agus Oseáil Oilfgiúil

Liam O'Connor, Stúirthoir Thaisce Cheol Dúchais Éireann

Óeáid Ómós i gCúmhne ar Liam Mac Con Iomaire

Aoicheantóir: An tOllamh Lillis Ó Laoire

22.30 Tigh Mheaic

Seisiún ceoil, amhránaíochta agus damhsa

Dé Sathairn 6 Bealtaine

Áras Shiorcha Ní Ghuairim

Ceardlanna Amhránaíochta (Clárú 10 nóiméad roimh an gceardlann)

10.30 - 11.30 Ceardlann Amhránaíochta Béarla le Rosie Stewart

12.00 - 13.00 Ceardlann Amhránaíochta ar an Sean-Nós le Micheál Ó Cuaig
(níl aon táille ar na ceardlanna seo)

Ionad Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge

11.30 Ceol na nÓg: Seisiún ceoil don aos óg

14.30 Tigh Mhóráin

Mórsheisiún Amhránaíochta na Féile

Fonnadóirí áitiúla agus aionna

15:00 Tigh Leavy

Seisiún Ceoil

20:00 Ionad Cuimhneacháin na nImlirceach

Ceolchoirm na Féile

Mick O'Brien & Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh, Rosie Stewart, Aodán Ó Ceallaigh, Calum MacMillan, Ailean Domhmallach, Liam O'Connor, Jackie Mac Donncha, Nóirín Uí Shuilleabháin, Pól Ó Ceannabháin, P.J. Ó hIarnáin, Páralc Ó Flatharta, Conor Connolly, Orla Leavy, MacDara Ó Curraoin, Máirtín Ó Cualáin, Sarah & Riona Ní Chuirrin, Eadaoin Ní Mhainín, Aisling Ní Cheannabháin, Liz & Yvonne Kane, Seán McKiernan, Páralc, Gearóid & Colm Ó Dubháin, Róisín Elsafty

Cead Isteach: C15 (lascaine do theaghlaigh)
Bean an Ti: Róisín Nic Dhonncha

22:30 Tigh Mheaic

Ceol, Amhráin agus Damhsa

Dé Domhnaigh 7 Bealtaine

11:30 Aifreann na Féile – Séipéal Mhuire (á chraoladh beo ar RTÉ RnaG)

Cuairt ar uaigh Joe Éinniú i Reilig Mháirois

Bus ag lágáil ó gheata an tSéipéil tar éis an Aifreinn

Aoicheoltóir: Néillidh Mulligan

13:00 Tigh Mhóráin

Seisiún Amhránaíochta agus Ceoil

14:00 Ionad Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge

Comórtas Amhránaíochta na nÓg (Sean-Nós) Aoisghrúpaí: Faoi 9, 12, 15, 18

Corn Cuimhneacháin Joe Éinniú (F15); Corn Cuimhneacháin Shiobháin Uí Neachtain (F18)

16:00 Ionad Cuimhneacháin na nImlirceach

Seoladh Dlúthdhioscaí

P.J. Ó hIarnáin, *Ar ais ar an Dúchas* agus *P.J. Hernon* (atheisiúint le Gael-Linn)

Muintir Chualáin, *Tigh Choilm: Ceol na gCualáin* (Cló Iar-Chonnacht i gcomhar le RTÉ RnaG)

Imeachtaí Breise:

Déardaoin 4 Bealtaine

19:30 Ionad Cuimhneacháin na nImlirceach

Ceardlann Cumadóireachta Amhrán 'Scriobh Amhrán' (Pleanáil Teanga Chonamara Láir)

Dé hAoine 5 Bealtaine

Beidh buíon ceoltóirí, amhránaíthe agus damhsóirí ag tabhairt cuairt ar na bunseóileanna áitiúla maidin Dé hAoine.

Ina theannta sin, beidh an clár Iris Aniar á chraoladh beo ar RTÉ RnaG ag 9.15 mar chuid d'imeachtaí na Féile.

Lóistín (leaba & bricfeasta):

Máirín Cooke, Sea Side B&B, Muighinis: 095 32080

Norah Ní Cheannabháin, Muighinis: 087 2266160

Eileen Uí Mheallóid, Carna: 087 6807055 (feilimach do ghrúpaí)

Martha Ní Chualáin, Carna: 087 9478925 (feilthreastal/self-catering)

Love Connemara Cottages, Apartment 381, Carna: 095 30620

Teagmháil:

Brid Ní Mhaolchiaráin: 087 675 4451 | bridnmc@gmail.com

Ciste Spreagtha

Sreathú na Gaeilge

Conradh na Gaeilge

Comhaltas na Gaeilge

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