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Issue No. 339 June 2024

FOREWORD

WE ARE NOT ALONE

One of our big stories this month features the new live album from Lúnasa, it's a special recording. You see the band has a huge fan base in Japan; their new album was recorded in Kyoto as a thank you for all the work their agents, promoters and their Japanese fans have devoted to them. Fans often become players, which is obvious when we ask the key question "who inspired you?" Sharon Shannon loomed large in the early years of Malin Lewis' journey into Celtic music, which has resulted not only in a new album, *Halocline*, but the development of a new type of bagpipe chanter that has the potential to open up Irish music to a huge cohort of Highland pipers.

Donnchadh Gough brings us up-to-speed on the Dungarvan TuneFest, where professional bands such as Danú, Talisk and Cherish the Ladies will be wowing fans this coming June. Norah Rendell tells us that the Minnesota Irish Music Weekend will cater for teenage players and introduce them to the finest musicians in Irish music. We highlight the Blas Summer School at the University of Limerick which provides a full two-week immersion in Irish music, song, dance and culture, and what fan wouldn't want that!

Iowa's biggest Irish cultural celebration is just around the corner. With an extensive list of Irish musicians and bands to entertain guests all weekend long, Iowa Irish Fest is the place to be this August!

The interest in our music runs deep and if you were ever in any doubt about its scope, then read my interview with Dr. Fintan Vallely, who has just completed the 3rd edition of his mammoth *Companion to Irish Traditional Music*.

Spread the net wide and enjoy every tune.

Slán
Seán L

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Irish Traditional Music was alive and well in the National Concert Hall Dublin on April 14th last for the Siansa Gael Linn Final.

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- **Seamus Kennedy**
- **Screaming Orphans**
- **And Many More...**



VIEW THE FULL LINEUP & GET TICKETS AT
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Check out the full line of products at www.Carbony.com and shots of our appearances at www.facebook.com/CarbonyCelticWinds

IRISH MUSIC CAFÉ RADIO SHOW PROVIDES WORLDWIDE PLATFORM FOR IRISH MUSIC

www.CRBRadio.com & www.IrishMusicCafe.com

The Irish Music Café Radio Show based near Detroit Michigan is providing a worldwide platform for Irish music and artists. Now broadcasting in its eighth year, the Irish Music Café plays all genres of Irish music from the legends of Irish music as well as Irish singers and songwriters that are just beginning their professional musical careers.

“As an Irish musician in Detroit, the Irish Music Cafe is a great resource for getting my music out into the world. The welcome in-studio is second to none with great fun and banter from hosts Pat, Erin and Dave. It’s always great craic. The genuine love of Ireland and our

culture is palpable and like a great Irish pub it’s a place to hear the news, connect with friends and listen to the music.” - Enda Reilly.

The Irish Music Cafe Radio Show plays a great mix of Irish songs and tunes including weekly interviews with the artists, singers and songwriters from Ireland and beyond.

Please submit your music for airplay consideration to pat@irishmusiccafe.com

Listen live every Monday 9–11 pm (Irish time) and 4-6 pm (US ET) on www.CRBRadio.com and www.IrishMusicCafe.com with podcasts available anytime on www.IrishMusicCafe.com. Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/irishmusiccafe

MACALLA – A MUSICAL CELEBRATION OF FORTY YEARS

A Feast of music and memories was presented by the great all-female Macalla in the Sugar Club, Dublin for their fortieth anniversary. Musicians and singers from every province who were based in the capital at the time came together for the first time in 1984 as Macalla. It was a celebration of the wealth of music and song these creative women possessed but who had been gaining little recognition or opportunities to perform on stages across the country in general.

They first came together at the Dublin Folk Festival also on International Women’s Day in 1984. The concert was in Dublin’s historic Ormord hotel on the quays mentioned by Joyce in *Ulysses*.

Macalla soon had requests to perform in various venues around the country, including the Willie Clancy Summer School. They were invited to play a set on *The Late Late Show* and to make a renowned BBC *As I Roved Out* programme.

Riobard Mac Góráin, a pioneer in Gael Linn at the time, invited them to make a record - *Macalla - Mná na hÉireann* with a beautiful sleeve by artist Pauline Bewick. They made a second record with Gael Linn sometime later, *Macalla 2*.

The musicians gradually dispersed from the city and returned to their home towns but occasionally they all came together to mark different celebrations over the years.

Music lovers were thrilled to hear them performing again on their fortieth anniversary. The concert was organised in conjunction with Gael Linn and sponsored by Foras na Gaeilge.

www.gael-linn.ie

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FRI 31 MAY 2024
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FLOOK
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SHASKEEN : LIVE AT BALLINDERREEN**www.shaskeen.net**

Saw Shaskeen doing a show last night. If you ever want to see a band that has touches of every genre of music without leaving for a second the heart of the tradition, go to one of their concerts.

All eight members are unique personalities with unique insights into the music and visually it's fun and relaxing to see them in full flow.. it's a treat to see a band that brings out the best in each member.. Eamonn can slip a jazz lick in behind a traditional song and go straight back to a steady flute sound.. Geraldine Cotter holds it all together and lets them shine and then moves us with a sad piano piece that feels like it's not long enough before it goes into a jig.. David Sanders and Mary Liddy have a lovely power where Mary lets David play hard but the concertina never loses where the tune has to be..

Tom Cussen is an institution and he has guided this band through many line ups throughout the decades and you can feel his excitement with the present crew.. it's the presence of Patsy Mc Donagh and Johnny Donnellan that allows the integrity and excitement flow.. seasoned musicians that ooze character.. the character and the natural musicianship we have need for the more rare it becomes.. the respect these musicians and singers have for each other is lovely and obvious.. festival organisers might not realise what has developed with Shaskeen.. check them out because it is music for all of us. Oh yeah, of course, Katie Theasby is a star. Up Shaskeen!!

By Eoin O'Neill (Clare FM)

Check out Shaskeen at www.shaskeen.net & <https://www.facebook.com/shaskeen/>

CELTIC WORLD FORUM SEPTEMBER 2024**www.celticworldforum.com**

Celtic World Forum is an annual event that brings together Celtic music enthusiasts, experts and artists to explore and celebrate the rich and diverse traditions of Celtic music in a gathering designed to be equally informative, inspiring, and entertaining.

The inaugural three day Forum event in 2023, comprised a mix of talks, panels, workshops, song circles and evening concerts, all connected to the world of Irish Traditional, Folk and Celtic Music.

Created by Grammy nominated Irish singer Éabha McMahon, the Celtic World initiative focuses on creating unforgettable experiences in

the form of unique events and concerts, using only the highest quality of Irish talent, with many of the performers being globally established names from the most successful international touring shows.

Having toured extensively as vocalist across the world with Anúna and Celtic Woman, gaining an international following and recognising the worldwide popularity of Irish Music, Éabha wanted to stage an event where people could discover behind the music and experience the multitude of musical talent here in Ireland.

The Celtic World umbrella is designed to be a multi-faceted endeavour. As well as the annual Forum event, it will also stage occasional concerts both in Ireland and overseas. There will also be music releases throughout the year that feature the very best Celtic talent.

Celtic World Forum 2024 will take place from Thursday 5th September to Saturday 7th September at the Irish Institute Of Music & Song in Co. Dublin, Ireland.

See www.celticworldforum.com for more details. Email: info@celticworldforum.com

ICC LIVE MUSIC EVENTS (MAY 2024 - JUNE 2024)**www.irishculturalcentre.co.uk****Spring Sounds at The Irish Cultural Centre**

The Irish Cultural Centre in Hammersmith is thrilled to present an exciting lineup of events celebrating the richness of Irish musical heritage.

On 11 May, join Ultan Conlon and his world-renowned band for the London launch of his acclaimed 5th Studio Album, *The Starlight Ballroom*. Followed by great Irish crooner, Barry Owen, on 16 May. Then, on 17 and 18 May, let the legendary Dervish sweep you away with their timeless Irish folk music.

23 May brings the maestro of quality music, Freddie White, to our stage for an unforgettable concert.

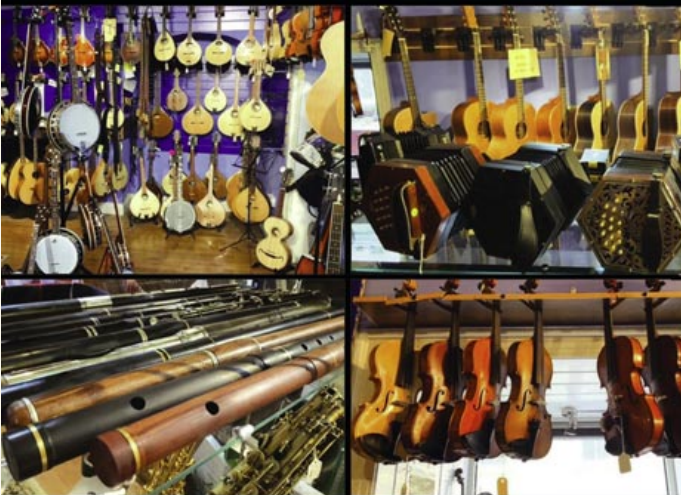
On 25 May, experience the fusion of musical traditions from Kerry, Donegal, and Yorkshire with band The Weaving.

Finally, we close out the month on 31 May with Breaking Trad, as they breathe new life into Irish music with their modern twist.

Into 08 June and Flook make a triumphant return with flutes, frets and skins, followed by breakthrough Irish Country virtuoso, Catherine McGrath and special guest Folk-Americana band Roswell on 20 June.

For more information and tickets, visit Irishculturalcentre.co.uk.

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<https://irishculturalcentre.co.uk/whats-on/>

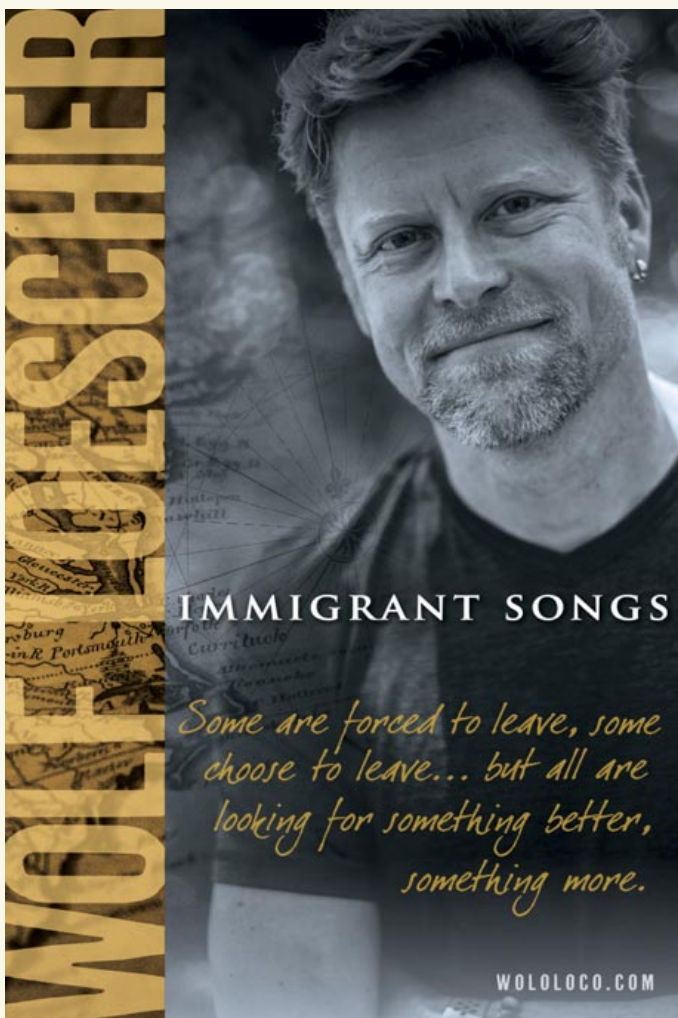
THE COMPANION TO IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC (EDITED BY FINTAN VALLELY)

www.comitm.com

Twenty five years ago in 1999 the *Companion to Irish Traditional Music* was launched, the first A-Z encyclopedia-style reference book for Irish Traditional Music. In 2011 it was re-released—updated and expanded, with digital versions also on Kindle and iBooks.

Now, in response to demand, a third edition has been compiled—substantially revised, expanded and re-focused on contemporary issues and practices. Edited again by musician Fintan Vallely, the *Companion* is the largest single collection of such diverse data. It brings together the knowledge of 215 musicians and writers in 600,000 words with 840 biographies and a thousand other articles, three hundred images and music transcriptions.

Its eighteen hundred entries cover the full gamut of Traditional music in Ireland and internationally, dealing with: all tune types; style, composition and arrangement; ballads, sean-nós and Irish-language song; step and sean-nós dance, céilí and sets; solo playing and sessions; competitions and awards; céilí bands, groups and professionalism; instruments; technology; organisations, media and promotion; teaching and learning; education and transmission; collectors and archives; history and revival; performers, stylists and commentators; broadcasting and recording; women in traditional music; Irish music in all Irish counties and diaspora cities worldwide.



Uniquely, the book carries the only complete bibliography of Irish music, song and dance literature and tutors, and has the first ever analysis of All-Ireland fleadh results 1951–2023, as well as a listing of the major senior winners over the fleadh's 72 years.

The music notated in the book can be listened to as well—on an accompanying digital-download album which is also separately available as both a double CD and DVD.

For further information see www.comitm.com

Or contact suas@imusic.ie

LEONARD BARRY : *LITTORAL*

www.leonardbarrymusic.com

Leonard Barry's third solo album *Littoral* has launched. His first solo album in ten years, the title reflects on growing up near the sea, first living near Banna strand in the town land of Kilmoyley in North Kerry on the South West of Ireland and his life now in Sligo on the North West coast. It is a study on Leonard's journey as a musician, shared with other artists on the recording who he has encountered and played with on the way. Produced by Michael McGoldrick (Cappercaille, Mark Knopfler), one of the most talented musicians of his generation, the album features guests and material that map Leonard's career and musical partnerships fostered during his 30+ years playing Irish Traditional Music.

The quality of the guests featured on this release reflect the esteem Leonard is held amongst his peers. Andy Morrow and Shane McGowan feature heavily on the CD reflecting 20+ years of playing music together. Other guests include legendary fiddle player Kevin Burke (The Bothy Band, Patrick St.), Michael Holmes and Brian McDonagh (Dervish), Seamie O'Dowd and the much sought after brilliant Scottish Cellist Alice Allen.

Over the coming months Leonard will be performing at various events throughout Ireland and Europe with Andy Morrow and Seamie O'Dowd including the Inishbofin Arts Festival in May, Halkær Festival in Denmark in June, Celt'cmes in France in July with more dates to be announced.

Info at www.leonardbarrymusic.com

GF MORGAN : *MAGENTA*

www.gfmorgan.bandcamp.com

On March 17th 2024 Gf Morgan released his new solo album *Magenta* to the public at a CD release party at Dharma Bums in New Hope, PA.

The album is reflective of Morgan's work as a solo artist with selected pieces from his vast repertoire which includes arrangements of ballads, sea chanteys, original compositions and the traditional music of the Celtic lands.

Coming on the heels of his critically acclaimed album *Driftwood*, the new album *Magenta* showcase features his delicate finger style guitar playing as well as his versatility on concertina and several instruments of the mandolin family.

The praise from both sides of the Atlantic for *Driftwood* brought Morgan to the notice of the American Celtic scene.

Magenta has met with similar plaudits.

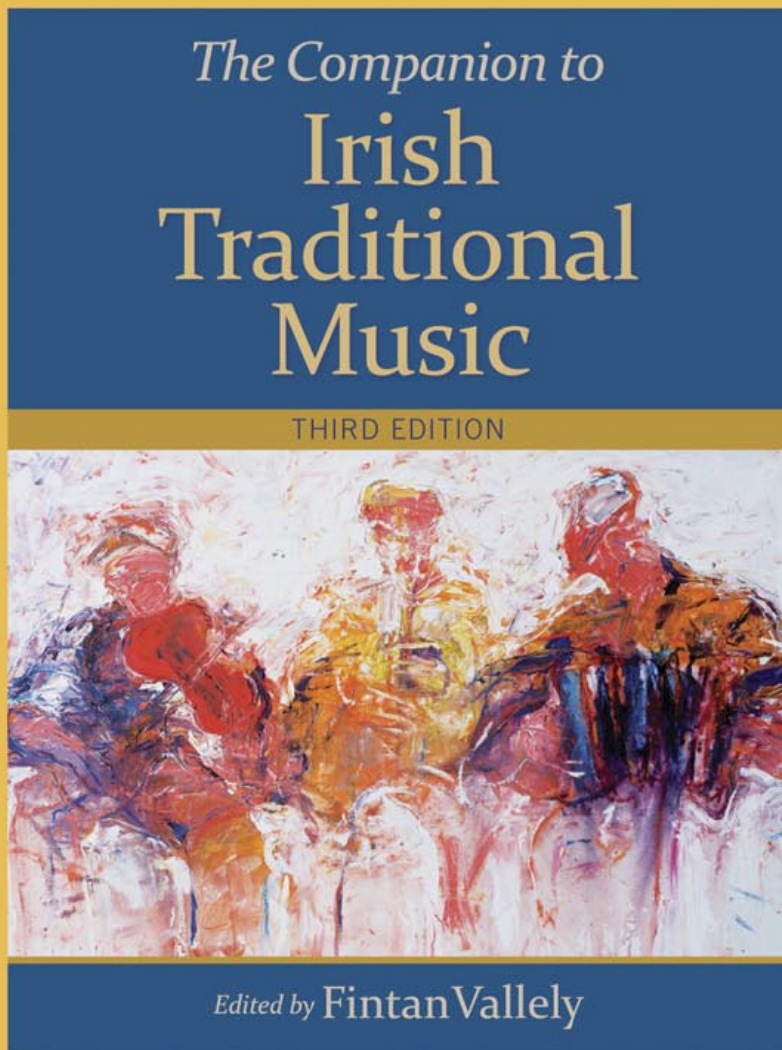
"There's genuine contentment in the playing, tunes that linger, old music that has survived and connects Celtic communities to their cultures, continuing to be spread across continents as Mr. Morgan is doing here." - Anne Marie Kennedy - *Irish Music Magazine*.

"Magenta confirms and expands his musical universe, offering a listening experience that is both a refuge and an exploration, a place where nostalgia meets innovation. This album is an invitation to dance under the stars, to dream with open eyes, to feel the infinite power of music which, like a river, has flowed for centuries, nourishing souls thirsty for truth, beauty, and authenticity." - *ExtravaFrench Webzine Reviews*.

www.gfmorgan.bandcamp.com

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Edited by Fintan Vallely



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WOLF LOESCHER RELEASES THIRD SOLO ALBUM : *IMMIGRANT SONGS*

<http://wololoco.com>

Colorado-based singer/storyteller Wolf Loescher released his third solo album *Immigrant Songs* on September 29th, 2023. The album is a collection of songs about those who have come to America seeking opportunity, security, and a better life for themselves and their families.

"The story of immigrants is the story of America," said Wolf. "As a first-generation American myself, I have always been fascinated by the immigrant experience. You don't have to cross an ocean to be an immigrant...sometimes all it takes is moving from one part of the country to another. I moved every three to four years growing up (due to my father's job)...so home has never been a specific place for me... just wherever my family was. And wherever we were, we always had music to share."

Tracks on the album include *American Tune* (Paul Simon), *American Wake* (Brent Hoad - The Elders), *City of Immigrants* (Steve Earle), and *Sutter's Mill* (Dan Fogelberg). All twelve tracks combine to tell a wider story of grit, willpower, and determination in the ongoing journey to find a place called home.

Joining Wolf on this album are long-time collaborators and friends Scooter Muse (guitar, banjo), Beth Patterson (bass, vocals), Frances Cunningham (mandolin, vocals), Rich Brotherton (guitar, vocals), Kendall Rodgers (piano, accordion), Tim Britton (whistle, Uilleann pipes), EJ Jones (Highland pipes, flute), Brian McNeill (vocals, fiddle, concertina), Mari Black (fiddle), and Leah Rankin (cello).

The album is available on Bandcamp, Spotify, or wherever you download or stream music. Find out more at wololoco.com

SEÁNIE Ó'LOINGSIGH : DEBUT SOLO PIPING ALBUM *CHONGIE ROAD*

<https://chongieroad.ie>

Chongie Road is a mesmerizing and deeply introspective album by Achill musician, Seán Lynch. With this project, Lynch embarks on a remarkable musical journey, encapsulating the various stages of his life and career through the lens of ten evocative tracks. Each track on the album serves as a poignant reflection of the moments, experiences, and influences that have shaped him along his life's journey.

As the album progresses, listeners are taken on a sonic odyssey, with each subsequent track representing a distinct period in Seán's life. These compositions weave together an intricate tapestry of emotions, memories, and musical influences that have defined his artistic evolution. From the second track *The Road to Lisdoonvarna*, which pays homage to Achill Island's rich pipe band tradition with the use of the distinctive snare drum to its culmination with the poignant final track, *Chongie Road* highlighting the significance of home and its people and their profound influence on Seán as an artist.

Featured Artists on the album include: Seánie Ó'Loingsigh - Uilleann Pipes, Tony Byrne - Guitar, Joseph McNulty - Fiddle / Bodhran, Niall Hughes - Double Bass, Alex Borwick - Trombone, Keys, Percussion, Collie Ahern - Side & Bass Drum. It was produced and engineered by Alan Doherty (Grada/ Aldoc) -Recording & Production, and Alex Borwick - Mixing & Mastering.

Chongie Road is a powerful tribute to the place that has shaped his identity and creative spirit, a reflection on the sense of belonging and the enduring connection to one's roots. *Chongie Road* is not just an album; it's a heartfelt narrative, a musical autobiography, and a soul-stirring testament to the enduring impact of one's life experiences on their artistry.

Find out more at <https://chongieroad.ie> & <https://chongieroad.bandcamp.com/album/chongie-road>

MUSIC CAPITAL SCHEME - COMING SOON www.musicnetwork.ie

Applications to the Music Capital Scheme which provides funding for musical instruments to both community music groups and individual musicians will open soon.

Established in 2008, the Music Capital Scheme is supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and managed by Music Network. Since it was established the scheme has made 544 awards to individual musicians and organisations providing access to instruments for over 51,000 people across the country.

Beneficiaries range from early years to mature players including musicians with physical and intellectual disabilities. 205 performing groups have been able to purchase instruments and expand their memberships, and 202 professional established and emerging musicians advanced their performance careers with new instruments enabled by the scheme. Previous awardees include The Bluestack Special Needs Foundation, renowned button accordion player Daithí Gormley and rising star cellist Grace Coughlan, who all received funding in the last round of the scheme.

An extensive range of applicant supports will be available to both organisations and individuals, with a particular focus on supporting first time and previously unsuccessful applicants.

Music Network is committed to equity and inclusion and welcomes applications from individuals within culturally diverse communities and people with disabilities.


More information about the awards, supports, guidelines and how to apply will be available at www.musicnetwork.ie and enquiries can be sent to Sarah Cunningham, Music Capital Scheme Administrator at capitalscheme@musicnetwork.ie

TRAINEESHIP IN IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC PERFORMANCE AND INSTRUMENT MAKING, REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE IN BALLYFERMOT COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION www.bcfе.ie

Since 2018, Ballyfermot College of Further Education's Irish Traditional Music Performance programme, Ceoltóir, has, in partnership with Na Piobairí Uilleann, been offering an instrument making strand to students. The instrument making strand is part of the college's Higher National Diploma in Irish Traditional Music Performance programme and graduates of the course regularly progress to the college's BA (Hons) in Media Production Management which is validated by Dublin City University.

This course, while retaining its academic qualifications, has now become a traineeship and brings a new level of funding and work placement opportunities for Irish Traditional Musicians and instrument makers.

The traineeship enables students to deepen their understanding of Irish Traditional music, develop as performers, learn the craft of instrument making from expert makers, and equips students with the skills and qualifications to progress to a sustainable and rewarding career in music.



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Ceoltóir HND/Traineeship in Irish Traditional Music Performance, Instrument Making, Repair, and Maintenance Diploma (HND) Level 6 Higher

Course Overview :

This programme is suitable for all traditional musicians and singers who wish to develop their practical skills and musicianship. The course is practical in nature with an emphasis on performance, developing musical skills and musical instrument making and repair. The programme, in partnership with Na Piobairí Uilleann, offers students the opportunity to make: uilleann Pipes, harps, flutes, and mandolins. The course also offers classes in instrument repair and maintenance.

Programme Features

- Expert tuition in all aspects of Irish Traditional Music and music performance
- Workshops and guest lectures from leading exponents of the tradition
 - Performance opportunities
 - Musical Instrument Making
- Access to on campus recording studios
- Strong links to the music industry

Career Opportunities

The course offers career opportunities for graduates & our former students are now working successfully in areas such as Performance, Music production, Music management, Arts administration, Festival programming, Teaching, Field recording, and Sound engineering. Our instrument makers have the opportunity to supply instruments to the industry either through direct sales or through organisations such as Na Piobairí Uilleann.

APPLY at WWW.BCFE.IE

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There is also an opportunity for instrument makers to offer fully insured work placement to students on this course. All instrument making training is delivered by Na Piobairí Uilleann in NPU's Pipecraft training facility and students learn to make, repair and maintain uilleann pipes, flutes, harps and mandolins.

The Traineeship is free to access and open to potential participants of all ages and backgrounds including school leavers, older learners, and those in, or seeking employment.

For those currently unemployed or on a state funded allowance, a training allowance or income support is available.

Further details of this unique opportunity for musicians and instrument makers can be found via the college's website www.bcf.ie or by contacting course coordinator Paul Mc Grattan at paul.mcgrattan@bcfe.cdetb.ie

ANDY COONEY'S CRUISE OF IRISH STARS

By Ronan Tynan

www.andycooney.com

I've been with Andy on The Cruise of the Irish Stars for nearly 18 years. After I performed on my first Cruise many years ago, I realised that most of our cruise members were huge lovers of anything, or anyone from Ireland.

They all were passionate about Irish culture and were like sponges when it came to Irish history and most of all Irish Music, particularly the ballads. The people themselves are fantastic. They attend all the shows offered on the Cruise. There is an enormous camaraderie among these wonderful people, and boy do they know how to enjoy themselves. The Entertainers love coming for the week as they know they are performing to people who will enjoy their Show and have a huge affection for the performer, which brings out the very best in the artist.

There are over 25 different groups each year performing. From Trad groups, balladeers, soloists who are crossover artists, Classical like myself and Bill Lewis, The New York Tenors, Dancers, comedians and many more.

Andy puts this whole Team together, He works extremely hard and I'm sure his team are dedicated to making everyone secure and safe. It's just Awesome. Everyone arrives on the Ship really looking forward to the Trip. It's just like a massive Family reunion and at the end we all feel part

of everyone's family...

The Cruise of the Irish Stars for all the people that travel is an occasion all of us look forward to every year. The food is super. The cabins are spacious but the whole week is unforgettable.

Ronan Tynan.

Find out more about the 2025 Cruise of Irish Stars at www.cruiseofirishstars.com

ERIN RUTH : **2024 ALBUM COMING SOON** erinruth.hearnow.com

"There's New World enthusiasm in Erin's voice here, a different take on the ballad than we'd know at home. Her Irish songs come with a dash of California sunshine." – *Seán Laffey of IMM.*

"There's a rich purity to Erin's voice. A room-silencer, confident and earthy, her style is self-assured. She takes confident ownership with vocal ease and versatility." - *Anne Marie Kennedy of IMM.*

Equipped with a background in clarinet and voice lessons (performance, sight-reading, auditioning), piano, guitar, tenor saxophone, choir, jazz band, theory courses, and songwriting - Erin Ruth Thompson arrived in San Francisco in 2012. It was here where she gained exposure to Celtic music – and began performing alongside artists such as Culann's Hounds.

Erin's hometown of Tucson, AZ is enriched in Mexican tradition, but not a great deal of Celtic culture. However, as a child she was aware of her Celtic heritage. Erin's mother (a classical pianist and songwriter) brought home Celtic albums and films. Even at a young age Erin was fascinated by the sounds of Celtic music.

This year Erin will release her second self-funded album, containing Celtic classics as well as original material. She contributes both guitar and piano to this new album - and also engages a variety of other instrumentalists. Erin considers the album to be a celebration of finding a long-lost part of herself: Celtic music.

**For more details erinruth.hearnow.com
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LIVE IN KYOTO

Seán Laffey talks to Cillian Vallely about the brand new live album from Lúnasa and discovers it was recorded to thank their thousands of fans in Japan.



Photo : Yuki Kuroyanagi

Armagh native, Cillian Vallely, the uilleann piper with Lúnasa, is settled in New York. Our conversation was scheduled around his domestic agenda, actually the daily school run, and it seemed talking to him that the band have their life-work balance nailed down at this stage.

On the go since 1997, Lúnasa has toured extensively, clocking up thousands of performances in a staggering 36 countries. This is Irish music with a global appeal; Cillian tells me they have a huge following in Japan. “Audiences there are very enthusiastic and exceptionally knowledgeable, they know all our albums, they know each track intimately, and they are surprisingly young. Maybe it’s our energy that draws in a younger demographic. All I can say is that when we play in Japan, our concerts are filled with twenty-some-things having a wild time.

“Playing in Japan is a totally different experience for us, firstly the concerts are held early in the evening, often starting before 7pm. It’s a very civilised way of making music, the gigs finish really early and we are usually treated to dinner by our host promoters. It all helps build up a bond between us and it engenders trust and a professional rapport.”

For those who have been following Lúnasa for the past dozen years or so, you will be familiar with their flexible line up. Cillian explains the situation. “The band works with two interchangeable fiddlers, Sean Smyth who has been with Lúnasa since its inception and Colin Farrell, originally from Manchester, but now living in the USA. Seán is a Doctor with an active and busy medical practice in Ireland, and his touring time with the band is necessarily limited. For example on our recent March tour of America, Colin did the first two weeks of the tour and Seán did the rest of the tour.”

Cillian says working with people who understand the local music scene is absolutely essential. It keeps a career in motion, and that is exactly what they have been doing in Japan since their first tour there back in 2000.

The band line up for the *Live in Kyoto* album is: Kevin Crawford, flute & whistles, Trevor Hutchinson, double bass, Seán Smith, fiddle & low whistle, Ed Boyd guitar, and Cillian Vallely, uilleann pipes & low whistle. It is self produced with Trevor Hutchinson taking charge of the

recording and mixing. Yoko Nozaki was the executive producer; Yoko had the original idea and the vision to make a live album in Japan and make it happen. Cillian tells us more about the role Yoko played in the new album.

“Yoko brought us to Japan on our first tour in 2000 and has championed the band ever since, both via her record company Music Plant and as a concert promoter and tour manager. Yoko asked us if we’d consider recording a live album in Japan before she retired from the business and we wanted to honour and thank her for the years of support. She set up the venue, audience and took care of all the logistics in Japan. This allowed us to just concentrate on just getting the music together and making sure the recording and technical side of things were right.”

“As the music we played in Kyoto was all new, having three nights to perform the sets really helped us make the best recording”

The album was recorded live in Taku Taku, Kyoto, Japan on November 27th, 28th and 29th 2023. Cillian explains the advantages of recording over a three-night period. “Firstly, Taku Taku is a small venue, the audience are so close to the stage and we can work off each other’s energies. As the music we played was all new, having three nights to perform the sets really helps: firstly it allows for glitches that could make a single recording session problematic, which is always a worry when you are recording straight from the sound desk. Secondly as we became familiar with the room and the tunes, the music improved and progressed each night. Nearly all the takes came from the final night.”

We consider the phrase “all new music” and Cillian is keen to point out that they wanted to make something fresh for this live recording. “We’d toyed with the idea of a live album for a number of years, and we could have gone down the easy road of performing a kind of *Best Of Lúnasa* show. However, this album was far more exciting to work on, as we were pulling in music from all kinds of sources. Writing new

pieces and working on arrangements. None of us are precious about the music we bring to the group, whether that be music from obscure collections or our own new compositions, we have an understanding of what works and is appropriate to our established Lúnasa sound."

I observed that the unique selling point of a Lúnasa show or their album is their rhythm section. What other band for example includes an upright double bass? Cillian agrees. "Yes that's true, when we look for new pieces of music, we ask ourselves how would this fit into a groove from Trevor and Ed?"

Does touring with a double bass bring its own logistical problems. "Sometimes Trevor's instrument is collapsible and packs down for transport. There was one occasion, however, on a US tour where he hadn't access to his regular bass and we had to borrow a standard instrument. There was no room to breathe in the van on that trip!"

When it comes to touring in the USA, Cillian says they are playing an acoustic music circuit, and not necessarily one that caters to the Diaspora. In this regard I asked their publicist in the USA, Leah Rankin of Batcello PR, to give us an insight into how American fans can find out about upcoming Lúnasa tours. She said:

"Specifically for Lúnasa, I took over their social media channels while they were on tour so it was one less thing for them to manage during such an intense travel schedule. I also liaised with presenters and tapped into the media markets where Lúnasa would be playing for press coverage and radio play for their new album. As an artist I understand that wearing many hats and DIY-ing a tour, album, or festival can be daunting, and I'm happy to be able to provide what extra support I can while driving advocacy and promotion for the Celtic music, arts, and culture that I love so much."

Having just finished a major USA tour this past March, the band members are dispersing over the summer months to work on other projects. "We do a lot of workshops and teaching, there may be one or two festival appearances - they are great fun and very social in that we get to meet up

with other musicians and things like after-hours sessions are always a blast. Winter is the time we are usually on the road as a band."

Cillian himself is in demand in the USA; in April he toured with fiddler David Doocey and guitarist Alan G Murray, with one show in Michigan with the Battle Creek Symphony in a programme of music that included Shaun Davey's *The Brendan Voyage*. Cillian and David released an album of pipes and fiddle music in December 2023 called *The Yew and The Orchard*. They will tour Ireland in June.

Fans, both here in Ireland and in Japan and around the world, can be assured that *Live in Kyoto* is a collector's item. A vintage performance from what has been called the hottest Irish band on the planet. The Japanese music journalist Tadd Igarashi summed up the band's Japanese fans as follows: "For them, Lúnasa is a contemporary band as much as a traditional band, a 21st century Irish band. The Japanese fans always open their heart and listen closely to what they try to do, and will always wait for them here. It is such a beautiful relationship and this album is rock-solid proof!"

Live in Kyoto is available via www.lunasamusic.com



Photo : Yuki Kuroyanagi

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PADRAIG JACK

The singer-songwriter is in conversation with Mark Lysaght for Irish Music Magazine.



Padraig Jack has been emerging as a singer-songwriter of real quality in recent years. Raised on the Aran Islands (a Gaeltacht area) off the coast of Galway, his dad Barry Ronan is an acclaimed songwriter, so Padraig was steeped in music from an early age. On finishing school, he pursued a successful academic career, while performing and writing songs part-time, but eventually he decided to devote his energies to music.

He released his debut album *Making Sand* in 2020, produced by John Reynolds, who is well-known for his work with Sinéad O'Connor and Damien Dempsey. The title track was nominated for an RTÉ Folk Award, and the album received extensive airplay during the COVID pandemic. When restrictions were lifted, Padraig was in demand as a solo live

faithful to whatever a song requires and allowed me to develop my own sound."

Mark: "When did you start playing professionally?"

Padraig: "After college, I studied Computer Science and eventually completed a doctorate, while also playing music on an occasional basis. I realised over time that music was my true passion and decided to pursue it more actively. So it was a gradual transition, and I was able to combine other activities to make sure I stayed afloat! My solo album got some great reviews which was very encouraging, and I got a few great opportunities until the pandemic hit. I've supported Damien Dempsey, Sharon Shannon and played festivals such as TradFest in Dublin – I also work in the UK and further afield."

Mark: "Tell me about your forthcoming album?"

Padraig: "We'll be releasing the new album this autumn, it's called *These Shores* and the title track is being released as a single in mid-May. The song explores 'Irishness' in the context of Irish reunification, trying to see both sides of the divide. The album is being produced by John Reynolds and features a number of guest musicians such as Anthony Thistlethwaite, Fergal Scahill, Seán McKeon, Alan Doherty and Steve Wickham. On this recording I'm moving towards a more Irish traditional sound and these and other musicians help enormously to add colour to the songs. We're really happy with how the songs are shaping up, so I'm looking forward to finishing it."

Mark: "What are your plans for live shows?"

Padraig: "I'm touring in the UK with Miles Hunt on a regular basis and also gigging in Wales over the coming months. Once the album is released, we'll have a detailed list of dates available on my website and Facebook page. I will be playing shows in Dublin's Cobblestone, Róisín Dubh in Galway and on Inis Oirr at Áras Eanna in July. I'm lucky in that I'm in demand as a support act for artists like Damien Dempsey and Sharon Shannon, which gives me great exposure to audiences who may

"These Shores is a song about Irish reunification, trying to see both sides of the divide"

performer and has toured in Ireland, the UK and Germany, as well as guest appearances with Damien Dempsey and Foster and Allen, among others.

Padraig's second album is due later this year, and his latest single *These Shores* is out May 17th. I had a chance to listen to some early mixes of tracks from the album and the songs and arrangements are very strong and appealing, Padraig has a great vocal style with strong harmonies. We met recently via Zoom so I could find out more.

Mark: "Growing up on Inis Mór, how did your music evolve?"

Padraig: "I was raised in Kilronan where my parents run a restaurant and pub, my dad and his brothers played music, so I was exposed to a range of different influences growing up, including sean-nós singing at school. I listened to lots of pop and rock music as well as Irish artists such as Sinéad O'Connor, Enya, The Pogues and Paul Brady. As I got older, I started listening more to songwriters such as James Taylor, The Eagles and Tom Waits. I began to write my own songs and perform, mainly on my own where I feel very comfortable – however I also enjoy playing with a band. Collaborating with experienced people such as John Reynolds and Anthony Thistlethwaite has really helped me to be

not be aware of me or my music. The songs seem to have a broad appeal in Europe as well, and I've done some gigs in the Basque country where the reaction has been very positive, so I'm hoping to tour more widely once the album is out."

You can find out more online at www.padraigjack.com and www.facebook.com/padraigjackmusic



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BRIGID O'NEILL'S TRUTH & OTHER STORIES

One of Ireland's finest songwriters, Brigid O'Neill has recently released her new album. Gráinne McCool says it was a delight finding out about her life and music.



Gráinne: "How did you discover music?"

Brigid: "I have early memories of singing to an imaginary audience in my garden, with a hairbrush as a microphone! My mother was known as a singer in our family, but it was my father who introduced me to the songs of the great musicals and iconic singers and writers like Ella Fitzgerald, Cole Porter, Gershwin, and Rogers and Hart.

"I was particularly inspired by singers who moved between a variety of musical genres. Singers like Maura O'Connell, Mary Black, Linda Ronstadt and Bonnie Raitt, could switch from pure trad or folk to a blues or swing number and still interpret the song powerfully. I find people like Paul Simon and Paul Brady to be inspirational for the same reason. In terms of writing, I will always be inspired by writers like John Prine, Paul Simon, Kris Kristofferson or Janis Ian where incredible lyrics and economy of words are king."

Gráinne: "Was music your primary career?"

Brigid: "Actually no - I took the long way round to a music career as it's not the only love in my life! I didn't see music as a career until I started to write my own songs. Everything changed then. I loved my job as a Conservation Scientist, but music, writing and performing started to simply demand their own space in my life. It was a tough choice for me to give up my job to become a full-time musician, but I think the time was right to commit to music and make some albums - before it was too late!"

Gráinne: "Are you happy with your new album's reception?"

Brigid: "I've been truly thrilled with the response to the *Truth &*

Other Stories from audiences, reviewers and radio presenters alike. It has been particularly lovely to see this album reach completely new ears - all across Ireland and across the UK. Airplay has helped so much with that and I am forever grateful to the brilliant radio presenters who play my music. It was truly special to have the opportunity to record it in Nashville with producer Nelson Hubbard and I believe we managed to give it that Americana-Nashville sound without losing my own voice."

Gráinne: "What was your inspiration behind this new collection of music?"

Brigid: "While the album is not specifically about Covid and the pandemic, nevertheless many of the songs that I chose to record on it were written during that time and influenced by my observations and emotions then.

"I was also fascinated by the concept of 'truth' and intrigued by the concept of everyone having a different version of their truth: a personal viewpoint, their own narrative, their own story. The title plays a bit with shades of meaning - a 'counter positioning' if you like. The 'other stories' may challenge the truth, but 'the truth' retains that sense of the absolute. In the songs I hope to present the realities of different characters through short stories, and as I moved through the pandemic, different stories came to light. However, I have been living with these stories and these characters for some time now."

Gráinne: "Why did you release the track *Easy* as a single?"

Brigid: "The value of playing a new song in front of a live audience cannot be overstated. The instant reaction always gives an insight into whether a song is connecting or not. The reaction I received when I finally had the opportunity to play *Easy* in front of an

"In the songs I hope to present the realities of different characters through short stories"

audience following lockdown, made me release it as a single. I like to think it has an important message - born from those times, but still very relevant today."

Gráinne: "What has been the highlight of your career to date?"

Brigid: "It was a pretty special moment singing my original music on the stage of the iconic Grand Opera House in Belfast with Duke Special, Anthony Toner and Gareth Dunlop! But to be honest, every single one of my album launches have been a career highlight for me. So much work and craft, love and energy goes into making an album. Creating something totally new, with the input of so many significant others - it's alchemy!"

Brigid brings her *Truth and Other Stories* to The Green Room London on June 4th and the Kitchen Garden Cafe Birmingham on June 5th. Find out more at www.brigidoneill.com

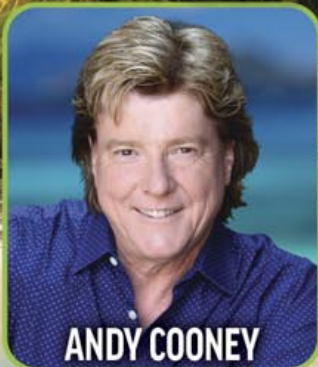
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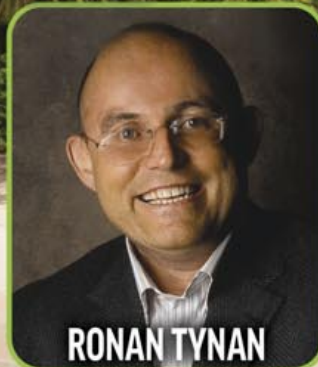


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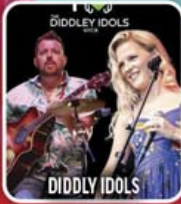
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Gf MORGAN'S MAGENTA

Seán Laffey put in a zoom call into Philadelphia to talk with Gf about the album *Magenta*.



When Anne Marie Kennedy reviewed Gf Morgan's *Magenta* for IMM, she wrote; "*Magenta*, is a savvy blend of guitar tunes, songs and airs, from Scottish, Irish and Celtic influences. There's depth and richness in the playing, an atmospheric album of gentle music and song from a seasoned artist."

In addition to his musical skills, Gf Morgan hosts a radio program on WDVR-FM in New Jersey entitled "Broadships & Broadwords" which traces the roots of balladry and songs and presents a mix of Celtic jigs,

tuning named for guitarist Danny Carnahan, with the low E tuned down to a C. "I try to find a tuning that fits the mood and temperament of the pieces I'm playing; you can hear some of those alternate tunings on the Welsh/Breton medley called the *Vale of the Red Wolf*."

Gf is a student of songs and there are some ancient ones on *Magenta*. "I love the old ballads, they have travelled down generations, from person to person and from place to place. Child Ballads from Scotland found their way into the Appalachians, Irish emigrants brought their songs to Colonial America and later in the post famine great immigration. I find knowing the roots and routes of a song, its history and provenance, help me perform it more authentically."

He cites *Bonnie George Campbell*, which he had as a fragment, with parts of it from a recording by Eamon O'Leary. "I fleshed it out and added an extra verse to make sense of the narrative, it's a tragic story of the fate of George Campbell at the hands of the rival MacDonald clan."

Another Scottish song is *Henry Martyne*, his version derives in part from one he heard sung by Joan Baez in the 1960s. "It probably dates back before 1600 and is based on a true story. It's a Scottish pirate ballad, some researchers say it is based on the exploits of the pirate Andrew Barton, its Child reference is 167/250." He's been a fan of song writers for many years and we spent a few moments talking about the work of Guy Clarke, Townes Van Zandt and Stan Rogers; he saw Stan play at John & Peter's, a small club in New Hope, Pennsylvania. "His songs resonated with me because they often spoke of the sea and the relationship coastal communities have with fishing."

Gf honours the memory of John Larsen and Peter Price whose venue John & Peter's hosted numerous internationally known folk artists in the 1970s and 1980s. The result was *Slán le Cara Maith*, a selection of *Women of Ireland/ Inisheer/ Eagle's Whistle*. "I put these together as a farewell to a pair of good friends. Music is more than enough, sometimes words get in the way." Gf combines two tunes we know so well over here as *Magenta's* opening track: *An Mhaighdean Mhara/ Southwind*, the latter he attributes to the version by Archie Fisher, which is an adaptation of *An Gotha Aneas* that was collected by Bunting. It

"I find knowing the roots and routes of a song, its history and provenance, help me perform it more authentically"

reels, strathspeys and hornpipes as well as traditional and more modern ballads, many of which are becoming classics in the genre.

We say our friendly hellos and before we get into the nitty-gritty of his new album, Gf (pronounced Jeff) tells me he is excited about an upcoming trip to Ireland. He'll be on a tour of the Wild Atlantic Way hosted by Altan's Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh. Although he has been playing Celtic Music for years, this will be his first trip to Ireland, reason enough to be excited. And he says he will be bringing a guitar and concertina with him as there promises to be numerous opportunities for a song or a tune. I reassured him that songs and tunes go with the territory on the Wild Atlantic Way.

Gf worked at one time as a photographer, back in the old analogue days of film, chemicals and darkroom wizardry, which was a fantastic grounding for a move into the digital realm and something similar happened when he began making albums. The years of playing music and performing in bands gave him the skill and the confidence to work solo in a studio setting. "I recorded *Magenta* at Sweet Creek Studios by John Fachtet. It is about 20 miles from me, it was a simple process really, just me playing and singing, nobody else."

I observed that his guitar sounds especially rich and full on the album and he tells me: "It's a lovely little Colling's Parlour guitar, made in Austin, Texas." He uses a number of tunings depending on the song or melody he is playing, with DADGAD, Dropped D, Standard and one

had an associated song telling of a ghost ship bringing home the souls of the Wild Geese; they sang this song that was heard on the wind by musicians who lived on the wild Atlantic coast of County Clare.

Perhaps Gf will have a similar experience when he takes the tour bus with Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh?

Listen to *Magenta* at www.gfmorgan.bandcamp.com and read more about his music and work at www.gfmorganballads.com



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30th ANNUAL CATSKILLS IRISH ARTS WEEK

July 14th – 20th, 2024. Deirdre Cronin in conversation with Director Paul Keating for Irish Music Magazine.



Photo : Tom Farley

Catskills Barn Dance in East Durham in July of 2023

Celebrating its 30th Annual 2024 Catskills Irish Arts Week in this renowned Summer School, it's as clear as a bright July morning that sparks will 'craic' across the concert stages and the skies above East Durham.

I can say that with great gusto & confidence, because prior to a lively conversation with **Paul Keating**, the esteemed Catskills Irish Arts Week Director, Paul had sent me a running list of artists for 2024. The names almost dance across the email page - impeccable brilliance of great musicians - that calibre is what this upstate New York festival has always been about.

Paul has this great evocative story about how behind his quest & vision to sign up the wonderful MacGabhann family from Co Meath (Antóin, Caitlín & Bernadette), he was guided by something in the ether that so beautifully reflects the ethos at the core of this great July week, and why music lovers & music learners are drawn to sunny East Durham year after year - the cross-weaving of artists from both Ireland & America.

"The MacGabhanns are no strangers to CIAW, deep roots in tradition in Co Meath, with strong links to Clare, Donegal, and more, but an expansiveness so evident when you see young Caitlín's work with Edwina Guckian & ITMA, Antóin an iconic figure in Irish music and both Bernadette and Caitlín with a fresh invigorating sense of musical adventure & style.

But what compelled me in 2024 is also linked to a rich memory of a particularly brilliant session from 2009 when the MacGabhanns were on our staff. Furlongs pub, 4 am in the small hours! You couldn't go home to bed if you tried - this was a session typical of our Arts Week where the girls from Co Meath (Caitlín & Bernadette) met the Detroit and Baltimore boys (Sean McComiskey & Sean Gavin), finding common ground in CIAW, tearing into tunes they hadn't realised they shared, like *Miss McGuinness*, *Cramers*, *The Kinnegad Slashers*, *The Dances at Kinvara*, the collective bonding delighting both audience and musicians alike. That led onto a collaborative CD that was launched at The Catskills in 2010, their chosen band name NicGaviskeys a reflection of their connection.

I ask Paul about the CD name *Home Away from Home*. The recording of which was set between Maryland, Miltown Malbay, Donegal and

Chicago. I remark about how placenames like that almost sing to the power of summer schools like CIAW triggering so much in creative music connection far and wide.

"Exactly. And that's just one story of the unexpectedness, the music magic, that brings students back to us with a sense of joy year after year."

Paul's words make me reflect on the brilliance of artists set to land in East Durham in 2024, the promise and prospect of what might happen. I think about the hugely-respected Mary Bergin, regarded as the best tin-whistle musician between Ireland and the US. A former student says it best: "It's one thing to hear Mary play on *The Feadoga Stain* albums. But in the class, it's more special, you get to see the fingers move, hear the clockwork rolls, feel the pulse, strength and subtlety in her music."

And then there's Gradam Ceoil's Young-Musician-2021 Sorcha Costello, who will bring a fascinating dynamic. Daughter of brilliant concertina musician Mary McNamara, Sorcha's fiddle music is steeped in the best tradition of East Clare, and she's also a recently qualified Music Therapist.

Paul is also looking forward with relish to the wonderful Roscommon-linked flute-player Catherine McEvoy, her presence reminding us of the late Mike McHale, the genial Catskills-based musician from Tusk; Mike's flute music still echoes in the hills.

Paul is so pleased to have acclaimed musician Diarmuid O'Meachair onboard. "As an accordion player and sean-nós singer from Cúil Aodha in West Cork, I wasn't surprised that Diarmuid was awarded Gradam Ceoil Young-musician-of-the-year in 2022.

Singer Niamh Parsons has one of the most distinctive voices in Irish music. Great Scottish balladeer Archie Fisher described Niamh as 'an artist that comes along once or twice in a generation'. Niamh will bring a breath of fresh air with her warm spirit of generosity across the week along with Graham Dunne - in her own words: *For me, the song matters more than my own voice, I'm more a songstress than a singer, carrier of tradition.*

"There's a great buzz of anticipation for July - the *anything can happen magic* between Irish and US based artists"

Considering Paul Keating's own deep family roots in County Clare, it's a bonus to have the gifted harpist and composer Aisling Lyons on the staff, and he's not surprised when I regale to him a review that praised Aisling for 'being *both* an excellent musician & an outstanding teacher'.

There's a great buzz of anticipation for July - my own enthusiasm linked to what Paul terms the 'anything can happen magic' between Irish and US based artists - I think of how Siobhán Long of The Irish Times wrote of Armagh piper Conor Mallon's *keen instinct for the cinematic qualities of the pipes* - or the huge influence Catskills based fiddle-player Rose Conway has had on young students in upstate New York - listening to her play is like a reminder that Rose brings the *pearl* to her home place Pearl River.

Excellent journalist (and regular CIAW artist) Dan Neely wrote about piper Joey Abarta's brilliance and how richly Joey deserves the many recent awards he's been granted. Paul Keating speaks with warm eloquence about how Arts Week will be lit by both Boston-based Joey and his hugely talented wife Jackie O'Reilly. "Joey & Jackie will bring

their outstanding gifts along - Jackie's dance artistry is of such a high calibre and that somehow transmutes into a very beautiful natural style - probably because Jackie feels no need to over-egg things - her creative choreography speaks for itself and musicians are really drawn to that."

Students will love being taught by young Connemara sean nos singer and multi-instrumentalist Seamus O'Flaherty - a teacher who accumulated a total of 23 All-Ireland-Titles from aged 7, and is already acclaimed among the finest ambassadors of Irish music.

Padraig McEneaney brings so much to his twice-daily dance classes, his genial, dapper and unflappable style matched by his smiling encouragement radiating to all his pupils, many of whom are so energised, they sign up for a twice-daily creative writing class as well!

Céilís are packed and terrific, such swing and brio in the brilliant band music of Pauline Conneely, Brendan Dolan, and more. Great Cavan sisters at the helm, hoteliers Emma & Nichola Hand of the Shamrock House, like human dynamos - but with smiles! Unstinting warmth matched by true professionalism.

Paul talks about another layer to Arts Week. "The afternoon presentations at CIAW have always drawn large appreciative crowds. And before the deep sadness that descended on all of us in the wake of the great Mick Moloney's passing, Mick himself was central to that. To be honest, that sadness remains undimmed, and so it feels good to report that Mick will continue to be honoured here. There will be a new documentary about the work undertaken by Mick and his great friend Leni Sloan. Also, we have Liz Hanley along this year accompanied by Jefferson Hamer of The Murphy Beds fame. Mick included Liz for many years as part of his Green Fields of America ensemble; both Liz and Jefferson gave astonishing contributions in fiddle, mandolin and evocative vocals in the New York Irish Arts Center tribute concert for Mick. Liz and Jefferson will launch a new CD that includes the great Eamon O'Leary. There'll be talks by the brilliant Gerry (fiddle) O'Connor (The Rose in the Gap about music of Oriel) and The MacGabhannns on eras from The Church Street Dances in Dublin's 1960s to their home in Ashbourne annually on RTE's Ceili House. And

also a talk called *Mick Moloney's Rambles — 'Across the Western Ocean' on a Green Road Lit by Songs Across the Sky*'.

Logistics-wise, here's what I wish I knew before I came, so take note as it may impact your plans for 2024! The accommodation is generally very good. Ditto the consensus on food. Good fish dishes and fresh veg in the Shamrock, real NY deli-sandwiches at Lawyer's General Store (with its pleasing symmetrical shop-front and a porch-seat for Democrats or Republicans!). No need to drive everywhere, a newly-built proper 'Irish footpath' helps. Some session venues are further afield, carpools and cabs helped. Unlike a lot of festivals, events don't clash, no need to suffer major FOMO (fear of missing out!).

It feels apt to end with words the aforementioned Mick Moloney wrote about the endeavours of Paul and other staff members in shaping the iconic festival: *The Arts Week is curated with exquisite attention to excellence and inclusiveness....truly an Irish-American community festival at the deepest level.*



Sorcha Costello at the 2023 CIAW

Photo : Tom Farley



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THE COMPANION TO IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Edited by Fintan Vallely. 958 pages. ISBN: 9781782056027, €69.00. Seán Laffey chats to Fintan for Irish Music Magazine.

Photo courtesy Maurice Cumming/TC4



In 1999 the *Companion to Irish Traditional Music* was the first A-Z encyclopaedia-style reference book for Irish Traditional Music. Its importance can be gauged by that fact that the first edition is now selling for around €150 on specialist book websites. The second edition came out in 2011, it was twice as long, and it had digital editions on iBooks and Kindle, a good thing as the print version was completely sold out by 2017.

Seven years later, the most advanced volume of *The Companion* is now published. Seán Laffey talks to its editor Fintan Vallely about the process of compiling this essential encyclopaedia of traditional music.

Fintan describes *The Companion* for us: “The new book has more than 900 pages and 600,000 words, there are 840 biographies, a thousand other articles, three hundred images and music transcriptions.” He says there is clearly a demand for the book and the

mature adults, but as the years have gone by the winners in this category are younger. Which indicates how the level of teaching and the standard of playing have improved, certainly in this century.” This third edition of *The Companion* is the first printed book to cover such fleadh winners comprehensively.

How has the job of editing evolved since 1999? “For the first edition most of the entries were on paper, some were typed, some were hand written and others came by fax, which was a problem as they were thermally printed and they fade over time, a key task was to get everything typed up, before I began editing and condensing the entries. The sources for the second edition were more digital but still there were many paper entries. Almost 25 years on, most if not all of the raw data arrived digitally, which is easier to work with, but conversely the actual volume of information has been much larger.”

Will *The Companion* be online at any time? “Possibly down the road, as there are ongoing negotiations to have the material taken over by the ITMA’s website. But, as before, there will be a digital edition available.”

In summary the publishers say: ‘Its eighteen hundred entries cover the full gamut of Traditional music in Ireland and internationally, dealing with: all tune types; style, composition and arrangement; ballads, sean-nós and Irish-language song; step and sean-nós dance, céilí and sets; solo playing and sessions; competitions and awards; céilí bands, groups and professionalism; instruments; technology; organisations, media and promotion; teaching and learning; education and transmission; collectors and archives; history and revival; performers, stylists and commentators; broadcasting and recording; women in traditional music; Irish music in all Irish counties and diaspora cities worldwide.

‘Much of the music notated in the book can be listened to as well – on an accompanying digital-download album, which is also separately available as both a double CD and DVD.’

Fintan is not resting on his laurels: “My next – and, I hope, last – book which will be out later this year is the very first comprehensive history

“In a reference book, just factual information is what is needed...”

very fact that it is a book has many advantages: it can be studied at leisure, you can flick through pages and discover connections that are not at first obvious, for example the biographies set each musician in their time and place.

The task of editing such a mammoth book might daunt anyone who hasn’t been with the project since its inception. Fintan’s time as a reviewer with the *Irish Times* taught him that every sentence has to count. “Over 200 musicians contributed information to *The Companion*, and I had the task of condensing their words. The first thing to do as an editor is to remove the superlatives, as in a reference book, just factual information is what is needed, in a consistent house style.”

One collaborator Fintan Farrell from Kildare supplied Fintan with his huge All-Ireland Fleadh database: “All the results for each competition from 1951 to 2023, each with first second and third place winners, some 47,000 entries, which we reduced down to focus on 14 major categories to permit detection of patterns in the fleadhs themselves; for example Clare has the largest number of winners. You can spot an age shift too, during the first 10 or so years senior winners tended to be

of the traditional-music drum — *Beating Time—the story of the Irish bodhrán.*”



Fintan Vallely and his sister Sheena at the launch of the 2nd edition of the *Companion* in 2011

Photo courtesy Nútán

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JULIE ABBÉ'S OUT OF THE ASHES

Anne Marie Kennedy spoke to Julie about her background, making the album and themes she is preoccupied with in her writing.



Photo : Paul Blakemore

Julie Abbé's most recent album *Out of the Ashes* is a compilation of original songs, in a bluesy, jazzy, style that contrasts with her first LP.

Julie: "As a kid, I played a bit of classical piano, but I think I learnt music mainly through being a dancer for a local folk band from my native Poitou region in France called "Les Brandous" who were also collectors and composers. I was also steeped in theatre which taught me a great deal about listening. My dream was to become a theatre actor, but after moving to England at age 22 this gradually shifted to a desire to sing, because singing, just like theatre, is a form of storytelling. It is about channelling and bringing a text to life and I find that the addition of a melody that really moves me, helps me access the emotions and hold on to them authentically for longer. And in writing, my songs come when I have a strong emotion that I need to express, or when something really significant has happened and I want to capture it. I record the idea on my phone and start developing it. Sometimes I wake up with a tune in my head. If I find a poem that I love, I look at it and start singing it and often it's those first spontaneous ideas that I keep."

AMK: "Out of the Ashes encapsulates great writing, arrangements and your good fortune with guest musicians."

Julie: "To record this album, which gathers 12 original songs of mine at the crossroad of folk, jazz and blues, my dream was to gather Ewan Bleach, with whom I used to be in a band 15 years ago, to capture the swing/jazzy/bluesy aspects of the album, and my old friend Paul Johnson (who wrote the melody for the 2nd song) to bring in the folky/world music vibes I needed on certain tracks. Both are incredible multi-instrumentalist virtuosos, whose inspired improvisations always say something deep from the heart. I was also lucky to have James Grunwell from Unitary Audio as my producer and guitarist.

"I was over the moon to hear that they were all available and up for it! We recorded the whole thing in 3 days in April 2022 at the Brown

House Studio near Oxford, joined by the amazing Sam Quintana on the double bass. James and I had prepared a demo version which they all recorded onto. I then re-recorded the vocals from my home studio and my friend Isoldè added some backing vocals. The album takes the listener on a deep journey around a full cycle of love. The first part reminisces and celebrates the beauty of what was once, like a spring and summer full of romance and sensuality, while also acknowledging the doubts and difficulties encountered along the way.

"For example, the opening track *Lanternes d'Or* is a light swing tune that talks about wanting to see someone again after a first, promising encounter, or *Take Me Away*, a sultry blues which should delight all the lovers out there!

"The second part honours the different stages of the grieving process I had to go through when it ended. *OUT*, helped me process my anger, *Medusa* speaks to the end of the denial phase, when you finally surrender to letting go, *Medicine Tune* is a soothing, wordless song that brings in acceptance and healing. And after the separation of autumn and the bleakness of winter, spring returns, the heart opens again and a new cycle begins, like the one I'm dreaming about in the final song called *Incantation*.

"There is something about the transmuting of pain into beauty that music offers that is very beneficial to the human soul"

"Making this album was a deeply transformative and empowering process for me and I hope it will bring much love, joy and healing to whoever listens to it. There is something about the transmuting of pain into beauty that music (or any other form of creativity), offers that is very beneficial to the human soul, and I would highly recommend anyone who is going through grief to dive into their creativity to express and transform their emotions.

"The album is now out on all music platforms, on Bandcamp or from my website www.julieabbé.com - please join my mailing list or follow me on Facebook and Instagram @julieabbemusic."



Photo : Paul Blakemore

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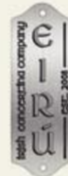
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MALIN LEWIS'S HALOCLINE

Seán Laffey in conversation with Malin Lewis for Irish Music Magazine.

Photo : Jonathan Doyle



Malin Lewis is creating not just groundbreaking Celtic music, but using their pioneering pipe-making to develop a newly invented two octave Smallpipe; an instrument which opens up Irish and Celtic music to hundreds of pipe band players.

"My parents were the caretakers of Eilean Shona, an island in Loch Moidart and an idyllic place to grow up. My parents love Irish music and Sharon Shannon's albums are some of their favourites.

"We moved to the Isle of Skye when I was 7; it was a big lifestyle change with a population increase from four to ten thousand. The local school fostered traditional music and we had a choice between the Clarsach and the Highland pipes. I took up the pipes and was immediately taken by its raw sound."

the pipes and the tradition is showcased throughout their debut album *Halocline*. Malin explains the significance of its title. "A halocline is a layer of water that occurs between salt and freshwater when there's a rapid change in salinity, for example when a river flows into the sea; I first saw one when swimming in an estuary in the Isle of Skye. Halocline is a metaphor for being trans and living in a space between a binary. I'm proud to be trans and through my music I hope to share compassion and the joy of and being yourself. Having an instrument with next to no repertoire creates an almost completely blank canvas for which to compose. The range and versatility of the instrument is incredibly inspiring to write for and it opens up a whole world of possibilities for Scottish piping."

"I'm proud to be trans and through my music I hope to share compassion and the joy of and being yourself"

Malin became enthralled by the pipes and went on to study at Plockton Music School and The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with an ERASMUS exchange at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. "As a teenager I was so intrigued by how the pipes actually worked, how simple wooden tubes and reeds can make music; I experimented with twigs and a hand drill to make rudimentary chanters. Later I came across the work of Donald Lindsay who was 3D printing a new breed of Scottish Smallpipes. Smallpipes have a straight bore which means they are capable of accessing the even numbered overtones starting with an octave and a fifth. With a touch of engineering and science, many things are made possible.

"Lindsay's chanter is chromatic, has two octaves and is pitched an octave lower than the uilleann pipes. I asked to meet Lindsay who generously shared his work with me. In the interim I studied the new chanter and became familiar with its layout, so that when we eventually met, I was able to play the instrument there and then. The first tune I played was Michael McGoldrick's *Farewell to Whalley Range*.

"I began making Smallpipes at fourteen after approaching a local woodturner for lessons. My first Lindsay chanter was rough and ready but I was amazed how good it sounded. As my woodturning improved, the chanters improved. Today they are intricately carved instruments which I perform and record with. The Lindsay chanters are made of two parallel tubes joined back to back, almost doubling the resonant length compared to a normal smallpipe chanter. There are 12 holes for ten digits, and while it takes time to adapt to the new finger positions, if you play Highland pipes it's not a major rethink."

Having toured with Irish uilleann piper Jarlath Henderson, Malin has taken the pipes to new levels of innovation. Malin's deep connection to

Halocline features Luc McNally on bouzouki, guitar and electric guitar, Cammy Maxwell on double bass and synth, Maija Kauhanen on kantele and vocals, Matthew Herd on saxophone, Michael Owers on brass, Stuart Brown on percussion, and Sally Simpson on fiddle. In *Halocline* Malin paints an intricate picture of sound using personal stories and a deep connection to their West coast tradition.

The album was recorded at GloWorm in Glasgow by producer and engineer Andy Bell. Three singles have been released from the record: *Elision*, *The Old Inn* and *Hiraeth*.

The album will be available digitally, on CD, black LP and limited edition blue LP from Friday 3 May 2024 and is available to order now at <https://hudsonrecords ffm.to/halocline>



Photo : Jonathan Doyle

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MEET COLM KEEGAN

Anita Lock interviews the ever-versatile Colm Keegan to discuss an upcoming album, summer festivals, and bus tours.



Colm Keegan has collaborated with his equally versatile wife, Laura Durrant (Scottish cellist)—since they met in 2012 while touring with Celtic Thunder—to produce high-quality entertainment and educational opportunities that have gone beyond their musical journeys. Today, the well-loved power duo is known for combining their musical talents with entrepreneurship through online lessons, Colm’s radio show, Keegan Bus Tours, musical and festival performances, and an upcoming live album, *Live From Dublin*.

Anita: Give us a brief history behind creating your new album, *Live From Dublin*.

Colm: We’ve wanted to do a live album for a while now, and what better opportunity than performing live to a local audience on stage post-COVID! Even though we knew this would be an extraordinary occasion in a memorable show venue of my past, returning to live performances after a long hiatus was nerve-racking. Regardless, the experience ranked among the most fulfilling and unforgettable performances I can recall, making this album one that I am incredibly proud of.

Anita: What makes *Live From Dublin* unique?

Colm: When tourism closed down with COVID, we were thankful for online platforms to keep performing throughout the pandemic. Still, nothing compares to playing before a live audience, and five minutes before our gig was probably the most nervous I remember. Yet, I’ll always cherish our decision to take the initiative to record the show and turn it into an album because the emotional change was significant as our nervousness instantly became adrenaline once we stepped onstage and heard the applause.

Anita: What is your favourite track from the album and why?

Colm: While each track played essential roles for us, two tracks bring back special memories: *Beautiful Day* and *Loch Lomond*. *Beautiful Day* was our “false ending” to the show, and *Loch Lomond* became our encore. *Beautiful Day* is a song we wrote together before our first solo US gig in 2014, which sends a reminder that every day is beautiful, no matter how dark and dull, as long as you have something you love. The crowd-pleasing *Loch Lomond* is also where I proposed to Laura, and we had our wedding.

Anita: What is the latest on the Keegan Bus Tour schedule?

Colm: Laura and I are qualified teachers and performers who have witnessed the impact of Celtic culture on all corners of the globe. Because we have a deep passion for everything related to the Celtic culture, it’s been our dream job to host tours that combine culture, history, music, and language. So, in 2017, we kicked off the Keegan Bus Tours project. By 2018, we doubled our offerings, and this year, we celebrated our busiest season with five sold-out tours across Ireland and Scotland and a chartered Scottish River Cruise.

Anita: Give us a brief overview of what guests can expect when attending your tours.

Colm: We limit our tours to one bus to personally interact with each passenger while showcasing tours on the best of Ireland’s and Scotland’s culture, language, industries, music, geography, mythology, and much more. To build familiarity and communication with each other before Day 1, we invite our passengers to a private WhatsApp group and host Zoom calls before the trip. Laura and I will join you on our tours and aim to look after you from the second you arrive until the second you go home.

Anita: Tell us about your summer festival lineup in the US.

Colm: Laura and I are excited to perform at various venues this summer in the US alongside our adopted family member, the massively talented keyboard player and producer Brian McGrane of our second studio album, currently in the works. Our tour will combine midweek performances, weekend festivals, and unique opportunities for us to

“It’s been our dream job to host tours that combine culture, history, music, and language”

connect with you. Check our website below for festival listings and a forthcoming detailed schedule!

Anita: You will also be involved in the Iowa Irish Festival. Tell us about that upcoming event.

Colm: While the Iowa Irish Fest has become one of our favourite weekends as we look forward to catching up with our musician friends, this year is unique since it lands on my and my youngest son’s birthdays. We bring the kids along, and they love their time there. It’s an extraordinary weekend, and we’re delighted to be part of their lineup again this summer.

Upcoming shows and so much more: <https://colmkeegan.com/>

Live From Dublin:

<https://www.celticthunder.com/shop/product/colm-laura-keegan-live-from-dublin-cd/>

Keegan Bus Tours: <https://colmkeegan.com/keegan-bus-tours/>

Contact: ColmKeeganTours@gmail.com

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IOWA IRISH FEST 2024

Souvenir Supplement

Featuring : Welcome Messages, Meet the Entertainment Director, The 2024 Line-up, Other Cultural Activities



YOUR SUPPLEMENT GUIDE TO IOWA IRISH FEST 2024

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

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IOWA IRISH FEST DOWNTOWN WATERLOO



FEST HIGHLIGHTS

Iowa Irish Fest is a jam-packed, three-day event, with activities for people of all ages! Children can immerse themselves in storytelling sessions or participate in interactive workshops while learning to play traditional Celtic instruments.

Family Fun & Learning Area

The Family Fun & Learning Area is the heart of family excitement at Iowa Irish Fest! This area is designed for families with children of all ages and offers a plethora of activities. Kids can channel their inner adventurers as they conquer the towering rock-climbing wall, while others can transform into magical creatures with dazzling face paint. Don't forget about the Dance and Music workshops, as well as the Celtic language classes for beginners! Each corner offers new surprises and opportunities for families to bond. Create cherished memories that will last a lifetime at Iowa Irish Fest!

Dogs of Ireland

Did you know there are over 200 dog breeds in the world and only nine are native to Ireland? From the Irish Terrier to the Irish Wolfhound, these breeds are very well respected and can aid in hunting, farm work and more. Learn more about these breeds and maybe even meet a few by visiting the Dogs of Ireland exhibit at Iowa Irish Fest!



Prince & Princess Competition

Does your child have what it takes to be this year's Fest Prince or Princess? Don't worry! There's no need to prepare an elaborate costume or rehearse a performance – simply bring your little ones to the Fest! This delightful event encourages children to embrace their inner royalty and have fun without any pressure to prepare in advance!

Learn more about the
FAMILY FUN & LEARNING AREA
by visiting
IOWAIRISHFEST.COM
/FAMILY-FUN-LEARNING-AREA



AUG. 2-4, 2024

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OPENING MESSAGES



Photo : Greg Tagtow

Chad Shipman Iowa Irish Fest Director

Hello friends and fans of Irish culture and entertainment! I just wanted to take a moment to extend a heartfelt thank you to all our incredible supporters over the past 17 years. Your unwavering dedication has been the cornerstone of our success, especially as we navigated through the challenges of the past few years during the pandemic.

Despite the hurdles, we are thrilled to announce that our festival has not only endured but also thrived. None of this would have been possible without the steadfast support of our community and the dedication of our team. With over 100 volunteer committee members working tirelessly behind the scenes, we've been able to sustain and maintain our beloved Iowa Irish Fest.

For those who have yet to experience the magic of Iowa Irish Fest, now is your chance! Join us from August 2nd to the 4th in downtown Waterloo, Iowa, as we showcase some of the finest entertainers from across the globe. Get ready to be mesmerized by world-class performances that celebrate the rich tapestry of Irish culture and heritage.

But that's not all! Our festival promises a diverse array of attractions to delight every attendee. Explore our multiple beverage showcases featuring beloved brands like Guinness, indulge in the finest whiskey selections, and partake in educational and cultural workshops throughout the weekend. Families are also in for a treat with our dedicated family area, offering engaging activities like Irish-themed archaeological digs and much more.

Whether you're a seasoned festival-goer or embarking on your first Irish adventure, there's something for everyone at Iowa Irish Fest. Allow us to immerse you in an authentic cultural experience unlike any other, right here in the heart of Iowa.

So, mark your calendars, gather your loved ones, and join us for a weekend filled with music, food, merchandise, and unforgettable memories.

Let us be your hosts as we welcome you to our vibrant community and share the spirit of Ireland with open arms.

Thank you for your continued support, and we can't wait to see you this August for an experience you won't soon forget!

Rory Dolan Sr. : President of the Cedar Valley Irish Cultural Association

At this year's Iowa Irish Fest, it is with a mix of reverence and excitement that I step into the role of President of the Cedar Valley Irish Cultural Association, following in the footsteps of our dear friend and founder, Mr. James Walsh. His legacy and spirit will continue to guide us as we embark on the 17th year of our beloved Iowa Irish Fest in downtown Waterloo.

Our festival has always been more than just a gathering; it's a celebration of community, culture, and camaraderie. With a dedicated circle of hard-working volunteers, we've built an event that embodies the very essence of family-friendly entertainment.

I am thrilled to invite each and every one of you to join us on August 2nd, 3rd and 4th for a weekend filled with captivating entertainment, rich culture, and boundless fun. Let's come together to honour the past, celebrate the present, and embrace the future of the Iowa Irish Fest.

See you there!

Kate Schildroth : Head of Iowa Irish Fest Workshops

The 2024 Iowa Irish Fest Workshop Program offers a world of opportunities for guests to explore the richness of Irish and Irish American heritage.

Workshops are free of charge with paid admission to the Fest, and adults and children are encouraged to enrich their understanding of Irish music, Irish Language, history, and culture.

Watch the schedule for workshops covering a wide range of traditional instruments such as Harp, Uilleann Pipes, Bodhrán drum, Fiddle, Rhythm Bones and more. Visitors are welcome to attend workshops on Irish Language, the Geology of Ireland, Irish History through Rebel Songs, Hurling and Rugby, the Poetry of Yeats set to music, hands-on with fibre arts and many exciting opportunities to plan your next Travel and Tour in the Emerald Isle.

This year, the Iowa Irish Fest Workshop Program will also launch an exhibit on Irish Dance and Irish Dance Costumes, with a unique opportunity for visitors to see and feel these gorgeous dresses up close, and to learn more about the intricacies of Irish dance. This is a very special exhibit that you won't want to miss!

Fáilte chuig Feis na hÉireann Iowa, 2024!



FESTIVAL ENTERTAINMENT LINE-UP 2024

Three Days of Live Music Across Seven Stages.



One of the most anticipated parts of Iowa Irish Fest is the live music! With an extensive list of Irish musicians and bands to entertain guests all weekend long, the Fest is the place to be this August! Musicians from all over the world travel to Iowa to be part of Iowa Irish Fest!

WHO WILL HEADLINE ON FRIDAY?

Scythian is a group of college friends that 12 years ago found they shared a love for Celtic Music. Since the beginning, they have headlined at multiple festivals including the U.S. Celtic Festival Circuit, Bluegrass/Americana Festival Circuit and of course, Iowa Irish Fest. Scythian is a crowd favourite because of their ability to engage with their audience no matter the venue, no matter the circumstance.

WHO WILL HEADLINE ON SATURDAY?

Enter The Haggis is a Toronto-based rock band composed of six individuals. Their songs offer singalong melodies that tell the tales of everyday hard-working people, often faced with insurmountable challenges. Popular songs like *One Last Drink*, *Down With The Ship* and *Lancaster Gate* have been streamed millions of times. Their show is exciting and dynamic, featuring unpredictable and spontaneous moments.

WHO WILL HEADLINE ON SUNDAY?

The High Kings group formed in June 2007. It didn't take long during their first studio rehearsal for them to realize the way their individual voices blended meant they were onto something special. The High Kings play 13 instruments between them, creating a unique sound and atmosphere that they still showcase to this day. The High Kings continue to set the bar extremely high for Irish Folk bands across the world and are widely regarded to be at the forefront of the genre.



ENTERTAINMENT ALL WEEKEND LONG! GET TO KNOW OUR RETURNING ACTS!

The Screaming Orphans are a chart-topping all-sister Celtic folk and pop band from Donegal. They are known worldwide for their award-winning sound combining original pop songs with a unique take on traditional Irish music. From an early age, the Diver sisters entertained international audiences around Ireland accompanying their mother, legendary céilí singer Kathleen Fitzgerald.

The Dublin City Ramblers have thrilled audiences worldwide with their unique blend of Ballads, Folk, humour, wit and foot-tapping music. Their impressive career has spanned more than 35 years, with over 30 albums, top ten hits and several awards for best Ballad/Folk Group and to top it all off, 8 Gold albums. It is certainly no wonder why they are classed as Ireland's Number One Group!

Seo Linn (Kev, Daithí, Keith and Stiofán) have a shared passion for performing, writing, recording, the Irish language and playing music together. Their influences vary from traditional Irish to old school rock, modern pop to classical orchestra – all of which can be felt in some way through the writing and recording of their own version of contemporary folk. Their songs and style mesh driving rhythm, energetic instrumentals and soaring vocals, all tinkled with delicate nuances that create a fascinating soundscape with which to deliver their words.

Colm & Laura Keegan : Irish singer-songwriter Colm Keegan and his wife, Scottish Cellist Laura Durrant, are best known as principal performers in the world-renowned singing group Celtic Thunder. Joining the group in 2011, they have been featured on three Celtic Thunder DVDs and four CDs, the CDs repeatedly rocketing to #1 on the Billboard World Music Chart. The duo have performed on many of the world's most prominent stages in the United States, Canada and Australia, as well as on two Celtic Thunder cruises.

Ian Gould, an immigrant from Belfast, Northern Ireland, began his musical career as a kid playing in bands throughout Ireland, the UK & Europe. Ian is now a solo artist and a singer/songwriter. He has been performing internationally for more than 20 years. Through his music and travels, Ian has had the privilege of living and studying in Perth, Scotland and living in other European cities such as London, Brussels and Amsterdam.

Blame Not the Bard is on a mission to bring alive songs and stories of Ireland. Expertly blending their captivating storytelling and historical knowledge with fiery instrumentals and musical prowess, Blame Not the Bard's high-energy show will get your hands clapping and feet tapping through an afternoon of down-to-earth entertainment you won't soon forget!

Trinity Irish Dancers : Since 1982, Trinity Irish Dance has brought the art of Irish Dance to Chicago, Chicagoland Suburbs, Milwaukee, Madison and Wisconsin. Trinity Irish Dancers offer award-winning,

affordable Irish Dance classes taught by patient and experienced teachers. Trinity provides an energetic environment with inspiring instruction that helps children develop a love of Irish dance, increases coordination, builds friendships and drives one's self-confidence to perform in front of an audience!

Hannah Flowers is a singer and harpist from St. Paul, Minnesota. She was classically trained from a young age and discovered Traditional Irish music as a teenager. She is best known for her sensitive and lyrical accompaniment of songs.

Wylde Nept started when a few of the guys found each other during a camping trip at a Celtic music festival and have been playing ever since. Their music, primarily inspired by traditional folk, is lively, fun and sure to get your face smiling and foot tapping. "I find the spirit of the songs and then link music to feelings," says Westan James, Wylde Nept's lead singer.

The Crowfoot Rakes is made up of five individuals. This Des Moines-based band specializes in high energy Celtic style folk music with a strong respect for their midwestern roots. They are experts on multiple different instruments, from banjos to accordions to pipes and more!

Ballyheigue is a six-piece Irish band specializing in traditional instrumental and vocal Irish songs. Comprised of family members, Jim, Alison, and Emily Ott, with Carl Droessler, Rob McCullough and Seth Enz, they have played at various locations all around the tri-state area.

GET TO KNOW OUR NEW ACTS!

Elephant Sessions formed in 2012, this group combines trad, funk and electronica to entertain audiences all across the UK, Europe, North America and Australia. Gigging extensively around the UK,

they swiftly built a fan base and went on to release their debut album *The Elusive Highland Beauty* in 2014 to critical acclaim.

The Bow Tides are a powerhouse Celtic ensemble led by three Irish fiddlers: Ellery Klein, Jessie Burns and Katie Grennan. Grammy-nominated bassist Eric Thorin and guitarist Jeff Lindblade were enlisted to hold down the low end.

Onóir formed in August of 2020. Onóir is a modern Irish male folk group, who sing harmony-focused songs and musical arrangements. Onóir is currently touring their theatre show across Ireland, the UK, and abroad.

The Byrne Brothers originally from Donegal, Ireland, are a multi-award-winning family band and Irish dancing group who are currently taking the Irish American scene by storm! Each member of the band is a county champion musician and Ulster champion Irish dancer.

"The Dublin City Ramblers have thrilled audiences worldwide with their unique blend of ballads, folk, humour, wit and foot-tapping music"

The Peelers now based in Montreal, were formed in 1999 in North Glengarry. Less than an hour from the city, they immersed themselves in a hotbed of Gaelic culture which smashed head-on into a love of whiskey, poetry, footy, debauchery, ska and punk.

Ally the Piper is a multi-instrumentalist out of New York. She specializes in Celtic instrumentation, such as the Highland Bagpipe, Scottish Smallpipe, Irish whistles and vocals.

Enda Reilly is from Dublin, Ireland and currently lives in Michigan. As a singer and guitarist, Enda has his own albums including *New Songs in Irish*, *Whorls*, songs created from the poetry of WB Yeats and songs about the environment.

Along with...

- Keith O'Brien*
 - Tim Britton*
 - Davy Holden
 - Dan Vaughn
 - Sorcha
 - Cedar Glen Pipes and Drums
 - McNulty Irish Dancers – Dubuque, IA
 - Champagne Academy of Irish Dancer – North Liberty, IA
 - Foy Irish Dancers – Des Moines, IA
 - And more!
- *NEW Act!



Check out the 2024 Iowa Irish Fest Spotify playlist by scanning the QR code above!



Sean McGuinness, Dublin City Ramblers

Photo : KC Irish Music

MEET GREG TAGTOW

Robert Heuston, Publisher Irish Music Magazine in conversation with Iowa Irish Fest Head of Entertainment.



Photo : KC Irish Music

Robert: What can we expect for 2024 in terms of entertainment?

Greg: This year, you can expect to see old favourites and first-time acts from all over Ireland, Scotland, Canada and the US. Older traditional favourites from The Dublin City Ramblers to the new music of Elephant Sessions and Ally the Piper. We will also be covering many genres including Traditional (Trad), Celtic Rock, Folk, Indie and Punk. A little something for everyone with 32 acts on 7 stages. Headline acts this year are Scythian on Friday, Enter the Haggis on Saturday and The High Kings on Sunday.

Robert: With so many quality artists in Ireland and the United States, how challenging was finalizing the 2024 line up?

Greg: It is extremely challenging. There are so many amazing artists from all over the world. We try to balance our line-up with returning fan favourites, some like the Screaming Orphans who have been here many, many times and with brand new acts coming to the US festival circuits for their first time. Onóir will be one of those first-time bands. We first heard them perform at an AICF (Association of Irish & Celtic Festivals) conference showcase last October in Galway, Ireland and were blown away. We also travel to other Irish Festivals around the US looking for new acts to bring to Iowa. And lastly, we receive at least 50 requests each year from bands that want to come and play at our festival. So, there is definitely plenty of talent to choose from.

Robert: Who are the performers making their Festival debut in 2024?

Greg: We are bringing in some great new groups who will be playing the Iowa Irish Fest for their first time! Elephant Sessions from Scotland (Saturday & Sunday), Onóir from Donegal, Ireland (all 3 days), The Peelers from Canada (Friday & Saturday), along with The Bow Tides (Friday & Saturday), The Byrne Brothers (all 3 days), Ally the Piper (Friday only), Enda Reilly (all 3 days) and Tim Britton (Friday & Saturday) from the US.



Robert: Can you give us some background on how your organization operates to produce an event of this magnitude year on year?

Greg: We do it the same way any successful event does; with our volunteers. From our beginnings with one stage and a handful of dedicated volunteers to what we have built today with just over 100 organizing committee members and somewhere around 1,500 volunteers each year. The saying, “many hands make light work” means a lot to our group. We are all committed to giving our attendees a weekend that they will never forget and having them come back year after year.

Some planning like entertainment goes on year-round, but our committee meetings begin right after the first of the year. We begin our official grounds set up the Sunday before our festival by placing Irish flags all along our 4th street bridge. Those, along with some recently added bridge lighting, really warms the heart. From there on Monday, we begin the transformation of roughly 12 blocks of downtown Waterloo into our festival grounds. Everything is ready to go by our 4 p.m. opening on Friday.

Robert: Iowa Irish Fest has made a significant contribution to Irish Culture year on year. What highlights are scheduled in 2024?

Greg: There is so much to do and see while at the festival. Take part in our special events; Shamrock N’ Run 5K, High Nelly Bike Rally, Celtic Cruise Motorcycle Rally, Whiskey tasting and our new Beverage Experience Street. Be sure to check out our Heros Area where we honour the sacrifice and service of our Armed Forces, Police, Firefighters and EMTs.

“Our festival strives to present many hands-on workshops in Irish language, history, music and dance”

You can dive deep into the Irish culture through our Cultural Area displays featuring blacksmiths along with spinners and weavers as well as a genealogy area. Our festival strives to present many hands-on workshops in Irish language, history, music and dance for those that have an interest. For the animal lover we have some beautiful local Irish Wolfhounds visiting as well as some amazing sheep herding demonstrations.

Be sure to check out our athletic events with the Highland Games competition, Rugby Tournament and Hurling demonstrations.

For the kids, don’t miss our Family Fun and Learning Area with events, games, contests, and inflatables. On Sunday we hold an Outdoor Mass that is very well attended to start the day.

Finally, I would like to highlight the importance of Irish dance at our festival. We are sponsoring a two-day children’s dance workshop which finishes with an on-stage performance. There is also a smaller workshop during the fest for those “spur of the moment” people. We take great pleasure in presenting 3 of our Iowa based schools, the McNulty Irish Dancers from Dubuque, The Champagne Academy of Irish Dance from North Liberty and the Foy School of Traditional Irish Dance from Des Moines.

For full details on Iowa Irish Fest 2024
<https://iowairishfest.com/>

WHAT MAKES IOWA IRISH FEST UNIQUE?

Iowa Irish Fest has events for EVERYONE!

If you want to get your body moving during Fest weekend, sign up for the Highland Games or participate in a friendly game of rugby! Learn about your favourite whiskey or plan your next trip to Ireland by checking out the long list of Fest workshops and classes!

Colm Keegan Workshop



Photo : Chelle Adkins

Highland Games

Once called the Ancient Games started in 1040AD when the king of Scotland started a hill climbing race to secure the fastest messenger. The games came to us in our 2nd year and since then, our number of competing athletes, as well as their audiences, has grown. We offer one of the smallest fields of play but are able to still produce National records as our event is sanctioned by the national board. Events include the caber toss, sheaf toss, stone put and others.

Rugby

While the exact origins of Rugby may be cloudy, it is said to have originated in England in 1823 when William Webb Ellis, while playing a game of football, picked up the ball and decided to go with it. In 1871, the Rugby Football Union was officially formed. The same year, the first ever Rugby international match was played between England and Scotland, with Scotland taking home the win by one point. The Iowa Irish Fest Rugby Invitational 2024 takes place on Saturday, August 3 at the Cedar Valley Soccer Complex. Adults and highschoolers are welcome to come battle in a friendly game of Rugby.

Rugby



United States Gaelic Athletic Association

In response to the creation of the Football Association and Rugby Football Union by the English, Ireland founded the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) in 1884. The mission of the GAA was to develop and promote sports of Irish origin. As a result, the rules of Gaelic Football and Hurling were officially established in 1887 with a desire to protect the tradition of Irish sports as a rejection of the emerging influence of English football.

The Kansas City Gaelic Athletic Club will be attending this year's Fest! Everyone is welcome - no matter their background and skill level!

From Travel & Tour Workshops to the Fest's infamous Whiskey Workshops, make sure you carve out time from your weekend to attend the Iowa Irish Fest workshops!

Travel & Tour Workshops

Are you ready to start packing up ideas for your next trip to Ireland? Put the Iowa Irish Fest Travel & Tour Workshops on your schedule! This is your chance to discover Ireland by joining some of your favourite band's bus tours with Colm Keegan, the Screaming Orphans, the Byrne Brothers, Ian Gould, and Sean McGuinness. Get travel planning tips from experts in the industry. Get off the beaten track and plan the trip of your dreams to the Island of Saints and Scholars.

Artist Workshops

Have you wanted to learn to play the guitar, the banjo or the bodhrán drum? Or perhaps you want to learn about Irish Rebel Songs. Look no further! Join numerous artists at our Artist Workshops to expand your knowledge on all things Irish song, dance and history. These workshops begin on Friday and continue throughout the weekend. The Artist Workshops are free to anyone who has purchased entry into the Fest and there is no need to register.

Whiskey Workshops

Do you enjoy whiskey, Guinness Stouts and mimosas? Then the Whiskey Workshops are for you! Iowa Irish Fest has an array of workshops where you can learn about Irish culture, paint while drinking whiskey, learn how to put together a charcuterie spread and stay hydrated while busting out your best yoga moves. All Whiskey Workshops are \$30 per person and registration is required to attend (IIF highly encourages early registration). You must be 21 or older. Be sure to bring a valid ID.

<https://iowairishfest.com/category/workshops/> to register or to learn more!

Hero's Area

The Hero's Area of the Fest is dedicated to honouring our veterans, firefighters, doctors, nurses, first responders and police officers. In this area, you can check out military vehicles on display, meet VIP guests from the Navy, view the navy ship display made completely out of Legos and so much more!"

Cultural Street

Fáilte don Sráidbhaile Cultúrtha! Welcome to the Cultural Street! Here you can immerse yourself in Irish culture as you watch blacksmiths, weavers, spinners and artists at work. Learn a few words as Gaeilge, stop by our genealogy tent to learn more about your Irish Ancestry, even try your hand at axe throwing at the Hurling Hatchets booth. Top off your visit with a stop at Dillon's Pub for a rest all while surrounded by the Irish music we love.

Sunday Mass

Sunday Mass will be held at 10 a.m. on Sunday, August 4 in the Lincoln Park area of downtown Waterloo, with Fest gates opening at 8:30 a.m. Everyone is welcome! Admission to the festival grounds (until 10:30 a.m. on Sunday ONLY) will be two non-perishable food items that will be donated to the Northeast Iowa Food Bank. This donation will allow you to enjoy the festival for the entire day!



Presented by Veridian Credit Union



IOWA IRISH FEST

DOWNTOWN WATERLOO

RIDES, RALLIES AND RACES! OH MY!

HIGH NELLY BIKE RALLY

The High Nelly Bike Rally is set to take place **Saturday, August 3rd**, starting at the Iowa Irish Fest grounds. There are two options to choose from: the fun family trail ride or the open road ride (for the experienced rider). Pre-registration is open now until July 31st. Day-of registration is available. Start your Saturday off right with Iowa Irish Fest's High Nelly Bike Rally!

SHAMROCK N' FUN RUN

After two years of construction in Waterloo, **The ShamRock N' Fun Run is BACK!** The Run will take place on **Saturday, August 3rd**, at the corner of Park Avenue and Mulberry Street. Online registration is open now and ends Thursday, August 1st at midnight. With your registration, you will receive a T-shirt, snacks and water!

CELTIC CRUISE MOTORCYCLE RIDE

The Celtic Cruise Motorcycle Rally began in 2017. Riders from all over the Midwest gather in downtown Waterloo to participate! Rev up your engines and enjoy the thrill of the Celtic Cruise Motorcycle Ride! Whether you're a seasoned rider or a newcomer eager for adventure, registering is as simple as revving the throttle. This year's rally will take place **Sunday, August 4**. With a \$35 entry fee, each participant will receive a T-shirt and a drink token (if the participant is 21+).



For more information or to download the registration sheets, please visit

IOWAIRISHFEST.COM



AUG. 2-4, 2024

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MUSIC MENDS MINDS

Its Truth as a Three-Word Sentence and the Remarkable Organization of That Name.

By Bruce S. Victor MD, DLFAPA.



When my father's 80th birthday was approaching in April, 2005, he was in the throes of dementia and we thought that this birthday could be (and, in fact, was) his last. His love for, and resonance with music was profound and so I assembled the musicians in the family to play a final birthday concert for him. However, the star of this ensemble would be my cousin, Neal, a classical pianist, who subsequently became the conductor of the New Mexico Symphony and who is now Professor of Orchestral Studies at U.C.L.A. Knowing of my father's especial love for Mendelssohn, Neal launched into a series of his sonatas, with a mellifluousness and flair that I had admired throughout our then-50 years of cousin-hood.

After a mere ten minutes of what I considered to be a particularly lovely passage, my father shook his head with utter disgust: "ach, ach, ...Bruce, he's messing it up completely!!" "Poor old Dad,"

“Hope and life came back into (our) home after Irwin's passion for music was reignited”

thought I, the dementing process seemed to have even derailed his capacity to enjoy his favourite music. However, it gave me the perfect opportunity to discharge fifty years of raw envy of my cousin's talent by informing him of his uncle's appraisal of his performance. I did so and my cousin smiled ruefully, saying "I was messing it up completely."

I was mystified: *why was my father's uncanny capacity to follow the intricate passages of the Mendelssohn sonata preserved, when the rest of his cognitive capacities seemed to be queuing up for an exit? And was my father unique in that respect?*

Regarding the second of those two questions: not unique in the slightest.

When Irwin Rosenstein, lawyer and pianist, was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and, ultimately, Parkinsonian dementia, his wife, Carol, chiropractor and psychologist enrolled him in the UCLA Alzheimer's and Dementia Patient Care Program. Carol observed that whenever he played the piano for fellow participants

and the staff, Irwin became more aware, responsive, energetic, and talkative, and ultimately, more confident and hopeful. "Hope and life came back into (our) home after Irwin's passion for music was reignited" and further discussions with women at this clinic whose husbands suffered from dementia revealed quite similar experiences of 'awakenings through music'.

Carol then formed these musicians into a music group called "The Fifth Dementia" which gave successful concerts throughout Los Angeles. Further such groups were formed (e.g. the 'West L.A. Treble Makers') were formed wherein the requirements for audition included the somewhat ironic requirement of the presence of dementia. Carol then launched the organization, "Music Mends Minds", wherein new bands were formed, with doctors, caretakers, and family members reporting remarkable improvements in the overall functioning of the participants.

Music Mends Minds has continued to foster the development of bands not only within the United States but also in England, Canada, Rwanda, the Philippines, and India. This expansion has been aided by their alignment with the Rotary Society, "a global network of 1.4 million neighbours, friends, leaders, and problem solvers who see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change...." And contained within it, is 'ADRAG', the Alzheimer's/Dementia Rotary Action Group that "support(s) Rotary clubs as they plan and execute meaningful projects and programs centred on Alzheimer's and dementia."

The Music Mends Minds website (www.musicmendsminds.org) is also a veritable treasure trove of not only referrals to their increasing array of musical programs as well as an educational platform of articles and access to experts via their podcasts. Who are these experts? Rudy Tanzi, Ph.D. Professor of Neurology at Harvard Medical School, author of over 550 publications (apparently done when he was not occasionally playing keyboards for Arrowsmith); Mark Tramo, M.D., Ph.D., Director of The Institute for Music & Brain Science at UCLA.

Would that I could arrange a simulcast of the May 13th concert of The Fifth Dementia at the Beverly Hills Hotel in a program presided

over by both Carol Rosenstein and Gordon McNally, the President of Rotary Club. But with the planning beginning for programs in Ireland, I will do what I can to help the band (and Carol and Gordon, who is originally from Scotland) do a UK/Ireland/Scotland tour.

I would acknowledge that I have not yet addressed the question of why music is preserved in a dementing process. I will do so in my next instalment. But I would contend that this very fact bespeaks a much more foundational role of music in human development, functioning, and healing than its mere capacity to "entertain".



THE LEGENDS SERIES

Chapter 36 : Brendan Begley. An appreciation by Mark Lysaght for Irish Music Magazine.

Irish traditional music often runs in families; some have acquired a place on the role of special achievement. The Begley family from Ballynabuck (Baile na bPoc) near Ballydavid in west Kerry undoubtedly occupies a special place in the hearts of Irish music lovers world-wide, not only for their individual qualities as musicians and singers, but for their roles in inspiring and attracting others to participate in our native culture.

The youngest of Brendan and Mary Ellen Begley's nine children, Brendan Begley was steeped in Irish culture from the day he was born on Halloween 1955. The family were native Irish speakers with music, song and dance actively encouraged and fostered. Brendan senior co-owned the local dancehall, and ceilís provided a natural platform for early musical performances by Brendan and his siblings. Most importantly, it instilled a deep natural understanding of the symbiotic relationship between Kerry tunes and dance sets. Songs were also passed on to the children at fireside sessions and get-togethers.

On finishing school, Brendan trained as a teacher and moved to Dublin, where he played an active role in playing and promoting Irish music. In 1987 he recorded an acclaimed solo album, *Seana Choirce* for Gael Linn. He was instrumental in establishing the legendary Hughes pub on Chancery Street as an important music venue, but he gradually found the lure of more active engagement with the music and culture he loved to be incompatible with maintaining a full-time teaching job, so in 1997 he decided to turn

professional, releasing a second solo recording *We Won't Go Home 'til Morning*, featuring Liam O'Flynn and Steve Cooney among others.

He was a member of traditional supergroup Beginish, featuring Paul O'Shaughnessy, Paul McGrattan and Noel O'Grady for many years, and also presented the seminal TG4 series *Geantraí* from 1999 till 2004; this enabled him to travel widely and interact with musical communities at home and abroad. His engaging personality and personal musical contributions to these programmes played a large part in their success in bringing traditional session music to a wider audience. A third solo recording *It Could Be A Good Night Yet!* was released in 2002.

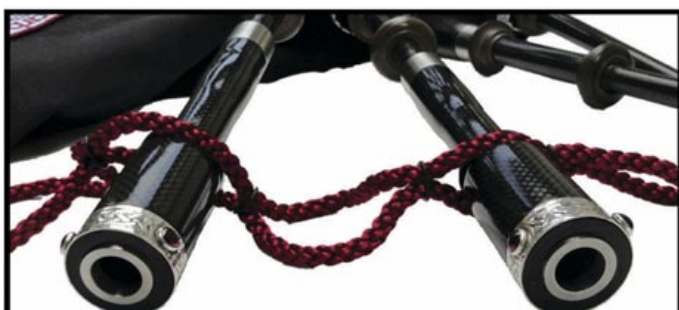
From 2002 onwards, Brendan has guested with The Boys of The Lough, a legendary Irish/Scots traditional and folk band originally formed in the late 1960s, and has formed many short-term musical collaborations as well as guesting on numerous recordings, including with The Chieftains. He kindly recorded a set of tunes for my own recording *Collaborations* in 2015 - I was struck by his generosity and the effortless authenticity of his playing; for much of the accompaniment I was literally trailing in his wake! I subsequently performed with him later that year in Kerry; he was a joy to play with. He has a great natural rapport with his audience, and he easily engages them with the magic of his cultural heritage.

In recent years Brendan has become involved in a range of other activities, all related to his passion for his native culture and heritage. He is central to a number of musical events in west Kerry, notably the annual Scoil Cheoil an Earraigh event held in Ballyferriter each February, which attracts top musicians and singers and features a range of cultural activities over 5 days. His interest in seafaring led to him participating in a documentary film called *The Camino Voyage* about making a 2,500km voyage from Ireland to northern Spain in a traditional Irish curragh. More recently he made an entertaining series of programmes with his son Cormac, detailing their travels throughout Ireland in a camper van, with various musical (and other!) adventures along the way.

“He has a great natural rapport with his audience”

Brendan is also a passionate advocate for the survival of the Gaeltacht areas of Ireland, and he attracted nationwide support for his crusade to be allowed to construct a permanent home at his homeplace in Baile na bPoc. In doing so, he highlighted the incongruity of a situation where, as a native, he was effectively forbidden to erect a permanent building on his own land. To his great credit, he was ultimately successful in his efforts to obtain planning permission. In doing so, he won an important victory for the local people who were being effectively discouraged from remaining in their homeplace.

Brendan's four children all play Irish music, and his son Cormac is an award-winning concertina player. The future of the Begley dynasty is assured as Brendan maintains his active involvement in various aspects of culture, which help to keep the tradition alive and vibrant.



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"Kudos to Lynch, who has turned a personal memoir into a timeless musical collection!"

- Anita Lock, Irish Music Magazine

Find out more at <https://chongieroad.ie>
& Chongie Road @ Bandcamp



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"...throughout the recording you'll find thoughtful, contemplative music, authoritative guitar playing with just the right, deft arrangements."

- Anne Marie Kennedy -
Irish Music Magazine

"This album is an invitation to dance under the stars, to dream with open eyes, to feel the infinite power of music which, like a river, has flowed for centuries."

- ExtravaFrench Webzine Reviews

www.gfmorgan.bandcamp.com

THE CENTER FOR IRISH MUSIC, ST. PAUL MN, PRESENTS

The 16th Minnesota Irish Music Weekend

June 6th - 9th, 2024

<http://www.centerforirishmusic.org/mim/>

Presented by the Center for Irish Music, Minnesota Irish Music Weekend is a unique festival that pairs world-class traditional Irish musicians and teachers with learners of all ages for a weekend of workshops, lectures, sessions, and concerts.

Each of our visiting artists is recognized for their musical mastery and will offer insights and techniques to help learners tap into the deep roots of traditional Irish music. This year's featured artists include musicians Joey Abarta - Uilleann pipes, whistle; Angelina Carberry - banjo; Aidan Connolly - fiddle; Conor Connolly - accordion; Josh Dukes - flute, guitar; Rose Flanagan - fiddle; Nuala Kennedy - flute, song; Eamon O'Leary - guitar, bouzouki, mandolin, song; and more!

The 2024 weekend includes a rousing Kick-Off Celebration at a local brewery. The Great Session Experience is free and open to all! Featuring all visiting artists, the much anticipated Master Artists Concert is a must-see event that will also be broadcast live.

Programs include:

- Irish Trad Immersion Camp for 9-12 year-olds
- Intermediate-Advanced Teen Program
- Adult Workshops, Lectures & Classes for intermediate to advanced-level students

Workshops are offered in accordion, banjo, bouzouki, fiddle, flute, tin whistle, uilleann pipes, and song, along with fascinating in-depth talks and lectures with visiting artists on the Irish musical tradition.

Lecture, workshop, and concert prices range from \$10 to \$250

for a weekend package. Find more information at

<http://www.centerforirishmusic.org/mim/>

The Center for Irish Music, 836 Prior Avenue, St. Paul, MN

55104. Telephone: +1 (651) 815-0083.

www.centerforirishmusic.org

MOTOR CITY IRISH FEST ANNOUNCES THREE HEADLINE ACTS FOR 2024 www.motorcityirishfest.com

The Motor City Irish Fest (MCIF) is pleased to announce three headline acts for the MCIF at Greenmead Historical Park, Livonia Michigan June 7 - 9 2024. Direct from Ireland, award winning singer-songwriter Sina Theil will be making her Motor City Irish Fest debut along with the Emmy Award-winning duo The Black Donnelly's (based in Las Vegas and originally from Dublin) and from Harrisburg Pennsylvania, the high energy Kilmaine Saints.

"We feel that this is a great mix of talent and musical styles to compliment our wonderful lineup of local bands as part of a weekend of Irish music, culture and fun," said Patrick Johnson of the MCIF entertainment committee. The MCIF features two stages of Irish music with over 20 bands and 7 schools of Irish dance along with a cultural exhibit, children's area, Irish tea room, whiskey tastings, an open air Sunday mass, a wide selection of retail vendors, food vendors, a .001K fun run, Gaelic Football demonstration and so much more.

For more information please visit the Motor City Irish Fest website, www.motorcityirishfest.com or www.facebook.com/motorcityirishfest

22nd ANNUAL PENN-MAR IRISH FESTIVAL SET FOR JUNE

June 15th, 2024 PennMarIrishFestival.com

The Penn-Mar Irish Festival returns to The Markets at Shrewsbury on Saturday, June 15, 2024.

This volunteer-run community celebration of Irish heritage features traditional and contemporary live Irish music, Irish dance groups, cultural talks and living history exhibits, Irish food, a children's activity area, and vendors offering Irish gifts, clothing, jewellery, music, books, pottery, photography, stained glass, and more.

Eileen Ivers will headline again with her Universal Roots band. New for 2024, Eileen will also lead a set with her powerhouse, fiery female band, The Brigideens, which formed in early 2023 for a Saint Brigid's Day concert in Pittsburgh. The new group was a huge success and the band loves playing together. Also new for 2024: Ian Carroll and The

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2024
JULY
14th - 20th

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30th Annual Catskills Irish Arts Week

Keeping the Tradition Alive

Sponsored by the MJQ Irish Cultural & Sports Centre

In EAST DURHAM, NEW YORK

Only 2.5 hrs North of NYC and 3 hrs from Boston

"The Irish Catskills"

July 14-20, 2024

A craic-filled week is in the works for the largest summer school devoted to traditional Irish Music and dance in North America with over Forty top-class teaching artists on staff at the 30th Annual Catskills Irish Arts Week.

The Catskills Irish Arts Week looks forward to celebrating its 30th year as a week-long summer school of Traditional Irish music, song and dance under the auspices of the Michael J. Quill Irish Cultural and Sports Centre in East Durham, New York, the heart of the Irish Catskills. The CIAW will take place July 14-20 with classes scheduled Monday to Friday and a closing day-long festival on Saturday, July 20.

Our Irish teachers and performers include Mary Bergin, Gerry O'Connor, Catherine McEvoy, Antoin Mac Gabhann, Caitlin and Bernadette Nic Gabhann, Sorcha Costello and Seamus O'Flaherty, Niamh Parsons and Graham Dunne, Diarmuid O'Meachair, Conor Mallon, Aisling Lyons, Deirdre Cronin for creative writing and Padraig McEneaney for the Sets.

Stateside staff features Rose Conway Flanagan, Siobhan and Willie Kelly, Larry Nugent, Eileen Clune Goodman, Pauline Conneely, Joey Abarta & Jackie O'Riley, Liz Hanley and Jefferson Hamer, Isaac Alderson, Annmarie Acosta Williams, Patty Furlong, Loretta Egan Murphy, Brendan Dolan, Colm Gannon, Michelle Bergin, Alan Murray, Colin Harte, Brendan Callahan, Regan Wick and Brenda Dowling. More staff to be added as needed.

Morning and Afternoon Classes daily from Monday July 15- to Friday July 19 along with late afternoon topical lectures from the staff, Evening Concerts and Barn Dance on the Quill Festival Grounds, Céilithe all week in the famed Shamrock House with Fear A Ti Padraig McEneaney.

Irish Pub Sessions Galore including the intimate Listening Room all week.

Finale Festival on Saturday July 20th on the Quill Festival Grounds

Online Registration will be open soon at <https://www.CatskillsIrishArtsWeek.org>

(Early Bird discount of \$50 for paid registrations by May 15, 2024)

Contact: Paul Keating Phone 201-965-6598 Email: paulkeating@aol.com





Patrick Players, Cormorant's Fancy, and Hold Fast. Returning favourites include Screaming Orphans, Enda Reilly, Cas Ceol, Susquehanna Pipes & Drums, McGinley School of Irish Dance, NiRiaín School of Irish Dance, and Oh! Gills Irish Dancers. Some seating is provided, but lawn chairs and blankets are welcome. Please, no pets or outside food and beverages.

The Markets at Shrewsbury is located at 12025 Susquehanna Trail, Glen Rock, PA 17327 (in southern York County off I-83 between exits 4 and 8). Parking and shuttle bus service will be provided at nearby locations (look for signs).

For discounted advance tickets and details, please visit PennMarIrishFestival.com. You can also follow updates on social media (#PennMarIrish). Marketing and volunteer opportunities are available in support of the festival.

For all inquiries, please email PennMarIrish@gmail.com

TUNEFEST, DUNGARVAN

Co. Waterford

June 21st – 23rd, 2024 Facebook: TuneFest Dungarvan

The best of visiting and local musicians are here. Sessions, Concerts, Recitals, Workshops, CD launches. It's all about the cream of traditional Irish music, dance & song. We pride on our festival catering for families.

Friday June 21st Cherish the Ladies in concert in Town Hall Theatre with support act "Trí Thine", group winners from Meitheal Summer School.

Saturday June 22nd Talisk in concert in Club Creation with support act "Tunefest Band" some of our local talent. This is a stand up gig.

Music Workshop – Saturday June 22nd in Ard Scoil Na nDéise.

Tutors: Fiddle: Tara Breen & Dylan Carlos, Concertina: Conor O'Loughlin, Accordion: Conor Moriarty, Whistle: Brian O'Loughlin, Bodhrán: Colm Phelan, Banjo: Keith O'Loughlin.

There is no show like a Joe Show in The Town Hall Theatre at 3pm. Join Joe Power for an afternoon of music, stories and songs. Multiple guests & artists including Bobby Gardiner, Donal Clancy, Donnchadh Gough, Benny McCarthy and more.

Street Busking Competition - Saturday June 22nd : Group music busking competition takes place on the street.

Sunday June 23rd CD Launches in The Old Bank : Three fantastic launches: 1. The O'Loughlins, 2. John Wynne & 3. Sinead McKenna.

DANÚ in concert in The Park Hotel with support act Taobh Na Mara Ceilí Band. Always a full house.

CD launches, Gig Rig, Busking competition, pub sessions & plenty more, so don't miss out on a jam-packed weekend!

Keep an eye out on our social medial sites. Tickets available on Eventbrite.

Facebook: TuneFest Dungarvan

Instagram: tunefest_dungarvan

Twitter: @FestTune

BLAS INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL OF IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND DANCE

June 24th – July 5th, 2024

www.blas.ie

Now in its 28th year, the Blas International Summer School of Irish Traditional Music and Dance returns to the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick 24th June to the 5th July 2024.

We are delighted to announce that Dr Conor Caldwell will join Dr Breandán de Gallaí as Co-Director of Blas and both have exciting plans in place for the upcoming summer school.

Blas has firmly established itself as one of Ireland's most prestigious university accredited summer schools, drawing students from all over the world to spend two weeks gaining access to the expertise of some of Ireland's finest artists.

In addition to expert tuition and masterclasses, Blas students can expect a whole range of activities including lectures on Irish

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The Black Donnelly's
 Las Vegas / Ireland!
TWO IRISH MUSIC STAGES!

The Kilmaine Saints
 FROM PENNSYLVANIA!

Sina Theil
 FROM IRELAND!

A FAMILY FRIENDLY FEST!

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traditional music and dance topics, Irish language classes, lunchtime and evening concerts, sessions, céilithe, field trips and above all, the unique opportunity to share tunes with some of Ireland's leading traditional musicians.

For further information on all aspects of Blas Summer School, visit www.blas.ie

SCOIL SAMHRAIDH WILLIE CLANCY

July 6th – 14th, 2024

www.scoilsamhraidhwilleclancy.com

Gairloch, the Montréal-based trio featuring David Gossage, Kate Bevan-Baker and Seán Dagher, will bring their unique repertoire of songs and tunes from the Irish, Scottish and Québec traditions to the 52nd summer school. The group continues the artistic collaboration between the School of Irish Studies at Concordia University, Montréal, and Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy which began in 2022 when the Director of the School, Professor Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin—a native of Ennis and an accomplished piper and concertina player—brought over a talented group of musicians, singers and dancers to perform at that year's school.

David Gossage is a multi-instrumentalist in virtually all styles of music and probably best known for his jazz and celtic music playing. He is a regular performer on the music festival circuit in Europe and North America and has composed and arranged music for the National Film Board of Canada. He teaches jazz at McGill University.

Kate Bevan-Baker is an award-winning fiddler, classical violinist and singer, and plays jazz, classical and Irish traditional music. She lectures at Concordia and McGill Universities and has an impressive list of national and international performances, recordings, presentations and awards to her credit. She will present a lecture on the musical connections between Ireland and Québec.

Seán Dagher is a singer and musician and composer and arranger of music from various folk and classical music traditions. He is a

founding member of Skye Consort, an ensemble specialising in bringing an art music aesthetic to different world folk musics, a co-artistic director of La Nef, and an expert on sea-shanty traditions.

Gairloch's music has impressed international audiences and summer school attendees can look forward to their exciting performances.

For full details see www.scoilsamhraidhwilleclancy.com

CATSKILLS IRISH ARTS WEEK

July 14th – 20th, 2024 <https://www.CatskillsIrishArtsWeek.org>

The Catskills Irish Arts Week looks forward to celebrating its **30th year** as a week-long summer school devoted to the preservation and promotion of Traditional Irish music and dance under the auspices of the Michael J. Quill Irish Cultural and Sports Centre in East Durham, New York, the heart of the Irish Catskills. The CIAW will take place July 14-20 with classes scheduled Monday to Friday and a closing day-long festival on Saturday, July 20.

Our Irish teachers and performers include Mary Bergin, Gerry O'Connor, Catherine McEvoy, Antoin Mac Gabhann, Caitlin and Bernadette Nic Gabhann, Sorcha Costello, Seamus O'Flaherty, Niamh Parsons and Graham Dunne, Diarmuid O'Meachair, Conor Mallon, Aisling Lyons, Deirdre Cronin for creative writing and Padraig McEneaney for the Sets.

Stateside staff features Rose Conway Flanagan, Siobhan and Willie Kelly, Larry Nugent, Eileen Clune Goodman, Pauline Conneely, Joey Abarta & Jackie O'Riley, Liz Hanley and Jefferson Hamer, Isaac Alderson, Annmarie Acosta Williams, Patty Furlong, Loretta Egan Murphy, Brendan Dolan, Michelle Bergin, Alan Murray, Colin Harte, Brendan Callahan, Regan Wick and Brenda Dowling.

Morning and Afternoon Classes daily from Monday July 15 to Friday July 19 along with late afternoon topical lectures from the staff, Evening Concerts and Barn Dance on the Quill Festival Grounds, Ceilithe all week in the famed Shamrock House with Fear A Tí Padraig McEneaney. Irish Pub Sessions Galore including the intimate Listening Room all week.

Among the many specials events during the week will be a Reunion of the Trad Quad known as NicGavisky formulated at the CIAW featuring Bernadette and Caitlin Nic Gabhann and Sean Vincent McComiskey and Sean Vincent Gavin.

Finale Festival on Saturday July 20th on the Quill Festival Grounds.

Online Registration will be open soon

at <https://www.CatskillsIrishArtsWeek.org> (Early Bird discount of \$50 for paid registrations by May 15, 2024).

Contact: Paul Keating, Phone 201-965-6598, Email: paulkeating@aol.com

SOUTH SLIGO SUMMER SCHOOL OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC, SONG & DANCE

July 14th – 20th, 2024

www.southsligosummerschool.com

A warm welcome awaits you here in Tubbercurry where the 38th Year of the South Sligo Summer School of Traditional Music, Song & Dance is just around the corner - 14th to 20th July. With a packed programme of workshops, talks, concerts, céilithe, recitals, CD launches and practice sessions for all ages, there is so much to look forward to. One of this year's highlights is the Monday Night Tribute Concert in The May Queen, honouring our own Junior Davey. Junior has been a stalwart of the summer school for many years and thanks to his input, the bodhrán/percussion feature at the Thursday evening recital each year is the stuff of legends. Junior brings great energy, verve and enthusiasm to everything he does and he is steeped in the rich musical tradition of his native area around Gurteen and South Sligo. The Wednesday Talk this year will centre around the significance of bodhrán & bones in traditional Irish music, presented by Junior Davey.



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<https://www.spartacelticfest.org>

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This year's summer school will be officially opened on Sunday evening, 14th July, by the wonderful Sligo musician Manus Maguire. Longtime resident of East Clare, Manus has always retained a close connection with his native Sligo town and county and he, along with Oisín Mac Diarmada, will be teaching Sligo Style fiddle this year.

We are also delighted to extend our range of workshops for beginners this year. If you have always wanted to give the flute, banjo, harp, bodhrán or uilleann pipes a go, now is your chance!

For all enquiries, including help with finding accommodation for the week, email us at anseo@southsligosummerschool.com or phone/text 00-353-89-6111375. All programme details and link to Registration on www.southsligosummerschool.com

BELFAST TRADFEST

July 21st – 28th, 2024 www.belfasttradfest.com

Belfast TradFest, the pinnacle of world-class traditional music concerts, fiery pub sessions, and Ireland's fastest growing summer school of traditional music, is set to celebrate its 6th edition this July across Belfast UNESCO City of Music.

The internationally renowned festival will mark this milestone with its most ambitious programme of music that will be showcased between Sunday 21st July – Sunday 28th July 2024. Featuring concerts with the likes of Lúnasa, Lumiere, Cherish the Ladies, Pólca 4, Zoe Conway & John McIntyre, Sean Maguire Fiddle Concert, Belfast Harp Festival Concert, tutor concerts, céilís and the annual TITANIC CÉILÍ which attracted 6,000 last year and which the festival hopes to build towards a World Record attempt at the World's Biggest Céilí during a future Fleadh Ceoil na hÉireann in Belfast.

The week-long summer school of traditional music which takes place in the stunning new Ulster University campus in Belfast City Centre, features tutors of the calibre of Tara Breen, Padraig Rynne, Cathal Hayden, Muireann Nic Amhlaoihbh, Ryan Molloy, Tara Howley, Seán Smyth, Joanie Madden, Kevin Crawford, Ed Boyd, Mary Bergin, Diane Cannon, Neil Martin, Derek Hickey, George McAdam, Edwina Guckian, Daibhidh Stiubhard, Fin Moore and many, many more..

Also featuring one of Ireland's premier session trails with the best musicians from all over the country, a highland piping solo competition, afternoon lectures, talks, screenings and taster sessions. There's something for everyone from beginners to professional musicians.

Sign up now for fantastic accommodation offers of £349 for 7 nights in Belfast city centre.

More information at www.belfasttradfest.com

YN CHRUINNAGHT CELTIC GATHERING

July 22nd – 28th, 2024

www.celticgathering.im

Every summer in Peel, Isle of Man, Yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering brings together the music, dance, culture and languages of the Isle of Man, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall and Brittany. From 22nd – 28th July 2024, Yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering will present a whole array of fabulous entertainment, including an opening night gig with trail-blazing Scottish/Manx band HEISK and dazzling tunes from Elizabeth Davidson-Blythe and Daniel Quayle, a lecture about St Bridget's role in Brittany, a concert celebrating the Celtic seasons, a giant ceili in Cathedral Isle of Man, a musical folklore tour of Peel, the compositions of Katie Lawrence, and grand finale from Scottish fiddle legend Duncan Chisholm!

Audiences will also enjoy Irish music and dance from The Len Collective and Céilí le Chéile, plus poetry and film, artisan craft fair, sessions, displays and workshops, and ceili dancing from the Celtic nations. There will be plenty of free community events and

IMDL
IRISH MUSIC AND
DANCE IN LONDON
PRESENTS..

MNÁ NA bPÍOB UILLEANN VOLUME 1 (NPU)

Saturday 4 May - Album Launch Concert - Sala Room,
The Crown Hotel, Cricklewood



Featuring: Claire Fennell, Rita Farrell, Maeve O'Donnell,
Muireann Ní Shé, Marion McCarthy

'IRISH HOOLEY AT KINGS PLACE'

Saturday 15 June



IMDL's annual profile and fundraising event

Featuring TG4 Gradam Ceoil Award Winners 2024:

Derek Hickey, MacDara Ó Faoláin, The Kane Sisters,
Ryan Molloy and representatives of Cairdeas na bhFhidiléirí

Full information and all tickets available
at www.irishmusicinlondon.org

RETURN TO  **2024**
LONDON TOWN

FRIDAY 25TH - MONDAY 28TH OCTOBER 2024

**LONDON'S 25TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF
TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC, SONG AND DANCE**

Return to London Town Festival line up tba soon
Full details will be at www.returntolondontown.org

IMDL
IRISH MUSIC AND
DANCE IN LONDON

is extremely grateful to its funders and
sponsors: Emigrant Support Programme,
Culture Ireland, Irish Youth Foundation,
Ireland Funds of Great Britain, Flannery Hire Plc, Embassy
Demolition, Ardmore Group, The Irish World, The Irish Post

family activities, as well as lunchtime sessions in the capital Douglas.

Established in 1978, Yn Chruinnaght Celtic Gathering is known for its small and friendly atmosphere and the fishing town of Peel is the ideal hub for the festival. Language learners and enthusiasts can sign up for Culture Vannin's Manx Gaelic summer school which runs alongside the festival, and boat owners can sail over to the Island for 'Peel Sea Fest' during the final weekend.

A festival pass is a bargain at £60 but individual tickets are available too!

All information on the festival and tickets:
www.celticgathering.im and www.facebook.com/CelticGatheringIOM/

DUBLIN IRISH FESTIVAL

Dublin, Ohio, USA
August 2nd – 4th, 2024

<https://dublinirishfestival.org/>

Save the date and attend the 37th Dublin Irish Festival this summer, August 2-4. Explore one of the top Irish festivals in the U.S., drawing over 100,000 guests to Dublin, Ohio each year with 7 music stages, 60 acts, and more than 800 performers. The Dublin Irish Festival was voted in the top three for "Best Cultural Festival of 2023" by USA Today Readers.

This year's headliners include The High Kings, Socks in the Frying Pan, Teada, Gaelic Storm, Skerryvore, Talisk, Goitse, GADAN with Enda Scahill of We Banjo 3, JigJam, Ispíní na hÉireann, O'Jizo, The Fitzgeralds, Ally the Piper, PoulaPhuca, Drowsy Lads, Bastard Bearded Irishmen and John Whelan with his All Star Ceili Band.

Kick off your weekend with the Dublin Irish Festival 5K and end it with the Festival Finale, in-between there is something for everyone. There are a variety of learning experiences available for every guest that attends. Learn about Irish history, genealogy,

instruments or Irish language. Animal lovers have the opportunity to meet Irish breeds and their owners at the Celtic Canine area. Bring your own instrument and find the sessions tent to play a jig with other aspiring musicians. Children have their own area at the Festival featuring crafts, games and entertainment. The Festival is complete with over 90 shopping vendors and 30 food vendors. Save some green and buy your tickets before the price increase on July 20.

See <https://dublinirishfestival.org/> for more.

GODERICH CELTIC ROOTS FESTIVAL, CELTIC COLLEGE AND KIDS CAMP August 5th – 11th, 2024

<https://www.celticfestival.ca/>

Join us on the shores of Lake Huron for the highly acclaimed 3-day festival and largest staffed Celtic music camp of its kind.

The 32nd Annual Goderich Celtic Roots Festival, Celtic College and Kids Camp is the ultimate Celtic experience in Goderich, Ontario, Canada.

From August 5th to the 9th, 2024, over 50 of the world's best musicians are ready to share their talents with all ages as they teach at the Goderich Celtic College and Kid's Camp. A week full of daytime classes and free evening concerts featuring your teachers, Ceili dancing in the park, with rousing singing and spirited instrument sessions at the local pub late into the night.

The week builds to an impressive crescendo with the world-renowned 3-day Festival in the magical Lion's Harbour Park at 166 West Street in Goderich, overlooking the beaches and sparkling waters of Lake Huron.

We are so pleased to be able to announce some of the world's most incredible musicians who will be here this August.

Karan Casey, Allison Lupton Band, Archie Fisher & Garnet Rogers, RUNA, Matt & Shannon Heaton, Rory Makem, Windborne, Jane & Kyle, O'Jizo, HeronValley, Fiárock, Portage, Pressgang Mutiny and more!

The Center for Irish Music Presents



June 6-9, 2024

Featuring world-class traditional musicians

Joey Abart - Uilleann pipes, whistle • Angelina Carberry - banjo
 Aidan Connolly - fiddle • Conor Connolly - accordion
 Josh Dukes - flute, guitar • Rose Flanagan - fiddle
 Nuala Kennedy - flute, song
 Eamon O'Leary - guitar, bouzouki, mandolin, song • and more

Music Programs for Teens, Children and Adults
 KICK-OFF CELEBRATION • Thursday
 GREAT SESSION EXPERIENCE • Friday
CONCERT • Saturday

Early bird registration discounts available.
www.centerforirishmusic.org

THE CENTER FOR IRISH MUSIC
 836 Prior Avenue North, St. Paul, MN 55104

Sponsors include:





This activity is funded, in part, by appropriations from the Minnesota State Legislature with money from the State's general fund, and its arts and cultural heritage fund that was created by a vote of the people of Minnesota on November 4, 2008.

SCOIL SAMHRAIDH WILLIE CLANCY
 Miltown Malbay, Co Clare

52nd Annual Willie Clancy Summer School
6th -14th July 2024



Photo: Eamon McGivney

Tuition on uilleann pipes, whistle, flute, fiddle, concertina, button accordion, melodeon, banjo, harmonica, harp, step dancing, set dancing, Conamara sean-nós dance.

Workshops on the Irish and English language song traditions.

Dúchas an Cheoil/The Scope of Irish Music is a week-long course on the history of Irish traditional music, song and dance and accredited through the University of Limerick. For full details see www.blas.ie

Know the Score: Read Music the Trad Way. A CPD course designed for traditional musicians and teachers, offered in partnership with I Teach Trad, and certified by the Royal Irish Academy of Music. To register go to: <https://bit.ly/WCSS-KnowtheScore>

Lectures, recitals, concerts, film documentaries, céilithe.
Online Registration Now Open

Information on Registration and Programme:
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Belfast Trad Fest

21 - 28 JULY 2024

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Summer School of Traditional Music | Concerts | Session Trail
Festival Club | Céilís | Slow Sessions | Talks & More!

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Cherish the Ladies | Pólca 4 | Titanic Céilí | SuperCéilí
Padraig Rynne, Tara Breen & Jim Murray | Ryan Molloy
Cathal Hayden | Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh | Diane Cannon
Derek Hickey | Edwina Guckian | Kevin Crawford
Joanie Madden | Mary Bergin | Conor Caldwell | Seán Smyth
Dàibhidh Stiùbhard | Eilís Lavelle | Fin Moore | Mick McAuley
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We hope you will join us for a full week of events including classes, nighttime concerts, Ceili dancing, sessions, and our weekend festival, in Canada's prettiest town, Goderich, Ontario August 5-11, 2024.

<https://www.celticfestival.ca/>

<https://www.facebook.com/goderichceltic>

FEAKLE FESTIVAL

August 7th – 12th, 2024 www.feaklefestival.ie

Celebrating 37 Years of Traditional Irish music, song and dance at the Feakle Festival.

Get ready to immerse yourself in the vibrant sounds and spirit of Irish tradition at the Feakle Festival, returning for its 37th year from Wednesday, August 7th, to Monday, August 12th, 2024. Nestled in the picturesque village of Feakle, this annual celebration continues to thrive, drawing top-tier talent and enthusiastic audiences from near and far.

Year after year, the Feakle Festival grows stronger, showcasing the very best of Irish traditional music, singers, dancers, and musicians. Renowned for attracting the cream of the crop in musical talent, attendees can expect world-class performances and intimate sessions where musicians interact and engage with one another.

This year's festival offers a diverse array of events, including workshops led by fantastic musicians, singers, and dancers, insightful lectures, captivating recitals, guided walks, ceili's, and a spectacular lineup of concerts. From puppetry for children to pop-up sessions and Gaeilge events, there's something to captivate audiences of all ages.

For anyone passionate about Irish traditional music and culture, the Feakle Festival is an unmissable opportunity to indulge and immerse oneself in the richness of our heritage and in particular in the home of East Clare music.

For more information and updates, follow Feakle Festival on Instagram and Facebook, or visit www.feaklefestival.ie. Don't miss out on what promises to be an unforgettable week of music, song and dance!

SPARTA CELTIC FESTIVAL

August 9th – 10th, 2024

www.spartacelticfest.org

<https://www.facebook.com/SpartaCelticFestival>

<https://www.instagram.com/spartacelticfestival/>

The Village of Sparta, Michigan USA is located about ten Miles north of the State's second largest city, Grand Rapids. Every year this small community hosts Michigan's "Largest Free Entry Celtic Festival", celebrating everything Irish, Scottish, and Celtic. This is expressed in the Festival's popular social media hashtag "#1village7Nations".

With a wide variety of Celtic themed music and dance acts, both on Friday August 9th and Saturday August 10th this year, the event brings to their little village the best local and regional talent, along with Cultural and Heritage activities, while maintaining a "family friendly" atmosphere. The event runs Friday from 5pm until 10pm and Saturday from 11am until 10pm. The main festival takes place in Rogers Park on both Friday and Saturday, and expands in to Balyeat Field for Saturday, adding a Classic Car Show and full Highland Games. Saturday also features a Kids Area from Noon-5pm.

Of course there will be a Beverage Tent, Food Court and wide variety of Celtic based Vendors, Clans and Cultural groups on both days. With the growth of the festival, and the difficulty of available parking in this small community, on Saturday there is a free shuttle service from the High School parking lot to Rogers Park and back.

Full details about everything can be found on the festival's website and social media sites which update regularly.

2024 MILWAUKEE IRISH FEST LINE UP ANNOUNCEMENT

August 15th – 18th, 2024 irishfest.com/lineup

The highly anticipated 2024 Milwaukee Irish Fest is back and bigger than ever! Taking place from August 15 - 18, 2024, at Milwaukee's picturesque lakefront at the Henry Maier Festival Park, this four-day extravaganza promises an unforgettable celebration of Irish music and culture.



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IRISH VENDORS, TALKS, and FOOD
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PennMarIrishFestival.com



37th International Festival of Traditional Irish Music
FEAKLE Co. Clare Festival
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AUGUST
Wednesday 7th to Monday 12th August 2024

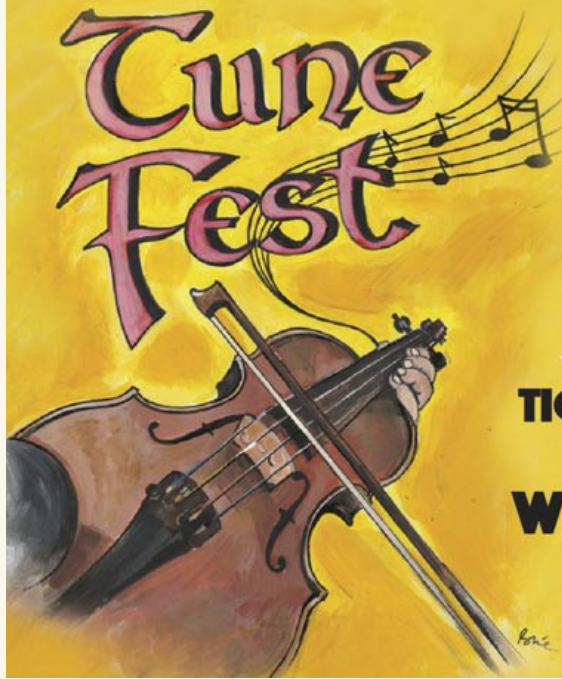
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or Tina Nelson 00353 87 6473537
www.feaklefestival.ie E: feaklefestival@gmail.com

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FRIDAY 21ST JUNE
CHERISH THE LADIES



SATURDAY 22ND JUNE
TALISK IN CONCERT

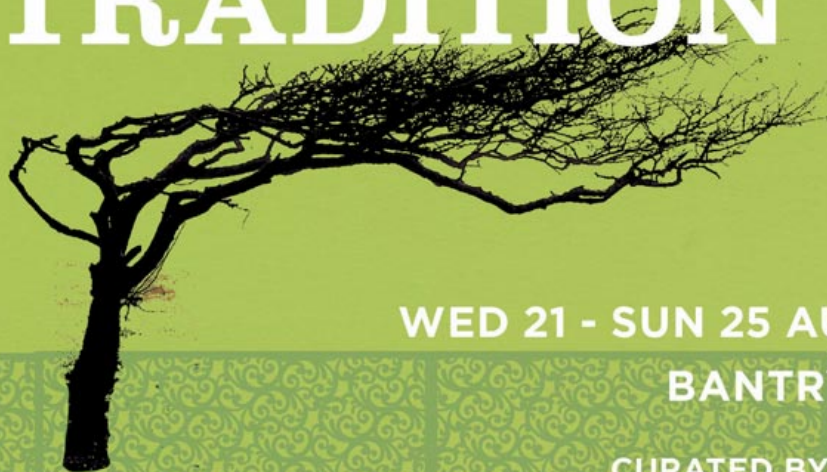


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TOM MOORE
DANNY O' MAHONY
& MANY MORE

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BANTRY, CO. CORK

CURATED BY MARTIN HAYES



www.westcorkmusic.ie



Featuring an impressive lineup of over 100 acts across 16 stages, attendees can expect a lively atmosphere filled with music, culture, and craic. This year's festival showcases a stellar roster of renowned entertainers, including Doolin', Drops of Green, Goitse, Lunasa, Mary MacNamara and Sorcha Costello, Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy, Rory Makem and Donal Clancy, Screaming Orphans, Seamus Kennedy, STEAM Irish Quartet, Talisk, The Byrne Brothers, The Consequences, The Finns, The High Kings, and Ulla.

Making their Milwaukee Irish Fest debut are Elephant Sessions, Gadan with Enda Scahill, Ispíní na hÉireann, O'Jizo, Onoír, Síomha, The Bow Tides, The Jeremiahs, and The Tumbling Paddies, promising fresh and exciting performances for festival-goers.

For tickets and to view the full lineup, visit irishfest.com/lineup. Secure your spot at the world's largest celebration of Irish music and culture by purchasing tickets at <https://irishfest.com/Tickets>.

Don't miss out on this extraordinary celebration of Irish music and culture at the 2024 Milwaukee Irish Fest! Join us for an unforgettable experience filled with music, dance, and community spirit.

Milwaukee Irish Fest is presented by CelticMKE, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting Irish, Irish American, and Celtic cultures. CelticMKE offers a wide range of cultural programs, including concerts, lectures, family events, music classes, and heritage projects. Additionally, CelticMKE is home to the Milwaukee Irish Fest Summer School, Milwaukee Irish Fest School of Music, the Ward Irish Music Archives, and the Milwaukee Irish Fest Foundation.

For more information about CelticMKE, please visit celticmke.com

MASTERS OF TRADITION FESTIVAL

August 21st – 25th, 2024 www.westcorkmusic.ie

Masters of Tradition takes place from 21 – 25 August in Bantry, Co. Cork. Its mission remains the same as every other year – to journey to the heart of Irish music and provide a platform where subtle elements of the music can be heard.

WHERE NATURE & IRISH FOLK MEET

Niagara Irish Festival

FRI 23 & SAT 24 AUG

FIREMEN'S PARK NIAGARA FALLS CANADA

OCAF FMCO YEARS 25 ANNÉES

WWW.IRISHMUSICNIAGARA.COM

As ever, the Festival is headlined by its Artistic Director Martin Hayes, the fiddler from East Clare, whose distinctive touch and extravagant virtuosity has brought the tradition to new levels.

"This year's festival will take us to the core of the music," says Martin Hayes. "We will also encounter many emerging ideas within the tradition, new ways of reimagining the past and also ways in which this music can relate with other music forms."

Martin Hayes will be joined at this year's festival by Bill Whelan, Iarla Ó Lionáird, Cormac McCarthy, Matthew Berrill, Nick Hart, Tom Moore, José Manuel Tejedor, Brighde Chaimbeul, Brian Donnellan, Peadar Ó Riada, Danny O'Mahony, Michéal Ó Raghallaigh, Geraldine Cotter and the Ré Órga ensemble, Zoe Conway, John McIntyre, Mick McAuley, Padraic Keane, Aidan Connolly, Fergus McGorman, Ruairí McGorman, Toner Quinn and many more.

Masters of Tradition Friends' priority booking opened 19 March. General booking opened 22 April.

Masters of Tradition is generously supported by the Arts Council and Cork County Council.

Full programme will be announced on www.westcorkmusic.ie

NIAGARA IRISH FESTIVAL (CANADA)

August 23rd & 24th, 2024 www.irishmusicniagara.com

Fáilte romhat! Irish Music Niagara presents the second annual Niagara Irish Festival on August 23 & 24, 2024!

Celebrate Irish music, dancing and culture at Firemen's Park just minutes from breathtaking Niagara Falls, Canada.

Irish Music Niagara is a non profit organisation with the goal of sharing happiness through folk and Irish music. We are grateful for the support of the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund (OCAF), local community volunteers & sponsors to make this happen.

Friday night at Niagara Irish Festival will have the theme "Irish music by candlelight in the park", while Saturday's theme is "Jump Around!"

The Festival will be headlined by international Irish showman PADDYMAN & high energy Irish band The Steel City Rovers. Other notable acts include Grass Mud Horse, Bill Craig, Michael O'Grady Band, The Blackthorns, O'Malley's Mates, Vox Violins, Niagara Pipe Band, Hamilton Band, Irish dancing & more talented acts on our main stage, folk stage & kids area.

Niagara Irish festival will feature a Ceili (Fri night), a children's area & cultural section.

We are proud to promote local businesses and vendors offering a wide variety of Irish & Canadian food, drinks & artisan goods.

Niagara Irish Festival is held outdoors at Firemen's Park, in beautiful Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. Free parking is available. Gates open at 5.00 p.m. Friday and 10.30 a.m. on Saturday. Tickets and more information available from our website and social media page below:

Follow us on Facebook www.Facebook.com/IrishMusicNiagara

PEORIA IRISH FEST

August 23rd – 25th, 2024 www.peoirishfest.com

The Peoria Irish Fest/Erin Feis is an outdoor celebration of all things Irish and Celtic on the beautiful banks of the Illinois river.

The Fest features the best of Irish and Celtic music, dance, and culture. We take pride in showcasing new and emerging artists on our three music stages. Our goal is to provide a cross section of music, from traditional pub songs and session tunes to genre bending performances highlighting the many ways in which artists are expanding and building on traditional forms. We love that many artists who perform at the Fest show up to see other artists' sets, and we often hear how much they enjoy our lineup of music.

Our unplugged workshops are a highlight for many. Our artists have free rein to perform, demonstrate, talk, or teach, in a small-scale venue, and each year the result is pure magic.

Save
the Date!



Please join us for our
33rd Annual Celebration

SEPTEMBER
6-7-8, 2024

We continuously work to expand our cultural offerings as well. We offer a variety of Irish and Scottish dance, an ever-changing lineup of cultural exhibits and interactive events, sessions, highland games, sheep herding, a children's area, storytellers, puppeteers, whiskey tastings, Gaelic lessons, author presentations, axe throwing, a 5K race and more.

The Fest is held at the Peoria Riverfront Park, in downtown Peoria, Illinois, conveniently located just off Interstate 74. Free parking is available. Gates open at 4:00 p.m. Friday, noon on Saturday and 10:00 a.m. Sunday for Mass.

Follow us on Facebook: www.Facebook.com/peoriairishfest/

MICHIGAN IRISH MUSIC FESTIVAL CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

September 12th – 15th, 2024 www.michiganirish.org

The Michigan Irish Music Festival, presented by Family Financial Credit Union, is excited to announce their 25th Anniversary. Join the celebration September 12-15th at Heritage Landing in downtown Muskegon, Michigan!

This year's incredible line-up of artists features the return of crowd favourite Gaelic Storm. Other headliners include Kila, Talisk, Aoife Scott, & Seamus Kennedy. Things kick off Thursday with the Pub Preview Party: one stage of entertainment, multiple food vendors, and a sampling of festival merchandise. The full festival opens Friday at 5pm and will include all stages, the full shopping experience, Celtic Kitchen and Food Court Vendors, cultural programs, Wee Ones activities, and more.

Along with presenting sponsor Family Financial Credit Union, other major sponsors of the festival include G&L Chili Dogs, Langlois Home Furnishings, The Mart Dock, and Budweiser.

Tickets will go on sale May 2, 2024 at www.michiganirish.org. Children 12 & under are free, but need a ticket, which can be ordered at the time of purchase. The 2024 ticket sponsor is Barry's Greenhouse & Landscaping.

For those needing overnight accommodations, reserving early is encouraged! Delta Hotels by Marriott and Shoreline Inn are host hotels for the festival, and they are ready to take your reservation. To book

Shoreline Inn: 231-727-8483 or to book Delta Hotels by Marriott: 231-722-0100.

Complete festival information, including the full entertainment line-up, can be found at www.michiganirish.org

Stay tuned to the website and Michigan Irish Music Festival social media pages for additional updates.

O'FLAHERTY RETREAT – GREAT TEACHING, MOTIVATED STUDENTS

October 24th – 27th, 2024 oflahertyretreat.org

The 21st Annual O'Flaherty Irish Music Retreat, organized by the Traditional Irish Music Education Society and sponsored through a grant from the Government of Ireland Emigrant Support Programme, will be held October 24-27, 2024 at the Hoblitzelle Camp & Conference Center in Midlothian Texas. The O'Flaherty Retreat is internationally renowned for instruction in traditional Irish music and dance by highly respected teachers from Ireland and the United States.

Students can choose from a wide range of courses on traditional instruments as well as singing and Sean-nós dancing. Additionally, lectures and workshops will explore topics ranging from Irish music history to music theory. At every meal there are guest concerts and during each evening there are instructor concerts followed by sessions.

The instructors for this year's retreat are: Lexie Boatright – Concertina Fundamentals; Dan Brouder – Button Accordion; Siobhan Butler - Sean-Nós Dancing; Angelina Carberry – Tenor Banjo; John Carty – Fiddle; Zoë Conway – Fiddle; Seamus Egan – Flute; Eileen Estes – Singing; Dylan Foley – Fiddle; Deirdre Granville – Harp; Matt Heaton – Bouzouki; Jake James – Fiddle Fundamentals; Caroline Keane – Concertina; Liz Knowles – Fiddle; Andy Kruspe - Bodhrán Fundamentals; John Liestman – Mandolin/Tenor Banjo Fundamentals; John McIntyre – Guitar; John Morrow – Mandolin; Kieran O'Hare – Uilleann Pipes; John Skelton – Whistle; and Robbie Walsh - Bodhrán. Melodies for the guitar class – Shannon Muenchow.

Tuition is \$350 for participants 18 and older and \$250 for youth 12-17 years old (admitted by invitation only). Meals and lodging are separate. For more information and to register, go to oflahertyretreat.org

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PeoriaIrishFest.com

VISIT OUR SITE FOR MORE INFO
& TO PURCHASE TICKETS

Peoria Irish Fest is co-sponsored by:
Peoria Park District and the St. Patrick Society of Peoria

IRISH MUSIC AND DANCE IN LONDON (IMDL) SPRING EVENTS & RETURN TO LONDON TOWN FESTIVAL

October 25th – 28th, 2024

www.irishmusicinlondon.org

Irish Music and Dance in London (IMDL) are looking forward to their next two events in the Spring of 2024.

'Mná na bPíob Uilleann Volume 1 (NPU)' album launch concert on Saturday 4th May in the Sala Room (upstairs) at The Crown Hotel, Cricklewood Broadway. This concert will feature two London Irish pipers: Marion McCarthy and Rita Farrell, plus Cork's Muireann Ní Shé, Waterford's Claire Fennell and Tyrone's Maeve O'Donnell. Tickets: £15/£6 U18s.

Our 'Irish Hooley at Kings Place' - IMDL's annual profile and fundraising event will take place in the prestigious venue's Hall One on Saturday 15th June. The evening will feature performances from a number of this year's TG4 Gradam Ceoil Award winners: Derek Hickey (Musician of the Year), MacDara Ó Faoiláin (Young Musician of the Year), The Kane Sisters (Group of the Year), Ryan Molloy (Composer of the Year) and representatives of Cairdeas na bhFhidiléirí (Outstanding Contribution).

Full information and all tickets for these events, see www.irishmusicinlondon.org

Return to London Town Festival 2024 – London's 26th annual Festival of traditional Irish music, song and dance will take place from Friday 25th – Monday 28th October at The Crown Hotel and surrounding venues in the Cricklewood area. Full line up tba soon. **Full details and tickets will be at www.returntolondontown.org**

Special Festival B&B Room rates now available at The Crown Hotel, Festival attendees. Please send booking requests to groups@aghotels.co.uk and give the group reference #GA000367 to book special rates (valid from Thurs 24 – Tues 29 Oct 24): Single: £105, Double/Twin: £110, Triple: £115, Quadruple: £120.

Visit www.irishmusicinlondon.org and www.returntolondontown.org

WILLIAM KENNEDY PIPING FESTIVAL

November 14th – 17th, 2024

www.wkpf.org

Armagh Pipers Club are delighted to announce details of the 30th anniversary edition of the William Kennedy Piping Festival. The event will take place at various venues across Armagh City from the 14th to 17th November. The festival will include concerts, workshops, sessions, lectures, events for children, plus an immersive uilleann piping academy in memory of the late Mark Donnelly.

What began in 1994 as a one-off celebration of the blind pipe-maker William Kennedy from Tandragee, Co. Armagh, has grown into one of the biggest and most prestigious events of its kind in the world. The festival has welcomed pipers and instrument makers from different cultures and traditions all over Europe, as well as North Africa, the Middle East and North America.

This year's event will see the festival welcome back some of our favourite guests from over the 30 years plus introducing some new sounds to the local and international audience. Highlights include two exciting trios - Michael McGoldrick, John Carty & Matt Griffin, and Cillian Vallely, David & Patrick Doocey - who will be showcasing their recent albums *At Our Leisure* and *The Yew and the Orchard*. The cream of uilleann pipers will be present including Mark Redmond, Padraig McGovern, Colm Broderick, Caoimhín Ó Fearghail, Jarlath Henderson and Tiarnán Ó Duinnchinn. From further afield we welcome Paddi Benson & Grace Lemon from London, and Duo Lagrange Rutkowski from central France. More names to be announced soon.

For full details visit www.wkpf.org

The festival is sponsored by Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council.

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Van Morrison · Alex Sharpe · The Saw Doctors
Willie Lynch · The Elders Sharon Shannon · Maura O'Connell
Brendan Shine · Celtic Cross · Flogging Mollys
The High Kings · Joe Dolan · Patrick Feeney · Liam Clancy
The Clancy Brothers · Louise Morrissey
Daniel O'Donnell · Michael English · Stuart Moyles
Dermot O'Brien · The Willoughby Brothers · David James
Andreas Durkin · Ruby Murray · Carmel Quinn Sean
Brennan · Lisa McHugh · Ciaran Rosney Trudi Lalor
The New York Tenors · Tom Comerford · Bernie Heaney
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Stephens Green · Susan Gillespie and Gerard Corbett
Kathy Durkin · Rod Stewart · Mary Black
Eleanor McEvoy · Dee Reilly · Olivia Douglas
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MOTOR CITY IRISH FESTIVAL

Anita Lock interviews Patrick Johnson and Kevin Murphy on the 2024 Motor City Irish Festival, June 7-9.



The Motor City Irish Festival has been a summer highlight at the Greenmead Historical Park and has served the Livonia, Michigan community and beyond for over a decade. This year's festival—from Friday, June 7 to Sunday, June 9—is gearing up for a full lineup of local and international entertainment and many fun, family-friendly activities.

Anita: Give us a brief history of the festival?

Patrick/Kevin: The Motor City Irish Fest started in 2010 in the parking lot of our local Hibernian Club. Several hundred attended. The goal was to promote our local Irish Culture and Heritage through our music and dance. We moved twice as we grew. The beautiful Historic Greenmead Park is our current venue, and close to 5000 attend each year.

Anita: Is there a sizeable Irish diaspora in Livonia and nearby areas?

Patrick/Kevin: The Metropolitan Detroit area has a large, active Irish community. We have over 60 Celtic bands and seven Irish Dance schools. We also have several great clubs, including the Gaelic League

and the Hibernian Hall—both supporting our culture and bringing in entertainment from Ireland and across North America. There are many pubs in the area featuring traditional Irish music sessions. We also have two local radio programs—The Irish Music Café and Detroit Irish Radio—that broadcast Irish music and news via Internet streaming.

Anita: How has the festival's performance lineup changed over the years?

Patrick/Kevin: As we grew, so has our music lineup. We started with one headliner, later adding a second and, this year, a third. It has been great to see participation from our local bands grow each year. The quality of the bands is such that they are making an impact on the national stage. We have grown from two Irish Dance schools to seven performing shows and dancing during the band's performances.

Anita: What does your musical lineup look like for 2024?

Patrick/Kevin: This year, our headliners include the Emmy-winning group the Black Donnelly's (originally from Dublin), singer-songwriter Sina Theil from Ireland, and The Kilmaine Saints from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, who we invited to perform based on votes from our patrons when asked, "Who would you like to see next year at the 2024 MCIF?" We also have the Dublin-born singer-songwriter Enda Reilly performing throughout the weekend and many other great local Irish/Celtic bands.

Anita: Do you have any traditions the community looks forward to from year to year?

Patrick/Kevin: The Mass at our festival is a significant part of our weekend. Great music and dance follow the well-attended Mass for the final day of our festival. Many of our patrons talk about it being the highlight of their weekend. Other traditions include our opening ceremony, kicked off by the Metro Detroit Police and Fire Pipe and Drum Corps, where we honour the Honorary Co-Chairs, whom the organizing committee has selected and voted on. These are usually people who have made

"I think the uniqueness of our festival is the quality of our local entertainment"

significant contributions to the Irish community. It is always a stirring beginning to the event.

Anita: Give an idea of events geared specifically for children.

Patrick/Kevin: Our Wee Folk's Tent is an integral part of our festival. We have beginning Irish Dance lessons, tin whistle lessons, interactive Irish Football games, crafts (like making a St. Brigid's Cross), entertainment by the Kilted Magician, and so much more. If the children are happy, the parents enjoy themselves all the more.

Anita: What makes the Motor City Irish Festival unique?

Patrick/Kevin: We take tremendous pride in our family-friendly festival and work hard to ensure we offer activities for all ages. I think the uniqueness of our festival is the quality of our local entertainment. Though we bring in a couple of headline bands, we use 20 local bands over two stages, many of whom perform in festivals nationwide.

Anita: What is the cost, and where can patrons get further information?

Patrick/Kevin: Tickets are \$15, and our website has all the events for the weekend.

Anita: How has the festival changed over the years?

Patrick/Kevin: We try to add new attractions each year to keep the festival

Check out more about the Motor City Irish Festival at

<https://motorcityirishfest.com/>



MCIF Director Kevin Murphy with Consul General Chicago Kevin Byrne

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MINNESOTA IRISH MUSIC WEEKEND

JUNE 6th – 9th, 2024

Gráinne McCool was delighted to hear all about it from festival organiser Norah Rendell.



2023 Master Artists Concert with Kane Sisters, Gráinne Hambly and Dáithí Sproule

Presented by the Center for Irish Music, Minnesota Irish Music Weekend is a unique festival that pairs world-class traditional Irish musicians and teachers with learners of all ages for a weekend of workshops, lectures, sessions, and concerts.

With this being the 16th year of the festival, I wanted to know what keeps it going so successfully. Norah told me that “the festival is truly the highlight of our year”. She continued, “the Center for Irish Music here has an enthusiastic base of supporters all year round. They all look forward to this music weekend annually.”

I wondered how the Irish Center engages with its wider community. Norah told me they are working at present to reach out to their diverse neighbourhood, adding “we welcome people of all cultural identities who are interested in Irish traditional music, and consequently we are seeing a greater diversity in the audiences at the Celtic Junction Arts Center.”

I asked Norah if it was only music over the weekend or were there other events taking place? She didn’t hesitate to tell me that there are in fact “three programs happening throughout the weekend. These include: *Trad*

Immersion Camp for children, ages 9-12, the advanced *Teen program* and workshops for adults. The Thursday night kick-off is at the Urban Growler (local brewery and restaurant), and the Friday night Great Session Experience is free, and open to anyone who wants to come play a tune or listen to a session.”

And of course we want to know just who will be performing over the weekend. And are there any artists coming over from Ireland? “This year,” Norah says, “we have eight master artists: **Angelina Carberry** (banjo), **Conor Connolly** (accordion), **Nuala Kennedy** (flute, whistle, song), **Aidan Connolly** (fiddle), **Eamon O’Leary** (bouzouki, guitar, song), **Josh Dukes** (guitar, flute), **Rose Flanagan** (fiddle), and **Joey Abarta** (uilleann pipes). Angelina, Conor, Nuala, and Aidan are travelling from Ireland.” She says they are all really looking forward to this line up!

We see Irish music continuing to grow here at home, but is it really still as popular as ever in the US? Clearly it’s doing just that in Minnesota. Norah told me, “Irish music is certainly continuing to grow in Minnesota, thanks to a large group of incredibly hard-working and dedicated people at CJAC and the Center for Irish Music. As far as Irish music schools go, the Center for Irish Music is somewhat unique in that we have paid staff who were able to sustain programming through the pandemic with the support of our amazing instructors. Enrolment grew

by 35% in 2020-21. With our 20th birthday coming up this September, we are starting to see our impact through our alumni, like Hannah Flowers (harpist) who is teaching harp workshops across the country, Joe DeGeorgeo who won the Sean O’Riada competition in fiddle in 2023, and Adrienne O’Shea who completed a Master’s at the University of Limerick and has been singing/playing flute with the local *Kickin’ It Irish* show. All three of these alumni have recently released gorgeous albums, and we’re fortunate to have Adrienne and Hannah teaching at the CIM. These talented young musicians are inspiring a new generation of musicians, so the tradition is in good hands.”

With so many Irish music festivals in the US, what makes this one different? It offers “weekend programs for all ages,” Norah tells me. And it “is short, and affordable enough that people can fly in for the weekend to study with legendary artists.” Another and very unique part of the festival according to Norah is the “teen-only program. We invest in connecting our young musicians with visiting artists.”

Having grown up in Vancouver, what drives the passion in Norah to get behind an Irish music festival? Clearly a lover of Irish traditional music she

“Through our Teen-program, we are connecting our young musicians with visiting artists”

says, “the music itself is the main driver of my work. In my role as executive artistic director of the Center for Irish Music since 2010, I enjoy the opportunity to combine my music education background with Irish music through programming the MIM weekend. I am thrilled to be serving as a leader in a community that has a passion for Irish music and is deeply connected to Irish and Irish-American cultural communities.”

Visit the Minnesota Irish Music Weekend’s website at www.centerforirishmusic.org

Angelina Carberry



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BLAS INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL OF TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC AND DANCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

June 24th – July 5th

Seán Laffey talks to Blas co-directors Dr. Breandán De Gallaí and Dr. Conor Caldwell.

Dr Conor Caldwell



Photo : Maurice Cumming



Dr Breandán de Gallaí

Blas means taste in Irish and that is just what is on offer at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick. Now in its 28th year, the intensive campus-based summer school is as fresh as ever and affords a unique opportunity to become intimately acquainted with all aspects of Irish music, song, dance and language, via hands-on activities and an informative lecture series.

The welcome on the Blas web page reads as follows: ‘As Co-Directors, we are delighted to be working together in leading the Blas International Summer School of Irish Traditional Music and Dance for its 28th edition in 2024. This year, as ever, we look forward to providing a rich programme of performances and world-class tutelage from experts in the fields of Irish traditional music and dance. Our interests lie in the origins of tradition as well as the potential for contemporising Irish artistic practices, and we hope to exemplify those ideals through this year’s Blas.’

Breandán says the summer school design follows five principles:

Access to Expert Tuition: This occurs through Masterclasses taught by renowned performers, experts and teachers of Irish traditional music, song and dance.

Performance & Reflection: Blas is unique among summer schools in that it offers strong academic, as well as practical content.

Intimacy: Group sizes are kept small to ensure a high level of attention from tutors and organisers. As a result, numbers are limited so early booking is advised.

International Accreditation: Blas, through the University of Limerick, is linked to the international credit system in education. Blas is the only summer school in Irish traditional music and dance to offer this feature.

Extra activities: Lectures, workshops, sessions and other evening events.

Self-Tailoring: Students can specialise in an individual instrument, song or dance class, or can sample from a number of instrument, song, and dance classes.

Conor explains that one of the outstanding features of the summer school is the access students have to world class tutors. “Our classes are small, one tutor to four students, so there is an intimacy in the deep conversations both oral and musical that take place each day in our masterclasses. Tutors explain not just the how to of traditional music, things like ornamentation, phrasing, pulse and dynamics, but also their personal biographies in the tradition and the cultural and community context from which they derive their practice. The anchor tutors for Blas 2024 are: Dr Breandán De Gallaí (dance), Dr Sandra Joyce (bodhran and singing), John Carty (tenor banjo), Siobhan Peoples (fiddle), Dr Niall Keegan (flute) and Dr Conor

Caldwell (fiddle) and other tutors can be invited to give specialist classes.

Breandán describes a typical day. “We begin with yoga, this relaxes us and helps us focus on the day’s programme. This prepares the students for two masterclasses each day, they run for one hour and half. Each day there is a lunchtime concert from tutors, faculty staff or students from the university. There are lectures from the Academy team and key practitioners: some are on their music, others on how the music works in the wider community, for example in music therapy. We champion the notion of a portfolio career in music and dance, and we invite speakers in to give insights into how they structure their own careers around traditional arts. We have daily Irish language classes, which are informal and fun. The evenings are devoted to impromptu sessions and we also have visits to Dolan’s music venue in Limerick City where our students can see professional players performing to a paying audience.”

Is it possible for Breandán and Conor to take part in the music themselves? Conor says, “I can grab little blasts of playing, in 15 minute breaks, in a corridor or a communal space, or joining in with an impromptu session, it’s actually a really fun way to be involved with the students.” He adds the course echoes the values and ethos of the Irish World Academy. The concept ‘taste’ is at its very centre. “Our tutors may come from distinct regional traditions, for example Donegal or Sliabh Luachra; over the course of the summer school, students will be able to taste a varied menu of Irish traditional music whilst they are here at Blas.”

For more and to sign up for this year’s Blas, please visit www.blas.ie

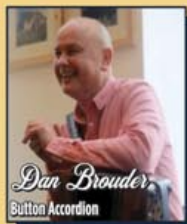


2024

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Lexie Boatright
Concertina Fundamentals



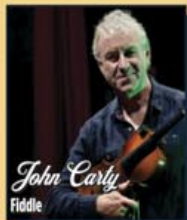
Dan Brouder
Button Accordion



Siobhan Buller
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Angelina Carberry
Tenor Banjo



John Carly
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Zoë Conway
Fiddle



Seamus Egan
Flute



Eileen Estes
Singing



Dylan Foley
Fiddle



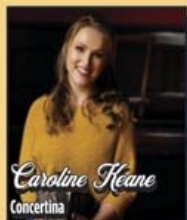
Deirdre Granville
Harp



Matt Heaton
Bouzouki



Jake James
Fiddle Fundamentals



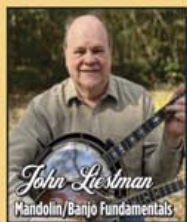
Caroline Keane
Concertina



Liz Knowles
Fiddle



Andy Kruse
Bodhrán Fundamentals



John LeSman
Mandolin/Banjo Fundamentals



John McIntyre
Guitar



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DUNGARVAN TUNEFEST 2024

June 21st–23rd, 2024

Seán Laffey calls Donnchadh Gough for an update on June's Dungarvan Tunefest.



Dungarvan is a seaside jewel on the south coast of County Waterford. It's a friendly Mecca for foodies and is the main commercial town for the nearby Gaeltacht of An Rinn. Every summer the town celebrates Irish culture with Tunefest. Pubs become session hubs, venues host top quality gigs. Grattan Square, the impressive central space at the heart of the town, holds a Busking competition, and is the location for the free gig rig. Just off the square is The Town Hall Theatre which will host the Friday night main concert.

If you have a grá for the music yourself then there are opportunities for you to take in workshops. This year there's a bunch of Clare musicians coming down to the Waterford shoreline with:

Keith O'Loughlin: A banjo virtuoso with roots in Corofin, he is a pivotal member of the Shandrum Céilí Band. Keith's talents have helped secure the prestigious Senior Céilí Band title at the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann three years running.

Tara Breen: Fiddle, this workshop has already sold out. Tara became a pivotal figure in the re-emergence of Ennis' iconic Stockton's Wing and was a frequent performer with the Chieftains.

Brian O'Loughlin: Whistle/Flute, again from Corofin, he's been a familiar face on the winners' podium at numerous national Fleadh Cheoil competitions, shining both solo and in ensemble performances.

Another Corofin native who will be teaching workshops at Tunefest is **Conor O'Loughlin:** Concertina. His expertise with this cherished instrument has garnered him numerous prizes at All-Ireland Fleadhs, shining both in solo performances and as part of esteemed bands.

Beyond Clare, **Conor Moriarty** will be teaching accordion, he was the All-Ireland Champion on Melodeon at the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in 2009, and he continued his winning streak by clinching the senior All-Ireland accordion Champion title the following year.

Colm Phelan, a native of Portlaoise, is acclaimed for his prowess on the Bodhrán. He was crowned as the first World Bodhrán Champion in 2006 and has secured back-to-back wins at the All-Ireland Bodhrán competition.

Donnchadh says he is thrilled that the extra fiddle workshop will be hosted by **Dylan Carlos**, who hails from a musically gifted family

“Cherish the Ladies on Friday 21st June in the Town Hall Theatre, promises to be some night of music”

Donnchadh tells me things are moving at a pace to welcome an influx of trad musicians in the final weekend of June. “It's thanks to a host of local sponsors, along with the drinks companies; Heineken, Diageo (Guinness) and C&C (Bulmer's Cider) and generous funding from Waterford County Council, that we are able once again to run Tunefest.”

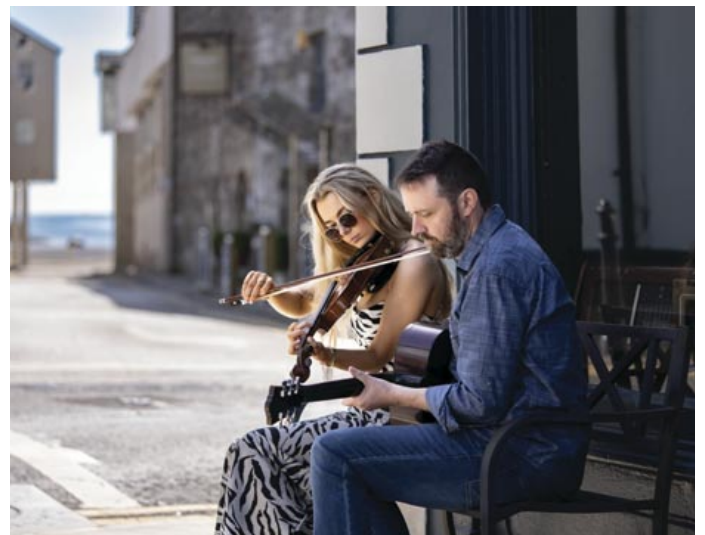
It is a family friendly festival and young players are especially welcome. Some will be given major opportunities over the weekend. Two years ago Taobh Na Mara Céilí Band played support to Danú at the traditional end of the festival concert held in the Park Hotel. The young Céilí band won the All Ireland Senior Céilí Band final in 2022 and have just released their debut album. They will support Danú at the Sunday night finale at the Park Hotel.

Another young band to watch out for is Trí Thine, who were awarded a performance slot at Dungarvan Tunefest 2024 after their outstanding music at last year's Meitheal Summer School. “What a gig to get,” says Donnchadh. “They will be playing support to none other than Cherish the Ladies on the Friday night in the Town Hall Theatre, it promises to be some night of music.”

Last year I was impressed by the audience's wild reaction to Ímar and this year their concertina player, Mohsen Amini, is back with his high power trio Talisk. Donnchadh tells me this will be in a new venue for the Saturday night club and he assures us that the lights and stage show on the 22nd June at Club Creation will be something special. It's a gig that is sure to please the younger fans (and some of us older ones too I might add).

in County Roscommon, he's well-known for his playing with renowned groups such as Gatehouse and Garadice. A key member of the trio Carlos Sweeney McCartin, Dylan's artistry is showcased in their latest album, *The One After It*.

Consult the excellent accommodation list and see longer profiles of the acts and tutors and the gig schedule for Tunefest 2024 at www.tunefest.ie and Facebook @ Tunefest Dungarvan.





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Sat	19th Oct	Kinawley Community Centre, Co. Fermanagh BT92 4FH
Sat	2nd Nov	Abbey Arts Centre, Ballyshannon, Donegal F94 DX51
Sun	3rd Nov	St Johns Theatre, Listowel Co. Kerry
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WEST CLARE FIDDLE TUNES WITH THERESE McINERNEY

Brought to you in association with the Online Academy of Irish Music (OAIM).

The fiddle, also known as the violin outside of the Irish music tradition, is considered one of the instrumental pillars of the tradition. The styles of play on it are as diverse and unique as the accents found across the island of Ireland. Its popularity can be attributed to its versatility. Whether it be lively jigs and reels, waltzes, rhythmic hornpipes, or slow airs, the fiddle is the melodic heart of any traditional Irish session.

At OAIM, we're delighted to offer a full range of courses for beginner, intermediate, and advanced fiddle players alike. Our expert instructors are here to guide you from picking up the instrument for the first time, to building skills you can take with you anywhere. For intermediate players looking to increase their

repertoire, we're delighted to offer a brand-new course taught by resident OAIM tutor Therese McInerney.

Therese McInerney hails from a little coastal townland just outside Miltown Malbay, but now lives in Ennis, Co. Clare. She grew up surrounded by Irish Culture and developed a love for Irish Traditional music, song, dance, history and the language from an early age.

In addition to her regular performances at various festivals and events in Ireland and abroad, Therese is also involved in Irish Radio and Television. She has worked on production teams for RTE's Fleadh Cheoil Programme, TG4's Gradam Cheoil, and Clare FM Radio. Recently, Therese collaborated with Red Shoe Productions on shows like Oíche Chultúir sa Ghaeltacht and Gradam Ceoil 2021 for TG4. She is currently working on new Traditional Music productions for TG4 and RTÉ.

Growing up, Therese performed with professional Ceili Bands such as The Four Courts, The Tulla Ceili Band, and the Five Counties Ceili Bands. She has won several underage titles with Inis Óg Ceili Band under the guidance of Padraic O'Reilly and was part of the Senior Ceili Band that secured the 2019 All-Ireland Senior Ceili Band Title in Drogheda.

About The Course

In "West Clare Fiddle Tunes", join Therese McInerney as she brings you on a musical tour around the townlands and villages of her native region. She introduces us to many of the tunes played by the great fiddle players of the area who have endowed upon future generations a rich heritage of music.

"Whether it be lively jigs and reels, tempered waltzes, rhythmic hornpipes, or slow airs, the fiddle is the melodic heart of any traditional Irish session"

The tunes in this course are not difficult tunes, but rather easy and repetitive in nature. Therese breaks them down slowly, phrase by phrase, drawing particular attention to creating simple variations in the tunes through a variety of methods. She covers double stops (chords), ornaments, triplets, the substitution of notes with those of a different tone, and the use of long notes in dance tunes. All these methods bring accentuation to the tune as well as variation.

By the end of this course you will have gained 13 unique West Clare tunes to add to your repertoire. These tunes are well established Irish session tunes and you will also have a deeper understanding of the subtler nuances of Irish music. And the best part? You don't need to read music to join this course! Staff notation and ABC notation are available to assist you throughout your learning experience.

So, are you ready to dive in? Let's start this journey together!

To learn more about Therese's "West Clare Fiddle Tunes" course, try out the first lesson for free, and download your free learning resources, go here: <https://www.oaim.ie/irish-fiddle/west-clare-fiddle-tunes/>

Elizabeth Kelly's Slip Jig

Part 1

Am7 Em Am7 G Em7

Part 2

C G/B Am7 C G/B Em7 C G/B Am7 G Em7

1ST PART (X2)
A-- ABA AGE A- E G- E DEG
A-- BAG AGE GAG G- E DEG

2ND PART (X2)
C-- BAG AGE C- A BGE DEG
C- A BAG AGE GAG G- E DEG

Scan for YouTube Video to Play Along!

Taken from
West Clare Fiddle Tunes
with Therese McInerney

OAIM

SIANSA GAEL LINN FINAL 2024

Irish Traditional Music was alive and well in the National Concert Hall Dublin on April 14th last for the Siansa Gael Linn Final.

Allta celebrate ! -
Siansa Gael Linn
winners 2024



A group of Kildare teenage musicians won the Siansa Gael Linn final, one of the country's most prestigious competitions for young traditional Irish music and singing groups. The final took place on Sunday, April 14, in the National Concert Hall, Dublin.

Allta (Irish for Wild) is made up of Fionn Connolly, Ruben Ó'Mórdha, Aoibhín Ní Mhórdha, Ciara Nic Éinrí, Ruaidhrí Ó'Deá, Doireann Ní Chonaill, Niamh Ní Mhuiris, Nell Kettle.

and their mentors," said Mairéad Ní Neachtain, Competition Organiser.

Allta were competing against seven other groups from Mayo, Clare, Longford, Wexford, Tipperary, Laois and Cork.

Mark Kelly, Edel Fox and Dónal O'Connor were the adjudicators on the night and announced Allta as the winners of this year's Siansa Final. They were presented with €2,500 and the Gael Linn trophy.

"The competition was broadcast live on Raidió na Gaeltachta and was an enjoyable night of music and song"

Mentored by Morgan O'Connell and Úna Ní Fhlaithearta, the group successfully made their way through two rounds of the competition and were among 8 groups from all over the country to compete for the €4,500 prize-fund.

"Siansa Gael Linn is one of the country's most prestigious competitions for young traditional musicians. We have been very fortunate to meet over 50 groups comprising of the country's best young traditional musicians since the first round of the 2024 competition. The culture and tradition is very much safe with the high standard of young musicians we see coming through this competition year after year. Congratulations to all the musicians

Flúirse, of Laois, were announced as the second place winners, being presented with €1,250 and Múscailt from Cork receiving €750 for third place.

The competition was broadcast live on Raidió na Gaeltachta and was an enjoyable night of music and song.

With a prize fund of €4,500, the competition, run entirely through the medium of Irish, is organised by Gael Linn with support from RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta and Irish Music Magazine and Molscéal TG4.

More Information: Mairéad Ní Neachtain, 087 359 3957 / maireadn@gael-linn.ie

Flúirse - 2nd Place, Siansa Gael Linn finalists 2024 with Wayne Mac Feilimí (Cathaoirleach Gael Linn) and Mark Kelly (Moltóir)



Múscailt - 3rd Place, Siansa Gael Linn finalists 2024 with Robert Heuston, Irish Music Magazine and mentors Rosaire Cagney and Richie Delahunty



SEÁN LYNCH (SEÁNIE Ó'LOINGSIGH)**Chongie Road****Own label, 10 Tracks, 41 Minutes****<https://chongieroad.ie/>**

Uilleann piper/whistle player Seán Lynch captures the heartbeat of growing up on Achill Island in his debut album. Featured artists include Tony Byrne (guitar), Joseph McNulty (fiddle/bodhran), Niall Hughes (double bass), Alex Borwick (trombone/keys/percussion), and Collie Ahern (side & bass drum).

Chongie Road opens with *The Big House*—a lively jig set instrumentally building from *The Big House* and *The Sunny Side to The Munster Buttermilk*. An eerie double-bass slide grabs listeners' attention before they kick their heels to *The Road to Lisdoonvarna* reel set (*The Merry Thatcher/Trim the Velvet/The Road to Lisdoonvarna*), followed by another trad reel set, *The Scholar (The Boys on the Hilltop/The Scholar)*. A backdrop of ocean waves stirs nostalgia in the slow air, *Valencia Harbour*.

More reels and a driving bodhran beat set the dancing pace again in *Off the Cuff (The Wind that Shakes the Barely/The Rainy Day)*, which leads into the energetic *O'Connor's* jig set (*Gan ainm tune/O'Connor's*) before introducing hopping trad reels (*Miss Monaghan/Nine Pint Coggie*) in the *Nine Pint Coggie* set. A violin and trombone improv segment in *Jewels of the Ocean* will delight listeners, followed by a final toe-tapping jig, *The Wandering Minstrel*, before *Chongie Road* draws to a close with Lynch's original and thought-provoking *Chongie Road* slow air—complete with spoken word (Brid McLoughlin) and backdrop of the Chongie River's trickling stream.

Kudos to Lynch, who has turned a personal memoir into a timeless musical collection!

Anita Lock**PORTAGE****Portage****Sound Solution, 10 Tracks, 47 Minutes****www.portagefiddle.com**

On the self-titled CD by Portage is a selection of ten tunes and songs. Five of North America's finest female musicians have come together and become Portage. Anne Lederman, Erynn Marshall, Laura Risk, and Christina Smith all play fiddle with Jean Hewson providing the guitar accompaniment. All the ladies are Canadian, with the exception of Laura Risk. Originally from California but having spent many years in Québec she may well be an honorary Canadian now.

The word 'Portage' is the word for overland travel between bodies of water. Many bodies of water were travelled across for Canada to become the country it is today. Much music has been brought to the Canadian shores by waves of immigrants. *Portage* is very aptly titled and very aptly put together to show that this music really has travelled and has helped make the music and cultural landscape of Canada what it is. It doesn't disappoint.

All tunes on the album are from the cultures which came to make up Canada – French, Irish, Scottish and many more. The tunes here have long connections where they originate and have been passed down through the generations. Added to these are a number of brand-new compositions. The first tune in the *Dawning* set is one composed by fiddle and band member Erynn Marshall. This is immediately followed by *Washington's March* and then the foot-tapping traditional song from Southwest Virginia, *Raleigh & Spenser*. You'll recognise *The Rocky Road to Dublin*, the 18th Century Scottish tune, *The Flowers of Edinburgh* and you will foot-tap from the onset of *Mrs Belle* through to the finale with *The Teddy Boy* set.

This is no easy-listening collection of music. This will have you ready to dance and you can't help but sway as you enjoy. You'll find yourself getting up and dancing the country or the highland dance. And you won't stop.

This fiddling album shows how music connects and the world of Canada has connected with its founding cultures and countries right here in *Portage*. Guesting on the album are Wendy MacIssac (Cape Breton fiddler) and Bryan Poirier (fiddler from Moncton).

Gráinne McCool**ROBERT JOHN MacINNES****Ri Taobh a' Chuain****Own Label, 5 Tracks, 22 Minutes****www.robertjohnmacinnes.com**

Half an album - a little more than an EP but somewhat short of a full CD, *Ri Taobh a' Chuain* presents five traditional songs from Robert John, four in Gaelic and the perennial *Loch Lomond* in English. MacInnes is as much a pianist as a singer, and much of the beauty on this recording is in the arrangements of these Scottish songs. From his home in Kishorn, as a young man he looked across to Raasay and Skye, birthplace of the love song *An Roghainn* by Sorley MacLean and Donald Shaw, and beyond to the Outer Hebrides and North Uist where John MacCodrum wrote the powerful lament *Smeòrach Clann Dòmhnailh*. This music is steeped in the mist and spirit of Gaeldom.

Now based in Glasgow, and still in his early twenties, Robert John MacInnes has enlisted the help of guitarist Keith Morrison as well as multi-tracking his own vocals and piano to make this solo debut a full and varied collection. Three tracks showcase MacInnes' exceptional touch on piano, with two unaccompanied Gaelic songs including the final *An Ataireachd Àrd* by Donald MacIver of Lewis, one of the finest modern Hebridean anthems and a personal favourite of mine. Robert John's solo voice holds up flawlessly on this challenging piece, contrasting perfectly with the preceding piano and voice arrangement of *Loch Lomond* which is bound to be a popular track.

Music and song, spirit and soul combine on *Ri Taobh a' Chuain*, promising a bright future for Robert John MacInnes.

Alex Monaghan**JULIE ABBÉ****Out of the Ashes****ANIS002, 12 Tracks, 56 Minutes****www.julieabbe.com**

A native of France, UK resident, Julie Abbé has a unique, distinct voice, emotionally connected to her lyrics. Her new album *Out of the Ashes*, all self-penned, deals with female agency in the joy of love, the pain of loss, the circularity of grief and healing.

With three songs in her native French language, *Lanternes d'Or*, *Au Bord de la Rivière*, and *Melusine* which is an exquisite blend of tender vocals with exotic flute and percussion.

Take Me Away captures a dreamscape vibe, silken-voiced, the poet invoking the lover to take her away, to "show me around to his hidden places", to take her away, "deep into the night", beautifully sensual, an homage to new love, in her signature style of folk, jazz and bluesy blend. *Songs of Love* has experimental, innovative playing and arrangements, well achieved.

Hushing The Blues Away is outstanding, in the voice of the unrequited, jilted but invested in recovery, directing her pain, "guiding it out through the door", taking charge so as the offender will "haunt my dreams no more", with an ethereal touch, her voice ranging from an intimate whisper in the verses to surging chorus.

Medicine Tune, mouth music, powerful, haunting, the intricate relationship between voice and instrumentation so beautiful, a warm cohesion, elegant and incantatory, she performed it at the opening ceremony at Glastonbury 2022 to great acclaim.

Out of the Ashes was produced by guitarist James Grunwell with highly skilled guest musicians; Sam Quintana on double bass, Ewan Bleach on reeds and Paul Johnson, percussion and flute, a very stylish album from an assured and accomplished writer, poet, songstress.

Out of the Ashes becomes gold dust in this case, and do please see her website for links to performances and her other work. www.julieabbe.com and follow Julie on Facebook & instagram @julieabbemusic

Anne Marie Kennedy

ROSS COUPER BAND**The Homeroad****Own Label RRC02CD, 7 Tracks, 46 Minutes****<https://rosscouper.bandcamp.com/album/the-homeroad>**

Known for his fiery playing with the Peatbog Faeries and his own energetic compositions such as *Strictly Sambuca* or *Melbourne*, this young Shetland fiddler has been at the forefront of the Scottish folk scene for a while and has released a couple of duo albums along the way, so it's surprising that this is his first solo recording. I say solo, the band is far from just a backing group, with Michael Biggins on keys, Sam Mabbett on buttons, Paul Jennings on percussion and spots of bass from Duncan Lyall, all master musicians in their own right. Together they produce an awesome sound, fiddle-led but artfully filled out, bringing this music to life as a shared creation. Couper has penned most of the material here: twelve out of fifteen pieces are his

The opening medley is almost an overture, a ten minute trio of tunes kicking straight in with fingers flying on the punchy reel *Da Clubb*, mellowing out with the sultry *Farewell to Dumbarton Road*, and then cranking up again for the swaggering march *Clunie Road* which comes from the same stable as *Melbourne*. Tasty syncopation, piano lines and varied percussion make this a great introduction to *Homeroad*. The fiddle's pretty amazing too! A beautiful Shetland bridal march and a couple of pieces from Ireland and Cape Breton cue up *Margaret Robertson's Reel*, a great tune written by Ross for his mother. The party vibe of *Da Lang Ayre* brings in button box on a very contemporary dance set before an almost country waltz. Then it's back to reels, another languid air on box and fiddle, and the final full-throttle medley. Excellent music with lots of twists: Ross Couper is certainly going places on *The Homeroad*.

Alex Monaghan**LOREENA MCKENNITT****The Road Back Home****Quinlan Road, 10 Tracks, 42 Minutes****www.loreenamckennitt.com**

The cover art on Loreena McKennitt's new album *The Road Back Home* depicts a remote, bucolic setting: farmhouses, pastures, a rock outcrop, all dwarfed by a rugged mountain range split by a trail that leads away, full of possibilities, a journey metaphor, the leaving and coming back.

The album, McKennitt says, 'harkens back to her roots', a journey of over thirty years, with material drawn from her early years on the folk music circuit, some of the songs previously unrecorded. With a high profile in contemporary Celtic music, her beginnings were in the humble folk clubs and festival circuit in Western Canada, which this album celebrates.

In keeping with the artful image, there are songs of nature, such as *Searching for Lambs* recorded live, a delightful opener, also *Bonny Portmore*, which laments the demise of oak forests, her voice dancing lightly in polished performance. *Greystones* is an enchanting waltz and her version of *Mary & the Soldier* is a rousing one. Her version of *As I Roved Out* is all drama, the voice wild and rich, operatic, with dramatic arrangements, a trad orchestra for backing, bound to be the backbone number in a concert setting.

With stellar musical accompaniment, *Custom Gap* is a showcase of brilliant instrumentation, a gentle lead in on fiddles and whistles, then away they soar, into a rip-roaring set of wild tunes, buoyant and sprightly, also recorded live, superb playing and arrangements. *Salvation Contradiction*, a bracing set of tunes, vigorous, authoritative playing, as is the final pair, *Sí Bheag, Sí Mhór/Wild Mountain Thyme*.

The Road Back Home is a fine piece of work from a woman who has already proved her mettle as a silken-voiced vocalist. The album may very well be adding to her already overflowing mantelpiece of awards and nominations.

Anne Marie Kennedy



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LEONARD BARRY**Littoral****Own Label, 11 Tracks, 40 Minutes****www.leonardbarrymusic.com**

Leonard Barry's new album *Littoral* is his third solo recording, its title refers to the edge of the world where sea meets shore. Inspired by his journey along Ireland's Atlantic fringe, from his youth in Kilmoyley in North Kerry to his present abode in Sligo on the Connacht coast. The tunes too, as you'll read below, have taken a number of roads to arrive at this Littoral border.

Place is a powerful marker in much of traditional music's catalogue of tunes, but so too are people and past performances. Barry was first smitten by the sound of Paddy Keenan's pipes and in particular Paddy's Bothy Band version of *The Pipe on the Hob*. Leonard Barry plays that tune with passion and pedigree. A salute to a master from a man who has completely mastered his craft. Listen to how he moves up a key as *The Pipe on the Hob* gives way to *The Fly in the Porter* and then into *The Stolen Purse*.

The album was produced by Michael McGoldrick, who alongside Brian McDonagh and Leonard, also mixed the tracks. Guest musicians invited along to provide added extra dimensions to old tunes, are: Shane McGowan (guitar), Andy Morrow and Kevin Burke (fiddles), Michael Holmes, Seamie O'Dowd and Brian McDonagh (bouzouki), with Michael McGoldrick on flute and Alice Allen on Cello - her track was recorded in Scotland.

There is a deep well of history to draw from if you are an uilleann piper, this is the case on the opening track *The Munster Rake / The Arra Mountains / Last Night's Fun*. The first tune is from Farrell's 1810 publication, the second from Paddy O'Brien, the Tipperary accordion player, the last one a popular session tune. Leonard plays a tune from his home parish: *The First of May*, which he combines with *The Few Bob* (a tune picked up from concertina player Rick Epping who learned it from Clare fiddler Joe Ryan); the backing from Shane McGowan is top drawer.

Leonard slows things down with a big slow air, *Aisling Chael* from Cul Aodha in the Múscraí Gaeltacht of Cork. Leonard's playing is profound, notes are held against a drone, vibrato is used as the tune shifts into the upper register. Alice Allen's cello blends in beautifully with Barry's resonant pipes. You can hear in his playing why the uilleann pipes were first thought of as being an Irish pipe organ. This is unvarnished piping at its best, no studio reverb, no digital cleansing, as pure drop as you'll find anywhere.

Barry puts down the pipes for a continental set of tunes: *La Valse de Pasteriaux / La Polverita Fiera*, the first from Michael McGoldrick who had it from composer, the Breton Musician Jackie Pollard. The second came to Barry via John Carty who found it in the compositions of the US based LE McCullough.

The final track has echoes of his Bothy Band heroes, a selection of *St. Ruth's Bush / The Old Pensioner / The Monastere den Fancy*, with its pulsating bouzouki and layers of harmony. It's a fitting and uplifting end to one of the best piping albums you are likely to find in this, or indeed, any other year.

Seán Laffey**SASSENACH****Passages****Own Label, 10 Tracks, 38 Minutes****www.facebook.com/sassenach.ca**

Passages is the debut album from four Montreal musicians that are Sassenach. Exploring Irish, Scottish and Quebecois traditional music with creative, innovative arrangements, and writing their own compositions in the Celtic music tradition, they have successfully weaved a collection of beautifully crafted music. Each musician takes

their turn as a soloist in pieces featuring their voice or instrument and sings in Gaelic, English, or French.

This is a very authentic and original collection of music. Much of what we have heard before but now in a new composite. With much string arrangement (alongside percussion and keys), there is a delicate tone to each piece bringing new life and new enjoyment to the same.

It's an easy listening yet musically awakening collection. The mix of voices with instruments provides a soothing and relaxing balance that connects in all the right places. It's a combination of vocals, a delightful string ensemble alongside the bodhrán percussion. Jane's vocals welcome us to the beautiful collection on the first track, *Siúbhán Ní Dhuibhir*, sang as Gaeilge, it sets the tone for the entire album - beautiful vocals accompanied by equally beautiful musical arrangement. It's Jane's vocals again on *Spencil Hill* and a haunting rendition of the song it is.

The music does the talking on Susan's composition *The Loon*. The tune was inspired by a pair of loons (*Gavia immer*) at her parents' lakeside cottage. Towards the end we hear the loons bobbing for fish through the music. It is a beautiful piece of music speaking to us.

The set of 10 tracks closes with a twist in *Star of the County Down / The Bus Stop Reel*. The well-known song is quickly followed by a foot-stomping reel to round off a wonderful debut collection of music and song.

Gráinne McCool**MUINTIR****Tús Maith****Own Label, 3 Tracks, 10 Minutes www.muintir.no**

Muintir is Brendan Monaghan, Cecilie Louise Mace Stensrud, Kaja Kowalska and Gareth Eason, who play traditional Irish music in Norway and throughout Europe. *Tús Maith* is an EP of three tracks, cracking music, a tantalising glimpse into their individual and collective talents.

All multi-instrumentalists, Monaghan's pipes and whistles anchor the tunes, solid harmonies in the song *Níl Sé na Lá*, a nice lively version with the penultimate chorus sung acapella, very effective. Great variety in the playing, traditional Irish to the core, the music is in safe hands.

With a plethora of traditional instruments: bodhran, fiddles, whistles, pipes, drones, guitars, *Muintir* have created a unique musical patchwork, staying true to the Irish but putting their own stamp on it, great maturity in the playing and arrangements. They have added unique textures, cross-cultural vibes united in the music, one can understand why they are in demand, be it an intimate venue, concert hall, festival, wake or wedding.

The title comes from an old Irish proverb, '*tus maith, leath na h-oibre*', translates as 'a good start is half the work', mightily appropriate here; the work comes easy to this foursome. Go whet your appetite, get a taste of them on their website.

Anne Marie Kennedy**AISLING LYONS****Sunbeam****Own Label, Single, 4 Minutes www.aislinglyonsmusic.com**

Aisling qualified as a Professional Master of Music Education in 2021 with First Class Honours. Aisling has over 10 years' experience teaching both harp & concertina, groups, bands, duets, trios, céilí band drums, secondary school music & primary school level groups. She is the current harp tutor at the University of Limerick, University College Cork and was the first teacher with the Clare Music Generation Harp Ensemble.

Sunbeam is a contemporary piece of music for the harp, beautifully played by Aisling and meticulously recorded & mixed by Ben Wanders, Wanderland Studios.

Aisling writes on her Bandcamp page that this piece of music was written for "my dear friend, Sarah who passed away suddenly at the end of 2023. A shining light, a sunbeam." This is the kind of music I'd like written for me when my time too comes, it's neither sad nor melancholy, there's a joyous celebration of a life lived, of the light of our existence. The repeated opening phrase is paused for a brief moment as if Aisling is spellbound in reflection. As the track slows down, there are echoes and resonances, and a gentle fade into the realm of story and beautifully formed memories.

Seán Laffey

STORY BEHIND THE SONG

In The Silence of the Twilight by Valerie Casey, writes Sean Laffey.

During the 2024 Maurice O'Keefe Traditional Music Festival in Kiskeam, County Cork, I had the pleasure of attending Valerie Casey's CD launch of her album *In The Silence of the Twilight*.

The album takes its name from a song written by Valerie's granduncle and it has one of the loveliest melodies I have heard in years. Its backstory is both true and fascinating as Valerie tells us below.

"This track is the title track of the album and it is very special to me. The lyrics were written by my late granduncle Willie (Bill) Hanly, brother to my grandmother Babs McCarthy. Willie passed away in June 2023. He was a proud Limerick man, born in Cappamore, County Limerick, but lived most of his life in the beautiful Curragh

label afterwards and it was set to a melody and he paid for it to be released. On his 90th birthday, Willie sent me the original recording and the printed music of the song. I had no idea until then that he had a poem he had written recorded and it was so lovely to have it. I thought that if I ever recorded an album, it would make a lovely title.

"Willie said I might put my own air to the song sometime and make it have more of a traditional/folk melody, which is exactly what I did, with the assistance of Conal Early, my friend, who produced and recorded the album. When the song was recorded it was sent straight to my cousin Anne, Willie's daughter, and she was the first to hear it. I'm so delighted that she got to do so. Anne told me he was very emotional and she was delighted with it. I hoped I

"On his 90th birthday, Willie sent me the original recording and the printed music of the song"

of County Kildare. Willie was a soldier. When he was young, he was stationed for a period of time in Cyprus on UN Peace Keeping duties. He was on patrol alone one evening on a hillside. He was looking at the people below, who were going into a little chapel, called by the sound of the church bell. He was lonesome for home as he watched the scene unfold, he put pen to paper and wrote the most beautiful words about what he witnessed that night, in the silence of the twilight. Willie sent the poem to Hallmark record

had done his words justice and that his wife Tess and all the Hanlys, who have been so fabulous in their encouragement, will have this song to remember him by always. I feel honoured to have gotten the chance to record this song. It is made all the more special by the fact that my daughter Annie Mai is featured on it on the album. The song now being intertwined with 4 generations of the family.

"For us, as an extended family, this song has genuinely made such an impact and brought us all closer. I have recently met cousins who I had never met before after they came to a concert where I sang it. It just shows the power of words and song."



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In The Silence of The Twilight

In the silence of the twilight, as the evening shadows fall
I hear the church bells ringing, sending out their holy call
See the people now they're gathering, coming out from
every door.

Soon the little church is crowded, from the altar to the
door.

Then from a window in the steeple, where the grey dove
sleeps in peace

Comes a golden ray of sunshine, shining down upon the
priest

I hear the murmur of the voices as they answer him in
prayer

I can hear it in the breezes, how I wish that I were there.

In the silence of the twilight, as the evening shadows fall
I hear the church bells ringing, sending out their holy call
See the people now they're gathering, coming out from
every door.

Soon the little church is crowded, from the altar to the
door.

Then from a window in the steeple, where the grey dove
sleeps in peace

Comes a golden ray of sunshine, shining down upon the
priest

But my lonely heart is aching for the day that I return
To the chapel in the valley, where the light will ever burn.

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