

TRADITIONAL MUSIC & SONG

fomm

Vol. 2 No. 3 Autumn 2023



PHOTO: CELIA BARTLETT

In the footsteps of the masters

Mark Redmond

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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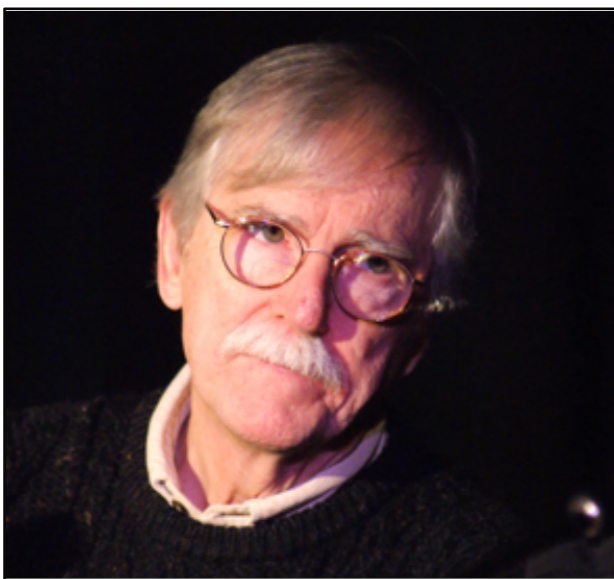
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Clare's MÓRglór award for Siobhán Peoples

This year's MÓRglór award is to be presented to fiddle player and teacher, Siobhán Peoples.

Steeped in the musical history of Co. Donegal, through her father, Tommy, and of Co. Clare, through her grandmother Kitty Linnane, pianist with the original Kilfenora Céilí Band, Siobhán has been widely recognised not only as an outstanding performer but also as an inspirational teacher and mentor.

In 2002, Siobhán teamed up with box player, Murty Ryan, to release an acclaimed duet album, *Time on Our Hands*, which included a number of Siobhán's own compositions.

Apart from concerts and recitals, she has been an integral part of the vibrant

session scene for several decades in Clare and beyond.

Equally dedicated to the transmission of the tradition, Siobhán has led workshops and tutorials at many festivals and at the World Music Centre at the University of Limerick.

Her commitment to developing traditional music in County Clare is further



Award: Siobhán Peoples

evident in her long-term membership of the Ennis Trad Festival steering committee. With a group of dedicated colleagues and friends Siobhán was active in relaunching the festival – now regarded as one of the premier traditional music events in the country.

Siobhán is a popular choice for the annual



Memory: Muiris Ó Rocháin

MÓRglór award – which is presented by the glór arts centre in Ennis in memory of the late Muiris Ó Rocháin, co-founder and Director of Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy.

An anonymous panel of traditional arts practitioners and experts, assembled by glór, selects the recipient each year.

Previous honorees have included Corofin Traditional Music Festival (2014); Eoin O'Neill (2015); Frank Custy (2016); Geraldine Cotter (2017); Chris Dronney, (2018); Mary MacNamara (2019); The Shannon Family (2021) and Malbay Studios (2022).

On December 16, Siobhán's achievements will be celebrated at a special concert in glór in Ennis featuring a host of local and national musicians.

Chance for Wicklow seniors to return to playing musical instruments

County Wicklow residents aged 55 and over are being invited to pick up instruments they used to play and start playing again under a new project – the Wicklow Teaching Residency – launched by Music Network and Wicklow County Arts Office.

The project is focused on helping participants return to playing an instrument and sharing the joy of group music-making. It provides participants with free tuition from professional musicians, access to instruments for the



The Rossana Trio: (from left) Mark Redmond (pipes, whistles, flute), Robbie Walsh (bodhrán) and Lynda O'Connor (fiddle).

duration of the programme and opportunities to connect and learn with other budding musicians.

Participants will receive tuition on uilleann pipes, whistle, flute, violin/fiddle or bodhrán from members

of the Rossana Trio, namely, Mark Redmond (uilleann pipes, whistles, flute), Lynda O'Connor (fiddle) and Robbie Walsh (bodhrán).

The project will run from November to next April. Participants will receive eight one-to-one lessons and three group lessons with others playing the same instrument.

The project will conclude with three large ensemble sessions, where all participants will join the professional musicians to play music learned during the project.



Making the Album of the Year Shortlist: Lankum (Photo: Ellius Grace)

Mercury rising for Lankum

Lankum's most recent album, *False Lankum*, has been celebrated as one of the twelve Albums of the Year by the Mercury Prize.

The other eleven nominated albums were: *The Car* by Arctic Monkeys, *Where I'm Meant To Be* by Ezra Collective, *Actual Life 3* (January 1 - September 9 2022) by Fred again., *Beautiful and Brutal Yard* by J Hus, *That! Feels Good!* by Jessie Ware, *I Love You Jennifer B* by Jockstrap, *hugo* by Loyle Carner, *Messy* by Olivia Dean, *My 21st Century Blues* by RAYE, *Nymph* by Shygirl, *Heavy Heavy* by Young Fathers.

Ezra Collective was announced as the overall winner of the Mercury Prize at an Awards Show at the Eventim Apollo, Hammsmith on September 7.

Mercury Prize promotes the best of British and Irish music and the artists

who produce it by celebrating twelve Albums of the Year.

The main objectives of the Prize are to recognise and celebrate artistic achievement; provide a snapshot of the year's music; and to help introduce new albums from a range of contemporary music genres to a wider audience.

It is the music equivalent of the Booker Prize for literature and the Turner Prize for art.



Conserving the tradition: Jerry O'Reilly of An Góilín Traditional Singers in Dublin beside the restored headstone at the grave of Michael Moran, aka Zozimus.

An Góilín acts to preserve Zozimus memorial

An Góilín Traditional Singers in Dublin have arranged to have the headstone of renowned Dublin ballad singer Zozimus (Michael Moran, 1794-1846) cleaned and restored in Glasnevin's Prospect Cemetery.

Buried on Palm Sunday, 1846, Zozimus had feared grave robbers, and had urged his longstanding friend, 'Stony Pockets' in one of his narrative songs:

Oh Stony, Stony/Don't let the Sack-'Em-Ups get me/ Send round the hat/And buy me a grave.

His grave in the 'Poor Ground' remained unmarked until the late 1960s, when The Dublin City Ramblers arranged for a headstone.

Over fifty years later, the stone needed attention – so An Góilín stepped up to the mark.

Zozimus' epitaph – which he composed himself – reads:

My burying place is of no concern to me, In the O'Connell circle, let it be,

As to my funeral, all pomp is vain, Illustrious people does prefer it plain.

Passing on the baton

The Geordie Hanna Traditional Singing Society is no more having passed the baton on to the 'new management' in the form of the Lough Shore Sessions.

After 36 glorious years, the society has decided to call it a day – safe in the knowledge that its local cultural legacy will continue to thrive.

In a joint statement, the society's chair, Ailish Hanna, and secretary, Maureen Loney, expressed the hope that the local community, people from all over Ireland and from afar would give the Lough Shore Sessions the same

wonderful support that the GHTSS had received down the years.

"We're sure that the memory and legacy of Geordie, Sarah Anne and the many great singers, musicians and listeners who are no longer with us will carry on for as long as there are seisiúin in Derrytresk and all along the shores of Lough Neagh," they added.

The outgoing committee has wished the Lough Shore Sessions every success in the future and especially at the upcoming festival weekend on November 3-4 – which will not only see concert performances by Carlos, Sweeney and McCartin.



Geordie Hanna

Daorí Farrell, Niall Hanna, Ciaran Hanna, Rachel McGarrity, and Cathleen Garland, but will also include singing and music sessions throughout both days.

Application deadline for Arts Council project awards approaches

Applications for Arts Council awards for various traditional arts projects commencing in 2024 will open on October 10 and close on November 16 2023.

The awards worth up to €80,000 are intended to support specific stand-alone projects "which enrich the traditional arts landscape by facilitating artists in bringing creative, ambitious and high-quality projects to audiences."

The Arts Council has indicated that there will be two strands in the scheme: Strand 1 covering small- and medium-scale projects eligible for awards of up to €20,000; and Strand 2 covering large-scale projects eligible for awards of up to €80,000.

This Arts Council funding round is for projects commencing on or after March 1 2024 through to December 31, 2024.

For more information on applications check out <https://www.artscouncil.ie/Funds/Traditional-Arts-Project-Award/>



The Lough Shore Sessions

Derrytresk, County Tyrone

Friday 3rd November - 7.30pm Saturday 4th November - 7.30pm

**CARLOS SWEENEY
MCCARTIN**

DAOIRÍ FARRELL

**NIALL HANNA, CIARAN HANNA
& RACHEL MCGARRITY**

CATHLEEN GARLAND

Derrytresk GAC Main Hall - admission £20
Followed by a session of music and song - admission free

Derrytresk GAC Main Hall - Admission £20
Followed by late singing session - admission free

Plus singing and music sessions in various venues throughout the day on Saturday 4th & Sunday 5th

TICKETS ON SALE NOW - SEARCH FOR "THE LOUGH SHORE SESSIONS" at www.ticketsource.eu



Festival-goer: José Manuel Tejedor from Asturias (Image:DR)

Piping festival suffers funding shortfall – but show will go on

Armagh Pipers Club has been refused Arts Council of Northern Ireland Lottery funding for the November 2023 edition of the annual William Kennedy Piping Festival which has been run since 1994.

The Club's application to the Rural Engagement Arts Programme was rejected on the basis that the festival was "open mainly to the general public" rather than tailored to the criteria for the Rural Arts scheme – even though the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon district is the most populous rural district in the north; and that the 2022 edition of the Festival – which is delivered in partnership with the district council – was funded under exactly the same scheme.

The Club's student body from which a substantial proportion of Festival

attendees will be drawn, is 90% rural, with a majority living in relatively disadvantaged areas.

While the Club estimates that it will face a deficit of around £10,000 as a result of the Arts Council decision, it is pressing ahead with its plans – drawing heavily on its limited reserves to subsidise the four-day event which features a substantial programme of public concerts, school concerts, workshops and free sessions involving over 40 renowned musicians from Ireland, Scotland, Northumberland, Sweden, Germany, Asturias and the Basque Country.

Since this is not the first time the Armagh Pipers' Club has encountered issues of this nature, it is determined to redouble its efforts to find a significant commercial or philanthropic sponsor for next year's landmark 30th Festival.

See pages 68-69.



Siblings: Barry and Laura Kerr

Sound of Belfast to echo through trad masterclasses

The team behind Belfast Tradfest has launched a further initiative in association with the Sound of Belfast festival – involving an afternoon of masterclasses with leading musicians followed by an evening recital on November 17.

Multi-instrumentalist and artist, Barry Kerr, will lead a class on the flute. His sister, Laura, will run the fiddle class.

A member of the *a capella* singing quartet, Landless, Méabh Meir, will lead the traditional singing class, while Donogh Hennessy will give the workshop in traditional guitar accompaniment.

Each masterclass will run from 4pm to 5.30pm at the

Oh Yeah Music Centre in Gordon Street, Belfast. Tickets for each class are £15.

Later in the evening at 8pm in the same venue, the four will take part in a concert along with Ó Ghluín go Glúin, a group of young traditional musicians, fostered at the Glengormley School of Traditional Music and nurtured among the musicians who frequent Madden's Bar in Belfast.



Ó Ghluín go Glúin: outside Madden's Bar in Belfast.



Martin Hayes will be one of many traditional musicians on the bill.

Major traditional stars for centenary concert

Traditional artists are to play a major role in a live concert event, titled *Ireland 100: An Old Song Re-Sung*, produced by RTÉ and South Wind Blows as part of the Irish Government's Decade of Centenaries Programme 2012-2023.

Taking place in the RDS, Dublin on October 7, the concert aims to reflect on the first hundred years of the Irish State, from 1923 to 2023, through various forms of Irish culture including song, music, dance, and spoken word.

Key themes such as achievements, failures, challenges, and changes are interwoven into the show, focusing on human experience and the cultural and artistic responses to these events.

Contributors to the event include Damien Dempsey, Martin Hayes, Dónal Lunny and friends, Colm Mac Con Iomaire and Síle Denvir with Bláth na hÓige and Liam Ó Maonlaí, Iarla Ó Lionáird, Loah, Pauline Scanlon, Aoife Ní Bhriain, Edwina Guckian, Steo Wall,

John Francis Flynn, Lisa Hannigan, Denise Chaila, FeliSpeaks and the London Irish Pensioners' Choir among others.

The presentation will be enhanced with archive film and still projections.

The title of the event, "Ireland 100: An Old Song Re-Sung," is suggested by the W.B. Yeats' poem, *Down by the Salley Gardens* (inspired by an elderly woman's sketchy attempt to remember the words to the great Ulster song, *The Rambling Boys of Pleasure*).

Yeats received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923, the year that also marked Ireland's admission into the League of Nations.

The concert will be broadcast on RTÉ One, RTÉ Player and RTÉ Radio 1 on October 30.

€1m State funding windfall for ITMA

The Irish Traditional Music Archive has been awarded a grant of €1 million from the Irish Government's Shared Island Fund.

The project was one of five brought forward by the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland with the aim of providing new facilities and opportunity for artistic exchange, curation, and audience engagement North and South across the island.

The €1 million allocated to the ITMA will be used to develop a new residential studio space and enhance digitisation capacity in order to promote all-island collaborations between artists and archivists.



Director: Liam O'Connor

The ITMA plans to restore the two-bedroom mews at the rear of the Archive on Dublin's Merrion Square to provide accommodation for an artist-/archivist-in-residence.

ITMA Director Liam O'Connor commented: "This Shared Island funding will see the Irish Traditional Music Archive become an archival and creative hub for a diverse range of artists, archivists and community representatives. It will connect local communities with ITMA's national collection while also benefitting a growing international online audience."

RTÉ SOUTH WIND BLOWS

SATURDAY OCTOBER 7TH - R.D.S. DUBLIN
SEE RTÉ/NE/CULTURE FOR FULL DETAILS

AIDAN GILLEN / ANNE ENRIGHT / BARBARA DAWSON / BLÁTH NA HÓIGE / CATRIN FINCH & AOIFE NÍ BHRIAIN / COLM MAC CON IOMAIRÉ / CONOR O'BRIEN / CORMAC BEBLEY / DAMIEN DEMPSEY / DARA Ó CINNÉIDE / DENISE CHAILA / DERMOT KENNEDY / DIARMAID FERRITER / DÓNAL LUNNY AND FRIENDS / EAMONN MCCANN / EDWINA GUCKIAN / FELISPEAKS / IARLA Ó LIONÁIRD / JOHN FRANCIS FLYNN / LELIA DOOLAN / LIAM Ó MAONLAÍ / LISA HANNIGAN / LOAH / LONDON IRISH ELDERS CHOIR / MARTIN HAYES / MIA MULLARKEY / PAULA MEEHAN / PAULINE SCANLON / SALLY MULREADY OBE / SELLO / SENATOR EILEEN FLYNN / SÍLE DENVIR / STEO WALL / THE SCRATCH / TOLÓ MAKAY



Joanie Madden wears the National Heritage Fellowship medallion at the event in the Library of Congress in Washington.

At last... Joanie gets her gong

Cherish the Ladies leader, Joanie Madden, has been officially presented with the award she won in 2021 at long last.

At a ceremony in the Library of Congress in Washington last month, Joanie celebrated her 2021 National Heritage Fellowship conferred by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in the USA.

As the pandemic led to the postponement of the usual formal celebrations at the time, the NEA decided to make up for lost time by bringing together the fellowship recipients for 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 at a gala event.

In conferring the fellowship in 2021, the NEA noted that Joanie Madden, one of the great flute and whistle players of her generation, is recognised as one of the most influential women in Irish music worldwide, with an accomplished career as a composer, recording artist, and performer.

"It is such an amazing honour," said Madden, "and I am so humbled. It was an incredible experience and well worth the wait!"



Nuala Kennedy has been awarded the 2023 Traditional Artist Bursary by glór arts centre in Ennis (Photo: Eamon Ward)

glór bursary for Nuala

Nuala Kennedy has been named as the recipient of the glór Traditional Artist Bursary for 2023.

The bursary will provide Kennedy with the budget, space and time to develop new work with her chosen collaborators, Tara Breen on fiddle and Tony Byrne on guitar.

Nuala plans to spend the award in full time residence in glór, with Tara and Tony, working on music which examines the place of women in traditional song, and how women are traditionally represented.

Nuala and her partners will re-imagine these songs, giving voice to the woman's spirit and personality, while shining a light on the difficulties of the past.

Nuala also plans to write new compositions inspired by the songs, enabling the music to expand outwards beyond the lyrics and flow naturally

into the instrumental sonic world.

Originally from Dundalk, Clare-based Nuala Kennedy is an award-winning performing and recording artist, known for her creative reworking and reimagining of traditional songs and for her unique Irish flute style. She also composes and produces music.

Among the many duos and trios Nuala has played in are The Alt with John Doyle and Eamon O'Leary.

While her roots are first and foremost in traditional music, she has been described by *Living Tradition* magazine as 'something of a genre bender.'

Kennedy has appeared on a host of solo and group recordings – including Janis Ian's Grammy nominated 2022 album, *End of The Line*.



Artist's impression of the expanded headquarters of Na Píobairí Uilleann in Henrietta Street, Dublin.

Pipers' HQ development boosted by award of €13.3m in public funds

Na Píobairí Uilleann's ambitious plan to extend its headquarters in Henrietta Street, Dublin, has received a timely boost with the announcement of a significant tranche of public funding.

The proposed Sound of Ireland Centre – which is to be facilitated by a major extension to the side and rear of the existing building – will include a substantial theatre performance space, an international visitor centre and an instrument-making training facility.

The development project has now been largely underwritten by funding from central and local government.

No less than three Cabinet Ministers were on hand to deliver the good news in Henrietta Street: Darragh O'Brien – whose Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will contribute €9.3m; Catherine Martin – whose Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media will contribute €2m; and Paschal Donohoe of the Department

of Public Expenditure and Reform and TD for the constituency in which the NPU Headquarters building is located.

The three Ministers were joined by Richard Shakespeare, Acting Chief Executive of Dublin City Council, which has not only granted planning permission for the project but is also providing a grant of €2m – bringing the total level of public funding to €13.3m.

With the funding in place, the new expanded facility is expected to open in 2027.

Na Píobairí Uilleann, which also receives annual grants from the Arts Council to cover current expenditure, has deemed worthy of support as a thriving and well-managed arts organisation dedicated to sharing the 'sound of Ireland' (as uilleann piping is frequently called), through access, education, performance and preservation. The new centre aims to reflect the growing international interest in uilleann piping and the work of NPU.

Designed by Dublin-based Ryan W. Kennihan Architects and scheduled for completion and opening in 2027, the new community and cultural hub is "shovel ready" and will welcome a diverse community of artists and arts audiences, enabling improved access to facilities.

Within Na Píobairí Uilleann's Sound of Ireland Centre, visitors will have an opportunity to see and experience an expertly curated insight into uilleann piping, charting the history and development of this uniquely Irish instrument.

Meanwhile, a dedicated space will bring tuition and mentoring in uilleann pipe making into the heart of Dublin for the first time from its current base in Clonshaugh in North Dublin.

A new 200-seater theatre in the complex will provide a purpose-built performance venue – designed to be flexible to accommodate a range of different performance types and audience arrangements.



Artist's impression of the planned performance space in the expanded NPU HQ.

Welcoming the announcement, NPU Chief Executive, Gay McKeon, said: "This investment by the Government and Dublin City Council is very welcome news for our members, staff and Board, current funding agencies, stakeholders and the wider uilleann piping community in Ireland and abroad.

"We have delivered on significant milestone projects in the past, including the restoration of our headquarters at 15 Henrietta Street, the establishment of our instrument making training centre, PipeCraft, and securing Irish Government support for the inclusion of uilleann piping on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Our access and education programmes have brought weekly piping tuition and instruments on loan to young people nationwide.

"Na Píobairí Uilleann was founded in 1968 and over five decades, through the dedication and hard work of the uilleann piping community, we have overseen an unimaginable positive transformation in the fortunes of the art of uilleann piping.

"We are very grateful for the support of the Government and Dublin City Council for helping us to provide new opportunities for people worldwide to appreciate and participate in this uniquely Irish art form."



Remarkable journey

When Na Píobairí Uilleann was founded in 1968, there were genuine fears that the instrument's future was in jeopardy – with at most 100 pipers in the country and only one full-time pipe-maker.

Today the NPU has over 1,500 members in more than 40 countries, and thousands of people play the pipes and classes are in high demand.

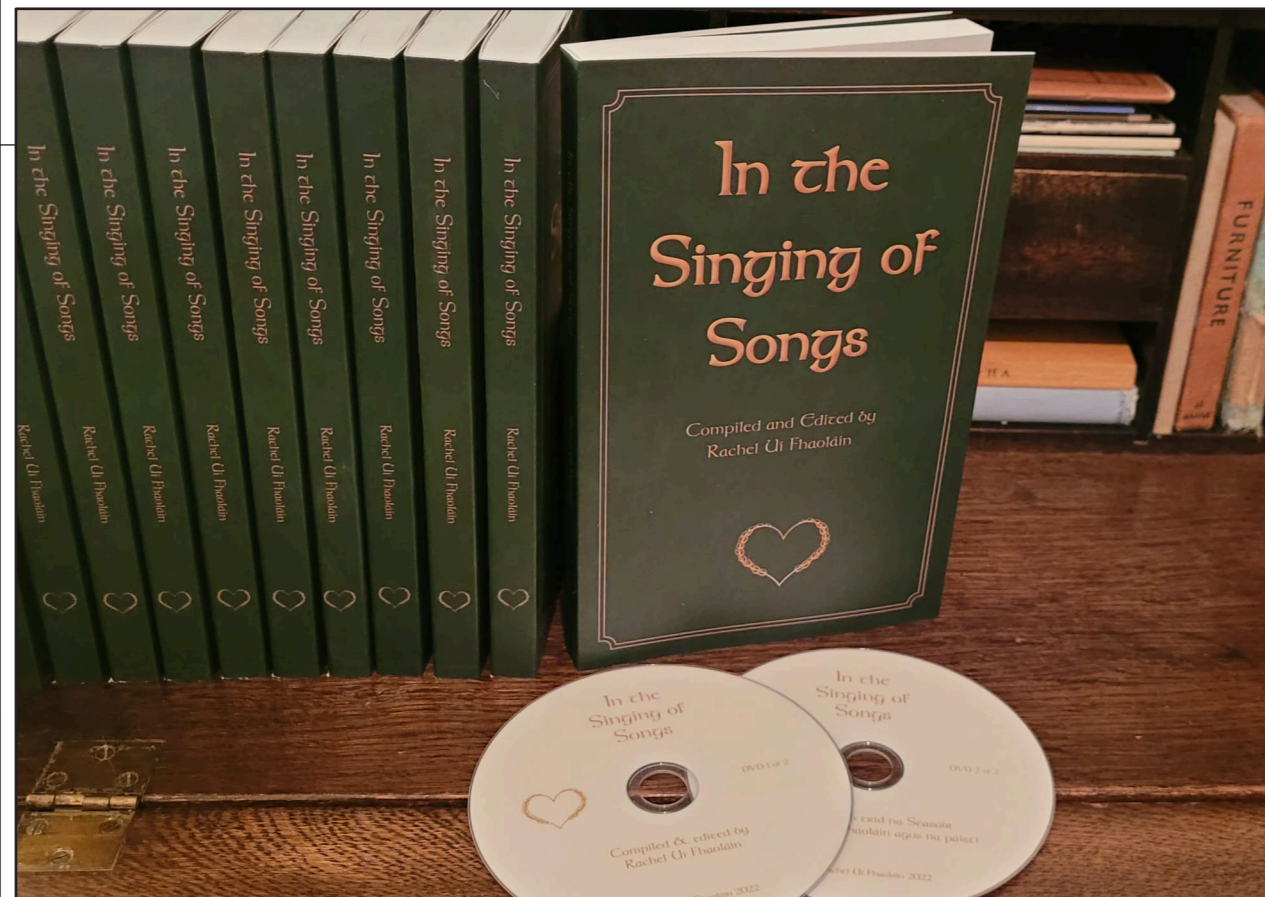
In 1982 Na Píobairí Uilleann secured a 99-year lease from Dublin City Council on a rather dilapidated Georgian building at 15 Henrietta Street.

"There was no front door," recalled McKeon. "We had to climb in through the window." But through a combination of fundraising events, contributions from members and volunteers and support from the Arts Council, the total renovation of the building was completed in 2006.

On taking stock of the potential to further develop the site in order to reflect and – even build upon – the organisation's growing international footprint, the NPU began to envisage how a further enhancement of the facilities in Henrietta Street could multiply its impact – not only for international visitors but also within the local community.



At the official announcement of the funding package were (front row from left) Ministers Darragh O'Brien, Catherine Martin and Pascal Donoghue, (back row from left) Na Píobairí Uilleann CEO Gay McKeon, actor Brendan Gleeson and pipers Liam Winnett, Séamus Ong and Muireann Ní Shé (Photo: Maxwell Photography).



'In the Singing of Songs'

New collection of songs launched

As Rachel Uí Fhaoláin sat amarvelling at the songs in the newly composed song competitions at successive Fleadhanna Cheoil, it began a continuing reflection on the nature of the song-writing process. Over time, those reflections planted a seed which has flowered in the publication of a remarkable new book, *In the Singing of Songs* – with two accompanying DVDs – featuring a unique collection of songs, recitations and poetry from Wexford and beyond.

Led by Rachel and supported by the North Wexford Traditional Singing Circle and Wexford County Council's Creative

Community Scheme, the project got under way during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

Its initial objectives were to highlight the voice of the people, to engage local singers, song makers and history lovers in the process of creating a new intergenerational song book with accompanying DVDs, which would celebrate our unaccompanied traditional singing and song-making heritage in a new way, with a specific emphasis on research, composing and collecting songs in the traditional style for all ages in the community context.

The onset of the pandemic and its ensuing uncertainties

around lockdowns and other measures meant that some of the originally intended approaches had to be modified. Project meetings had to take place online rather than in person – which, though initially a matter of regret, ultimately facilitated the engagement of contributors from further afield.

These meetings provided invaluable support to the participants during the research, composing and collecting process.

Typical of the wider song tradition, the repertoire in this new collection of 25 songs covers a wide variety of themes



from 1169 in Wexford to Covid-19, itself, and more in between.

The book features new compositions, songs which have never been published before, some which resulted from collaborations between natural storytellers and songwriters during the course of the project.

Some poems are included which have been adapted for singing: marrying them with old airs was all part of the creative process. More of the songs were started on paper previously, but were never fully finished for various reasons. The project meetings provided a great sounding board for the songs, a platform for support, critique, and the songs became better.

Another important aspect of this project is the research carried out in order to gain a fuller insight into the process and the stories within the songs. The song certainly speak for themselves, but the historical documents, photographs and personal insights included, give the reader and the future

Singer of Songs: Senan Lillis (Photo: John Ó Faoláin) ▲

Family: Chulainn Ó Faoláin, Rachel Uí Fhaoláin and Éire Ní Fhaoláin (Photo: John Ó Faoláin) ►



readers a solid background to take forward with each song. Reflecting Rachel's concern to ensure that the female perspective was respected, the voices of women are heard in equal measure throughout the song book.

To complement Rachel's work with school children in traditional song education, the book also includes eight additional songs specifically aimed at children. Young singers were invited to learn and perform a selection of newly composed songs in the traditional style which Rachel wrote with her own children, Éire and Chulainn.

The Irish language features too with new songs like *Caoineadh an Carron Row* as well as a variety of macaronic songs in the children section of the book.

"Our singing and song-making tradition is a gift, it's about singing with our communities, our families and

our friends, getting absorbed in the songs and the stories that we want to tell. It is about passing them on. That's what this song book and the accompanying DVDs are all about," explained Rachel.

The singers and songwriters who have contributed to the book and the DVDs are:

- Noel Armstrong, Colm Brennan, Gavin Byrne, Francis Devine, James Doran, Aoife Doyle, Mick Doyle, Grace French, Rita Gallagher, Des Geraghty, Frank Greally, Senan Lillis, Ellen MacIsaac, Marianne McAleer, Éire Ní Fhaoláin, Simon Oak, Chulainn Ó Faoláin, Larry O'Toole, Séamas Sheils, Vincent Strunks, Jonny Tennant, Deirdre Tobin, Paul Tobin, Alenora Tuohy, Rachel Uí Fhaoláin, Sophie Wickham, Fiachra Willoughby and Síofra Willoughby,



Singer of Songs: Rita Gallagher ◀

Singers of Songs: Deirdre Tobin ►
Francy Devine ►►
(Photos: John Ó Faoláin)



Ademar comes of age

This year's undisputed star of the Fleadh in August was Ademar O'Connor from Offaly.

The multi-instrumentalist from Edenderry has been causing a stir at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann for a number of years now as he has progressed up through the age categories – racking up a total of eighteen All-Irelands in the fiddle, button accordion, banjo, piano, melodeon and miscellaneous categories.

But this year, he finally arrived at the senior (over 18) grade 2023 – to achieve one of the most remarkable individual performances in the history of the event.

Ademar took both the All-Ireland senior fiddle title and the senior banjo title in Mullingar as well as second place in the mandolin and third place in the melodeon competitions.

Having won the junior Fiddler of Dooney in 2016 and the junior Ed Reavy fiddle competition in 2017, O'Connor the Fiddler of London competition earlier this year.

His brothers, Theodore and Arthur, also have All-Ireland titles to their names.

On the double: Ademar O'Connor with his trophies for winning the all-Ireland senior fiddle and banjo championships at the recent Fleadh Cheoil in Mullingar.

Ademar also took second place in the mandolin and third in the melodeon competitions.

Duais dúbailte: In the senior competition for women singing in Irish, the title was won by Gormfhlaith Ní Shíocháin Ní Bheoláin from Waterford. Three years ago Gormfhlaith won the piano sonata competition at the Feis Maitiú.



Ademar began playing the tin whistle at the age of four before progressing to the button accordion followed by the fiddle and the banjo.

Altogether at this year's event in Mullingar, there were 230 competitions in a range of categories across all age groups covering traditional instruments played by solo performers, duets, trios and céilí bands; solo singing in Irish and English; sean-nós and céilí dancing; along with rather more esoteric disciplines like liltin, whistling and story-telling.

Competition winners were drawn from Ireland, Britain and the USA.

Shauna Cullen from Sligo took the honours in the senior flute competition while Limerick's Micheál Mac Giobúin lifted both the senior uilleann pipes crown and the uilleann pipes slow air title.

Other senior individual winners were Hamish O'Carroll (Kerry) on harp, Aaron Glancy (Sligo) on

button accordion, Cathal Ó hEachtighearna (Dublin) on tin whistle and Colm Browne (Clare) on concertina.

In the senior singing competitions, the women's (singing in Irish) title went to Gormfhlaith Ní Shíocháin Ní Bheoláin from Waterford, while Oonagh McArdle from Tyrone tool the title for singing in English. The winner of the men's (Irish) title went to Máirtín Ó Cathasaigh from Kerry, while Cork's Vincent Crowley retained the men's singing (in English) title which he won in Mullingar in 2022.

In the blue riband event – the senior céilí band competition – the Piper's Cross Céilí Band from Knock became the first Mayo band to win the title. They finished ahead of another Mayo band, Glór na dTonn from Castlebar, in second place.

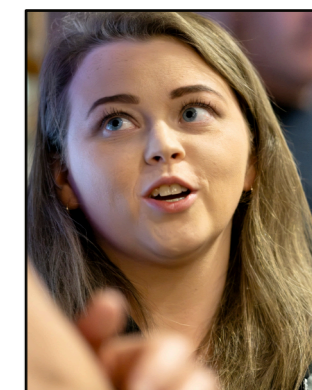
Next year's Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann will take place in Wexford town on August 4–11.



Singer John Tunney



Rebecca and Caroline Griffin from Kilmaley



Singer Eileen Broderick



Inside the Chambers Bar in Mullingar



Mary Grace O'Neill



Caitlín and Antoin Mac Gabháinn with Colm Regan



Lorcan Fox and friends



Banjo Joe Connaire and friends take the streets.

Singing down the generations

When the Covid-19 lockdown forced the Inishowen Traditional Singing Weekend to go online in 2021, Dublin-based film-maker Bob Gallagher created a number of short films for streaming as part of the festival. From this point, as they said themselves, the Inishowen Traditional Singing Circle “stepped into the world of film-making guided by Bob’s unique vision.”

Two years later at the Galway Film Fleadh this July, a remarkable 60-minute music documentary, *It’s A Fine Thing to Sing*, had its world premiere.

In the film, we follow the engagement by younger singers – Ian Lynch, Ye Vagabonds and The Henry Girls – with six songs from the Inishowen Song Project – sung by older local singers, Roseanne McGonigle, Dan McGonigle, Mary Ann Canny, and Corney McDaid, along with a visitor,

▼ The Henry Girls



Packie Manus Byrne from Ardara singer.

The film follows the younger singers through their process of developing their own interpretations of the songs, against the breathtaking landscape of the Inishowen Peninsula with the archival recordings and interviews with local figures providing further context.

“The film,” said the ITSC, “is a fitting and important tribute to the singers and songs of Inishowen, the incredible vision of Jimmy McBride who founded the Inishowen Traditional Singing Circle.

“It has been our pleasure to work with Bob’s wonderful crew of cinematographers, editors, sound engineers, and post-production professionals.”

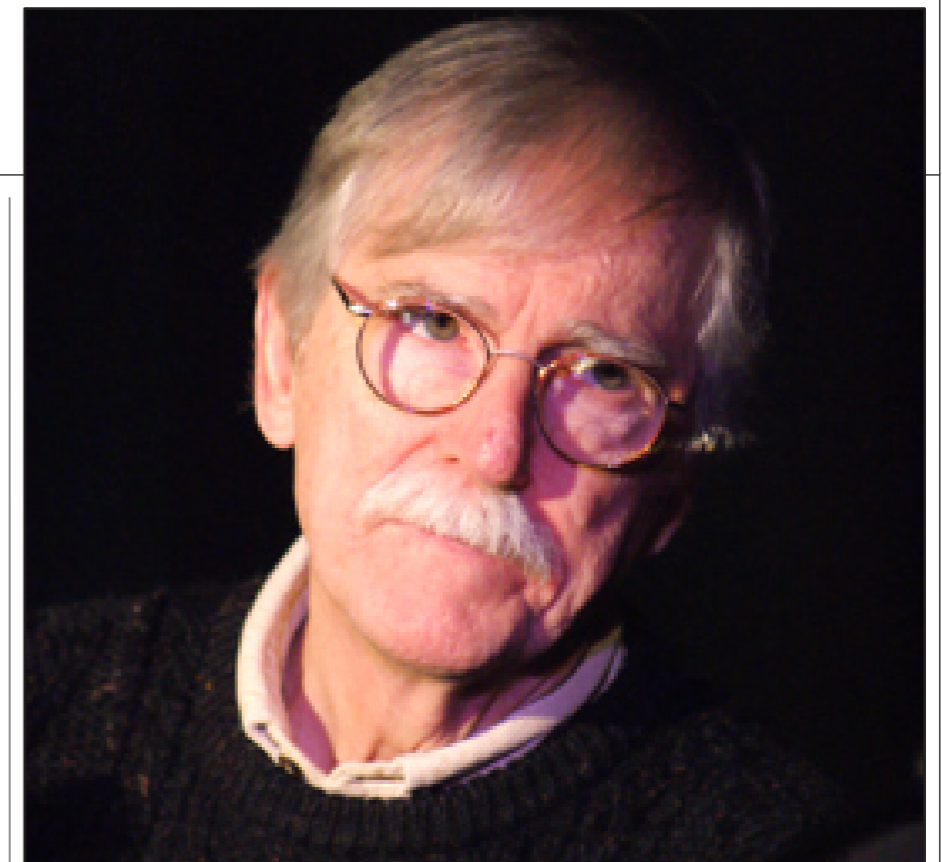
The Singing Circle has its roots in the 1980s amid concerns that an oral tradition embodying “the history, music, language, social habits

and humour of past generations – the intangible cultural heritage of the Inishowen Peninsula” may not be able to continue to withstand “the erosion caused by radio, television and recorded music.”

Buncrana school teacher, Jimmy McBride, who was originally from Gaoth Dobhair, formed the Inishowen Traditional Singers’ Circle in 1988.

At the ITSC’s first festival in 1990, the opening lecture was presented by the prolific song collector, Tom Munnely, who returned each year to deliver the keynote until his death in 2007.

Jimmy McBride’s recordings of local singers made over 20 years were donated to the Irish Traditional Music Archive and form the kernel around which the ITMA’s impressive Inishowen Song Project microsite has been built.



Ómós: Dan Milner

Daniel Michael Milner
born March 27,
1945, died
September 27,
2023

The acclaimed singer and song collector, Dan Milner, died suddenly last month.

Born in Birmingham, England to an Irish mother Nora Mary (née Cremin) and English-born Irish father, William, Dan Milner and his family lived in many other places during and after World War II, including Ballyunion and Toronto, as well as Brooklyn and Queens in New York where they became US citizens. Dan was educated in New York City and later in England.

After losing his student deferral for not carrying enough college credits, Dan received his draft notice during the Vietnam War era. He joined the United States Air Force – serving at Travis Air Force Base in California.

After leaving the military, he began working in the airline industry in California and then in New York.

He started as a baggage handler, reservation agent before becoming a sales manager for two airlines.

Following the many moves he made during his childhood; travel became an important part of Dan’s life. Working in aviation led to many spectacular trips around the globe.

He also worked as a National Park Ranger, a cartographer for the Census Bureau and most recently as a professor at St. John’s University in New York City.

But the most important passion of Dan's life was his singing. Music was in his family. His mother was a keen set dancer and his father a good singer and piano player.

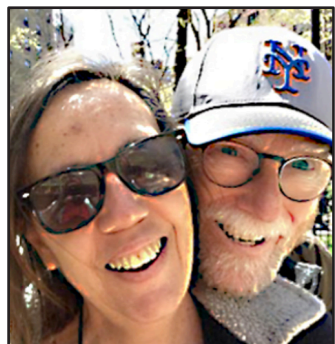
Dan's first 'performance' occurred when, as a small child, he was briefly separated from his family at Coney Island Beach and was brought to the police station. When his anxious mother came into the station, there was Dan on top of one of the desks regaling the Irish cops with a song. He narrowly escaped punishment!

His father, William, had been raised by his mother and maternal grandfather, John Patrick McKay from Ennis from whom he learned his first traditional songs.

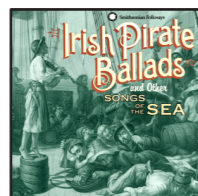
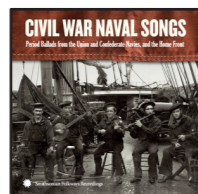
Dan picked up some of his father's repertoire, which included *Skibbereen*, *The Wild Rover* and traditional ballads like *McCaffery* and *Barbara Allen* as well as Republican songs like *Kevin Barry*.

Along with his elder brother, Liam, Dan learned these along with Thomas Moore songs and many Irish-American lyrics from Tin Pan Alley.

"Though they came from different places and time periods," he said, "I link them together as Irish national songs in the sense that, individual taste aside, Irish people would agree they all are part of the country's national heritage and consciousness."



Duet: Dan Milner and Robbie O'Connell



An avid collector with a great facility for memorising songs, Dan began to absorb the canon of Irish, English and Scottish traditional folk songs along with an oversized helping of sea shanties.

In the United States, he won the Mid-Atlantic Fleadh Cheoil several times and competed in the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann twice. He became a highly renowned and respected singer and collector of Irish songs in the English language.

In the early 1970s he set up the Eagle Tavern Folk Club in New York City, where he ran weekly concerts for ten years. The club attracted the best of traditional singers and musicians from the USA and abroad.

In New York City, he was fortunate to befriend legendary older Irish singers like Joe Heaney, Margaret Barry, The Clancy Brothers and Dominic Behan.

As a founder member of the acclaimed band, The Flying Cloud, Dan performed right

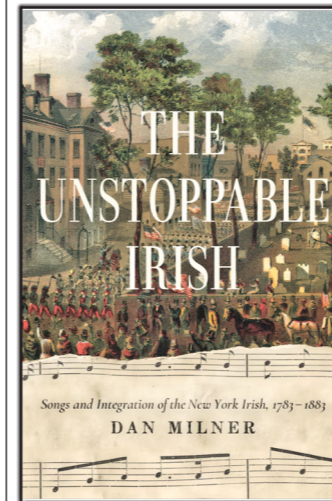
across the USA including the Philadelphia Folk Festival in 1977. Their one, eponymous recording, was with Adelphi Records.

In 1983 he published his first book, *The Bonnie Bunch of Roses: Songs of England, Ireland & Scotland*.

Though work dominated his life at this time, he still kept a hand in music by going to sessions and concerts whenever possible.

He met his beloved wife Bonnie at one such session at the Eagle Tavern. They were married in 1989 and with her encouragement, he returned to singing which led to a rich and rewarding life.

Over the years Dan made five CDs: three for Folk Legacy Records – *Irish Ballads and Songs of the Sea*, *Irish in America* and *Irish Songs from Old New England* and two for Smithsonian Folkways: *Civil War Naval Songs* and *Irish Pirate Ballads and Other Songs of the Sea*.



After he retired and following a 37-year hiatus from college, Dan decided to go back and received a Bachelor's degree followed by a Master's from Hunter College in New York.

He then completed a doctorate in American Studies back "home" at the University of Birmingham in England.

His doctoral dissertation led to his second book, *The Unstoppable Irish: Songs and Integration of the New York Irish, 1783-1883*.

A special guest along with Bonnie at the last Frank Harte Festival before the pandemic in September 2019 in Dublin, Dan also made time to attend the Inishowen Traditional Singers' Weekend in Ballyliffin whenever he could, along with the Mystic and CT Sea Music Festivals closer to his home in the US.

Dan and his beloved wife, Bonnie, enjoyed their music and travels together during an incredible lifetime journey.

He is survived by his wife, Bonnie, his step-daughter Kerry Cosentino, her husband Brian and their children, Lena and Nick, along with many cherished friends and Inky the pet parrot!



Huge figure

It was such a terrible shock to hear the news of Dan Milner's recent death. He was a great friend and musical collaborator, as well as one of my favourite singers. He was also an author, an ethnomusicologist and a teacher. His vast repertoire of songs and his encyclopaedic knowledge of Irish and British folk songs was legendary. In addition to a strong true singing voice, Dan had that rare ability to inhabit a song and make completely his own.

In the early 1980s, Dan ran a renowned concert series at the Eagle Tavern in New York. I first met him there with his wife Bonnie, also a great singer... Between 2012 and 2017 Dan and I frequently performed as a duo and I always enjoyed his company and his great sense of humour... Dan was a huge figure on the folk music scene and his genial presence will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

Robbie O'Connell

Versed in history, kinship and mirth

Dan came to my little house in Hawthorne NJ, some years ago, where I had set up my recording studio, which consisted of a spare bedroom and my dining room. There we recorded two records for Smithsonian Folkways...

Dan invited many of the legends of folk to the little green house to help him assemble components of the records, and he and I crafted the songs with himself striving to keep them sparse enough to fit the folk/traditional idiom.

Of course we had a horn section for *The Monitor and the Merimac*, provided by Katy Bowerman and a friend. And great vocals by Mick Moloney, Robbie O'Connell, Susan McKeown and John Doyle; also the Johnson Girls with Bonnie his wife, Joanie Madden on flute, Bob Conroy on banjo, Tim Collins and quite a few others. I'm proud of both of those records and I think they are unique and important recordings of *Civil War Naval Battles* and *Irish Pirate Songs*...

His songs with his great life partner, Bonnie Milner, were always the spice of any gathering. I know the passing of Dan is a great loss to her and the large sea music and Irish music community of the Atlantic seaboard. He was the real deal, a credit to his Kerry mother and English father. He represented in a way the Irish diaspora that quietly celebrated their heritage in the UK and loudly proclaimed it in the USA.

There was no shamrock or shillelaghs about Dan though, but a deep knowledge of our history, our struggles and our songs of kinship and mirth. I'll never forget the time we spent making recordings that will be referred to by future generations of singers of historical folk song. Also the cups of Barry's tea and the odd Hoegarden.

I'll miss you Dan, we all will.

Gabriel Donohue

Treasure

So sad to hear of the passing of Dan Milner, a treasure of inestimable value.

A sweet singer of traditional Irish songs and songs of the sea, a scholar, a teacher and a writer.

I have had a deep respect for Dan for a long time, met him many times, and was always charmed and delighted by his approach to his songs.

Shay Black

Immense presence

The trad singing community has lost a big voice and an immense presence with the sudden passing... of Dan Milner, a son of England, Ireland and Amerikay.

Michael O'Leary

Honoured

We are truly honoured to have shared his songs, his company and friendship in Inishowen over many decades.

Inishowen Traditional Singers

Contribution

He was such a nice man, and he made a significant contribution to the musical tradition we love. Rest in peace, Dan.

Joe Offer

Stirring singer

Dan Milner will be missed by many, in both the Irish music and sea music world...a stout and stirring singer and a great guy to know. My thoughts go out to my dear friend Bonnie Milner...their partnership was a joy to see...Go well Old Fella...I will miss you....

Tim Radford

Warm and wise

Dan was a tremendous presence in the traditional song community for many years, and always enlivened our sessions with his wonderful songs and humour. He was tremendously warm and wise, and was always generous with his time, his immense knowledge and his songs. He will be greatly missed.

Kara O'Brien, Limerick Singing Session



A study in concentration: Mark Redmond playing at the Imbolc Festival in Derry in 2020.

In the footsteps of the masters

In October, 2018, *Ómós do Liam O'Flynn*, a special concert in the great piper's memory was under way in the National Concert Hall in Dublin. Liam had died in March of that year. The second-half of the concert was to feature *The Brendan Voyage* with Mark Redmond as pipe soloist. As Mark waited at the side of the stage ready to go on, he was naturally nervous – but far more than he had been the first time he played the piece in concert over a year earlier. This was a particularly significant performance: not only was the event paying tribute to one of Ireland's greatest ever pipers and one of Mark's piping inspirations, but also in attendance were Liam's family and friends as well as a veritable who's who of Irish traditional music.

As Mark tried to calm his nerves, Christy Moore – who had been playing with his former Planxty bandmates in the first half of the event – came over to him. Christy had tears in his eyes. He put his hand on Mark's shoulder then rested his head. As his tears stained Mark's jacket, Christy said: "I don't envy the task you have in hand now." Then he added: "But don't you worry, Liam is out there tonight. And he'll look after you."

In many ways Redmond was the obvious choice for the concert. Not only had he played the Shaun Davy piece before with a full orchestra – but he had also delivered a memorable performance at Liam O'Flynn's funeral service six months earlier.

But at another level, entirely, Mark Redmond was also the perfect choice – since his own career in piping has had many parallels with Liam's journey.

Just as Liam was famously driven the 30km from Kill in Co. Kildare to Dublin in a side-car by his father for lessons with master piper Leo Rowsome, young Mark Redmond initially travelled over 50km from Gorey to Wexford – and subsequently 100km to Dunmore East in Co. Waterford with his father for lessons with master piper Tommy Kearney.

Although Mark does not remember precisely when he first heard the sound of the uilleann pipes, he recalls as a young boy being intrigued by the cool sound he heard from time to time. Even though it was less than 25 years ago, easy access to music over the internet was still a pipedream and there was little recorded uilleann pipe music played on local radio or RTÉ.



Patriarch of a great piping and pipe-making dynasty: (left) William Rowsome. (Image: ITMA)



The Rowsome Brothers: (above) Thomas (left) and Leo.

"My parents listened to all kinds of music: but they also listened to a lot of traditional music. So I developed a liking for it before I even thought about playing.

"Eventually we learned the tin whistle in school – the usual stuff like *The Dawning of the Day*, *Down by the Sally Gardens* and so on – but I kept hearing this intriguing sound. It wasn't until I was in fifth class in primary school that I actually saw an instrument for the first time.

"By coincidence my fifth class teacher, John O'Brien, had just started lessons in the Cork Pipers' Club before he moved to Gorey. He had a Kevin Thompson beginner set. When he played it in class one day, I recognised the magical sound I had heard before. So I was really excited.

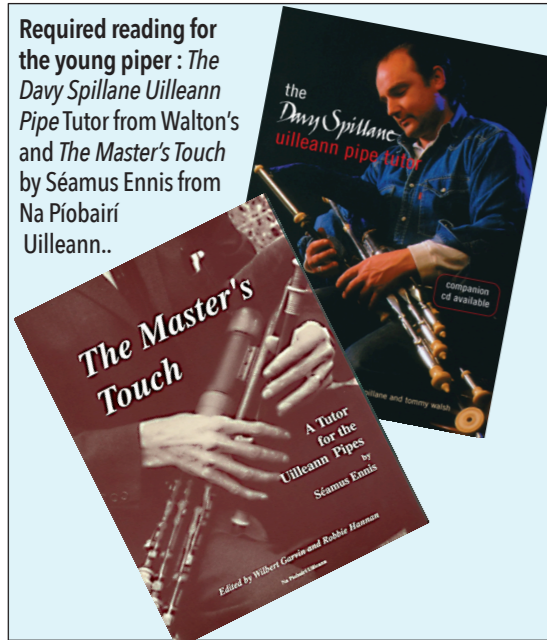
"I was fascinated by the bellows, the bag and everything else. I was so excited that when I got home from school, I got two water bottles under each arm and a broken leg of a fancy stool for the chanter, to explain what I saw to my father. "Of course, my father was

well aware of the uilleann pipes because – even though it went over my head at the time – he told me that Leo Rowsome's brother, Tom, used to spend the summer down next door to my father's family in Courtown. It was actually his family's house but they divided it in the summertime so they could rent it out to visitors from Dublin. Courtown used to be a very popular tourist destination for people from Dublin at that time.

"So Tom Rowsome used to spend many a summer down in my father's family's house. Later when I began to understand the history of the pipes, I realised what a remarkable coincidence that was. I often thought if only there had been a photograph – because we still have the melodeon that belonged to my father's grandmother. She used to play it with Tom Rowsome playing the pipes."

Another near miss involving the house at Courtown involved another legendary piper, Séamus Ennis.

Required reading for the young piper: *The Davy Spillane Uilleann Pipe Tutor* from Walton's and *The Master's Touch* by Séamus Ennis from Na Piobairí Uilleann..



“Séamus Ennis had TB, which was rife in the country at the time, and was in the same hospital ward as my uncle, Joe, who was only about 21 at the time. A few months after Joe had left the hospital,

Séamus came down to visit him at the family home. So one night the lads got back after a night out and my grandmother told Joe that there was a big tall man down from Dublin to see him today and he waited around for a while, had tea and left. So that was Séamus Ennis. Another near miss!

“But I wasn't aware of any of this when I became interested in the pipes. As many a piper would say, I had been bitten by the bug straightaway: I had to have a set of pipes. But back then, it took a while to source a set. This was before Na Piobairí Uilleann launched the pipes loan scheme.

“So we had to get on the waiting list for a starter set. It was a few months before I got them. But those few months felt like a year. So while I was waiting, I was on the lookout for anything to do with the

pipes. If I saw a picture of uilleann pipes on an album, I'd buy it. Or if I saw the pipes on the cover of a book, I bought it.

“Coincidentally one of the first books I bought was the Spillane Tutor from Walton's. Another book I got my hands on in those early stages was the Séamus Ennis tutor produced by NPU, *The Master's Touch*, edited by Robbie Hannon and Wilbert Garvin.

“Although there were a few pipers in Wexford, we could not get lessons immediately. But by sheer coincidence, I got the pipes for the first time in April 2000 and by September of that year a Wexford Pipers' Club was established.

“So I turned up. I had a few tunes that I had half taught myself to play. I could hold the instrument and knock out a few tunes. But I had never actually had a formal lesson. So I got my first proper lesson in Wexford that night.

“A lot of the pipers I met there for the first time have become lifelong friends even though they are a generation older than me. Every week I just couldn't wait for the lesson.

It was just over an hour's drive from Gorey down to Wexford at the time.

“I used to bring an old cassette recorder with me and record absolutely everything. It was brilliant.

“I remember the first time I saw a set of C pipes. A man called Brendan Wickham, a postman in Rosslare, had a lovely set of C pipes made by the master pipemaker Geoff Wooff – stunning looking and stunning sounding.

“A couple of weeks later there was another young piper from Wexford who was doing his Leaving Cert, called Daire Murray. He had won All-Ireland medals in various age categories. So he turned up with his B♭ set. Another piper from South Wexford came in with a B♭ set.

“So I just sat in the room, recording the two of them playing their Geoff Wooff B♭ sets. Next day I listened to the tape with my jaw dropping at this remarkable sound.

“Unfortunately the club really only lasted for two winters. I think the most that ever attended in one night

Three pipers from Wexford: (from left) Brendan Wickham, Ned Wall and Mark Redmond



was about fifteen. But there couldn't have been many more pipers in the whole of the county at that time.

“When I look back, I realise that 23 years ago in Wexford there were actually quite a lot of pipers relative to most other places. But generally there was not much piping. And so, 23 years ago to get ten or more pipers together was brilliant. But they all had other commitments. So it just didn't continue. Such a pity!

“Still in those two winters, I got a real grounding in piping technique, repertoire and everything else. Most of the tuition was done by John McMahon and Ned Wall. They were probably in their thirties with young families. So finding the time wasn't easy for them. Ned lived on the other side of the county.

“They said that they'd try to look after me from time to time in terms of tuition but if I wanted more regular lessons, I'd have to go to Dunmore East in Co. Waterford to Tommy Kearney, who had been Ned's teacher.

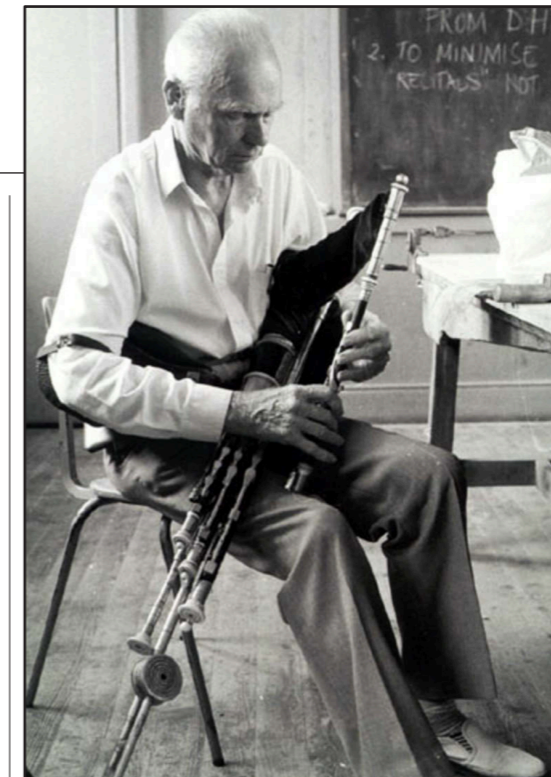
Tommy Kearney

“Tommy was a gentleman piper in every respect. He was absolutely brilliant. He wore a suit all the time with the pioneer pin.

“We used to go down to Tommy about once a month. I used to take a day off school on a Friday and it would be a day out for my father and me. It's a fair distance from Gorey to Dunmore East – about 100km along the old roads.

“We had our routine. We'd go as far as Waterford City, have lunch at the Granville Hotel, and then go on to meet Tommy in the afternoon.

“Tommy was a strong 88 year old and I was 12. He had a great memory. He was a wonderful teacher. It was more than the lessons – picking up



Tommy Kearney at Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy (Photo Peter Laban)

The piping master from Portlaw

A pivotal figure in the Irish piping tradition, Waterford's Tommy Kearney (1912-2008) was one of the leading exponents of a style of piping which combined an open flowing melody and crisp staccato ornamentation with near continuous accompaniment on the regulators. Tommy's teacher, Liam Walsh, was a student of William Rowsome – father of Leo and Thomas.

In this notes on Tommy Kearney's album for Na Piobairí Uilleann, *The Master Pipers Vol. 2*, Seán Donnelly described Kearney as “a living link in a musical chain that stretches back to the nineteenth century and beyond” – connecting to renowned pipers like the Cashes, the Byrnes and the Rowsomes. Tommy also recalled listening to Johnny Doran playing on the streets of his native Portlaw.

Although Garech de Brún at Claddagh Records was keen to record Kearney, for various reasons it never happened. But in 1977, he took part as a member of the band, Tjompán, in Mícheál Ó Suilleabháin's Gael Linn album, *Óró Domhnaigh*, inspired by his mentor, Seán Ó Riada's work with Ceoltoirí Chulainn. Tjompán also included Nóirín Ní Ríáin, Tomás Ó Catháin, John Dwyer, Mattie Fahy and Kearney's former student, Tommy Keane (now Honorary President of Na Piobairí Uilleann), on the whistle. Ó Suilleabháin subsequently noted: “Tommy (Kearney) inspired each and every one of us to greater things within ourselves.”

Apart from Redmond, Wall and Keane, Tommy taught a number of other pipers from the South East, including Jimmy O'Brien-Moran, Donnchadh Gough, John Tuohy and David Power.

Tommy's life and music is commemorated each year at Tionol Tommy Kearney, the annual gathering of uilleann pipers in the South East – run by Craobh Osraí Comhaltas Kilkenny for over 25 years.

a tune and a bit of technique – it was his connection to the past and the way he talked about it.

“He talked about his own teacher, Liam Walsh, who is buried in Rosslare. I think Liam was born around 1886. So we're going back more than a century in a very direct line. Tommy explained to me about the great tradition of piping in the southeast.

“He used to talk a lot about Liam Walsh, as well as Leo Rowsome and Leo's father, William, from Wexford.

“Because of his age, we didn't want to overstay our welcome. So my father used to drop me off and come back in an hour. The lesson would be done but Tommy would never let us go straightaway. We'd sit there and talk about old pipers and the stories he had were just brilliant. We had a small camcorder and got a clip of him the odd time. I must try and digitize some of him talking or playing. But he is well documented in other areas.”

The Wexford Connection

Mark's role as a lecturer and teacher at the Conservatoire in the Technological University of Dublin – the successor to the original Dublin Municipal School of Music – is another link in a chain connecting Wexford to the role of piping tutor at the Dublin college.

“It's almost like the family tree of piping. It started over 100 years ago in 1919 with the appointment of 16-year-old Leo Rowsome. When Leo died in 1970, his son, Leon, took it on. Then when Leon left, Peter Browne took it on. Now I'm next in the line. It was actually Peter who pointed out the Wexford connection the whole way through. Peter also has Wexford roots.”

From student to teacher

“I love teaching in TU Dublin because, apart from the academic classes, I can generally arrange the instrumental classes or supervising essays to fit in with other commitments like concerts or recording.

“My big academic classes are all arranged for one day – Mondays – which means the rest of the week is quite flexible and I am the master of my own time.

“We’re in a new campus in Grangegorman. It’s fantastic new building with modern facilities.

“I do instrumental lessons for the pipes and I have a couple of Erasmus students who play Galician pipes. So I’m really enjoying that.

“I lecture on different topics for different years in the college, correct essays and I do supervision for dissertations as well.

“One of the dissertations I’m supervising, is by one of the Erasmus students.

“I’m blessed – and I don’t take it for granted – because I also do a bit of lecturing in the Royal Irish Academy of Music on the topic of the history of Irish music for their BMus Ed programme.”



The Galway piper: (left) Paddy Conneely (died 1850) was patronised by George Petrie. Painted by Frederic William Burton (National Gallery of Ireland)

The Wexford Piper: (right): Leo Rowsome



Apart from teaching and lecturing, Mark’s academic pursuits also include research on a dissertation for a PhD.

“I got the degree in 2011 and the masters in 2012. So seven years ago I started on the PhD. I was flying it until I became a member of staff at TU Dublin. But I’m also blessed as a member of staff because there is a bit of leeway. They understand all the preparation that goes into teaching as well as the time involved in supervising students’ work.

So what’s the PhD on?

“How to rid the world of uilleann pipes! No, actually it considers how the uilleann pipes have been used in various orchestral contexts from the eighteenth century to the present day.

“So Chapter 1 looks at the historical connections between the uilleann pipes and what we would call Western art music – or classical music. It’s fascinating.

“Chapter 2 looks at the Gaelic revival. The union pipes, as they were originally called, became known as the uilleann pipes (after the Irish for elbow). In Chapter 1 we saw that the old pipers’ repertoire covered everything and anything. That’s why the pipes were designed with fully chromatic

chanter to play melodies. But in the period covered by Chapter 2 the pipers’ repertoire became somewhat more standardised.

“Chapter 3 then goes further into the revival but leans towards Leo Rowsome, who was technically the first piper to perform with an orchestra when he played an arrangement of A. J. Potter’s *Fiach an Mhada Rua (The Fox Chase)* in 1969. But it was an unusual arrangement because even though he was on stage with the orchestra, they weren’t actually playing at the same time. The orchestra would play and stop.



“Then Leo would play and stop. Back to the orchestra and so on. It was more like a relay than synchronised playing.

“So although you could argue that technically Leo was the first piper to perform in the company of an orchestra, Liam O’Flynn was the first to really play *with* them.

“Chapter 4 then is a case study of Liam O’Flynn and his orchestral endeavours. Liam really was the first because *The Brendan Voyage* wasn’t a traditional piece as such. He opened a lot of doors.

“Chapter 5 looks at orchestral performances with pipers since the Shaun Davey-Liam O’Flynn collaborations. It looks at Mick O’Brien, Neil Martin, Pádraic Keane, David Power and various others.

“Then Chapter 6 circles back to the first chapter. It is really interesting. It looks at people like Tiarnan Ó Duinnchinn; the American piper, Jerry O’Sullivan; Padraig McGovern and a few others. It considers that everything seems to have come full circle where we have pipers once again playing what you’d call classical music in any setting.

“Tiarnan Ó Duinnchinn, for example, is one of the most underrated pipers in the country. There are some lovely clips of him playing baroque music on the chanter. This is what pipers were doing in the late 1700s and early 1800s. That’s why the pipes are constructed the way they are and we’re now finally using them to their full potential again.”



Masterful (left): Armagh Pipers’ Club alumnus, Tiarnan Ó Duinnchinn (Photo: Na Probairí Uilleann)

Pioneer (below right): Liam O’Flynn was the pipes soloist for the premiere of *The Brendan Voyage*.



On waves of sound (above): Mark plays *The Brendan Voyage* with the NSO in the National Concert Hall.

Mark’s voyage with Brendan begins

As a piper with a special interest in performing with orchestras, Mark acknowledges the pivotal role of Liam O’Flynn.

Liam had already taken a step outside the strict confines of the tradition when, with the blessing of his mentor, Séamus Ennis, he joined three folk musicians – Christy Moore, Dónal Lunny and Andy Irvine – to form the highly successful Planxty – which Ennis understood would bring the sound of the pipes to a much wider audience.

O’Flynn’s willingness to consider other genres led directly to *The Brendan Voyage* since Shaun Davey noted that when he began work on *The Brendan Voyage*, if Liam had said that it would not work or that he had no interest in the project, then that would have been the end of it. *The Brendan Voyage* would have remained just a pipe dream.

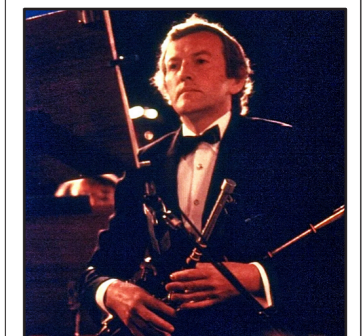
But although Mark has now performed the piece to great acclaim on a number of occasions, he explains that *The Brendan Voyage* wasn’t

the first time he heard the pipes with a full orchestra.

“It was probably the movie, *Braveheart*, that featured an American piper, Eric Rigler, who also played on the soundtrack to *Titanic*.

“I also heard the pipes with the orchestra on the soundtrack of *Michael Collins* with Davy Spillane. But at the time I wasn’t quite certain if this was part of the mad sound I kept hearing.

“But I got *The Brendan Voyage* early on. I was in a music shop in Wexford town one day and asked if they had any uilleann pipe recordings.





They said: 'have you got this one?' pulled out this album with the strange looking cover. I had heard of Liam O'Flynn, of course. So I bought it, came home and put it on to play.

"Because I was so young, I was unaware of any issues about the boundaries between genres, and I had been listening to Davy Spillane playing pipes with other genres, jazz and rock and everything. So I wasn't shocked at the idea of a piper with an orchestra.

"But when I heard *The Brendan Voyage*, it was one of those moments: I thought this is majestic. I listened to the CD over and over and over that day. I was thinking to myself, this is absolutely brilliant – everything, the sound of the pipes, the playing and the orchestra.

"My little starter set was like your first car – an absolute banger – it wasn't in tune and never played right. It was an absolute disaster. But then you hear this perfection with an artist, and this sounded so correct to me.

"I couldn't wait to get another album like this. But, of course, there wasn't really another one like it!

Bravo: (above) Mark is congratulated by composer, Shaun Davey, after a performance of *The Brendan Voyage* in the National Concert Hall, Dublin .

Ovation: (right) Mark takes the applause along with composer Shaun Davey, conductor David Brophy and lead vocalist Rita Connolly after a performance of *The Brendan Voyage* in the National Concert Hall, Dublin .

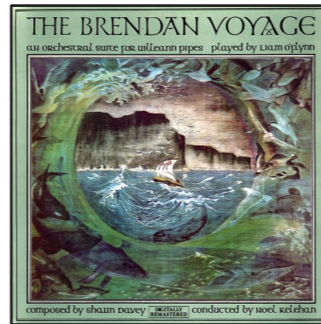
"In a few weeks, I'll be rehearsing *The Brendan Voyage* again. But I don't ever take it for granted. Particularly in the rehearsals, the introduction to *The Brendan Voyage* gets me every time. It's hard to listen to it any more on the album because I've experienced it not just from an audience point of view, but from right inside it in the orchestra with that amazing kind of surround sound all around you.

"The first violins are here, the strings around me, the celli are there and everyone else behind me in the Concert Hall. When the timpani gets going, it washes over me and, I'm not joking, every time it sends shivers down my spine and the hairs on the back of my neck stand up.

"You will never get that on your phone or on the radio. So I'm absolutely spoiled and I don't take it for granted. It's a real honour to be playing these compositions. I'm blessed that I've been asked to play them. I just love it."

"Now I have experienced the challenge of actually playing with an orchestra, I have a much clearer understanding of Liam's achievement.

"Probably the most difficult thing that we face as traditional musicians playing in an orchestral setting is the timing



issue because we're grounded in certain time signatures, 6/8, 4/4 and so on. But playing with an orchestra, you can get any kind of time. But you also have to pay particular attention when the orchestra is playing a passage that you are not involved in: you are expected to keep counting so that you know where you are in the score. So as bad as it is as the soloist, it's worse when you're part of the orchestra because you're given a piece of music and you don't generally have a lot of time to prepare.

"So the first thing I always look at are the bar rests to see if I can navigate the piece. So I generally say to the conductor: 'Listen, I'm only in here a couple times a year. I'm a traditional musician, primarily. Could you give me a nod when I am to come in?' I do that even if it's a simple piece, just to be sure.



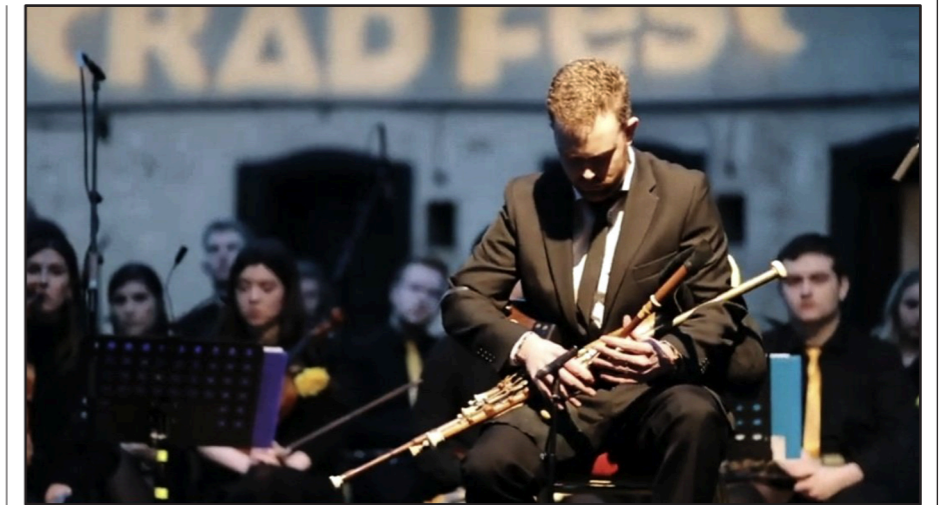
"We were never trained to read bar rests in traditional music. And then within those bar rests, you might have time or tempo changes. But touch wood, there have never been any disasters as far as I'm concerned.

"Of course, tuning is the other major issue. There used to be a pie chart in relation to bagpipes: a tiny sliver of the pie was practice and all the rest was tuning.

"Even today with a much better set of pipes, you would not believe the hours that I spend tuning the instrument. I often say if all the time spent on tuning went into practice, I probably would know every tune in O'Neill's book at this stage. But that's the nature of the instrument and it's something that goes hand in hand with the instrument.

"This is a particular issue playing with an orchestra. Firstly concert pitch is A=440 on the tuner. But most orchestras now tune to A=442. I remember one of the concerts I played in 2020 – a livestream concert from the NCH – I was bang on 442. Because of COVID, there was no live audience to warm up the auditorium.

"I went out on stage thinking to myself that the pipes were absolutely flying it and



remembering that when Liam O'Flynn was playing with an orchestra he might be the tiniest bit flat starting out – maybe A=441 – because his pipes were going to heat up as the concert went on and might eventually become sharp. So he told me in an interview that he would nearly aim to be a tiny bit flat.

"So I remember going out in this concert thinking I'm absolutely bang on 442. This is going to sound great because there's a droning section with the strings. But then it happened. And I thought what the hell – not that it was obviously out of

Legacy: (above) Accompanied by the Irish National Folk Orchestra, Mark plays Eamonn Ceannt's pipes in Kilmainham Gaol as part of Dublin Tradfest 2020.

Easter Rising leader, Ceannt had been a co-founder and Secretary of the Pipers' Club in Dublin .

tune, but just the tiniest bit. It might have been 1% or so flat compared to the rest of the orchestra. So I was wondering what was going on.

"Everything went grand: there were no mistakes. But I went to them afterwards and said I thought you all tuned to 442. I was bang on 442. But I felt that I was the tiniest bit flat out there. What was that all about? So they said: 'Our instruments naturally heat up as the concert goes on, so we are constantly rising as well.' Sometimes you cannot win. But it's a great sound when it works. It really is."

"Most of the conductors I have worked with understand that traditional musicians are different but none more so than David Brophy, who is really on our side.

"David has worked with so many traditional musicians including Liam O'Flynn and he loves traditional music. He loves the freedom of it and he does give us a small bit of freedom.

"But he carries the orchestra with us and he's great like that. I'd say I've done most of my orchestral performances with him. I always know I'll be in safe hands when I see David's name on the programme."



Plaudits: (left) Mark is congratulated by conductor, David Brophy, after a performance of *The Brendan Voyage* in the National Concert Hall, Dublin .



Dave Flynn's Irish Memory Orchestra: (left) performing at the Cork Folk Festival in 2018.

More-chestra!

Aside from his work with the National Symphony Orchestra and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra along with a number of other large ensembles like the National Folk Orchestra of Ireland, Mark has also been involved in the Irish Memory Orchestra (IMO), where he is principal uilleann piper – in succession to his friend, Mick O'Brien.

So-called because the players do not use sheet music in their performances (which means that the ensemble is accessible for visually impaired players) the IMO plays a multi-genre repertoire that includes classical and jazz as well as traditional.

But since it was founded by Dave Flynn in 2012, it has numbered some acclaimed traditional artists in its ranks – including fiddlers Bríd Harper, Aoife Ní Bhríain Liz Coleman, Tara Connaghan and Niamh Varian-Barry, concertina players Jack Talty and Edel Fox and harper Ann-Marie O'Farrell.

It has also collaborated in a number of projects with performers like Martin Hayes, Mary Bergin, Liz Carroll, Dennis Cahill and Máirtín O'Connor.

While the IMO took an enforced break because of the

pandemic, it has resumed its activities: a recital in Dublin's National Concert Hall during the summer is to be followed soon by a performance by four of the principal players – Dave Flynn on guitar, Aisling Agnew on flute, Aidan Dunphy on percussion and Mark on uilleann pipes – at the Mermaid Arts Centre in Wicklow.

"The first time I played with the IMO in 2015, Mick (O'Brien) was still a member. But Mick was a secondary school teacher and he couldn't always get off school. So he suggested me as a substitute. So the first one was a trip away to South Korea. What an opportunity!

"But I was thinking poor Mick, he's going to be stuck in school after giving me the nod to go off in his place to South Korea to play with some fantastic traditional musicians. I really enjoyed it.

"A couple of times when I wasn't available, another piper from Drogheda, Daragh O'hÉiligh, took my place, with the guide dog nearby.

"But Dave Flynn is very inventive: he has come up with some great ideas. The whole project has had some lovely results.

The Quartet

Mark is a member of the latest incarnation of the Rowsome Quartet.

The piping foursome comes together for special events, like the NPU's annual Ace and Deuce of Piping concert in Liberty Hall, Dublin.

The original quartet of pipers was formed in the 1920s by Leo Rowsome and his brother, Tom. It was wound up after Leo died in 1970. However, Leo's grandson, Kevin Rowsome, revived the quartet in recent years – performing at a variety of events including a memorable recital at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in 2018 in Drogheda.

Kitted out in evening dress like their predecessors of almost a century ago, Kevin and Mark, along with Nollaig Mac Carthaigh and Mick O'Brien played a storming set in sweltering heat.

"We had worked out some lovely harmonies. It was really enjoyable. Afterwards, in the little room backstage we all started giggling because we had managed to stay in tune in the heat.

"It was particularly hot that day. We had plans to wear the full tuxedos like the lads used to do: but we had to take the jackets off.

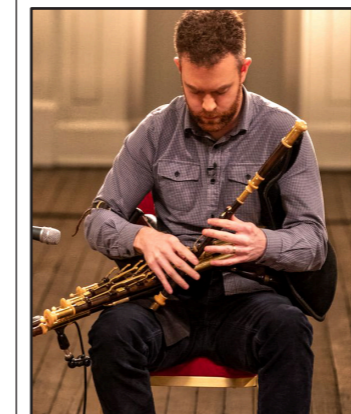


"We played again recently as the Wexford Quartet in the NPU headquarters in Henrietta Street in a concert to mark UNESCO's recognition of uilleann piping as part of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

"We had worked out some really lovely harmony. We played some old Wexford tunes that nobody had heard before. So not only was it really enjoyable but you wouldn't believe the questions I've been getting since about the tunes and their sources.

"I go looking for old books, and if there's anything to do with Wexford in the title, we will play it because it's something different.

"Although the quartet does not perform very often, it's always a good excuse to meet up with the lads because we're scattered all over the country."



For the record

Mark has contributed to a variety of recording projects usually as a member of an ensemble – sometimes playing on one track as in Christy Moore's *Flying into Mystery*.

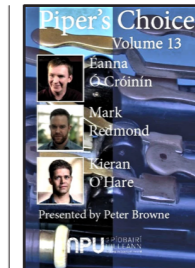
Although he has yet to make a full solo album, he has contributed six tracks to Na Piobairí Uilleann's *Piper's Choice Vol. 13*.

He also made a duo record in 2014 with David Bremner, Assistant Organist at Christ Church Cathedral. The album, entitled *L'air du Temps/The Spirit of the Times*, aims to explore the connections (real or imagined) between two distinct traditions: traditional Irish slow airs and the music of the French classical organ school.

"David took the lead in that project. Although he picked my brains, they were all his arrangements. That was nearly ten years ago. If it had been done now, I probably would have pushed a few of my ideas a bit more."

Mark's first experience of recording for an album took place nine years earlier in 2005.

"The very first album where I was on multiple tracks was actually recorded in Gorey, live in a pub out the road. I



The Rowsome Foursome: (above) (from left) Mark Redmond, Mick O'Brien, Kevin Rowsome and Nollaig Mac Carthaigh in Drogheda in 2018 (Photo: Fonn)

Festival: (below left) Mark at Dublin Tradfest in 2020.

Studio: (below right) Mark with Daoirí Farrell and Dónal Lunny recording at the ITMA in 2018.

was playing with a group of traditional musicians in the town. We had been playing around in pub sessions.

"We were invited over to play at a music festival in Split in Croatia. When we got the call, they asked us to 'send over our CD.' Of course we didn't have a CD. So so we had to record one quickly.

"A man in Enniscorthy who had a bit of a recording studio, recorded it. It did the job: we threw together a few tracks. We called it *Tim's Live* or something: it wasn't meant to be a world-beating CD: I was only in transition year at the time and had only been playing the pipes for a few years.

"When I listen back to that CD now, of course I think I wasn't really playing the regulators at the time. I didn't have a great set. I didn't really get a really fantastic set of D pipes until about 2008 when I got the set that I play now – which was made by Benedict Cole in Vermont. It is so reliable and it's been so good to me: it's just fantastic.

"But that's another very important aspect of piping. The quality of the instrument is a big factor."





Mark is in constant demand now to record pieces for a range of projects – not only albums but also soundtracks for television and film productions – and frequently at very short notice.

Often so much time elapses between the recording and the release of the finished product that it becomes difficult to keep track of them.

But one piece he played on – which he and we hear very frequently – is the theme tune for the RTÉ1 television programme, *Nationwide*, written by the US-based composer, Brian Byrne from Navan.

Perhaps even more widely heard is the RTÉ Radio 1 News jingle which features Mark on the whistle.

“When I used to meet people who asked me what I did and I explained, they often didn’t understand what I was talking about. So now I say: “You probably hear me many times every day and you don’t even realise it.

Tribute to Liam: (above) Mark with Rod McVey (left) and the West Ocean String Quartet who came together to record an excerpt from *The Brendan Voyage* for *Píobaire*, the TG4 documentary film on Liam O’Flynn.

Composer: (below) Brian Byrne



The Trio

One of Mark’s enduring collaborations both on record and in the follow-up concerts has been with the Dublin singer and musician, Daoirí Farrell.

Mark has appeared on both Daoirí’s recent albums – *A Lifetime of Happiness* (2019) and *The Wedding above in Glenree* (2023). He also performs as a member of the Daoirí Farrell Trio along with award-winning bodhrán player, Robbie Walsh.

Reared on a childhood diet of Planxty, The Bothy Band and Moving Hearts – featuring renowned pipers, Liam O’Flynn, Paddy Keenan, Davy Spillane and Declan Master-son, Daoirí has always been captivated by the sound of the pipes.

In *FourWinds*, Daoirí played with piper, Tom Delaney, Caroline Keane on concertina and Robbie Walsh. Since embarking on his solo career,

Daoirí has collaborated at various times with pipers, Paddy Keenan and Blackie O’Connell. But Mark is now the featured piper in Daoirí’s touring and recording group.

“I love playing with Daoirí. Sometimes I don’t know how he even organises himself. In the morning before the concert, you ask: ‘What’s the set list then, Daoirí?’ ‘Sure, we’ll do this and we’ll do that.’

“Then you’re on stage and he suddenly goes off somewhere else. The other night he asked if the audience had any requests. So you end up playing something that was never planned and I have to check to see if I have brought the right whistle or whatever.

“Afterwards people say that was a great concert – but I’ve really no idea. I’m sitting there wondering what he is going to do next. He’s great craic – stone mad!

“Where possible the three of us try to play together. But, of course, Robbie or I might not always be available. We have great craic and we’ve played some great concerts over the years. We bounce off each other, I suppose.”

“Daoirí has a wonderful ability to make the songs he sings his own. Take *The Foggy Dew*, for example. Luke Kelly sang it and sometimes when Luke Kelly sings something, there is a sense that you dare not do it because Luke has delivered the definitive version. That song is particularly complicated and, of course, it has become very popular of late because of Sinead O’Connor’s recording. I heard a fantastic recording of it years ago by Lisa Lambe. They’re all great versions.

“So you’re wondering how much more can you get out of this song? And then Daoirí comes along with his version and you think how does he do it? He puts his own imprint on it and it’s brilliant.



“I played with him in 2013 at the Session with the Pipers at the Cobblestone in Dublin. It was my first time hearing *Van Diemen’s Land* – there are two different *Van Diemen’s Land* songs. Daoirí was singing the one he got from Jerry O’Reilly of the Góilín.

“Then when he won the BBC Folk Singer of the Year Award, I heard him sing it again. He had completely transformed the song – making it his own. It was nothing like what I heard when he learned it first. But the transformation was just brilliant.”

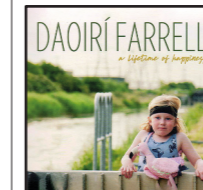
“Another song on the new album is one of my favourite tracks: *One Starry Night*. I was so fond of Seán Tyrrell’s version when he played it with Davy Spillane.

“Then I listened to Daoirí’s version. You can’t really compare the two of them because they’re so different. But they’re both so brilliant and all the better for that.”

Although Mark only plays on one piece on *The Wedding above in Glenree* – the open-

Trio: (above) The Daoirí Farrell Trio at the Cambridge Folk Festival in July (Photo: Celia Bartlett).

Trio: (right) The Daoirí Farrell Trio at Celtic Connections in Glasgow in 2022.



ing track, *Father Murphy* – the arrangement sounds just like something Planxty would have done.

“I know this might sound strange – but I’ve enjoyed listening to the album. Obviously there is a Wexford connection on two tracks

(*Father Murphy* and *Murphy’s Running Dog*). But also I don’t usually listen to recordings I make myself. We went into the studio in May of last year but I only heard the album for the first time after it was released.

“Until we recorded it, I’d never heard the song (*Father Murphy*) before – although I was aware that Frank Harte had recorded it. I play it with a C chanter. You don’t always get to use those other keys, like B, Bb, C and C# because 99% of pipe tunes are played on the D chanter. So to play the C is a rare treat.

“But, of course, there is also Daoirí’s great voice. You can’t train to have a voice like that: you either have it or you don’t. It’s great to play with him.

“I was delighted when the new album was released. He’d put so much work into it. I am pleased he is getting the recognition for it because some of those songs are not easy. He does a fantastic job on them. He’s put in a lot of work with Trevor Hutchinson. I particularly love the tracks where it’s just him singing a *capella*. I think it’s brilliant.”



Coming of age

According to the old adage, it takes 21 years to become a piper – 7 years to learn, 7 years to practice and 7 years to play. So by that reckoning, Mark only became a real piper last year. But clearly he has been a fully fledged piper for much longer.

“Yes I’ve been saying that to people since 2022: that I have finally have crossed the line!

“But I find that if you are obsessed with something, it’s not even that you have to deliberately push yourself or drive yourself, you just pursue it naturally. And I don’t mean to sound cocky, but I found that I got really good really quickly on the pipes. I could play a lot of tunes – quite difficult tunes – or so I thought – quite soon after starting.

“Of course, I didn’t have every tune in the book – and I still don’t have every tune in the book and never will – but in terms of the general repertoire that you would usually hear in sessions, I got on top of that really quickly. It wasn’t that I had set out with a specific aim that I had to be the best, it was just that I loved it so much and became obsessed with it that I found myself absorbed by the pipes.



Three on the road: Mark with Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh and Cormac de Barra on Music Network Ireland’s autumn tour in 2022.

Whistle while you work: (below left) Mark at the Cambridge Folk Festival in July (Photo: Celia Bartlett).

Inspirational: (below right) Afro-Celts piper Rónan Browne.



“If I heard a new tune somewhere – that took my attention – I would record it. Then I’d keep listening to it until I got it. In school, I’d hold the pen like a chanter and play tunes in my head all day.

“When I got home from school, I couldn’t wait to mess around with the pipes. I used to put on recordings of the likes of Liam O’Flynn, Davy Spillane and Rónan Browne and particularly pipers who were playing in other genres, like Rónan with the Afro Celt Sound System and Liam with the orchestras. I’d sit with the earphones in half trying to play along with them and just enjoy them.

“I also think the timing of a player taking up the pipes is also crucial. When I began to get into the pipes seriously, I was 12. People often say to me: ‘You were late starting.’ But then the counter argument goes: ‘You weren’t too late because with the pipes your hands have to be big enough to handle the chanter.’

“I know of pipers who began when they were too young and they get pains in their fingers.

“But I think I couldn’t have started at a more perfect time because I was aware enough of how to go about it and to be self-disciplined, for want of a better description, to commit to it. I also had the time to practice.

“If I were to start an instrument today, that would never be the case. This is something that Tommy Kearney used to talk about. It’s an age thing – you need to get it at the right age and when you’ve got time to give to it. In all fairness, you have plenty of time when you’re in your school years.

“But I haven’t a second to spare these days. I can’t even practice stuff that’s coming up at the end of the week yet. But I was really into it from a relatively young age.

“I also think ironically the fact that I had such a bad starter set made a positive difference. It was so bad I can’t really explain how bad it was. Everything that could possibly be wrong was wrong. But I learned an awful lot because I kept having to try and maintain it for myself: if something wasn’t working, it would’ve meant another spin to visit a piper a couple of hours away.

“When you had such a bad set and you were listening to such great pipers with great sounding sets, it would make you even more determined to get towards that sound.

“So because it was such a bad set, I learned so much. Now I’m able to maintain a good set quite easily. It’s like if you learn to drive an absolute banger, when you eventually get a good car, you really appreciate it and you’re able to deal with it.”



In the shadow of Kennedy: (left) Mark Redmond plays at the William Kennedy Piping Festival, organised by the Armagh Pipers’ Club, in 2019 (Photo: Fonn)

Pipe dream: (below left) Jerry Douglas has inspired Mark’s desire to develop a new pipes-dobro duet project.

Into the future

While Redmond has a very full schedule – between performing in various genres, recording, research and teaching, not to mention his family life – he also entertains a number of outstanding ambitions as a piper.

“Some people may be upset – but I believe that the pipes shouldn’t be restricted. Of course I love traditional music. But my PhD research backs up my belief that if something can be done in music, then why not try it?”

“I’d like to think I’ve ticked many boxes. For example, at the end of April, I was in Hong



Kong to play with a local musician who plays an instrument called the *pipa* – no wind or reeds involved: it’s a plucked string instrument. That was a really interesting collaboration and I would be open to similar projects with other musicians.

“For example, I would like to build on the idea of a pipes and dobro collaboration. I love the dobro and bluegrass music generally.

“The dobro player, Jerry Douglas – who guests on Daoirí’s latest album – played with Davy Spillane on Davy’s 1988 album, *Atlantic Bridge*. So the pipes-dobro duo has been done: we’ll never hear it for the first time again.

“But it could be built on because it’s a combination that works well: pipes and dobro. It would be absolutely brilliant. I would love to do that at some stage.”

“Another area I’d like to explore is a variation on the idea of the piping quartet – with perhaps two or three pipers, backed by an ensemble. I’ve spoken about this to a lot of pipers and composers. What about original compositions

or existing pieces arranged for a pipe duo, trio or even a quartet? I might even do it myself if no one else does it.

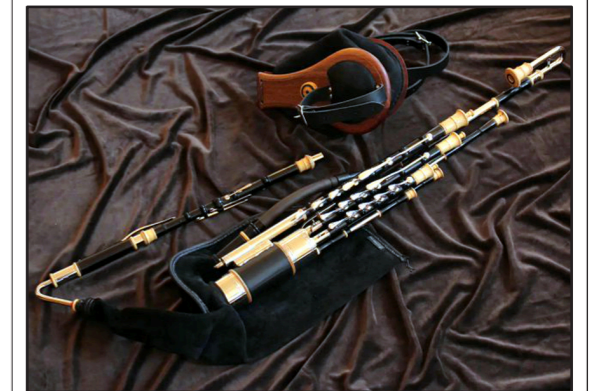
“So, for example, I could be playing a B set, the piper beside me playing a C set, the piper beside him or her playing a C# set and so on – a range of different sets and we’re playing different parts of the arrangement together.

“So I might finish on a note and the next piper would go down that bit further. Just imagine how that would sound – maybe one or two pipers with different chanter at different points: sometimes they’re in harmony with each other and other times they’re playing a single melody line.

“Then just imagine the range when you think of what just one set of pipes can do, we could have *The Brendan Voyage* by three, for example. That’s something I’d love to do. I know there has been talk about it in the past. Neil Martin was considering something along those lines at one stage. But whether it happens or not is another thing. Still that would be a really exciting project.”

Given the range of his achievements to date, no one should doubt that with the remarkable technique, wonderful musicality and inspired creativity – literally at his fingertips – there seem to be no limits to what Mark Redmond can accomplish in the future.

The ‘new’ pipes: Mark Redmond’s C# set – hand-made by the acclaimed German pipemaker, Andreas Rogge – were acquired in 2022 with support from Music Network Ireland and the Arts Council.



New album from new line-up

Thing of the Earth: Réalta (Self-released)

Having announced a change in their line-up, earlier this year, Belfast-based band, Réalta, have been working on a new album, *Thing of the Earth* – due for release next month.

Although the band's usual concert repertoire consists largely of dance music interspersed occasionally with slow airs and songs, they have been joined in the studio for the new album by Myles McCormack – who previously added vocal heft to Beóga's last album – and by Cathy Jordan who takes the lead on *The Wind that Shakes the Barley* – which was pre-released in the summer as a single.

As Breton piper, Loïc Bléjean, has replaced Aaron O'Hagan on uilleann pipes and whistle, the band has kept its rather unusual dual piper line-up – emulating Moving Hearts' pair, Davy Spillane and Declan Masterson.

In Réalta his piping partner is founder member, Conor Lamb. The rest of the line-up features Deirdre Galway on guitar and vocals with two All-Ireland champions, Dermot



Réalta – seeing stars: Loïc Bléjean, Deirdre Galway, Conor Lamb, Dermot Moynagh and Dermot Mulholland

Mulholland on banjo, double bass, bouzouki and vocals, and Dermot Moynagh on bodhrán.

Reared on a staple diet of The Bothy Band, Planxty and other such classics, the band aims to capture the timeless aspects of the tradition and present it in its raw form – fresh and beautiful.

Following the very positive response to their second album, *Clear Skies*, expectations for the third studio album have been high.

Thing of the Earth features a wide range of musical styles, from traditional dance tunes to newly composed songs. They have taken their core sound of wind, strings, reeds and drum and developed it, adding breadth and depth to their music.

Thing of the Earth is available to pre-order on Bandcamp.

Track Listing:

1. Skidoo
2. The Wind that Shakes the Barley
3. Johnny D's / The Connaught Heifers / The Jolly Tinker / The Mill House
4. Mulroy Bay
5. The Kittycat Slip Jigs: Fluffy's Frolics / Frosty's Frolics
6. Thing of the Earth
7. The Red Rock
8. Up and About in the Morning / Scatter Island / The Slippery Dip
9. The Times They are A-Changin'
10. Ormond Sound / Jackson's / Lucy Campbell's

Réalta to tour new album with Myles McCormack

Myles McCormack will link up with Réalta for a series of gigs to support the release of their new album, *Thing of the Earth*.

The band are set to play Down Arts Centre in Downpatrick on October



Myles McCormack

27, the Old Church in Cushendun on October 28, The Black Box in Belfast on October 29; and at Trad Fest in Ennis on November 11.

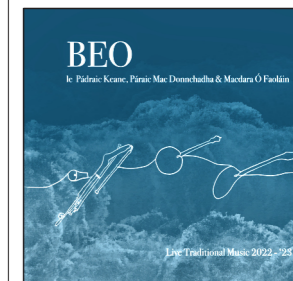
Réalta will also take the stage at the William Kennedy Piping Festival in Armagh City on November 18.

RECENT RELEASES



Tony starts on the right note

Clare fiddle maestro, Tony Linnane, has released his long awaited debut solo album, *Ceol na Fidle*, on Raelach Records. Fourteen exquisite tracks from the canon played with effortless grace with support from some of our leading traditional musicians – a debut well worth the wait!



Trio with brio

Recorded live between November 2022 and April 2023 at the Ennis Trad Fest, Tionól Nioclás Tóibín, The Crane Bar in Galway and Maureen's Pub in Cork, *Beo* is a collection of classic tunes from piper, Pádraic Keane, banjo player, Pádraic Mac Donnchadha and Maedara Ó Faoláin on bouzouki.

Track Listing:

1. High Way to Hermitage
2. Long for Light
3. Caelestis / Sheep in the Temple
4. Quilley Reel
5. Freedom Bird
6. Just Stop & Eat the Roses
7. Bone Music
8. Clogstravaganza
9. Gods of War
10. One Night In Moaña
11. Back to the Rede



Kathryn Tickell and the Darkening

Cloud pleasers!

Award-winning Northumbrian roots musician Kathryn Tickell has just released *Cloud Horizons*, her second album with The Darkening on Resilient Records.

Based in the shadow of Hadrian's Wall yet reaching out to the wider world, Kathryn Tickell and The Darkening explore the connecting threads of music, landscape and people over a period of almost 2000 years.

Songs range from themes of freedom, nature and venturing out into the world after times of darkness, to a Roman inscription with links to Libya and Syria magnetically pulled into the 21st century by Amen-inspired breakbeats, ominous vocals and the wildest of piping.



Described as 'Ancient Northumbrian Futurism', *Cloud Horizons* manages to draw inspiration from the area's ancient heritage [the wall commissioned by the ancient Roman emperor, Hadrian, an enduring presence on the landscape] within a creative framework open to experimentation with new sounds.

Cloud Horizons makes for exhilarating and rewarding listening.

Kathryn Tickell is the foremost exponent of the Northumbrian small pipes, a composer, performer and educator whose work is deeply rooted in the landscape and people of the North-East of England.

Named after the old Northumbrian word for twilight, The Darkening is made up of four North-East England-based members: Kathryn Tickell (Northumbrian smallpipes, fiddle, vocals), Amy Thatcher (accordion, synth, clogs,

vocals), Kieran Szifris (octave mandolin), Joe Truswell (drums, percussion, programming, plus Stef Conner from Cambridge (vocals, lyres, sistrum) and Josie Duncan from the Isle of Lewis (vocals, clarsach).

The album also includes Anahi Pena on Pandeireita, (Galician tambourine) Vieira shells and Zamburiña shells; and Mair Faltri providing Aturuxo (Galician war cries).

Together these dazzling musicians create musical magic; dynamic and unique 'Ancient Northumbrian Futurism.'

RECENT RELEASES



Muireann makes promising debut

Piper and singer, Muireann Ní Shé, from Cork combines traditional and contemporary influences on her debut album, *Éistigh Liomsa Sealad*, which includes a number of tasteful collaborations with performers like Aoife Blake, Macdara Ó Faoláin, Johnny McCarthy and Jake Kalilec.



Golden album

Clare pianist, Geraldine Cotter, offers a fine collection of new compositions, interpretations of classic traditional dance tunes and arrangements of archival material on reed organ and piano – recorded over a Covid-extended period from 2018 to 2023 – with Raelach Records.



Lankum (Photo: Eilius Grace)

Rita's health service

The Linnet of the Bluestacks, the incomparable Rita Gallagher, has released a collection of fourteen songs – which she has not previously recorded – under the title, *If My Health is Spared*.

The recordings are freely available on Rita's YouTube channel and on SoundCloud along with the song lyrics and notes on where she learned the songs.

The selection of songs includes a number of classics in the Ulster Song Tradition and includes nods to the three singers who have probably exerted the most influence on Rita's own development: Paddy Tunney, Dolores Keane and Packie Manus Byrne.

The fourteen tracks – recorded by Terry McGinty at Valley Music Studio in May and June – bear all the hallmarks of the style that has won Rita widespread acclaim in a decorated singing career – burnished with three All-Ireland titles in 1979, 1980 and 1982 and a Gradam Ceoil as Singer of the Year in 2017.

Rita's astounding breath control, allied to her remarkable tone and tasteful ornamentation, equip her take on the most challenging songs in the traditional canon with an almost effortless calm. Her assured engagement with the spirit and the sentiment of the lyrics completes the package for a singer performing at the peak of her powers.

Track Listing:

1. Anach Cuain
2. A Maid in her Father's Garden
3. The Banks of the Moy
4. Derry So Fair
5. The Shores of Lough Erne
6. Rocking the Cradle
7. My Bonnie Blue Eyed Lassie
8. Burns and Highland Mary
9. Siúil a Rún
10. Slieve Gallion Braes
11. The Quiet Land of Erin
12. Meet Me Tonight on the Shore
13. The Blantyre Explosion
14. The Green Fields of Canada



Fiachra's legacy from Connemara

Taking its name from the Twelve Bens All-Ireland champion piper, Fiachra O'Regan from Roundstone offers a well balanced collection of tunes straight from the piping canon on *Na Beanna Beola*, recorded in his current base in Quebec, where he plays in the trio, Grosse Isle, with fiddler, Sophie Lavoie, and André Marchand who provides guitar accompaniment on this album.



Flying sky high

Much loved Yorkshire folk duo, Belinda O'Hooey and Heidi Tidow, have released their first full studio album in seven years, *Cloudheads*, drawing inspiration from some recent developments in their personal lives – like becoming first-time parents with the birth of their son, and each embracing their diagnosis of autism. The duo's facility in connecting personal truths to universal themes makes this an exceptional album.

Auspicious debut for class duo

Fiddler Conor Arkins and concertina player Paul Clesham first began playing tunes together as music students in University College, Cork.

Those early musical engagements – which continued subsequently with many other musicians who called to their house in Cork – are reflected in the tracks featured on their debut album, *The Morning Thrush*.

Arkins from Clare and Clesham from Mayo boast impressive credentials – both as academics and as performers.

Conor, who has just been appointed director of the traditional Irish music course at Cork College of Further Education, is also conducting post-graduate research at UCC on the great Clare fiddler, Bobby Casey. A past winner of the Seán Ó Riada Memorial Prize, Conor is a member of the 2022 senior All-Ireland champion Taobh na Mara Céilí Band. He frequently collaborates with his sister, Eimear.

Paul is studying for a PhD in Ethnomusicology at UCC having been awarded an Excellence Scholarship for his doctoral studies.

Like Conor, Paul is a multi-instrumentalist – as well as concertina, he plays piano, melodeon accordion and fiddle. His catalogue of All-Ireland titles includes senior concertina and senior accompaniment in 2015. He is a founding member



Breadth and depth: Conor Arkins (left) and Paul Clesham

of the group, Officially Tapped, featuring step dancer, David Geaney.

Aside from their own undoubted pedigree, the two principals have also drawn on Ryan Molloy on piano and Jim Murray on guitars their debut album.

He is a founding member of the group, Officially Tapped, featuring step dancer, David Geaney.

The repertoire evident on *The Morning Thrush*, leans heavily on their respective musical heritages in Clare – drawing from figures like Bobby Casey, Junior Crehan Bobby Gardiner and Martin Hayes – and in North Connaught – influenced by Matt Molloy, John Carty, Charlie

Lennon, James Morrison and Oisín Mac Diarmada – along with their shared attachment to West and North Cork.

While most of the tracks on the album are sets of jigs and reels, the duo also give us a set of three military two-steps – which they attribute to the playing of Clare's Kilfenora Céilí Band.

This auspicious debut album is available through Bandcamp.

Track Listing:

1. The Shaskeen/Paddy Fahey's/Ashmolean (reels)
2. The Powdermills/Out in the Cold/Hardiman's Fancy (jigs)
3. The Newborn Lamb/Dick

4. The Humours of Lissadell/Mary McMahon of Ballinahinch/The Tailor's Thimble (reels)
5. Sweet Marie/Frank's Two-Step/An Phlásog Ghlas (military two-steps)
6. Lord Leitrim/Joe Bain's/The Morning Thrush (barndances/reel)
7. Mo Ghrá Thú/The Gander in the Pratie Hole/The Sunny Hills of Beara (jigs)
8. Callaghan's/Teachín an Ghleanna/'Twas Many a Wild Night (polkas)
9. The Porthole of the Kelp/Maghera Mountain/The Steeplechase (reels)
10. I Was Born for Sport/The Clare Shout/Tá'n Coileach ag Fógairt an Lae (jigs)
11. Caisleán an Óir/Her Lovely Hair was Flowing down her Back (hornpipes)
12. Fisherman's Island/Mandabawn Chapel/Callaghan's (reels)

RECENT RELEASES



California to Clare

Amelia Baker's experimental folk project, Cinderwell, draws on her California upbringing and her current life in Clare to inspire her new album, *Cadence*. With a broader sound palette – including electric guitar, percussion and fiddle (by Cormac MacDiarmada), the album offers signs of hope in the wake of pandemic-induced uncertainties.



So far so good

So Far We Have Come is the debut duo album from Tamsin Elliott (UK) and Tarek Elazhary (Egypt), who have recognised in each other a commonality in their relationship to music as well as engaging in a thrilling exploration of some intriguing connections between English and Arabic folk idioms.



Sarah Ghriallais

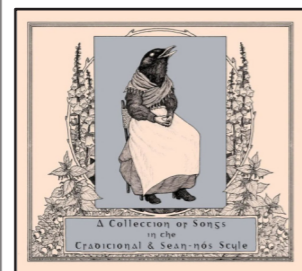
Songs that echo down the generations

A Collection of Songs in the Traditional and Sean-Nós Style: Various Artists, Nyaah Records

Inspired by the song collecting of Alan Lomax, this compilation brings together two generations of singers from all across the island of Ireland.



Ruth Clinton



Some of the songs have previously appeared on albums, but the rest were recorded by the singers, themselves, on their phones to give the song a real and raw effect that brings an immediacy and authentic feel to the songs – almost echoing the feeling of the singing sessions which proliferated on Zoom during the Covid pandemic.

Indeed a number of the singers on the album made regular appearances on these online sessions.

In compiling the song collection, Willie Stewart of Nyahh Records has noted that singing has taken

place in pubs and private homes all over the country since the thirteenth century and has been a way to share and keep the music alive, passing it down to younger generations.

For most of this period the transmission of these songs was aural: it was only relatively recently that the songs were written down both in musical notation and lyrics and later still recorded on tape or disc by the likes of Alan Lomax, Séamus Ennis, Peter Kennedy and Seán O'Boyle in the early 1950s.

The album boasts three winners of the TG4 Gradam Ceoil Singer of the Year: Rosie Stewart (2004), Thomas McCarthy (2019) and Sarah Ghriallais (2022) as well as the youngest ever singer to win the highly prestigious Corn Uí Ríada, (2014), Nell Ní Chróinín.

Contributors to the Nyaah collection also include winner of the RTÉ Radio 1 Folk Awards album of the year (2021), Eoghan Ó Ceannabháin, along with two members of the highly acclaimed *a capella* quartet, Landless: Méabh Meir and Ruth Clinton.

Track Listing:

1. Harvest of Clovers - *Conor O'Kane*
2. Ócam an Phríosúin - *Aoife Hammond*
3. Eileanóir na Rún - *Eoghan Ó Ceannabháin*
4. Róisín Dubh - *Michael Frank Ó Conthaola*
5. Queen among the Heather - *Méabh Meir*
6. Jug of Punch - *Rosie Stewart*
7. Lament of the Irish Mother - *Ruth Clinton*
8. When the Mummers Come Calling - *Fionnuala Maxwell*
9. Banks of Sullane - *Nell Ní Chróinín*
10. The Wicklow Mountains High - *Thomas McCarthy*
11. An Sceilpín Draighneach - *Sarah Ghriallais*

Eliza's trio converse to brilliant effect

Conversations We've Had Before: Eliza Carthy Trio.

The latest album from Eliza Carthy, *Conversations We've Had Before*, has been acclaimed by many as her best work in years.

Joined by two members of her previous ensembles, The Gift Band and the Wayward Band, Eliza has, herself, described the album as the culmination of almost thirty years of playing with Saul Rose leading to a desire to push themselves to engage with new material in new ways.

"The conversations... in the title reflect just how long it's taken for us to find the perfect balance and get this done, but we found it...and here it is," says Eliza.

Indeed, they have found the balance. From the dynamic rendition of the opening track – the rarely recorded *Knife in the Window* (collected from Harry Cox in 1953), the trio drive into Avington Pond – celebrating the "mud-plumpers" of the Hampshire village whose drinking and dancing suggests the exuberant morris tune, *Mrs Casey*.

The album continues with a stunning rendition of *The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green* – collated by Delarre from broadsides in the Bodleian library – with Carthy's voice soaring over



The Eliza Carthy Trio (from left): Saul Rose, Eliza Carthy, David Delarre (Photo: Thom Ashworth)

Roses's rich and fat-sounding melodeon and Delarre's exquisite guitar.

With its infectious syncopated rhythm, *Pecket's Black Mary/Love Lane* is the kind of instrumental that Sharon Shannon has made her own in recent years. Here the Carthy trio give us a tight energetic set guaranteed to trigger stomping feet and nodding heads.

The Spanish Lady's Love provides a perfect illustration of the range and versatility of Eliza's vocal instrument with her moving and poignant interpretation – followed by the tasteful playing of *Planxty Charles Cooté*.

The trio changes gear again for *Away My Brave Boys* where following a sedate musical entrance, the three voices combine into a suitably martial three-part harmony.

The Message – a John Donne poem set to music – is a dramatic, emotional and atmospheric lament in

Eliza's hands. It is followed by an intriguing set of tunes, *Sword Dance* and *Cheshire Rolling Hornpipe*.

Go From My Window Whitefriars Hornpipe, after which we are treated to a well-earned rest with *Golden Slumbers*.

The Bird in the Bush – the title track from the 1966 Topic album of Traditional Erotic Songs featuring – A.L. Lloyd, Anne Briggs and Frankie Armstrong – is given a highly imaginative treatment by the trio.

The album's finale, *The Light of Other Days* is, according to Carthy in the sleeve notes, "a broadside ballad I came across when making a radio programme for the BBC at Chatham's Library. I've never encountered writing or traditional music that deals with the issue of depression before, and this seems to express it perfectly."

Eliza delivers a powerful vocal performance – with

great emotional impact – to cap off a fine album.

And of course this begs the question as to why the album has not been supported by the record company, Topic, with a CD release. It appears that they do not have the resources to get behind it. So instead, it is available only as a digital download on Eliza Carthy's Bandcamp page. It deserves much wider exposure.

Track Listing:

1. Knife in the Window
2. Avington Pond/Mrs Casey
3. The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green
4. Pecket's Black Mary/Love Lane
5. The Spanish Lady's Love/Planxty Charles Cooté
6. Away My Brave Boys
7. The Message
8. Sword Dance/Cheshire Rolling Hornpipe
9. Go from My Window/Whitefriars Hornpipe
10. Golden Slumbers
11. Bird in the Bush
12. The Light of Other Days

RECENT RELEASES



Dynamic debut

Wexford band, Tuluva, has issued a striking calling card in the form of their debut album, *No Coming No Going*. With a line-up that includes All-Ireland champion instrumentalists, the band has produced a fine collection of original, traditional and newly-composed music and songs – with a joyful spirit of exploration that matches their musicianship.



Second to none

Garadice's long anticipated second album, *Sanctuary*, delivers in full measure. Eleanor Shanley's exquisitely controlled vocals are complemented by the excellent musicianship of uilleann piper, Padraig McGovern; multi-instrumentalist David Sheridan; and guitar/bass player, John McCartin.

Nuala inspired by Clare coast

Nuala Kennedy's fifth solo album, *Shorelines*, is by turns moving, thrilling and engaging.

Conceived as an imagined journey of a single female protagonist, the album also draws inspiration from the evocative coast of County Clare where Nuala now lives.

"Although there are poignant moments in the record," says Nuala, "I hope what I see as her redemptive sense of joy and resilience pervades!"

"The powerful physicality of the Clare shoreline helped me reimagine these songs for today – and so the sea is a constant presence throughout the album; cradling the songs and setting the scene from the opening lines."

Vocalist and flute player, Kennedy is joined on the album by award-winning fiddler, Tara Breen, from Clare and in-demand guitar player, Tony Byrne, from Dublin – who have both also toured with Nuala in recent months.

Other special guests on the album which was recorded at the Malbay



Nuala Kennedy

Studios in Clare. include another member of the Armagh musical dynasty Caoimhin Vallely on piano, Moira Smiley from the US on backing vocals, and Kerry's own Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh on lead vocals for *Cúcúin*. Tony and Grammy award winner Todd Sickafoose from Brooklyn plays bass on two tracks, also mixed the tracks at Earycanal and collaborated on the production with Kennedy.

This album opens with *Sally Sits Weeping/Blue Devils' Jig* – an exquisite rendition of one of the staples of the traditional canon, followed by a somewhat enigmatic dance tune.

Father Father is Nuala's tragic interpretation of the classic *Sweet William* (aka *Died for Love* and *A Sailor's life*).

Saltwater/Flow/Cúcúin evokes great tidal movements before the simple charm of a children's song about a cuckoo.

Kennedy's own tune, *Wake*, appears to have been inspired by a metaphysical sea journey – in which a voyage leads to an engagement with life's big questions.

The band changes gear with the energetic set, *Sea Reels (Downtown Troy/Haul Away Da Hauser/Distant Colours)* – two of which were composed by Kennedy.

Marguerite – previously recorded by Geraldine Hollett of the Newfoundland trio, *The Once* – tells the tragic blighted love story of Marguerite de La Rocque de Roberval and the Isle of Demons.

Whirlpools/The Lighthouse Polka provides us with a further illustration of the trio's musical mastery before another change of pace closes the album with Nuala's haunting solo vocal, *The Cavan Road*.

Track listing:

1. Sally Sits Weeping/Blue Devils' Jig
2. Father Father
3. Saltwater/Flow/Cúcúin
4. Ye Lover's All
5. Wake
6. Sea Reels (Downtown Troy/Haul Away Da Hauser/Distant Colours)
7. Marguerite
8. Whirlpools/The Lighthouse Polka
9. The Cavan Road

Celebrating a musical dynasty

A Family Tradition: Traditional Irish Music from the Kelly Family

In this wonderfully heartfelt musical tribute to the late John Kelly Snr of West Clare and Dublin, his sons – both acclaimed fiddle players – along with his grandchildren and their spouses play a fine collection of tunes associated with him.

Born in 1912 in the townland of Kilballyowen in Co. Clare, John was an exceptional fiddle and concertina player, a highly knowledgeable collector of traditional music, and a man of great humour.

Having been endowed with a remarkable musical heritage, John prized his inheritance and ensured that it would be handed on to succeeding generations – further polished and enhanced.

One of his grandfathers was Johnny Keane and John was told by his father that he was connected to Frank Keane, from whom George Petrie collected tunes in the early part of the nineteenth century. An uncle, Tom Keane, was pivotal in sparking John's interest in the concertina.

While John's fiddle playing has often been cited as typifying the West Clare style, he also had a strong family connection with the music of Kerry and West Limerick through his



Take a bow: The remarkable John Kelly

grandmother, Mary, born on Scattery Island in the River Shannon. She had a lot of tunes that were not common in Clare – many of which John learned.

Another woman who was influential in John's musical formation was the fiddle player Ellen Galvin, whose house in Moyasta hosted weekly music sessions.

But the fiddle player who probably exerted the most influential on the young Kelly was Patsy Geary – with whom John played at many local house dances before Patsy's death in 1936.

After moving to Dublin in 1945, Kelly was one of a small group of musicians

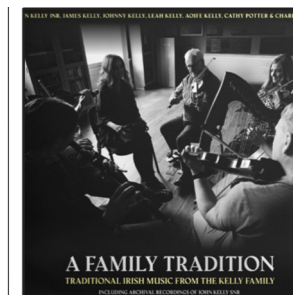
who kept traditional music alive in the capital in the face of widespread apathy and even antipathy.

John Kelly first met Seán Ó Riada in 1959 and they remained close friends throughout their lives. John was a member of Ó Riada's Ceoltoirí Chulainn – which was the hothouse that eventually blossomed into The Chieftains.

John became a member of the now almost legendary Castle Céilí Band, when it formed in 1963, with a line-up that also included Seán Keane and Joe Ryan (fiddles), Mick O'Connor and Michael Tubridy (flutes), Paddy O'Brien (button accordion),

Track listing:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Patsy Geary's/An Lá I Ndiaidh An Aonaigh | 8. Mary Brennan's/The Humours of Tullycrine/Mickey Callaghan's |
| 2. The Cabin Hunter/Delia Crowley's | 9. Porthole of the Kelp/Farewell To Ireland |
| 3. Shores of Lough Gowna/The Wheels of the World | 10. The Cliffs of Moher/Miller's Maggot |
| 4. Scattery Island/Siney Crotty's/John Kelly's | 11. The Old Concertina/Tom Keane's |
| 5. Raghadsa Is Mo Cheaiti/Ned Stapleton's | 12. Cailíní An Fhactory |
| 6. The Humours of Carrigaholt/The Traveller | 13. Brian O'Lynn/Delia Keane's/Mickey Callaghan's |
| 7. The Humours of Kilclougher/Elizabeth Kelly's Delight | 14. The Ebb Tide/John Kelly's |
| | 15. The Humours of Quilty/Andily's |
| | 16. Toss The Feathers/Maids Of Mitchelstown/Miss Johnston's |



Bridie Lafferty (piano) and Benny Carey (drums).

The Band won the All-Ireland Championship in Thurles in 1965 and were four times Oireachtas Champions.

John became a member of Eamon de Butléir's Ceoltoirí Laighean in the early 1970s along with his son, James, another young Dublin fiddler, Paddy Glackin and the whistle player, Mary Bergin.

John was also involved in the only known recording of the travelling piper Johnny Doran, for the Irish Folklore Commission. His trips to Donegal resulted in strong connections with fiddlers like John Doherty, Tunes collected from these trips were passed onto younger musicians, including Seán Keane and other members of the Castle.

Recorded in the atmospheric headquarters of Na Piobairí Uilleann in Dublin's Henrietta Street, the tunes selected for the album have been particular resonance for John Kelly senior – honouring family members or close friends or reflecting his own musical inheritance.

Along with his sons, John junior and James are John junior's children, Johnny and Leah on fiddle and Aoife on concertina along with Johnny's wife, Cathy Potter on harp and Aoife's husband, Charlie Le Brun, on flute.

Back to roots of Canada's French-speaking tradition

Art Populaire

The enduring musical partnership formed by Nicolas Boulerice and Olivier Demers began in 1996 while they were studying music at the Collège d'Enseignement General et Professionnel (CEGEP) in Quebec.

They released their first album, *Le vent du nord est toujours fret*, in 2001.

When the duo subsequently became a quartet, they took the opening words of the album title as the name for the band, *Le Vent du Nord*. Under that name they have achieved fame far beyond Quebec and Canada.

Despite the success of the four-piece, Boulerice and Demers have continued to produce occasional albums as a duo.

Their second duo record, *Un peu d'ci, un peu d'ça*, featured a series of tracks involving collaborations with solo artists which whom they would form a temporary trio: among them were mandolin player Michel Bordeleau, pianist Denis Fréchette and singer Jean-Claude Mirandette.

About ten years ago, while *Le Vent du Nord* were taking part at the Celtic Colours Festival, Demers

and Boulerice met Robert Deveaux during an "open mic" session. Deveaux from Cape Breton is a significant figure in the traditional music of Acadia – the former French territory in the Maritime Provinces of Eastern Canada, including New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, which in the past also included north-eastern Maine in the US.

Deveaux is a singer, a pianist, a fiddler and a collector, who is rooted in the culture and history of Acadia.

The three became firm friends and, over time, the idea of a special project began to take root between the three musicians. This finally came to fruition this summer with the release of the album, *Art Populaire*.

In this new album, the ancient repertoire of the French-speaking oral traditions of Acadia and Quebec are presented in a very stripped-down form: three voices, two violins and a hurdy-gurdy.

In short, the trio deploy the basic instrumentation of traditional music in North America before the arrival of pianos and accordions.

Ironically in pursuing a lean authentic aesthetic, the trio have produced a



Trio: (from left) Olivier Demers, Robert Deveaux et Nicolas Boulerice (Photo: Noémie Martineau).

remarkable album of poignant sincerity that also sounds surprisingly contemporary to modern ears.

"[French speakers] in Canada, like those throughout America, have a common history and culture. The people of this country have often been driven by the idea of resistance in order to preserve their language and their identity. Despite the great cultural proximity of these nations scattered across the continent, real moments of exchange for these Amerquois peoples are rare; here is one," notes Nicolas Boulerice.

The Acadians whose music is featured on the album include those who

were deported to Quebec or Louisiana or even sent back to France.

Through this project, Boulerice and Demers not only pay homage to the Acadians, but also to the efforts of Deveaux and his colleagues, to save this music and these songs from oblivion.

Track listing:

1. Venez jeunes gens
2. Au Canada, il y a des jolies filles
3. Charmante bergère
4. Je m'en fus à sa porte
5. C'était un beau galant
6. Rossignol du vert bocage
7. C'est sur le quai du havre
8. J'avais une méchante mère
9. Là-bas sur ces montagnes
10. Mon père a fait bâtir maison
11. Quand j'étais à l'âge de 15 ans



Battles of the bands

On The Night: Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann – Musicians and Senior Céilí Band Winners 1951–2021.

A new book tells the story of some of Ireland's greatest céilí bands. Written by Sligo native and well-known fiddle player, Philip Duffy, *On The Night* celebrates the hundreds of musicians behind the Senior Céilí Band Competition at the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann over a seventy year period from 1951 to 2021.

The book with two accompanying CDs (featuring 39 tracks covering All-Ireland winning céilí bands from 1953 to 2019) is available for €62



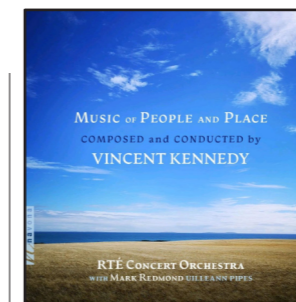
Labour of love: Philip Duffy including postage within Ireland from <https://onthenight.net/>.

COMING SOON

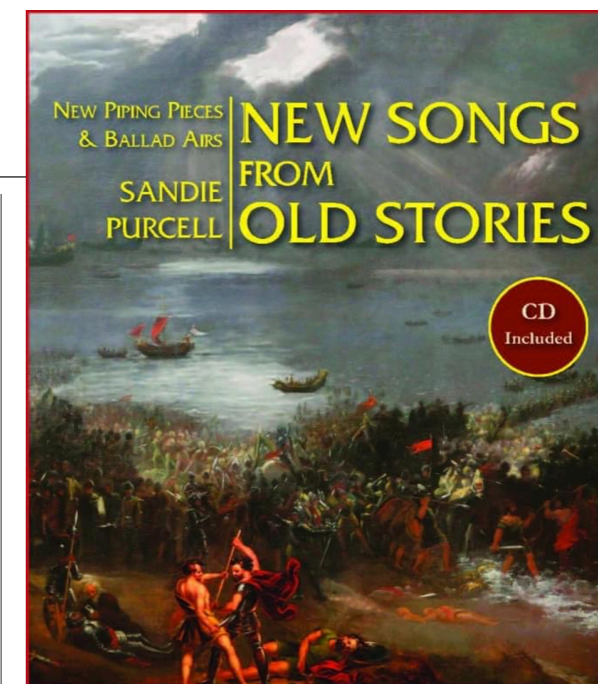
Music of people and place

Due for release before the end of this year is a new album, entitled *Music of People and Place*, consisting of 19 tracks conducted and recorded by composer, Vincent Kennedy, with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra earlier this year,

Uilleann piper, Mark Redmond, is the featured soloist on four of the tracks. A former player in the National Symphony



Orchestra, Vincent first came to prominence as a composer when he won the RTÉ music prize for his piece, *Soliloquy and March*.



New publication from CRAFT RECORDINGS

New Songs from Old Stories

featuring new compositions in the styles of Irish traditional music by Sandie Purcell:

- two new piping 'pieces', 'The Battle of Clontarf' and 'The Open Road' in the tradition of 'The Fox Chase' and 'Mairseáil Alasdrúim'
- fourteen new ballad airs to turn poems by Irish writers into songs, including

'Constant Dropping Wears the Stone'

Little pens, if tipped with fire cause the revolution's shock
Little blows that never tire fell the oak and blast the rock.
Littles steps ascend the mountain, little wings long leagues have flown.
Little drops fill up the fountain. Constant dropping wears the stone.

CD included

The piping pieces played by Mark Redmond.
The songs sung by Antaine Ó Faracháin, Helen Diamond, Mick Keeley, Pádraig Ó Nualláin, Chantal de Barra, Éamonn Hunt, and Maedara Yeates.

Available from CRAFT.DUBLIN@GMAIL.COM
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CRAFT RECORDINGS is a not-for-profit publisher dedicated to the publication of traditional Irish music, song, and dance. Support for this collection will provide the finance for future publications.



Moving Hearts: (from left) Dónal Lunny, Graham Henderson, Davy Spillane (seated), Liam Bradley, Noel Eccles, Keith Donald (seated), Anthony Drennan and Eoghan O'Neill.

Hearts' delight

Moving Hearts will reunite for a pre-Christmas gig at Dublin's 3Olympia Theatre on Sunday December 10 – to be followed by concerts at the University of Limerick, the National Opera House in Wexford and Galway's Leisureland in February.

Following two sold-out shows with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra at the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre earlier this year, the band returns to the familiar surroundings of the Olympia for a sensational night of music.

Although each member of the band has moved on into a variety of other projects since the Hearts were in their touring pomp in the 1980s, their periodic reunions have always proved to be joyful events for the band members and their audiences.

Of necessity these occasional get-togethers lean heavily on the band's back catalogue. But no one can complain when the set list includes tracks from the Hearts' acclaimed ground-breaking instrumental album, *The Storm*, along with popular favourites like *Before The Deluge*, *No Time for Love*, *Hiroshima Nagasaki Russian Roulette* and *Irish Ways and Irish Laws*.

The band's line-up for the concerts will feature Dónal Lunny (*bouzouki*), Davy Spillane (*pipes and low whistles*), Keith Donald (*saxophone and bass clarinet*) Eoghan O'Neill (*bass guitar*), Noel Eccles (*percussion*), Anto Drennan (*guitars*), Graham Henderson (*keyboards*) and

Liam Bradley (*drums*).

At least one special guest is expected to join the band for a few songs and/or tunes on the night.

For tickets for the show, check out <https://www.ticketmaster.ie/moving-hearts-tickets/artist/2107412>

Lankum cancel gigs abroad over health concerns

Lankum have announced that they have been forced to cancel upcoming dates in Denmark and the United States in order to "preserve the health and well-being of our band members."

In each case, the cancelled gigs would have marked the Dublin band's first return since the Covid outbreak

Conceding that the announcement would be bitterly disappointing for their fans – especially since most of the dates had already sold out – the band pointed out that the decision had been taken as a last resort.



The Cavan Man: Martin Donohoe

Nyah crosses the Shannon

Cavan-based button accordionist and broadcaster, Martin Donohoe, will cross the Shannon on October 19 to bring a taste of Cavan to the Roscommon Arts Centre in the Reel Thing session. He will be joined by fellow-accordionist, Fergus Bogue from Ballinagh, who plays with the All-Ireland Céilí Band champions, Cnoc na Gaoithe from East Clare.

The session will also feature multiple All-Ireland singing champion, Aileen O'Connor from Knockcroghery, and her daughter, Gemma Casey, All-Ireland Scór na nÓg solo singing champion – as well as Hannah, Charlie, Bernie and Emily O'Reilly. All-Ireland and Ulster singing champions from Mullahoran, Co. Cavan. The complement of musicians will be filled by Philip Clarke on keyboards and Fintan McManus on guitar.

Another Cavan native and former Ulster champion, Eamon Maguire, will regale

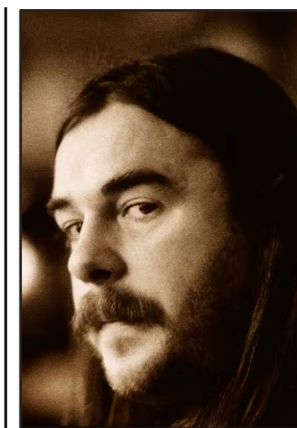
the audience with some stories.

Martin Donohoe is the driving force behind NYAH Cavan – which promotes traditional music, song and dance in the border county. Martin also

hosts *The Wind That Blows* show every Saturday night on the local Shannonside Northern Sound radio station.

As a performer, Martin has played around Ireland and internationally at the Catskills Festival (USA), Return to Camden Festival (London), Shetland Festival (Scotland) and the Tocane Summer School (France).

Tickets for the session – each costing €15 are available from <https://roscommonartscentre.ticketsolve.com/ticketbooth/shows/1173646411>



Touring: John Francis Flynn (Photo: Steve Gullick)

John Francis Flynn to tour new album

Award winning singer and multi-instrumentalist John Francis Flynn begins a tour of Ireland and Britain in December in support of his new album *Look Over The Wall, See The Sky*, which is to be released by River Lea on November 10.

A founding member of the band, Skipper's Alley, John had an auspicious start to his career as a solo performer when his debut album, *I Would Not Live Always*, was named as *MOJO* magazine's Folk Album of The Year and he won both Best Singer and Best Emerging Artist at the RTE Radio 1 Folk Awards in 2021.

The tour – beginning in December – will include dates in Cork, Clonakilty, Galway, Kilkenny and Limerick as well as Dublin's Vicar Street venue with Belfast following in January (see page 78) for details.



Hatbox: Emma Corbett

First tranche of artists announced for Dublin Tradfest in January

Dublin Tradfest – which will run from January 24 to 28 – will again bring a prodigious line-up of traditional and folk musicians to the metropolis in the New Year.

As tickets for the event went on sale earlier this month, Tradfest organisers announced the first tranche of performers who include Altan, Grammy-winners Aoife O'Donovan and Janis Ian, pipers Carlos Nuñez and Paddy Keenan, Julie Fowlis and the Máirtín O'Connor Trio.

Recent TG4 Gradam winners, Angelina Carbery, Maurice Lennon and Edwina Guckian will also feature along with a diverse line-up that includes Airc Damhsa; Tara Breen, Pádraig Rynne & Jim Murray; Alison

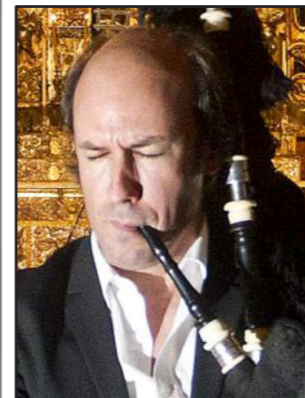
Brown; Cinder Well; Emma Corbett; Cuas; The Deadlians; Niamh Dunne; Niamh Farrell; Felispeaks; The Friel Sisters; Paul Frost Band; Dagogo Hart; David Howley; Tara Howley; Eileen Ivers; Pádraig Jack; Kíla; Lumiere; Ralph McTell; Oisín Morrison; Máiread



Multiple Grammy winner: Janis Ian

Ní Mhaonaigh; Brigid Mae Power; The Pride Céilí Band; The Raines; Aoife Scott; Strange Boy; Allannah Thornburgh; Steo Wall; Sharyn Ward; and Varo.

Further announcements are expected over the coming months.



Galician piping master: Carlos Nuñez

Once again the Tradfest programme will extend beyond its original city centre venues around Temple Bar to include locations like the Pepper Canister Church, Collins Barracks and the National Stadium. 2004 will also see the Abbey Theatre and the GPO Museum in O'Connell Street join the roster of atmospheric venues for the festival.

Apart from the major concerts, the festival will again include the Smithwicks Sessions offering intimate free ticketed gigs in some of Temple Bar's pubs.

Arts and craft workshops for children will also be provided at The Ark cultural centre.

Tickets for Tradfest are available from <https://tradfest.com/whats-on/>

Dublin Tradfest expands into Fingal

After the success of siting a small number of events in Fingal earlier this year, next January's edition of Dublin Tradfest will see a substantial expansion in the programme based in North County Dublin – especially in Swords and Malahide.

Among the many artists who are set to appear in the Fingal 'extension' are three TG4 Gradam Ceoil winners: Laoise Kelly (Musician of the Year 2020), Síle Denvir (Singer of the Year 2023) and Michelle Mulcahy (Group of the Year 2023).

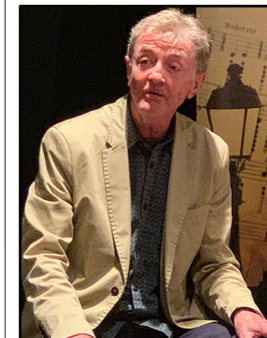
Award-winning fiddler Tara Breen will be doing double duty at Tradfest as a member of Stockton's Wing and as part of a newly formed trio with Nuala Kennedy and Tony Byrne.

Phelim Drew will also present *Remembering Ronnie*, the show based on the songs and stories of his late father as a member of the Dubliners and in his subsequent solo career.

Others slated to appear in Finglas include Zoë Conway and John McIntyre (*not McEntyre as appearing on some Tradfest publicity*); Gerry O'Connor; Brenda Castles; Liam Ó Maonlaí; Aisling Lyons; Brian Kennedy; Brid Harper; Niwel Tsumbu; Niamh Bury; and Cathy Jordan and Feargal Murray.

This latest development follows a number of initiatives by Fingal County Council in recent years to promote folk and traditional music events

It also ties in with the move to expand Dublin Tradfest beyond its original catchment area in Temple Bar.



Kevin Conneff



Niamh Dunne

Burke, Conneff and Dunne heading for Cobblestone

Na Píobairí Uilleann continues with its regular *Session with the Pipers* concert series in The Cobblestone in Smithfield, Dublin on the first Tuesday of the month.

The performances run from 9:30pm to 11:00 pm. Seating is not allocated and is available on a first come first served basis. Admission is €15 (concession: €10).

The Autumn season of sessions have been programmed with two family members in each line-up: the Ó Meachair brothers in October, the Diamonds (husband and wife) in November; and the Dunnes (father and daughter) in December.

The October session featured Éamonn Ó Meachair (*uilleann pipes*), Colm Ó Meachair (*flute*), Kevin Burke (*fiddle*) and Bláithín Mhic Cana (*song*).

The full line-up for November 7 features Conor McKeon (*uilleann*

pipes), Dermie Diamond (*fiddle*), Tara Diamond (*flute*) and Kevin Conneff (*song*).

The full line-up for December 5 features Mickey Dunne (*uilleann pipes*), Niamh Dunne (*fiddle*), Maureen Fahy (*fiddle*) and Patsy Broderick (*piano*).



DeMent aims to bend the arc towards justice

On her transcendent new record, *Workin' On A World*, Iris DeMent faces the modern world – as it is right now – with its climate catastrophe, pandemic illness, and epidemic of violence and social injustice – and not only asks us how we can keep working towards a better world, but implores us to love each other, despite our differences. Her songs are her way of healing our broken inner and outer spaces.

With an inimitable voice as John Prine described, “like you’ve heard, but not really,” and unforgettable melodies rooted in hymns, gospel, and old country music, she is one of America’s finest singer-songwriters as well as a fierce human rights advocate.

Her debut record, *Infamous Angel*, which just celebrated its thirtieth anniversary, was recently named one of the “greatest country albums of all time” by *Rolling Stone*, and the two albums that followed, *My Life* and *The Way I Should*, were both nominated for Grammy awards.

From there, DeMent released three records on her own label, Flariella Records, the most recent of which, *The Trackless Woods* (2015), was hailed by *The Guardian* as “a quietly powerful triumph.”

DeMent’s songs have also been featured in film and television and have been covered by numerous artists. Fittingly, she received the Americana Music Trailblazer Award in 2017.

Dublin-bound:
Iris DeMent (Photo:
Dasha Brown)



Workin' on a World, her seventh album, started with the worry that woke DeMent up after the 2016 elections in the US: how can we survive this?

“Every day,” she recalls, “some new trauma was being added to the old ones that kept repeating themselves, and like everybody else, I was just trying to bear up under it all.”

She returned to a truth she had known since childhood: music is medicine.

“My mom always had a way of finding the song that would prove equal to whatever situation we were facing. Throughout my life, songs have been lending me a hand. Writing songs, singing songs, putting them on records, has been a way for me to extend that hand to others.”

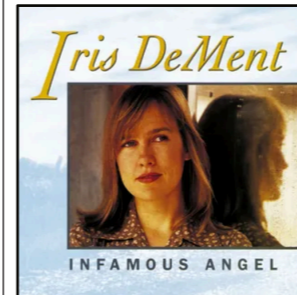
With grace, courage and soul, Iris shares thirteen anthems – love songs, really – to and for our broken inner

and outer worlds. DeMent sets the stage for the album with the title track in which she moves from a sense of despair towards a place of promise:

Now I'm workin' on a world
I may never see
Joinin' forces with the warriors
of love
Who came before and will follow
you and me.

She invokes various social justice activists – both past and present – to deliver messages of optimism. *How Long* references Martin Luther King, while *Warriors of Love* acknowledges John Lewis and Rachel Corrie. *Goin' Down To Sing in Texas* is an ode not only to gun control, but also to the brave people who speak out against tyranny and endure the consequences in an unjust world.

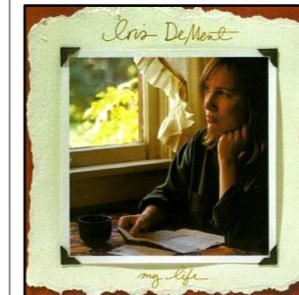
Iris DeMent will play Vicar Street in Dublin on October 28.



“I kept hearing a lot of talk about the arc of history that Dr. King so famously said bends towards justice,” she recalls.

“I was having my doubts. But, then it dawned on me, he never said the arc would magically bend itself. Songs, over the course of history, have proven to be pretty good arc benders.”

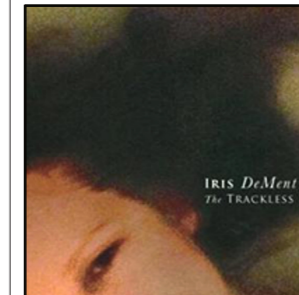
Underpinning her engagement with the political is an equally intense awareness of the personal: she grapples with loss on the deeply honest *I Won't Ask*



You Why, While Encouraging Compassion Over Hate in the awe-inspiring *Say A Good Word*.

The final track, *Waycross, Georgia*, encompasses the end of the journey, thanking those along the way. As she considers subjects like ageing, loss, suicide and service, an arc of compassion – elevated to something far beyond words – begins to emerge.

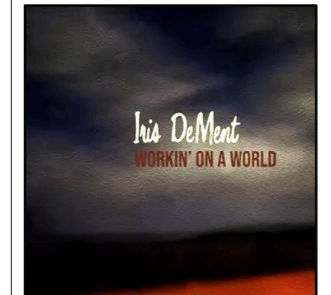
The riveting power of her voice – delicately fragile yet at the same determinedly fierce – has only grown over time.



Stalled partway through by the pandemic, the record took six years to make with the help of three friends and co-producers: Richard Bennett, Pieta Brown and Jim Rooney. Brown gave the record its final push.

“Pieta asked me what had come of the recordings I'd done with Jim and Richard in 2019 and 2020. I told her I'd pretty much given up on trying to make a record.

“She asked would I mind if she had a listen. So, I had everything we'd done sent



over to her, and not long after that I got a text, bouncing with exclamation marks: ‘You have a record and it's called *Workin' on a World!*’”

With Bennett joining them in the studio, Brown and DeMent recorded more songs and added the final touches in April, 2022.

The result is a hopeful album – shimmering with brilliant flashes of poignant humour and uplifting tenderness – that speaks the truth, “in the way that truth is always hopeful,” she explains.

Garry McMahon

Traditional Singing Weekend

October 13-15

ABBEYFEALE

Ramble Inn &
Fr. Casey's GAA Hall

WEST LIMERICK SINGING CLUB





Suedan: (from left) Angus Nicholson, Angus McKenzie, Fin Moore and Calum McCrimmon with Allan MacDonald (front) (Photo: Ryan MacDonald).



▲ Máire Ní Ghráda
▲ Méabh Smyth

William Kennedy: Piping up in Armagh

Famous for its astronomical observatory, Armagh will become the centre of the piping universe in November when the 29th edition of the annual William Kennedy Piping Festival begins.

Organised by the award-winning Armagh Pipers' Club (APC), the international festival runs from November 16 to 19 – with a stellar line-up of traditional musicians, including leading pipers from Ireland, Scotland, Northumbria and Europe – who will take part in concerts, sessions and workshops.

The festival features the return of Asturian star José Manuel Tejedor, who first appeared in Armagh in 2001. Other big names include the Northumbrian piper Andy May, Mná na bPíob (Máire Ní Ghráda, Mary Mitchell-Ingoldsby and Rosaleen O'Leary) and Dublin piper Mick O'Brien. Scotland is represented by the five-piece bagpipe-led band

Seudan, and by another quintet formed by Allan MacDonald and Finlay MacDonald – both of whom have featured in the changeable Seudan line-up – along with Ali Hutton, Iain MacFarlane and Marty Barry. The latter quintet goes by the evocative name “We’re a Case The Bunch Of Us”!

Tiarnán Ó Duinnchinn, who is one of the APC's uilleann piping tutors, appears in concert with Brendan Murphy, and joins the Club's senior tutor, pipemaker Éamonn Curran, on the panel of tutors for the two-day Mark Donnelly Piping Academy. O'Brien, Ní Ghráda, Mitchell-Ingoldsby and O'Leary also feature on the teaching panel, along with Cillian Vallely, Loïc Bléjean, Conor Lamb and Barry Kerr. The panel is completed by Gay McKeon, who was originally booked to appear in a festival concert with Seán Keane, the great Chieftains fiddler, who died on May 7.

With such a distinguished group of teachers, and a price tag of just £80, the Academy is likely to sell out quickly.

The imposing city-centre venue of First Armagh Presbyterian Church again hosts two festival concerts, including the schools concert which regularly attracts hundreds of children from a wide range of schools.

Other venues include the Armagh City Hotel, the APC premises in Scotch Street, and the city's cultúrlann, Aonach Mhacha, which will host a special screening of Myles O'Reilly's wonderfully realised documentary on ballad singer Liam Weldon, *Dark Horse on the Wind*.

Originally organised as a one-off event by Armagh Pipers Club in 1994, as part of a cross-community *Armagh Together* series of events, the festival was such a success that it was reprised in 1995, and then became a regular annual fixture.

A total of 26 festivals took place up to 2019, attracting a vast array of internationally renowned players and aficionados from all over the world. It is one of the longest-running festivals of its kind in the world of piping.

The festival had to take a break in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic, but returned in 2021 – on a smaller scale than in previous years to ensure public safety. The 2022 edition was considerably larger, with some 41 musicians taking part, and the 2023 Festival has the same number.

William Kennedy, after whom the festival is named, was a blind craftsman from Tandragee, near Armagh, who lived from 1768 to 1834. He made several important innovations in the design of uilleann pipes.

For further information check out wkpf.org, email: info@armaghpipers.com or info@wkpf.org or phone +44 (0)7712 809933.

Dublin Folk Festival is back

After a lengthy hiatus of over 45 years, the Dublin Folk Festival is to return over six nights from November 7 to November 12 in Dublin's Liberty Hall Theatre, under the guidance of promoters, Singular Artists, and programmer, Conor Byrne.

Leading artists – like the Daoirí Farrell Trio, Ralph McTell, Scullion, John Spillane, Byrne, Harper & Cooney and Gemma Hayes – will headline the festival's six evening shows, with support acts still to be announced.

Festival programmer, Conor Byrne – whose mother, Eilish Moore, was one of the organisers of the original Dublin Folk Festival in the 1970s – talks about his dream of re-establishing the festival:

“I have fond memories of the Dublin Folk Festival back in the 1970s, when I was a child. This was at a time when the folk scene in the city was buzzing in the various clubs and sessions around estab-

lishments such as Slattery's of Capel Street and the Meeting Place in Dorset Street.

“With the current revival of the folk scene in the city, there is an array of talent that needs to be heard. To me, it's a no-brainer that we should re-establish this festival and celebrate our music, our musicians and our singers. It's been a longtime personal dream, and I'm delighted that it's now going to be a reality.”



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DUBLIN FOLK FESTIVAL

LIBERTY HALL THEATRE
NOVEMBER 2023

Tues 7th Nov Byrne, Harper & Cooney	Fri 10th Nov Daoirí Farrell Trio
Wed 8th Nov Gemma Hayes	Sat 11th Nov SOLD OUT Ralph McTell
Thurs 9th Nov John Spillane	Sun 12th Nov Scullion

TICKETS ON SALE NOW

SINGULARARTISTS.IE



Above top: Scullion (from left): Philip King, Sonny Condell and Robbie Overson

Above middle: Trio (from left): Steve Cooney, Brid Harper and Dermot Byrne

Above bottom: Gemma Hayes

Two plus one: Cormac Begley (centre) with Brian and Diarmuid Mac Gloinn (aka: Ye Vagabonds) (Photo: Clare Keogh)



Begley, Vagabonds for *Tradition Now*

The latest instalment of the *Tradition Now* series at the National Concert Hall in Dublin takes place on October 7 and 8 – headlined by award-winning duo, Ye Vagabonds, and acclaimed concertina player, Cormac Begley.

The two-day event will also see performances from this year's somewhat controversial recipient of the Liam O'Flynn award, the rapper Strange Boy; from singer and fiddle player Doireann Ní Ghlacáin; from legendary singer and flute player Cathal McConnell; Scottish smallpipes virtuoso Brìghde Chaimbeul and many more.

The *Tradition Now* series, which is now firmly established in the folk calendar, aims to celebrate invention and evolution in traditional music, while staying true to its roots.

Saturday headliners, Ye Vagabonds, are still basking in the glow of the widespread praise for their latest album, *Nine Waves*, which won Best Album at the 2022 RTÉ Radio 1 Folk Awards.

The record follows on from their first two recordings, *Ye Vagabonds* (2017) and *The Hare's Lament* (2019).

The Mac Gloinn brothers have garnered a number of accolades, including a BBC Radio 2 Folk Award for Best Traditional Track as well as several RTÉ Radio 1 Folk Awards including Best Group.

On the Sunday night revered concertina player Cormac Begley makes his first head-line performance in the National Concert Hall. Cormac's career has gone from strength to strength over the past year, winning Best Folk Instrumentalist at the 2022 RTÉ Radio 1 Folk Awards and receiving positive reviews for his second solo album, *B*, focussing on the bass concertina. His music is also central to Michael Keegan Dolan's award-winning dance show, *Mám*, and to Pat Collin's film, *The Dance*.

Limerick poet/rapper Strange Boy performs at the NCH for the first time since receiving the 2023 Liam O'Flynn Award. His unique method of combining hip hop and Irish traditional

music with hard-hitting lyrics was exemplified in his debut album *Holy/Unholy*. He will present new work developed as part of his residency at NCH supported by the Liam O'Flynn Award.

Accomplished fiddler, sean nós singer, academic and broadcaster, Doireann Ní Ghlacáin, presents her new multimedia project, *Say a Song*, combining the worlds of music, literature and technology to breathe new life into the sean nós tradition, with the help of leading Irish writers and visual artists.

Fermanagh's legendary singer and flute player Cathal McConnell will be joined by singer and flute player, Nuala Kennedy, Clare fiddle maestro Tara Breen and Dublin guitarist Tony Byrne, to discuss and perform some of his uniquely creative 'variations' on traditional tunes and talk about his life in music.

Hack-Poets Guild is a brand-new collaboration between three of British folk's most unique and prestigious voices; Marry Waterson, Lisa Knapp and Nathaniel Mann, whose new

album, *Blackletter Garland*, includes twelve fascinating interpretations and original compositions.

Elsewhere on the bill, Irish tenor banjo player Damien O'Kane reunites with American bluegrass banjo player, Ron Block, while Scottish smallpipes player Brìghde Chaimbeul returns in the wake of the release of her sublime second album, *Carry Them With Us*.

The full line-ups for the *Tradition Now* weekend are:

- Saturday October 7:**
- Ye Vagabonds
 - Strange Boy
 - Damien O'Kane & Ron Block
 - Cathal McConnell's Variations with Nuala Kennedy, Tara Breen and Tony Byrne
 - The John Field Room Session

- Sunday October 8:**
- Cormac Begley
 - Doireann Ní Ghlacáin
 - Hack-Poets Guild
 - Brìghde Chaimbeul
 - The John Field Room Session



Mel Mercier (front right) and the Irish Gamelan Orchestra

'Melebration!' Mercier's legacy to be honoured in Cork

Mel Mercier will lead the Irish Gamelan Orchestra (IGO) and special guests at Cork's Everyman Theatre in October in a performance of *Guiding Bells* – in an event to celebrate his contribution to artistic life and education in Cork and Ireland.

Performing music from their unique repertoire of new music, song and dance, as well as new arrangements of songs by Schubert and Purcell, Mercier and the IGO are joined by guests including Iarla Ó Lionáird, Colin Dunne, Kate Ellis, Tara Breen, Claire Egan, Kathleen Turner, Nick Roth, Óscar Mascareñas and West Cork Ukulele Orchestra.

Composer, percussionist and Professor of Performing Arts at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance in the University of Limerick,

Mel was first introduced to music by his father, Peadar Mercier, the original

bodhrán player with the Chieftains, who taught him to play the Irish traditional percussion instruments.

As one of the leading traditional percussionists he has played and recorded with many of the leading artists in the genre including Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, Iarla Ó Lionáird, Dónal Lunny, Martin Hayes, Liam Ó Maonlaí, Alan Stivell, Pallé Mikkleborg, Caitriona O'Leary and Bill Whelan. Throughout the 1980s he performed in Europe and the US with John Cage and the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in *Roaratorio*, *Inlets* and *Duets*.

As a composer Mel has mainly worked on creating music and soundtracks for theatrical performances.

His work in this field has garnered numerous awards including the *Irish Times* Theatre Award for Best Soundscape for the Corca-dorca production of Caryl Churchill's *Far Away* (2017); the TG4 Gradam Cheoil for Collaboration for his con-

tribution to Colin Dunne's dance show *Concert* (2018); the New York Festival Bronze Medal Award for his RTÉ radio documentary, *Peadar Mercier* (2017); the New York Drama Desk Award and a Tony Award nomination for his sound score for Colm Tóibín's *Testament of Mary* (2012) among others.

In parallel with his career as a performer and composer, Mel has also enjoyed a very substantial academic life. After completing a BMus at UCC in 1989 and a Master of Fine Arts in World Music at the California Institute of the Arts, Los Angeles, in 1991, he was awarded a PhD from the University of Limerick in 2011.

Joining Súilleabháin on the staff of the newly established Irish World Academy of Music and Dance in Limerick, Mel developed a reputation for academic leadership and scholarship which led eventually to his appoint-

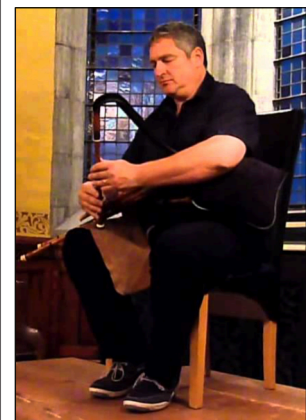
ment as Professor of Performing Arts at the Irish World Academy.

He has over twenty-five years' experience of teaching and mentoring at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as well as directing a variety of academic projects, festivals and community outreach initiatives.

The Irish Gamelan Orchestra (IGO) (formerly Cork Gamelan Ensemble) was established in 2013 with the aim of developing a collaborative approach to the composition and performance of new music for gamelan.

Born out of twenty years of music-making in the Seomra Gamelan (Gamelan Room) at the Department of Music, University College Cork, the IGO performs a repertoire of original music, which is co-created with a variety of artists across a wide range of genres.

Guiding Bells Everyman Theatre October 6



Piper: Ronan Browne

Chats and tunes in the Naul

Master piper, Ronan Browne, will host an illustrated conversation with a different musical guest each month as they exchange chat and tunes in the relaxed atmosphere of the Séamus Ennis Arts Centre (SEAC) in the Naul, North County Dublin.

As well as entertaining anecdotes and some quality playing, these special evenings should also offer intriguing insights into Ronan's guests and more especially into their formation as artists and the importance of music in their lives.

The first in the series of monthly engagements took place on Culture Night (September 22) with piper Jimmy O'Brien Moran as Ronan's guest. Details about further guests and dates will be posted on the SEAC website: <https://www.tseac.ie/> events



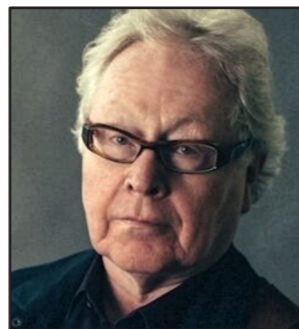
In praise of Peoples: Tommy Peoples (main picture), Matt Molloy (top right), Triona Ní Dhomhnaill (middle right) and Paddy Keenan (bottom right).

Honouring Peoples' legacy

Many of Ireland's leading traditional musicians, singers and dancers will honour the legacy of the late Donegal fiddle master, Tommy Peoples, in a unique event in Dublin's National Concert Hall, organised by the Irish Traditional Music Archive as part of its acclaimed *Drawing from the Well* series.

The concert on October 28 will include original Bothy Band members Matt Molloy, Paddy Keenan, Triona Ní Dhomhnaill, Paddy Glackin and Dónal Lunny, as well as Paul Brady (right) and Tommy's daughter Siobhán.

The line-up will also feature several other distinguished performers who drew inspiration from Tommy including the great Donegal fiddler Brid Harper, singer Mairhéad Ní Dhomhnaill, young emerging talented fiddle players Megan Nic Fhionnghaile, Sínead McKenna and Nia Byrne, and uilleann piper Seán Potts, who recorded the celebrated *Waiting for*



a Call album with Tommy. The concert will also include contributions from sean-nós dancer Seosamh Ó Neachtain, and poet and writer, Theo Dorgan. "Tommy Peoples holds a very special place in Irish traditional music,"

commented ITMA Director Liam O'Connor. "An outstanding fiddle player and composer, his unique style and sensitive artistry inspired generations of musicians."

"We are honoured to be able to celebrate Tommy's legacy in association with our partners in the National Concert Hall," Liam added, "not only by assembling wonderful musicians, singers and dancers connected with Tommy but also by launching our new online resource which will give the public unfettered access to an incredible collection of Tommy's recordings and associated material."

Unthanks take on eight-date Irish tour



The Unthanks have been described as "a take on tradition that flips so effortlessly between jazz, classical, ambient and post-rock, it makes any attempt to put a label on them a waste of time."

Formed in 2004 originally as Rachel Unthank and The Winterset, the band from Tyne and Wear, released two albums before changing their line-up and name. The current line-up features Rachel Unthank (vocals, cello, kalimba, feet), Becky Unthank (vocals, autoharp, feet), Niopha Keegan (violin, vocals), Adrian McNally (piano, vocals) and Chris Price (guitar, bass, vocals).

Their prolific output includes the studio albums *Here's The Tender Coming* (2009), *Last* (2011), *Mount The Air* (2015) and *Lines* (2019) and their fifteenth and most recent *Sorrows Away* (2022) – described as "a masterpiece of nuanced drama" in *Uncut* magazine's listing of the albums of the year.

Using the traditional song repertoire of the North East of England as a starting point, the influence of Miles Davis, Steve Reich, Sufjan Stevens, Robert Wyatt, Antony and The Johnsons, King Crimson and Tom Waits makes The Unthanks a unique band – earning them a Mercury

Music Prize nomination and widespread international acclaim.

In the eight years since the acclaimed *Mount The Air* album, The Unthanks have scaled up to self-composed projects with The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Charles Hazelwood's Army of Generals, and right down to their roots again for the unaccompanied live record, *Diversions Vol 5*.

They have created song cycles from Emily Bronte's poetry on her original piano, created site-specific theatre

with Maxine Peake, paid an entire album and 8 track EP's worth of devotion to Molly Drake, and created the light and the dark in soundtracks for six hours' worth of Mackenzie Crook's BBC adaptation of the *Worzel Gummidge* books.

At the nucleus of a constantly evolving unit is the traditional upbringing of Tyneside sisters, Rachel and Becky Unthank, and the arrangements and writing of composer, pianist, producer and Rachel's husband, Adrian McNally, from Yorkshire.



Unthanks very much: (from left) Becky, Rachel and Adrian McNally.

The Unthanks Tour Itinerary

Thursday October 5
Watergate Theatre,
Kilkenny

Friday October 6
Solstice Arts Centre,
Navan, Co. Meath

Saturday October 7
An Grianan Arts Centre
Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Sunday October 8
Town Hall Theatre,
Westport, Co. Mayo

Monday October 9
Liberty Hall Theatre
Dublin 1

Wednesday October 11
Hawks Well Theatre
Sligo

Thursday October 12
Live at St. Luke's,
Summerhill North, Cork

Friday October 13
Theatre Royal,
Waterford

PATRICK O'KEEFFE

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 CONNOLLY • DEREK HICKEY • COLM GANNON • JESSE SMYTH • LIAM O'BRIEN • CAOIMHÍN
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 PALANDRI • DONAL MURPHY • ANGELINA CARBERRY • NIALL HANNA • SEÁN GAVIN • MARTIN
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 MURRAY • NATHAN GOURLEY • MEGAN MCGINLEY • NIA' BYRNE • CATHAL Ó'CURRÁIN • DIARMUID O'MEACHAIR
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 Ó'DUBHGHAILL • PADDY TUTTY • NICKY MCAULIFFE • ANNE MCAULIFFE • GRETA CURTIN • JOHN WYNNE
 JOHN MCEVOY • MICKEY MACCONNELL • TIM DENNEHY • DONIE NOLAN • GAY MCKEOWN • MARY CORCORAN
 AIDAN COFFEY • JOHN BROSAN • PADRAIG O'SÉ • JEREMY SPENCER • DAIRE BRACKEN • PAUL DE GRAE
 JOHN MCCANN • SINEAD MCKENNA • DAN GURNEY • GEORGE MCADAM • COLM MCCOIGLE • KEELAN MCGRATH • ADEMAR O'CONNOR • ALAN FINN • BRIAN O'LOUGHLIN
 MIKIE O'GORMAN • GER NAUGHTON • SARAH O'GORMAN • DAN BROUDER • DYLAN CARLOS • CÉIN SWEENEY • JOHN MCCAIRTIN • STEPHEN MCKEE • TADHG MULLIGAN • LILY
 O'CONNOR • JOSEPH MANNION • CAOILTE MORRISON • TIMMY O'FLAHERTY • JOE O'SULLIVAN • LIAM FLANAGAN • TOMMASO TORNIELLI • PETER MCKENNA • SIÚN GLACKIN
 PÁDRAIG ÓG MAC AODHAGÁIN • RUTH MCCROHAN • JESSIE HEALY • SEÁN O'MEARA • EMMA O'LEARY • MARIE O'GORMAN • KATE O'GORMAN • CONOR DALY • GEAROID CURTIN
 DARRAGH CURTIN • DARRAGH HORAN • GEAROID KEATING • MAIREAD CORRIDAN • EIBHLÍS MURPHY • JONATHAN ROCHE • SEÁN LEAHY • GERRY HARRINGTON • EOGHAN
 O'SULLIVAN • PETER BROWNE • FERGUS MCGORMAN • RUAIRI MCGORMAN • MACDARA Ó'FAOLÁIN • IARLAITH MCGOWAN • CONOR MORIARTY • DEIRDRE O'BRIEN • TIMMY
 CONNORS • JOHN WALSH • RAYMOND O'SULLIVAN • PAT FLEMING • MARIE COTTER • CON MOYNIHAN • DENIS O'CONNOR • MICK CULLOTY • PJ TEEHAN • MIKERICE • MIKE BROSAN
 MARY CROWLEY • MICHELLE O'SULLIVAN • SEÁN KELLIHER • REBECCA MCCARTHY KENT • MIKE KELLIHER • SEAMUS SANDS • CATHAL FLOOD • ROISÍN O'CONNOR • KIRILL HEALY
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 CLANCY • TOM CONNELL • NIALL O'CONNOR • GARY O'BRIEN • GEAROID DIN EEN • SEÁN ABEYTA • MIKIE 'THE LEGEND' O'CONNOR • JOE WALSH • EGIN BEGLEY • COLM GUILFOYLE

MANY MORE NAMES TO BE ADDED

For continuous updates stay tuned to www.patrickokeeffefestival.com
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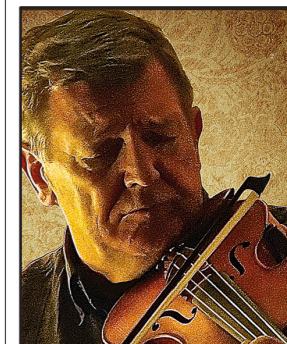








Castleisland-bound: (above) Altan; (top right) Tara Breen; and Kevin Burke (above right).



Honouring Patrick O'Keeffe's legend

Castleisland in County Kerry will become the fiddle capital of Ireland from October 26 to October 30 when the thirty-first annual Patrick O'Keeffe Music Festival takes over the town.

Held in honour of the legendary fiddler and teacher, Patrick O'Keeffe (1887-1963), the festival celebrates the rich heritage of traditional music and the significant role that O'Keeffe played in its preservation.

The festival came into being just as the autumn of 1993 approached, when RTÉ broadcaster and uilleann piper, Peter Browne, suggested that an event of some kind should be held to mark the thirtieth anniversary of O'Keeffe's death.

Mary Jones, who ran Charlie Horan's Bar in

Castleisland, took up the baton. The first edition of the inaugural Patrick O'Keeffe Traditional Music Festival took place in October 1993 – and has continued annually ever since.

With his access to the RTÉ sound library, Peter Browne discovered that, even though O'Keeffe had been in his prime before sound recording technology was widely available in Ireland, a few precious recordings had been made by Séamus Ennis and later by Ciarán Mac Mathúna.

This year's festival will feature three major evening concerts on Friday, Saturday on Sunday.

The Friday evening event will be headlined by Jackie Daly and Kevin Burke – supported by Paddy Glackin, Gay McKeown and Mary Corcoran; Tara Breen, Orlaith McAuliffe and Catherine McHugh; and

Jesse Smith, Colm Gannon, Seán Gavin and Cathy Jordan.

The Saturday evening concert – the Sliabh Luachra Concert – will feature Caoimhe Flannery, Eimear Flannery and Aoife Granville; Méabh and Eoin Begley; Gearóid Keating, Mairead Corridan and Donie Nolan; Jackie Daly and Paul De Grae; Connie O'Connell and Eibhlín de Paor; Paudie O'Connor and Andrea Palandri; and Bryan O'Leary, Joe O'Sullivan and Con Moynihan.

The Sunday event will be headlined by Altan with support from Megan McGinley, Nia Byrne and Cathal Ó Curráin; Aidan Connolly, Padraic Keane, Ruairi McGorman and Fergus McGorman.

For all of these concerts, the line-ups are likely to be extended as more performers are confirmed for the festival.

Apart from the evening gigs, two more events will take place on Saturday afternoon: the Sliabh Luachra Fiddle Recital – with Caoimhe Flannery, Máire O'Keeffe, Aoife Ní Chaoimh, Emma O'Leary, Connie O'Connell, John Daly, Eamon Flynn, Con Moynihan, Andrea Palandri, Aidan Connolly, Mikie O'Gorman, Gerry Harrington, Darragh Curtin, Nickie McAuliffe and special guests Paddy Glackin and Kevin Burke), and the Singing Concert featuring Niall Hanna, Tim Dennehy, Méabh Begley, Mickey MacConnell and Cathy Jordan.

Over the course of the festival weekend, there will also be a variety of sessions, workshops and classes, céilithe, lectures, album launches and a pop-up Gaeltacht.

One of the great storytellers, Ralph McTell, is celebrating more than fifty years on the road. His *From There to Here Tour* will include thirteen dates around Ireland.

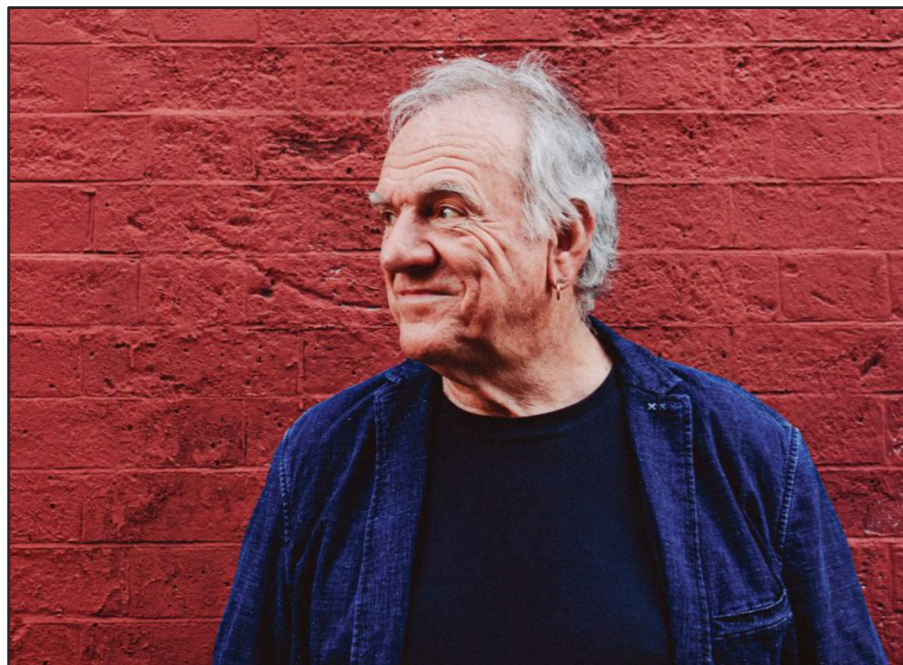
Known for his virtuoso guitar style, he is primarily a prolific and gifted songwriter. With a style that invites you into a unique world, he weaves a narrative that is both meaningful and poignant.

He modelled his guitar style on American country blues guitar players of the early twentieth century, including Blind Blake, Robert Johnson and Blind Willie McTell. These influences led a friend to suggest he take McTell as his professional name.

An accomplished performer on piano and harmonica as well as guitar, McTell issued his first album, *Eight Frames a Second*, in 1968 and found acclaim on the folk circuit.

Tour Itinerary

- October 26: Watergate Theatre, Kilkenny
- October 27: glór, Ennis
- October 28: Siamsa Tíre, Tralee
- October 29: Lime Tree Theatre, Limerick
- November 1: Hawk's Well Theatre, Sligo
- November 2: The Mac, Belfast
- November 3: Riverside Theatre, Coleraine
- November 5: Everyman Theatre, Cork
- November 7: Westport Town Hall, Westport
- November 8: Ardhowen Theatre, Enniskillen
- November 9: The Guildhall, Derry
- November 10: An Táin, Dundalk
- November 11: Liberty Hall Theatre, Dublin



Street cred: Ralph McTell (Photo: Elly Lucas).

Ralph McTell returns from there to here

He reached his greatest commercial success in 1974 when a new recording of his song, *Streets of London*, became a No. 2 hit on the UK Singles Chart and earned him an Ivor Novello Award.

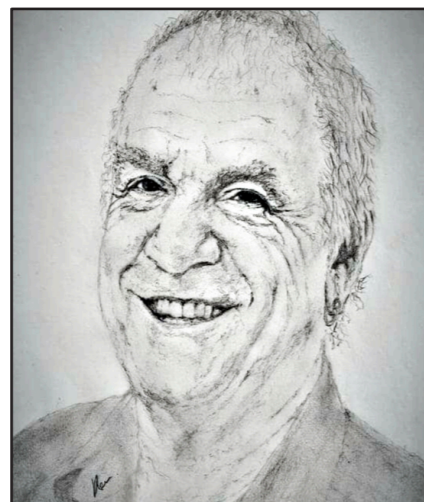
In Ireland, Ralph's emigration ballad, *From Clare to Here*, which

appeared on his 1976 album, *Right Side Up*, has entered the repertoire of many local singers since it was recorded by the Fureys and Davey Arthur in 1977 and subsequently by other singers including Nanci Griffith and Jim McCann.

In 2002 McTell received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards.

More recently McTell has played an annual benefit concert for the UK homeless charity, Crisis at Christmas, and in 2017 he invited the Crisis Choir to sing *Streets of London* with him at the Palladium.

McTell and the choir also recorded the song with guest vocalist, Annie Lennox, for release before Christmas. The song charted at No.94 in the Official Singles Chart (for downloads, CDs and streams), and at No. 1 in the Official Physical Singles Chart (for CD sales).



Drawn to sing: Ralph McTell by fellow singer, Ken Wilson.

THE BIG GIG LIST

Altan: Hartlepool Folk Festival, October 7; River Island Hotel, Castleisland, October 29; Pavilion Theatre, Dun Laoghaire, December 10.

Zoé Basha, Anna Mullarkey & Erin Hennessey: glór Arts Centre, Ennis, November 30.

Frances Black: Gleneagle INEC Arena, Killarney, January 1; Sligo Park Hotel, Sligo, January 5; Leisureland, Galway, January 19; Landmark Hotel, Leitrim, January 20; Hotel Kilkenny, Kilkenny, January 26.

Mary Black: Gleneagle INEC Arena, Killarney, October 20; Pavilion Theatre, Dun Laoghaire, October 29; Vicar Street, Dublin 2, November 4; Olympia Theatre, Dublin, November 17; Royal Theatre, Castlebar, November 18.

Blackwater Céilí Band: Ed Reavy Festival, Cavan, October 20; Wild Duck Inn, Portglenone October 28; St. Joseph's Parish Centre, Carryduff, Co. Down, October 29; Longford Arms Hotel, Longford, November 4.

Luka Bloom: The Cornerstone, Woodford, Co. Galway, October 13.

Billy Bragg: Cypress Avenue, Cork, November 20; National Concert Hall, Dublin, November 21; Mandela Hall, Belfast, November 22.

Kevin Burke: glór Arts Centre, Ennis, December 1. Seantí Bar, Waterford, December 29.

Joshua Burnside: Cyprus Avenue, Cork, November 7; The Workman's Club, Dublin, November 16; Dockers' Club, Belfast, December 22.

Dermot Byrne, Bríd Harper & Steve Cooney: Liberty Hall, Dublin, November 7.

Cherish the Ladies: MAC Arts Centre, Belfast, October 8; glór Arts Centre, Ennis, October 14; The Social, Gweedore, October 21.



Daorí Farrell

Clare Youth Trad Orchestra & guests: glór Arts Centre, Ennis, November 11.

Dónal Clancy: Seantí Bar, Waterford, October 13.

Zoe Conway & John McIntyre: Rostrevor Folk Club at Crawford's, Rostrevor, November 20.

Iris DeMent: Vicar Street, Dublin 2, October 28 (see page 48-49).

Damien Dempsey: Púca 2023, Trim, Co. Meath, October 30; Limerick Milk Market, Limerick, December 8; Leisureland, Galway, December 9; Vicar Street, Dublin, December 16-17, 19-20, 22-23; Gleneagle INEC Arena, Killarney, December 31.

Drawing from the Well: Various Artists, National Concert Hall, Dublin, October 28 (see page 54).

Dublin Legends: Vicar Street, Dublin, December 28

Dublin Tradfest: Multiple artists at various venues, Dublin, January 24-28. (see page 70)

Ennis Tradfest: Multiple artists at various venues, Ennis, November 9-13 (line-up to be announced – check <https://www.ennistradfest.com/> for more information).

Daorí Farrell: The Loughshore Sessions, Derrytresk, November 4; Liberty Hall, Dublin, November 10; Seantí Bar, Waterford, December 8.

Mick Flannery: Empire Music Hall, Belfast, October 12; Spirit Store, Dundalk, October 13; De Barra's, Clonakilty, October 27; Gleneagle INEC Arena, Killarney, October 28; glór Arts Centre, Ennis, December 15; Róisín Dubh, Galway, December 29-30.

Bela Fleck: Vicar Street, Dublin, February 3

John Francis Flynn: Set Theatre, Kilkenny, December 1; Vicar Street, Dublin, December 2; Róisín Dubh, Galway, December 8; St. Luke's, Cork, December 9; De Barra's, Clonakilty, December 10; Dolan's Warehouse, Limerick, December 14; Ulster Sports Club, Belfast, January 12.

Fureys: Abbey Court Hotel, Nenagh, October 7; The Lodge Hotel, Coleraine, October 20; Great Northern Hotel, Bundoran, October 22; Westgrove Hotel, Kildare, October 29; Kilmore Hotel, Cavan, December 28; Shamrock Lodge Hotel, Athlone, January 4; Carrickdale Hotel, Dundalk, January 6; Keadeen Hotel, Newbridge, Kildare, January 14; Portico Arts Centre, Portaferry, January 28.

Frankie Gavin: The Venue, Athlone, October 8.

Rhiannon Giddens: Vicar Street, Dublin, February 25.

Goitse: Market Place Theatre, Armagh, October 5; Flowerfield Arts Centre, Portstewart, October 6; The Duncairn, Belfast, October 7.

Greenshine: Seantí Bar, Waterford, November 3.

Gemma Hayes: Liberty Hall, Dublin, November 8.

THE BIG GIG LIST

Martin Hayes & the Common Ground Ensemble: University Concert Hall, Limerick, October 14; Vicar Street, Dublin, October 19-20; Royal Theatre, Castlebar, October 21; St. Luke's, Cork, October 22.

Hermitage Green: Black Box Theatre, Galway, December 27; Live at the Big Top, Limerick, December 28-29; Langton House Hotel, Kilkenny, December 30.

Huun-Huur Tu: Sugar Club, Dublin, November 27-28; Set Theatre, Kilkenny, November 29; Connolly's of Leap, Co. Cork, November 30; St. Luke's, Cork, December 1; Róisín Dubh, Galway, December 2; Leitrim venue tbc, December 3; Amharclann Gaoth Dobhair, Donegal, December 4.

Chris Kavanagh: Legend of Luke Kelly: Tramline, Hawkins Street, Dublin, October 28; Liberty Hall, Dublin, November 17; Vicar Street, Dublin, January 27; Newgrange Hotel, Navan, February 17.

Keady Traditional Music Sessions: Arthur's Bar, Keady, Fortnightly on Saturdays. Check: <http://facebook.com/arthurbarkeady>

Pádraic Keane, Páraic Mac Donnchadha, Macdara Ó Faoláin: Moloney's, Knockglass, Co. Kilkenny, October 7.

Noriana Kennedy, Mirella Murray, Oisín Mac Diarmada & Donogh Hennessy: Christ Church Cathedral, Waterford, October 26.

Landless: Fennelly's, Cavan, September 29; Hartlepool Folk Festival, October 7.

Emma Langford: Fallon's Bar, Kilcullen, October 26.

Lankum: Dolan's Warehouse, Limerick, December 19; Leisureland, Galway, December 22.



Rhiannon Giddens

Tony Linnane & Eamonn O'Riordan: glór Arts Centre, Ennis, December 14.

Lumiere: St. Augustine's Church, Derry, February 1.

Aisling Lyons & Kseniya Rusnak: glór Arts Centre, Ennis, October 21.

Mary MacNamara & Breandán Ó Beaglaóich: glór Arts Centre, Ennis, October 25.

Mary Wallopers: Vicar Street, Dublin, December 7-8; Telegraph Building, Belfast, December 9; St. Columb's Hall, Derry, December 10; Leisureland, Galway, December 20.

Maxwell Quartet with Brighde Chaimbeul & Linda Buckley: The Duncairn, Belfast, November 26.

S.J. McArdle & Trevor Hutchinson: Cherrytree Pub, Walkinstown, Dublin, October 22.

Ralph McTell: Watergate Theatre, Kilkenny, October 26; glór, Ennis, October 27; Siamsa Tíre, Tralee, October 28; Lime Tree Theatre, Limerick, October 29; Hawk's Well Theatre, Sligo, November 1; The MAC, Belfast, November 2; Riverside Theatre, Coleraine, November 3; Everyman Theatre, Cork, November 5; Westport Town Hall, Westport,

November 7; Ardhowen Theatre, Enniskillen, November 8; The Guildhall, Derry, November 9; An Táin, Dundalk, November 10; Liberty Hall Theatre, Dublin, November 11.

Mel Mercier & the Irish Gamelan Orchestra with friends: Everyman Theatre, Cork, October 6 (see page 53).

Miscellany of Folk: Jim of the Mills, Upperchurch, Co. Tipperary, October 8.

Christy Moore: Waterfront, Belfast, October 12; Armagh City Hotel, Armagh, October 19; Royal Theatre, Castlebar, October 28, Lyrath Estate Hotel, Kilkenny, November 12; Carrickdale Hotel, Dundalk, November 17; Vicar Street, Dublin, November 22, 26, 29, December 4, 11, 29, January 2, 7, 11, 16, 19.

Moving Hearts: 3Olympia Theatre Dublin, December 10; University Concert Hall, University of Limerick, February 2; National Opera House, Wexford, February 9; Leisureland, Galway, February 23.

Deirdre & Sinéad O'Brien: glór Arts Centre, Ennis, November 23.

Damien O'Kane & Ron Block: National Concert Hall, Dublin, October 7.

Lisa O'Neill: Dolan's Warehouse, Limerick, October 6; Everyman Theatre, Cork, October 7; Set Theatre, Kilkenny, October 8; Sandino's, Derry, December 5; Empire Music Hall, Belfast, December 6-7; Vicar Street, Dublin, December 9.

Declan O'Rourke: Roscommon Arts Centre, Roscommon, October 6; Town Hall Theatre, Cavan, October 7; An Grianán, Letterkenny, October 13; Town Hall Theatre, Westport, October 14; INEC Acoustic Room, Killarney, October 21; Mandela Hall, Belfast, October 27; Theatre Royal, Waterford, October 28; Lime Tree Theatre, Limerick, November 3; Town Hall Theatre, Galway, November 4;

THE BIG GIG LIST

Solstice Arts Centre, Navan, November 10; An Táin, Dundalk, November 11; Jerome Hynes Theatre, November 17; St. Luke's, Cork, November 16-17; Vicar Street, Dublin, November 18; Arts Centre, Mullingar, November 24; Watergate Theatre, Kilkenny, November 25.

Rónán Ó Snodaigh & Myles O'Reilly: Christ Church Cathedral, Waterford, October 29.

Brigid Mae Power: Market Bar, Waterford, October 27.

Pilgrim Street: Balor Arts Centre, Ballybofey, October 7, Solstice Arts Centre, Navan, October 14, Cherrytree Pub, Walkinstown, Dublin, November 4; Wexford Arts Centre, Wexford, November 17; Ramor Theatre, Virginia, Cavan, December 10.

Piper's Cross Céilí Band: *The newly crowned All-Ireland senior champions*, Moy Hotel, Foxford, October 20.

Réalta: William Kennedy Festival, City Hotel, Armagh, November 18.

Réalta with Myles McCormack: *Album Launch* Down Arts Centre, Downpatrick, October 27; The Old Church, Cushendun, October 28; Black Box, Belfast October 29; Trad Fest, Ennis, November 11.

The Reel Thing Session: Roscommon Arts Centre, Roscommon October 19,

Michael Rooney & June McCormack with Dordán: glór Arts Centre, Ennis, October 20

Ruaile Buaille: Judge Roy Bean's, Newbridge, October 14.

Pauline Scanlon & the Whileaways: Hawks Well Theatre, Sligo, November 5; Lime Tree Theatre, Limerick, November 17; Ulster Hall, Belfast, November 24; Olympia Theatre, Dublin, November 26.



Trevor Sexton (left) and Ger O'Donnell

Scullion: Liberty Hall, Dublin, November 12.

Seeger Sessions Revival: Empire Music Hall, Belfast, October 20; Ramor Theatre, Virginia, Co. Cavan, October 21; Crescent Concert Hall, Drogheda, November 10.

Session with the Pipers: The Cobblestone, Dublin, November 7, December 5 (see page 47).

This is The Kit with Ailbhe Reddy: Cypress Avenue, Cork, November 16; Róisín Dubh, Galway, November 17; National Concert Hall, Dublin, November 18; Mandela Hall, Belfast, November 19,

Trevor Sexton & Ger O'Donnell: Culturlann, Newmarket, Co. Cork, October 7; Linenhall Theatre, Castlebar, October 11; University Concert Hall, Limerick, November 29; Killala Bay Folk Club, Killala, December 1; Dan Murphy's, Sneem, December 21; Dolan's Warehouse, Limerick, December 28.

Eleanor Shanley & Mike Hanrahan: Rostrevor Folk Club at Crawford's, Rostrevor, October 23.

Sharon Shannon: glór Arts Centre, Ennis, October 7; Púca 2023, Athboy, Co. Meath, October 28.

John Spillane: The Social, Gweedore, October 6; Séamus Heaney Homeplace, Bellaghy, October 7; Spirit Store, Dundalk, October 8; Mike the Pie's, Listowel, October 19; Ballintubbert House, Stradbally, October 26; De Barra's, Clonakilty, November 2; Liberty Hall, Dublin, November 9; Sneem Hotel, Sneem, Co. Kerry, November 10; Cleere's Bar & Theatre, Kilkenny, November 16; Anvil Inn, Portarlington, November 17; Róisín Dubh, Galway, November 19; Wexford Arts Centre, Wexford, November 30; The Dun-

cairn, Belfast, December 2; De Barra's, Clonakilty, December 7; Gleneagle INEC Arena, Killarney, December 10; Everyman Theatre, Cork, December 17; Seantú Bar, Waterford, February 2.

Talisk: Whelan's, Wexford Street, Dublin, October 10; Dolan's Warehouse, Limerick, October 11; Monroe's, Galway, October 12; Black Box, Belfast, October 13.

Tradition Now: Various artists, National Concert Hall Dublin, October 7-8 (see page 52).

The Unthanks: Solstice Arts Centre, Navan, October 6; An Grianán, Letterkenny, October 7; Town Hall Theatre, Westport, October 8; Liberty Hall Theatre, Dublin, October 9; Hawks Well Theatre, Sligo, October 11; St. Luke's, Cork, October 12; Theatre Royal, Waterford, October 13 (see page 55).

The Waterboys: Púca 2023, Trim, Co. Meath, October 30.

The Wolfe Tones: 3Olympia Theatre, Dublin, October 22; Gleneagle INEC Arena, Killarney, October 29; 3Olympia Theatre, Dublin, November 3.

SINGING SESSION PLANNER

Most – though not all – of the regular singing sessions around Ireland take place on a particular day of a specific week of the month. So this planner provides an indication of where a session may be taking place on any day of the month. But of course you should always check with the session organisers (see opposite for contact information) before heading out for the afternoon or evening. All sessions below are in person unless followed by (²).

WEEK 1

Monday: Limerick Singing Session (²); Kinvara Singing Circle
Tuesday: Dundalk Singing Circle
Wednesday: Belfast Singing Circle; Drogheda Singers
Thursday: Howth Singing Circle; South Roscommon Singers Circle, Knockcroghery; Sunflower Folk Club, Belfast
Friday: An Góilín, Dublin; Robbie's First Friday, Tulla; West Limerick Singing Club, Abbeyfeale
Sunday: Cork Singers Club; The Night Before Larry Got Stretched, Dublin

WEEK 2

Monday: Limerick Singing Session (²); Crown and Shamrock, Belfast

Tuesday: Dundalk Singing Circle; Navan Singing Circle
Wednesday: Drogheda Singers; Sligo Singers' Circle
Thursday: Clé Abhaile (Z); Sunflower Folk Club, Belfast
Friday: Croonerista Social Club, Dublin; Ennis Singers Club; An Góilín, Dublin; Inishowen Singers' Circle
Sunday: Cork Singers Club; Song Central

WEEK 3

Monday: Limerick Singing Session
Tuesday: Dundalk Singing Circle; Nightingale Session, Belfast
Wednesday: Ciorcal na nAmhráin, Falcarragh; Clé Club, Dublin; Drogheda Singers
Thursday: Sunflower Folk Club, Belfast
Friday: An Góilín, Dublin;

Wexford Singers Circle
Saturday: Down Singers Circle
Sunday: Bray Singing Circle; Cork Singers Club

WEEK 4*

Monday: Limerick Singing Session (²)
Tuesday: Dundalk Singing Circle
Wednesday: Drogheda Singers
Thursday: Sunflower Folk Club, Belfast
Friday: An Góilín, Dublin
Sunday: Cork Singers Club; Rainbow Singing Session, Glenfarne.

LAST WEEK*

Monday: Limerick Singing Session (²)
Tuesday: Dundalk Singing Circle; North Wexford Singing Session, Gorey.
Wednesday: Drogheda Singers

Thursday: Malahide Singing Circle; Sunflower Folk Club, Belfast
Friday: Chapel Gates Singers Club; An Góilín, Dublin; Shanaglish Singing Circle, near Gort
Sunday: Cork Singers Club; Skerries Folk Club.

* Usually the fourth time a day falls in the month will be the last week. But, of course, there will always be a few days each month that occur for a fifth time. Some sessions, like the Rainbow, are held in the fourth week, even when there may be a fifth Sunday in the month. Others, like Gorey and Malahide, are held on the last Tuesday or Thursday (respectively) regardless of whether it may be the fourth or fifth time the day has occurred in a particular month.

The Shillelagh Singing Circle meets fortnightly on Wednesdays. The Singing in the Crane session in Galway meets frequently but not on a specific day each month as does the Sliabh Liag Singing Circle in Co. Donegal.

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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 Sunday 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>

Ciorcal 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 Monday 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*

Song Central, Chaplin's Bar, Hawkins Street, Dublin 2. *Second Sunday of the month.* <https://www.facebook.com/songcentral>

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/countywexfordtraditionalsingerscircle/>



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