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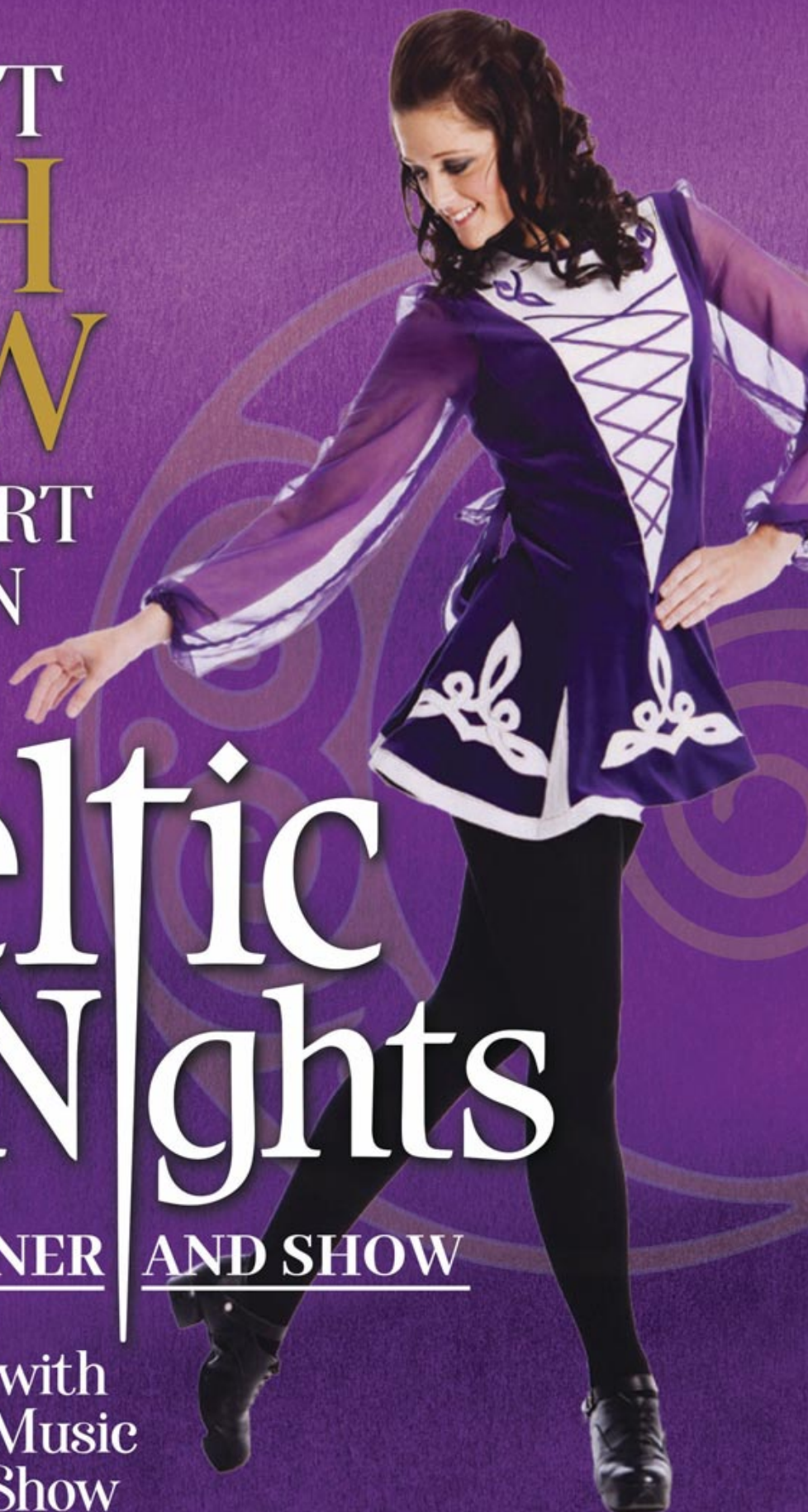
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FOREWORD

THE IRL OF TRAD

IRL is an acronym explaining why the authentic is gaining traction in the online world, it stands for In Real Life. Of course IRL has always been at the heart of traditional and folk music.

According to Thomas McConaughay, Peoria Irish Fest has a very special acoustic stage set up for players and listeners to share an authentic experience of the tradition. Something which singer songwriter Enda Reilly tells Mark Lysaght he is keen to bring to his performances.

Life events are truly authentic and none more so than the passing of a parent. Caitríona O'Sullivan's new chart topping single *In the Still of the Night*, is her response to processing such grief. A memory to pass down to future generations and a song that resonates with people worldwide.

Joanie Madden has developed tours of Ireland and music cruises, where fans rub shoulders and play in sessions with some of the genre's finest musicians and singers. We feature festivals where the wider culture is paramount. Lorient, the world's largest Celtic festival welcomes Les Cousins d'Amérique this August and Mick Walsh has a preview of what to expect.

Milwaukee, known affectionately as the "City of Festivals", provides the perfect backdrop for Milwaukee Irish Fest in August. This annual gathering sees musicians and music lovers coming together to celebrate a shared heritage and passion for Irish and Celtic culture.

August is the height of festival season, some are ingrained into their regions and have become essential elements in their communities' calendars. Gráinne McCool hears about the 48th Ballyshannon Folk Festival and Rónán Ó Dochartaigh of Oideas Gael reminds us how music can be a welcome gateway into the Irish language.

Enjoy August and keep an ear out for the real thing.

Slán

Seán L

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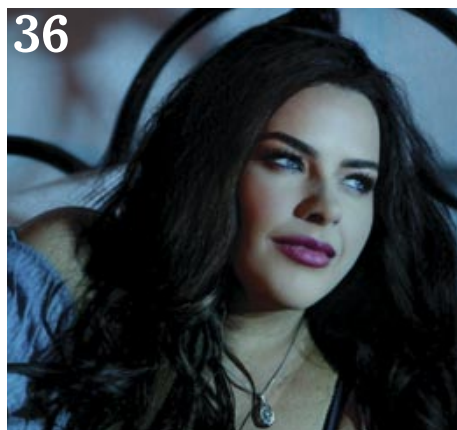
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The 38th International Feakle Festival of Traditional Irish Music returns from August 6th to 11th. Seán Laffey spoke with festival Secretary Aoife Hayes, to find out what is planned for this August.

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We continue our series of stories, songs and poems titled *Let The Memories Be*, brought to you by the legend of Irish Music that is Johnny McEvoy. In this edition we feature Michael Collins.

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

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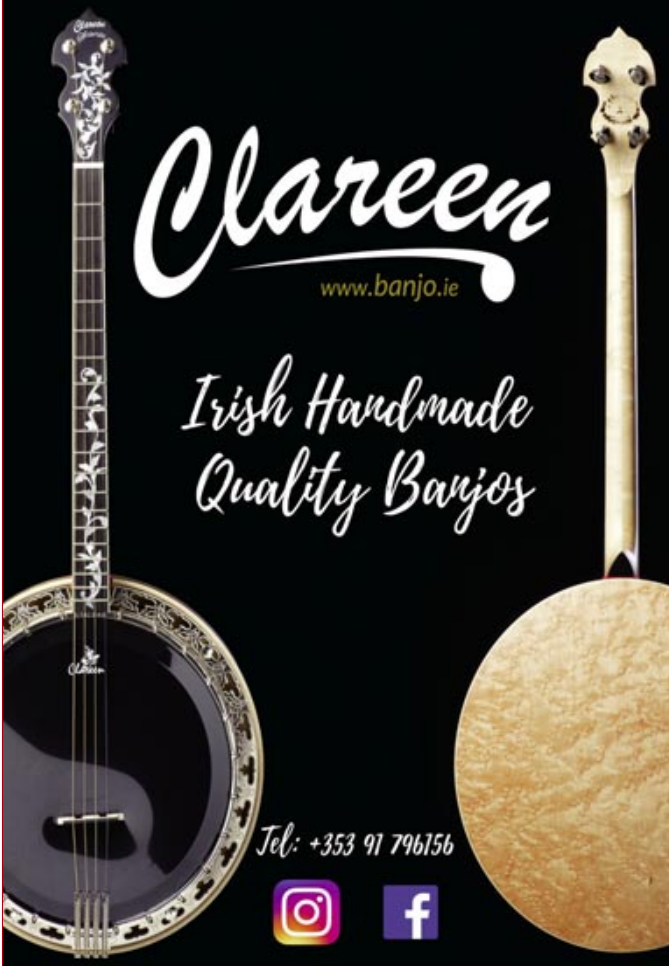


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DON "BANJO" SMITH

www.donbanjosmith.com

In the spring of 2016, Don "Banjo" Smith set out to make a follow up album to *The Rose Sessions* that he and Marty "Moonshine" McKernan released the year before, not necessarily of the same vein, but of the same quality. In order to achieve that goal, he again recruited Marty as his Co-Producer/multi-instrumentalist, and song contributor, and Bob Both (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bob_Both), of Twain Recording Studio in New Jersey, as Recording Engineer and Co-Producer.

The album is/was to be a Concept Album, similar to the one Earl Scruggs did in the early 70's (Earl Scruggs with Family and Friends), whereas Don would be featuring many of the very talented people he has performed with over the years. This has proven to be quite an undertaking with so far up to 14 different musicians, and several have been lost over this time, before they could be brought to the studio to record for this album. There are one or two more Don would have liked to have brought in, but you can't have everything....

Don features the likes of frequent collaborator Marty McKernan, Jack Driscoll, Mike Griffin, Randy Shenise, Greg Jowaisas, Terry Kane, Jeanie Cassels, et al, playing a variety of instruments on a variety of songs, many of them Irish in origin, but also some original songs (all really good!) by Marty, Randy, Jeanie, and Greg, and a few by some well-known songwriters. It was slated to be finished in early winter 2019, but a break was taken in late Feb. to start playing during the busy season, and then Covid struck, and everything came to a grinding halt.

We got back to work in the autumn of 2020, and all the mixing and overdubbing was finished by summer of 2021, and just recently the artwork was attended to, and we launched the new album just before Saint Patrick's Day, 2025.

I believe that the results will have been worth the wait!

Find Don at www.donbanjosmith.com

TAKE A HOLIDAY IN 'GLEANN AN CHEOIL!'

www.oideasgael.ie & donegalfiddlemusic.ie

Le breis agus 40 bliain anuas, tá Oideas Gael ag cur cúrsaí Gaeilge agus laethanta saoire cultúrtha do dhaoine ar fásta ar fáil in iardheisceart Chontae Dhún na nGall. Tá clú agus cáil ar Ghleann Cholm Cille as saibhreas an traidisiúin cheoil atá sa cheantar, go háirithe an amhránaíocht agus an ceol fíde. Is ann a bhíonn Seachtain na bhFidléirí, scoil samhraidh iomráiteach de chuid Cairdeas na bhFidléirí, gach bliain. Cuireann Oideas Gael ceol na hÉireann chun cinn trína chuid cúrsaí ar an chláirseach agus ar an fheadóg mhór agus trí chlár ceolchoirmeacha samhraidh gach bliain.

For more than 40 years, Oideas Gael has provided adult Irish language courses and cultural activity holidays in southwest Donegal. Gleann Cholm Cille is renowned for its rich musical tradition, particularly in the domains of singing and fiddle music. It is the venue for Seachtain na bhFidléirí—Fiddle Week—the annual summer school of Cairdeas na bhFidléirí, recent recipients of a Gradam Ceoil TG4 Outstanding Contribution Award. Oideas Gael promotes Irish music through its educational programmes and its summer concert series.

Each year, our Flute & Whistle Playing course, taught by Claire McGrattan, is offered in both week-long and weekend formats. A week-long course in the Irish Harp takes place every summer. All courses are suitable for both beginning and improving players, and the small-group format of each course ensures that they cater to individual learners' needs. As we come to the close of our 2025 programme, keep an eye on our website for next year's dates!

Find out more at www.oideasgael.ie and donegalfiddlemusic.ie

ERIN RUTH

<https://erinruthfolk.com/>

"Erin sings with an alluring exuberance that allows her to interpret an Irish ballad's lyrics with meaning, insight, sentiment & historical perspective." - *Roots Music Report*

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TO BYZANTIUM
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DOUBLE CONCERT £35

SAT 26 JUL 2025
JOHN BUCKLEY MCQUAID
DOORS: 7.30PM | £10

FRI 01 AUG 2025
SHARON SHANNON
DOORS: 7.30PM | £25

THU 04 SEP 2025
CATHERINE MCGRATH
DOORS: 7PM | £22/£20

FRI 05 - SAT 06 SEP 2025
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KELLY GANG
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Originally from Tucson, AZ - Erin Ruth arrived in San Francisco in 2012 with a background in performing, sight-reading, & auditioning her voice & clarinet. She also possesses ability with piano, guitar, & sax. Erin followed in her mother Debbie's footsteps, writing songs through College at the University of AZ. Debbie is Scots-Irish/American, & Erin's father is from Madrid. During childhood, her mother brought home Celtic & Flamenco albums. Upon moving to SF, Erin gained further exposure to Celtic music – and began performing alongside artists such as Culann's Hounds.

Erin released an album of trad classics in 2020, with limited outlets for exposure during the pandemic. She'll soon release a 2nd album, also self-funded by the modest salary she earns as an accountant. The new album will brush on Irish, Scottish, American, Celtic-Galician, & original songs. Erin contributes a good deal of her own piano & guitar for the album. She is particularly excited that the project engages a variety of revered Bay Area musicians as well. Additionally, Erin is elated at the opportunity to use Debbie's artwork as the album cover.

Watch Erin's website & FB page for further updates:

<https://erinruthfolk.com/>

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"It would be wonderful if many more traditional musicians could have access to the very rich treasury of notated Irish music." – Martin Hayes.

readmusicthetradway.com

TRAD ON THE PROM

www.tradontheprom.com

Trad on the Prom is a unique and unforgettable intimate theatre experience taking place in the heart of Galway.

It is the number 1 show in Ireland, a cultural highlight of the Wild Atlantic Way and a MUST for every Irish holiday adventure.

Since 2005, Trad on the Prom has been thrilling visitors from home and abroad with its electrifying energy and world class performances – showcasing traditional, Irish music, song and dance with a brilliant contemporary edge. Trad on the Prom is a unique Irish Cultural experience for all.

The world class cast features virtuoso fiddle player Máirín Fahy (featured soloist for many years with Riverdance and The Chieftains). Máirín is joined on stage by her brother Ger Fahy (Composer of Lord of the Dance, Dangerous Games), sister Yvonne Fahy (Multi-instrumentalist, prolific composer and member of BackWest), Padraig Rynne (Notify), Colm Henry (Keyboards), Marc Roberts (Eurovision star) and Chris Kelly (Producer and Presenter, Reeltime).

Trad on the Prom showcases a stunning line-up of world champion Irish Dancers who have amassed an amazing 30 world titles including Claire Greaney (6 times World Champion), World Champions Sylvia Carroll, Evan O'Brien, Owen Gaughan, and champion dancers Anne Marie Keaney (Velocity), Laoise Dunne, and Róisín Francis. Completing this amazing array of dancers are TikTok dance sensations Dara Kelly and Rónan O'Connell from Cairde.

Trad on the Prom, a 'must see' for visitors to Galway, is suitable for all ages and nationalities and takes place in Leisureland Theatre, Salthill, from May to September 2025.

Book Now online at www.tradontheprom.com

MÁIRÍN FAHY and PATSY BRODERICK

mairinfahypatsybroderick.bandcamp.com

Growing up in East Galway, an area renowned for its unique style of traditional music, Máirín from Ballinakill and Patsy from Kilreekil have been playing music together since childhood. As members of the All Ireland winning Junior Ballinakill Céili Band, they were influenced by the music of Máirín's aunt Aggie Whyte, her mam Bridie Whyte (Fahy) and musicians of the surrounding area. Máirín and Patsy as aspiring musicians, spent many Sunday afternoons in Aggie's house listening to Fr. P.J. Kelly, a Columban missionary, who on his return from a Mission term, would join in the musical gatherings in Cappycun, often playing many of his own charming melodious compositions.

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SUMMER

GADAN

2025

AUG 01 DUBLIN IRISH FEST – DUBLIN, OH *
AUG 02 DUBLIN IRISH FEST – DUBLIN, OH *
AUG 03 DUBLIN IRISH FEST – DUBLIN, OH *
AUG 04 MUSIK FEST – BETHLEHEM, PA
AUG 05 MUSIK FEST – BETHLEHEM, PA
AUG 06 DAKOTA – MINNEAPOLIS, MN
AUG 07 LA CROSSE IRISH FESTIVAL – LA CROSSE, WI *
AUG 08 LA CROSSE IRISH FESTIVAL – LA CROSSE, WI *
AUG 09 LA CROSSE IRISH FESTIVAL – LA CROSSE, WI *

AUG 10 CHESTNUT ARTS CENTER – MARSHFIELD, WI
AUG 15 MILWAUKEE IRISH FESTIVAL – MILWAUKEE, WI *
AUG 16 MILWAUKEE IRISH FESTIVAL – MILWAUKEE, WI *
AUG 17 MILWAUKEE IRISH FESTIVAL – MILWAUKEE, WI *
AUG 20 RAVEN WOLF PRODUCTIONS – WILLIAMSBURG, IA
AUG 21 CA D'ZAN – CAMBRIDGE, IL
AUG 22 BLUE STRAWBERRY – ST. LOUIS, MO
AUG 23 PEORIA IRISH FESTIVAL – PEORIA, IL
AUG 24 CHICAGO GAELIC PARK IRISH FEST – CHICAGO, IL

* W/ HILLARY KLUG AS SPECIAL GUEST



NEW ALBUM OUT NOW!

WWW.GADANBAND.COM • @GADANBAND

Whilst living in Dublin, Máirín and Patsy joined in the vibrant traditional music session scene and were members of the all-female group Macalla in the 80's. They recently celebrated a significant anniversary with a sell-out concert during Dublin TradFest '25.

They have both pursued very successful individual music careers, Máirín with Reeltime and soloist with Riverdance and the Chieftains and currently with Trad on the Prom, and Patsy as a member of Gaelforce, Arcady and the Senior All Ireland winning Shannon Vale Ceili Band.

Máirín and Patsy were delighted to get back to their roots in East Galway, recording the wonderful compositions of Fr. P.J. Kelly ... The title of their album is "*Galway to Fiji*" the music of Fr. Kelly. Máirín Fahy and Patsy Broderick.

It will be available from July 2025 at
mairinfahypatsybroderick.bandcamp.com
mairinandpatsy@gmail.com

MISE GRÁINNE

Gael Linn

Written by Louis de Paor with music composed by Dana Lyn

Mise Gráinne is a music-audiobook in the Irish language. The text has been prepared and recorded beautifully by Louis de Paor and team. This is a new development for the iconic Gael Linn label. One of the best stories from Irish mythology will now be available around the globe in audio format. The author is a well-known poet and academic. Dana Lyn based in Brooklyn, New York, composed the inspirational musical accompaniment.

Among the actors who were involved in *Mise Gráinne* are; Bríd Ní Neachtain, Dónall Ó Héalaí, Louis de Paor, Marcus Mac Conghail, Domhnall Ó Braonáin, Ciara Ní É, Aodh Ó Coileáin and Darach Mac Con Iomaire. *The Pursuit of Diarmaid and Gráinne* is one of the best-loved mythic stories from the Fenian



Cycle and it is great that this new version is available, written by an author of the highest quality, with music by a superbly gifted composer & narrated by some of the finest actors. An image by artist Rita Duffy, *Solitary Forest*, is used for this audiobook.

Réamonn Ó Ciaráin, CEO of Gael Linn, said, "The main digital platforms need more audiobooks in the Irish language. You can listen to them while you are on the move in the car, on the train or even out for a walk. The Audiobook market will grow by up to 25% annually in the next ten years. We must make sure that the Irish language is part of this growth."

***Mise Gráinne* is available on digital platforms such as Spotify, Google Play, Kobo, Walmart, Audiobooks.com, NOOK Audiobooks, Libro.FM etc.**

SHERIDAN RÚITÍN : FREAKSHOW

sheridanrunitin.com

Blending ancient spirit with modern grit, the fresh new LP, *Freakshow*, by Sheridan Rúitín arrives September 2025 like a roar of wind leaping from the crags of the Slieve League Cliffs—wild, raw, and unmistakably alive. This "Celtwave", as the band defines their genre, album is more than a collection of tunes; it's a pilgrimage across two worlds, stitched together by fiddle strings, bodhrán rhythms, and stories that know no borders.

Rooted in traditional Irish balladry but laced with the raw folk energy of American back porch storytelling, *Freakshow* captures the dual spirit of heritage and reinvention. Whether it's the foot-stomping energy of *Red Haired Mary* or the aching lament of *North Georgia Mountains*, every track hums with the pulse of memory and resilience.

The instrumentation is both intimate and expansive—whistles and pipes weep beside steel banjo strings and squeeze box buttons, while lilts echo through massive harmonies born in the rocky suburbs of New York. There's humour here too, and heart, especially in songs like *Old Man Mickey*, which could just as easily be sung in a Galway pub or a Brooklyn backroom.

At its core, *Freakshow* is a love letter—to songs traditional and original, and the stubborn beauty of keeping one's roots alive while experimentally bending folk as we know it. It's music for the wanderer, the nostalgic, and anyone who's ever felt the pull of adventure.

With this release, Sheridan Rúitín doesn't just preserve tradition—they dance with it.

sheridanrunitin.com

THIRD ANNUAL CELTIC WORLD FORUM OCTOBER 2025

www.celticworldforum.com

Grammy-nominated Irish singer Éabha McMahon announces the third annual Celtic World Forum, a Celebration of Celtic Music & Culture.

This year's event takes place at Fitzpatrick Castle Hotel, Killiney, Dublin from October 21st to 23rd.

This unique event explores the vibrant traditions of Celtic music. It brings together Celtic music enthusiasts, experts and artists for an engaging experience filled with insightful sessions and inspirational performances through a diverse program of talks, panels, workshops, song circles, and concerts throughout the three days.

Attendees will have the rare opportunity to immerse themselves in the essence of Irish Traditional, Folk, and Celtic music, guided by some of the most esteemed artists in the genre.

As well as an Irish audience, the previous two Forums have been attended by visitors travelling specifically for this event from their home countries, including USA, Canada, Australia and across Europe. They have seen artists taking part such as Moya Brennan, Horslips, Séamus and Caoimhe Uí Fhlatharta, Máiréad Nesbitt,

CELTIC WORLD

Forum 2025

An annual three day event that brings together Celtic music enthusiasts, experts and artists to explore and celebrate the past, the present & the future of Celtic music and culture.

Hosted by Grammy nominated Irish singer Éabha McMahon. This unique event comprises talks, panels workshops, song circles and concerts and features a stellar line up of the best Celtic talent.

A Celebration of Celtic Music and Culture

21–23 October
Fitzpatrick Castle Hotel
Killiney, Dublin, Ireland

Tickets & Packages Available
at celticworldforum.com



Tara Howley, Eimear Quinn and Michael McGlynn, along with many other globally established names.

It also aims to introduce undiscovered talent to a global audience while preserving the rich history and tradition of the creative arts. Recognising the universal love for Irish culture will inspire a new generation of Irish music artists to embrace their heritage.

Join us in celebrating the rich tapestry of Celtic music and culture at the Celtic World Forum 2025, a remarkable annual event dedicated to the past, present and future of Celtic music.

www.celticworldforum.com

THE 19TH STREET BAND

<https://19thstreetband.com/>

Known for their high-energy and strong harmonies, The 19th Street Band brings together a constellation of Americana, hillbilly, gypsy-rockin', good time music sure to captivate every crowd. This joyous group consists of husband-wife duo Caolaidhe, pronounced "Cally", (guitar/harmonica/vocals) and Meghan Davis (fiddle/mandolin/vocals) with the rockin' rhythm section of Chris Brown (bass) and Patty Dougherty (drums).

The 19th Street Band has entertained crowds at US festivals such as DelFest, Charm City Bluegrass Festival, National Cherry Blossom Festival, The Washington Folk Festival, Iowa Irish Festival, and Maryland Irish Festival. Overseas, they have been featured as a regular artist at the Open House Festival in Bangor, Northern Ireland and the Dunmore East Bluegrass Festival in Co. Waterford and recently showcased at Your Roots Are Showing in Killarney. The band tours Ireland/UK every year and brings 40+ American fans along for the ride. This year they will be rocking their 'Baps to Baguettes' Tour from Belfast to France.

Catch them this summer!

Jul 26 The Spirit Store, Dundalk w/ support from Cathryn Craig & Brian Willoughby

Jul 31 The Sound House, Dublin

Aug 1 The Empire Music Hall, Belfast w/ support from Revue

Aug 3 Ward Park, Open House Festival, Bangor

Aug 9 Special *Duo* Show, The Court House, Open House Festival, Bangor

<https://19thstreetband.com/>

Facebook & Instagram: @the19thstreetband

EDEL MURPHY : MOTHERLAND SONGS

<https://www.motherlandsongs.com> &

<http://www.celticnote.com>

Motherland Songs is the debut album from Dublin born actor and musician Edel Murphy. Described as having "a voice that would silence angels" (artsreview.com), the Irish singer/songwriter brings a heartfelt intensity and serenity in equal measure to new songs and to memorable female characters in songs by The Beatles, Dolly Parton, Kate Bush and Judy Collins. Produced by Irish musician Ewan Cowley, this new release is a compelling collection of contemporary Irish and North American folk anthems, modern classics and protest songs from great female artists such as Joan Baez, Natalie Merchant, Mary Black and Carole King, evoking the universal experiences of working life, independence, love, inequality, and the search for social justice.

Edel Murphy is an Irish singer, actor and musician. Starring in the live show production 'Motherland Songs' since its debut show in Dublin in 2019, Edel has toured Ireland several times with the show to wide acclaim.

Edel and producer Ewan Cowley began their collaboration when they were touring the world in the hit show Celtic Woman. During jam sessions on long tour bus journeys across the US, with ukuleles and guitars being passed around, the pair found they shared a love of American songwriters like Nanci Griffith and Natalie Merchant, Nina Simone and Paul Simon. *Motherland Songs* is available now on CD from CelticNote.com and streaming on digital stores.

<https://www.motherlandsongs.com>

<http://www.celticnote.com>

MULLIGANS IRISH MUSIC BAR, AMSTERDAM

A Haven for Traditional Irish Music in The Netherlands

www.mulligans.nl

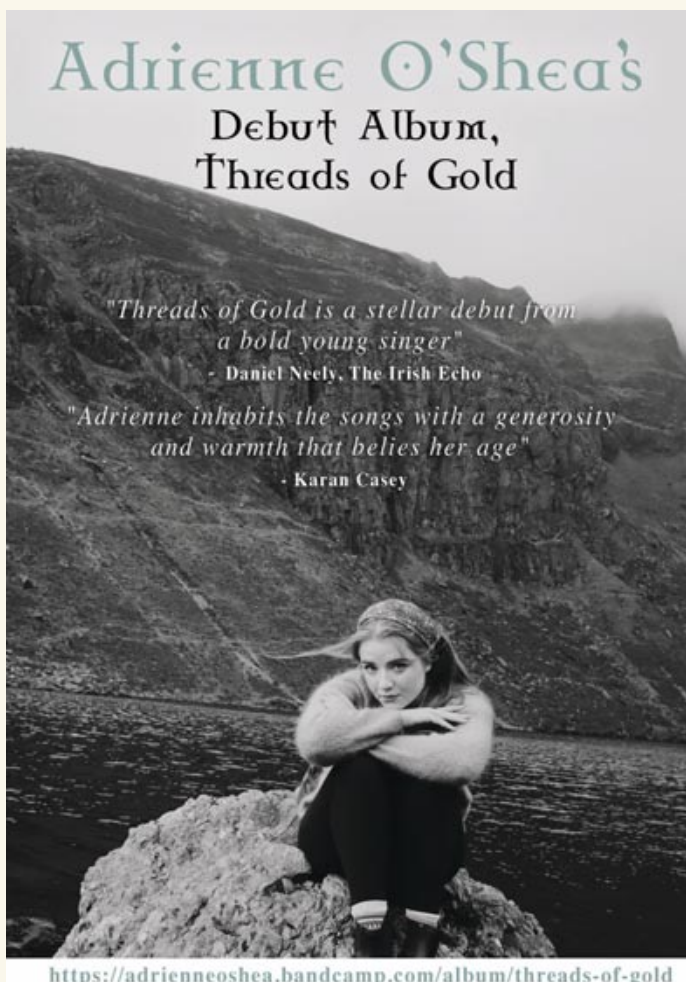
Nestled along the picturesque Amstel River, Mulligans Irish Music Bar stands as a beacon for lovers of traditional Irish music and culture. Established as the oldest and most authentic Irish pub in Amsterdam, Mulligans offers a unique blend of live music, friendly atmosphere, and a diverse selection of drinks.

Mulligans is renowned for its vibrant live music scene, featuring performances by both local and international musicians. The bar's intimate setting allows for an up-close experience with talented artists, making every visit memorable. Whether you're a fan of lively jigs, soulful ballads, or spirited reels, Mulligans has something for everyone.

In addition to its musical offerings, Mulligans boasts an impressive selection of Irish, Belgian & Dutch beers on tap, including Guinness, Kilkenny, and Magners. The bar also offers a wide range of Irish whiskeys, spirits, wines, soft drinks, and snacks such as the famous Tayto crisps!

The welcoming staff at Mulligans are known for their professionalism and friendliness. This camaraderie extends to the bar's patrons, creating a warm and inclusive environment where long-lasting friendships are formed.

For those who enjoy sports, Mulligans broadcasts Irish sports such as Gaelic football, hurling, camogie, and rugby on multiple screens throughout the bar.



<https://adrienneoshea.bandcamp.com/album/threads-of-gold>



SCRÍBHNEOIR:
LOUIS DE PAOR

CUMADÓIR:
DANA LYN

GAEL LINN

MISE GRÁINNE

Closleabhar ceoil ar fáil ar na hardáin dhigiteacha

Music audiobook available on digital platforms



Visit Mulligans Irish Music Bar at Amstel 100, 1017 AC Amsterdam. For more information, check out their website at www.mulligans.nl, follow on Facebook at Mulligans Irish Bar Amsterdam, and on Instagram at [@mulligans_irish_bar_amsterdam_](https://www.instagram.com/mulligans_irish_bar_amsterdam_).

Contact: Email: michael@mulligans.nl Phone: +31 (0)20 2335543

Regular music events include: **Every Sunday:** Open Irish Session Traditional from 19:00; **Every Wednesday:** All-style session from 20:00; **Gigs:** every Friday & Saturday from 21:00

Experience the magic of traditional Irish music and hospitality at Mulligans Irish Music Bar – where every night is a celebration!

ENDA REILLY LAUNCHES “TÍR ENDA” WITH JULY 19TH LIVE STREAM EVENT

Endareilly.com/tirenda

Award-winning Irish singer-songwriter Enda Reilly will launch his new fan-supported platform, Tír Enda, with a special live stream concert on July 19th at 12ET 5pm Irish at Endareilly.com/tirenda

Amid a U.S. summer festival tour—including Milwaukee Irish Fest, Kansas City Irish Fest, and more—Reilly is inviting fans into a new digital home for his music, stories and community.

Tír Enda, meaning “Enda’s Land”, is a subscription-based space offering exclusive content, unreleased songs, livestreams, behind-the-scenes insights, and access to Reilly’s deep catalogue of original and traditional Irish music.

“This is a place where I can share the quieter side of what I do—the songs, stories, and poems that connect us through Irish culture and language,” says the Dublin-born artist.

Reilly, recently named “Male Vocalist of the Year 2024 for his album Hy-Brasil” by *Ireland Tonight* on WDCB Chicago, is known for his soulful performances and innovative cultural shows such as

“Singing Yeats”, “Unveiling Irish Language Songs”, and “Songs and Stories of Irish Folklore”.

The July 19th livestream will feature a mix of original songs, traditional ballads, and personal reflections to celebrate the launch. All are welcome to tune in and explore this next chapter in Reilly’s evolving musical journey.

Find out more or join the livestream at:

Endareilly.com/tirenda

Press & booking: endareilly@gmail.com

Socials: [@endareillymusic](https://www.instagram.com/endareillymusic)

1975-2025, CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF MIKAM SOUND (and MOSCODESIGN)

Based in England, MIKAM was started by Mick O’Gorman and Muz (Keith Alexander Murrell) with the equipment from the retired Jonathan Kelly Band. First client a sell-out Don McLean tour of GB, later the same year Mikam provided the sound for the first professional GB tour by the Chieftains (starting a 10 year relationship with the band). Also, during that time Mikam provided sound for such diverse clients as Mary O’Hara, The Damned, The Bothy Band, Ian Dury and The Kilburns and more.

Parting ways in 1980 the sound equipment moved to Ireland, first large client being a sell-out Bagatelle Tour (we sadly remember Andy Walton who died in a crash returning from a show). Settling in, the company diversified taking in music shows, Product Launches and work with RTE particularly the 7Up Beats on the Street. Providing audio enhancement for the 250th Anniversary of Handel’s Messiah in Dublin and travelling sound for Expo 92 in Seville was the gateway to delivering Live Sound to RTE TV for the 3 consecutive Eurovision Contests hosted by Ireland. From that has come a 30 year relationship with Riverdance the Show.

The current client list includes The Abbey Theatre, The Gaiety Theatre, The CCD, RTE RADIO, Murt Whelan Sound, Acoustik Productions, Session Hire, Red House, Magic Kite, NIAVAC, The Dublin Theatre Festival and many more, thank you. Huge thanks to our landlord Litton Lane and MIKAM/MOSCO associates Kevin McGing, Amir Carmel, Seán McKeown, Darragh Finn, Archie McLoughlin, Conor Diamond, Kate Crook and Sarah Jane. I would like to dedicate our half century to PAUL AUNGIER the much missed “QUINTISSENTIAL MIKAM PERSON” Thank you Paul.

ICC LIVE MUSIC EVENTS & MORE (JULY – AUGUST 2025)

Summer Music at The Irish Cultural Centre

www.irishculturalcentre.co.uk/whats-on

This summer, the Irish Cultural Centre, Hammersmith presents an electrifying season of live music, celebrating the richness of Irish culture with some of its most iconic voices.

Kicking off in July, acclaimed jazz-folk vocalist **Christine Tobin** takes the stage on 19 & 20 July with three spellbinding original shows across the weekend - “Returning Weather” and “Sailing To Byzantium”. On 26 July, singer-songwriter and Poet, **John Buckley McQuaid**, brings his one-man music show to the ICC.

August welcomes the long-awaited return of **Sharon Shannon** on 01 August, promising her trademark high-energy performance. She will be joined by two of the finest musicians in the Irish music scene, Alan Connor and Gerry O’Connor.

Looking ahead, rising Americana singer-songwriter **Catherine McGrath** returns on 04 September, followed by the stunning **Eddi Reader with the Alan Kelly Gang** on 05 & 06 September.

Rounding off the season, acclaimed Irish singer and actress **Lisa Lambe** performs “Night Visiting: The Hauling Home” on 13 September, a showcase of beautiful traditional songs and tunes inspired by the rich tapestry of Ireland’s folklore.



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ÉTÉ | SUMMER 2025

July 1st:	Canada Day, Ontario
July 18:	Celtic Festival, Kinnear's Mills, Qc.
July 24-27:	Mémoire et Racines, Joliette, Qc.
July 29:	Place de la Francophonie, Gatineau, Qc.
July 31:	Argences (FR)
August 1:	Cambremer (FR)
August 4-6:	Festival Interceltique de Lorient, Lorient (FR)
August 12:	Salle "La vieille ferme", Bathurst, N.-B.
August 14:	Festival acadien de Caraquet, N.-B.
August 15:	15th August Celebration at 12 PM, Miramichi, N.-B.
August 15:	Officers' Square, Fredericton Capital Region Tourism
September 11-14:	Festival Ripon Trad, Ripon, Qc.

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WWW.DARKWELLPROJECT.COM

Many events are already selling fast—early booking is highly recommended.

The Irish Cultural Centre has been offering the most extensive and diverse Irish Culture programme to the UK and beyond for 30 years. **For full listings and tickets, visit:**

www.irishculturalcentre.co.uk/whats-on

For media enquiries, contact:

Emma Byrne emma@irishculturalcentre.co.uk /

William Foote william@irishculturalcentre.co.uk

Browse our Events Programme:

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

FIONA TYNDALL : ÉINÍN AN CHEÓIL

www.fionatyndall.com

Hailing from County Clare, Fiona Tyndall has been immersed in Irish and Celtic music traditions since childhood. Her new album, *Éinín an Cheóil*, described as “a triumph full of joy and reflection” by Tim Dennehy, was recorded between Dublin and New Jersey, and was produced by Brendan Hayes and mixed/mastered in BAZ Studios, Co. Galway.

The album was inspired by Tyndall’s father, Buadhach Tóibín, a traditional singer and collector of Irish music. Meticulously hand-writing the lyrics of over 200 songs in the old Irish script in a bound ledger, Fiona came into possession of this wonderful manuscript collection following her father’s passing.

A carefully archived digital copy of her father’s manuscript of songs is available at the Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA) in Dublin.

The album features some of Ireland’s leading contemporary figures in Irish traditional music, including Fergal Scahill (We Banjo 3), Brendan Hayes, multi-instrumentalist and long-time collaborator of Tyndall’s, renowned Irish and World music artist

and producer Seán Whelan, Kieran Munnely (The David Munnely Band), Maire Egan (Michael Flatley’s “Lord of the Dance”), James Blennerhasset (Mary Black, Gilbert O’Sullivan, Sinead O’Connor, Steve Earle, Sharon Shannon, The Chieftains, Daniel O’Donnell), Tim Edey (double BBC Musician of the year), and 5-time All-Ireland title holder Padraig Rynne.

For more information, please visit www.fionatyndall.com

For details on upcoming performances, please visit <https://fionatyndall.com/upcoming-events>

ANNA EGGERSBERGER : THE FOX AND THE HARE

anna-eggensberger.com

In an exploration that bridges the old and the new, Anna presents her debut album, *The Fox and the Hare*, a heartfelt reflection of her deep love for Irish music and her innovative approach to the harp.

The album features a curated selection of cherished traditional tunes such as *The Golden Eagle* and *Planxty Browne*, arranged with a contemporary twist, alongside Anna’s own compositions. By subtly incorporating modern musical elements, she breathes new life into the repertoire, giving it a refreshing edge.

As a solo project, *The Fox and the Hare* encapsulates Anna’s musical journey, inviting listeners to transcend the boundaries between tradition and innovation while honouring the timeless beauty of the Irish harp. The album was recorded, mixed, and mastered by the accomplished uilleann piper Simon Pfisterer.

A graduate of the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick and recipient of the Ian MacLeòid Young Composer Award in 2022, Anna has refined her musical abilities over the years. Her distinctive approach to the lever harp allows her to honour traditional music while reimagining it in fresh, exciting ways.

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- Rik Anderson, CD Hotlist

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songs, she embodies them.”
- Celticmusicfan.com

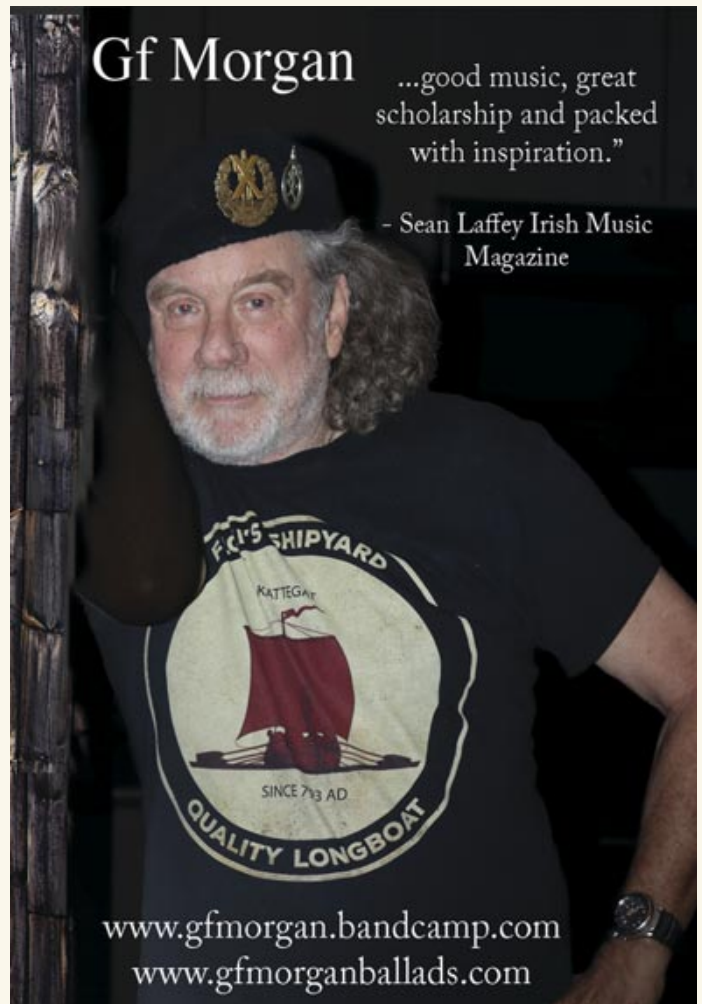
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- Irish Music Magazine

**BOOKINGS & ENQUIRIES FOR WINTER/SPRING 2026
FESTIVALS, LESSONS, & SHOWS VISIT:
<https://AMELIAHOGAN.COM>**

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scholarship and packed
with inspiration.”

- Sean Laffey Irish Music
Magazine



www.gfmorgan.bandcamp.com
www.gfmorganballads.com

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The Fox and the Hare is available on all major streaming platforms, including Spotify, Apple Music, and Bandcamp. Digital and physical copies can be purchased through Bandcamp and directly via email.

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

[https://open.spotify.com/intl-](https://open.spotify.com/intl-de/artist/0MmAjomI57ZcVf4KvF107?si=_Nqb3y2TSk6KcJE4EO8TOQ)

[de/artist/0MmAjomI57ZcVf4KvF107?si=_Nqb3y2TSk6KcJE4EO8TOQ](https://annatheharp.bandcamp.com/album/the-fox-and-the-hare)

<https://annatheharp.bandcamp.com/album/the-fox-and-the-hare>

<https://www.youtube.com/@annatheharp>

<https://music.apple.com/de/artist/anna-eggersberger/1792892782>

20 YEARS OF RWE SIGNATURE LINE BODHRÁN – LIMITED ANNIVERSARY EDITION ANNOUNCED

www.bodhran-info.de/en/bodhrans/rwe

The RWE Signature line bodhrán, developed in close collaboration between maker Christian Hedwitschak and player Rolf Wagels, is celebrating its 20th anniversary. Since its launch in 2005, the RWE has stood for exceptional sound quality, precision craftsmanship, and constant innovation. To mark this milestone, a special limited-edition model is now available – a tribute to two decades of music, craftsmanship, and heart.

The anniversary model includes a rare concave frame – a unique feature valued at €200 – setting it apart visually and providing the ultimate comfort. Despite this, it is priced at just €669 – only €50 above the standard model. The best part: this €50 premium is donated in full and transparently to Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders).

Only 6 instruments will be made – making this a truly exclusive collector's item for musicians who value both quality and compassion.

"20 years of RWE is not only a reason to celebrate, but also an opportunity to give back," says Rolf Wagels, co-developer of the RWE Signature line model.

More information about the RWE's evolution and technical details can be found here:

www.bodhran-info.de/en/bodhrans/rwe

A special instrument – crafted with heart.

Only 6 available – never again.

COSCÁN

www.coscan.ie

COSCÁN, the traditional band from Slane, Co. Meath have had a busy year so far, performing at venues all over Ireland together with performances in France. They have a busy summer ahead, performing at a number of venues and festivals throughout Ireland. With 3 highly acclaimed albums, COSCÁN is Harry Long (whistles, guitar and vocals), David Nevin (bodhrán, keyboards, guitar and vocals), Gerry Doggett (fiddle, accordion and whistles) and Kieran Weldon (guitar and vocals).

Following on from their last three albums and EP, *Coscán*, *Dinnseanchas* and *FireDance*, the band has been busy composing and arranging new music and are now busy rehearsing and preparing to record their fourth album. Collaboration between the four band members knows no limits. As with their previous album, COSCÁN compose music influenced by the ancient monuments and folklore of the Boyne Valley, particularly the village of Slane and its surrounds.

COSCÁN have performed at some of the largest stages in Ireland and Europe such as Ballyshannon Folk Festival, Electric Picnic and Festival Interceltique de Lorient, in France. The year ahead continues to be shaping up to be just as successful.

We have been busy performing to international visitors who choose Ireland as their holiday destination. In many cases COSCÁN has been their first introduction to Irish Music and Culture performing at Dublin's famous Taylors Three Rock venue.

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COSCÁN's diary is filling up and you can catch them performing live at The Fiddler's Green International Festival.

2025 is a busy year for the band and 2026 is shaping up to be an even busier year for COSCÁN.

You can find out more at their website, coscan.ie and on their Facebook page. For more information go to www.coscan.ie and <https://www.facebook.com/coscan.ie>

'THE GARDEN WHERE THE PRATIES GROW'

The story of the Potato, as told through Traditional Irish Music, song and dance. www.pratiesgarden.com

Explore the poignant Irish history of the potato in this compelling documentary that intertwines the cultural significance and history of potatoes or "*praties*" in Ireland. Through the lens of traditional Irish music, this film explores how the potato – once a staple of daily life- became a symbol of both hardship and hope in Ireland.

Filmed over three days in the original founders' building at Seed Savers, Co. Clare, the documentary captures the raw energy of live performances by some of Ireland's finest musicians. Collectively known as '*Potatoes With Everything*' this ensemble includes Mick O'Brien pipes and whistles, Karan Casey vocals, Michelle Mulcahy harp, Carl Corcoran piano, vocals, Colm O'Donnell flute, vocals, Fergal Scahill fiddle, guitar, Pat Quinn, guitar/vocals, all led by Tommy Hayes percussion.

Interwoven throughout these performances are interviews with organic growers and experts in biodiversity and sustainability, offering a broader perspective on the cultural and historical impact of the potato on the Irish psyche.

The Garden Where the Praties Grow is the vision of renowned Irish musician and producer Tommy Hayes, whose deep understanding of Irish traditional music and cultural heritage brought this unique project to life

Filmed and directed by Anthony Hughes, a cinematographer with a background in fine arts, photography, and sculpture, the documentary is visually rich and immersive. Anthony's keen eye for composition and storytelling shapes the film's striking visual aesthetic, and authentically captures the depth and emotion of the story.

Launched on July 1st at Blas Summer School in the Irish World Academy (UL), a series of public screenings follow; Glór, Ennis July 15, Shorelines Festival Portumna, September and more.

Visit www.pratiesgarden.com

View trailer here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nq-TEVuNYVA>

SHASKEEN 2025

www.shaskeen.net

Shaskeen is a legendary Irish traditional band whose journey spans over five decades of preserving and innovating Ireland's rich musical heritage. Formed in 1970 in the historic setting of the Oxford Tavern, Kentish Town, London, the band has established itself as a cornerstone of Irish music, renowned for their captivating performances and deep cultural roots.

At its inception, the band was led by the dynamic Tom Cussen, whose passion and leadership have been pivotal in shaping Shaskeen's distinctive style. Today, the band boasts an accomplished lineup comprising Eamonn Cotter on Concert Flute, Patsy McDonagh on Accordion, Alan Wallace on Guitar & Bass, Tom Cussen on Banjo and Mandolin, Dave Sanders on Fiddle, Viola, Vocals and Mandolin, Deirdre Scanlan, main vocalist and Guitar, Johnny Donnellan on Bodhrán and Vocals, Mary Liddy, Concertina and Vocals, and helping at this time Yvonne Flynn on Fiddle.

Known for their versatile approach, Shaskeen seamlessly navigates a vast repertoire—ranging from lively jigs and reels to



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Eimear Coughlan & Francis Cunningham

www.franciscoughlan.com

Available on franciscoughlan.bandcamp.com

soulful ballads and witty banter—creating an engaging concert experience that leaves audiences captivated. Their commitment to tradition is balanced by an innovative spirit, ensuring their sound remains both authentic and fresh. Their discography boasts nineteen recordings, including the acclaimed *Walking Uptown* and *Live and Kicking* double album celebrating their 50th anniversary.

Over nearly fifty-five years, Shaskeen has toured extensively across Ireland, the UK, Europe, and North America, packed venues from parish halls to major festivals, and garnered widespread acclaim on radio, television, and in print. Their enduring influence and dedication to Irish music have solidified their status as true custodians of the tradition.

Having embarked on their 2025 Emerald Tour marking 55 years, Shaskeen continues to celebrate Irish music's legacy while inspiring new generations. With upcoming albums, special collaborations, and their timeless energy, Shaskeen remains an unmissable force—forever faithful to the spirit of Irish tradition and innovation.

Contact Tom on +353 087 2485404

EXPERIENCE LA FAMILLE LEBLANC'S MUSICAL HERITAGE AT ST. GEORGE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

<http://www.lafamilieleblanc.com/>

La famille LeBlanc, a celebrated six-generation family band, invites you to experience their unique blend of Celtic and Acadian music through their latest YouTube video. The video, filmed at the historic St. George's Anglican Church in Bathurst, N.B., showcases the band's performance of four captivating tunes, starting with a reel from local fiddler Edmond Savoie from Évangeline, N.B., followed by an old Acadian song called *Fille que moi*, and concluding with two crooked reels played by the amazing Acadian fiddler, Firmin Mallet.

St. George's Anglican Church, built between 1864 and 1873, is a prime example of Gothic Revival architecture. Designed under the guidance of John Medley, the church embodies the Carpenter's Gothic style with its wooden structure, reminiscent of medieval Gothic churches in England. The heritage value of this local historic place adds a rich, aesthetic backdrop to La famille LeBlanc's performance.

This video not only highlights the musical prowess of La famille LeBlanc but also allows viewers to appreciate the stunning Gothic architecture of St. George's Anglican Church. The combination of historical ambiance and traditional music creates an immersive experience that transports listeners to a bygone era.

Join us in celebrating this unique cultural heritage by watching the video on their YouTube channel 'La famille LeBlanc' and enjoying the beautiful synergy of music and architecture.

For more information, please contact
musique@agenceresonances.com and connect with "La famille LeBlanc" on social media! Website:
<http://www.lafamilieleblanc.com/>

RAISING THE NEXT GENERATION : CELTIC JUNCTION'S ROLE IN GROWING IRISH ARTS IN AMERICA

Touring artists inspire the next wave of performers
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At the Celtic Junction Arts Center (CJAC) in St. Paul, Minnesota, live performances do more than entertain—they inspire the next generation of musicians and dancers. The center hosts concerts and cultural events that often involve youth, providing early exposure to professional traditional arts.

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Funded by An Chomhairle Oidhreachta The Heritage Council
OPW

O'Shea Irish Dance (OID), and the Irish Fair of Minnesota, CJAC fosters an environment where emerging talent flourishes. Students gain experience through open mic nights, OID productions like *Kickin' It Irish* and the *Celtic Holiday Hooley*, and performances at the Irish Fair—building confidence by sharing their talents with welcoming, multi-generational audiences.

Touring artists at CJAC often engage directly with young performers, offering encouragement, expertise, and lighting the way. Musicians and dancers who began their journeys on CJAC stages are going on to teach, record albums, join professional ensembles, and tour internationally. Fiddler Joe DeGeorgeo won the prestigious 2023 Seán Ó Riada Gold Medal, and dancer Ava Schaëffell tours with Trinity Irish Dance Company, performing across Japan. In May, student fiddler Claire Vanorny joined Reverie Road onstage—a musical moment of joy capturing CJAC's spirit.

CJAC offers free concert admission to youth 18 and under, removing financial barriers. Nearly 2,000 youth attended events in 2024—10% of total attendance—highlighting CJAC's significant impact on younger audiences. By pairing access with opportunity, CJAC actively sustains Irish traditional arts in the United States.

For touring artists, CJAC offers a chance to leave a lasting impact, to help shape the future of Irish arts in America. At this creative hub, tradition isn't just preserved—it's passed on.

celticjunction.org

GADAN U.S. TOUR THIS AUGUST

www.gadanband.com

Gadan, the quintet blending Irish traditional music, Appalachian roots and Italian flair with a touch of bluegrass,

announces its U.S. tour this August following the release of its first debut album in July. Featuring three banjos (tenor and clawhammer), fiddle, mandolin and guitar—power-driven by solid bass and stomp rhythm—the record weaves driving reels, timeless energetic songs and groovy breakdowns with virtuosic precision and heartfelt energy.

Critics praise the album's seamless fusion of Irish roots and American folk spirit. It's available now on all major streaming and download platforms and as a physical CD through Gadan's online store—though festival-goers know best to grab a copy directly from the band's merch table at every stop.

Throughout August, Gadan brings its "strings-only" powerhouse to premier events including the Milwaukee Irish Festival, Dublin Irish Festival, Peoria Irish Festival, Chicago Gaelic Park Irish Fest, La Crosse Irish Festival and more, sharing lineups with leading names in folk and traditional music. Each performance promises propulsive rhythms, tight ensemble interplay and the group's signature Italian seasoning for an electrifying and unique live experience.

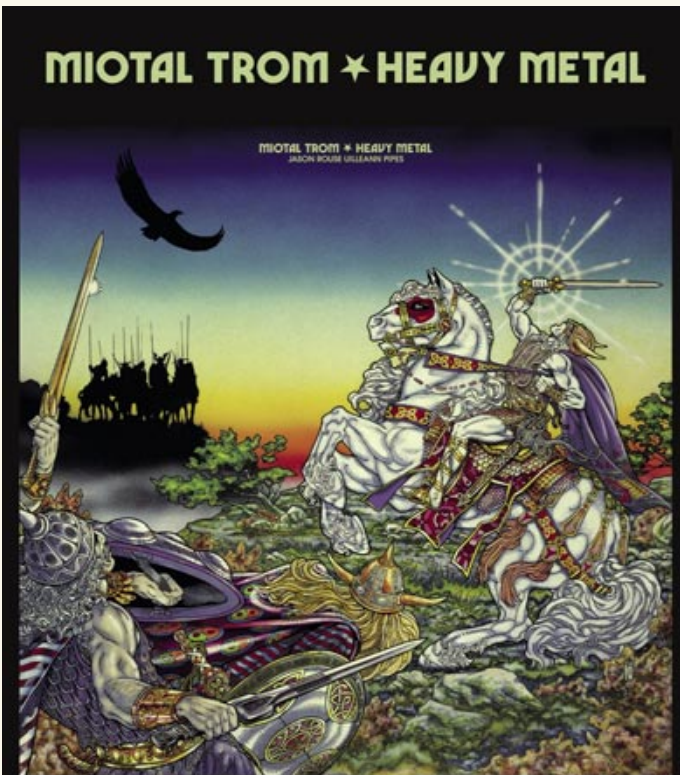
Founding banjoist Lorenzo Testa and guitarist Jacopo Ventura are joined by All-Ireland champion Enda Scahill and clawhammer player-songwriter Eric Long, forging a true transatlantic ensemble. They'll be occasionally joined by world-renowned fiddler and clog dancer Hillary Klug as a special guest for summer 2025 only—a show not to be missed.

For full tour dates, ticket information and album details, visit www.gadanband.com or follow @gadanband on social media.

MICHAEL DARCY & THE ATLANTIC TRAMPS : *HOMEMADE*

www.michaeldarcymusic.com

Irish-born, Canadian-based folk band Michael Darcy & The Atlantic Tramps are excited to announce the release of their

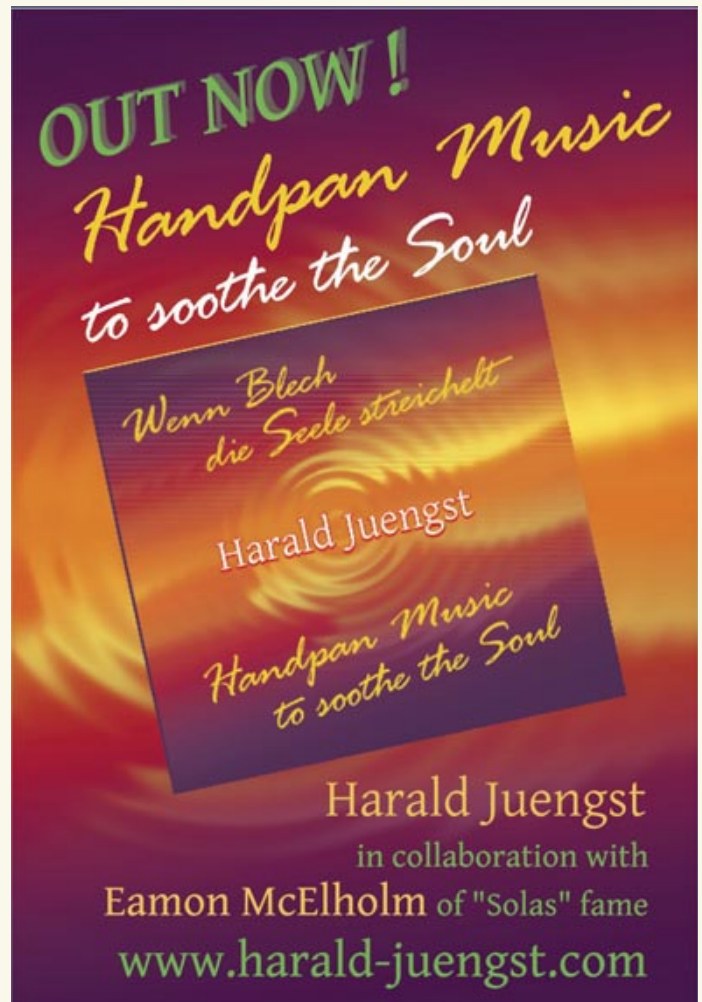


MIOTAL TROM ★ HEAVY METAL

MIOTAL TROM ★ HEAVY METAL
JASON ROUSE UILLEANN PIPES

The NEW ALBUM of solo UILLEANN PIPES from
JASON ROUSE

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PIPINGROUSE.BANDCAMP.COM



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Handpan Music
to soothe the Soul

Wenn Blech
die Seele streichelt

Harald Juengst

Handpan Music
to soothe the Soul

Harald Juengst
in collaboration with
Eamon McElholm of "Solas" fame
www.harald-juengst.com

new studio album *Homemade*, which will be available everywhere from July 9th.

In 2010, Michael packed up his songs and guitar, left his home in the hills of Co. Clare and journeyed westward across the ocean to Toronto, Canada. Chasing adventure and tunes, he eventually connected with three like-minded musicians who would become 'The Atlantic Tramps'. The result was a whirlwind of transatlantic folk traditions as Michael's songs carry the earthy tones of his west Clare roots, combined with the freshness of Americana's evolving path.

Their most recent critically-acclaimed album *Down to the Roots* earned a 2023 *Canadian Folk Music Awards* nomination for 'Traditional Singer of the Year' while his original song *The Ballad of Uncle Frank* was nominated for 'Song of the Year' at the 2023 *Ontario Folk Music Awards*.

Over the past two summers, the band has steadily grown a devoted fanbase in the U.S. performing at multiple celtic festivals & theatres, all while maintaining a busy touring schedule in their Ontario, Canada home base. They also embarked on a successful Irish tour in August 2023 culminating in a packed show at Dublin's historic Cobblestone venue.

For more information go to www.michaeldarcymusic.com and www.facebook.com/michaeldarcymusic

THE DARK WELL — MUSIC FROM THE EDGE OF REASON www.darkwellproject.com

There are albums that flatter the listener's ear. Then there are albums that wake it up, pour cold water over its head, and whisper something half-mad in its sleep. *The Dark Well* is one of the latter.

Enda Scahill, founder of We Banjo 3 and long recognised as one of Irish music's great banjo innovators, teams up with Joel Andersson, the Swedish mad scientist of harmonica making, to

produce something far stranger — and more beautiful — than a collection of tunes has any right to be.

This isn't your grandfather's trad album. Tunes are stripped back to the bone, turned sideways, and occasionally dismantled entirely — only to be rebuilt with a kind of gleeful menace. Nothing is safe: not the rhythms, not the harmonies, and certainly not your expectations.

"We weren't trying to be clever," says Scahill. "We were trying to be different — and then it got out of hand."

As if the core duo weren't enough, *The Dark Well* is scandalously adorned with guests so outrageously talented and far-flung, both geographically and stylistically, that the liner notes may require a passport and a stiff drink.

There is precision here, yes — but also a touch of chaos. A gleam in the eye. The feeling that something might fall apart at any second, or suddenly reveal its other face.

The Dark Well might just delight the listeners who've been secretly waiting for trad to misbehave a little.

Available now at www.darkwellproject.com and on all major streaming platforms — for those unafraid of the dark.

KÍLA RETURN WITH RAISE THE ROAD <http://www.kila.ie>

Iconic trad-fusion band Kíla return with *Raise The Road*, a bombastic new album of their latest songs and tunes featuring collaborations with an 8-piece brass band, arranged by trombonist Paul Frost. The 12-track collection reflects Kíla's exhilarating live performances. Paul's arrangements have fused funk, mambo and New Orleans jazz with Kíla's contemporary compositions. This addition to Kíla's already outstanding repertoire will have listeners electrified by the fusion of the brass band's funky blasts and Kíla's energetic rhythmic sound.

Speaking about the new album, Kíla founding member Rossa



City of Dublin
FET College
Ballyfermot, Southwest Campus
Ballyfermot Road | Kylemore Road

City of Dublin
Bord Oideachais agus Oikina
Education and Training Board

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 and 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.

For further information, application details & entry requirements visit www.bcfie.ie

Ó Snodaigh has said: "This album breaks new ground, not only for Kíla, but for Trad. in general."

Guitarist and *Raise The Road* co-producer Brian Hogan said: "The brass adds this depth and enormity to the sound."

With a career spanning over five decades, 20 releases, and collaborations with esteemed musicians such as U2, Ronnie Wood (The Rolling Stones), Sinéad O'Connor, The Dubliners, Shane MacGowan, Glen Hansard, and Dónal Lunny, the new album reflects the imagination, reinvention and the creative genius that Kíla are known for. Recent performances of this material have had audiences enthralled, enchanted and dancing with abandon.

***Raise The Road* featuring Paul Frost Brass is out now on Crashed Records. Available worldwide on CD from CelticNote.com and to stream/download from digital outlets. <http://www.kila.ie>**

THE CAVES OF KILTANON : A MUSICAL TRIBUTE ROOTED IN CLARE'S LIVING TRADITION

www.francisandeimear.com

The Caves of Kiltanon is the debut album from husband-and-wife duo Francis Cunningham (Crusheen) and Eimear Coughlan (Tulla), two deeply respected musicians rooted in the rich musical heritage of County Clare. This twelve-track release is more than a collection of traditional tunes - it's a heartfelt tribute, a personal journey, and a celebration of Clare's soulful, enduring sound.

At the heart of the album is the title track, *The Caves of Kiltanon*, composed by Eimear's grandfather, the legendary fiddle player Paddy Canny. His influence runs deep throughout the album and not just in the tunes themselves, but in the very way the music is played. Eimear grew up learning directly from

him, and several of the tracks are tunes she remembers being taught as a child, capturing the essence of a tradition passed lovingly from one generation to the next.

The album's cover photography is rooted in the very landscape the music was born from - the Caves of Kiltanon themselves - further anchoring the record in the place and spirit that inspired it.

While firmly grounded in tradition, the album also makes space for deeply personal touches. Among these is "*The Wedding*", a beautiful composition by Phil Cunningham that the couple played on their own wedding day.

Francis Cunningham is a strong, rhythmical concertina player and a fresh name on the Clare concertina scene, bringing a dynamic pulse and expressive character to the music. His playing blends seamlessly with Eimear's fiddle and harp, and together their duet style is marked by subtlety, elegance, and emotional depth.

With extensive touring experience across the U.S., Europe, and Australia, Francis and Eimear have earned a reputation for their thoughtful, masterful musicianship. *The Caves of Kiltanon* is a living document of their shared musical heritage. 40 minutes of carefully chosen tunes, tender interpretations, and a sound that is both timeless and uniquely their own.

For more information go to www.francisandeimear.com

TRAINEESHIP IN IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC PERFORMANCE AND INSTRUMENT MAKING, REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE IN CITY OF DUBLIN FET COLLEGE, SOUTHWEST CAMPUS, BALLYFERMOT

www.bcfе.ie

Since 2018, City of Dublin FET College, Southwest Campus, Ballyfermot 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/ Traineeship in Irish Traditional Music Performance and Instrument Repair and Maintenance (Ceoltóir) programme, and graduates of the course may 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.

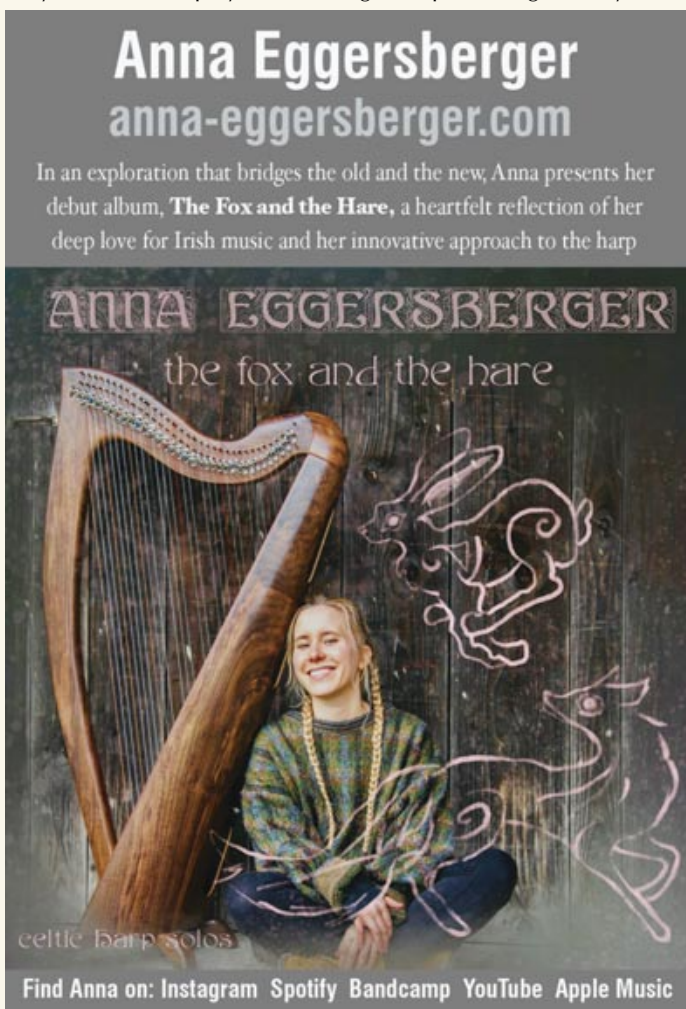
The traineeship enables students to deepen their understanding of Irish Traditional music, develop as performers, learn the craft of instrument making from expert makers, and equips students with the skills and qualifications to progress to a sustainable and rewarding career in music.

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.

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.bcfе.ie or by contacting course coordinator Paul McGrattan at paul.mcgrattan@bcfe.cdētб.ie



Anna Eggersberger
anna-eggersberger.com

In an exploration that bridges the old and the new, Anna presents her debut album, **The Fox and the Hare**, a heartfelt reflection of her deep love for Irish music and her innovative approach to the harp

ANNA EGGERBERGER
 the fox and the hare

celtic harp solos

Find Anna on: Instagram Spotify Bandcamp YouTube Apple Music

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RAGLANROAD.COM

HARALD JUENGST : HANDPAN MUSIC TO SOOTHE THE SOUL
www.harald-juengst.com Contact email : juengst@sheevon.com

This album presents a collaboration between the German musician and radio presenter Harald Juengst and his Irish friend, the Tyrone man Eamon McElholm of Solas and Stockton's Wing fame.

The friendship between Harald and Eamon started about 30 years ago over in Germany. In those days the highly skilled Tyrone man was part of a high profile "Irish Folk Festival Tour" as a guitarist and singer. Harald's radio station *WDR Cologne* recorded the show which he later presented on air to a huge audience including an interview with Eamon.

On this production, Harald plays a C-sharp minor stainless steel handpan with 9 strongly reverberant tone fields, manufactured by Bill Brown. With its 432 hertz frequency, this particular handpan carries mellow, earthy, relaxing sounds to the heart and ears which long to caress the soul- an overwhelming sound escaping from time and space to soothe, calm and comfort.

To complement the sound Harald plays a KoMo, a combined instrument consisting of a 13-string in C-sharp minor pentatonic tuned Koto as well as a monochord with 25 strings, all tuned in C-sharp.

Eamon contributes piano, guitar, keyboard, programming and his enormous creative and magical professional empathy for arrangements, sounds, engineering, and producing.

There are 10 tracks on this album, all composed in teamwork by Harald Juengst and Eamon McElholm. The production was recorded at Eamon's Homeboy Studio, Omagh, County Tyrone, Ireland and was mastered by Pete Maher, Top Floor Productions, London. The playing time is 58 minutes.

"If you are in need of some extensive chilling out time, this album has some good vibrations for you!" - *Irish Music Magazine – Dublin*. "Harald Juengst is bringing wellness to people through his chilled out and soothing handpan sounds." - *The Irish News- Belfast*. "The album brings some relaxation, peace and escapism to a lot of people in these difficult and not-so-peaceful times." - *The Tyrone Herald – Omagh*.

www.harald-juengst.com

MIOTAL TROM / HEAVY METAL : JASON ROUSE UILLEANN PIPES
 Available 27/06/25

pipingrouse.bandcamp.com, www.pipers.ie & All Major Streaming Platforms

Miotal Trom / Heavy Metal is the bold new release from acclaimed Tyrone uilleann piper Jason Rouse, offering a deeply personal and sonically rich journey through nearly 200 years of Irish piping tradition. Featuring six historic sets of pipes dating from the 1840s to the 1990s, the album is an exploration of sound, history, and the living voice of the instrument.

Far from a conventional studio album, *Miotal Trom / Heavy Metal* captures the raw intimacy of a solo performance. Each track was recorded in just a few takes, preserving the spontaneous energy and emotional immediacy of the music. The result is a vibrant, at times wild, dialogue between piper and pipes. It represents a series of duets where every instrument reveals its own unique personality.

"Each set of pipes has a soul, a mood, and a way it wants to be played. Some are gentle, some rebellious, some aching to break free of melody and dip into chaos before finding their way back again."

This unique project is a testament to the living, breathing history of uilleann piping. With *Miotal Trom / Heavy Metal*, Jason Rouse invites listeners into an intimate, at times thrillingly unpredictable, sonic experience.

Available with full sleeve notes on instruments and tunes via Bandcamp Digital Download, across all major streaming platforms, in gorgeous CD and LP, and with cover artwork by acclaimed Irish artist Jim Fitzpatrick.

pipingrouse.bandcamp.com

CEDAR DOBSON : DECADE
www.cedardobson.com

Decade is a groundbreaking tin whistle album performed, arranged, and produced by multi instrumentalist, Cedar Dobson. *Decade* showcases her percussive and energetic style of whistle playing, supported by renowned musicians such as Ian Kinsella (De Dannan), world champion Bodhrán player Aimée Farrell Courtney, and other accomplished musicians.

Decade is a love-letter to Irish traditional music with a contemporary flair, featuring the most influential tunes of Cedar's music career. Hurdy gurdy, Greek bouzouki, and jaw harp feature throughout this beautiful musical journey. Every tune on *Decade* is saturated with Cedar's love, passion, and enthusiasm for music from Ireland, France, England, and Scotland. Full of subtle complexities, energy, and delicate touches of sensitivity, this diverse album includes jazz, funk, and 'orchestral' elements performed in Cedar's unique style.

Some tunes include *The Glass of Beer*, *The Crested Hens*, as well as the magical soundscape of *A Midnight Magpie*, composed by Cedar Dobson. Recorded partly in the legendary Windmill Lane Recording Studios and mixed by Cedar herself, a Pulse College graduate, this album will not disappoint. *Decade* is a work of art, filled to the brim with life.

"Cedar plays superbly on various whistles...where tradition, innovation and creativity come together to deliver a stand-out and satisfying listening experience. Is ceoltóir cumasach, cruthaitheach í Cedar atá i mbarr a maitheasa." - Caoimhín O Sé, RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta.

Decade is available to purchase in digital/CD form on Bandcamp at Cedar Dobson Music.

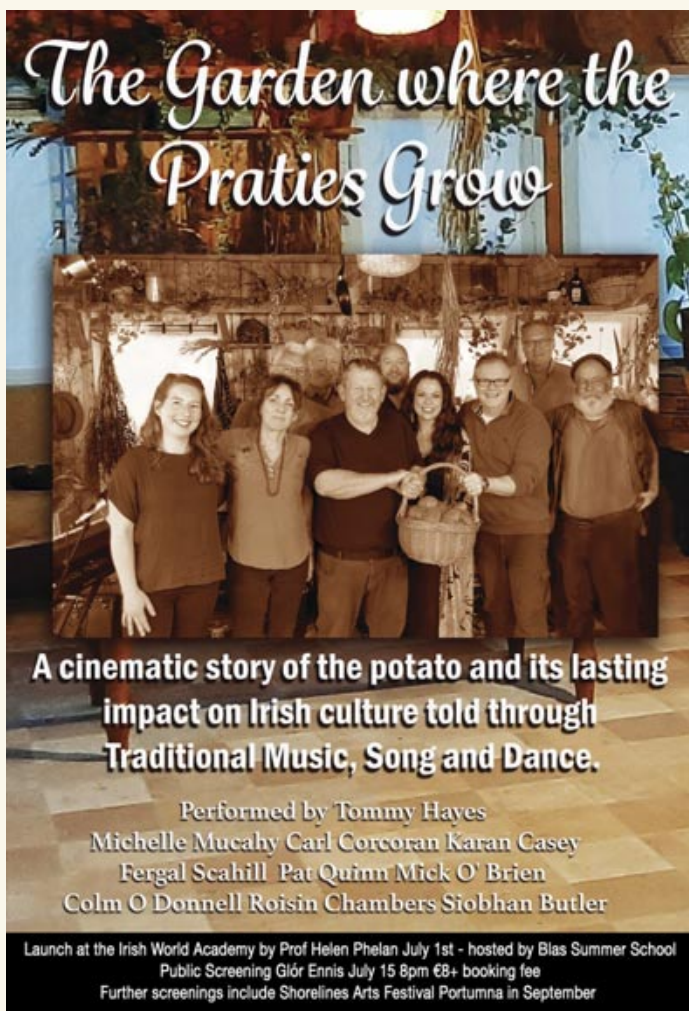
Contact Cedar at cedardobsonmusic@gmail.com

RISING CELTIC MUSIC BAND CARROLL SISTERS TRIO RELEASES SECOND ALBUM RADIANCE
carrollsisters.com

The Carroll Sisters Trio is an energetic band based in New England, and they are set to release their second album this August. *Radiance* is a mix of traditional Celtic tunes and original compositions on fiddle, cello, and piano.

The album showcases the Carroll Sisters Trio's compelling arrangements of music from Ireland, Scotland, and Cape Breton, which they learned and developed primarily from Celtic musicians in the United States.

The album features some traditional tunes, yet also many contemporary tunes by members of the trio and also prolific contemporary musicians



The Garden where the Praties Grow

A cinematic story of the potato and its lasting impact on Irish culture told through Traditional Music, Song and Dance.

Performed by Tommy Hayes
 Michelle Mueahy Carl Corcoran Karan Casey
 Fergal Scahill Pat Quinn Mick O'Brien
 Colm O'Donnell Roisin Chambers Siobhan Butler

Launch at the Irish World Academy by Prof Helen Phelan July 1st - hosted by Blas Summer School
 Public Screening Glór Ennis July 15 8pm €8+ booking fee
 Further screenings include Shorelines Arts Festival Portumna in September

such as Liz Carroll, Sèamus Egan, John Whelan, Sharon Shannon, and more. The album is the first that features the full trio and reflects the sound they have developed over the last five years, performing hundreds of gigs and solidifying their unique Celtic fusion sound and identity as a band.

Radiance highlights the guiding light that the New England Celtic music community has been for the trio individually and collectively. Trio members Emilie Carroll, Nora Carroll, and Sammy Wetstein all grew up in a small community in Connecticut that does not have many Celtic music opportunities, so they each had to make their own way into the larger New England music community. Their musical journey celebrates the influence that an inviting music community can have, and their album contributes to the diverse yet distinctive style of American Celtic music.

Order their new album and learn about their upcoming shows at carrollsisters.com

FIDDLIN' MIKE FERRY LAUNCHES "IRISH FIDDLE MASTERY" ONLINE PROGRAM TO HELP VIOLINISTS AND FIDDLERS SOUND MORE IRISH

www.irishfiddlemastery.com

Fiddlin' Mike Ferry, internationally-known Irish fiddle teacher and performer, announces the launch of *Irish Fiddle Mastery*, a comprehensive online program designed specifically for current and returning violin and fiddle players eager to deepen their connection to Irish traditional music.

Irish Fiddle Mastery offers a step-by-step curriculum that guides players through authentic Irish fiddle techniques, rhythmic styles, ornamentation, and phrasing. Participants will gain practical tips to increase playing speed, develop confidence, and cultivate the "lilt" that defines the tradition.

"Many violin and fiddle players struggle with turning the notes on the page into authentic Irish music. I created this program to bridge the gap for musicians who want to truly *feel* and *sound* Irish in their playing," says Ferry. The online course includes guided lessons on jigs, reels, waltzes, ornamentation such as rolls and cuts, and strategies for playing in traditional sessions. With years of experience helping classical players and fiddlers from other traditions unlock their fiddle

voice, Mike brings warmth, humour, and clarity to every lesson.

Enrollment for Irish Fiddle Mastery is now open. For more information and to register, visit www.irishfiddlemastery.com

FILL YOUR HEART WITH IRELAND....AT THE FLEADH CHEOIL NA HÉIREANN

www.Ireland.com

Every summer, a host town on the island of Ireland welcomes musicians, dancers and performers from across the globe for a rip-roaring traditional music celebration. At Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, the world's largest annual festival of Irish music, you can expect street performers, intimate concerts, big-name acts and over 150 competitions showcasing the very best of traditional music talent.

This year the Fleadh takes place in Wexford from August 3-10 and is certain to be as wonderful as ever. The Fleadh Cheoil first took place in Mullingar in County Westmeath in 1951 and has travelled the length and breadth of the country to this year find itself in Ireland's Ancient East.

The competition is fierce with solo acts, duets, trios, groups, céilí bands, sean nós singing and dancing all in store. Star acts include Garadice, the National Folk Orchestra and Frankie Gavin & De Danaan – to name a few.

This is your chance to really immerse yourself in Ireland's musical heritage. Get your toes tapping at a traditional céilí dance, soak up the atmosphere of a trad session in a cosy pub or take in the delights of a street parade. You can even practice your 'cúpla focal' (few words) at an Irish language workshop or stop by a lecture or two.

Alison Metcalfe, Tourism Ireland's Executive Vice President, North America and Australia/NZ, said, "The Fleadh offers a great insight into what makes us tick. We are blessed with a musical heritage that will form a truly special part of an Irish vacation. At this time especially, we are encouraging folks to enjoy #IrelandUnrushed – 'when you take your time and immerse yourself, you feel more' -and that will certainly be the case as you take a seat and savour the splendour of the Fleadh Cheoil."

For more information visit www.Ireland.com



KÍLA

Iconic trad-fusion band Kíla return with **Raise The Road**, a bombastic new album of their latest songs and tunes featuring collaborations with an 8-piece brass band, arranged by trombonist Paul Frost.

"This album breaks new ground, not only for Kíla, but for Trad. in general"
- Kíla founding member Rossa Ó Snodaigh

Out now on Crashed Records. Available worldwide on CD from CelticNote.com and to stream/download from digital outlets

<http://www.kila.ie>



BELFAST BECKONS : THE HEARTBEAT OF IRELAND'S MUSICAL EVENTS AWAITS YOU IN 2026

Close your eyes and listen: a fiddle tunes up on a street corner, a bodhrán thumps to the beat of the streets, and a ripple of laughter dances through cobbled lanes. This isn't a dream - it's **Belfast in August 2026**, and the city is alive with music. **Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann**, the world's largest annual celebration of traditional Irish music, is coming to Belfast for the first time.



Belfast is ready to welcome you. Not just with world-class venues, transport, and hospitality (though you'll find plenty of all three), but with heart. Bold street art, bustling music venues, historic tours, and some of the friendliest locals you'll ever meet; it all adds up to a city humming with culture and ready to share it.

From the grand steps of City Hall to the echoing alleys of the Cathedral Quarter, every corner of Belfast will pulse with the Fleadh's spirit. Wander from a competition venue to an impromptu street session. Grab a pint in a cosy pub and catch a trad session – or join one! It's spontaneous. It's electric. It's Belfast.

This is your moment to start dreaming - and planning. Whether you're a seasoned fleadh-goer or new to Irish traditional music, there's never been a better time to make the journey. Travel beyond the sessions - explore the **Causeway Coast**, visit **Titanic Belfast**, take a road trip down the **Wild Atlantic Way through Donegal**. Music and a warm welcome can be found everywhere on the island of Ireland.

It's never too early to start planning your journey. Visit [Ireland.com](https://ireland.com) for more travel tips and inspiration. And don't forget your dancing shoes -there will be céilís for all ages and abilities!

Come to Belfast in 2026, the UNESCO city of music and home of the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann.

 **Ireland.com**

For one extraordinary week – **August 2 to 9, 2026** - Belfast will become the home of music on the island of Ireland. The Fleadh is more than a festival. It's a homecoming of tunes passed down through generations. A homecoming of people - musicians, dancers, families, visitors - all gathering to honour our shared traditions.

“From the grand steps of City Hall to the echoing alleys of the Cathedral Quarter, every corner of Belfast will pulse with the Fleadh's spirit”

Expect a week like no other: more than **400 events** will ripple across the city, from championship competitions to open-air céilís, from quiet storytelling sessions to roaring street sessions that stretch into the night. Pubs, parks, theatres, and streets will be transformed into stages.

The Fleadh is a celebration of community, of language, of identity. You'll find youngsters mastering their first reels alongside master musicians with decades of stories in their bow hands. It's a place where strangers become session partners, and the music becomes the language everyone speaks.

And it's huge: over **700,000 visitors** are expected, bringing a sea of energy to Belfast's heart. But the real magic isn't just in the numbers, it's in the spirit. You'll feel it walking through Cathedral Quarter as fiddlers warm up on a doorstep. You'll feel it when a sean-nós singer hushes a packed pub with a single verse. You'll feel it the moment you arrive.



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heart?

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What makes the trip to Ireland so special? Is it the historic castles? The vibrant cities? The shimmering green landscapes, or the easy ebb and flow of our rivers and lakes? Well, it's all of those things. But one thing you're sure to remember on a trip here... is the craic. "Craic" - it's a word that encapsulates the spirit of Ireland.

It's an experience, a sensation, a great time. It's the electricity that pulses through a crowd at a traditional music session. It's a joke shared with a wise-cracking taxi driver, or a witty barman. It's free-spirited, it's unplanned, and it's here to welcome you home.

So come on, fill your heart with Ireland...

 **Ireland.com**

CRUISING WITH JOANIE

Aboard the high seas with Joanie Madden and her Folk 'n' Irish family of music lovers, writes Seán Laffey.



Recently, I caught up with award-winning flutist and music dynamo Joanie Madden in Miltown Malbay, County Clare. She just finished a sold-out musical bus tour of Ireland and she was still glowing from the experience. “We had a brilliant trip,” Joanie grinned, “and to top it off, when I got home, a gang of the best musicians on the planet surprised me with a 60th birthday party where the music didn’t stop until 6:30 in the morning!”

Long nights of tunes are nothing new for Joanie. As the founder and driving force behind the internationally acclaimed group Cherish the Ladies, she’s built a career performing with unmatched passion. But in recent years, Joanie has taken her love of Irish music beyond the stage—and onto the sea.

Her Folk ‘n’ Irish Cruises have become legendary: part music festival, part cultural retreat, and part floating family reunion. “We create a week where everyone, performers and guests alike, are immersed in Irish music, dancing, culture, and craic,” she says.

Her next voyage? This August, a nearly sold-out Danube River cruise from Budapest to Passau in Europe. “The boat holds 167 people, and we’re bringing 14 top-tier traditional musicians with us and it’s going to be a blast!”

Joanie’s inspiration for these cruises began years ago when she performed on numerous Clancy Brothers cruises. “I saw the magic of it, the way it spoke to people who were deeply passionate about Irish music,” she recalls. It wasn’t long before she began organising her own, putting her signature stamp on every detail. She partners with Norwegian Cruise Line, and her flagship event, the Joanie Madden’s Folk ‘n’ Irish Cruise, now

draws over a thousand guests from around the world each year. “We usually depart from Florida, but this time, we’re sailing from New Orleans: January 25 to February 1, 2026,” she says.

This voyage is already shaping up to be one for the books. “We’ve got over 85 musicians, singers and dancers booked so far,” Joanie says. “And we’re thrilled to be joined by a film crew from TG4, who will be documenting the entire journey for a feature programme.”

So, who joins a Joanie Madden cruise? “Everyone, from teenagers to retirees,” she says. “We have guests from all over the world and what brings them together is their love for traditional music, joining in the sessions, lectures, set dancing, waltzing, jiving, sing-a-longs, and the craic! People bond, share stories, and leave with new friendships, with many coming back year after year.”

Joanie ensures there’s a rich tapestry of entertainment. Each performer is scheduled for just 90 minutes a day, whether it’s a concert, workshop, or class, leaving them ample time for informal sessions and spontaneous fun. “We want our musicians to be part of the experience, not just performers,” she explains. “And many of our guests are not just spectators, they’re session players, singers, dancers, who all help to make the magic happen.”

And what a lineup it is. The 2026 cruise includes performances from Cherish the Ladies, Lúnasa, Dervish, Derek Warfield & The Young Wolfe Tones, Don Stiffe, Matt Molloy, Kevin Burke & John Carty, Ger O’Donnell & Trevor

“People come on board as strangers and leave as lifelong friends—brought together by the music we all love — Joanie Madden”

Sexton, George Murphy, Rory Makem, The Kane Sisters, Swallows Tail Ceili Band, Donal Murphy, Patrick O’Sullivan, Kathy Durkin and many more.

Pulling off a music cruise of this scale is no easy feat, but Joanie runs a tight ship. “We bring our own gear and a dedicated crew of sound engineers. In November, we will do a test run on the Norwegian Escape to plan every logistical detail: where the concerts and sessions happen and how to optimise the flow of each event. One thing I love about Norwegian is their casual dining policy,” she says. “No assigned tables, no set meal times and a casual dress code.”

Joanie’s Folk ‘n’ Irish Cruise with seven months to go, is already more than 60% booked. Prices start at \$1,500 per person, which includes accommodations, meals, drinks, gratuities, Wi-Fi and access to all performances and events.

“It really is a big floating family festival,” Joanie smiles. “There’s nothing like the feeling on board; music, dancing and craic around every corner, new friendships, incredible scenery, and the deep joy of sharing our traditions. I absolutely love it.”

For more information or to reserve your spot, visit www.joaniemaddencruise.com

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SHERIDAN RÚITÍN'S FREAKSHOW

Rooted in traditional Irish balladry but laced with the raw folk energy of American back porch storytelling, New York's Sheridan Rúitín has moved on considerably from their Pub roots, writes John O'Regan.



This year Sheridan Rúitín played festivals, pubs, and concert venues during a sold-out February-March "St. Patrick's Tour" from the Catskills to Virginia, and even a few wild nights in Boston and the rest of New England. Their show at The Black Rose was a highlight; they played *Rattlin' Bog* and a guy in the front dressed in a full feathered chicken costume jumped on stage - he got booed and thrown off!

The band formed in the Spring of 2020 in Congers, New York, starting in "Sheridan's Pub". Actually a detached garage, converted DIY style, which came into its own at the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic, as more pubs and restaurants were shutting their doors. Band founder Billy Houlihan became a regular at his next door neighbour's pub. "Sheridan's pub was complete with a speaker system, Guinness on tap (ran through G-mix), and portraits of the 1916 Rising Irish rebel leaders." Since then the band has developed through two albums, a live demo set and *Rebels in the Night* and now their new album *Freakshow*.

Freakshow captures the dual spirit of heritage and reinvention. Whether it's the foot-stomping energy of Sean McCarthy's classic ballad *Red-Haired Mary*, or the aching lament of the original *North Georgia Mountains*, every track hums with the pulse of memory and resilience. At its core, *Freakshow* is a love letter to songs traditional and original, and the stubborn beauty of keeping one's roots alive while experimentally bending folk as we know it. It's music for the wanderer, the nostalgic, and anyone who's ever felt the pull of adventure.

Billy opens up about the album. "*Freakshow*, is the most daring thing we've done yet. We've always rooted ourselves in Celtic folk, but we are bending the genre into new territory, mixing it with pop-rock, cinematic storytelling, and a kind of theatrical grit we call Celtwave. It's a celebration of outsiders, misfits, and wild nights, stitched together with fiddles, electric guitars, and a few different types of bagpipes.

"*Freakshow* has twelve tracks, nine originals and three traditional tunes we've *Sheridanized* into our own. Originals like *North Georgia Mountains*, *Bad Habit*, and *Dublin Scars*

showcase back-porch storytelling, while *Old Man Mickey* and *Fitzpatrick's Mourning* bring a rough-edged humour that feels unique to us. For the covers, we reimagined *Red Haired Mary*, *The Auld Triangle*, and *The Wild Rover* with a Celtwave spin.

"*Freakshow* is home-made, down to the recording and mixing. We have always recorded, produced, mixed, and mastered everything ourselves. Even our music videos are all in house and self-produced. This time, we recorded the album in Billy's basement in Cliffside Park, NJ; just in time before his wife gave birth to their first child, Charlie Anna Houlihan, on the thirteenth of May. We sent the record to get mixed in Atlanta, GA by Zack Odom and Kenneth Mount, and then sent it to John Naclerio at Nada Recording in Middletown, NY for mastering.

"I asked him about the line-up. "We're still the same crooked crew at heart: Shannon Cokeley: guitar/vocals, Myself on: banjo/bagpipes/bouzouki/fiddle/vocals, Tommy Ma: bodhran and vocals, and Michael "Zeus" Zayas on accordion/mandolin/piano & whistle. Sometimes we add John Damiano on a full drum kit, who brings some extra sonic mischief. Everyone writes, everyone yells, and somehow it all comes together on stage."

Much has happened for Billy and the band. "We've got lots of life changes with a new baby born, and one due in September, but it doesn't stop us from touring and having fun with our music; you might just end up seeing a couple very small versions of us at the gigs!"

"Freakshow is a celebration of outsiders, misfits, and wild nights, stitched together with music..."

How does he assess the progress Sheridan Rúitín has made since their last recording? "We've come some way, both musically and as a band. Our last recording was more traditional, but *Freakshow* is us kicking the doors open. We've grown more confident in our sound; blending the Celtic roots we love with the storytelling punch of folk rock and the experimentation of pop and rock. We've taken more creative risks, pushed the boundaries of what Celtic folk can be, and found a voice that's truly our own. It's rawer, bolder, and weirder. We are looking forward to sharing it with the world!"

Catch up with their antics and much more at www.sheridanrunitin.com



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CELTIC WORLD FORUM

BUILDING LINKS AND RESILIENCE THIS OCTOBER

Mark Lysaght spoke with Grammy-nominated singer Éabha McMahon via Zoom recently to find out more about this all-inclusive gathering of music professionals and enthusiasts, which is scheduled in Dublin this coming October.



Photo : Leigh Page

Co Founders of the Celtic World Forum, Éabha McMahon and Shane McDonnell

The Celtic World Forum is an innovative event which has been running for the past two years; it invited participants to immerse themselves in the essence of Irish traditional, folk and Celtic music. This has drawn an international audience with people travelling from various parts of the world to attend, along with Irish people who wish to explore the tradition in more depth.

"Having been involved in singing with Anúna and (later) Celtic Woman since my teens, I had a great opportunity to observe how people reacted

who engage fully with participants, sharing their experience of the tradition and culture with evening concerts open to a wider audience. Daytime events include talks, panel discussions, workshops and song circles. In the last two years, performers have included Anúna, Moya Brennan, Horslips, Seamus and Caoimhe Uí Fhlatharta, Máiréad Nesbitt, Tara Howley, Eimear Quinn, Michael McGlynn and James Greenan (Riverdance lead dancer). Éabha and Shane have access to a wide range of performers from their various involvements in musical projects, and they take great care to select people who are best suited to the concept of providing a fully immersive experience for those attending.

Éabha is a native of Dalkey, County Dublin and this year's event will be held in Fitzpatrick's Castle Hotel, Killiney from October 21st to 23rd.

While the line-up of artists has not yet been announced, it looks like there will be a range of major artists involved, as those performers who have already taken part have been extremely complimentary about the benefits they see for themselves from engaging with attendees, and sharing their life experiences in an informal setting. "Even at this early stage, it's clear that a network is emerging, where the participants and artists interact and bond, and a number of spin-off events have already been organised," Éabha told me. "The Forum has become a tree which keeps growing, with branches emerging all the time, it just keeps expanding into new areas."

Éabha feels that there is enormous potential in the Celtic World Forum, which solidifies the connection between artists and their audience, and the artist feedback has been universally positive as they discover how listeners react to a more detailed insight into their creative processes. Her own musical journey began when she was a small child, and at a relatively young age she has a wealth of experience in the music industry, and is also composing music which reflects her position as a person with deep concerns about the modern world and its impact on ordinary people. With two small children, she is concerned about what kind of world they will

"A network is emerging, where the participants and artists interact and bond..."

to Irish music and song across the world. Anúna were very involved in collaborative events such as workshops, which I found really inspiring, and I felt that there was a need for an event where people could experience interaction with major artists at first hand, incorporating workshops, talks and concerts," Éabha explained. While with Celtic Woman, she formed a close professional bond with their manager Shane McDonnell, who had previously managed Clannad. Together, they collaborated on several music projects, and it was during this period that they developed the idea, which became the Celtic World Forum.

In the aftermath of Covid, Éabha and Shane decided to go ahead with the first event and were at the planning stage when an unexpected setback happened. "My husband John was involved in a bad accident, and Shane suggested that we postpone the project," said Éabha. "But John insisted that we go ahead." Once the format was publicised, the response was amazing, and places were filled very quickly. It's clear from speaking with Éabha that she is absolutely passionate about the event and its benefits to those taking part, and that there is a great support network in place to ensure that each year builds on the previous one. "Shane has been a fantastic partner in the organisation of Celtic World Forum, and we complement each other's skills and competencies in a way that enables us to develop new ideas for each year, and expand on existing formats."

Key to the success of previous events has been the involvement of artists

face as adults, and wants music to play a key role in advocating a more just and humane future for all.

More information on Celtic World Forum is available on the website www.celticworldforum.com



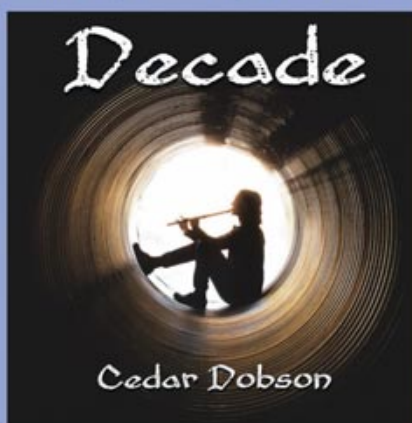
Máiréad Nesbitt performing at the Celtic World Forum concert in 2024

Photo : Leigh Page

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CLIMBING THE CHARTS WITH 'THE STILL OF THE NIGHT'

Seán Laffey talks to Caitríona O'Sullivan whose single *The Still of the Night* was Number 1 in the Irish iTunes charts, co-written by Caitríona and composer-arranger Gavin Murphy.

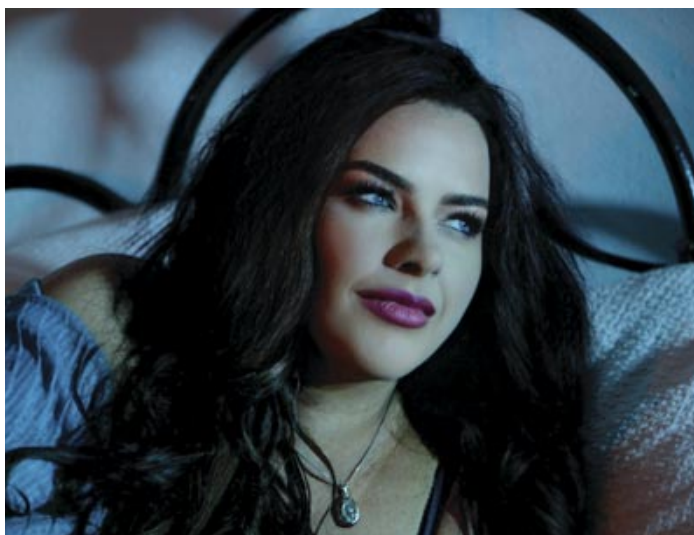


Photo : Sarah O'Connor

Irish based readers may know Caitríona from her 21 years as a judge on TG4's country music series *Glór Tíre*, she is also an award-winning singer-songwriter, television personality, and fluent Irish speaker. Her chart topping single has a distinctly Irish character thanks to its arrangement, which features: Gavin Murphy (composer/ producer /piano and strings), Keith Farrell (upright bass), Anna Connolly (Irish traditional flute), Mark Redmond (uilleann pipes). There is another possibly more important reason why it echoed so strongly with Irish listeners, and that is the honesty and the vulnerability at the song's core.

Caitríona says there are times in our lives that are pivotal, that define who we are and give us the opportunity to reassess our priorities. There's probably nothing as impactful as the passing of a parent and for Caitríona, the song came out of such a time of change. The song was written in 2012 when the economy was turning sour and emigration was once again scouring Ireland. Caitríona could see the hurt that separation was causing and this gave her the inspiration to write the song.

both her and us that things would go on. She passed away only a few hours later that same night. These events were the catalyst that gave me the courage to start my own family. I realised that beyond my career and my music, family was the bedrock that I wanted to build my future life on."

She sang *The Still of The Night* to her mother on that final day, but Caitríona wasn't ready for it to take on its finished form or be released to the public. "Grief isn't something you have control over, it might be a cliché but it does take time to process and be accepting of it. Even when I had the song released and it was getting media attention last May, I was surprised how emotionally affected I was when journalists asked me about my mother. The emotions all came back to me so vividly, it seemed as if it was only yesterday."

Caitríona thinks the song did so well because it deals with the "dark night of the soul" that we all must confront from time to time. When a loved one passes, a child emigrates or a relationship ends, we are left by ourselves to figure out questions like how did we get here and where are we going now? I think we all search for that deeper meaning in our lives.

The single is accompanied by a stunning video filmed in Kerry in the area where Caitríona's mother Marion grew up on her family's small farm. Caitríona says "Cinetex film produced it. Colm Sexton shot and edited the video with Paulina Kiewesz assisting, Aaron Egerton shot some stunning drone footage, my friend Sarah O Connor chose the locations and shot the promotional photos, and my friend Diane Jeffers styled me for the shoot. I am blessed with the support of family and friends, and my sisters Eileen and Rose did my hair and makeup. It was a family affair! The scenery and the landscape we chose were very dear to my mother: Glenbeigh beach, Dook's beach Cromane, Caragh Lake, all near to her homeplace in Tullig, near Cromane in County Kerry."

The public response has been massive of course, but what of her own family? "My children were born after Mom passed, but we

"It's my way of paying tribute to the memory of my mother after all she did for me and my sisters and hopefully immortalising her memory in my own small way for the generations after us"

"My mother passed away in 2012, she had cancer and the time between her diagnosis and leaving us was very short." Knowing that her mother's time was limited focused Caitríona to concentrate on deeply personal priorities. She moved back home to Tralee (she had been teaching music and Irish at Mount Anville in Dublin). Once back home, not only did she care for her mother but began to reassess her life. "My partner of 13 years said it was time for us to get married and on the afternoon before my mother passed on, we had a simple blessing ceremony at home with her. He went to the bank, got some money out and went to the jewellers and bought a ring. We invited the parish priest in to bless us and perform the last rites for Mom. It was a lovely way to assure

haven't forgotten her, we still have photographs around the house so the children know what she looked like. They often talk about Nana and they love the song. It's my way of paying tribute to the memory of my mother after all she did for me and my sisters and hopefully immortalising her memory in my own small way for the generations after us. My children never knew her but they share the love she had for us and they feel like she watches over them.

**You can watch *The Still of the Night* on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISXgtzfCPxo
And download the track on iTunes and Spotify**

EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum



At EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum, music is more than just entertainment; it's a vital thread in the fabric of Irish identity, woven into the story of emigration and cultural legacy. Located in Dublin's historic CHQ Building, EPIC invites visitors on an immersive journey through 20 galleries that explore how Irish emigrants have shaped the world, and naturally there's a focus on Ireland's wealth of musical talent.

The Music & Dance gallery is a powerful testament to the enduring resonance of Irish music far beyond Ireland's shores. From the foot-stomping rhythms of traditional jigs to the ethereal strains of the uilleann pipes, the gallery explores how emigrants kept the sounds of home alive in faraway places, and how this helped them build and maintain communities in their new homes - especially in North America. It celebrates the spirit of musical storytelling that generations of Irish people brought with them, and how it influenced global soundscapes.

Visitors encounter stories of remarkable musicians whose Irish roots nourished new traditions abroad. Among them is John

McKenna, the County Leitrim-born flute player who brought his craft to New York in the early 20th century, recording prolifically into his 60s and inspiring countless others. He played alongside fellow Leitrim native James Morrison, a master fiddler who, like Michael Coleman of Sligo, helped define the golden age of Irish American traditional recordings. These artists didn't just preserve Irish music; they transformed it into a living, evolving art form across the Atlantic.

EPIC also shines a light on charismatic figures like Patrick Touhey, dubbed the "wizard of the Irish pipes", vaudeville sensation Maggie Cline, and singer-songwriter John Francis Patterson, a circus performer and one of the highest-paid entertainers in 19th-century America. Their tales are as rich and varied as the tunes they performed, showcasing the power of Irish music to uplift, unify, and endure.

Modern icons such as Sinéad O'Connor, The Pogues, and The Cranberries also feature, reminding visitors that Ireland's influence on global music is as current as it is historic. It even showcases artists you never would have imagined had Irish ancestry - like Rihanna, Shania Twain, and even Taylor Swift. EPIC connects these stars of the stage with the humble traditions that inspired them, revealing music as a constant in the Irish emigrant story.

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DESTINATION ‘GLEANN AN CHEOIL’!

Seán Laffey talks to Rónán Ó Dochartaigh, the Irish language director of Oideas Gael, a social enterprise that has been active in the Donegal Gaeltacht since 1984, where it offers a range of adult oriented courses, each with the Irish language at its heart.



Emer Mayock, Mick O'Brien and Aoife Ní Bhriain

Oideas Gael is centred in Gleann Cholm Cille, a wild unspoilt landscape in south west Donegal. Rónán begins with a sincere acknowledgement. “We have to thank the tireless work of the late Fr James McDyer, the Glenties native, who did so much to foster community enterprises and the living Irish language in the area. He was a real inspiration and champion here, so much so that in 1984 Liam Ó Cuinneagáin, who had been teaching in Dublin, set up our centre here in the Glen. And suffice to say it has grown from strength to strength ever since.”

Immersion in the language happens here by being part of a living linguistic community, which is how those early courses began, as Rónán explains. “While language courses are a core part of our programme, we gradually introduced various cultural activity holidays over the years. The first of these involved hikes

“Outside of the music classes, there is a sense of being part of something ancient and connected”

across the hills and valleys of the area, it was a gentle yet physically rewarding introduction to the language. The slow pace of the hike, and the chance to learn the stories behind features in the landscape was a popular foundation for the many courses that followed in their wake.

“Walking around the scenic landscape was a wonderful way of introducing people to the language, the folklore and the culture of the area. It was an informal way to pick up phrases, idioms and aspects of the language that many people might have forgotten or lost since their days at school, or if they were coming to the course with absolutely no knowledge of the language at all.

“Our music offerings began with flute and tin whistle. And we continue this to this day with a programme that runs over a week. Our initial meeting is on the Saturday where we introduce our tutors, and take a tour of the facilities. By Sunday, friendships

are beginning to form and reticence about rusty language is beginning to fade away. It is an enjoyable week of immersion in music and language.

“Outside of the lockdown years, we offer courses to over two thousand students a year, and we’ve had the pleasure of working with at least 70 teachers from all over Ireland. In fact, even beyond, we’ve had people from New York and Saskatchewan who have grá for the Irish language and who have been great ambassadors for the culture. Last year we had attendees from 30 different countries, as many as 40% of our participants come from outside of Ireland.

“We have a wonderful location here in the Sliabh Liag peninsula. Being on the peninsula there is a coastal character to the settlements in the west of the region, and we are well served with good restaurants, pubs, a food store and a post office. The area has not succumbed to the anonymity of AirBnB, so our attendees often stay in family run guest houses where they will have chance to chat in Irish over the breakfast. Local people are very welcoming and are happy to share anecdotes and stories with our visitors, no two days are the same. Outside of the music classes there is a sense of being part of something ancient and connected.

“We run courses all year round and our centre is in almost constant use, except for when we hand it over to Cairdeas na bhFidiléirí for their annual fiddle week. Thanks to the tireless work of Aidan O'Donnell, Rab Cherry and Caoimhín MacAoidh, Donegal fiddle music has seen a vibrant resurgence in the past three decades. Their 40th Donegal Fiddle Summer School runs here in Glencolmcille, from Monday 4th to Friday the 8th of August.”

Rónán sums up our chat by saying the social enterprise helps build up a sense of self esteem in what might be otherwise a marginal area on the extreme west of Ireland. “Our aim here at Oideas Gael is to ensure that areas such as Gleann Cholm Cille are economically, socially and culturally viable, that people have a sense of their history, and then this can be happily and proudly shared amongst themselves and across the world.”

To find out more about the work of Oideas Gael please visit www.oideasgael.ie



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GLENCASTLE IRISH DANCERS • GOULD AND JAEGER • GRAY, GOSA, LANGBY • HEARTFIRE • HERMITAGE GREEN
THE HOWLEY BROTHERS (OF WE BANJO 3) • HUGH IRWIN • IAN GOULD • KÍLA • KIM ROBERTSON • KINSELLA ACADEMY OF IRISH DANCE
LEAHYS LUCK • LÉDA • MARY ANN MILLER • MARY NOLAN'S HARP AND SHAMROCK IRISH CEILI ORCHESTRA ALL-STARS
MCNAMARA MCCARTHY SCHOOL OF IRISH DANCE • MILWAUKEE IRISH DANCE • MILWAUKEE IRISH FEST SCHOOL OF MUSIC
THE MICHAEL MCGOLDRICK FAMILY BAND • MUSIC65 • NIAL MCCABE
NIAL MCCABE, MICHAEL MCGOLDRICK, AND NOLLAIG CASEY • THE O'BRADYS • O'DARBY
PAT GAUGHAN AND NANCY MAIO • PROVIDENCE CÉILÍ BAND • RADIATION • RED HOT CHILLI PIPERS • REILLY
SCHAUER CENTER IRISH DANCERS • SKERRYVORE • SLIABH NOTES • THE STEPCREW • STRANGE BOY • SUPERCÉILÍ
TARA BREEN, PÁDRAIG RYNNE, AND JIM MURRAY • TRINITY ACADEMY OF IRISH DANCE • WAYNE FRANCIS

AUGUST 14-17
IRISHFEST.COM

MILWAUKEE
IRISH FEST

A WELCOME MESSAGE FROM CAITLIN WARD

45 Years of Promoting Irish Music, Dance, and Culture in Milwaukee



As the executive director of Milwaukee Irish Fest, I am delighted to share with all of you the 2025 special edition of Irish Music Magazine, featuring our beloved celebration of Irish and Celtic culture, Milwaukee Irish Fest.

This year, I am particularly thrilled about the diverse lineup of performers who will grace over 18 stages at the 45th Milwaukee Irish Fest. We have several artists making their festival debut, such as Gardiner Brothers, Garron Noone, Bog Bodies, SuperCéilí, LÉDA, and Strange Boy, and over 100 music and cultural performers entertaining audiences all weekend long.

We also look forward to welcoming back some returning festival favourites, like Red Hot Chilli Pipers, Cherish the Ladies, Emma Langford, The Fitzgeralds, and Hermitage Green.

Milwaukee, known affectionately as the “City of Festivals,” provides the perfect backdrop for our annual gathering. Henry Maier Festival Park, a 75-acre park situated along the picturesque shores of Lake Michigan, has played host to countless cultural celebrations over the years, fostering a sense of community and camaraderie that is second to none. It is here that we come together to celebrate our shared heritage and passion for Irish and Celtic culture.

Whether you’re dancing a jig, savouring a hearty bowl of Irish stew, tracing your Irish ancestry in our genealogy area, exploring the artisan crafts of our marketplace, or discovering your new favourite artist, may you feel the warmth of our hospitality and the depth of our cultural legacy.

I encourage you to visit irishfest.com to learn more about our lineup, view the daily schedule, and start planning your trip. We hope to see you August 14-17 along Milwaukee’s lakefront.

Céad míle fáilte—a hundred thousand welcomes will be waiting for you.

Sláinte,

Caitlin Ward-Hegedus
Executive Director, CelticMKE
Home of Milwaukee Irish Fest

“Milwaukee, known affectionately as the “City of Festivals,” provides the perfect backdrop for our annual gathering”

Milwaukee Irish Fest holds a special place in my heart, as it was founded by my father, Edward Ward, in 1981 with a vision to promote and preserve the vibrant traditions of Ireland, Irish America, and the broader Celtic world.

Over the past four decades, we have remained committed to showcasing Irish and Celtic music, dance, history, and heritage to audiences near and far.





that the
call
climb
lower
each every
None can compare with
wild Irish Rose
My wild Irish Rose, the
flower that grows.

MILWAUKEE IRISH FEST

SHOWCASING IRISH DANCE

BEGLAN ACADEMY OF IRISH DANCE • BELLATOR ACADEMY OF IRISH DANCE • CAOIMHE NÍ MHAOLAGÁIN

CASHEL ACADEMY OF IRISH DANCE • CHERISH THE LADIES • GARDINER BROTHERS

GLENCASTLE IRISH DANCERS • KINSELLA ACADEMY OF IRISH DANCE

MCMAMARA MCCARTHY SCHOOL OF IRISH DANCE • MILWAUKEE IRISH DANCE

SCHAUER CENTER IRISH DANCERS • SUPERCÉILÍ IRISH DANCE PARTY

THE FITZGERALDS • THE STEPCREW • TRINITY IRISH DANCE ACADEMY

AUGUST 14-17

VIEW THE SCHEDULE AT
IRISHFEST.COM

MILWAUKEE
IRISH FEST

MILWAUKEE IRISH FEST TO FEATURE AN IRISH DANCE SHOWCASE WITH TWO SPECIAL SHOWS FROM MILWAUKEE DANCE SCHOOLS

For over four decades, Milwaukee Irish Fest has proudly showcased Irish dance as a cornerstone of its programming.



Each year, thousands gather to watch dancers perform with precision, joy, and unmistakable pride. The festival has become not only a celebration of Irish culture but a stage where generations of dancers—from beginners to world champions—share their talents and passion.

This year's festival takes that legacy one step further.

Milwaukee Together: An Irish Dance Showcase is a collaborative performance celebrating the strength and unity of Milwaukee's Irish Dance community. For the very first time, all eight Milwaukee Irish dance schools will join together for two performances that will highlight the strength, spirit, and solidarity of the local Irish dance community, a community rooted in a shared love of tradition and artistry.

Audiences will experience a powerful journey through time as the history of Irish dance is told through the movement and music that have defined it. From traditional steps passed down through generations to contemporary interpretations that reflect the dance's evolution, this showcase is a living tribute to the enduring legacy of Irish dance.

Witness the exceptional talent of dancers who have qualified for the World Irish Dance

Championships, showcasing the high level of commitment and skill cultivated right here in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. And as the showcase builds to a grand finale, all eight schools will take the stage together in a spirited celebration of unity and pride.

The dance pieces will be choreographed and performed by instructors and dancers from the following schools:

- Beglan Irish Dance Academy
- Bellator Academy of Irish Dance
- Cashel Academy of Irish Dance
- Glencastle Irish Dancers
- Kinsella Irish Dance School
- McNamara McCarthy School of Irish Dance
- Milwaukee Irish Dance
- Trinity Academy of Irish Dance

“Milwaukee Together: An Irish Dance Showcase is a collaborative performance celebrating the strength and unity of Milwaukee's Irish Dance community”

More than just a performance, Milwaukee Together is a heartfelt reminder of what Irish dance truly represents: community and heritage. It is a moment of connection for dancers, families, and audience members alike, a testament to the bonds forged through rhythm and movement.

Catch these special performances on Thursday, August 14, at 5:15 p.m. and Sunday, August 17, at 4:30 p.m. at the Miller Lite Stage.

View more details at irishfest.com.



TRADITIONAL IRISH MIXED WITH THE CONTEMPORARY SOUNDS OF TODAY

This Year's Milwaukee Irish Fest Music Lineup Features It All

The annual Milwaukee Irish Fest, presented by CelticMKE, is set to return for its 45th year along the shores of Lake Michigan at the Henry Maier Festival Park for four days, August 14-17, to celebrate Celtic music and culture.



internationally to sold out rooms across Ireland, the UK, Middle East, Australia and the US.

Their unique arrangement of instruments that includes the bodhrán, djembe, rhythmic guitar and banjo sets them apart as a truly original offering of Irish Music. They have played alongside the likes of Gavin James, Josh Ritter, Walking On Cars, The Pogues, and more.

Emma Langford

Emma Langford has become a firm feature of the Irish folk and songwriter scene. A globetrotting troubadour, Langford calls Limerick City in the South-West of Ireland home. Storytelling and wit sit at the heart of all she does; interweaving her live performances, and shining through her works. Langford's is an inimitable, dreamy voice on the frontline of a new wave of Irish folk.

"As gentle and harmonious as it is in sound and mood, this second album is strong and bold in sentiment, as she proclaims in the first few minutes of the album, 'My own self is my own, I am strong as my bones'." – Journal Of Music

The Fitzgeralds

A family group consisting of fiddling and step dancing siblings – Tom, Kerry & Julie Fitzgerald and Alanna Jenish on guitar. These siblings, from just outside of Canada's renowned Ottawa Valley, have come a long way from their small town roots. Featuring 3-time Canadian Grandmaster Fiddle Champions and Ontario Open Step Dance Champions, this unique act features high-energy fiddling and mind-blowing step dancing. It is the rare combination of exceptional musicianship, incomparable step dancing, audience interaction, evident love of performing, and genuine sibling connection that resonates with audiences of all ages and sets this group apart.

Gadan ft. Enda Scahill and Hillary Klug

A storming new band, blending the drive of Irish traditional music and



Emma Langford

The festival features hundreds of musicians, dancers and entertainers from around the world across 18 stages, with music running the gamut of genres, from traditional Irish to the most contemporary sounds of today.

The 2025 Milwaukee Irish Fest lineup includes performers from Ireland, Scotland, Canada, Italy, and more. Check out some of this year's entertainment below. Visit irishfest.com to view the full lineup and schedule.

Returning Headliners

Red Hot Chilli Pipers

Bagpipes with attitude, drums with a Scottish accent, and a show so hot it carries a health warning! The Red Hot Chilli Pipers, a multi-platinum, award-winning Celtic rock band from Scotland, are bringing their signature "BAGROCK" sound back to Milwaukee. Their energetic and infectious music appeals to all ages, with fans that include Ewan McGregor, Sir Paul McCartney, and Samuel L. Jackson. The Chillis' blend of traditional Scottish music and rock creates an electrifying experience that you have to see to believe. Feel the Chilli heat: it's time to come closer to the fire!

Hermitage Green

Hailing from Limerick, Ireland, Hermitage Green have made a large impact in a short period of time. After having released their first full length album via SONY Ireland and watching it climb the charts with tracks like *Quicksand*, *Not Your Lover*, and *Save Your Soul*, the band has been touring





Cherish the Ladies

For four decades, Cherish the Ladies has captivated audiences worldwide as one of the most celebrated Irish music ensembles in history. Renowned for their exhilarating mix of traditional Irish music, stunning vocals, and propulsive step dancing, they have won the hearts of audiences and critics alike. As the Boston Globe aptly puts it: It is simply impossible to imagine an audience that wouldn't enjoy what they do! This Grammy-nominated group has forged a path for women in the male-dominated Irish music scene, leaving a lasting legacy with 18 critically acclaimed albums and thousands of performances worldwide, from prestigious concert halls to the Olympics and even the White House. Led by the dynamic flute and whistle virtuoso Joanie Madden, a recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Award, Cherish the Ladies offers an unforgettable experience of music, song, and dance—a true masterclass in entertainment. Alongside Madden are stellar musicians; Mary Coogan on guitar, Mirella Murray on accordion, Kathleen Boyle on piano, Nollaig Casey on fiddle, vocalist Kate Purcell, and a talented ensemble of world-class dancers.

KÍLA

Formed at school in Dublin's late 1980's, award-winning band, Kíla, are heralded as one of Ireland's most innovative and exciting bands. Their unique sound has been ever-evolving, rooted in tradition, yet inspired by a myriad of influences and ideas from all around the world.

Often defined as contemporary Irish World music, Kíla fuse the effects of their own melodies and Irish (Gaeilge) lyrics, Irish folk instruments such as whistles, fiddles, Uilleann pipes, bones and bodhrán with djembe, congas, drums, mandolins, brass, and acoustic/electric/bass guitars. Kíla's eight members come from the differing musical backgrounds of traditional, classical, and rock. The result is a fresh blend of freewheeling instrumentals, furious jigs, and primal rhythms that transcend the traditional boundaries of Irish music.

“The 2025 Milwaukee Irish Fest lineup includes performers from Ireland, Scotland, Canada, Italy, and more”

bluegrass with the heart and soul of folk and Appalachian music—spiced up with an Italian seasoning for extra flair! Gadan is a fresh project created by seasoned Italian musicians from the Irish trad and European folk/rock scene, all with years of experience performing at major traditional and alternative music festivals across Europe and the US. The band originally featured four members, all Italian, bringing exceptional skill and passion to Irish traditional music and old-time American styles—a distinctive and remarkable combination. Among the founding members are Lorenzo Testa and Jacopo Ventura, both longtime performers on international stages.

In 2024, they were joined by Enda Scahill, a tenor banjo master, award-winner, All-Ireland champion, and founder of We Banjo 3. With Enda, Gadan expanded into a five-member band. Together, Gadan and Enda performed at all the major Irish festivals across the US during August 2024, marking the start of an exciting collaboration that is set to continue into the future. Their high-energy repertoire has a powerful live appeal, reminiscent of new-trad acts, but with a unique identity. With three banjos—tenor and clawhammer—fiddle, mandolin, and guitar, they create a distinctive “strings-only” sound, enhanced by subtle electronics and driven by a powerful rhythmic pulse. In 2025, the band completed its line-up with the addition of Eric Long, a gifted clawhammer banjoist and singer-songwriter originally from the mountainous heart of Pennsylvania—a region deeply rooted in Appalachian tradition—and now based in San Francisco. Eric brings a raw, authentic American folk soul to the group's transatlantic sound, further expanding their dynamic and diverse musical identity.

Kíla have worked extensively in TV and film. In 2020 they won the IFTA for Best Original Score for the soundtrack of *Arracht* (TG4). Their most notable collaborations have been with French composer Bruno Coulais on the soundtracks for Cartoon Saloon's three Oscar-nominated animated films *The Secret of Kells* (2010), *Song of the Sea* (2014), and most recently for *Wolfwalkers* (2020).

TradFest Returns to The Snug Stage with New Performers

Bog Bodies

Bog Bodies emerges as a powerhouse Irish ensemble, masterfully blending traditional Irish melodies with a contemporary, raw edge. Inspired by the enigmatic megalithic sites of Ireland, the band is formed by songwriter and archaeologist, Dan Maher. Their genre-bending, high-energy folk sound is characterised by the interplay of traditional Irish instruments such as the bodhrán, flute, and mandolin with guitars and drums, creating a unique blend of old and new, earthy and electric. Combining the storytelling traditions of Irish folk with the raw intensity of rock and a dash of world music for good measure. Bog Bodies' songs are charged from the ancient megalithic sites of Ireland and are often political, ethereal, and Celtic/Pagan in theme. The band's name is inspired by the ancient bog bodies that have been discovered in





Photo : Paul McCarthy.

Ireland, which were preserved in peat bogs for centuries, giving them a deep and mysterious aura. This fascination with the ancient and mystical is a recurring theme in the band's music, which is infused with the spirit of the land and the stories of its people.

Fionn and Jonathan Angus

Fionn Crombie Angus is a left-handed fiddle player with Down syndrome. After performing at the inaugural TradFest/AbleFest programme in Dublin earlier this year, he was named TradFest Ambassador and will appear on the stage at Milwaukee Irish Fest, accompanied by his father, Jonathan. Fionn and Jonathan are co-directors of Fionnathan Productions, a social enterprise.

You can pronounce it Fionnathan or Fear Nuthin'—close enough. Fionn is a regular fixture of the

Galway arts scene: a filmmaker and visual artist as well as a traditional musician. To help clarify Fionn's goals, he has conducted nearly 800 video interviews, asking, "What do you love about your life?" As a result, Fionn can rightly be considered a happiness expert, and his YouTube channel, Fionnathan Presents: The Happiness Project, has more than 5 million views. He combines his music skills with his deep love of nature as a Heritage Expert, teaching children about animals and traditional Irish culture in schools across Ireland and internationally. He has performed on national TV numerous times. They each received Remy Martin Irish Men of the Year 2025 Awards: Fionn as Diversity and Inclusion Advocate and Jonathan as Arts and Culture Advocate. Working with numerous organisations, they have led advocacy courses and family consultations, published works, served on government committees, and presented at conferences worldwide, and together they have visited over two dozen countries. They perform as part of Milwaukee's partnership with TradFest.

SuperCéilí

Traditional Irish tunes meet advanced technology in the SuperCéilí live show. A unique array of acoustic and digital instruments create a fully-live Irish Dance Music experience. With its gigantic sound and stage-presence, SuperCéilí drives crowds wild and has introduced a new audience to the passion and spontaneity of Ireland's culture.



Making Their Milwaukee Irish Fest Debut

Gardiner Brothers

Michael and Matthew Gardiner are American born Irish Dancers living in Nashville, Tennessee. They have over 800 million views on social media, have won over 40 major Irish dancing titles between them and have performed to audiences all over the globe at their own corporate events and with the world famous Riverdance cast. They are known for their fast paced and rhythmic style of dance that they developed after training at the Hession School of Irish Dance in Galway, Ireland.

Garron Noone

Garron is an online comedy content creator and musician from Mayo. He burst onto the scene in late 2022 by posting videos on TikTok, quickly becoming one of Ireland's most recognised creators, captivating audiences far beyond the Emerald Isle. In addition to his comedic talents, Garron is a professional musician and has participated in the BBC's radio series Big Comic Energy. He also hosts the food podcast Listen, I'm Delicious, where he combines his love for humour and culinary delights. Look forward to music, laughs, and great craic at his Milwaukee Irish Fest shows. He'll perform all four days of the festival.

LÉDA

LÉDA hail from Balla, Co Mayo and the Shetland Isles respectively and are now based in Glasgow. The duo features both Éadaoin Ní Mhaicín, a multi-award winning instrumentalist who holds a staggering amount of world titles and Amy Laurenson, who was recently named BBC Radio Scotland Young Traditional Musician of the Year 2023.

Strange Boy

Strange Boy is redefining the landscape of Irish music. With a voice that echoes the seanchaí of old and a delivery that pulses with the urgency of modern hip-hop, he has carved out a space entirely his own. Fusing the raw storytelling tradition of Ireland with the rhythm and cadence of rap, his work is both deeply rooted and boundary-breaking—an unmistakable force in contemporary music. A live Strange Boy performance is something to behold. His words—poetic, piercing, relentless—cut through melodies steeped in the ancient sounds of tin whistle, bodhrán, and banjo. Now, as he prepares to release his highly anticipated second album in summer 2025, Strange Boy steps onto festival stages armed with a fresh collection of songs—music that speaks to identity, struggle, and survival in a language both timeless and unmistakably of the moment. Strange Boy is not just an artist to watch—he is one to experience.

Conor Mallon, Unearthed

You may recognise Conor Mallon from the band Connla. Now, he's blazing his own trail with his latest project, *Unearthed*. Conor's debut solo





Fionn & Jonathan Angus

album has burst onto the folk/trad scene with “high-octane production,” as hailed by The Irish Times. His music blends powerful original compositions that honour tradition while pushing the boundaries of uilleann pipes. The end result? An unveiling of the beauty of the uilleann pipes.

Elias Alexander

Elias Alexander is a rare performer who combines live looping and electronics with a wide variety of instruments from bagpipes to fiddle, guitar, whistle and keys. With deep roots in traditional Celtic and American music, but a boundless appetite for possibility, rhythm, and expression, Elias takes audiences on a mind blowing journey through traditional tunes, original songs, and danceable fun.

Elias Alexander grew up in Ashland, Oregon, where he studied pipes and fiddle from a young age. Moving to the east coast in 2009, he made a name for himself as one of the foremost exponents of traditional Scottish music in America, touring with numerous groups and playing many of the top Celtic festivals including Celtic Connections (2017 with Gillebride MacMillan) and Celtic Colours (2019 with Farsan). He currently tours as the pipes and whistle player with Scottish legends Old Blind Dogs in North America.

Elias's latest project, *Rambler*, arose out of the early lockdowns of 2020, when he found himself blending the traditional acoustic music of his youth with house, disco, hip-hop, and lo-fi sounds. Emerging with his new



Fiddler of Oriel winner

Irish World Academy of Music and Milwaukee Irish Fest Student Awards

Milwaukee Irish Fest continues its partnership with the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick, where two traditional musicians registered at the academy receive the opportunity to travel to Milwaukee to perform at the festival and teach at the Irish Fest's Summer School.

This year Milwaukee Irish Fest is pleased to welcome Aoibhe Kettle and Caitlin Donnelly. Aoibhe and Caitlin are two accomplished traditional musicians whose shared passion for Irish music brings together rich traditions from both Ireland and the UK. Aoibhe Kettle is a harpist and fiddle player from Wolfhill, County Laois. Caitlin Donnelly is a talented flute and whistle player from Stockport, Greater Manchester, deeply rooted in the region's vibrant Irish traditional music scene. Together, Aoibhe and Caitlin bring a dynamic blend of cultural backgrounds, musical excellence, and creative energy to their performances, celebrating the richness of the Irish tradition in both its historic and contemporary forms.

Fiddler of Oriel Winner

The winner of this year's prestigious Fiddler of Oriel competition in Ireland, in the over 18 category, is Maebh McGlinchey! Maebh,

“Milwaukee Irish Fest continues its partnership with the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick and will welcome Aoibhe Kettle and Caitlin Donnelly to the festival”

solo electronic show in hand in 2021, he has taken festival stages by storm, with standout performances at Oregon Country Fair, BlissFest, Sisters Folk Fest, Portland Pride, Bellingham Folk Festival, and many others.

Niall McCabe, Michael McGoldrick, Nollaig Casey

This newly curated lineup features, acclaimed fiddle and viola player Nollaig Casey, one of Ireland's fast-rising stars of the folk world, guitarist and singer Niall McCabe, and the incomparable multi-instrumentalist Mike McGoldrick. Nollaig Casey is one of Ireland's most gifted and versatile musicians, known for her distinctive sound and instantly recognisable playing style. She has worked with a host of renowned artists including Enya, Van Morrison, Sinéad O'Connor, Mary Black, Christy Moore and Sharon Shannon. As a member of groundbreaking bands Coolfin and Planxty, her influence on Irish music is enduring. Niall McCabe, with his self-effacing humour and captivating stories of growing up on a remote Irish island, brings an effortless charm to his performances. His natural, distinct voice is earning him a growing and loyal fanbase across Ireland, the UK, Europe and North America. Former BBC Folk Awards Musician of the Year Mike McGoldrick is a gifted composer and a master of the wooden flute, low whistles and uilleann pipes. A sought-after contributor for many artists, he has collaborated with Mark Knopfler since 2009 and is a core member of the Transatlantic Sessions.

from Omagh, Co. Tyrone, started playing fiddle at the age of seven. Coming from a family immersed in traditional Irish music, Maebh and her older sister, Una (Fiddler of Oriel winner in 2023), have gained significant attention as two of the most admired and saluted players across Ireland and further afield...belying their youthful ages. They both are captivating exponents of their traditional fiddle music. Among the many accolades and awards Maebh has received are two All-Ireland fiddle titles, Fiddler of Dooney, 2019, the Ed Reavy Award in 2023, and the national Scor na nOg. We urge any fiddle enthusiasts to make sure they get the opportunity to see this remarkable young Irish fiddler perform for her very first time in the U.S.

Learn more about the artists and bands performing throughout the 75-acre festival grounds and start planning your Milwaukee Irish Fest experience at irishfest.com. Tickets are on sale now!



AN IRISH CULTURAL EXPERIENCE AWAITS AT MILWAUKEE IRISH FEST

Check out presentations on Irish history, culture, language, and more, plus cultural displays throughout the festival weekend.



The 45th Milwaukee Irish Fest features a full slate of cultural programming that goes far beyond music. From language and literature to history, theatre, dance, and hands-on experiences, the festival continues to showcase the depth and breadth of Irish culture — both traditional and evolving — through its immersive Cultural Village.

At the Cultural Pavilion, visitors can explore a curated cross-section of Irish history, heritage, and identity. This year, the Pavilion places special emphasis on Irish dance, highlighting its historical significance and geographic reach. Explore a new exhibit that tells the story of Irish dance in Milwaukee, tracing its roots back to 1966 when the Shamrock Club launched its own troupe, helping to seed what is now a thriving community of eight Irish dance schools in the area.

Adding a youthful creative touch, the Murals on Ireland project will return with large-scale canvases painted by Milwaukee-area middle schoolers. Coordinated by Milwaukee Public Schools with contributions from neighbouring districts, these four-by-eight-foot artworks portray student interpretations of Ireland's landscapes, folklore, and symbols.

The Cultural Pavilion also continues to explore lesser-known corners of Irish identity. The Irish

“At the Cultural Pavilion, visitors can explore a curated cross-section of Irish history, heritage, and identity”

Mexicans exhibit, a collaboration between Mexican Fiesta (a festival that takes place in Milwaukee at the Henry Maier Festival Park) and Milwaukee Irish Fest, delves into the rich intersection of Irish and Mexican history. Other returning favourites include Celtic Cures, which looks at traditional Irish remedies and folk medicine, and Irish Science Fiction, which traces Irish contributions to the genre. A new display will spotlight County Mayo, offering visitors a glimpse of the stories and traditions from this culturally rich region. Additionally, IBAM Chicago (Irish Books, Arts, and Music) and the Irish American Hall of Fame will each contribute engaging content for festivalgoers to explore.

Outside the pavilion, the festival grounds offer even more to discover. The Sacred Trees of Ireland installation returns, inviting attendees to reflect on the symbolic and spiritual significance of trees in Celtic tradition. Nearby, the Irish Currach Club of Milwaukee will host currach races along the lagoon, including Saturday's noon regatta with exciting

relay competitions. Visitors can also stop by the currach tent to learn about the historic boat and join Sunday's Knitting Circle (1–4 PM), where participants of all ages can knit an Irish pattern — no experience needed, and supplies are provided.

The Literary Corner shines a spotlight on authors whose work explores Irish or Celtic topics and themes. Among this year's featured writers is Leora O'Carroll, Emmy-nominated producer and co-author of *Maureen O'Carroll: A Musical Memoir of an Irish Immigrant Childhood*. This poignant memoir, selected for IrishCentral's "Ultimate Irish Reading List," captures the immigrant experience in 1930s and '40s Australia. O'Carroll brings a dual artistic perspective as both writer and musician.

Visitors seeking language immersion will find it in the Gaeltacht area, a dynamic hub for Irish language and culture. This year's lineup features sean-nós dancing with Caoimhe Ní Mhaolagáin, performances by Kíla and Enda Reilly, and an open invitation to engage with the language through music, dance, and conversation.

In the Theatre Pavilion, festivalgoers can experience the premiere of *Willow*, a powerful new play by Catherine McKiernan. Set in a small seaside town in the west of Ireland, it's a story of love, secrets, and redemption unfolding over a single day. Also at the Theatre Pavilion is Keith Corcoran, seanchaí and author of *Finding Fairy Mysteries in Donegal*, who weaves spine-tingling tales of banshees, haunted islands, and ancient Irish lore in the oral storytelling tradition.

For thought-provoking discussion, the Hedge School is the place to be. Highlights this year include Dr. Niamh Hamill on the poetry of Irish landscapes, Julianne Stanz on fairy folklore, and historian Damian Shiels on the Irish experience in the American Civil War. Topics range from politics and genealogy to literature and contemporary identity.

Finally, no celebration of Irish culture would be complete without food and drink. Classic dishes like bangers and mash and shepherd's pie will be available throughout the festival weekend. Jameson Whiskey returns with multiple bars and immersive experiences, and new this year is Bunratty Meade, bringing their traditional Irish mead products to the grounds for the first time in decades.

Milwaukee Irish Fest continues to evolve, all while honouring the roots and traditions of Irish culture. Whether you're seeking history, music, language, or a taste of Ireland itself, there's something waiting for you in every corner of the festival grounds.


For the full schedule and details, visit irishfest.com. Come be part of the story August 14–17 at Henry Maier Festival Park in Milwaukee. Céad míle fáilte—a hundred thousand welcomes will be waiting for you at Milwaukee Irish Fest!





FALL EVENTS AT CELTICMKE

Sept. 13	Monthly Céilí Dance
Sept. 17	Great Irish Open Golf Outing Fundraiser
Oct. 10	Andy Irvine in Concert
Oct. 11	Monthly Céilí Dance
Nov. 8	Monthly Céilí Dance
Nov. 22	Celtic Christmas Boutique
Dec. TBA	Irish Holiday Concert

Scan for details
& tix! 



MILWAUKEE IRISH FEST'S SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM FEATURES OVER 40-IMMERSIVE IRISH CLASS OPTIONS

A Celebration of Irish Music, Culture, Dance, Language, and History
August 11-15, 2025

Michael McGoldrick



Photo : Suzanne Plunkett

The Milwaukee Irish Fest Summer School takes place the week leading into the festival and features classes that showcase the rich culture, history and traditions of Ireland and Irish America, past and present. Come learn to play the Irish fiddle, flute, tin whistle, guitar, harp, Celtic music styles, and more from master musicians. Or take a discussion class and learn about Irish history, Irish language, art, and culture. Below are a few examples of this year's class offerings.

Art and Cultural Classes

Celtic Calligraphy with Linda Lubner | Three-Day Class

The Celtic Calligraphy class will cover how to use a broad tipped pen, a line sheet and foundational strokes to make Celtic calligraphy. We will also cover a short history of it and the Book of Kells. The last class will show the many ways to lay out the calligraphy on paper. If there is time we will try to do a little Celtic knotting.

I Am Irish, Hear Me Roar: Tales of Mischief, Magic and Mirth with Julianne Stanz | Three-Day Class

What is it about Ireland and the Irish people that continues to resonate with so many people around the world? Drawing on her



Irish roots, Julianne delves into the enchanting world of mythology, the Spirit-world and the mystical landscapes that have shaped Ireland's identity for centuries. From the haunting beauty of the Banshee's call to stories of shapeshifters, Stanz highlights how Ireland's folklore offers insights into our own journey through life. Infused with warmth, humor, and a touch of Irish charm, this talk is a celebration of Ireland's enduring legacy of myth and faith, inspiring listeners to look for the extraordinary in their own lives and cultures. Sláinte!

Steps in Time: Irish Dancing and Irish America with Samantha Jones | Three-Day Class

Céilí, step, set, sean-nós! The world of Irish dance is varied and rich. This series will look at the history and culture of Irish dancing, with special attention paid to Irish America. We'll discuss the different kinds of solo and social Irish dancing, the influence of politics on dance, and the importance of the Irish diaspora for the development and continuance of Irish dancing in the past and the present. The class will include (optional) opportunities to dance some of the styles and repertoires covered in the course.

Irish Language, Beginners with Rossa Ó Snodaigh | Three-Day Class

Irish Language, Intermediate with Colm and Rossa Ó Snodaigh | Three-Day Class

Irish Language, Advanced with Ray MacManais | Three-Day Class

Irish Dance and Songs Classes

Sean-nós Dance with Caoimhe Ní Mhaolagáin | Three-Day Class

Step into the world of sean-nós dance with Caoimhe Ní Mhaolagáin. Caoimhe Ní Mhaolagáin is a celebrated Irish musician and dancer from Dublin, proudly carrying forward the rich legacy of the Mulligan dynasty — a family steeped in music for five generations. Her family runs the iconic Cobblestone Pub in Dublin, renowned as a vibrant home for traditional Irish music.

Gerry O'Connor





Aoibhe Kettle & Caitlin Donnelly

Set Dancing with Ronan Eastwood | Three-Day Class

Ronan Eastwood will teach a variety of set dances from all over Ireland ensuring that we get a variety of different styles included - reels, polkas, jigs, hornpipes & flings. We will go over the basic set dancing steps at the start of each class and then go into teaching the set itself. We will revise some of the older sets but will also teach a few of the new dances that have been introduced in recent years.

Sean-nós Song with Colm Ó Snodaigh | Three-Day Class

Colm Ó Snodaigh, flute player, songwriter, singer with Kíla will perform a masterclass aimed at giving the attendees an understanding into the beautiful and mysterious world of Sean Nós (old style) unaccompanied singing. Colm will give you a taste of the different regional styles, the history of a number of songs and the stories behind them.

Irish Music Classes

Harp: Slow Airs from the Celtic Nations with Kim Robertson | Three-Day Class

Slow airs are the heart of Celtic music and are ideally suited to the harp. Learn a sampling of beautiful slow airs representing the various Celtic Nations (Scotland, Ireland, Manx, Cornwall, Wales and Brittany), along with ideas for left hand accompaniments. All levels are welcome.

Playing Irish Music in a Duo with Aoibhe Kettle and Caitlin Donnelly | Three-Day Class

Join a lively traditional Irish music class that focuses on playing in a duo led by duo Aoibhe Kettle and Caitlin Donnelly from the University of Limerick on harp, flute, and fiddle. Dive into the rich sounds of Ireland as they teach classic tunes, ornamentation, and ensemble playing. Whether you're a beginner or experienced musician, this engaging, hands-on session offers an authentic introduction to the heart and soul of Irish folk music. Open to all instruments.

Irish Tenor Banjo with Enda Scahill | Three-Day Class

Learn traditional Irish music on the tenor banjo at the 2025 Milwaukee Irish Fest Summer School with Enda Scahill. This immersive class covers technique, ornamentation, and classic Irish tunes. Ideal for intermediate to advanced players.

Galway born banjo player Enda Scahill is one of the most critically acclaimed banjoists in Ireland today. Enda has long established himself as one of the finest exponents of traditional Irish banjo playing and is widely recognised for his technical prowess and banjo teaching abilities.

There are also the following classes available to dive deeper into learning Irish music.

- Intro to Irish Fiddle
 - Intro to Guitar Accompaniment
 - Intermediate Bodhrán
 - Intermediate and Advanced Fiddle
 - Intermediate and Advanced Tin Whistle
 - Intermediate and Advanced Flute
 - Intermediate and Advanced Harp
 - Irish bouzouki
 - Button Accordion
 - Concertina Repertoire
- And much more!

In addition to the three-day classes, the Summer School also offers one-day only samplers and workshops, taking place on Friday, August 15. Below are a few examples of Friday class options!

- Sampler: Otherworlds – The Alternative Realms Within the Myth, Literature and Language of Ireland with Dr. Niamh Hamill
- Workshop: The Dance Music of Oriel with Gerry O'Connor
- Workshop: Irish Flute with Michael McGoldrick
- Workshop: Sliabh Luachra Tunes with Jim Murray
- Workshop: Irish Fiddle Ornamentation and Bowing Techniques
- Workshop: Uilleann Pipes with James Mahon

“In addition to the three-day classes, the Summer School also offers one-day only samplers and workshops”

Register Now!

Milwaukee Irish Fest Summer School courses are three-days and take place Monday through Wednesday in the evenings and Tuesday through Thursday in the afternoons. Classes take place in the Village of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, primarily at the CelticMKE Center.

Learn more about Irish Fest Summer School class options, and register at irishfestsummerschool.com. Registrations are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Some classes are limited in size. Classes are open to anyone - any age and any playing level. Register online in advance to secure a spot. All classes take place in-person.

The Irish Fest Summer School is a part of CelticMKE, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting Irish, Irish American, and Celtic music and culture. Learn more about CelticMKE by visiting CelticMKE.com.



MILWAUKEE IRISH FEST: A CELEBRATION OF CELTIC HERITAGE

August 14-17 | Henry Maier Festival Park, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

In the heart of the Midwest, along the shores of Lake Michigan, there exists a celebration like no other: Milwaukee Irish Fest. This annual event, spanning four days the third weekend in August, showcases the rich traditions of the Celtic Nations through music, dance, food, language, and culture.



To fully appreciate the magnitude of this festival, one must delve into its origins, evolution, and unique offerings that make it a must-visit for all.

The inception of Milwaukee Irish Fest can be traced back to the visionary mind of Edward Ward.

In the late 1970s, Ward recognised the burgeoning interest in Irish music and culture among Americans, fuelled in part by the global success of bands like The Chieftains and The Dubliners. Inspired by his own Irish roots and the desire to showcase the depth and diversity of Irish traditions, Ward and a group of volunteers established Milwaukee Irish Fest in 1981. The festival wasn't just an opportunity to feature national Irish acts but also an impetus to showcase local groups that celebrate the rich traditions of Irish music.

Milwaukee, often referred to as the "City of Festivals," provided the perfect backdrop for Ward's ambitious endeavour. With its rich immigrant history and penchant for embracing diverse cultural

The High Kings, Skerryvore, Eileen Ivers and The Coronas, the festival brings the very best of Celtic music to captivated audiences year after year. Beyond the main stage performances, attendees have the opportunity to engage with Celtic culture on a deeper level through workshops, demonstrations, interactive activities, and more.

What sets Milwaukee Irish Fest apart is its dedication to immersion. From the moment you step foot on the festival grounds, Irish Fest's goal is to transport you to a world where the sights, sounds, and flavours of Ireland and the Celtic Nations come to life. Whether you're sampling traditional Irish fare from one of over 35 food vendors, perusing the wares of more than 90 marketplace vendors, or learning a couple of Gaelic phrases, there is no shortage of experiences to savour.

But perhaps the most enriching aspect of Milwaukee Irish Fest lies in its commitment to education. Attendees have the opportunity to delve into their own heritage in the genealogy area and receive tips on tracing your ancestry with professional genealogists. Meanwhile, lectures and

"What sets Milwaukee Irish Fest apart is its dedication to immersion"

expressions, the city, known for its German roots, welcomed the inaugural Milwaukee Irish Fest. What began as a modest gathering for musicians and the Irish American community has since blossomed into the largest celebration of Celtic culture in North America, attracting over 100,000 visitors annually.

At its core, Milwaukee Irish Fest is more than just a music festival; it is a living testament to the mission of its founder and organisers. Central to this mission is the preservation and promotion of Celtic music and culture, ensuring that future generations can continue to appreciate and embrace the heritage. Through a carefully curated lineup of artists representing a spectrum of genres – from traditional Irish ballads to contemporary Celtic rock – the festival offers something for everyone, regardless of age or musical inclination.

Over the decades, Milwaukee Irish Fest has played host to an impressive array of talent, both emerging and established. From legendary acts like The Clancy Brothers, Tommy Makem, De Danann, Kevin Burke, and Liz Carroll to modern sensations such as Gaelic Storm,

panel discussions offer insights into Ireland's storied past and vibrant present, providing a deeper understanding of the cultural forces that have shaped the nation.

With the festival situated along the shores of Lake Michigan, the location offers a unique spectacle: currach races on the lagoon. Dating back centuries, these traditional Irish boat races pay homage to the seafaring heritage of the Celtic people, serving as both a competitive sport and a symbolic celebration of history and community.

Whether you're a regular attendee or a first-time visitor, there has never been a better time to experience Milwaukee Irish Fest. Make plans to travel to Milwaukee August 14-17 to celebrate Celtic music and culture. View hotel packages and schedule information and get tickets in advance to save at www.irishfest.com. Sláinte!



Rory Makem & the late Tommy Makem



A TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP WITH TWO HISTORIC IRISH COMPANIES *CLADDAGH RECORDS* AND *BUNRATTY MEADE* TEAM UP WITH MILWAUKEE IRISH FEST

Milwaukee Irish Fest, the world's largest celebration of Irish music and culture, is proud to announce new partnerships with Claddagh Records and Bunratty Meade. The historic Irish record label joins as the official ticket partner, and Bunratty Meade is the new Celtic Kitchen Stage sponsor and exclusive mead provider of the festival.



Niamh Bury

As the official ticket partner, Claddagh Records will collaborate with Irish Fest to bring their Irish music catalog to a North American audience through promotional efforts and original, digital content.

"We are thrilled to welcome Claddagh Records as our official ticket partner," said Caitlin Ward, Executive Director of CelticMKE, the nonprofit organization behind Milwaukee Irish Fest. "Claddagh Records has played a significant role in preserving traditional Irish music while also promoting the evolving sounds of Irish artists today, mirroring what Irish Fest has sought to do for the past four decades. This partnership is rooted in a mutual passion for sharing Ireland's musical heritage with the world."

Nick Younger, General Manager of Claddagh Records, echoed that sentiment, stating, "It felt like a natural fit to partner with Milwaukee Irish Fest. Their team shares a complementary vision of promoting Irish music across generations. We're proud to partner with a festival that has become such an important cultural ambassador for Ireland."

Co-founded in 1959 by Garech Browne, Browne had a lifelong mission to make Irish music more accessible internationally. With Claddagh Records signing a global licensing agreement with Universal Music in 2020—and now, partnering with Milwaukee Irish Fest—Claddagh's legacy continues to grow as it reaches new audiences around the world.

About Claddagh Records

Claddagh Records is an Irish traditional and folk music label and online store based out of Dublin, Ireland. It has long served as a cornerstone in the preservation of traditional Irish music, spoken word, and song. With a catalog that includes legendary artists like The Chieftains, Seamus Heaney, Christy Moore, and Liam O'Flynn, Claddagh Records continues to champion

Ireland's cultural past while ushering in the new wave of Irish music with artists like DUG, Niamh Bury, OXN, and Lemoncello. In 2021, Claddagh re-launched its online store,

CladdaghRecords.com, with the goal of becoming the first stop for Irish traditional and folk music.

Bunratty Meade - A Unique, Time-Honored Beverage

Bunratty Meade will be available at multiple locations throughout the 75-acre festival grounds and featured prominently at the Celtic Kitchen Stage all weekend. The stage offers an interactive platform for festivalgoers to explore Irish-inspired food and drink, with programming that will highlight mead's versatility through cocktails and cuisine.

"We're thrilled that Bunratty Meade will have such a strong presence at Milwaukee Irish Fest this year," said John Rau, Director of North American Operations for Bunratty Meade. "This partnership is an incredible opportunity to introduce traditional Irish mead to a North American audience and to be part of a festival that has celebrated Ireland's vast history and culture for over four decades."

CelticMKE (home of Milwaukee Irish Fest) Executive Director Caitlin Ward added, "We are excited to welcome Bunratty Meade to Milwaukee Irish Fest. Bringing a product steeped in cultural significance from County Clare to Milwaukee enhances the immersive experience we strive to create at the festival."

About Bunratty Meade

Bunratty Meade is a traditional Irish honey wine crafted using an ancient recipe that blends honey, herbs, and white wine. Produced near the historic Bunratty Castle in County Clare, Ireland, the mead is steeped in legend and heritage. Known for its smooth, warming character, Bunratty Meade has long been a celebratory drink in Irish tradition and is enjoyed as both a sipping beverage and a versatile cocktail ingredient.

Learn more about this year's festival programming by visiting irishfest.com or downloading the free, official festival app, which is available on both Android and Apple devices.



MILWAUKEE IRISHFEST

CAN'T MISS SPECIAL SHOWS



SKERRYVORE'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY SHOW

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16 • AER LINGUS STAGE • 9:45 P.M.

Skerryvore will celebrate their 20th anniversary with a special, one-of-a-kind performance at this year's Milwaukee Irish Fest. Over the past two decades, the band has toured the world and formed close friendships with exceptional musicians—many of whom will join them on stage for this milestone show. It's a music and dance celebration you don't want to miss.

In the Key of Tradition: The Irish Flute Across Time

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16 • PARKVIEW SENIOR-LIVING COMMUNITY STAGE • 12:15 P.M.

More than just a concert, this showcase offers a deep dive into the Irish Flute—its role in traditional Irish music, its evolution over time, and its enduring cultural significance.

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IRISH MUSIC MAGAZINE : Celebrating 30 Years in 2025!

BÉAL NA BLÁTH 22 AUGUST 1922

We continue our series of stories, songs and poems titled *Let The Memories Be*, brought to you by the legend of Irish Music that is Johnny McEvoy. In this edition we feature Michael Collins.

Images courtesy of Johnny McEvoy



MICHAEL

The curlew stood silent and unseen in the long damp grass.
And he looked down on the roadside below him.
That wound its way through Beal na Blath.
And he heard the young men shouting and cursing.
Running backwards and forwards
Dodging and weaving, and ducking the bullets
That rained down on them from the hillside opposite.

Just as quickly as it started, the firing stopped.
And a terrible silence hung over the valley.
A lone figure lay on the roadside.
In the drizzling August rain
Dressed in green great-coat, leggings, and brown hobnail boots.
That would never again send the sparks flying.
From the kitchen flagstones
As he danced his way through a half-set

A hurried, whispered Act of Contrition
And the firing breaks out again.
The curlew takes to flight.
And as he flies out over the empty, sad fields of West Cork.
With his lonesome call he must tell the world
That the Big Fellow has fallen, and that Michael is gone.

Johnny McEvoy



THE BIG FELLOW HAS FALLEN

On a far-off August day
Cold young men in ambush lay
On a roadside by a hill
Where flowers grow
So much hate for one so young
Who was right, and who was wrong?
Though a thousand years
May pass we'll never know

Chorus

Candles dripping blood
They placed beside your shoulders
Rosary beads like teardrops on your fingers
Friends and comrades standing by
In their grief, they wonder why
Michael, in their hour of need
You had to go

“With his lonesome call he must tell the world that the Big Fellow has fallen, and that Michael is gone”

And when evening twilight came
Gently fell the autumn rain
Oh but you lay still and silent
On the ground
As we hung our heads in prayer
In our sorrow and despair
We wondered was it
Friend or foe, who shot you down?

Chorus

Now the flame that you held high
When you called out to the sky
To end this senseless killing and this shame
Has now passed to other hands
And is carried through the land
By some not fit to even speak your name

Chorus

Michael in their hour of need why did you go?

Epilogue

“Tell me bi, like!
Did you write that bit of a song about me?”
“I did, Mister Collins, I hope you’re not vext”
“Yerra! not at all, sure it’s grand!
But why did you write it about me, like?”
“Because you were the best, Mister Collins,
You were the best!”

Johnny McEvoy



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The Clare €2500
Steel Ends
Handmade Accordion Reeds
(Similar reeds to Claddagh, Morse)

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ELIAS ALEXANDER STARTS HIS OWN DANCE PARTY

Michael Lange catches up with the multi-instrumentalist moving people to hear traditional music in new ways.

Photo : Anna Colliton



Portland, Oregon-based Elias Alexander circled the globe this Spring, playing festivals in Australia, Italy and Scotland before heading home to ready himself for a round of summer festivals in the U.S and Europe. Melding fiddle, guitar, whistles, keyboard, percussion and pipes with Electronic Dance Music (EDM), he's forging an innovative solo path through traditional music designed to move people toward joy and healing.

Michael: At the start of the pandemic, you were asked to make some music for a virtual ceilidh and your *Ramblxr* project was born?

Elias: Summer McCall directs the Boston Celtic Music Festival. She also calls dances at Sierra Fiddle Camp. She said, "do you want to put together some music for an online ceilidh?" I thought, why don't I try to use the sort of pop music sensibility and production that I've been working on for a few years to make a dance track? The first track I made was *Fiddle Disco*. I put this kind of pop production into the same space

"I hope that I can offer a space of peace and hope and resistance in this time"

as a fiddle tune. Then Cayley Schmid, who was the director of the Bellingham Celtic Festival, said, "can you do this live?" I spent nine months trying to figure out how to do this music live. I had to come up with a whole system. I ended up doing that show in Bellingham and people were very enthusiastic about it and it felt like this really could be something.

Michael: You've said that, "many of the tunes we play in the traditional music world, such as jigs and reels, are dance tunes, but in our current form of performance, the audience is seated. When you combine it with electronic music, which makes people want to move their bodies, and add traditional music, people can hear tunes in a new way."

Elias: Trad music has always hit me as incredibly energetic and incredibly rhythmic and complex. It makes me want to dance and that's what the tunes were written for. For some reason, most people don't necessarily hear it like that. I think that's maybe changing as there are more and more festivals and shows where people are jumping up and down and dancing. People are coming because they want to dance and then they really connect with the pipe tunes and fiddle tunes and melodies. I've had a lot of people come up and say this felt like it connected them to something that was missing in their life. I've always really wanted more people to appreciate it and to feel the power of trad tunes, the way that I feel them myself. So it's been really beautiful to see that happen at my shows.

Michael: You mentioned *Fiddle Disco*. That came out and went viral on Instagram with over a million views. You're creating a collection of pieces under the title *Ramblxr*. Is there going to be a complete or final version of it?

Elias: *Ramblxr* is going to be an album. I am working on completing it. I spent eight days in Nashville in February finishing the recording, editing and mixing. There are going to be a few singles and then the album will come out at some point this summer, and we'll see where we go from there. I'm really excited to get all this music out.

Michael: You created a music video on YouTube for *Right Now (at Angel's Rest)*. I think it's an incredible piece of music. Your friends hiking 3 miles up the mountain with you and your equipment to make that says a lot about you, Elias.

Elias: Well, I've just always loved that spot. It's one of my favourite hikes anywhere in the world. It's just a beautiful, incredible spot. It almost kind of feels like you're flying when you're up there. I thought it would be so cool to play this song that has some moments that feel like they're kind of soaring in that spot. I'm so grateful that my friends were willing to go on this crazy hike. It wouldn't have been so crazy if it hadn't been 100 degrees and smoky in August, but actually the smoke ended up making for some really beautiful soft light in the video.

Michael: You seem to me to be a creative spirit at heart. You write about yourself that you weave melodies with catchy beats and original songs that discuss themes of alienation, belonging, and queerness?

Elias: I think this is really the essence. I've always felt a little bit outside of society in certain ways and struggled to find a home and a connection to community and to land. That's really where traditional music came from in my life. When I first experienced it, it felt like this thread of connection and I followed that and I followed it for years. That desire to be in conversation with community, with land, with my own history and my family's history and our journeys across this planet, and to engage with this music that has been carried across generations and sustained communities and sustained joy, even in really difficult times;

that desire for connection is what has kept me going and what's kept me playing this music.

It's my hope that in talking about the stories of my life and my family and this music and the land that I live on in Oregon and wherever I travel, that I can create a sense of belonging for myself and for people who come to the show and also talk about what we're facing as a society, as we're facing some difficult moments, especially right now. I hope that by wrapping this history and my experience into something that can reach out to others and invite them into a welcoming space where we can celebrate life and celebrate healing and celebrate this music and connection, that I can offer a space of peace and hope and resistance in this time.

Discover more at www.eliasalexander.com or find Elias on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Soundcloud.



Photo : Andrew Wallner

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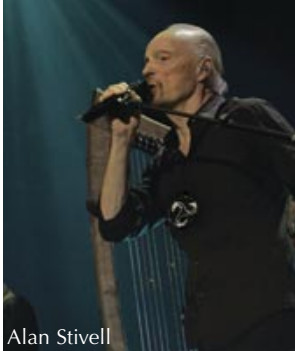
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FESTIVAL INTERCELTIQUE DE LORIENT 2025

L'année des Cousins d'Amérique – The Year of the American Cousins. Mick Walsh reports from Paris.



Alan Stivell



Calum Stewart



Flook



Photo : Naoki Fujioka

The Kilkennys

This year FIL will celebrate the music of L'Arc Atlantique; the idea that the Celtique nations are united by the Atlantic Ocean. For centuries, people have emigrated to America from Ireland, Scotland, Brittany, Wales, Cornwall, Galicia, Asturias, crossing the Atlantic with their music and culture. In 2025 the Festival celebrates these 'Celtés du Nouveau Monde' (the New World Celts) and the evolution of Celtique music in the Americas."

Artistic director, Jean-Philippe Mauras is anticipating *une belle 54th édition* running over 10 days from 1st August and involving more than 5,000 musicians, singers, dancers and visual artists from across the diaspora. The scale is staggering, the world's largest Celtique gathering, comprising 300 performances across 12 venues, facilitated by 1700 volunteers and attracting 950,000 visitors each year.

The Festival's central theme is *Interceltism*, and the American Cousins are an integral part. "In 2025 we're focused on the East Coast of

town; the sound of a bagad warming up is a uniquely enchanting sound."

The Kilkennys, back by popular demand, will ignite an evening of energetic ballads, jigs and reels at Le Palais on Sat 2nd, The Friel Sisters play Le Kleub on Saturday 2nd and on Tuesday 5th, Zoe Conway and John McIntyre will perform at Vox Celtes.

This year marks the launch of several new concepts. JP explains, "we've created *La Taverne Celte*, where people come to eat, drink, listen and participate in the culture of each Celtic nation, Sunday 3rd will be la soirée Irlande. We've also created new elements to strengthen our appeal to a new generation. Since its launch in 2022, Le Kleub has been a revelation, an ephemeral contemporary Celtique music venue – hosting every night diverse musical offerings with very contemporary sounds, and the evening closes with electronic music in the form of creation or DJ Set."

One of these new generation groups is Belfast-based *tradronica*

"Flook's Brian Finnegan reflects: few festivals in the world have such enduring, incomparable mystique..."

America, particularly Louisiana, New York State and Massachusetts, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, and we've invited groups representative of these communities. From Quebec, Le Vent du Nord will perform with Orchestre National de Bretagne on Wed 6th August. Lynda Lemay is a Canadian singer immensely popular in France and we're also bringing the fiddling sensation Dominique Dupuis, and the Canadian theme will continue with the Scottish generational trad-punk group The Real McKenzies. SOLAS will represent the Boston region as part of their 30th anniversary world tour and will share top billing with LUNASA at La Grande Nuit Irlando-américaine on Tuesday 5th."

From an Irish perspective, highlights include the inimitable FLOOK performing at Le Palais on Monday 2nd on their 25th anniversary tour, sharing *une Soirée Légendes Celtiques* with the iconic whistle player Mary Bergin. Flook's Brian Finnegan reflects, "few festivals in the world have such enduring, incomparable mystique. I first played FIL in the early 90s and it was a life changing experience. We met an Ulster Pipe band, so it was tense at first but over the week, hardline indoctrinated beliefs were dissolved and on our last night we played side by side in The Galway Inn, until early morning. It was an awakening, how much environment shapes us. In 2022 with Flook, Lorient's heartbeat was stronger than ever, music spilling out of bars and alleyways all over

group Huartan who tap into a pagan past to imaginatively blend ancient and modern. This exciting trio will showcase their innovative homage to Ulster musical and oral traditions, a sensual performance including high-energy costumed dancers, at Le Kleub on Tuesday 5th.

2025 will herald the launch of ÉlectroFIL, "it's *une grosse soirée electro* running over 6 hours; a new concept dedicated to electronic music, opening up a captivating sonic universe with an exceptional lineup including Dublin-based techno Trad group Yard, whose electrifying performances have energized audiences across Europe. It's a genre that is immensely popular with younger audiences."

On Saturday 9th, Bláth and West Kerry's Cuas will perform at La Place des Pays Celtes, an event that will be recorded by TG4. On Saturday 2nd on the Quai de la Bretagne, Wexford-based traditional Irish fusion band Tulua will build on their international touring success with their unique *beautifully mystical* sound.

The Festival Interceltique Lorient 2025 promises a heady cocktail of Celticism with an American twist, infused with East Coast influences and contemporary ÉlectroFIL vibes. With its pure Trad credentials firmly rooted, this year's Festival focus is also to the future, a testament to an evolving living tradition. Bravo!

Find out more about the world's biggest Celtic Festival at www.festival-interceltique.bzh

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ENDA REILLY - FLYING THE FLAG IN MOTOR CITY USA

Mark Lysaght spoke with Enda to find out more about his recent activities and plans for the rest of the year.



Photo : Dave Keegan

Enda Reilly is a prolific and versatile singer, songwriter and guitarist, originally from Dublin but now based in Detroit, Michigan, USA. He has received a number of awards and accolades, most recently being named Male Vocalist of the Year 2024 by Sharon Iberle Smith of *Ireland Tonight* on WDCB Radio Chicago.

Enda is a very engaging character, full of creative ideas to develop his music and songwriting; we initially met just after the Covid pandemic and since then we've maintained contact via Zoom.

"Not long ago, I was back in Ireland for a short tour, and I got a chance to perform my WB Yeats show at the National Library, where the Yeats exhibition is, and also did an Irish language workshop at the Pearse Street Library. I also got to perform at the Nighthawks show in the United Arts Club which was very

He's used the mythology theme on the title track of his latest album *Hy-Brasil*, where he reimagines an island under the sea, reputed to lie near Clew Bay off the west coast of Mayo.

"Historically, it's referred to by French sailors in the 1700s and I imagine taking a journey from Croagh Patrick and then walking underwater to find it. Overall, the album represents my status as an Irish musician living and working in the USA, my mind is actually somewhere in between," said Enda.

It's all original songs, and it's a lovely collection, full of personal reflections on his homeland and life experiences with songs composed in English and Irish. He includes two co-writes with Enda Cullen and one with Aisling Kavanagh. He used content from the Irish Folklore Archive to create songs like *A Sign Of Rain*; *Gráinne Mhaol* celebrates Grace O'Malley cutting her hair so she could enlist as a sailor. *Na Lochlannaigh* is inspired by the Viking incursions into Ireland, other songs like *Off The Grid For A While* relate to real-life experiences.

Always seeking new ways to engage with his growing audience, Enda will launch his new fan-supported platform, *Tír Enda*, with a special livestream concert on July 19th at www.endareilly.com/tirenda. *Tír Enda*, meaning "Enda's Land", will be a subscription based space offering exclusive content, unreleased songs, livestreams, behind-the-scenes insights, and access to Enda's deep catalogue of original and traditional Irish music.

"This is a place where I can share the quieter side of what I do: the songs, stories, and poems that connect us through Irish culture and language," said Enda. The inaugural livestream will feature a mix of original songs, traditional ballads, and personal reflections to celebrate the launch.

Enda is very upbeat about developing his music using all the tools at his disposal, spreading the message of Irish culture and folklore in his adopted home in Michigan, where he has been based since

"The Hy-Brasil album represents my status as an Irish musician living and working in the USA"

enjoyable," Enda told me. "I was accompanying a group of American tourists who came along with me to various parts of Ireland, especially Dublin where I introduced them to venues that I had played previously. We also visited Kilkenny, Clonmacnoise and took a trip up the River Shannon."

This came about when a Michigan-based company called Triskel Tours & Celtic Treasures approached Enda to host a tour group who wanted a more immersive experience while visiting. It worked out so well that further visits are in the pipeline. Meanwhile, closer to home, Enda was just getting ready to participate in the Motor City Irish Festival, Detroit's very own Celtic festival. He has a busy summer ahead, not only performing his regular shows in Michigan, but featuring at several festivals across the USA, including Penn-Mar Irish Festival (Pennsylvania), Iowa Irish Fest, Milwaukee Irish Fest (Wisconsin), Peoria Irish Fest (Illinois), Kansas City Irish Fest (Missouri) and Beaver Island Irish Festival (Michigan). His live performances weave threads of Irish culture, language, and history into a rich tapestry of song, with the Irish language to the fore and Enda's deep interest in Irish history and mythology, as well as the poetry of WB Yeats (the subject of one of his albums – *To The Waters And The Wild*).

2019. He still manages to maintain a deep connection with his homeland, and has become a musical ambassador for Ireland. His website provides a wealth of information on his growing catalogue of recordings. "I'm keen to develop it as a valuable portal for people to visit and experience my material in a more immersive way, including live recordings," he told me.

We recommend a visit to Enda's website at www.endareilly.com



Photo : Dave Keegan

tim staffell aMIGO



New Remastered Special Edition CD of Tim Staffell's classic 2003 album aMIGO. Eleven tracks, including 'Doin' Alright', 'Earth', and 'Night Moves' plus new bonus live-in-the-studio track.

Tim Staffell first came on the scene in the '60s with **The Railroaders**, then went on to blues-rock band **1984**, he then formed **Smile** with Brian May and Roger Taylor. He (famously) departed from Smile, moving on through **Humpy Bong** before becoming singer of progressive rock outfit **Morgan** formed with Morgan Fisher and Maurice Bacon from Love Affair and Bob Sapsed, then a stint with **Jonathan Kelly's Outside** alongside Snowy White and on...

timstaffell.com

MOSCODISC

MOSCD4016



FIDDLER'S GREEN INTERNATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL**July 16th – 20th, 2025 <https://fiddlersgreenfestival.com/>**

The Fiddler's Green International Folk Festival returns to the welcoming village of Rostrevor, Co. Down from Wednesday the 16th to Sunday the 20th of July, for a celebration of traditional Irish music, storytelling, dance, and community. Nestled between Carlingford Lough and the Mourne Mountains, this much-loved festival blends world-class folk music with a deeply local, family-friendly atmosphere, making it one of the most interactive and inclusive festivals on the island.

This year's Hall of Fame Award honours Seán Keane, whose unmistakable voice and contribution to Irish folk music has touched generations of fans. The 2025 lineup features Cara Dillon, returning to her native soil with her haunting vocals, festival stalwarts The Sands Family, acclaimed English guitarist and songwriter Martin Simpson, the much-loved Donegal trio The Henry Girls, Niall McCabe, Cathryn Craig and Brian Willoughby, and Matt McGinn — artists spanning the best of folk, roots, and acoustic traditions.

Fiddlers Green is also delighted to announce the appearance of none other than Dana for a special one-off performance at 1pm in An Cuan on Sunday 20th of July. Dana, world-renowned for her Eurovision triumph all those years ago, was once a resident of Rostrevor and has lost none of her charm or her commitment to outstanding performance.

Also on 21st of July, the Aurora Film Club will present the short film *From a Forest to a Fiddle*, followed by a performance by Zoë Conway and John McIntyre — a wonderful blend of cinema and live traditional music.

However, Fiddler's Green is more than just music; it's a village-wide celebration which includes: A vibrant music school with workshops in traditional instruments and song. Céilís on the outdoor stage and dance floor. Hundreds of events, from concerts to quiet storytelling circles. Guided walks through the ancient Oak forest and deeper into the Mourne Mountains. An Environmental Hub with eco talks, creative workshops, and exhibitions. A Wellbeing programme including yoga and qi gong sessions. A full Children's Programme and family events throughout the week.

Tommy Sands hosts "The Music of Healing", bringing voices of peace and reflection together. Legendary goalkeeper Pat Jennings will also be making a special appearance at this event.

And at the heart of it all, Rostrevor's warm, welcoming community.

With traditional music sessions every night in local pubs, where visitors are welcome to join in, and a dedicated Céilí House where anyone can step up to share a song or tune, the festival thrives on participation and spontaneity. It's a place where strangers become friends and the whole village feels like one big musical family.

Tickets and full programme now available at <https://fiddlersgreenfestival.com/>

Come join the magic this July in Rostrevor, where the music never stops, and everyone has a part to play.

IMDL & RETURN TO LONDON TOWN**irishmusicinlondon.org**

July sees IMDL hosting a special concert evening in tribute to North Leitrim musician and renowned Irish music teacher in London, Tommy Maguire at the London Irish Centre. The Concert will take place on Friday 18th July and will feature a number of Tommy's students.

IMDL's continued collaboration with Music Network brings Connemara's Caoimhe (fiddle/ vocal) and Séamus (harp/ vocal) Ó Flaharta with Tyrone's Ryan Molloy (piano/ fiddle) to the Irish Cultural Centre, Hammersmith on Friday 26 September.

London's annual Festival of traditional Irish music, song and dance returns for the 27th time from Friday 24th – Monday 27th October. Return to London Town is based at The Crown Hotel, Cricklewood and other local venues – This year's line up includes: Danú, The Friel Sisters, Charlie Harris, Maeve Donnelly, Éamonn and Geraldine Cotter, Aoife and Deirdre Granville, Parish Céilí Band, Brian Kelly and Tad Sargent, Tara Breen and Marty Barry, Mick Mulvey and Shane Meehan, The Trad Gathering and more.. Early Bird tickets are now available at just £45 as well as special Festival Hotel B&B rates for the weekend at The Crown Hotel (£108 single, £113 double/ twin, £118 triple, £123 quadruple).

Full details and more as it's announced at returntolondontown.org

The year's programme comes to an end with an album launch concert for Dublin's fiddler, Aoife Ní Bhríain debut solo, with Cormac McCarthy (keys) in Hall Two of Kings Place. Special guest on the evening will be

renowned piper, Mick O'Brien.

For more information about all of these events and more, see irishmusicinlondon.org

BALLYSHANNON FOLK AND TRADITIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL GEARS UP FOR ITS 48th YEAR WITH SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY TICKET LAUNCH**July 31st – August 3rd, 2025****www.ballyshannonfolkfestival.com**

Get ready for a weekend brimming with the finest folk and traditional music as the Ballyshannon Folk and Traditional Music Festival prepares to celebrate its 48th anniversary from July 31st to August 3rd, 2025. This year's festival promises a vibrant atmosphere with three spectacular live marquee concerts showcasing renowned artists, a lively buzz of free street entertainment throughout the town, and a diverse range of fringe events to captivate all ages.

As the festival edges closer to its momentous 50th anniversary, the organising committee is thrilled to announce the launch of its special "50 for 50" ticket offer. In the lead-up to this golden milestone, weekend tickets for the 48th festival are available for the incredible price of just €50! This is a fantastic opportunity to experience a full weekend of exceptional music and community spirit at an unbeatable value.

For those who wish to show their long-term support and secure their place at future festivals, a special three-year ticket option is also being offered. This unique ticket allows patrons to enjoy the 48th, 49th, and the landmark 50th anniversary festivals, ensuring they don't miss a single note of the celebrations to come.

"We are incredibly excited to be approaching our 48th festival and to share our passion for folk and traditional music with everyone," says Mary Daly, Festival Director. "This year feels particularly special as we look ahead to our 50th anniversary. Our '50 for 50' ticket offer is our way of saying thank you to our loyal supporters and welcoming new faces to experience the magic of Ballyshannon." Tickets for the "50 for 50" weekend offer and the special three-year tickets are available for purchase from the festival website at www.ballyshannonfolkfestival.com, local outlets (Abbey Arts Centre) from 19th May. Early booking is highly recommended to avoid disappointment.

#BallyshannonFolkFest #IrishMusic #FolkFestival #Donegal #GoVisitDonegal. www.ballyshannonfolkfestival.com

DUBLIN IRISH FESTIVAL**Dublin, Ohio, USA****August 1st – 3rd, 2025 <https://dublinirishfestival.org/>**

Save the date to attend the 38th Dublin Irish Festival this summer, August 1-3. Explore one of the top Irish festivals in the U.S., drawing over 90,000 guests to Dublin, Ohio each year with seven music stages, 60 acts, and more than 800 performers. This year, the Dublin Irish Festival has been named the "Best Cultural Festival" by USA Today Readers.

The 2025 Festival promises an extraordinary lineup of performers, Irish dancers and cultural experiences. This year's headliners include Gaelic Storm, Solas, Skerryvore, Tannahill Weavers, The StepCrew, Gadan featuring Enda Scahill and Hillary Klug, The Gardiner Brothers, Open the Door for Three, The Jeremiahs, Ally the Piper, Cassie and Maggie, PoulaPhuca, Drowsy Lads, The Narrowbacks, Allison Lupton Band, Barleyjuice, Bastard Bearded Irishmen, Bracken and John Williams and Katie Grennan.

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 who 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 reel 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.

Visit <https://dublinirishfestival.org> for more information.

38th INTERNATIONAL FEAKLE FESTIVAL OF TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC**August 6th – 11th, 2025 www.feaklefestival.ie**

The 38th International Feakle Festival of Traditional Irish Music returns from Wednesday, August 6th to Monday, August 11th, 2025, transforming the village of Feakle into a vibrant hub of music, dance, and cultural celebration.

This year's festival offers an exciting and varied programme, with concerts, workshops, CD launches, céilís, singing sessions, informal music sessions, film screenings, children's activities, festival walks, lunchtime concerts, and much more—ensuring something for all ages and interests.

Audiences can look forward to performances from some of the most highly regarded names in traditional music, including Martin Hayes, Brian Donnellan & Conal O'Kane, The Kilfenora Céilí Band, Caitlín Nic Gabhann & Ciarán Ó Maonaigh, Breannán Ó Beaglaíoch, Clíodhna Ní Bheaglaoich & Cormac Begley, Andrea Palandri & Ruairí McGorman, Cáit Ní Rian & Ultan O'Brien, Charlie Harris, Eva Carroll, Seán Lyons, Cnoc na Gaoithe Band, Eimear Coughlan & Francis Cunningham, Sorcha Costello, Dermot Byrne & Tim Edey, Mary and Andrew MacNamara, Conor Crimmins, Tara Breen, Dermot Sheedy & Seán O'Meara, Máirín Fahy & Patsy Broderick, The Big Mad Horn Céilí Band, The Tulla Céilí band, The Star of Munster Céilí Band and many more to be announced.

Dancers can enjoy lively céilís with The Tulla Céilí Band and Star of Munster, while daily workshops in music, song, and dance will be led by some of the finest traditional artists.

Celebrated for its warm atmosphere and deep musical roots, the Feakle Festival remains a cornerstone of the traditional Irish music calendar.

Full programme details coming soon at www.feaklefestival.ie or follow @FeakleFestival on Instagram and Facebook.

IRISH FAIR OF MINNESOTA

August 8th – 10th, 2025 www.irishfair.com

The 45th annual Irish Fair of Minnesota, the three-day outdoor celebration of all things Irish, returns to Saint Paul's Harriet Island Friday, Aug. 8 through Sunday, Aug. 10, 2025. This family-friendly event is one of the largest Irish festivals in the nation.

For three days in August, we transform Harriet Island in Saint Paul into a version of the Emerald Isle in miniature. A marketplace with handmade goods; traditional Irish dancing; strong pints of Guinness; authentic fish and chips; Gaelic football, camogie, and hurling; wolfhounds and sheep; and above it all, good company, good Irish music of all kinds, and mighty craic.

Hundreds of talented musicians, dancers, and performers will take to six outdoor stages on Harriet Island. Featured entertainers for the 2025

festival include Talisk, Gaelic Storm, The High Kings, Eileen Ivers, The Diddley Idols, Ally the Piper, and Emma Longford to cover everything from folk songs to patriotic anthems.

Cultural programming set up around the festival will allow guests to learn about and connect with Irish heritage, language, and culture and its connection to Minnesota. Guests of all ages and backgrounds are welcome to the festival to find traditions both familiar and new. The Irish Fair of Minnesota is a celebration where many different threads of Irish cultural experience overlap and weave together.

More information about the schedule and tickets for the festival can be found at www.irishfair.com

MASTERS OF TRADITION FESTIVAL

August 20th – 24th, 2025

www.westcorkmusic.ie

Booking is now open for the 2025 Masters of Tradition which runs from 20 – 24 August in Bantry, Co. Cork.

Masters of Tradition opens in the Maritime Hotel before moving up to Bantry House for the remaining evenings. During the day, the programme includes daily talks in Marino Church as well as secret concerts in Future Forests, Kealkil; St Brendan's Church, Bantry; and Whiddy Island.

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.

Martin Hayes will be joined by Dave Flynn, Inni-K, Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh, Peter Browne, Des Geraghty, Nuala Kennedy, Eamon O'Leary, Lucia & Maria, Pádraig Ó Tuama, Brian Donnellan, Kate Ellis, Carlos Sweeney McCartin Trio, Brian Conway, Brendan Dolan, Colm O'Donnell, Siobhán O'Donnell, Eimear Coughlan, Francis Cunningham, Aoibhe Kettle, Maria O'Connor, Niamh Varian-Barry, Jane Walls and Nada Ní Chuirín.

For full programme and booking, go to www.westcorkmusic.ie or ring the West Cork Music office on +353 (0) 27 52788.

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



31ST JULY TO 3RD AUGUST 2025
BALLYSHANNON, CO. DONEGAL

48th Ballyshannon FOLK & TRADITIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL CO. DONEGAL

50 for 50

ALL WEEKEND TICKETS FOR THE NEXT 3 YEARS, ONLY €50!
CONCERTS, STREET ENTERTAINMENT, FRINGE EVENTS AND LOTS LOTS MORE!

[f](https://www.facebook.com/ballyshannonfolkfestival) [i](https://www.instagram.com/ballyshannonfolkfestival) WWW.BALLYSHANNONFOLKFESTIVAL.COM

EXPERIENCE THE SPIRIT OF IRELAND AT THE MICHIGAN IRISH MUSIC FESTIVAL!

September 11th – 14th, 2025 Heritage Landing, Muskegon, MI
michiganirish.org

Get ready to immerse yourself in the vibrant sights, sounds, and tastes of Irish culture at the Michigan Irish Music Festival, proudly presented by Family Financial Credit Union. Held along the scenic shores of Muskegon Lake, this beloved event transforms Heritage Landing into a lively celebration of all things Irish.

Enjoy world-class performances across six dynamic stages, featuring an exciting 2025 lineup including Skerryvore, Socks in the Frying Pan, Lúnasa, and Old Blind Dogs. From high-energy tunes and traditional dance to cultural workshops and storytelling, there's something for everyone.

Indulge in hearty Irish fare from the Celtic Kitchen, sip a pint at The Pub, and explore the Celtic Marketplace filled with authentic goods and gifts. The Wee Ones' Area offers fun for the littlest festivalgoers, making this a true family-friendly event.

Run entirely by volunteers, the Michigan Irish Music Festival is a nonprofit with a heart. Inspired by Ireland's Great Famine (Gorta Mór), the festival has donated over \$450,000 and 20,500+ pounds of food to local organisations combating food insecurity.

Tickets are on sale now, thanks to Lascko Services. Don't miss this magical weekend of music, culture, and community.

Visit michiganirish.org for tickets, band bios, class schedules, and more.

CORK FOLK FESTIVAL 46th EDITION

October 2nd – 5th, 2025 www.corkfolkfestival.com

The Cork Folk Festival is preparing for a spectacular 46th edition 2-5th October, here is a rundown of what to expect.

This year's festival will feature Flook with Brian Finnegan, Sarah Allen, Ed Boyd and John Joe Kelly. The band are celebrating 30 years on the road, their music is typified by extremely fast, sometimes percussive, flute and whistle. Also playing at the festival will be The Irish Concertina Orchestra conducted by Cormac McCarthy and NOTIFY featuring Pádraig Rynne, and Tara Breen.

Jackie Daly & Matt Cranitch will be performing at the festival again this year, Jackie will be celebrating his 80th birthday while Matt will be celebrating his Gradam Ceoil TG4 Lifetime Achievement Award.

Two formidable artists will also feature, Lisa Knapp & Gerry Diver. Each are highly respected for their contributions to the folk genre, drawing from the deep well of Irish and English folk song and music traditions.

Other acts confirmed are Belfast Band Craobh Rua, Seamie O' Dowd, Leonard Barry & Andy Morrow, Mary Greene with Gals at Play and the legendary band Shaskeen. The festival will feature concerts, sessions, walking tour, lectures, classes, Céilí's and openair events and a Rising Sons Brewery gig trail.

The Book 'Reeling down the Years' Cork Folk Festival 1979-2024 by William Hammond will be on sale over the festival weekend.

The festival is offering a Spáilpín Season Ticket for 75 Euro, it includes all An Spailpín Fánach Concerts.

More details available at www.corkfolkfestival.com
cfolkf@gmail.com phone 087 2759311

LINEUP ANNOUNCED FOR 2025 CELTIC COLOURS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

October 10th – 18th, 2025 celticcolours.ca

The very best of Cape Breton Island is showcased during nine days and nights of stirring music, majestic scenery, and renowned hospitality as the Celtic Colours International Festival presents 51 concerts and more than 250 cultural experiences in communities all over the Island.

The 29th Celtic Colours International Festival kicks off on Friday, October 10 at the Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre with The Grand Opening concert featuring The Barra MacNeils, David Francey, the MacArthur Dancers, and widely-acclaimed Anglo-Irish band Flook. Nine exhilarating days later, the festival wraps up in Sydney at Centre 200 with The Grand Finale. Jimmy Rankin and his band will be performing at Celtic Colours for the first time along with a very special collaboration of Breannán Ó Beaglaoich, Tim Edey, Rose Morrison, and Dave Gunning for an exciting evening of beloved songs and tunes that'll knock your socks off!

Throughout the nine-day "week", Celtic Colours 2025 will be celebrating milestones and sharing memories with artists from Scotland,

38th International Feakle Festival of Traditional Irish Music

Feakle Co. Clare **festival**

Our 2025 Festival takes place this August to celebrate our 38th festival from Wednesday 6th to Monday 11th

Discover the heart of Irish culture at the Feakle Festival in Co. Clare! Immerse yourself in six incredible days of music, song, and dance, featuring unforgettable concerts, lively ceilis, workshops and sessions. Explore the richness of poetry, storytelling, and captivating talks, while children enjoy their own magical events.

Whether you're a seasoned performer or a curious listener, the Feakle Festival offers something for everyone. Don't miss this extraordinary celebration of tradition and creativity in the surroundings of Feakle!

Tel: Gary Pepper 00353 61 924322 & 00353 87 9678020 or Tina Nelson 00353 87 6473537

www.feaklefestival.ie E: feaklefestival@gmail.com

IRISH FAIR OF MINNESOTA

sláinte? u-betcha!

AUGUST 8-9-10
HARRIET ISLAND, ST. PAUL

featuring:
GAELIC STORM
THE HIGH KINGS
TALISK

MUSIC FOOD DANCE FUN!



IRISHFAIR.COM/TICKETS  

Ireland, Northern Ireland, the U.K., and the U.S., as well as Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Québec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia.

International performers Flook, Solas, Liz Doherty, Breannán Ó Beaglaoich, Kris Drever, Tim Edey, Saltfishforty, Rioghach Connolly, Teresa Horgan & Donogh Hennessy, Seamus & Caoimhe Flaherty, Cathy Ann MacPhee, Margaret Stewart, Ingrid Henderson, and Máiri Chaimbeul will share stages with their musical counterparts from across Canada including Vishtèn, Dave Gunning, David Francey, James Keelaghan, Madison Violet, Valdy, and Connie Kaldor.

There will be plenty of opportunities to see some of the finest traditional singers, players, dancers, and culture-bearers from Cape Breton as well with The Barra MacNeils, Jimmy Rankin, J.P. Cormier, Beòlach, Mary Jane Lamond, Ashley MacIsaac, Heather Rankin, Brenda Stubbert, and many more scheduled to perform.

More than 250 Community Cultural Experience events will be going on all over Cape Breton in association with Celtic Colours, so the chance to immerse yourself in the culture between concerts is always just around the corner. You can step your way into a square dance, join a milling frolic, play in a session, take a workshop in dance or fiddle, enjoy a guided walk, or go for a hike with a magnificent view. And there's nothing like sharing a home-cooked meal, so keep an eye out for the many Community Meal options available wherever you travel.

And don't forget Festival Club, where the true spirit of Celtic Colours never sleeps. Celtic Colours Festival Club is open late every night and will feature a variety of hosts and special guests throughout the festival.

Tickets go on sale July 8 for the 2025 Celtic Colours International Festival, scheduled for October 10-18. If you cannot attend this year, you can still enjoy the music from wherever you are as there will be a concert streamed live each night.

For the full schedule and lineup of artists or to purchase tickets, visit celticcolours.ca.

Celtic Colours International Festival greatly appreciates the support of Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Canadian Heritage, the Province of Nova Scotia, and its many other partners.

O'FLAHERTY IRISH MUSIC RETREAT

IRISH MUSIC IMMERSION October 23rd – 26th, 2025

oflahertyretreat.org

The 22nd Annual O'Flaherty Irish Music Retreat, organized by the Traditional Irish Music Education Society and supported through a grant from the Government of Ireland Emigrant Support Programme, will be held October 23-26, 2025 at the Hoblitzelle Camp & Conference Center in Midlothian Texas. The retreat is internationally renowned for instruction in Irish music and dance by highly respected teachers from Ireland and the United States.

Students can choose from a wide range of courses on acoustic instruments, singing and Sean-nós dancing. Additionally, workshops explore topics ranging from Irish music history to music theory. At every meal there are guest concerts and each evening instructor concerts followed by sessions. A céilí is held on Friday evening.

The instructors for this year's retreat are: Calum Bell – Flute/Whistle Fundamentals; Peter Brice – Singing; Darragh Carey-Kennedy – Mandolin/Tenor Banjo Fundamentals; Joanna Clare – Fiddle Fundamentals; Anna Colliton – Bodhrán; John Coyne – Bouzouki; Francis Cunningham – Concertina; Liz Doherty – Fiddle; Mickey Dunne – Uilleann Pipes; Danielle Enblom – Sean-Nós Dancing (Advanced); Nicolle Fig – Bodhrán Fundamentals; Caoimhe Uí Fhlatharta – Fiddle; Séamus Ó Fhlatharta – Harp; Cliona Halley – Concertina Fundamentals; Brian Hughes – Whistle; Finn Magill – Fiddle; Adrian McAuliffe – Tenor Banjo; Sean McComiskey – Button Accordion; Gerry O'Connor – Fiddle; Conal Ó Gráda – Flute; Richard Osban – Mandolin; and Dáithí Sproule – Guitar. Our melody players for the accompaniment classes will be fiddler Grace Broadhead and flute player Evan Powell.

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



Tommy Maguire Tribute Concert



Friday 18th July 2025

London Irish Centre, 52 Camden Square, London NW1 9XB

Doors 7pm, Tickets £15/ £7 U18s

Friday 26th September 2025

Music Network Ireland Tour:

Caoimhe and Séamus Ó Flaharta with Ryan Molloy



Irish Cultural Centre,

5 Black's Road, London W6 9DT

Doors 7.30pm, Tickets: £15/ £7 U18s

Full Information and Tickets Available from
www.irishmusicinlondon.org

RETURN TO LONDON TOWN 2025

FRIDAY 24TH - MONDAY 27TH OCTOBER 2025

**LONDON'S 27TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF
TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC, SONG AND DANCE**



**4 DAYS OF CONCERTS, CÉILÍS, WORKSHOPS, ALBUM
LAUNCHES, FILM SCREENING, SESSIONS
AND MORE**

**The Crown Hotel, Cricklewood Broadway NW2 3ED
and other local venues**

www.returntolondontown.org

**IMDL would like to thank all its current sponsors, partners & funders
for supporting their work throughout the year**

GALWAY BAY'S CELTIC MUSIC FEIS**October 13th – 19th, 2025 www.celticmusicfeis.com**

2025 will herald the 22nd year of Galway Bay's Celtic Music Feis, celebrating Irish songs, ballads, players and bands that will be flooding Ocean Shores, WA with music and fun for six days this October. Again this year the festival begins: Tuesday October 13th, 2025 and lasts until Sunday, October 19th, 2025. An eclectic mix of Irish bands, choirs and dancers hailing from throughout the United States, Canada and, of course, Ireland will be rounding out this year's entertainment.

Check out our music line-up on our website listed below.

Buy tickets at www.celticmusicfeis.com. Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/GalwayBayIrishPubOS.

Galway Bay Irish Pub - 880 Point Brown Ave NE - Ocean Shores, WA 98569 - 360-289-2300.

TRADFEST IS BACK ACROSS DUBLIN CITY AND COUNTY NEXT JANUARY**January 21st – 25th, 2026****www.tradfest.com**

Ireland's largest gathering of trad and folk music takes centre stage as one of the most exciting cultural events to take place in Dublin this Winter.

On the back of a hugely successful festival in 2025, TradFest is going bigger and better than ever, with a rich and ambitious showcase of the very best of trad and folk music. Running from January 21st to 25th, audiences can enjoy cosy pub sessions across Temple Bar, and concerts throughout Dublin City Centre and County.

TradFest continues to enthral audiences with its day and nighttime concerts in spectacular venues such as the majestic St Patrick's Cathedral, historical landmarks Collins Barracks and The National Stadium, as well as vibrant live music venues such as the Button Factory and the Grand Social.

Following on from a very successful series of concerts and events in Fingal and South Dublin in 2025, next year will see TradFest greatly expand its musical footprint throughout the two regions.

For fans of live music, trad and folk connoisseurs and the culturally

curious - TradFest Temple Bar is the music and cultural event to be at in January 2026.

TradFest Temple Bar is produced by The Temple Bar Company with support from The Arts Council, Diageo, Fingal County Council, South Dublin County Council, Dublin City County Council, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Culture Ireland and RTE Supporting the Arts.

Follow TradFest on Social Media:**FB: TradFest****Insta: @tradfest_dublin****Twitter @trad_fest****TikTok @tradfest****Go to www.tradfest.com for full details.****BOSTON CELTIC MUSIC FESTIVAL (BCMFeST)****January 15th – 18th, 2026 www.passim.org/bcmfest**

The 23rd annual Boston Celtic Music Festival, known as BCMFeST, returns January 15–18, 2026, with events taking place at Club Passim, the Somerville Theatre, Crystal Ballroom, The Burren, and The Rockwell—venues located in Cambridge and Somerville, Massachusetts. The festival is presented by Passim, a Cambridge-based nonprofit organisation dedicated to supporting a vibrant music community through Club Passim, the Passim School of Music, artist grants, and outreach initiatives.

The 2026 festival will celebrate Greater Boston's rich traditions of music, song, and dance from Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton, and other Celtic communities. BCMFeST will feature nearly 40 acts, including sessions, workshops, and dances that range from deeply traditional to innovative interpretations that blend contemporary sounds and ideas. The lineup includes full-time professional touring acts as well as local session musicians, highlighting performers across multiple generations. In addition to the 40 regional bands, internationally renowned headliners will be announced in the coming months.

"As BCMFeST grows, it's an absolute joy to stay true to its original mission—celebrating the incredible talent within Boston's Celtic music community while bringing in internationally acclaimed headliners," says Summer McCall, Director of BCMFeST.

Tickets and additional information about BCMFeST can be found at passim.org/bcmfest. Follow us on social media or subscribe to Passim's newsletters to stay up to date.



BOSTON CELTIC MUSIC FESTIVAL
PRESENTED BY PASSIM

FOUR DAYS OF CONCERTS, PARTICIPATORY DANCES, SESSIONS AND WORKSHOPS CELEBRATING BOSTON'S CELTIC MUSIC COMMUNITY
PRESENTED BY PASSIM

JANUARY 15-18, 2026

PASSIM.ORG/BCMFEST

CLUB PASSIM • SOMERVILLE THEATRE
CRYSTAL BALLROOM • THE BURREN • THE ROCKWELL



@bcmfest

BOSTON CELTIC MUSIC FESTIVAL
PRESENTED BY PASSIM

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JANUARY 15-18, 2026

PASSIM.ORG/BCMFEST

CLUB PASSIM • SOMERVILLE THEATRE
CRYSTAL BALLROOM • THE BURREN • THE ROCKWELL

@bcmfest



THE 39th YEAR

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PITTSBURGH IRISH FESTIVAL 2025 ENTERTAINMENT LINE-UP

The 34th Annual Pittsburgh Irish Festival will be held September 5-6-7, 2025 at Carrie Blast Furnaces National Historic Landmark.



“We could not be more excited to present this year’s Pittsburgh Irish Festival entertainment line-up,” said Mairin Petrone, Pittsburgh Irish Festival Executive Director. “The line-up features new bands, phenomenal solo performers, well-known favourites, Grammy winners and nominees, local Irish dance groups, two social media famous bagpipers, and more on four stages for non-stop fun and enjoyment.”

The Pittsburgh Irish Festival will welcome Gaelic Storm, The Screaming Orphans, The Drowsy Lads, Eileen Ivers and The Brigideens, Ally the Piper, Bastard Bearded Irishmen, Elias Alexander, The Fitzgeralds, The Low Kings, Donnie Irish, and more, who will all be headlining acts on various evenings and stages.

International Headliners:

Ally the Piper

Ally is a multi-instrumentalist out of New York. She specialises in Celtic instrumentation, such as the Highland Bagpipe, Scottish Smallpipe, Irish whistles, and vocals. At age 16 Ally became a world champion performing on the Highland Bagpipe and holds several domestic and international titles.

The Brigideens

Led by Grammy awarded, Emmy-nominated, 9-time All-Ireland Fiddle Champion, Eileen Ivers, Eileen formed the group to showcase the mighty dimension of talent in today’s female artists. Native New Yorkers, Caitlin Maloney is featured on lead vocals, and Hilary Hawke on 5-string banjo, bass, clarinet, spoons, and background vocals. Hilary was featured in the Tony award winning Broadway musical, “Oklahoma”. Anna Colliton, a Chicago native, is a master of the bodhran, the traditional Irish frame drum. Anna teaches nationwide and has performed with many top traditional music groups including Cherish the Ladies. Rounding out the ensemble from Maryland is guitarist and vocalist, Colin Forhan, who also plays tenor banjo and concertina.

Dennis Doyle

Dennis Doyle is a Celtic harpist who has been featured at the Pittsburgh Irish Fest for over twenty years. His delightful program of traditional Irish harp music, stories, songs, bits of history and jokes have been performed all over North America, Japan and Ireland.

The Drowsy Lads

2024 brought the 20th Anniversary of The Drowsy Lads! Critically

acclaimed Irish-American Traditional Folk powerhouse, The Drowsy Lads, are the epitome of “we dare you to sit still” Irish music. Named as the 2018 “The Best Irish-American Band” the 20 year performing veterans have galvanized their place amongst Irish and folk music’s must-see acts. From headlining festivals to packing out theatres, The Lads deliver a performance steeped in traditional roots with a fervour that leaves audiences wanting more. You’ll have a blast... and the band will be arm in arm beside you! This will be their first performance at the Pittsburgh Irish Festival.

Elias Alexander

Elias Alexander is a rare performer who combines live looping and electronics with a wide variety of instruments from bagpipes to fiddle, guitar, whistle and keys. With deep roots in traditional Scottish and American music, but a boundless appetite for possibility, rhythm, and expression, Elias takes audiences on a mind blowing journey through traditional tunes, original songs, and danceable fun.

The Fitzgeralds

The Fitzgeralds are a sibling band comprised of 3-time Canadian Grand Master Fiddle and Step Dance champions – Tom, Kerry & Julie Fitzgerald. With roots in Canada’s renowned Ottawa Valley, their art form stems from the rich tradition of Ottawa Valley fiddling and step dancing.

Gaelic Storm

It’s hard to imagine a band just coming into their own after 20+ years of success, but that’s exactly what makes a true anomaly. This multinational, Celtic juggernaut grows stronger with each live performance, and as you can imagine, after two decades and over 2000 shows, it is a true force to be reckoned with. With their latest release, *Go Climb a Tree*, their music has never sounded more representative of themselves as musicians and as live performers.

The Screaming Orphans

The Pittsburgh Irish Festival could never have a year without this fest favourite female powerhouse group. Screaming Orphans, an all-sister

“Eileen Ivers formed The Brigideens to showcase the mighty dimension of talent in today’s female artists”

band from Bundoran, Co. Donegal, Ireland, are one of the most sought-after Celtic bands with a powerful, award-winning sound combining their original melodic pop songs with a unique take on traditional Irish music and song.

About the Pittsburgh Irish Festival

The Irish Partnership of Pittsburgh d.b.a Pittsburgh Irish Festival, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation created to contribute to the rich cultural awareness of Irish history and tradition that exists in Pittsburgh.

In addition to our three-day Celtic Celebration, the Pittsburgh Irish Festival has expanded into a year-round resource for education and cultural programs through the creation of the Irish Education Outreach Program.

Created in 1991, The Pittsburgh Irish Festival, Inc. has gained recognition as an important presenter of Celtic culture due, in large part, to our highly successful festival.

This event has become one of the nation’s finest Irish-American festivals, and certainly the most comprehensive exhibit of Irish music, lore, food, and dance in the region. The Festival is held the weekend after Labor Day in September.

For more info www.pghirishfest.org

FIDDLER'S GREEN FESTIVAL

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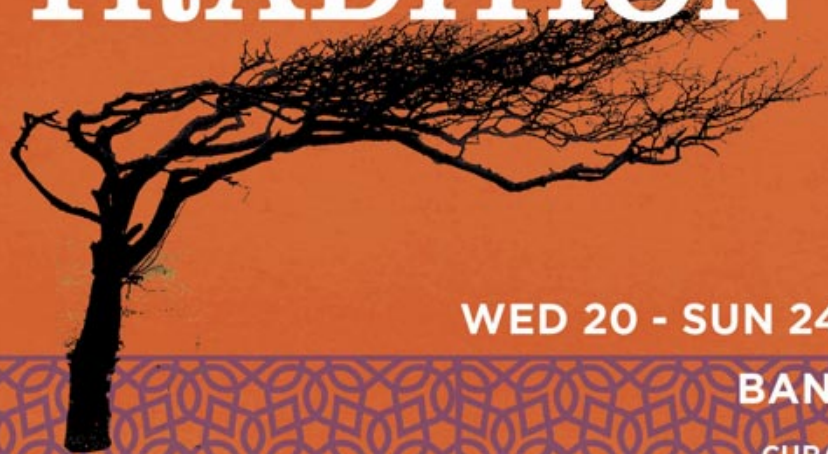
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IRISH ADVENTURE AWAITS IN DUBLIN, OHIO, USA

Here's what will make this year's Dublin Irish Festival truly unforgettable.



Feis Parade of Champions

The world's largest three-day Irish celebration draws over 90,000 attendees annually with a rich blend of music, culture, community and craic. While this year's Dublin Irish Festival promises exciting new entertainment and offerings, there's much more to explore behind the scenes and throughout the park.

The Dublin Irish Festival was recently named first place in the USA TODAY 10Best 2025 Readers' Choice Award for Cultural Festival Awards! Many Festival guests have returned year after year to celebrate Irish heritage because of the world-class entertainment, authentic cultural programming and a strong sense of community. At the Festival, dance performances, interactive workshops, genealogy and history exhibits, traditional sports and diverse culinary offerings are all rooted in genuine Irish tradition. Festival guests from all backgrounds come

energy and tradition that have existed for decades. Friday night, the Columbus Feis hosts its adult competition on Festival grounds. On Saturday, the winners of all age groups are invited to perform at the Parade of Champions.

While the Dublin Irish Festival is packed with music, dance and celebration, there are a few things you won't expect to find when you arrive. Over 90+ vendors from across the globe showcase their unique craftsmanship and creativity with handmade jewellery, home décor and fine art. Dive deeper into your Irish history and culture at the Genealogy tent, where you can trace your Irish roots and connect with your heritage. In the Celtic Canine area, animal lovers can learn about the history of Irish dogs and see Ireland's eight breeds up close. Guests can also pet the bog ponies or watch the sheep herding demonstration.

Three different reenactment areas are found throughout the Festival grounds. Brian Boru's Ireland gives Dublin Irish Festival visitors an authentic experience of life as it was in Ireland 1,000 years ago. The Viking Village brings you a variety of demonstrators who represent Viking Life during the Viking Age of Dublin, when Vikings established four of the major cities of Ireland, including Dublin itself. The 2nd Cavalry Brigade will have a display area near the sports field where guests can learn about the daily life of a Civil War soldier, many of whom were Irish immigrants. The Defenders Den, a covered rest area, offers complimentary snacks, non-alcoholic beverages and veteran resource information to active and retired military members, veterans of all military branches, first responders and up to three accompanying family members. From stone throw to stone carry, attendees can enjoy the Stones of Strength and Highland Games competitions. They can

"If music is the heart of this annual event, then dance is surely its soul"

together from across the world to learn, celebrate and connect the first weekend in August each year. The Dublin Irish Festival has grown and adapted to changing times, but its dedication to celebrating and preserving Irish culture and traditions remains at its core.

The park comes alive with the rhythmic beats of Irish music, echoing the spirit of the Emerald Isle. The 2025 Festival promises an extraordinary lineup of performers and cultural experiences, including 17 national and international entertainers and 26 local and regional artists. This year's headliners include Gaelic Storm, Solas, Skerryvore, Tannahill Weavers, The StepCrew, Gadan featuring Enda Scahill and Hillary Klug, The Gardiner Brothers, Open the Door for Three, The Jeremiahs, Ally the Piper, Cassie and Maggie, PoulaPhuca, Drowsy Lads, The Narrowbacks, Allison Lupton Band, Barleyjuice, Bastard Bearded Irishmen, Bracken and John Williams and Katie Grennan. Our headliners are not just on the main stages but the intimate ones too. You can catch them at the sessions tent or hosting music workshops, where they share stories, techniques and tunes. Some even surprise guests with pop-up shows throughout the weekend, creating memorable moments in unexpected places during the Festival. If music is the heart of this annual event, then dance is surely its soul. Nine Irish dance schools are taking the stage in Coffman Park this year, showcasing the

also learn about darts in a seminar or compete in games at the dart tent. These unique experiences, combined with the vibrant atmosphere and rich cultural offerings, make the Dublin Irish Festival a standout event that attracts visitors from across the world.

This year's dates are August 1-3, 2025. Tickets are on sale now for the Best Cultural Festival in the Nation. Purchase yours today at DublinIrishFestival.org.



Brian Boru's Ireland

IRISH *Adventure* AWAITS

AUGUST 1-3, 2025



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THE BALLYSHANNON FOLK AND TRADITIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

July 31st – August 3rd, 2025, County Donegal

Mary Daly, Festival Director, took time out to tell Gráinne McCool about the upcoming 48th anniversary of the famous Donegal music festival.



Is there anything new for 2025 I asked her? She's excited as she tells me: "Ballyshannon Folk Festival is to open with a legendary musical evening featuring two of Ireland's most revered musical talents, Seamie O'Dowd and Pat McManus. This exclusive opening concert will see these iconic artists join forces to explore the rich tapestry of Irish traditional music, infused with a soulful taste of the blues, with their masterful interplay of fiddle, guitar, and a host of other instruments as these legends, both masters of their craft, play in the relaxed setting of the Abbey Arts Centre.

"As the festival edges closer to its momentous 50th anniversary, the organising committee is thrilled to announce the launch of its

three main concerts will be taking place in the Marquee in the Markey Yard. A hive of activity is guaranteed throughout the town."

The Festival Committee are delighted to announce that they have some pretty special acts this year yet again. Acts such as Luka Bloom, Muddlers Club, Porter Belly's, Pheonix and many others. Having asked Mary if there's a big community outreach with this festival she confirms that there certainly is: "Everyone involved is local, from the voluntary committee to the volunteers over festival week. We are also grateful for the sponsorship support from local businesses."

The Ballyshannon Folk and Traditional Music Festival receives public funding from Donegal County Council and Fáilte Ireland and local private sponsorship which sustains their festival each year and they are incredibly grateful to all funders. Without such, festivals like this would be unable to continue.

Is there a lot of planning to do ahead of this festival, I wondered. "Yes, there is a lot of organisation, and it is done by a small volunteer group each year. From administration work dealing with funding applications to box office, from social media to putting up posters – there are always lots of jobs to be done," said Mary.

There is a lot happening during this week in Ballyshannon. With three electrifying live marquee concerts, Free Street entertainment,

"The festival provides a platform for the next generation of folk and traditional musicians"

special "50 for 50" ticket offer. In the lead-up to this golden milestone, weekend tickets for the 48th festival are available for the incredible price of just €50! This is a fantastic opportunity to experience a full weekend of exceptional music and community spirit at an unbeatable value. A truly fantastic offer and initiative ahead of this year's entertainment."

Mary added, "for those who wish to show their long-term support and secure their place at future festivals, a special three-year ticket option is also being offered. This unique ticket allows patrons to enjoy the 48th, 49th, and the landmark 50th anniversary festivals, ensuring they don't miss a single note of the celebrations to come." Donegal and Ballyshannon in particular, certainly knows how to reward their patrons and supporters.

With such a rich history to the festival, just how has the organisation developed in these years and just what keeps everyone involved so motivated? "Our committee members who are all volunteers are driven by passion. The reason why, is simply because of the festival's historical significance, its impact on the community and the traditional music scene. Events over the weekend are scheduled to take place in a variety of venues in the town, and the

and Fringe events, there really will be something for everyone.

While rooted in traditional Irish music, the festival often features a mix of traditional and contemporary artists, catering to a wide range of tastes. It showcases both renowned musicians and emerging talent through its annual showcase competition. Ballyshannon is Ireland's oldest town, situated on the Wild Atlantic Way in County Donegal. The picturesque setting with views of the surrounding countryside and the River Erne, adds to the overall experience. The festival actively promotes new artists through its showcase competition, providing a platform for the next generation of folk and traditional musicians. The festival offers Great Value and especially with the offer this year of the 50/50.

The Ballyshannon Folk and Traditional Music Festival provides an immersive and authentic experience of Irish culture, music and hospitality, in a beautiful and historic setting. Donegal at its finest in every way.

Discover more about the festival and Donegal by visiting www.inishview.com. Tickets are now on sale for the opening concert at www.abbeycentre.ie. For more details www.ballyshannonfolkfestival.com

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Joanna Clare
Fiddle Fundamentals



Anna Colliton
Bodhrán



John Coyne
Bouzouki



Francis Cunningham
Concertina



Liz Doherty
Fiddle



Mickey Dunne
Uilleann Pipes



Danielle Enblom
Sean-Nós Dancing



Nicole Fly
Bodhrán Fundamentals



Caoimhe Uí Fhlatharta
Fiddle



Séamus Ó Fhlatharta
Harp



Cliona Halley
Concertina Fundamentals



Brian Hughes
Whistle



Finn MacGill
Fiddle



Adrian McAuliffe
Tenor Banjo



Sean McCormiskey
Button Accordion



Gerry O'Connor
Fiddle



Conal O'Grada
Fiddle



Richard Osban
Mandolin



Dáithí Sprout
Guitar



Grace Broadhead
Mandolin Player



Evan Powell
Mandolin Player

The Retreat opens with a Texas BBQ Dinner followed by a Kick-Off Concert on Thursday evening October 23rd. Classes begin October 24th.

Online enrollment begins June 14th, 9am CST.

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O'Flaherty Irish Music Retreat is produced by the Traditional Irish Music Education Society (TIMES)
For more information, call (469)215-1840 or e-mail to info@oflahertyretreat.org or visit www.oflahertyretreat.org

THE IRISH FAIR OF MINNESOTA

Harriet Island, August 8-10, 2025

The state of Minnesota has always been supportive of Irish Music, writes John O'Regan.



Since the 1970s, some leading Irish musicians have settled there, names like Daithi Sproule, Paddy O'Brien, Darren Crossey and more suggest the state is a good home for both resident and visiting Irish players. Festival organiser Lucy Mullen filled me in on the details of this year's Irish Fair of Minnesota.

Lucy: "The Irish Fair of Minnesota offers an equal opportunity and a showcase for all things Irish in the local area. It was founded in 1980 by Roger Conway and Leah Curtin, the two eminent visionaries who contributed profoundly to the foundation and development of the Irish Fair of Minnesota. The legacy they left behind serves as a beacon of commitment and resilience to which others may aspire."

John: "What kind of crowds does the festival attract?"

Lucy: "This year's Irish Fair of Minnesota runs from Friday, August 8th through Sunday, August 10th, 2025. The festival is always the second full weekend in August. The weekend-long outdoor festival is on Saint Paul's

with her storytelling and wit. Over 100 local bands, artists, and dance schools will feature during the weekend.

"Eileen Ivers, the Grammy-winning, 9-time All-Ireland fiddle champion, and original musical star of Riverdance, returns to the Irish Fair of Minnesota. On Saturday, she'll perform with the Universal Roots and then, on Sunday, she will take the stage with The Brigideens. The High Kings will close out the weekend with mighty craic!

"Special interest items include ZeroK Fun Run, a 3-metre race where everyone is a winner! Baarry, the Irish Fair mascot, will lead the fun on Saturday and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. The registration fee of \$45 supports the Irish Fair of Minnesota while the "athletes" will receive a complimentary beverage (beer, wine, or N/A), a bag of chips, and a commemorative jersey.

"Attendees enjoy traditional Irish dance, a variety of food stands, whiskey tastings, Irish sports demos (hurling, camogie, boxing), Irish comedy, a marketplace with handmade goods, educational and cultural programming, and activities for children."

John: "How do you finance such a diverse and inclusive festival?"

Lucy: "The Irish Fair of Minnesota has generous event sponsors and partners who help to keep this event going year after year. Decades-long partnerships are instrumental in hosting this event every year. Every board and staff member at Irish Fair works tirelessly to secure donations and sponsorships for the fair. This event is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund. Funding cuts to major federal grants can hurt many cultural programs, and the Irish Fair does not take our relationships with the city, state, or corporate sponsors for granted."

John: "What plans and hopes do you have for its future?"

Lucy: "Bigger and better each year! We are hoping to bring in more sponsors every year, attract bigger crowds during the festival, and offer more entertainment. Irish Fair also hopes to host more events during the year, not just the annual weekend festival. As we can continue to promote

"Decades-long partnerships are instrumental in hosting this event every year"

Harriet Island, celebrating all things Irish in Minnesota. We've been building a small version of the Emerald Isle on Harriet Island since 2001.

"The Minnesota Irish are a dedicated bunch. Even if it's raining setters and wolfhounds, we still see on average 11,000 people each day of the festival. Families spend all weekend on the island watching dancers, live music on the river, and enjoying great food, drink, and mighty craic. Groups of friends and local organisations share pints, laughs, and memories each year."

John: "What is on offer for your audience this August?"

Lucy: "This year's visiting headline acts come from Ireland and Scotland, mixing new talents with national festival bill-toppers as well as a healthy selection of local bands and players. Headlining acts on Friday include Talisk, the Scottish trio of Mohsen Amini (concertina), Benedict Morris (violin) and Charlie Galloway (guitar), who have been redefining the folk genre for almost a decade. On Saturday Gaelic Storm headlines, while The Diddley Idols, the husband-and-wife team of Queens native Dave Barckow and Dubliner Louise Barry, will bring a full band sound.

"Ally the Piper, a multi-instrumentalist and vocalist, best known for her work on the Great Highland Bagpipe, globetrotting Limerick troubadour Emma Langford has become a feature of the Irish folk and songwriter scene

and cultivate Irish Culture and heritage in the Twin Cities, we are constantly expanding what that looks like and how to create spaces where people can come together and revel."

Find out more at www.irishfair.com



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PEORIA IRISH FEST

August 22nd - 24th, 2025

Seán Laffey talks to Peoria Irish Fest's Entertainment Chairman Tom McConnaughay.



The festival began back in 1981 as the Erin Fest in Peoria, Illinois, which is at the centre of a triangle of three cities, Chicago, St Louis and Indianapolis. It was rebranded under its present name in 2017.

Tom says, "we're actually one of the smaller festivals in the region, attracting around 8,000 people during our weekend, which happens between August 22nd and 24th this year. It's a great time of year because we're sandwiched between the two big festivals of Milwaukee and Kansas City and well organised touring acts are able to extend their performing schedules to take in all three, so it's a win-win for all of us.

"Sitting between those three bigger cities means we are able to draw on a large Celtic Diaspora, and it's something we are focusing

Gadan, The Byrne Brothers, Conor Mallon/Unearthed, Síomha, Colm & Laura Keegan, RUNA, Hadrian's Wall, Elias Alexander, Enda Reilly and On the Lash. And, we are always proud to showcase our local and regional bands – Turas, The Bogside Zukes, The Roundstone Buskers, Broken Brogue, Skibbereen, Still Shine, The Morning Larks, Barry Cloyd and The McDowell's.

Tom attends other festivals around the States to observe audience reactions to live shows. "That's because a good proportion of Peoria's clientele might be described as Folk-curious, as they are not entirely die-hard traditional music fans or they don't all have Celtic ancestors. Our booked acts must be able to please a crowd and connect with people."

If stage craft is important for the bigger shows, then there is an equally engaging alternative, which is micro-scale in comparison. "We like to think our Fountain stage is a unique feature of our Fest. It is an unplugged, purely acoustic stage, it has chairs for 20 people in its audience, and we encourage our touring artists to perform, demonstrate, talk, or teach in a small-scale setting, and each year the result is pure magic. Last year one act taught the small crowd how to do a Scottish Ceilidh dance. Then when they performed on the main stage, the folks in the audience became part of the show."

Finally, Tom would like to thank several organisations for all the support they give to the festival. "I must really thank Culture Ireland who support so many of the artists we bring in, the Consulate General of Ireland in Chicago for their assistance with cultural programming, The Association of Irish and Celtic Festivals for their resources and knowledge, many of our fellow festivals, who are always happy to help, and of course our corporate and individual sponsors. With the help of all of these people and organisations, we

"I must really thank Culture Ireland who support so many of the artists we bring in"

on for the future, as we have the capacity to cater to an even bigger audience than we do at the moment, so getting our name out and attending other festivals around the country is one of our main priorities, certainly in relation to growing the festival. Rest assured though, our number one priority is always the music."

I wondered do they know anything about their audience profile, who are they appealing to? "The surrounding States have a large Irish Diaspora and people who are keen to hear authentic Irish music, so we offer a mix of both homegrown and new and well-known bands who come over from Ireland. Peoria itself has a large Catholic population which adds to the power of the festival to attract a local clientele. We are also lucky to partner with the Peoria St. Patrick's Day Parade, which enhances our yearlong visibility in the community."

Tom tells me a little about the venue itself. "We are situated downtown on a purpose-built festival site with a permanent stage. There is a large waterfront building from which we can administer the festival, and we also use it for one of our pubs which features whiskey tastings, cultural events and music. We have three main outdoor music stages, a dance stage, and fields for highland games and other events. One major benefit of being so close to the river is that we can enjoy the cooling breezes off the river if the weather heats up."

Tom outlines the main acts that will appear this August. "We are excited to welcome The Red Hot Chilli Pipers, The Kilkennys,

are able to present some of the finest touring acts and give our audience an experience they won't forget."

The Fest is held at the Peoria Riverfront Park, on the banks of the Illinois River, in down town Peoria, Illinois. Free parking is available. Gates open at 4:00 p.m. Friday, noon on Saturday and 10:00 a.m. Sunday for Mass.

www.peoriairishfest.com

www.Facebook.com/peoriairishfest/





46th Cork Folk Festival 2nd-5th October 2025

The Line-Up So Far

Flook with Brian Finnegan, Sarah Allen,
Ed Boyd & John Joe Kelly

The Irish Concertina Orchestra conducted by Cormac
McCarthy & NOTIFY with Pádraig Rynne, Tara Breen,
Davie Ryan, Adam Taylor, Rory McCarthy & Hugh Dillon

Jackie Daly & Matt Cranitch

North Gregg

Shaskeen

Any Old Time

Niamh Parsons & Graham Dunne

Lisa Knapp & Gerry Diver

Craobh Rua

Seamie O' Dowd, Leonard Barry & Andy Morrow

Mary Greene & Gals at Play

Alice Lajo, Paula K O'Brien

Éimhear Flannery, Trish Reilly

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Cork Singers' Club

Galician Piper

Club Ceoil Ballyphzhang

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38th INTERNATIONAL FEAKLE FESTIVAL OF TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC

The 38th International Feakle Festival of Traditional Irish Music returns from Wednesday, August 6th to Monday, August 11th, 2025. Seán Laffey spoke with festival Secretary Aoife Hayes, to find out what is planned for this August.



Caitlín Nic Gabhann & Ciarán Ó Maonaigh



Cáit Ní Riain

Feakle is a village in the hilly wooded region of East Clare. Be careful because once there, you might never ever want to leave again, something many folk have been considering since 1987 when Gary Pepper got the first Feakle Festival into gear.

Aoife says, “the festival is literally the highlight of my year. My dad has been involved with the festival since it began and I’ve grown up with it. I wouldn’t miss it for the world. This year’s festival offers an exciting and varied programme with concerts, workshops, CD launches, céilís, singing sessions, informal music sessions, film screenings, children’s activities, festival walks, lunchtime concerts, and much more, there is something for all ages and interests.”

Who is booked to appear at the festival? Aoife tells us that audiences can look forward to performances from some of the most highly regarded names in traditional music, including: Martin Hayes, Brian Donnellan & Conal O’Kane, The Kilfenora Céilí Band, Caitlín Nic Gabhann & Ciarán Ó Maonaigh, Breannán Ó Beaglaíoch, Clíodhna Ní Bheaglaoich & Cormac Begley, Andrea Palandri & Ruairí McGorman, Cáit Ní Riain & Ultan O’Brien, Charlie Harris, Eva Carroll, Seán Lyons, Cnoc na Gaoithe Band, Eimear Coughlan & Francis Cunningham, Sórcha Costello, Dermot Byrne & Tim Edey, Mary and Andrew MacNamara, Conor Crimmins, Tara Breen, Dermot Sheedy & Seán O’Meara, Máirín Fahy & Patsy Broderick, The Big Mad Horn Céilí

“The opening night concert is a great opportunity for the local people to thank Charlie Harris for his years of music making in the village”

I was intrigued to find out about a special tribute concert celebrating Charlie Harris’ contribution to traditional music and in particular to the musical life of Feakle.

“Charlie Harris has always been a great friend of the festival. He’s played it with the Tulla Céilí Band in Feakle and has been a member The Shaskeen, which has brought him around the world, but he’s also deeply rooted in the village here, having played a regular Wednesday night session with Mark Donnellan in Pepper’s pub for years. The special opening night concert is a great opportunity for the local people to really say thank you to Charlie for his years of music, his years of entertaining everybody. I am sure there will be lots of musicians in attendance both on stage and in the audience for the opening concert.”

Aoife whets our appetite for the workshops at the Feakle Festival. “They offer visiting musicians the opportunity to pick up techniques, learn new tunes, meet like-minded people, and build their repertoire; and of course be taught by some of the finest players around. Our workshops run from Thursday through Saturday from 10am in the morning till 1pm in the afternoon. We would encourage people to book up early for the three days of workshops as they are very popular. We use a number of venues for music workshops. Our sean-nós dance classes, however, which are taught by Suzanne Leahy, are held in the large back room of Bohan’s bar, which becomes the hub for traditional dancers during the festival.”

Band, The Tulla Céilí band, The Star of Munster Céilí Band and many more to be announced.

Feakle is a small village, how does it cope with the influx of visitors? “Firstly, everyone is welcomed as each year the village is filled with musicians and well-wishers, they all become part of the community. Secondly, locals make rooms available in their homes to cater for the influx of visitors which is always a huge help. Our campsite is open throughout the festival. It’s great value, it’s only €10 euro per night to stay there. If you want to stay in the region, there are good hotels and B&Bs within a few minutes of us in Scariff, Gort and Killaloe.”

The festival programme details are on www.feaklefestival.ie or follow @FeakleFestival on Instagram and Facebook. Remember those dates: August 6th – 11th, 2025 in the welcoming hills of East Clare.



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GUITAR BASICS (ACCOMPANIMENT)

with Jean Damei

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

The guitar has well earned its place as a favoured accompaniment instrument for Irish music. It was, however, a hard won and relatively recent battle. Resurrection came in the '60s and '70s thanks to folk legends such as Paul Brady, Micheal O'Domhnaill and Daithi Sproule. In many ways, you could say the guitar has opened the doors of traditional Irish music to musicians of other genres, which is exactly the point on which the purists and liberals diverge.

Guitar accompaniment fundamentally requires a deep familiarity with the unique rhythms of traditional Irish music. Many would argue that you can't teach rhythm, you have to feel it in your bones... so notwithstanding the difficulty, a good teacher can map out the territory. One such good teacher goes by the name of Jean Damei— living proof that the Irish tradition is not just for the Irish...

Jean Damei, born in Grenoble, France, started to play the guitar at the age of 16. After meeting a number of Irish musicians touring and teaching music in the Alps he discovered a passion for it. At the age of 18, he left Ardeche, his childhood home, to study guitar and flute in the Irish Music and Dance degree course at the University of Limerick. On his return to France, to Lyon in 2011, he decided to explore jazz and funk. He has found much inspiration from these

two musical universes, allowing him to accompany Irish melodies in a rich and varied way, and to work with new angles and approaches to the tradition. He is now based in Glasgow where his most recent projects include Elir, a trio also featuring vocalist and fiddler Niamh McKaveney and fiddler David Lambardi. His other cutting edge projects include Fourth Moon and Event Horizon.

The Course

Guitar Basics (in standard tuning) is for beginner guitarists who are new to Irish traditional music and would like to learn how to accompany it as well as established musicians who want to get an insight into this music. It will also be a great help to guitarists who have good experience of Irish music accompaniment and wish to go further in the development of their style.

First you will learn how to tune a guitar and how to read chord charts. Then you will move into a progressive study of techniques that focus on how to play accompaniment using simple chords, simple 4/4, 6/8, 3/4 or 9/8 rhythms, as well as syncopated rhythms and more complex chords. Jean uses a broad selection of well-known tunes to demonstrate the skills taught. Mp3 files of each tune are included for download in the course content as are pdfs of the chords, in both standard and ABC notation.

The Tunes Taught Are:

The Mountain Road, The Bag Of Spuds, Gallagher's Frolics, Out On The Ocean, The Kid On The Mountain, Give Us A Drink Of Water, The Rights Of Man, The Reel Of Sceachog, Fanny Power, The Hag At The Churn, The Man Of The House

Jean's course is also available in his native French. There are two other courses available on guitar accompaniment in standard tuning from Cillian O'Dalaigh and one on DADGAD tuning from MJ

“Join Jean Damei and Alan Reid (Banjo) as they host a livestream session on OAIM's YouTube channel on Sunday, August 3rd at 8pm GMT. They will be playing familiar tunes at a slow pace for learners to participate in, as well as sharing their own music”

McMahon. The beauty of getting a subscription with OAIM is that you don't have to settle on just one course, subscription gives you access to them all. You could search and see what tune you want to learn and see what teacher is teaching it, or you could work your way up via your skill level, which in the case of guitar accompaniment would mean Jean teaches basic level, Cillian teaches intermediate and advanced and MJ's course is more suited to intermediate skill level.

So if guitar accompaniment is your thing, then the harvest is rich at OAIM. Their extensive library of backing tracks alone is worth the subscription. These Play Along Backing Tracks give you the opportunity to practice playing along with a melody and/or an accompaniment at 50, 75, or 100% speeds – which is a really practical way of improving your playing.

Join Jean Damei and Alan Reid (Banjo) as they host a livestream session on OAIM's YouTube channel on Sunday, August 3rd at 8pm GMT. They will be playing familiar tunes at a slow pace for learners to participate in, as well as sharing their own music.

In this YouTube video Jean teaches the reel *The Mountain Road*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLGBPw4FvO0>

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CONAL Ó GRÁDA**Anú Abú****Raelach Records RR026, 15 Tracks, 58 Minutes****www.raelachrecords.com**

A dozen fresh young tracks from a veritable old head, recorded at Benny McCarthy's Doon studio and engineered by Billy Sutton. This is a follow up to Conal's solo album *Cnoc Buí* of 2008.

Ó Gráda leads out the tunes on the flute and is accompanied by Caoimhín O Fearghail (guitar, Greek bouzouki), Colm Ó Murchú (bodhrán), Caitríona Frost (marimba, drums, tambourine, brooms, jawbone) and Benny McCarthy (accordions-high chords, basses, sub basses, basse aux pied).

Full marks for the bilingual liner notes, concise context and insight into budgies, canaries and a drowned fox, which, to give you a hint, refer to a greedy hurler, a feline holiday, and a generous glass of wine. Conal's titles are wacky and whimsical, and his playing is full of life and humour. This is an unashamedly happy album.

It is another classic from Jack Talty's Raelach Records, which is building an impressive catalogue of some of the finest traditional playing of the 21st century. On hearing this I am sure Conal's new tunes will stick like limpets to the rocks of Bawn. Catchy quirky titles help, but in the tradition the quality of the tunes comes first, and what goodies we have. The bouncy and brill of *Benny's Gone To Vegas*, *Fuip Out The Bugle*, a clutch of K alliterating polkas, *K Kung Fu Kate & The Karate Kid*. Marches too, *Tan Ann*, *Teacht Mhíl Espáinne* (There was Once a Time, The Coming of the Milesians) contrasting the military fates of two ancestral armies.

Conal's tunes will be remembered not just because they have curious titles, but because they are addictive and they are offered in variety. He now lives in the Múscraí Gaeltacht, there's a set of slides that are no doubt sung in the locality: *An Dui-Reí* (The Dark Slide of the Moon), *Siúl sa bhFásach* (Walk on the Wild Slide). I could go on, but my closing words are: Conal's *Anú Abú* album is the very definition of a living tradition.

Seán Laffey**AILBE GRACE & LIAM FLANAGAN****With special guest Mick O'Connor****Across The Glen****Own Label, 12 Tracks, 44 Minutes**

Ailbe Grace is not known for being prolific, with just 2 albums in 20 years, the wait for this, his second album, has been well worth it.

Ailbe plays button box and Liam the fiddle, they are joined here by Jack Talty (piano), Eddie Costello (acoustic guitar) and Billy Sutton (bodhran). They met up with their old pal Mick O'Connor (banjo) at a gig at the Prince Albert pub in Whitton, London which furnishes two live tracks: the hornpipes *The Peacock's Feather/Cooley's/Cuz Teehan's* and the marches *Down The Brae/The Thatch*. (Down the Brae is on my "one to learn list"). The other tracks were recorded at Benny McCarthy's Doon studio in Waterford.

This is a short-run CD, and at the time of printing, it had already sold out at Custy's Music in Ennis. No surprise because it's one of the most engaging and evocative CDs produced this year.

There are selections here that you might know: *Sergeant Early's Dream*, *Boys of Lough Gowna*. The hornpipe *Galway Bay*, which they combine with *The Smell of the Bog*. A wonderful old slip jig *Hardiman The Fiddler*, the lads pair this with *The Bridal* and Mike McGoldrick's *Farewell to Whalley Range*, surely a modern classic? Another relatively new tune is a light-footed waltz written by Joanie Madden: *Farewell to the Catskills*.

The combination of fiddle and accordion is, of course, a classic in itself, and Ailbe and Liam bring a sense of confident ease and swing to every tune here. Nothing is rushed and neither is anything static; there's drive without eagerness, their tempo is always in the Goldilocks zone.

On a recent trip to the Cavan Fleadh from Cashel to Killeshandra, this album was my constant companion, we never tired of the road

and now it is an old friend. *Across the Glen* is a gem and it is surely a keeper.

Give Custy's a ring in Ennis and see if they can get some more in stock, hot cakes would be cool by comparison.

Seán Laffey**GRANNY'S ATTIC****Cold Blows the Wind****Grimdon Records GRICD010, 11 Tracks, 45 Minutes****www.grannysattic.org.uk**

Two very fine singers and two excellent musicians combine in this trio: George Sansome on vocals and guitar, Lewis Wood on fiddles, and Cohen Braithwaite-Kilcoyne on button boxes and vocals. Sid Goldsmith joins them on double bass. George and Cohen share the lead on eight songs here, each one exquisitely arranged to provide a huge variety of tones and textures. Every song has a heritage of more than a hundred years, some much longer, and most are well known in the English, Scots and Irish Traditions. *Where the Swan Swims so Bonny* is a version of the *Two Sisters* song of betrayal and murder. *Claudy Banks* is a cheerful story of a returning sailor, and *The Nightingale* is a more typical tale of press gangs and drownings.

The delicate side of Granny's Attic is nicely illustrated by their take on the English classic *Lovely Joan*, a very different betrayal given a slow and complex treatment here. *The False Bride* and *Jack the Sailor* are less well known, and each has a surprising twist, while *The Mermaid* and *Cold Blows the Wind* tell familiar tales of sea and land. Every song benefits from the instrumental prowess of this trio, and there are also three purely instrumental tracks, two old and one new. Lewis Wood's *Conversations* is a cheeky English reel which draws on tradition and adds a good pinch of party mood: the guitar and concertina parts accentuate its saucy aspect. *Bobbing Joe* is a master class in how to make Morris tunes interesting, and *New Allemand* juxtaposes the slow and the sprightly styles of English dance music.

Granny's Attic are a class act and this fourth album shows them at their best.

Alex Monaghan**EMER O'FLAHERTY****Go dtí Seo****Own Label, 10 Tracks, 40 Minutes www.emeroflaherty.com**

The role of the singer songwriter has been one of troubadour and newscaster. Whatever the vernacular, the function remains the same as does the song to quote Led Zeppelin. When it comes to songwriting in the Irish language as opposed to English, the same governing rules apply. Thus, Emer O'Flaherty finds herself in a growing niche as a predominantly Gaelic speaking singer-songwriter.

From Ennis she combines her commanding voice and lyrics with her multi-instrumental abilities on piano, organ, flute and tin whistle. With the increased popularity of spoken Irish, her debut album *Go dtí Seo* is a courageous and momentous release. For her influences she chases everything from sean-nós to contemporary forms and musically the mood is down tempo. However, it's not a gloomy affair, far from it as it aims for the deep heart's core and succeeds.

Ag Gearradh Romham is a resonant opener that highlights her strong distinctive vocals behind a stirring yet restrained backing. *Ca Bhfuil Tu* hides Baroque folk/rock roots while *Staisun Traenach* emits a poignant tale of romantic disappointment and departure seasoned by breathy flute and accordion. *Neilli Bheag* and *Suantrai* are melodic instrumental pieces that add further slow burning lustre. Hints of Laura Nyro and Shelagh MacDonald permeate the piano led musings like *Grian Dubh*, and jazz nuances also raise their head on *Cuirt Baile Nua* and *Taibhse*. Contrast is provided by a straight sean-nós delivery of *Amhran Na Leabhair* to a sparse piano backing where all the poignancy is evidently focused. The sole English language track *Bird Interrupted* neatly turns the tables proving equal giftedness in the Anglo Saxon gloss.

This is music to dwell on, drink deeply from and wonder at her prowess. Emer O'Flaherty is a major new Irish songwriting talent. *Go dtí Seo* offers gems for after-hours deliberation.

John O'Regan

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HARALD JUENGST**Handpan Music To Soothe The Soul****Liquid Sunshine Records LSR CD 02, 10 Tracks, 58 Minutes**<https://www.harald-juengst.com/>

This is music for a dark room, scented candles, slow breathing and deep healing. Harald Juengst the genial German handpan player, Irish storyteller and often resident of Donegal, has released this album of handpan and monochord music in collaboration with Tyrone man Eamon McElholm of Solas fame, who adds piano, keyboards, programming and guitar, and his skills as an arranger and producer.

Harald has a home near Ranafast, it is handy for the airport and is within sight of the beach. For the past thirty or more years he's been part of the eclectic music scene around Gweedore. On this album he plays both the Handpan and monochord. Both are tuned in C# with the handpan having a pedal frequency of 432 Hertz, much more mellow and soothing than standard concert pitch. Tracks have one word titles, *Tranquility*, *Parting*, *Forest*, *Time* and so on. Harald's music really needs a new vocabulary to describe it, chords, melodies, beats and patterns don't really do it justice. For example on *Simplicity* there are pulses of percussion on the handpan, they in turn set free washes of ambient harmonies, which themselves are pure tones, and then there are the resonating strings from the monochord, the latter so delicately placed that you might miss them. The piano makes a cameo appearance towards the end of track 9 *Dew Drop*, as if to say "I'm a percussion instrument too". On *Laura's Dream* the handpan sends sound waves radiating as they ascend from their tapped root.

Track 6, *Parting* is perhaps the most complex and intense, the monochord brought in to make a musical punctuation, presaging the final cadence.

If you are in need of some extensive chilling out time, then Harald, the boy with a view of the beach, has some good vibrations for you.

Seán Laffey

**PEGGY SEEGER****Teleology****Red Grape Music RGPSCD5, 11 Tracks, 35 Minutes**www.peggyseeger.com

Now in her 90th year, Peggy Seeger has walked a hallowed path from her time working with her brother Mike Seeger, her involvement with Ewan McColl, more recently with Irene Scott, and she had also formed a partnership and toured with her sons Calum and Neil in a show of familial intimacy. Her solo work has contributed greatly to her legendary status and now comes what she says is her final recording, and one where she plans not to exit stage left gently but with a BANG. Its title refers to a philosophy that concerns itself with ends and goals not aspirations and causable factors.

Indeed, this album has a bang and punch to it in her observations and musings which offer a fitting personal tribute to over 70 years as a working musician, collector, composer, feminist and social activist. Peggy's voice and songwriting are still both major forces to be reckoned with. *Teleology* has nine brand new songs and two reinterpretations, including a new version of the classic *First Time Ever I Saw Your Face*. Written and recorded with family members, this album is suffused with love and respect. *Sing About the Hard Times* opens in a rousing chorus, mixing optimism and resilience with Peggy's voice out front. *I Want To Meet Paul Simon* offers clever wordplay on his song titles while the title track *Teleology* is confessional and *The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face* radiates shimmering desire in this new treatment, and at 90 sees Peggy making her recording debut playing piano.

The swampy Jazz/Blues shuffle of *Slow* and the march rhythm of *Sit-Down* address current issues and champion strength through unity. *Driftwood* tackles migration with empathetic humanity while *No Place Like Home* addresses the sense of worthlessness felt by the homeless. *Through The Clouds* and *Driftwood* both pack an emotional punch.

Teleology proves that Peggy Seeger's observational gifts are still intact and offers a powerfully resonant coda to a great folk career.

John O'Regan

 The background of the advertisement is a large, dark, high-contrast photograph of Don Banjo Smith. He is shown from the chest up, looking slightly to the left, with his hands on the neck of a banjo. He has a full white beard and is wearing a dark shirt.

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A smaller version of the album cover is shown in the top right corner. It features the same photograph of Don Banjo Smith but with the text "Don Banjo Smith and Friends" overlaid in white.

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TERESA HORGAN**Amethyst****Own Label TH001, 14 Tracks, 56 Minutes****www.teresahorganmusic.com**

Amethyst is Teresa Horgan's first solo album – but while this is her debut effort under her own sails, she has earned her stripes touring and recording with The Outside Track, Cuas, and other collaborations including one with guitarist Mossie Griffin.

Teresa Horgan, from County Cork, was immersed in music from a young age, playing whistle, flute and singing with her family. Having made a considerable impression, now comes her solo debut. *Amethyst* is where she lays claim to a space among Ireland's premier new female vocal spots. Indeed, its arrival is both warranted and well-deserved. Vocally she possesses a warm deep timbre which suits her material and her voice range. Much of the material is either traditional or gleaned from writers within the balladic form such as Brian MacNeil's in *Strong Women Rule Us All with Their Tears*. Her own *Far Across the Ocean* unveils a finely wrought compositional skill and traditional songs like *Sweet William's Ghost* and *Sovay* gain from fresh insights and intonation.

Tear My Stillhouse Down, No Ash will Burn and Deeper Well steer the proceedings into Lucinda Williams and Emmylou Harris territory adding a dash of Country Blues and Americana. Alan Burke's *Will Jobling* carries its message of injustice with righteous panache. Her comfort with Gaelic singing gives *Eamon An Gnoic* a collaboration with the late Seamus Begley a peaceful warmth. Teresa is helped by Donogh Hennessy, Martin Brunnsden, Pauline Scanlon, Gerry O'Beirne, Barry Kerr, Niamh Varian-Barry and a host of renowned guest artists. Some of her family John, Catherine and Breda Horgan join her in performances which are both winsome and wistful.

By successfully mixing judiciously chosen material, subtle arrangements and sympathetic production framing Teresa's agile and beguiling vocals, *Amethyst* proves that Teresa Horgan is among our finest vocal talents.

John O'Regan**PAT MCCARTHY****Memories Recalled and Lost****Own Label, 10 Tracks, 38 Minutes**

This is the third CD in a series of original song releases from Kerry native Pat McCarthy. He spent a lifetime as an educator in Portmarnock Dublin and has blossomed as a singer songwriter and guitarist in the recent past.

Good times, good vibes and funny words are on offer on the first track: *Hair of The Dog*. Where Pat juxtaposes the jollity of pre-Christmas parties against the looming guilt-trip to the gym, and a necessary cleansing of the body after the Yuletide indulgence.

He takes a nostalgic trip back to his mother's homeplace outside Castleisland on *Loughfouder*, led out by a mandolin, his catchy chorus evoking happy childhood memories: "Take me back to sweet Loughfouder... where the spirit can run free."

Two songs in the middle of the album take a closer look at isolation. *Locked Up In Lockdown* reminds us that back then we needed to find space in nature, a place to run with the rabbit, the fox and hare, a safety valve when our homes became too claustrophobic. The other extreme is visited in *Under Charing Cross Bridge*; what a powerful song about the homeless Irish who fell foul of the system after years of hard labour. Pat's voice is as strident, angry and authentic as anything sung by Luke Kelly in his prime.

The final track is upbeat on its surface, but carries a serious message, asking a question: do we judge a ballad singer as a person harshly, because they dare to sing a Rebel song or mention a Republican hero? Pat leaves us with the thought that as long as we sing about Pearce, Connolly and Tone, our history still belongs to us.

Seán Laffey**NATALIE PADILLA****Eostre****Own Label, 9 Tracks, 28 Minutes****www.nataliepadillamusic.com**

A very natural blend of Celtic and Americana, *Eostre* actually starts like a classical orchestra tuning up but then quickly slips into smooth oldtime fiddle and banjo on *Terra*, the first of nine tracks all by Natalie Padilla and all named for different gods or spirits from around the world. Although this is new music, it has an old soul – the gentle *Vayu* with its airy backdrop, the more urgent *Agni's* driving country beat, and the dreamy *Areg* with Padilla leading on guitar are all instantly appealing, easy listening but also inviting us to dance or play along.

Natalie plays fiddle, banjo and guitar, but she's not alone on this album. Producer Quinn Bachand plies his jazz guitar plus touches of fiddle and harmonica, Vancouver fiddle icon Daniel Lapp adds piano, and there's mountain dulcimer from Simon Chrisman. *Eostre* has no lyrics, no songs in that sense, but there are snatches of vocals from Béatrix Méthé woven into a rich carpet of sounds behind the melodies here.

Nigeria's forest spirit *Aja* must have attended a Flanagan Brothers concert in her youth: this piece bridges the gulf between Africa and Ireland with a gorgeous slow reel or barndance, followed by a crooked pair of Irish jigs dedicated to the *Ngen* spirits of the South American narrows. *Eostre* wraps up with an oldtime clawhammer banjo tune, a growling contemporary fiddle reel, and a country waltz to bring a tear to the eyes of Roman nature goddess Flora. I'll be learning this tune: it's so good, I can't believe it's not butter! Smooth, tasty, and true to the tradition – spread *Eostre* around, and sink your teeth into its final tear-it-up hoe-down medley.

Alex Monaghan**HARTWIN DHOORE & ROSS GRANT****New Beginnings****Trad Records TRAD040, 5 Tracks, 21 Minutes****www.hartwin.be**

On the long side for an EP, but certainly shorter than a full album even by today's standards, this collection of five tracks nonetheless packs some weighty tunes, both new compositions and centuries-old nuggets from the Flemish and English traditions. Grant's fiddle and Dhoore's button box are the only sounds here, duetting on every track: no overdubbing or other musical alchemy aside from the magical interplay of two fine musicians. Box and fiddle fill the space with constant creativity in Hartwin's left-hand accompaniment and frequent double stops from Ross. This pair draws inspiration from the likes of Leveret and Naragonia: the similarities are apparent, and the space between them is almost negligible.

Four of Hartwin's own pieces provide almost half the material here. Opening with the title piece, a typically smooth and uplifting saunter in the Flemish style, he shifts into a laid-back jig which could be Celtic in the right light. The waltz *Green Café* brings us back to Belgium, a sunny afternoon on the town square perhaps, and contrasts nicely with Ross Grant's grinding reel *Gezellig*, which despite its pleasant Dutch name seems to originate close to the heart of old English fiddling. Other pieces here certainly do: *Cuckoo's Nest*, *Blew Bell Hornpipe*, and the plain-spoken *If You Will Not Have Me You May Let Me Go* from the 1770 Northumbrian Vickers manuscript.

New Beginnings winds down with Dhoore's *Bonfire Tune*, a quiet close to a very promising first chapter from this pair.

Alex Monaghan



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THE RARE OLD MOUNTAIN DEW

This song has, for a very long time, been a staple of Irish ballads across the northern hemisphere, yet its origin lies in the Vaudeville theatres of 19th century New York. Take a dram with Seán Laffey.

American readers may be familiar with the soft drink soda that goes by the name of Mountain Dew; this originated in Knoxville TN sometime between the 1930s and 1940s and was marketed as “zero-proof hill billy moonshine that will tickle your innards”. The spirited Mountain Dew in the lyrics we print below is much stronger stuff.

In many respects this is the quintessential Irish drinking song, yet the title is a little off-kilter. Mountain Dew is more commonly a Scots Irish or an American term for illicit whiskey. After a search online I found in Green's Dictionary of Slang (500 years of the Vulgar Tongue) a note

work well in the dramatic setting of musical comedy. Easy to remember, it became popular and slipped into the ill-defined world of folk song, so much so that Colm O Lochlan writing in 1938 said he collected it in 1916 and the words were by Phil O'Neill from Kinsale.

One of the lines hints at its American origins: ‘the sweet poitin from Ireland green, distilled from wheat and rye’. Barley, the starting point of choice for Irish whiskey, grew poorly in America. Instead rye whiskey was produced there, the rye seeds were imported from Germany with its similar hot continental summers. And of course, back home in Ireland real poitin was often made from malted barley

“In many respects this is the quintessential Irish drinking song”

from the Inverness Courier of 12th December 1838: ‘The peasantry pledged the health of the Laird and his lady in overflowing bumpers of mountain dew.’

The Ulster Scots Academy cites its origins to the early 19th century America, stating ‘mountain dew. Home-made, illicit poitin or whiskey. The Oxford English Dictionary dates the term only from 1826 and has no citations from Ireland’.

The song itself was penned by Ned Harrigan around 1881 with music by David Braham. The tune is a variant of *The Girl I Left Behind Me/ Brighton Camp/ Spailpín Fánach*, which was already over 100 years old when Harrigan included *The Rare Old Mountain Dew* in his 1882 musical comedy *The Blackbird*. It is a short song that would

and potatoes, not wheat nor rye. A gauger, the correct term, others are used wrongly, was an inspector who would levy the tax (duty) on spirits; this was determined by their strength (proof) which was a measure of the drink's alcohol content.

The song is referenced in Shane MacGowan's *Fairytale of New York* and it has been recorded many times. Indeed when the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem resorted to singing it in the White Horse Tavern in Greenwich Village in their impromptu ballad sessions after a night treading the boards in the nearby Cherry Tree Theater, they were (almost) bringing the song home to its paternal roost.

RARE OLD MOUNTAIN DEW

Edward Hariggan

Let grasses grow and the waters flow in the free and easy way,

But give me enough of the rare old stuff that's made near Galway Bay.

The gaugers all, from Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim too,
Oh we'll give them the slip, and we'll take a little sip of the real old mountain dew.

Chorus

Hi the skiddley-al-the dall dal the skiddley al-the dee,
dal the dal dal skiddley al the dee, Hi the skiddley al the dal,
dal the skiddley al the dee, dal the dal dal skiddley al the dee.

At the foot of the hill there's a neat little still where the smoke curls up til the sky,
by the whiff of the smell, you can plainly tell that there's poitin, boys, close by.
For it fills the air with a perfume rare, and between both me and you,
as home be go, we will take a little bowl, or a bucket of the mountain dew.

Now learned men who use the pen have wrote the praises high
of the sweet poitin from Ireland green, distilled from wheat and rye.
Sure away with your pills, it will cure all ills, be ye Pagan, Christian or Jew,
so take off your coat, and grease your throat with the real old mountain dew.



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