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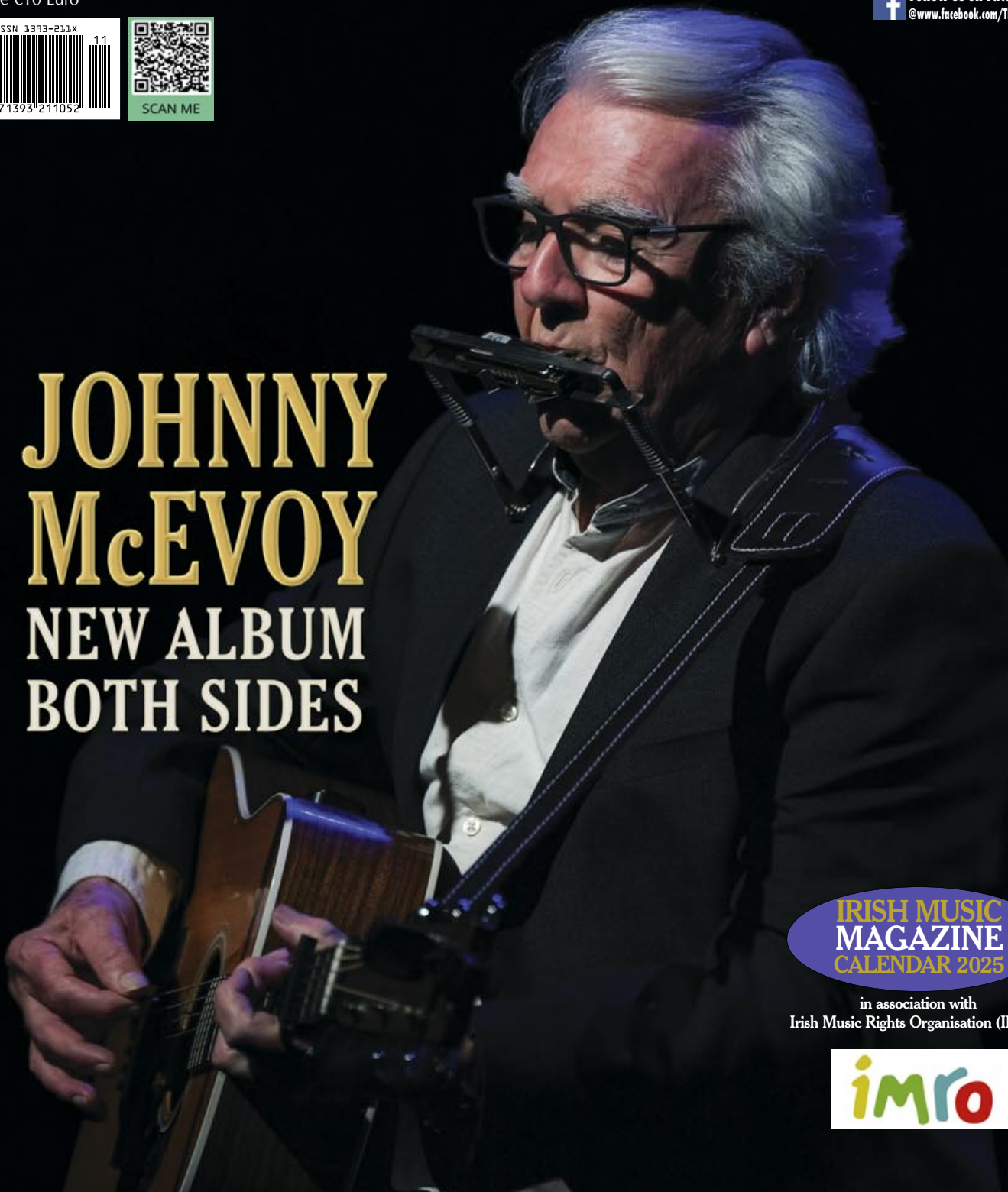
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**JOHNNY
McEVOY**
NEW ALBUM
BOTH SIDES



IRISH MUSIC
MAGAZINE
CALENDAR 2025

in association with
Irish Music Rights Organisation (IMRO)



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JOHNNY
McEVOY

Both sides

NEW
ALBUM



Tour Dates

October 2024

17th Draiocht Blanchardstown

November 2024

2nd Hotel Kilkenny

9th Killaloe Hotel Killaloe

10th Headfort Arms Kells

16th Castle Darga Sligo

30th Landmark Carrick-on-Shannon

January 2025

30th Glor Ennis

31st Gt National Hotel Tipperary

February 2025

2nd Keadeen Newbridge

6th Abbey Roscommon

9th Tullamore Court

13th Civic Tallaght

16th Riverside Enniscorthy

21st Helix Dublin

23rd Woodford Carlow

March 2025

6th Shearwater Ballinasloe

7th Royal Theatre Castlebar

15th Burnavon Cookstown

22nd Canal Court Newry

23rd Sligo Park

29th INEC Killarney

30th Maritime Bantry

April 2025

4th Ardhoven Enniskillen

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nua

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GROUP

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FOREWORD CONNECTIONS KEEP US GOING

One player strikes two or three notes and immediately the rest follow suit, as if there's a magic telepathy at work. Behind the magic are thousands of hours of playing and of connecting in groups and informal gatherings.

George Millar of The Irish Rovers talks about those kinds of connections when he reminisces about the early days of the 1960s folk boom, when North America opened up to Irish Folk acts. Connecting with your community and having an ambitious cultural plan is something that Jojo Wagner is doing in Luxembourg with the band Schèppe Siwen.

Making connections is at the heart of Nuala Kennedy and Eamon O' Leary's new album *Hydra* and you can read how a chance encounter in Austria led the duo to record the album in Greece. Another traditional musician who has an international dimension to their work is the box player, Conor Moriarty, who after performing with the group Cordean has made lasting musical links with Newfoundland. Being open to the wider context of Irish music has led to the film maker Charlie O'Brien, discovering a new vein of Irish ballads; we feature one of those in our *Story Behind the Song*, written by a mysterious Irish exile who worked on the Argentinian pampa in the 1870s.

We feature the legendary Johnny McEvoy on our cover this month. Johnny is back on the road again, touring the country for a series of concerts to promote a brand new album *Both Sides*.

Meadhbh Walsh tells us how she hopes the stories in the songs from her new album connect with people and reflect shared experiences, making the album relatable and meaningful.

And that's the thing about cultural connections, they transcend time and place, and we'll keep you connected to the widest community of music makers and fans in each issue of Irish Music Magazine.

Slán

Seán L

Publisher : Robert Heuston
Editorial : Seán Laffey
Design : John Barrett
Text Editor
& Production : Emma Meade

**For Editorial, News, CD Reviews,
Tours & Advertising Enquiries Contact:**
Select Media
c/o Irish Music Magazine
4-5 Burton Hall Road, Sandyford
Dublin 18, Ireland
Tel: 01 6622266
Email : info@selectmedialtd.com

Contributors:
Aidan O' Hara (RIP), Melissa Ward, Deirdre Cronin, Grainne McCool, Anne Marie Kennedy, Reidin O' Flynn (RIP), John O' Regan, Edel McLaughlin, Paul Keating, Michael Lange, Mark Lysaght, John Brophy, Philippe Cousin, Alex Monaghan, Nicky Rossiter, Caroline Tatem, Chris Keenan, Frank Grealley, Fergal Woods, Anita Lock, Bruce S. Victor, Mary Beth McCormack, Dave McNally, Austin Comerton, Maryann McTeague Keifer (RIP).

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George Millar was back home in Ireland and busy recording at RedBox Studios in Belfast when Seán Laffey phoned to see how the new album from The Irish Rovers was shaping up.

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WHAT IS CELTICMKE?



CelticMKE is a nonprofit organization based in Milwaukee, WI.

The brand CelticMKE was first introduced in 2016. While Milwaukee Irish Fest has been around since 1981, creating CelticMKE better represents the umbrella organization and all of its varied cultural activities and endeavors.



THEIR MISSION

CelticMKE's mission is to promote, preserve, and celebrate all aspects of Irish, Irish American and Celtic cultures, and to instill in current and future generations an appreciation of their heritage.

CULTURAL ENDEAVORS

CelticMKE has emerged into a thriving organization that celebrates the music, culture and history of Ireland, as well as other Celtic Nations, during its four-day festival Milwaukee Irish Fest, and with several initiatives and programs throughout the year.



CELTICMKE IS HOME TO ...

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- Milwaukee Irish Fest School of Music
- Milwaukee Irish Fest Choirs
- Ward Irish Music Archives

plus

- cultural programming
- concerts
- family-friendly activities
- workshops
- + much more!



FÁILTE!



CelticMKE is your destination for Celtic content, resources, programming, and so much more.

It all started with a one-of-a-kind festival over 40 years ago. Now, CelticMKE is thrilled to offer art and music classes, fun family events, and concerts from some of the world's best Irish, Irish American and Celtic musicians all year long.



Scan to learn more about CelticMKE, their resources, events, archives catalog, and more!

DIVE INTO CELTIC CULTURE WITH CELTICMKE!

Start exploring your Irish and Celtic heritage - or discovering your own unique love for it - with CelticMKE today! Follow them on TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook - or visit their website!



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20 years of Ireland's biggest celebration of trad & folk music.

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IRISH MUSIC CAFÉ RADIO SHOW PROVIDES A WORLDWIDE PLATFORM FOR IRISH MUSIC

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

"As an Irish musician in Detroit, the Irish Music Cafe is a great resource for getting my music out into the world. The welcome in-studio is second to none with great fun and banter from hosts Pat, Erin and Dave. It's always great craic. The genuine love of Ireland and our culture is palpable and like a great Irish pub it's a place to hear the news, connect with friends and listen to the music." - Enda Reilly.

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

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

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

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Carbony Celtic Winds offer musicians innovative musical instruments that blend the advantages of modern carbon fiber technology with the time-tested designs of traditional craftsmen. This unique carbon fiber process has a lay-up perfected to match the fiber structure and density of African Blackwood, proving a warm resonance. The aviation grade material is stable in all temperatures and climates creating an instrument that stays in tune and needs no settling or warmup.

Our designs are recreations of some of the best traditional instruments ever made. All the critical geometries are molded not reamed so the

repeatability and surface finish are perfected. With derived equations for establishing the frequency relationships, we offer a full line of whistles and flutes in all keys. We also specialize in close hole spacing. With our angled chimney technology, we create instruments that are easy for everyone to play. Custom work is also a specialty, so if there is a project or an instrument that needs carbon fiber replication, Carbony Celtic Winds can help. The selection of the material also creates flutes, whistles and pipes that are virtually indestructible so all instruments come with a lifetime warranty. Carbony Celtic Winds are used by professional musicians around the globe.

Check out the full line of products at www.Carbony.com and shots of our appearances at www.facebook.com/CarbonyCelticWinds

REEL IRISH RADIO SHOW

www.wioxradio.org

Reel Irish is an exploration, appreciation and celebration of Irish Traditional Music broadcast from an independent, all volunteer radio station, WIOX FM, in the northern Catskill mountains town of Roxbury in upstate New York.

The show was created by Richie Berger, an uilleann piper and fiddler from Southern Schoharie County when he was a piping student of current show host Tom Wadsworth. Every other Saturday from 10AM EST 'til noon, Tom plays the music that was danced to with delight at crossroads and in kitchens, community and parish halls.

From set dances and reels, hornpipes, jigs and polkas, the biweekly show presents musicians who established and preserved the tradition through the recording of 'the tunes' as well as the new generation of players who are 'carrying the tune' for the dancers and listeners of tomorrow.

Recognizing the need for the occasional story, songs in Irish and English are also featured as is spoken word so as to give the dancers and musicians a bit of a break.

If ever you find yourself in the northern Catskill mountains and are no more than twenty miles from Roxbury, you can tune your radio to 91.3 FM.

Elsewhere in the world streaming at: www.wioxradio.org

GAEL LINN TALENT COMPETITIONS

www.gael-linn.ie

SIANSA

This is a competition for traditional music groups with the support of RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta and Irish Music Magazine, to encourage and give a platform to the best of the country's young traditional music and singing talent. What is special about Siansa Gael Linn is that even though it is a competition, the young musicians receive mentoring from established musicians.

Groups are invited to put together a 10 - 12 minute musical set. Each recording will be listened to by a well-known musician and a critique provided. Groups will be selected to take part in the second stage of the competition. *Workshops* will be held in different venues across the country. Well-known musicians/singers will conduct the workshops and will advise the groups. 8 groups will be selected to participate in the final. *The Final* takes place in a prominent venue and the 8 groups have the opportunity to perform on a prestigious stage. RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta will live-broadcast the event.

Further details about prizes etc, go to <https://www.gael-linn.ie/siansa>

SCLÉIP
Scléip is an exciting and fun talent competition open to Irish Medium/Gaeltacht post-primary schools only, with an emphasis on the contemporary arts. Post-primary students are given the opportunity to perform music and songs in front of audiences and judges in venues across the country. The Categories include *Solo Instrumental and Singing, Solo Singing With Backing Track, Solo Instrumental Music only, Pop Group/Rock Group and Group Singing.*

We are delighted to partner with NOS.ie to present the NÓS Award to the best newly composed song at the Scléip Gael Linn final.

Further details about prizes etc, go to <https://www.gael-linn.ie/scléip>

MUSIC EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2024

THU 14 NOV 2024
ANDY IRVINE IN CONCERT
DOORS: 7PM | £22/£20



SAT 23 - SUN 24 NOV 2024
SEÁN KEANE
DOORS: 7:30PM (SAT)/7PM (SUN) | £25/£22.50



FRI 15 NOV - SAT 16 NOV 2024
LUKE KELLY 40TH ANNIVERSARY SHOW PERFORMED BY CHRIS KAVANAGH
DOORS: 7.45PM | £22.50/£20



FRI 29 NOV 2024
THE ROB STRONG BAND
DOORS: 7.45PM | £20/£18



SAT 17 NOV 2024
PADDY KEENAN, DERMOT BYRNE, TIM EDEY
DOORS: 7PM | £25/£22.50



SAT 30 NOV 2024
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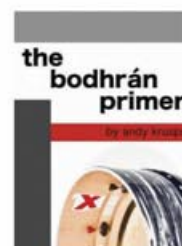


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FRIENDLY FOLK RECORDS/OOB RECORDS**friendlyfolkrecords.org / oob-records.com**

Label News: Greetings from Rotterdam, Netherlands with this seasonal update from our sister labels, **Friendly Folk Records (FFR)** and **Oob Records**. Due to a high level of demo submissions and releases from our signed label artists, we are currently welcoming new acts who are interested in joining our label family for 2025 releases. Average timeline between demo submission to release date takes approximately three months.

Attention Musicians: If you are in search of full service distribution and promotion for your music, perhaps **Oob/FFR Records** is for you. Information on how to send your music for consideration can be found on our websites FAQ section. Please keep in mind we are a record label; we are not a booking agency for live gigs or festivals. **Send demos to Kathy Keller at:** info@friendlyfolkrecords.org and/or info@oob-records.com

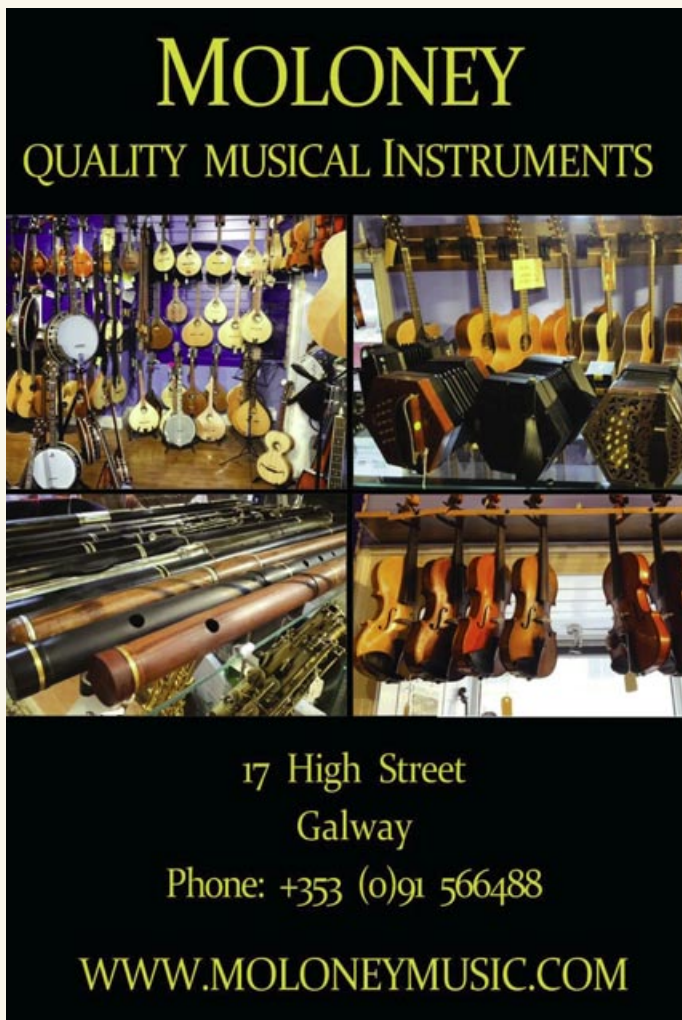
Interviews: This issue of Irish Music Magazine features an interview with **Drusuna Pagan Folk (Portugal)** discussing their long anticipated second studio album, *Beyond the Green Realm* (Oct/2024) featuring Sefirus Oakborn and Rose Avalon and **Schëppe Siwen (Luxemburg)**. Future issue interviews: **Ton Scherpenzeel (Netherlands)**, and **The Midnight (Italy)**.

2024 Fall/Winter releases: *Unadance* by **Ton Scherpenzeel (Netherlands)**; *Into the Mist of Time*, by **Philhelmon (Netherlands)**; *Richtung Fräiheet* by **Schëppe Siwen (Luxemburg)**; *Willow Trees* by **The Midnight (Italy)**; *The Witchfinder* by **Peter Lawson (UK)**. Visit our webshop for these titles and more.

www.oob-records.com/shop. (Digital downloads on Spotify, Bandcamp, Deezer, and 200+ more platforms).

ICC LIVE MUSIC EVENTS & MORE**November Music at The Irish Cultural Centre**www.irishculturalcentre.co.uk

The Irish Cultural Centre in Hammersmith, London is excited to



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announce a vibrant lineup of events this November, showcasing the finest in Irish music and featuring iconic performers.

On the 14th of November, we welcome back the legendary Andy Irvine for an unforgettable evening of his unique blend of Irish and Balkan influences. From the 15th to the 16th of November, Chris Kavanagh will pay tribute to the late, great Luke Kelly in a special 40th Anniversary Show, offering a heartfelt homage to the Dubliners' legendary frontman.

The music continues on the 17th of November with a stellar trio: Paddy Keenan, Dermot Byrne, and Tim Edey, promising a night of unparalleled musical mastery. On the 23rd and 24th of November, the celebrated Seán Keane will grace our stage with his evocative voice, delivering performances that will stay with you long after the night ends.

The month concludes with two incredible shows: The Rob Strong Band on the 29th of November, bringing their signature blues-rock energy, and on the 30th of November, Breaking Trad, joined by special guest Gino Lupari, offering a night of dynamic, foot-stomping tunes.

Don't miss out on these unforgettable evenings of Irish music and culture. Book your tickets now!

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

www.irishculturalcentre.co.uk**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/>**CHERISH THE LADIES**www.cherishtheladies.com

For over four decades, Cherish the Ladies has captivated audiences worldwide as one of the most celebrated Irish music ensembles. Known for their exhilarating fusion of traditional Irish music, enchanting vocals, and energetic step dancing, they have won hearts across the globe. 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 blazed a trail for women in the male-dominated Irish music scene, leaving a lasting legacy with 18 critically acclaimed albums and thousands of performances worldwide. Led by the dynamic flute and whistle virtuoso Joanie Madden, Cherish the Ladies creates an unforgettable experience of music, song, and dance, delivering a masterclass in entertainment. Alongside Madden are Mary Coogan on guitar, Mirella Murray on accordion, Kathleen Boyle on piano, Nollaig Casey on fiddle, vocalist Kate Purcell, and a team of world-class dancers.

The *New York Times* praises their sound as "passionate, tender, and rambunctious", while the *Washington Post* marvels at their "astounding array of virtuosity". The group has been honoured as the BBC's Best Musical Group of the Year and crowned Top North American Celtic Group at the Irish Music Awards. Their impressive list of collaborations includes the Boston Pops Symphony, Vince Gill, Nanci Griffith, The Chieftains, Pete Seeger, Arlo Guthrie, The Clancy Brothers, and Tommy Makem. As the most renowned Celtic Pops act in history, they've performed with over 300 symphony orchestras.

Among their many accolades, they were also immortalised with a street named in their honour on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx, New York. Cherish the Ladies' enduring success lies in their blend of masterful instrumentals, beautiful vocals, and breathtaking step dancing—all delivered with unmatched talent, creativity, and charm.

For more information and tour dates, go to

www.cherishtheladies.com



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bodhrán-info : NEW SKINS AND FRAMES SHOP NOW AVAILABLE
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bodhrán-info is a website fully dedicated to the bodhrán, run by Rolf Wagels, who has spent the last 30 years touring the world, playing, and teaching the Irish frame drum. The site offers a wealth of information, including the history of the bodhrán, a buyer's guide, and the latest updates on innovations in bodhrán craftsmanship and playing techniques.

New to the shop: You can now order skins and frames for the **ChangeHED system**, as well as synthetic skins for **HEDge** and **Rebellion bodhráns**.

The **ChangeHED skin-holding system** allows you to easily swap out the drumhead and tuning rim, both of which play a crucial role in shaping the instrument's sound. You can choose from a selection of pre-configured skins and frames, including synthetic options, or you can fully customise your own. Options include selecting the type of bodhrán skin, the placement of the spine (if you choose one), and adding personal touches like ribbons and nails for decoration. **For more details, visit:**

<https://www.bodhran-info.de/en/extras/skins-and-frames-for-changehed>.

Additionally, the **HEDge** and its predecessor, the **Rebellion**, have always been compatible with any standard 14-inch drum set skins. While you can find a wide variety of options at music shops worldwide, **bodhrán-info** now offers a curated selection of synthetic skins for these drums. Each **Remo skin** is specially treated and taped by Christian Hedwitschak to ensure optimal sound quality. **For more information, visit:**

<https://www.bodhran-info.de/en/extras/skins-for-hedge-and-rebellion>.

DAN POSSUMATO NEW ALBUM AND SINGLE
www.danpossumato.com

Dan has released a compilation drawn from three of his previous albums, entitled *An Teachín Gorm* or *The Blue Cottage*. The album

contains 20 tracks, and he is joined by many other musicians to include Kevin Burke, Séamus McGuire, Bill Verdier, Frances Cunningham, Mick Mulcrone and others. "It's a lovely album with some beautiful tunes on it" — *Aoife Nic Cormaic, The Rolling Wave, RTÉ Radio 1*.

Dan has also composed and released a single, *Planxty Gerard McDonnell*, in memory of his friend and bandmate who perished in a mountain climbing disaster. He is again joined by Séamus McGuire on fiddle, with Stan O'Beirne on piano.

Both releases are available at www.danpossumato.com, Apple Music, Amazon, Spotify and Band Camp.

CONOR MORIARTY : THE FIRST MONTH OF SUMMER

Facebook: Conor Moriarty Instagram: conorbox

Conor Moriarty hails from Kilcummin, County Kerry and began playing the accordion at the age of 7. In 2009, he was crowned All Ireland Champion on melodeon and went on to win the much coveted prize of Senior All Ireland Champion on the button accordion in 2010. He completed an MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance at the University of Limerick the same year. Since then Conor has released his debut solo album to critical acclaim, *The Irish Times* garnishing it "A three dimensional, glorious debut" and gave it four stars.

In 2013, Conor worked as Musical Director with Siamsa Tíre, The National Folk Theatre and performed for six years with their hit show, *Turas*.

In 2014, he alongside a few of his music contemporaries formed the band The Trí Tones and released a critically acclaimed album which earned TradConnect's 'Album Of The Year'.

Conor has toured all over North and South America, Canada and Newfoundland, Europe and China with such bands and shows as The Trí Tones, Cordeen, Celtic Legends, Socks in the Frying Pan to name a few.

In 2022, Conor began working as Musical Director of popular Irish music and dance show, 'Gaelic Roots' in his home town of Killarney. He is a much sought after music teacher with many of his students winning top prizes at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann on numerous occasions. He is looking forward to playing music from his new album in lots of venues and festivals around the country in the near future.

Facebook: Conor Moriarty Instagram: conorbox

EIMEAR QUINN : SONGS OF WINTER DREAMING

www.eimearquinn.com

Lovers of Irish music and song this winter season, will be thrilled to learn that Eimear Quinn has a new release: *SONGS OF WINTER DREAMING*.

As one of the pre-eminent Irish voices of her generation, Eimear Quinn's ethereal voice has become synonymous with the Christmas season for many, since her multi-platinum selling album *O Holy Night* in 2007.

Touring Ireland each year through the winter season, Eimear decided the time had come for a new album of winter music: Eimear says: "It has become an enormous part of my life, touring and meeting audiences through December, sharing in the magic of the season, as we lose ourselves in the music for a couple of hours, away from the crazy pace of life. The audience has been asking me for more winter and Christmas music for a while, so I'm delighted to say that, this November, it's finally here!"

Songs on this new release include originals such as *Song of Winter Dreaming*, *Silent Snow* and *Winter Solstice*, as well as traditional carols arranged by Eimear such as *The Wexford Carol*, *Suantraí ar Slanaitheora*, *Oíche í mBeithil Fadó* and the Catalan folk carol *El Cant Des Ocells*.

Eimear is joined by the **Mamisa String Quartet**, plus renowned folk guitarist **Robbie Overson** (Scullion) with whom Eimear has been working since her first EP in 1996. The album will also feature

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1 & 15 February

DAN McCABE

BACK TO LIFE

ALBUM
OUT NOW



TOUR DATES

October 2024

Sat 26th Devenish Complex Belfast

November 2024

Fri 1st Abbey Hotel Roscommon
Fri 8th Canal Court Newry
Sat 9th Loughrea Hotel
Thurs 21st Woodlands Hotel Adare
Sat 23rd Palace Theatre Fermoy
Sat 30th Royal Theatre Castlebar

January 2025

Thurs 2nd Greville Arms Mullingar
Fri 3rd Clayton Hotel Galway
Sat 4th Clayton Hotel Cork
Fri 10th Keadeen Hotel Newbridge
Sat 11th Kilmore Hotel Cavan
Sat 18th Carrickdale Hotel Dundalk
Fri 24th Riverside Park Enniscorthy
Sat 25th Abbey Hotel Donegal
Sun 26th Vicar St
Fri 31st Tullyglass House Hotel Ballymena

February 2025

Sat 1st Headford Arms Kells
Fri 7th Longcourt House Hotel West Limerick
Sat 8th Landmark Carrick-on-Shannon
Thurs 13th Glor Ennis
Sat 15th Woodford Dolmen Carlow
Sat 22nd Bru Boru Theatre Cashel
Sat 28th Rhu Glenn Hotel Waterford

March 2025

Sat 1st Millennium Forum Derry
Fri 7th Shamrock Lodge Hotel Athlone
Sat 8th Armagh City Hotel
Thurs 13th Westport Town Hall Theatre
Sat 15th Arklow Bay Hotel
Fri 21st Birr Theatre Offaly
Sat 22nd Devenish Complex Belfast
Fri 28th INEC Killarney
Sat 29th Maritime Hotel Bantry

September 2025

Sat 1st Millennium Forum Derry
Sat 8th Armagh City Hotel
Sat 15th Arklow Bay Hotel
Sat 22nd Devenish Complex Belfast
Friday 28th INEC Killarney

October 2025

Thurs 9th Set Theatre Kilkenny
Friday 10th Set Theatre Kilkenny
Sat 11th Set Theatre Kilkenny
Sat 25th St. Michael's Theatre New Ross

November 2025

Sat 8th Jacksons Hotel Ballybofey
Fri 14th Ardhowen Theatre
Sat 15th Newgrange Hotel Navan
Sat 22nd Sirule Arts Centre Omagh

Tickets available on
[ticketmaster.ie](https://www.ticketmaster.ie)

Australian Tour 2025 to be announced
US Tour 2025 to be announced

pianist **Feargal Murray** and Ukrainian Bardura (folk harp) player **Tetiana Mazur**. They will take the album on tour in beautiful churches and cathedrals around Ireland through November and December.

Eimear Quinn is best known and loved for being Ireland's most recent Eurovision Song Contest winner (1996) with *The Voice* by Brendan Graham. Her unique blend of folk, sacred and classical music has garnered many accolades including the Classic FM Hall of Fame for her composition *In Paradisum* for the 4 years in a row.

Tour dates, music videos, CDs and streaming information can be found at www.eimearquinn.com

Facebook @eimearquinnvox

Instagram @eimearvox

NEW LEAF

newleafirishband.com

New Leaf is Kira Jewett on fiddle, Jacob Hagelberg on accordion and Jim Bunting on guitar, vocals and bouzouki. Together they play traditional tunes with tight musicality, deep respect, and unbridled joy, interspersed with Jim's unique take on Ireland's song repertoire.

Kira Jewett started playing classically when she was just three years old, but fell in love with the music of Ireland in her 20s and studied extensively with fiddler Brian Conway. She is the 2003 All-Ireland fiddle Slow Airs Champion. Jim Bunting is an avid local player who brings a sensitive touch and driving rhythm to the band. Jacob Hagelberg, our most recent addition, is a session musician who specialises in the B/C style of accordion. He fell in love with the music at 17, and has been playing ever since studying under Billy McComiskey and Damien Connolly.

The name "New Leaf" is taken from a Billy McComiskey composition, and the band enjoys sharing the tunes of talented traditional composers such as McComiskey, Liz Carroll, Paddy O'Brien and even the group's own members. They have received praise for their style and joyful energy from late concert promoter Brian O'Donovan among others.

New Leaf has two critically-acclaimed CDs and were invited

THE HENRY GIRLS

December 2024 & January 2025

Friday 6th December - Portico of Ards With Lore - Portaferry, Co. Down
 Friday 20th December - Christmas concert - St Augustine's Church, Derry 8pm
 Saturday 21st December - Family Christmas concert - St Augustine's Church, Derry 2pm
 Sunday 19th January - Atlantic Irish Fest - Aparthotel Bundoran, Co. Donegal
 Thursday 23rd January - Poppy Lane Sessions - Kinvara, Co. Galway
 Friday 24th January - Shorelines Festival - Portumna Co. Galway
 Saturday 25th January - Temple Bar TradFest - Millbank Theatre, Co. Dublin

"A gracious and gutsy Collection"

www.thehenrygirls.com

NEW ALBUM
"A TIME TO GROW"
 AVAILABLE NOW



guests at the 2023 Fleadh Nua in Ennis. Currently they stay busy performing throughout New England and touring.

You can find and book them at newleafirishband.com and Facebook or listen to their music at newleaf1.bandcamp.com as well as on Spotify, YouTube, and Apple Music.

CELEBRATE 55 YEARS OF TRADITION WITH SHASKEEN!

www.shaskeen.net

Shaskeen are coming towards the end of a very successful 2024 and looking forward always. Join us for the remaining gigs in 2024 starting with The Abbey Theatre, Ballyshannon Sat 2nd November. St Johns Theatre, Listowel on Sunday 3rd November, early gig 5 to 7pm. Brú Ború, Cashel on Sat 9th November, and finally Sat 30th November, a Charity Concert in Town Hall Ballinasloe. This great concert line up includes Le Chéile Step dancing troupe, Eleanor Shanley, renowned international folk singer & Shaskeen. Check out www.buildyourfuturetoday.org

Please join with super group Shaskeen as they deliver Traditional Irish Music & Song on their 55 Emerald Anniversary Tour in 2025! (Shaskeen55 Emerald Tour (1970-2025)). For over half a century, this beloved Trad group has captivated audiences with their soulful melodies, lively performances, and rich heritage of Irish music and song.

A Legacy of Music: From intimate gatherings to grand festivals, Shaskeen has been at the heart of the Irish music scene, bringing the spirit of Ireland to life through their enchanting tunes and heartfelt songs.

Special Anniversary Events: Prepare for a year filled with unforgettable performances, special guest appearances, and celebrations of Irish music like never before. Whether you're a lifelong fan or new to the scene, there's no better time to experience the timeless magic of Shaskeen!

Join the Celebration: Book Shaskeen and mark your calendars to be part of this landmark year! Let's raise a glass and our voices in celebration of community, tradition, and the joy of Irish music.

Here's to 55 years of Shaskeen—and many more to come! Sláinte!

For more information on upcoming shows and events, visit www.shaskeen.net

BREAKING NEWS: RAGLAN ROAD IRISH DANCERS WANTED

Cian O'Flynn coflynn@raglanroad.com

Raglan Road in Orlando, Florida, U.S.A are seeking multi-talented Irish Dancers for up to a 6-month contract.

Flights, visa, accommodation, meals, transport included.

So, if you have fantastic feet and previous show experience, combined with a great attitude and would enjoy performing in the Florida sunshine, get in touch.

For inquiries contact Cian O'Flynn coflynn@raglanroad.com

BREAKING NEWS: RAGLAN ROAD MUSICIANS WANTED

Cian O'Flynn coflynn@raglanroad.com

Raglan Road in Orlando, Florida, U.S.A are seeking multi-talented Trad Bands and Solo Artists for up to a 6-month contract.

Flights, visa, accommodation, meals, transport included.

So, if you have fantastic sense of rhythm & previous show experience, combined with a great attitude and would enjoy performing in the Florida sun, get in touch.

For inquiries contact Cian O'Flynn coflynn@raglanroad.com

THE HENRY GIRLS ANNOUNCE DECEMBER & JANUARY DATES ACROSS IRELAND

www.thehenrygirls.com

The Henry Girls will end 2024 with two special Christmas concerts at St. Augustine's Church in Derry. They'll perform an evening concert on Friday, December 20th, at 8pm, followed by a family-friendly afternoon concert at 2pm on Saturday, December 21st.

GAE LINN

Traditional Music & Contemporary Arts Competitions



Siansa Gael Linn – Young Traditional Music Group
(with the support of Raidió na Gaeltachta & Irish Music Magazine)

Scléip Gael Linn – Music, Singing and Contemporary Arts
sponsored by Foras na Gaeilge

All Information from www.gael-linn.ie



Kicking off 2025, the Donegal-born trio—sisters Karen, Lorna, and Joleen McLaughlin—will headline the Atlantic Irish Festival on January 19th in Bundoran, Co. Donegal. They'll also appear at the Poppy Lane Sessions in Kinvara, Co. Galway, on January 23rd, and the Shorelines Festival in Portumna, Co. Galway, on January 24th. The month wraps up with a performance at Temple Bar TradFest at the Millbank Theatre in Rush, Dublin, on January 25th.

Their January schedule includes a showcase at the Your Roots Are Showing folk music conference in Killarney, joining artists from around the globe.

These performances follow the success of their 2024 album, *A Time to Grow*, which received critical acclaim. *The Irish Times* praised it as “a gracious and gutsy collection”, highlighting the trio’s ability to blend traditional folk with innovation.

The Henry Girls have also joined the rosters of Wooden Ship Productions for North America and Midnight Mango for the rest of the world, signalling their growing international presence. With their blend of folk, harmony, and soulful storytelling, The Henry Girls are set to captivate audiences throughout Ireland this January. Don’t miss the chance to see them live!

Find out more at www.thehenrygirls.com

40 YEARS OF ALTAN

www.altan.ie

Altan have been at the forefront of the Irish traditional music scene for four decades now. They have played all over the world from the Sydney Opera House to the Hollywood Bowl to name a few prestigious venues, as well as collaborating with many highly respected musicians and singers on their albums, from Bonnie Raitt, Steve Cooney, Dolly Parton, Donal Lunny, Liam O’Flynn and many more.

Their albums and shows are always well received, gaining praise from reviewers to selling out shows wherever they play.

Altan were honoured on an Irish Stamp by An Post and have been given a civic reception by Donegal County Council.

In November 2024, the Irish American Books, Arts and Music awards, iBAM, held a Gala evening in Chicago, Illinois to recognise Altan’s achievements in their traditional Irish music field over their forty year career.

Their latest album, *Donegal*, was released in the Spring of 2024 and has been received with favourable reviews from both sides of the Atlantic.

Altan will be touring in the USA in March 2025, before their Irish and European dates next Summer. Catch them at a show near you!

For further information visit www.altan.ie

THE HAAR

thehaar.ie/gigs

Renowned Anglo-Irish folk ensemble The Haar are set to take to the stage again in November for a series of four gigs – including two maiden appearances in Scotland.

The band includes the formidable talent of All-Ireland Scór na nÓg winner **Molly Donnery** alongside three of the most exciting instrumentalists on the folk and traditional music circuit: **Cormac Byrne** (bodhrán), **Adam Summerhayes** (fiddle) and **Murray Grainger** (accordion).

Their music is fast becoming known as unafraid to transcend borders – whilst recognisably born of the traditional music that all members have grown up with.

Unapologetic in pushing boundaries, the band embodies a unique ‘live reactive composition’ approach - embracing both spontaneous improvisation and trad structures. Their self-titled debut, released in June 2020, is a collection of traditional Irish songs tackling love, poverty and oppression.

It was heralded as “a splendid balance of swirling instrumental magic and beautifully sung narratives” by *Klof Mag* and attracted attention from the likes of Mike Harding who described it as “absolutely amazing”.

The band’s latest album, *Where Old Ghosts Meet*, continues to earn rave reviews, solidifying their reputation as a *must-see live act* on prestigious stages.

Excited at the prospect of playing in Scotland, **accordionist Murray said**: “I’m really looking forward to playing in Scotland, the land of my ancestors and somewhere with a deep appreciation of us box squeezers”.

Cormac added: “We can’t wait. Scotland is home to so many amazing folk musicians and it’s a uniquely rich, vibrant culture so we can’t wait to tour there this November.”

Vocalist Molly summarised their anticipation, she said: “I’m hoping to hear about other versions of our songs. I know that there’s a lot of crossover between Irish and Scottish pieces from people I’ve met before so hoping to have some great chats on that at these gigs. Also, I can’t wait for a deep fried Mars bar”.

All gigs and details: thehaar.ie/gigs

CLOVER’S REVENGE

cloversrevenge.com

We are Clover’s Revenge, a Sarasota, Florida - based Irish Speed Folk trio. For those of you who’ve not heard of it, Irish Speed Folk is a genre of music, which, frankly, we made up. We have noticed, however, that other bands have adopted the same description, and we are *delighted* to welcome these other groups from around the world to the party!

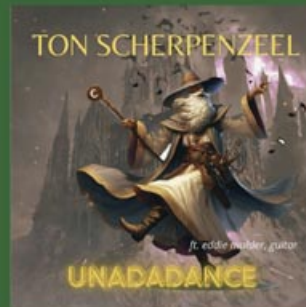
Although the band’s most natural element is the traditional pub, 2025 will mark our busiest festival season with three new festivals in the first three months alone. The band’s ultimate goal is to continue playing pubs and festivals in the US, Canada, the UK, and Ireland.

WHAT’S nEXT?: Next up for Clover’s Revenge is the Spotify release of their newest single, an original song called *If There Is No Pub In Heaven* by Clover’s Revenge member, John Barron. This single comes off of *Among Your Friends*, the band’s most recent CD. The single drops November 18th. Also, along with their busy US festival schedule, the band will be travelling to Ireland with a group of their most dedicated fans in June of 2025.

We’re looking forward to meeting you all. - **John, Zach and Beau - Clover’s Revenge**



Embark on a journey ‘Beyond The Green Realm’ with Drusuna Pagan Folk to uncover ancestral roots long forgotten. A tale of a distant past that still breathes, waiting to be heard by those who care to listen closely within the serene embrace of the green realm. Single released 22/September. Album released 4/October via Friendly Folk Records in digital and cd format.



Experience the vibrant, folky charm of **UNADADANCE** by Ton Scherpenzeel. An irresistible blend of fun and rhythm! Available worldwide on over 200 digital platforms starting October 15, 2024

Richtung Fräiheet Nov/2024 release from Luxembourg’s dynamic folk-punk band, **Schöppe Siwen**, is more than just an album; it’s a call to embrace life boldly and fight for what really matters.



Demo submissions to Kathy Keller: info@friendlyfolkrecords.org / info@oob-records.com
Visit our webstore for Artist roster and all releases from both labels! oob-records.com/shop

Socks in the Frying Pan

Waiting for Inspiration Out November 15

Standout tracks include: Willy Anne's Waltz, The Ballerina reel, & the Beetlejuice-inspired Beetlejig Beetlejig Beetlejig!

- ★ High-energy Irish traditional trio from Ennis, County Clare
- ★ Known for infusing virtuosic musicianship with humour, charisma, and a palpable passion for their roots
- ★ Critically acclaimed as "Live Band of the Year" at the 2020 Celtic Music Awards
- ★ Celebrating 10 years of music making in 2024!



Catch them On Tour in the US 3-12 December 2024

"Waiting for Inspiration" will be available for purchase at www.socksinthefryingpan.com and in person during the band's December US tour

ABOUT CLOVER'S REVENGE: Clover's Revenge exists at the intersection of two beloved genres of music: Celtic Traditional and Irish Punk Rock. The trio, which recently released its third full-length CD *Among Your Friends*, is composed of guitarist/vocalist Zachary Johnson, mandolin player/vocalist John Barron and cajon player/screamer Beau Wilberding. With a repertoire that features traditional reels, jigs and pub songs, as well as Irish Punk Rock classics from bands like The Pogues, Flogging Molly, Young Dubliners and Dropkick Murphys, Clover's Revenge are best known for their well-loved original compositions like *No Irish Need Apply* or *The Merry Misadventures Of Sister Mary Margaret*.

Find out more at cloversrevenge.com or facebook.com/cloversrevenge

SOCKS IN THE FRYING PAN : WAITING FOR INSPIRATION

www.socksinthefryingpan.com

Socks in the Frying Pan, the high-energy Irish traditional trio from Ennis, County Clare known for infusing virtuosic musicianship with humour, charisma, and a palpable passion for their roots, self-releases their fifth album *Waiting for Inspiration* on 15 November, 2024, ahead of the band's Christmas tour of the US from 3-12 December, 2024.

Critically acclaimed as "Live Band of the Year" at the 2020 Celtic Music Awards, Socks in the Frying Pan celebrates 10 years of music making in 2024 with *Waiting for Inspiration*, presenting 11 brand new tracks featuring band members **Aodán Coyne** (guitar and lead vocals), **Shane Hayes** (accordion, keyboard, guitar and vocals), **Fiachra Hayes** (fiddle, banjo, mandolin, guitar, bodhrán and vocals) along with special guest artists "The Sockettes" (singers **Lee Coyne**, **Nicole Daly**, **Willy Anne Wijnja**), **John Bridge** (bass), and **Mike Shimmin** (drums).

Highlights of *Waiting for Inspiration* include new tunes composed and performed by Shane Hayes like *Willy Anne's Waltz*, *The Ballerina* reel, and more; the Beetlejuice-inspired track *Beetlejig Beetlejig Beetlejig!* featuring The Sockettes and Dead Choir; and song *Shoot the Arrow* featuring vocals by Aodán Coyne, who *Folk World* has described as "a traditional singer who is capable of continuing the Irish song tradition and joining the ranks of the great Irish vocalists".

Waiting for Inspiration is the Socks' fifth full-length album, following *Socks in the Frying Pan* (2012), *Return of the Giant Sock Monsters from Outer Space* (2015), *Without a Paddle* (2016), and *Raw & Rí (Live)* (2019).

Waiting for Inspiration will be available for purchase at www.socksinthefryingpan.com and in person during the band's December US tour.

AN ACTION-PACKED YEAR FOR ONÓIR

www.onoirmusic.com


As an action-packed 2024 comes to a close for Donegal-based vocal quartet Onóir, it seems that things are only beginning for the contemporary folk group. It has been an exciting year for the band from releasing their self-titled, debut album in March and touring it extensively, to making their first adventure across the pond on a month-long tour of the United States, playing at a collection of the largest Irish festivals in the world.

Not long after returning home from The US, they travelled to London for their first set of sold-out concerts in The UK. With their first shows in Scotland happening in November alongside a full touring schedule in Ireland between now and Christmas, it is time for the group to take stock of what 2025 has in store for them.

In between back-to-back shows every weekend, Onóir once again find themselves in the studio recording for their second album, scheduled for release in the first half of 2025. Plans are also already in motion for a second tour in The USA come the spring of next year, with a collection of shows set to take place in March. The Donegal singers also look towards the third and fourth concerts of their career in The Historic Millennium Forum in Derry. The first night on March 7th is now sold out, and night two taking place on April 13th has just went on sale.


A complete list of Onóir's remaining concerts for 2024 and their upcoming tour schedule for 2025 can be found on their website at www.onoirmusic.com

AVAILABLE AS DIGITAL DOWNLOADS AT WWW.DANPOSSUMATO.COM AND AMAZON, APPLE MUSIC, SPOTIFY & BAND CAMP



Planxty Gerard McDonnell
 Dan Possumato • Button Accordion
 Séamus McGuire • Fiddle
 Stan O'Beirne • Piano

SINGLE



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 THE BLUE COTTAGE
 DAN POSSUMATO
 AND FRIENDS

KEVIN BURKE
 SEAMUS MCGUIRE
 BILL VERDIER
 FRANCES CUNNINGHAM
 MICK MULCRONE
 BRIAN MCGRATH
 TERESA BAKER
 ELIJOT GRASSO
 BRUCE MOLYNEUX
 VINCE BURNS
 KATHY FALLON
 BILLY OSKAY
 MOLLY THOMPSON
 GERRY WHELAN
 ELIZABETH NICHOLSON

20 TRACKS

CONSISTING OF TRACKS FROM THESE ALBUMS:
The Last Pint, Tunes Inside, Putting Out The Stops



NEW LEAF
 Traditional Irish Music and Song

Based in New England, USA

"Terrific, pure drop Irish trad"

- Brian O'Donovan, concert promoter, WGBH

See, Hear and Book us at newleafirishband.com
 Listen and buy our CDs at newleaf.bandcamp.com
 or wherever you get your music

The Irish Concertina Company

Quality Instruments Handcrafted in Dublin, Ireland

Introducing The Highest Quality Irish Made Concertina



The Eirú GOLD €4500
Clamped Brass Concertina Reeds
with Inside Angle.
(Similar reeds to Suttner)



The Eirú SILVER €4000
Clamped Brass Concertina Reeds.
(New Concept: Clamped Reeds made
without inside angling for a more
budget friendly top of the range option.)



The Vintage €3500
Steel Ends
Riveted Brass Concertina Reeds.
(Similar reeds to 7mount)



The Vintage €3500
Hardwood Ends
Riveted Brass Concertina Reeds.
(Similar reeds to 7mount)



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



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

JOHNNY McEVOY ON THE ROAD AGAIN

On the cusp of his 80th birthday (April 24th, 2025), singer/songwriter legend Johnny McEvoy is back on the road again, touring the country for a series of concerts to promote a brand new album *Both Sides*, featuring 14 new compositions, as well as extra spoken word tracks featuring poems and stories, writes Frank Greally.



When we meet on a sunny October afternoon at the Bochelli restaurant in Greystones, the idyllic Wicklow town that has been home to Johnny for many years, he is relaxed and happy to talk about his new album and the tour that will run from early November to his birthday month of April 2025.

"I have spent the last eighteen months writing new songs and recording the album in Madison Studios, run by Bill Shanley, who also happens to be my producer," Johnny said. "Bill is one of the finest musicians in Ireland and he is a genius, full of brilliant ideas.

"Bill played most of the instruments on the album apart from saxophone, played by Richie Buckley, who is also full of magic. I wrote thirty new songs during what was a very intense creative period and I've recorded 14 of them for this new album. I have many left over for another album after that. The whole process nearly killed me, as I'd be writing from 11am until maybe 8 or 9 o'clock at night. Eventually, my daughter Alice had to intervene and encourage me to slow down for the sake of my health."

It has been a highly creative and productive period for Johnny, who now lives alone - content in his own company. Eleven years have slipped by since Johnny's beloved wife Odette was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. The prognosis was three years - maybe, but she died on November 12th, 2013. "Today is Odette's (or Dodi, as I called her), birthday," Johnny tells me. "Through good times and bad, we were together for nearly fifty years and she did the most of the rearing of our two children, Jonathan and Alice, while I was out on the road making a living for us.

"During the dreadful time of operations and chemo treatment, Odette remained stoic about it all, saying however bad the chemo was, at least it was keeping her alive," Johnny said.

After Odette's cancer diagnosis, Johnny cancelled all his tours, recordings and travels abroad, dedicating himself to looking after her as best he could.

"I found that caring for Odette through her illness gave a purpose to my life that I never had before," he said. "It's amazing what strengths you find as a human being in times of grief; and how quickly one can adjust to all kinds of adversity."

Now that his new album is recorded and ready for market, Johnny can relax a little and enjoy his countrywide tour, supported by his wing-man, guitar supremo John McLoughlin. "It's a great relief to finally have the album recorded," Johnny said. "It was a difficult experience for all involved because I am never fully satisfied with the songs I am writing and even when recording a song I can get up to my usual tricks of changing words or lines which can prove to be very challenging for everyone."

Since he started writing songs back in 1975, Johnny estimates that he has written well over 200 compositions. The first song he wrote came to him while sitting on a stone in a field at the back of Kennedy's pub in Doocastle, where he was gigging on an Easter Monday night in 1975. "I was feeling a bit down and while the band was setting up I took myself off to the haggard behind the pub," Johnny said. "Looking back now, I think the title for the song came from something my father used to say if I asked him about times past. I remember that his usual answer to my questions was: 'Sure that was long before your time, son'. I reckon those words gave me the trigger for the song."

Johnny was finishing off recording an album at the time and decided to add his new composition to the mix without telling anyone that he had written the song. "I was a bit shy and embarrassed about writing it as it was a sad song and my first attempt at song-writing," he said. "However, the record producers took a liking to the song and they released it as a single which quickly sped up the charts and ended up as a Number One hit for me. *Long Before Your Time* is in the style of the old melodramatic songs that were popular on the stages of the old Victorian music

halls, and I am proud to say that that people still request it after all these years."

Muirsheen Durkan was the game-changer for Johnny; a song that will be forever associated with him. The recording of that song came about in the late summer of 1965 when Johnny was appearing in a show called *Gaels Of Laughter* in Dublin's Gaiety Theatre. "I was approached by John Woods of PYE Records and asked to record a few songs with the possibility of releasing one as a record," Johnny said.

"The song itself dates back to the California Gold Rush of 1849 and was probably written by one of the many Irish immigrants working there at the time. I got the song while singing in the Abbey Tavern, from Jessie Owens, a great singer and a collector of songs in his own right. Isn't it strange how a life can be changed in just a couple of words? The song went quickly to Number One in the hit parade, with *Those Brown Eyes* as a B-side, It remained in the Top 20 well into the middle of the next year and won me one of the

all the songs he has written over the years, it is *The Ballad Of Anne Frank* that Johnny chooses as his favourite composition. "I wrote that song after a disturbing visit to the Anne Frank house in Amsterdam," he said. Another favourite is *Michael* - a song about the tragic killing of Michael Collins which Johnny wrote in 1995 after a visit to Béal Na Bláth, where Michael Collins died in an ambush during the Civil War. *The Ballad Of John Williams* is another favourite.

Johnny names Liam Clancy as his biggest influence when setting out on his life of music and song. "Liam was a great influence on me during the early days of my career and Bob Dylan and Hank Williams are lifelong favourites of mine, too," he said.

As we finish lunch, Johnny tells me about a trip he is making the following day to Auschwitz, the Second World War Nazi concentration camp. "It's something I have always wanted to do," he said. I have always had a great interest in history, especially Irish history and the First and Second World Wars."

"I'm now back on the road again with a new album, a fulfilment of my wish to record an album of all my own songs"

first silver discs awarded in Ireland up to that time."

Johnny has for many years now been a prolific song writer. When I ask where the inspiration for his songs comes from, Johnny replies: "An old Chinese proverb says -'Inspiration is like a dove that lands on your shoulder, but if you don't catch him quickly, he will fly away and never return'.

"Sometimes when I'm struggling for some inspiration and nothing is coming to mind, I feel God creeping up behind me and whispering in my ear, 'Hey John, I have a great idea', so I listen.

"You see, it has nothing to do with me. It's not the words, it's not the melody, it's the idea. Some of the songs I write, you may find them difficult to understand and when recording them, I sometimes have my doubts. But Bill Shanley reassures me by saying: 'John, they are you and you only'. My manager Darren Farrell tells me that I have great ability to keep reinventing myself and I have managed to do that a good few times over the years, starting back in 1963 with The Ramblers with Mick Crotty. I then moved on to the showband era with a full band, and when the dance halls began to fall off, due, I feel, to lack of re-investment by the owners at the time, I had to move on to a couple of successful decades on the cabaret scene with Phillip O'Duffy, a hugely talented musician (guitar and mandolin) who toured with me for 20 years without ever a cross word said between us.

"I'm now back on the road again with a new album, a fulfilment of my wish to record an album of all my own songs and a list of tour dates that will keep me engaged right up to my 80th birthday."

There are some more song gems to be enjoyed on Johnny's new album, including a beauty titled *Trail Of Tears*, a song dedicated to the Choctaw Indians, who although being oppressed themselves, came to the aid of Irish people during the Great Famine. A few verses from this song are worth sharing:

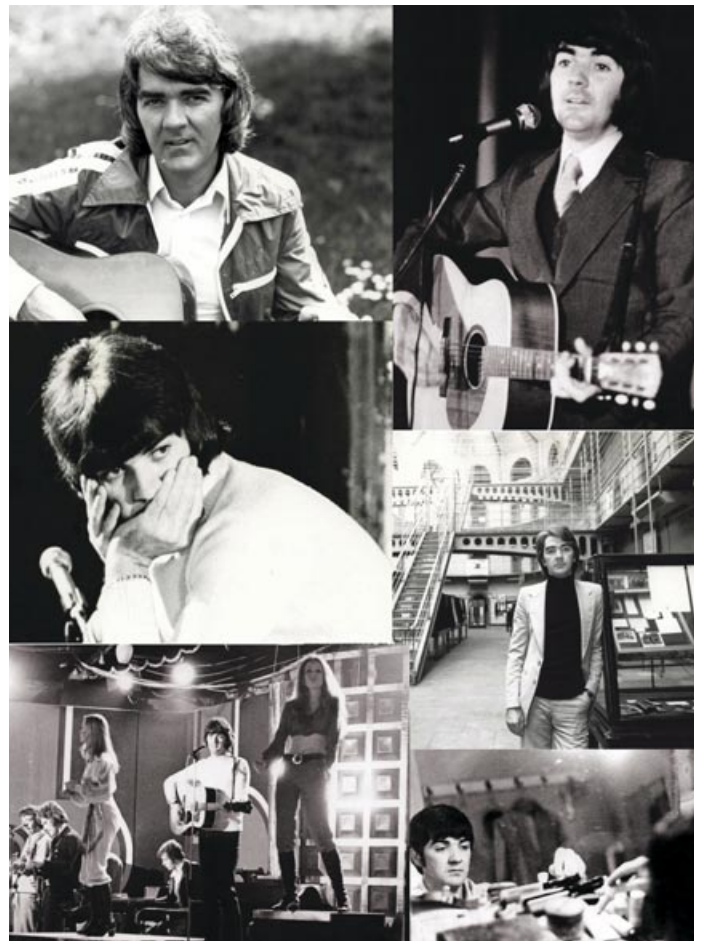
*Burning plains white with snow
The great white chief says you must go
Your wife and child though young in years
Now lie up on "The Trail Of Tears"
Your brothers in a far off land
They die of hunger where they stand
Yet in their pain and suffering you
Send them bread that was meant for you*

Other tracks include a song about the loss of the Kingstown lifeboat in 1849 and one about Matt Talbot and the demon drink. There are some tender love songs included, too - *Do You Want To Be With Me*, *You Left Me A Memory Or Two* and *Potters Lane*. Of

Before we part ways, Johnny gives me a poem/song that he has just written, titled *Child Of Auschwitz*, with the lines:

*O little child my tears are falling
I'd like to take you from this spot
To where you'll hear the cuckoos calling
And pick the sweet forget-me-nots*

Johnny enjoys his daily walks down by the sea at Greystones, where he often finds inspiration for new songs. At night, before he goes to sleep, he tunes in to hear Morgan Freeman recite Edgar Allen Poe's classic poem *The Raven*, a poem that tells the story of a mysterious talking raven which visits a young man who misses a woman who has died. "I find comfort in that poem and it always helps me to find sleep," Johnny said.



ON MY OWN with Meadhbh Walsh

Robert Heuston in conversation with the Rising Star of Irish Folk Music for Irish Music Magazine.



Robert: What can we expect from the new album *On My Own*, and what was your thought process that inspired the songs?

Meadhbh: *On My Own* is a reflection of my evolving style in Irish folk music. The album is influenced by artists I grew up listening to, like Stockton's Wing and Christy Moore. I wanted to blend traditional Irish sounds with contemporary influences, which is why I included a country song, *Something in the Orange* by Zach Bryan. The album features three of my originals: *On My Own*, *21 in 22*, and *One of a Kind*. Recording each song was a joyful experience, allowing me to showcase my songwriting while exploring new sounds. My aim was to create a fusion of Irish folk and contemporary music that resonates with listeners. I hope that the stories in these songs connect with people and reflect shared experiences, making the album relatable and meaningful.

Meadhbh: Collaborating with other artists has been a vital part of my music journey. My experience started in 2022 when I toured with Dan McCabe, which opened doors for me to work with talented musicians like the Whistlin' Donkeys, George Murphy, and Daniel O'Donnell. Each collaboration has taught me something new and helped me grow as an artist. Some highlights include the friendships formed and the creative energy shared during our sessions. Working with these musicians has been an honour, as they inspire me to push my own limits and explore different styles. I appreciate the community within Irish music, where artists support each other and contribute to our shared heritage. I look forward to more collaborations in the future, as they enrich my music and keep the spirit of Irish folk alive.

Robert: As a successful touring artist whose music is resonating around the world, what advice would you give to young musicians starting their careers?

Meadhbh: To young musicians starting out, my main advice is to enjoy every moment and seize every opportunity. Don't hesitate to attend events, collaborate, and learn from others in the industry. Avoid comparing yourself to others; every artist has their own path. There's a saying, "There are horses for courses", and I believe you should find what works for you. If you have a passion for music, put yourself out there—you never know who will connect with your work. Remember, your music can inspire someone even if you don't see it. Keep creating and sharing your voice, especially in genres like Irish music, which are always evolving. Stay true to yourself, work hard, and let your passion guide you. Music has the power to make a difference, so don't be afraid to share your art with the world.

"My life's purpose is to champion this music and inspire others to appreciate and contribute to our rich musical heritage"

Robert: How significant is preserving the Irish ballad and sharing the songs with the Irish diaspora around the world for you?

Meadhbh: Preserving the Irish ballad is incredibly important to me. Since I was young, I've felt a strong connection to Irish music, which is a huge part of my identity. Sharing these songs with the Irish diaspora helps create a sense of community among those who may feel far from their roots. It's inspiring to see young people perform my songs and embrace Irish music. For me, it's not just about music; it's about keeping our culture alive. I believe that Irish folk music captures our shared experiences and emotions, and I want to ensure it continues to resonate with future generations. My life's purpose is to champion this music and inspire others to appreciate and contribute to our rich musical heritage.

Robert: You have been making significant progress touring the United States in late 2023 and during 2024. How has this experience been for Meadhbh Walsh?

Meadhbh: Touring the United States has been an amazing experience for me. From the moment I arrived, I felt warmly welcomed by the Irish communities here. This support has boosted my confidence and encouraged me to pursue my music more seriously. Travelling at a young age has allowed me to see the world in new ways, and performing in places I've dreamed about has been incredible. Being in America has shown me how Irish music connects people from different backgrounds and brings them together. It's heartwarming to see how our songs resonate with audiences and reflect what it means to be Irish. This journey has solidified my commitment to my roots while also pushing me to explore new musical horizons. I look forward to sharing my music and continuing to build connections through my performances.

Robert: You have collaborated with many Irish artists in recent years. What have been the highlights for you?

Robert: What are your plans for 2025?

Meadhbh: In 2025, I plan to travel as much as possible, including stops in America, Canada, maybe Australia, and more of the UK and Europe, along with touring Ireland. I'm excited to work on my next album, which I hope will feature even more original music. I want to focus on writing new songs and sharing fresh stories through my music. Collaborating with other musicians is also a priority for me as I believe each partnership enriches my sound and perspective. Additionally, I want to encourage young Irish musicians to pursue their dreams. It's important to share that they can contribute to our vibrant musical culture. Overall, I'm committed to working hard to achieve my goals and to continuing my journey as an Irish folk singer, celebrating our heritage along the way.

The new album *On My Own* is now available from <https://distrokid.com/hyperfollow/meadhbhwalth/on-my-own>

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24 Carnegie Arts Centre
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30 The Bonnington Drumcondra
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8 Balor Theatre Ballybofey
balorartscentre.com

14 Live at the Seánti South
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15 Briery
Gap Macroom brierygap.ie

28 Tuar Ard Moate tuarard.ie

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BRÍDÍN : A LAMENT FOR JOHN DONAGHER

Seán Laffey talks to Brídín, the multi-instrumentalist from County Sligo, about making the single, *A Lament for John Donagher*, which is a deeply personal tribute to her great-grandfather.



Seán: “Can you tell us a little about the musical life of your great-grandfather?”

Brídín: “My great-grandfather was John Donagher from County Sligo. He first began playing the flute and then the fiddle after he became fascinated by one and made a replica himself. He was very intelligent and something of an inventor, he was always fixing and creating things. My grandfather kept a gramophone that his dad made, and it still works today. John began playing the fiddle and it was not long before he was playing in the dance halls and house sessions. When he went to America, he played a lot at dances and would have played with James Morrison often. I never met him, but his legacy shows what an interesting man he was and he was so good to others.”

Seán: “When did he meet Josie McDermott and did they play together?”

“When you’re passing down a tune...it’s like passing down a piece of time...”

Brídín: “They would have been neighbours and good friends and would have worked together and played at sessions and dances. Josie would have played with my grandfather a lot too.”

Seán: “Josie won a competition with the lament. It had to be renamed because of the rules, and it became: *Lament for A Fiddler*. How do you feel about resurrecting its original title?”

Brídín: “I feel very proud to play this beautiful piece and say that I have a personal connection to it. I feel more proud knowing how happy my grandfather Gerry Donagher would be and feel that he is living on through music. My grandfather was very proud of this air. I first learned it from him as he passed it down to us. My mam Aileen also kept the tape of Josie playing it himself, so I paid close attention to his style when learning it. I think the air is so beautiful and it has a modern and soulful feel to it.”

Seán: “Can you tell us about the circumstances of recording the tune?”

Brídín: “I started introducing the flute to my set just before my winter tour last year. It is my first instrument and I couldn’t believe the response to this Lament. I always wanted to record it properly, but I’m glad I waited until after the tour because my band members on fiddle, cello and harp really became one with the air in their accompaniment. The recording is live as well, so you can really feel the emotion in the room. You can watch this live performance on YouTube.”

Seán: “You play a flute made by Sam Murray, who passed away recently. Have you any words about his craftsmanship and the tone of the instruments he made?”

Brídín: “My first ever flute was made by Sam Murray and I also have my keyed one that you see in this music video. He was such a great character and gifted flute maker. I remember we used to have great craic when we were down with him. I love playing them, there is such a lovely tone out of them and they’re light as a feather. He made my F natural key longer than normal for my tiny hands. I always get a laugh off that, but he made it so unique to me and special. I’ll always remember him, may he rest in peace.”

Seán: “Finally, can you reflect on the importance of musical legacies?”

Brídín: “I think any tradition is so special to pass down to the next generation, but I feel like when you’re passing down a tune or music, it’s like passing down a piece of time. I believe that we can express emotions through music in many ways that words can’t. When I’m playing this lament, I can imagine the landscape of that time and can get a real feel for what my great-grandfather was like as a person. I think he would be so proud knowing the line of musicians he created after he made that first fiddle and to us, he will never be forgotten. That’s one of the reasons why I love releasing

music; there’s a piece of me here, in this moment for me to look back on in years to come and remember my feelings and thoughts and to hopefully pass down like my family.”

You can listen to ‘A Lament for John Donagher’ on BRÍDÍN’s Spotify and watch the live recorded performance on BRÍDÍN’s YouTube.



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CONOR MORIARTY'S FIRST MONTH OF SUMMER

Seán Laffey chats to the County Kerry box player Conor Moriarty about learning music and making a second album.



Seán: “Can you tell our readers a little bit about yourself, your musical roots, learning the accordion and developing your style?”

Conor: “I began playing the accordion when I was 7 years of age. I come from a set dancing household, my parents have been teaching set dancing in Kilcummin outside Killarney for the past 36 years. I began playing for the set dancers when I was 11 years of age. We were at Fleadh Cheoil Chiarraí in Miltown and our musician had to leave early to go onto another gig, so I was taken out of the bumper cars at the local funfair and brought up to the competition to play for the senior set

make lots of friends from playing music. Some of them compete at the Fleadh Cheoil competitions; they're all playing to a high standard and they've been lucky enough to bring home some trophies from Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann on numerous occasions.”

Seán: “How did you decide on the tracks for *The First Month of Summer*?”

Conor: “I've had a lot of these tunes from the album running around in my head for a long time now and it's been about 13 years since I recorded my first solo album *All In A Days Play*, so I decided it was time to get back into the studio again! I think there is a good mix of tunes on the album from jigs, reels and hornpipes to polkas and slides and a lovely slow air for good measure! Benny McCarthy has been a great friend and help to me over the years, guiding me along for the first album and we did an album with Cordeen and a few tours together as well, so I asked him to record this album for me. Benny has a lovely studio down in Waterford and it was just the right setting to go there for a few days and record some music. I am delighted to have a stellar line up of musicians joining me on the album. They are: Conal O' Kane on Guitar, Tadhg Ó Meachair on Piano, Déirdre Ní Mheachair on Fiddle and Billy Sutton on bodhrán. Billy Sutton, a good friend of mine, from Newfoundland mixed the album and Jason Whelan also from Newfoundland mastered it.”

The album has had two launches, one at the Pre-Gathering Festival in October at the Gleneagle in Killarney and the other in November at the Ennis Trad Festival. Conor is currently in the middle of organising an Irish tour for the Spring of 2025 with the aim of more appearances at festivals from the first month of summer and beyond.

Discover more at www.facebook.com/ConorMorMusic

“I suppose we're very lucky in Kerry that we have a very strong tradition of music, song and dance”

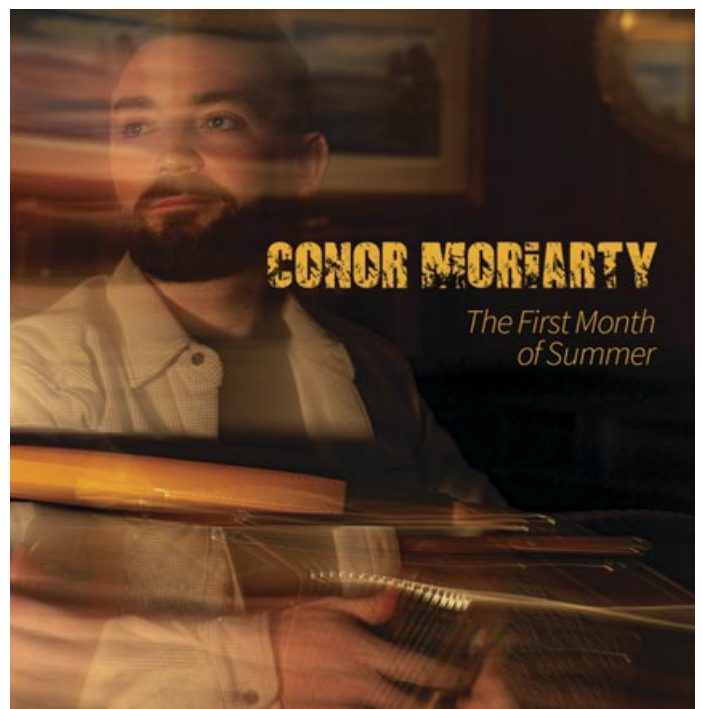
dancing group! I've been playing for them ever since! I went to music classes with my local Comhaltas branch and just really enjoyed playing the accordion. I played before and after school and pretty much every chance I got.

“I grew up listening to as much music as I could get my hands on and enjoyed all the different styles of box players. I really enjoyed and still do enjoy listening to Dermot Byrne, Benny McCarthy, Dónal Murphy, Máirtín O Connor, Bobby Gardiner and Jackie Daly, and I suppose they would have had an impact on what route I was taking. I did an MA in Irish Music Performance in UL in 2009/2010 and I had the pleasure of being taught by Derek Hickey on a weekly basis and I would have learned a lot from Derek for sure.”

Seán: Is it an advantage living in Kerry with both its vibrant living tradition and a strong regional style?”

Conor: “I suppose we're very lucky in Kerry that we have a very strong tradition of music, song and dance. Sliabh Luachra music is possibly more popular than ever thanks to the young and not so young musicians for keeping it alive and the local festivals for promoting the tradition.

“The local scene is possibly stronger than ever. There are so many young people playing music nowadays and playing to a very high standard. I teach a lot of music around the County and many of the musicians that come to me go to all the local sessions, the festivals and



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NUALA KENNEDY AND EAMON O' LEARY'S HYDRA

Mark Lysaght spoke with Nuala via Zoom recently to learn more about this new release.



Photo : Allie Novak

F lautist and singer Nuala Kennedy and guitarist/singer-songwriter Eamon O' Leary first met in New York in the 1990s. They later played in the renowned supergroup The Alt along with John Doyle, and have developed a close musical partnership which has endured and prospered.

Nuala and Eamon were on tour and playing in a remote village in the Austrian Alps when a chance meeting in a bar presented the opportunity to travel to Greece to record as a duo. Their artistic chemistry is remarkable, and is fully displayed on their latest album *Hydra*, named after the Greek island where it was recorded.

"We've been lucky to have had a truly fantastic reception both from critics and the public for the recording after the initial Ireland/UK launch in August," Nuala told me. "When planning this album, we followed the hand of fate, something which is a bit of a musical and personal philosophy between us. We're both naturally curious about the world and really enjoy the experience of touring, especially to remote climes."

Nuala is extremely positive and enthusiastic about the power of connecting with people via music. This includes an amazing global Irish music community, which can provide support in different ways. "When our daughter was born, she had a congenital birth defect needing surgery," said Nuala. "It was a very stressful time but while I was touring in Scandinavia, a fellow musician was able to connect me with a Swedish surgeon, who in fact, invented the procedure she required. We were incredibly grateful for the support we received from the Irish music community in Sweden, and she is now absolutely fine."

She has been touring with Eamon in various line-ups for many years, and they have many shared interests, such as people, places, books and swimming. "Hydra, the island, really infused the recording with some special quality of lightness and space. Sonically it's perhaps more expansive, maybe due to the large open room we recorded in, overlooking the harbour and Aegean Sea. The performances were recorded live, and it's the first album I've made that I feel really captures something intangible at the heart of Irish song: it speaks to a universal experience of love, loss and human frailty."

Cars are banned on the island with donkeys providing transport, and recording took place in an eighteenth century carpet factory; a unique and inspiring location. Nuala and Eamon's duo sound is rich and deep, imbued with their shared knowledge and passion for ancient Irish

traditional song, but modern in sensibility. They've honed their craft together over decades of touring, playing every conceivable type of venue, from Carnegie Hall and huge folk festivals to a tiny village hall North of the Arctic Circle. Their matching harmonies and gentle virtuosity have been lauded by many reviewers and together they exude a formidable musical strength - combining bouzouki and guitar with whistle, flute and vocals, with occasional drone effects.

They both share a life-long interest in collecting lesser-known ancient ballads, re-working and re-imagining them for audiences today, often subtly re-adjusting elements of the structure so they can internalise the songs and reinterpret them. Nuala's tone on the flute is rich and varied, while Eamon's warm but minimalist approach ensures that each note is carefully placed, never cluttering or dominating the lyrics. It's a

"I feel the album captures something intangible at the heart of Irish song"

gorgeous recording of songs that are genuinely special to them, with guest appearances from Cathal McConnell, Anais Mitchell, Will Oldham, Liz Knowles and Brian MacGloinn. Included is an original song written by Eamon during the COVID lockdown called *As We Rove Out*, and two sets of tunes. "Cathal McConnell is a huge inspiration to me and we have been friends since I started on this musical road full time," Nuala told me. "Traditional music continues to be my biggest source of inspiration, but I love stepping outside and availing of opportunities to explore other genres." She mentioned the deep well of tradition that we all draw from, allowing us to see the links between Irish music and other styles, helping musicians to enrich their own approach.

The album was launched last August in Ireland and the UK, with a second launch planned for the rest of Europe and the USA in November. Nuala and Eamon continue to tour together as well as having their own separate projects. Nuala is also joining the Irish-American supergroup Solas as they celebrate their 30th anniversary in 2025.

***Hydra* is available on Bandcamp and at www.nualakennedy.com on the Under The Arch records.**

GADAN : IRISH MUSIC. AMERICAN FLAVOUR. ITALIAN SEASONING.

Michael Lange follows up with Gadan after meeting at Milwaukee Irish Fest in the Ward Irish Music Archives tent.



If you take a visit to their very nicely done website, you will find Gadan described as, “A storming new quintet, blending the drive of Irish traditional music and bluegrass with the heart and soul of folk and Appalachian music - served with a dash of Italian seasoning for extra flair.” It’s a mouthful, but it seems like a good place to begin to know these talented Italians. The band consists of Andrea Verga on mandolin, banjo and vocals; Lorenza Testa on tenor banjo, mandolin and vocals; Jacopo Ventura on guitar, bouzouki and vocals and Joan Gatti on fiddle.

They came from very different musical backgrounds with Classical music, French, Folk, Pop, Jazz, Bluegrass, Appalachian, Scandinavian, Country influences and more. The individual members toured for many years (and continue to tour) throughout Europe and North America with various bands before joining to create a fusion of styles with a strong Celtic flavour. They’ve thrown in Enda Scahill for more Irish tenor banjo and a bit of Irish craic when touring in the United States.

Lead singer Andrea Verga grew up playing guitar and was influenced by Massimo Gatti, an Italian Bluegrass pioneer, which led him to American Old Time traditional music and to learn 5-string banjo and mandolin. He was influential in forming Gadan and in developing their focus on traditional music.

Back as early as 2021 and 2022, they were able to take advantage of the growing tradition of Celtic music in Italy by playing at festivals there such as the Insubria Festival, Abruzzo Irish Festival, Celtic Valle d’Aosta, Montelago Celtic Festival and Molly Malone’s Days. This was augmented by a string of well produced music videos and an EP on Bandcamp and Spotify late in 2022. They quickly followed up with a series of brief tours to the U.S. starting in October of 2022 (East Coast), April 2023, July-August 2023 (Midwest), October 2023 (West Coast) and July-August 2024 (Midwest).

Michael: How did the band come together and start playing music together?

Lorenzo Testa: The band was formed in 2021 during the COVID period when, not by our choice, we all found ourselves having to stop touring with our respective bands. We’ve been friends for years; in the end, there aren’t many Irish musicians in Italy, and we

all knew each other a bit. It was an idea we had for a long time, and at that moment, there was an opportunity to make it happen. When the first concerts came up, we had to quickly prepare a setlist by putting together our influences and personal repertoires. And that’s how our sound was born... simply by being ourselves!

Each of us comes from a different background, but especially Andrea had grown up listening to and playing American music, old-time, Appalachian, and bluegrass. There are many common points, and his desire to explore and grow musically led him to join the Irish music sessions in Milan, eventually becoming part of Irish folk rock groups and adapting his style to Irish music. For example, he is one of the few in the world who plays jigs on the clawhammer banjo!

Michael: I see that you have a digital EP on Bandcamp. Are you working on a full length album?

Lorenzo: Yes, we released an EP that is physically sold out but available digitally. However, we are already working on a full album, which will be released in late spring 2025. In the end, it was right to wait because we were able to develop our own style and sound, enriching ourselves musically through our exchanges on stage and the tours we’ve done together. We will return to the U.S. for the summer of 2025. In the meantime, there’s a lot to do finishing the writing, pre-production, production, videos and promotion.

Michael: I find the collaboration with Enda Scahill to be fascinating. How did this come about?

“We are already working on a full album, which will be released in late spring 2025”

Enda Scahill: I’ve known Lorenzo online for a few years and we met when his Celtic rock band, Uncle Bard & The Dirty Bastards, played Dublin, Ohio. He also came to Galway in 2019 for a workshop I was running. Then in 2023 I was joking with him on Facebook when Gadan were on tour that all they needed was a 3rd banjo! So at the end of that summer tour Lorenzo asked if I was serious and would I consider joining them in 2024.

I chatted with Lorenzo and Jacopo on a zoom call and then met Andrea and Joan in Italy for the first time in June. I instantly knew they were excellent musicians and at that stage was very excited for the summer tour. I was still curious about how they would actually be onstage as that’s a very different arena to playing than sitting down in someone’s kitchen. They turned out to be excellent entertainers and seasoned professionals. I think they have a huge opportunity to break through as a major touring act.

Michael: What’s ahead for 2025?

Lorenzo: A new album, a new tour with Enda Scahill still with us, and above all, so much banjo that we risk being prosecuted by the Hague Tribunal for this atrocious crime! It’s definitely better than bagpipes, isn’t it? Ha ha!

More information on Gadan can be found at www.gadanband.com

BACK TO BELFAST FOR A SELF-CONFESSED FOLK DINOSAUR

George Millar was back home in Ireland and busy recording at RedBox Studios in Belfast when Seán Laffey phoned to see how the new album from The Irish Rovers was shaping up.



Photo : Hamish Burgess

The Irish Rovers recording "The Belfast Sessions" at Redbox Studios

They refer to themselves as *Dinosaurs* on their song that is a tribute to the old crusty musicians who have paid their dues and are still going strong today. With 60 years under their belts, they are still creating new music. When The Irish Rovers tour again in 2025, they will have with them their new album, *The Belfast Sessions*.

The Irish Rovers got together in Canada in the early 1960s and have become something of a national treasure there ever since. George is based in Victoria in British Columbia and The Irish Rovers are scattered between Canada, the USA and Ireland. George still has a home near Bushmills, and we find we have a common interest in apple orchards. His favourite is Beauty of Bath, a red apple with speckled flesh that's so sweet it has to be eaten within a few days of picking. Unlike Irish music, it doesn't travel too well and it hasn't made its way into commercial production, in contrast to the career George has had with The Irish Rovers. One that has been adorned with accolades, from their 1968 "Folk Group of the Year" to their 2023 Nomination in the Canadian Folk Music Awards for Single of the Year with *Hey Boys Sing Us A Song*.

George tells me about those early days. "When I arrived in the USA from Ballymena, people from the north were an unknown quantity, and luckily for me almost as soon as I arrived Tommy Makem took me under his wing. We found we shared so much through music. There was a huge appetite for folk music, and we were all young and able to party after a gig and our after-hours singing sessions were legendary. We'd meet all sorts of people who were passing through such as the Wolfe Tones and Kris Kristofferson and his wife Rita Coolidge. Soon a supportive network began to grow up around us. We played on one of the first Caribbean Irish music cruises out of Fort Lauderdale and we were the first Irish band to play at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. Tommy Makem and the Clancys really paved the way for Irish musicians in America, in fact when they came home to Ireland, they came home as an America success story. It was the

embodiment of the American dream, you could make it over there and be lauded on your return home."

The Irish Rovers came together in Toronto in 1963 and soon they were being feted on radio and TV. "Our big break came with our second album *The Unicorn* in 1967, and we haven't looked back since."

After 60 years on the road, has George any advice to young players? "Firstly, perform as if you are really enjoying it; of course you should enjoy every gig. But when you are on the road full-time, there will be some shows that are better than others. The audience have paid a part of their hard earned wages to see you, so give them 110%, connect

"I put ideas down as a scratch track to give the other lads an idea of the tempo and the phrasing of the new songs"

with them, share stories, tell jokes and invite them to sing choruses. The second thing is to get on together as a band, enjoy your time and give your bandmates space when they need it."

The new album was recorded in RedBox Studios, an experience George describes for us. "It's been wonderful bringing everyone together in the same space after all those remote recording and file sharing sessions we did during Covid. RedBox is on three floors of a Victorian house in the city and it's run by Dolan O'Connor, the son of our fiddle player Gerry O'Connor. We recorded parts of tracks in rooms on the different floors. I put ideas down as a scratch track to give the other lads an idea of the tempo and the phrasing of the songs. All the songs on the album are new, and we have one tune set, so it's really exciting. Actually it's been something I've been meaning to do for years now, release an album of my original pieces."

***The Belfast Sessions* will be available in the New Year. For more details please visit www.theirishroversmusic.com**

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9	Lone Tree Arts Center	Lone Tree	CO
11	Norman&Vi Pettey Performing Arts Center	Clovis	NM
12	South Broadway Cultural Center	Albuquerque	NM
13	Lincoln Theatre	Vernon	WA
19	The Dakota	Minneapolis	MN
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21	Old Town School House of Folk Music	Chicago	IL
22	De Bartolo Performing Arts Center	Notre Dame	IN
23	The Kent Stage	Kent	OH
25	The Englewood	Hershey	PA
26	Sellersville Theater	Sellersville	PA
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TIME SIG: 6/8

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FAD FAD GFG EFG
FAD FAD GED D- E
FAD FAD GFG E- G'
FED' EG#A [1 GED D- E]
[2 GED D-]

2ND PART
AD'D' DE'D' CAB CAG
AD'D' DE'D' CAB C- B
AD'D' DE'D' CAB CDE'
FED' EG#A [1 GED D-]
[2 GED D- E]

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Buachaill Ón Éirne
The Rakes Of Mallow
Gander In The Pratie Hole
The Rocky Road To Dublin
Danny Ab's
The Butcher's March
The Rambling Pitchfork
The Foggy Dew
The Glenside Polka
O'Keefe's Slide #1
O'Keefe's Slide #2
The Boys Of Bluehill
Humours Of Whiskey
The Sunny Banks
Jimmy Duffy's #2
The Munster Buttermilk
The Heathery Breeze
Brendan Tonroe's
McGivney's Fancy
The Crosses Of Anagh
O'Gorman's Reel

The Flute Basics course has many fans and proved very popular with students. One of the best things about learning with OAIM is that the learning doesn't just come from the tutors, but other students sharing their tricks and insights. One such student, Bernard Dulmet, commented on YouTube giving sage advice that "One should keep a balance between learning new tunes (which is our first longing, indeed) and getting into the proper techniques for your instrument. It is a big job, but it is really possible to overcome the difficulty as long as one works consistently to keep this balance." He ends his comment by saying: "it is good that OAIM has several teachers at hand, offering different styles, skills and pedagogic talents. Everyone should be able to find his/her cup of tea."

So, if you are visiting OAIM's YouTube site to sample some of their lessons, be sure to scroll down to the comment section where there is always a lively discussion and some great advice such as what instruments are

Steph's comprehensive beginner's guide to playing the flute covers the essential topics such as proper instrument holding, tone, achieving strong low notes, breathing techniques, ornamentation, and articulation. This extensive 29-lesson course is OAIM's largest offering yet and provides a solid learning foundation for anyone new to the flute.

Steph Geremia, your tutor on the Flute Basics course, is a traditional flautist and singer recognised as a vibrant and versatile musician on the traditional music scene. Though a longtime Irish resident, Steph hails originally from New York where she first began playing traditional music. She studied

The Course

Flute Basics is aimed at the absolute beginner flute player. It begins with the foundational steps of how to hold the instrument as well as an in-depth instruction in embouchure, which is the refined craft of blowing air into a wood instrument and involves the correct positioning and use of the lips, facial muscles, tongue, and teeth to produce the sound. So mastering embouchure is a vital piece for anyone new to the flute and the tutor does a beautiful job in explaining this with the support from a close camera angle to highlight the subtleties.

Once you can correctly blow into the flute you can move on to learning the scales of D

and G. Essential instruction is given on when to take a breath in a tune and what technique to use in taking a breath. Tips are also given on articulation, ornamentation, flute maintenance and how to gain clarity of tone in both the high and low register.

Demonstrating a deep understanding of the challenges involved in learning the flute, the tutor addresses the most common issues that give so many flute players difficulties.

recommended and where to buy them. And while you're there, be sure and add your own voice to the conversation because 'Ar scáth a chéile a mhairimid' which translated literally means: we live in each other's shadow.

Learn *Gander in the Pratie Hole* with Steph in this YouTube video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6_PWkS4W_0

“Demonstrating a deep understanding of the challenges involved in learning the flute, the tutor addresses the most common issues that give so many flute players difficulties”

World Music at the prestigious Wesleyan University receiving a first-class honours Bachelors of Arts. She also holds a Master's Degree in Traditional Irish Music Performance, which she completed at the University of Limerick. Steph is now based in Galway where she teaches and performs on a regular basis as well as continuing to tour internationally.

IRISH WWW.IRISHMUSICMAGAZINE.COM 2025

In association with the

Irish Music Rights Organisation (IMRO)

The logo for the Irish Music Rights Organisation (IMRO) features the word "imro" in a lowercase, rounded, sans-serif font. The letters are colored as follows: 'i' is yellow, 'm' is green, 'r' is blue, and 'o' is red.

CALENDAR

The Definitive
Voice of
Irish Music
Worldwide



JANUARY 2025



FEBRUARY 2025

Wednesday 1	Thursday 2	Friday 3	Saturday 4	Sunday 5	Saturday 1	Sunday 2	Monday 3	Tuesday 4	Wednesday 5
Monday 6	Tuesday 7	Wednesday 8	Thursday 9	Friday 10	Thursday 6	Friday 7	Saturday 8	Sunday 9	Monday 10
Saturday 11	Sunday 12	Monday 13	Tuesday 14	Wednesday 15	Tuesday 11	Wednesday 12	Thursday 13	Friday 14	Saturday 15
Thursday 16	Friday 17	Saturday 18	Sunday 19	Monday 20	Sunday 16	Monday 17	Tuesday 18	Wednesday 19	Thursday 20
Tuesday 21	Wednesday 22	Thursday 23	Friday 24	Saturday 25	Friday 21	Saturday 22	Sunday 23	Monday 24	Tuesday 25
Sunday 26	Monday 27	Tuesday 28	Wednesday 29	Thursday 30	Wednesday 26	Thursday 27	Friday 28		
Friday 31									

○



MARCH 2025



APRIL 2025

Saturday 1	Sunday 2	Monday 3	Tuesday 4	Wednesday 5	Thursday 6	Friday 7	Saturday 8	Sunday 9	Monday 10	Tuesday 11	Wednesday 12	Thursday 13	Friday 14	Saturday 15	Sunday 16	Monday 17	Tuesday 18	Wednesday 19	Thursday 20	Friday 21	Saturday 22	Sunday 23	Monday 24	Tuesday 25	Wednesday 26	Thursday 27	Friday 28	Saturday 29	Sunday 30	Monday 31				
Thursday 6	Friday 7	Wednesday 12	Monday 13	Tuesday 14	Friday 19	Thursday 20	Monday 23	Tuesday 24	Wednesday 25	Thursday 26	Friday 27	Monday 28	Tuesday 29	Wednesday 30	Thursday 5	Friday 6	Monday 9	Tuesday 10	Wednesday 11	Thursday 12	Friday 13	Monday 14	Tuesday 15	Wednesday 16	Thursday 17	Friday 18	Monday 21	Tuesday 22	Wednesday 23	Thursday 24	Friday 25	Saturday 26	Monday 29	Tuesday 30

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MAY 2025

MUSIC

JUNE 2025

Thursday 1	Friday 2	Saturday 3	Sunday 4	Monday 5	Sunday 1	Monday 2	Tuesday 3	Wednesday 4	Thursday 5
Tuesday 6	Wednesday 7	Thursday 8	Friday 9	Saturday 10	Friday 6	Saturday 7	Sunday 8	Monday 9	Tuesday 10
Sunday 11	Monday 12	Tuesday 13	Wednesday 14	Thursday 15	Wednesday 11	Thursday 12	Friday 13	Saturday 14	Sunday 15
Friday 16	Saturday 17	Sunday 18	Monday 19	Tuesday 20	Monday 16	Tuesday 17	Wednesday 18	Thursday 19	Friday 20
Wednesday 21	Thursday 22	Friday 23	Saturday 24	Sunday 25	Saturday 21	Sunday 22	Monday 23	Tuesday 24	Wednesday 25
Monday 26	Tuesday 27	Wednesday 28	Thursday 29	Friday 30	Thursday 26	Friday 27	Saturday 28	Sunday 29	Monday 30
Saturday 31									

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JULY 2025



AUGUST 2025

Tuesday 1	Wednesday 2	Thursday 3	Friday 4	Saturday 5	Friday 1	Saturday 2	Sunday 3	Monday 4	Tuesday 5
Sunday 6	Monday 7	Tuesday 8	Wednesday 9	Thursday 10	Wednesday 6	Thursday 7	Friday 8	Saturday 9	Sunday 10
Friday 11	Saturday 12	Sunday 13	Monday 14	Tuesday 15	Monday 11	Tuesday 12	Wednesday 13	Thursday 14	Friday 15
Wednesday 16	Thursday 17	Friday 18	Saturday 19	Sunday 20	Saturday 16	Sunday 17	Monday 18	Tuesday 19	Wednesday 20
Monday 21	Tuesday 22	Wednesday 23	Thursday 24	Friday 25	Thursday 21	Friday 22	Saturday 23	Sunday 24	Monday 25
Saturday 26	Sunday 27	Monday 28	Tuesday 29	Wednesday 30	Tuesday 26	Wednesday 27	Thursday 28	Friday 29	Saturday 30
Thursday 31					Sunday 31				



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SEPTEMBER 2025



OCTOBER 2025

Monday 1	Tuesday 2	Wednesday 3	Thursday 4	Friday 5	Wednesday 1	Thursday 2	Friday 3	Saturday 4	Sunday 5
Saturday 6	Sunday 7	Monday 8	Tuesday 9	Wednesday 10	Monday 6	Tuesday 7	Wednesday 8	Thursday 9	Friday 10
Thursday 11	Friday 12	Saturday 13	Sunday 14	Monday 15	Saturday 11	Sunday 12	Monday 13	Tuesday 14	Wednesday 15
Tuesday 16	Wednesday 17	Thursday 18	Friday 19	Saturday 20	Thursday 16	Friday 17	Saturday 18	Sunday 19	Monday 20
Sunday 21	Monday 22	Tuesday 23	Wednesday 24	Thursday 25	Tuesday 21	Wednesday 22	Thursday 23	Friday 24	Saturday 25
Friday 26	Saturday 27	Sunday 28	Monday 29	Tuesday 30	Sunday 26	Monday 27	Tuesday 28	Wednesday 29	Thursday 30
					Friday 31				

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NOVEMBER 2025



DECEMBER 2025

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
6	7	8	9	10	6	7	8	9	10
Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
11	12	13	14	15	11	12	13	14	15
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
16	17	18	19	20	16	17	18	19	20
Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
21	22	23	24	25	21	22	23	24	25
Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
26	27	28	29	30	26	27	28	29	30
					Wednesday				
					31				





IMRO - Serving music creators by collecting/distributing royalties in Ireland and worldwide

The Irish Music Rights Organisation (IMRO) exists to collect and distribute performance royalties on behalf of its members. If you are a songwriter, lyricist, composer, an arranger of public domain music or a music publisher who has original music publicly performed, you can join IMRO and avail of the many benefits of membership.

Music users such as broadcasters, venues and businesses must pay for their use of copyright music by way of a blanket licence fee. IMRO collects these monies and distributes them to copyright owners involved. The monies earned by copyright owners in this way are known as public performance royalties.

IMRO is also prominently involved in the sponsorship and promotion of music in Ireland. Every year it sponsors a large number of song contests, music festivals, seminars, workshops, research projects and showcase performances. Indeed, IMRO is now synonymous with helping to showcase emerging talent in Ireland.

If you are a songwriter, composer or music publisher and your works have been commercially recorded, broadcast, performed live or are available on streaming/download platforms contact IMRO now to find out how you can become a member of our organisation.

Download an IMRO Membership Application Pack at
<https://imro.ie/music-creators/join-imro/>

IMRO has a comprehensive website www.imro.ie and Member Services can be contacted by email at membership@imro.ie

Membership of IMRO is free of charge.



THE LEGENDS SERIES

Chapter 42 : Máirín Fahy. An appreciation by Mark Lysaght for Irish Music Magazine.

It will come as no surprise that virtuoso fiddle player Máirín Fahy grew up surrounded by traditional music and song in a well-known musical family from Ballinakill, County Galway, absorbing a strong musical heritage from previous generations. Thomas Whyte, her grandfather, had the distinction of being a founder member of the Ballinakill Ceilí Band, the first to be broadcast on RTÉ in 1929, and her aunt Aggie Whyte was a well-known fiddler. Her sibling Ger Fahy is an acclaimed composer and uilleann piper whose credits include *Lord Of The Dance*, and sister Yvonne is also an accomplished traditional composer and multi-instrumentalist.

As a young child Máirín showed exceptional prowess, starting on the fiddle aged five, and her ability enabled her to take part in sessions and competitions from an early age, honing and developing her skills under the watchful eye of her mother Bridie, herself a gifted musician. She first came to prominence as a member of the Temple House Ceilí Band in the late 1980s, touring

“Audiences and critics were enthralled by her lively and breathtaking approach to her playing”

internationally. She trained as a teacher but very soon after starting work, she took a career break to form a band called Reeltime. Their guitar player Chris Kelly and Máirín got married. They built up a reputation as a band to be reckoned with, enjoying great success in the USA.

In 1996, Máirín accepted an offer to play with *Riverdance*, initially with the European show, but she ended up playing in Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the Far East as well. *Riverdance* really established her as a fiddle player of international renown with fantastic reviews; audiences and critics were enthralled by her lively and breathtaking approach to her playing on the show. On stage, Máirín commanded the stage and made contacts with musicians and performers all over the world. She toured with the show for several years, taking some time out for various other projects, maintaining Reeltime for a while and also accepting an offer to tour with The Chieftains, where she was featured as an Irish dancer as well as playing fiddle with them. In addition, she and Chris welcomed their first child Dara, who accompanied them on tours.

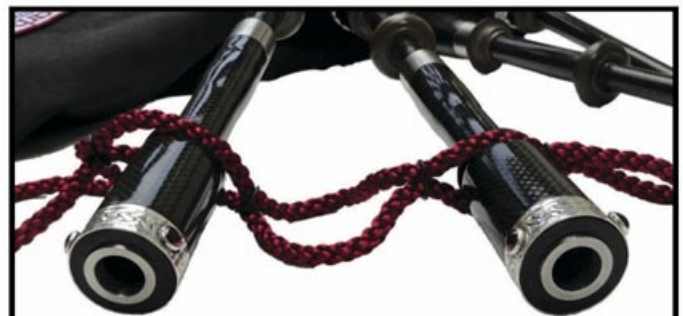
In 2000, Máirín released a solo CD *Máirín* featuring a range of material recorded at various locations including Rotterdam and Auckland as well as at home in Galway. On this recording, she displays her phenomenal command of the fiddle, accompanied by husband Chris and other family members with guest appearances by Declan Masterson and Brendan Power. There is a great contemporary feel to the tracks with fantastic variety in her musical choices. She also sings a number of classic songs on the album, displaying yet another dazzling string in her musical bow.

Seeking a more permanent outlet closer to home, Máirín and Chris established Trad On the Prom in 2005, a show featuring top-class Irish musicians, singers and dancers in an extravaganza of

entertainment which has been voted as Ireland's No. 1 spectacle of its kind. Drawing on their experience gained touring with major shows abroad, they have enlisted the cream of Irish talent available to perform, sing and dance. Initially marketed primarily as a tourist attraction, the quality of the production is such that it has become a major draw for local people as well. The show has run consistently for twenty years, the only break being as a result of the COVID pandemic. Their son Dara is now a regular dancer on the show and has formed his own dance troupe.

Another project initiated by her brothers Ger and Terry was Furry Village, a traditional fusion band and Máirín was also featured with them. They enjoyed a lot of success in the 1990s, then went their separate ways, but more recently they have had some reunion gigs. Another family project was the Celtic musical *Tara*, also composed by her brothers in 2004. This illustrates the amazing diversity of Máirín's career including recording with the late Cranberries singer Dolores O'Riordan and featuring on the soundtrack for the movie *Devil's Own*, starring Harrison Ford and Brad Pitt. She has appeared in some of the world's most prestigious venues including Carnegie Hall, and appeared before various dignitaries including Princess Diana and Prince Rainier of Monaco.

Máirín is still a very active musician and performer, and in recent years has hosted her own radio show in Galway. She continues to delight audiences at home and abroad with her vivacious and energetic performances, with no sign of any slowdown in her range of active projects.



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CELTIC WINDS

CELTIC CONNECTIONS

January 16th – February 2nd, 2025 www.celticconnections.com

Celtic Connections to shine bright this winter as their 2025 programme has been unveiled. The world's leading folk, roots and world music festival Celtic Connections has unveiled its ambitious, multi-faceted programme for 2025.

The premiere winter festival and international celebration of Celtic music will illuminate stages across Glasgow from Thursday 16 January to Sunday 2 February, eclipsing dark winter nights with a kaleidoscope of internationally-renowned music, exciting new performances, unique showcases and one-off collaborations.

Demonstrating just why Glasgow is a UNESCO City of Music, the festival, delivered by Glasgow Life, will fill around 25 venues on both sides of the Clyde with around 300 events across 18 days, anticipating around 110,000 visitors and an estimated 1,200 musicians and artists. Now in its 32nd year and almost five times the size it was when it began in 1994, Celtic Connections continues to push the envelope of artistic programming and ambition.

The festival's 2025 bill spans a myriad of genres, from acoustic, traditional, Americana and orchestral to indie, jazz, blues, experimental and more. The event will welcome artists from around 20 countries around the world including Australia, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, France, Italy, Nigeria, Spain, Wales, Ireland, Republic of the Congo and many more.

This year will also see the launch of a new under-26s pass, giving young music fans an opportunity to access rolling discounts on a mix of shows and ensuring the magic of the festival continues to be accessible to as wide a range of audiences as possible.

Glasgow's much-loved venues, famous for having the "best fans in the world", are set to give artists a welcome warm enough to heat the chilliest of evenings.

Iconic locations the length and breadth of Glasgow are involved including The Old Fruitmarket, Barrowland Ballroom, SWG3, Saint Luke's and Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum. Celtic Connections will also make history when Peat and Diesel become the first band ever to play at the Emirates Arena in the city's east end.

General tickets for the festival are now on sale at www.celticconnections.com

TradFest20

20 Years of Ireland's Biggest Celebration of Trad & Folk Music

January 22nd – 26th, 2025

tradfest.com

TradFest celebrates 20 years as Ireland's leading trad and folk festival in January 2025, with some of the biggest artists from home and abroad set to perform at iconic locations across Dublin.

2025 will mark 20 years of this hugely popular annual celebration of Trad and Folk. TradFest has enthralled audiences over two decades with its daytime and evening concerts at spectacular venues in the city centre and north county Dublin, including historical landmarks like Collins Barracks, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Malahide Castle and Swords Castle. For the first time TradFest will now extend into South County Dublin, with venues including Áras Chrónáin Irish Cultural Centre and St. Maelruain's Church in Tallaght set to host a variety of events. So from 22-26 January, audiences will enjoy performances throughout Dublin City Centre, Fingal and South Dublin and Temple Bar.

More details will be announced over the coming weeks, but among those already confirmed are: Tom Paxton, Transatlantic Women with Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh, Maura O'Connell, Julie Fowles, Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh, String Sisters, The Scratch, Frankie Gavin and De Dannan & Biird, Women of Note with Aoife Scott, Peggy Seeger, Eric Bibb, Feile Kila, Wallis Bird -Vision of Venus, Stockton's Wing, Scullion, Sean Keáine, Martin Simpson,

Karen Casey - The Women We Will Rise, Liz and Yvonne Kane with John Blake, Macalla, Yankari & Ines Khai, Dug, Landless and Eoghan Ó Ceannabháin as well as a celebration of Stephen Rea.

Tickets for TradFest 2025 are available from tradfest.com

Follow TradFest on Social Media:

Instagram - @tradfestdublin

Twitter - @trad_fest

Facebook - @tradfestdublin

TikTok - @tradfest

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

EXPERIENCE IRISH CULTURE AT OKLAHOMA'S LARGEST IRISH FESTIVAL

Tulsa Irish Fest 2025

March 7th – 9th, 2025, Dream Keepers Park, Tulsa, OK

www.tulsairishfest.org

Get ready for a weekend full of Irish music, food, and culture at the 2025 Tulsa Irish Fest, happening March 7-9 at Dream Keepers Park (1875 S Boulder Park Dr.). As Oklahoma's largest Irish festival, this family-friendly event will immerse you in all things Irish, offering live music, traditional dance, and delicious food.

Festival-goers will enjoy performances by top Irish and Celtic musicians, lively dance showcases, and insightful cultural conversations. But the excitement doesn't stop at the stage! The festival will also feature a wide array of vendors and artisans selling unique Celtic crafts, jewellery, and traditional Irish goods.

"This year's festival is shaping up to be our best yet," says Executive Director Millan Hupp. "We're excited to not only showcase incredible musicians but also offer our guests a marketplace full of Irish and Celtic artisans, creating a true Irish experience for everyone."

Food lovers can indulge in Irish fare from various vendors, while families can explore hands-on activities, including traditional Irish games and sheep-herding demonstrations. There's truly something for all ages.

Join us for this vibrant celebration of Irish culture at Oklahoma's premier Irish festival!

For more information and tickets, visit www.tulsairishfest.org and follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

MEITHEAL ENNIS AND LIMERICK PLUS MEITHEAL NA GAELIGE IRISH COLLEGE!

July 21st - 26th (Meitheal) & July 28th – August 2nd (Meitheal na Gaeilge)

www.tradweek.com

Next year, Meitheal Ceoil will be held in St. Flannan's College, Ennis and also in Villiers School, Limerick from July 21st to 26th. Marvellous tutors are already lined up. Reaction to Meitheal 2024 was marvellous and the Finale Concerts in Glór and the Millennium Theatre were unforgettable experiences, as was as the Reunion event in Wexford and the TG4 slots.

Some of the award-winners have already played at the events for which they were chosen and many more will soon appear at Ennis Tradfest, Ed Reavy festival in Cavan, the Fleadh Nua in Ennis, at the Corofin and Kilfenora Trad festivals, Consairtín and so on.

The full list of tutors will be published shortly and will be a who's who of the exciting performers currently on the scene.

Meitheal na Gaeilge Irish College – a Gaeltacht experience in a musical setting (total immersion in the Irish language) will run from July 28th to Aug 2nd, just after Meitheal Ceoil. Details and application at www.meithealnagaeilge.ie.

Information and application forms from Garry Shannon, Ruan, Co. Clare, Tel: 087 6704465 www.tradweek.com or via email: meitheal1@gmail.com Closing Date: March 21st.

Meitheal

July 21st to 25th in Ennis & 22nd to 26th, 2025 in Limerick
and Meitheal na Gaeilge (Irish College) July 28th to Aug 2nd



Apply at www.tradweek.com. Closing date March 21st

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- Composition Scholarships
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www.tradweek.com

Contact: meitheal1@gmail.com

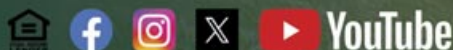
Tel: 087 6704465



MARCH 7-9
TULSA IRISHFEST 2025



VISIT US ONLINE



TradFest20

20 years of Ireland's biggest celebration of trad & folk music.

Peggy Seeger



Photo : Laura Page

TradFest celebrates 20 years as Ireland's leading trad and folk festival in January 2025, with some of the biggest artists from home and abroad set to perform at iconic locations across Dublin.

In 2025 TradFest will celebrate the life of Barney McKenna, original member of the Irish band The Dubliners. TradFest Artistic Director, Kieran Hanrahan, himself a banjo player says: **“Barney McKenna was probably the single most important and influential figure in tenor banjo playing in Irish traditional music. He changed the landscape.”** Barney's influence stretched beyond Ireland. Internationally renowned, he was much loved for his music and singing throughout Europe. Across **2 days and nights** in The Abbey Tavern, Howth, TradFest will honour Barney through music and stories and craic. A well-deserved recognition for a very special musician.

“Barney's influence stretched beyond Ireland...he was much loved for his music and singing throughout Europe”

On January 25th is Remembering Barney McKenna, an afternoon of music and stories celebrating The Dubliners legend Barney McKenna with members of the McKenna family and some of Barney's contemporaries in the ballad and trad scene.

25th & 26th January is Gerry O'Connor & Friends Celebrate Barney McKenna. Join Gerry O'Connor as he hosts 2 special nights remembering his friend and fellow Dubliner Barney McKenna.

Banjos for Barney McKenna on January 26th is an afternoon of music with some of the finest young banjo players and friends as they celebrate Barney's legacy.

In 2025 TradFest extends into South County Dublin with venues including Áras Chrónáin Irish Cultural Centre and Brú Chrónáin Round Tower Visitor Centre, Clondalkin Court of Petty Sessions, Rathcoole, Glenasmole Community Centre and St. Maelruain's Church in Tallaght set to host a variety of events.

The TradFest Legend's Interview Series returns next year with 2 of folk's most iconic artists Peggy Seeger and Ralph McTell in Áras Chrónáin Ionad Cultúir. On Thursday 24th January 2025 Peggy Seeger will discuss her life in music. Peggy Seeger is a unique artist who has carved a special place in the folk pantheon of both the UK and the USA. Despite approaching her 90th birthday, her light burns as brightly as ever.

On Friday 25th January there'll be an interview with Ralph McTell. One of the great storytellers, Ralph McTell is now celebrating more than 50 years on the road. Known for his virtuoso guitar style, he is primarily a prolific and gifted songwriter. With a style that invites you into a unique world, he weaves a narrative that is both significant and poignant. Ralph made his debut in 1968 with the album *Eight Frames a Second* and in 1974 the release of *Streets of London* earned him an Ivor Novello Award. In 2002 he was presented with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards.

Other artists in 2025 will include: Tom Paxton, Ralph McTell, Transatlantic Women with Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh, Maura O'Connell, Julie Fowlis, Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh, String Sisters, The Scratch, Frankie Gavin and De Dannan & Biird, Women of Note with Aoife Scott, Peggy Seeger, Eric Bibb, Feile Kila, Wallis Bird -Vision of Venus, Stockton's Wing, Scullion, Sean Keáine, Martin Simpson, Karen Casey - The Women We Will Rise, Liz and Yvonne Kane with John Blake, Macalla, Yankari & Ines Khai, Dug, Landless and Eoghan Ó Ceannabháin as well as a celebration of cultural and musical icons Stephen Rea and Barney McKenna.

Tickets for TradFest 2025 are available from tradfest.com

Follow TradFest on Social Media:

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Facebook - @tradfestdublin

TikTok - @tradfest

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



Barney McKenna

Photo : Colm Henry

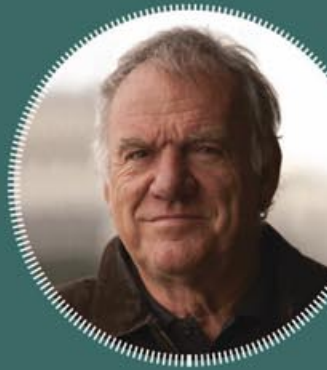
TRADFEST 2025

22-26 JAN

NNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNN

**Tom Paxton Ralph McTell
Transatlantic Women:**

with Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh, Maura O'Connell,
Muireann Nic Aomhlaibh, Julie Fowlis, String Sisters



**The Scratch Frankie Gavin and De Dannan & Biird
Women of Note with Aoife Scott & Peggy Seeger**

Eric Bibb Lindisfarne Féile Kíla

Wallis Bird - Vision of Venus

Stockton's Wing Eleanor McEvoy

Scullion Seán Keane Martin Simpson

Stephen Rea & Neil Martin

Karen Casey - The Women we will rise

Liz & Yvonne Kane with John Blake Macalla

Mike Hanrahan & Eleanor Shanley Luka Bloom

Mick Hanly with Anto Drennan and Eoin O'Neill

Steo Wall The Henry Girls Tara Breen

Yankari & Ines Khai Emma Langford Dug

Landless George Murphy & The Rising Sons

Dublin Pride Géilí Louise Mulcahy

Evelyn Kallansee & Declan Sinnott Sharyn Ward

Lauren Ní Néill Toshin Eoghan Ó Ceannabháin

Brídín Elaine Reilly Diarmuid Ó Meachair

Jacqui Martin & Derek Hickey

Paudie O'Connor & Aoife Ni Chaoimh

plus many more to be announced



NNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNN

tradfest.com

[f/TradFest](#) [@tradfesttdublin](#) [x/trad_fest](#) [@tradfest](#)

NNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNN

MUSIC AND HEALING

In our continued series by Bruce S. Victor MD, DLFAPA, we feature Studies in Rhythm and Healing from Kieran Jordan on Footwork to Energy Work.

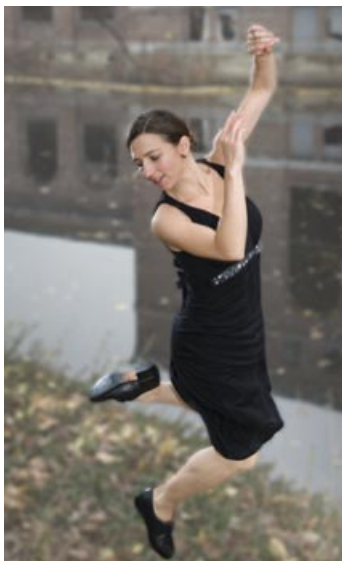


Photo : Ariel Mandeville



Photo : Doug Hyde

When Kieran Jordan mentioned that she has been doing Irish dance since she was five years old, I asked, “Well, whose idea was it then?” Having known Kieran for over a decade, I should have realized the folly of my question.

“It was my idea,” she said, evincing her amalgam of passion and determination, that remarkably exists without hauteur or arrogance. Her father, whose family came from County Kilkenny, had taken her to a St. Patrick’s Day Parade in Philadelphia, and upon seeing the other young girls in their festive costumes dancing so exuberantly, she thought, “I have to do this!”. She thereupon informed her parents, who arranged for dance lessons. Within the next three decades, the *Irish Echo* would state that she is “one of America’s premier dancers and instructors”, while the *Boston Globe* called her Boston’s “first lady” of Irish dance.

“Kieran describes Polarity Therapy, in particular, as providing the “biophysics” of healing”

In addition to ceaseless hours of dance training, Kieran’s journey entailed meticulous scholarship. She obtained her bachelor’s degree in English and Irish Studies at Boston College, which included the study of dance at University College Cork with Joe O’Donovan; as well as being elected to Phi Beta Kappa, the oldest and most prestigious of America’s academic honors societies. She later obtained a master’s degree in Contemporary Dance from the University of Limerick and was subsequently awarded two Artist Fellowships and two Master Artist teaching grants in Massachusetts.

Kieran has forged new paths in the world of Irish dancing both as a performer and director as well as a teacher. In the US, she was one of the first to bring *sean-nós* dancing into theatrical ensembles on stage and founded her own school of non-competitive Irish dance for adults in 2001. Appraised as “a rare find” (*Cambridge Chronicle*), this school became central to New England’s Irish cultural community for more than two decades.

In 2017, when Kieran felt that she was “at the top of her career”, she suddenly developed heart palpitations, followed by a rapid cavalcade of debilitating symptoms such as night-sweats, insomnia, nausea, profound fatigue, shooting pains, muscle twitching, brain fog...and others! The severity of these symptoms took a sledge hammer to her ability to dance, or even function, in a normal or reliable way. She

immediately suspected that she had Lyme Disease. Early testing was negative, and for nearly a year, she sought multiple varieties of medical encounters which resulted in continued unrelenting symptoms, erroneous diagnoses, ineffective remedies, and consequent financial drainage.

As it happens, Kieran’s intuitive self-diagnosis was correct, she did have Lyme disease, a tick-borne bacterial infection, but also Babesiosis, a parasite that is transmitted by an infected tick, that can result in life-threatening complications. However, the correct diagnosis did not lead to efficacious treatment for another full year following diagnosis.

Kieran then consulted a naturopathic doctor in Maine, who is a noted Lyme specialist, and her symptoms started to improve. However, she was very much her own ‘co-healer’ in the process: having immersed herself in Reiki and Polarity Therapy, meditation, and yoga, before she became ill, she integrated all these practices with the treatment of the naturopath.

Kieran described the synergy between the naturopathy and the ‘energy practices’ as follows: the former addressed the aberrant biochemistry that perpetuated the disease, but the latter addressed the *trauma* inflicted by it. Kieran referred to the work of Polarity Therapy, in particular, as providing the “biophysics” of healing, which resulted in an increasing feeling of “harmony in the body and a re-balancing of the nervous system...to heal not just what happened to my body from these illnesses, but the results of their life disruption, their impact upon my professional life, social life, and identity.”

With Kieran’s gradual return to health, she undertook the necessary curriculum to become a Board Certified Polarity Therapist, which she accomplished in January of this year. She described that she is now doing “some dance and some Polarity”. And saw her involvement in dance as having prepared her well for her work as a Polarity Therapist. “My life as a dancer made me deeply informed as a body worker... my background in understanding alignment, kinesiology, and anatomy was very applicable to working with a Polarity client.” Kieran stated that

this was, in turn, contingent on her deep understanding that both dance and the biological systems of the body have *rhythm* as their underlying basis.

But Kieran took it one step further, contending that dance and Polarity Therapy share the ultimate *intention*, in the words of Dr. Randolph Stone, founder of Polarity Therapy, “the soul finding free expression through the mind and the body”.

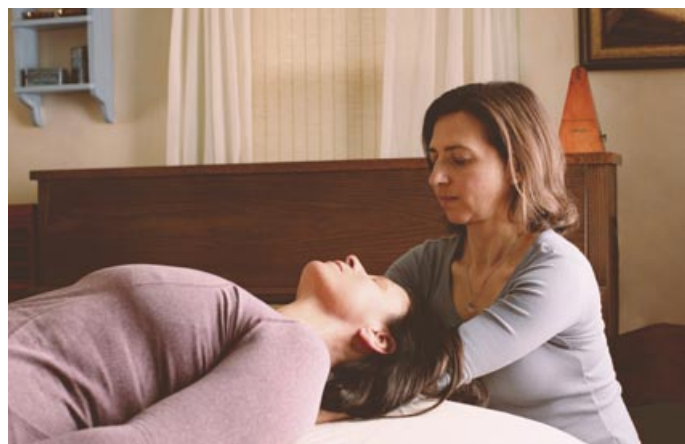


Photo : Doug Hyde

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and melodeon playing, great tune choice all complemented
with tasteful accompaniment throughout"*

- Benny McCarthy (Danú)

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SCHËPPE SIWEN

On the release of their *Richtung Fräiheet* album, John O'Regan calls Jojo Wagner in Luxembourg.



Photo : Yves Kortum

Google a glance at the website for Schëppe Siwen (Seven of Spades), you will see they are dressed impeccably in chic attire, adorned with stylish hats and flat caps, exuding bohemian elegance. Fronted by singer/violinist Jojo Wagner, the band consists of Lionel or Lio-guitarist, drummer- Phillipe, Isa (Isabelle) on accordion, Davina on flute, trumpeters Pierre, Marc, Pawel and Titi and bassist Noé. *Richtung Fräiheet* translates as Towards Freedom, and a journey is at the heart of their music; it is on OOB Records.

"We're a group of ten musicians, each with their own distinct personality and musical background," Jojo explained. "While some of us are deeply rooted in punk, rock, and folk traditions, we all share a common foundation in classical music, having received formal education from the conservatory. This mix of diverse styles, combined with our classical training, has helped us craft our distinctive sound. We like to think of ourselves as a musical family. Our individual styles come together in a way that's organic, and it's that sense of unity and diversity that fuels the energy of our live performances," he added.

"We've created something fresh but still deeply rooted in our heritage"

Was the mix of musical styles intentional or did it happen naturally? Jojo replies, "it all happened naturally. We initially set out to combine the rebellious energy of punk with the emotional depth of folk music. As we evolved, various styles, rock, ska, jazz, and even classical influences naturally blended in. Our goal from the start was to modernise Luxembourg's traditional music while staying true to the folk instruments that define it. By fusing these traditional sounds with modern styles, we've created something fresh but still deeply rooted in our heritage. Some may see it as a risk not to stick to a single genre, but for us, it's about creating an authentic musical experience that reflects the diversity of our influences. This blend is what makes our music resonate with people.

"As we've grown, we've incorporated a wide array of musical influences into our folk repertoire. The lively tradition of 'village fanfares' and brass ensembles that can be found in nearly every Luxembourg village also plays a crucial role in our identity, creating an atmosphere where music is woven into everyday life. Today, our influences are as diverse and vibrant as the music scene itself, and this eclectic mix is what truly defines Schëppe Siwen."

What's so special? "Two key elements set Schëppe Siwen apart: our commitment to social engagement and our mission to modernise Luxembourg's traditional music. First, our social contributions play a significant role in defining who we are as a band. Beyond the music, we aim to create awareness around important issues such as inclusivity, community solidarity, and cultural preservation. We see ourselves as not just musicians, but as cultural ambassadors, using our platform to spark dialogue and encourage social responsibility. Our lyrics often reflect personal experiences, but they also touch on broader societal themes, aiming to connect with our audience on a deeper level. We're driven by the belief that music can be a catalyst for change, and this perspective influences both our songwriting and our live performances.

"Second, we are deeply committed to modernising the traditional music of Luxembourg. While we proudly incorporate folk instruments like the accordion, the violin, brass, and flutes, staples of Luxembourg's musical heritage, we blend these with contemporary genres like punk, ska, and rock to create something fresh and relevant. Our goal isn't just to preserve the past but to breathe new life into it, making it accessible

and engaging for modern audiences without losing its cultural significance. This fusion of the old and the new, paired with our desire to make a positive social impact, is what truly sets Schëppe Siwen apart.

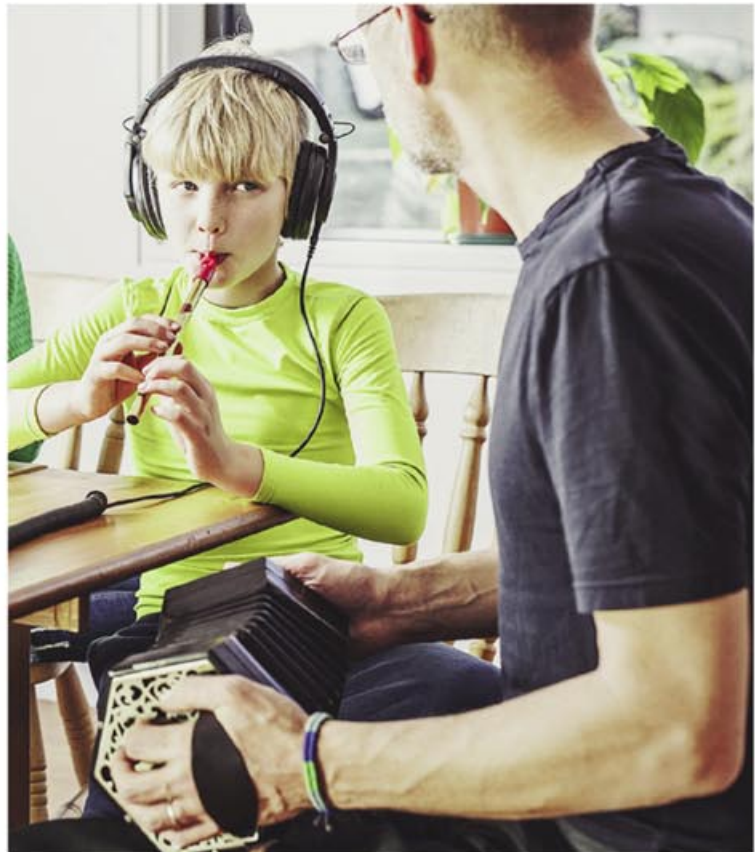
Appearances at festivals such as the Schots Weekend in Limburg, the Schlossgrabenfest in Darmstadt, and the E-Lake Festival in Luxembourg confirm their ability to captivate audiences. Jojo concludes: "Our new album, *Richtung Fräiheet*, feels like the culmination of everything we've learned along the way. It delves deeper into our experiences and emotions while still inviting listeners to dance and celebrate. With this album, we're not just sharing music, we're offering a glimpse into our growth as a band and the journey that has shaped us. Whether you're a long-time fan or just discovering us, we hope you feel that evolution in every note!"

OOB Records released the album worldwide on 9th November, 2024 in CD and Vinyl format as well as on over 200+ digital platforms. See www.oob-records.com/shop and visit the band at www.scheppesiwen.com



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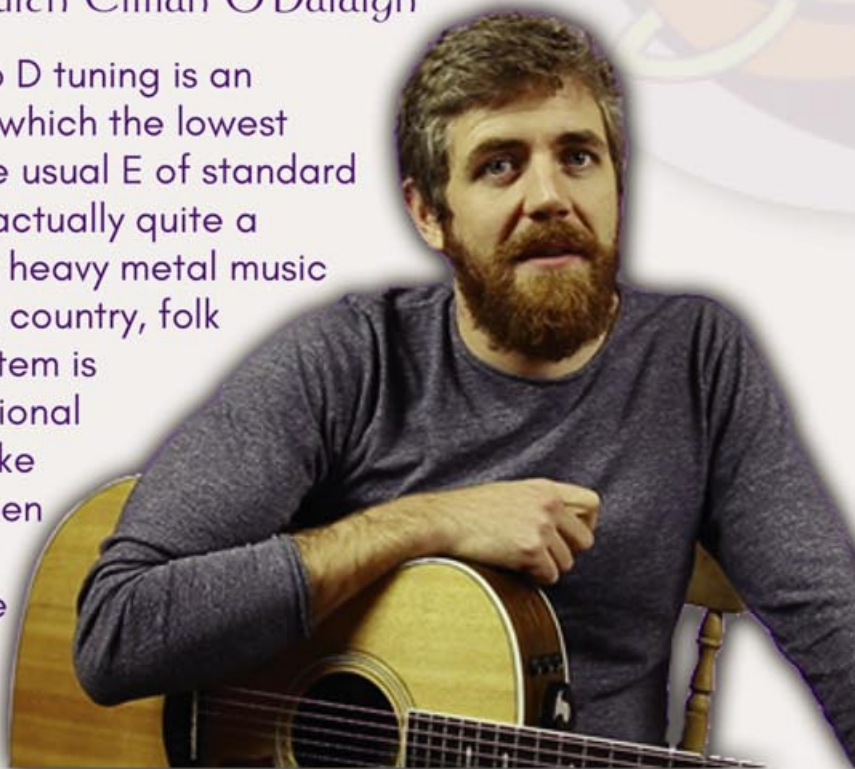
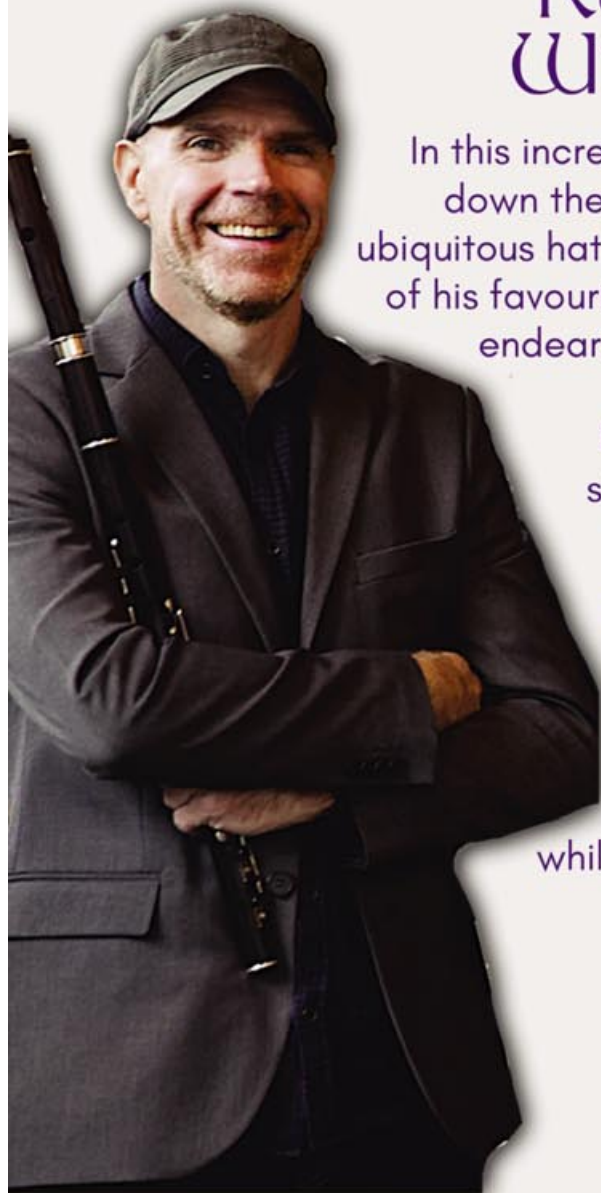
In this incredible course, Kevin Crawford of Lúnasa puts down the flute, which he is most famous for, dons the ubiquitous hat (also famous for!), and takes you through 13 of his favourite session tunes in a very personal and most endearing way. So, instead of these lessons feeling like Kevin is your teacher, they're more like having a chat with him, where, in his relaxed style, he imparts the wisdom of a life-time on the Irish music scene.

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with Cillian Ó'Dálaigh

For those not already familiar, Drop D tuning is an alternative form of guitar tuning in which the lowest (sixth) string is tuned down from the usual E of standard tuning by one whole step to D. It's actually quite a popular tuning for electric guitar in heavy metal music and is also found regularly in blues, country, folk and classical guitar. This tuning system is particularly suited to the Irish traditional music genre as a beautiful drone-like effect can be created using the open D string. Previous knowledge of standard tuning, at an intermediate level, is necessary to begin this course.





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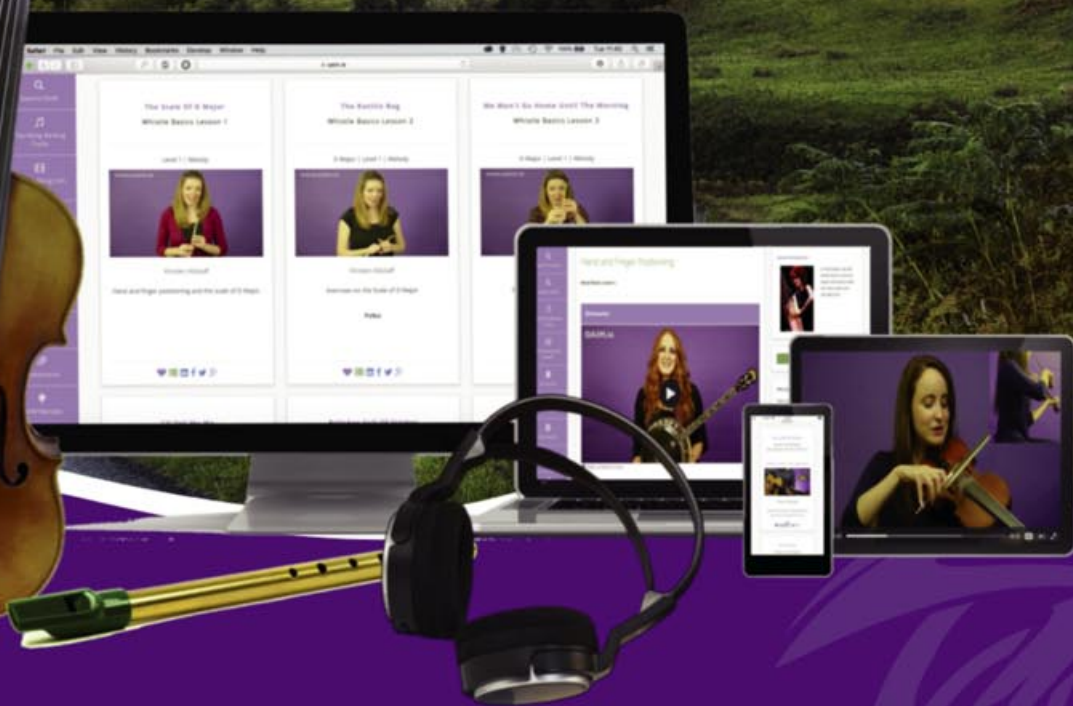




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DRUSUNA : BEYOND THE GREEN REALM

Drusuna is a musical project from Sefhirus Oakborn, who works in the genre of Ritual Pagan Folk music. Seán Laffey sends off some questions to Portugal to find out more.



Sefhirus: “The new album is titled *Beyond the Green Realm*, a concept I envisioned some years ago. It represents a hidden place, untouched by the modern world, where only ancient forces remain, forgotten by time. In this realm, the trees are not silent; they speak in an ancient, hidden language, one only audible to those who listen with intent. Their whispers carry the secrets of the earth, a forgotten language intertwined with the rustling leaves and the sigh of the wind. Through these cryptic sounds, primordial elements of an ethereal nature emerge, conveying messages embedded in the pure fabric of nature itself.

“I don’t see Drusuna as a band, it is a personal project, with no plans for live performances at the moment, despite frequent invitations. For me Drusuna, it’s more than just music; it’s the extension of my mind as both creator and dreamer. The essence of this project has always been the same: to create art that is deeply and intrinsically connected to nature.”

Seán: “How does this translate into the music you make?”

Sefhirus: “My aim is to create soundscapes that transport the listener into a realm of wonder, where echoes of the ancient world can still be heard. Incorporating natural and organic sounds, often captured during my walks in the woods, plays a key role in achieving this. The intention is to craft a journey that feels both timeless and immersive, drawing the listener into a deep bond with the forgotten and the ethereal, where reality and fantasy seamlessly intertwine. It’s a form of escapism, where our human essence reconnects with the ancestral roots of the earth. In a musical arrangement that features a more cinematic aspect, the stunning voice of Rose Avalon elevates the entire aesthetic experience of the music.

“The composition process is always an open-ended journey, and I can never predict where it will lead when I begin with a sketch or concept. Frequently, a simple natural sound sparks an idea, serving as the foundation for something more intricate. Whenever Drusuna has performed live, this immersive atmosphere has always been achieved through sampling and backing tracks. While it’s not an easy setup, it’s definitely feasible, especially in concert halls where the sound can truly flourish.”

Seán: “You work closely with Kathy Keller at Friendly Folk Records in Rotterdam.”

Sefhirus: “My relationship with Kathy and Friendly Folk Records has

always been positive and based on trust and transparency. It’s been several years of collaboration, and everything has always gone very well.”

Seán: “What connections have you with the wider pagan folk music scene in Europe?”

Sefhirus: “To be honest my professional life doesn’t allow me much time to stay attuned to what’s happening within the scene. Additionally, since the pandemic, I haven’t brought Drusuna back to the stage. Obviously, being from a more peripheral European country and not performing live also affects the exposure and media presence that Drusuna has. Nevertheless, there is a fan base that continues to follow the project, which certainly motivates me to share my creations with all those who appreciate and support it.”

Seán: “It seems to me that much of your work would sit very comfortably within the video games industry.”

Sefhirus: “Definitely. I’ve always had an affinity for soundtracks in the

“Drusuna is more than just music; it’s the extension of my mind as both creator and dreamer”

film and gaming industries. I have participated in a few casual projects of this nature, but nothing too serious. Nowadays, this industry is saturated with many artists, and artificial intelligence technology will only exacerbate the situation. While it’s certainly not the end, entering this industry will definitely be much more challenging than ever before. Even so, I have some parallel musical projects (example: Urze-Dungeon Synth) that falls more into the soundtrack category.”

Seán: “What ambitions have you for *Beyond the Green Realm*?”

Sefhirus: “I wish this album will reach a wider audience, because I believe it’s a solid work that steps outside the conventional boundaries of the genre. To make this even more special, I have made a handmade special edition limited to 20 Hand-numbered copies. I would say that Drusuna remains a hidden gem for lovers of this style. We’ll see what time will bring.”

Discover more about *Beyond The Green Realm* at www.drusuna.com

MACDARA YEATES**Traditional Singing From Dublin****Own Label, 9 Tracks, 38 Minutes****<https://macdarayeates.bandcamp.com/album/traditional-singing-from-dublin>**

Macdara Yeates is one of a crop of young artists associated with the recent resurgence of traditional singing in Dublin, alongside acts such as Lankum, Ye Vagabonds and Landless. In 2012, Macdara became a founding member of "The Night Before Larry Got Stretched", a unique monthly singing session based in The Cobblestone pub, which has spawned some notable vocalists since its inception. From 2013 to 2017, Macdara was a member of the acclaimed traditional/folk band Skipper's Alley, touring internationally.

This is his debut album under his own name, and he takes the opportunity to evoke the raw and unadorned beauty of solo ballad singing with minimal accompaniment from his guitar or bodhrán, or simply a cappella. The tone is set on the opener *Johnny I Hardly Knew Ya*, a well-known anti-war song as relevant today as it ever was. His baritone voice is strong and assured, but unadorned with niceties, which just adds to the authenticity of his delivery.

Here, he has compiled a master list of those songs which have engaged him most, and they are presented with the care and attention associated with a true connoisseur of the fine art of balladry. Many of the tracks will be familiar with powerful renditions of classic songs such as *The Shores Of Lough Bran* and *The Kerry Recruit*. He includes a great version of the humorous Dublin ballad *The Herrin'*, and I was particularly drawn to ballads with beautifully sparse guitar accompaniment – *One Starry Night* is wonderfully atmospheric, and *Boys From Home* captures the sadness of the forced emigrant.

This recording is unashamedly sparse, raw and authentic, capturing the true spirit of the singing sessions which have become such a feature of Irish traditional music. Macdara Yeates can be proud of his initial offering, which is sure to enthral his many admirers.

Mark Lysaght**FIACH MORIARTY****Liberties****Own Label, 10 Tracks, 32 Minutes www.fiachmusic.com**

Fiach Moriarty has already established himself as an impressive figure on the Irish music scene with some serious credits including collaborations with Paul Brady, Eddi Reader, and tours with Mary Black and Ray Davies, also recording and performing with a host of well-known artists, too numerous to mention. More recently, he has been a member of the acclaimed trad-fusion group ALDOC, and has recently joined the legendary Horslips. *Liberties* is his third solo album, and is an ambitious project telling the real-life story of his great-grand uncle Jack Kavanagh from Francis Street, Dublin, who fought in World War One.

He chronicles a period of great economic hardship where, for many young Irishmen, enlisting in the British Army provided an escape from the misery of poverty and unemployment. The songs are in chronological order and trace his relative's journey to Gallipoli, where he witnesses the horrors of war at first hand. *I'm For Gallipoli*, already released as a single, features Damien Dempsey on shared vocals and Canadian singer Jenna Nicholls also appears on *Long Lost Penpal*, with lovely use of trumpet and ukulele.

There is clever use of style and instrumentation throughout, Fiach playing several instruments himself with some great guest musicians helping out as well. The subject matter is obviously deeply personal to Fiach, and he has taken great care to make the material authentic and true to the spirit of the times. *We At Swim* is a lovely melodic piece, *The Recruit* is a humorous ballad with some neat chordal twists, and perhaps the most poignant song, *The Raven's Wing*, details the reality of the soldier's lot.

The album really captures the reality of the life and times of an Army recruit during the First World War, and Fiach has fully achieved his artistic goal on this fine recording.

Mark Lysaght**ERLEND VIKEN TRIO****Ville Veier****Heilo, 9 Tracks, 43 Minutes****www.facebook.com/erlendvikentrio**

The Erlend Viken trio are: Erlend Viken (fiddle and hardanger fiddle), Marius Graff (electric guitar and banjo) and Sondre Meisfjord (double bass). This is a follow on from their *Fete Slåtta*, which was nominated for the Spellemann Awards (Norwegian Grammy) in 2023.

The cover of the album shows an urban street corner, taped off for safety's sake, a nearby traffic light has been knocked sideways. Google translates the album title as "wild ways"; is this an oblique reference to an intersection where the once strict rules have been temporarily suspended? Perhaps, because, *Ville Veier* is something of a departure for Erlend, whose work has been previously characterised by meticulous orchestration. Here there's more freedom, more collaboration, more conversations between the players.

The majority of the tracks are newly composed with just two being traditional Norwegian tunes, although Erlend is well grounded in the traditional music of the country. A famous Norwegian dance form is the Halling, an energetic traditional male dance, here the trio play Meisfjord's new composition *Roadsterbassgangarhalling*. They were exposed to our kind of music at Celtic Connections, which inspired Erlend to write *Road from Glasgow*. I wondered if their track *Mingus Lullaby* was a nod to the famous jazz bass player, but no, it's named for a puppy that slept during band rehearsals.

Two of the tracks feature vocals from Synnøve Brøndbo Plassen. Her contribution on *Bogata Blues* is to add a high pitched harmony, it's a kind of jazz scat singing. This effective device is repeated on the ballad *Springar Etter Gottfried*, Synnøve's voice sitting over a minimal bass line. It reminded me melodically of the *Coventry Carol*. Track 9, *Byrsevegen* is the most accessible and I could see this being adopted by folk fiddlers across the northern hemisphere.

The overall feel of the album is one of gentle experimentation, the trio conjuring up soundscapes that are both intriguing and beguiling.

Seán Laffey**MICHAEL PETER FLYNN****Coragh County Leitrim 1928****Own Label, 14 Tracks, 49 Minutes****www.michaelpeterflynn.com**

The frontman and co-founder (with the late Pat Collins) of the Café Orchestra is back with a concept album exploring connections to home. Inspired by a short memoir written by Michael's father shortly before he died, the album captures the essence of his life, through his eyes.

Flynn tells his family story through music and song; it is a familiar tale we all know so well; of exile from the county of his forefathers, of internal displacement, emigration, scattered family overseas. At its core is the enduring love his father found in Dublin with his mother, who was a skilled dressmaker, often called upon to stitch together dresses for glamorous film stars and politicians' wives.

The album begins traditionally enough with two sets of tunes played on the piano-accordion, *Logan's Field* and *The Master's Cane*. Before you settle into thinking this might be another sepia toned journey to school across the fields, Flynn's razor sharp writing kicks in. There's a marked musical shift into a world of rock on *Wash Me Clean*, a funk groove carries the narrative of *The Tricker in Galder* and by the time we reach *The First Loy* we are cutting turf on a riff that wouldn't be out of place in a Mission Impossible movie. *The Blue Egg* takes a continental turn as if his parents' romantic relationship was pure Fabergé.

In short, Michael P Flynn has taken an old story and morphed it into a modern muse, employing contemporary musical tropes to reveal a true tale that begins when a cock crows in *Logan's Field* on the first track and eases its way into his own future on *Prayer For Nancy*, a sad end note in honour of his mother.

Echoing the craft of his mother, Michael P Flynn makes his masterpiece from the textiles of his father's memory. This is bespoke culture.

Seán Laffey

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STEVE KNIGHTLEY**The Winter Yards****Hands On Music HMCD054, 12 Tracks, 43 Minutes**www.steveknightley.com

For decades Steve Knightley was one half of the duo Show Of Hands, a fiddle, guitar and mandola combo that brought thoughtful, often acerbic songs to hundreds of folk clubs and festivals in the UK and beyond. It is obvious that when Show Of Hands finally called it a day, Knightley was anything but finished, and *The Winter Yards* hands us this in spades.

Knightley is joined by his Show of Hands' pal Phil Beer and a talented ensemble of Philip Henry, Mark Tucker and Matt Clifford, notably the tabla player Johnny Kalsi, vocal duo True Foxes, The Lost Sound and the Madrid based band Track Dogs.

The opening track is a comment on Britain's systemic failing of people, whether they be immigrants, the elderly or post-masters (if you haven't read about the Post Office scandal, be prepared to get angry at corporate cover ups, and a cultural belief that flawed technology is perfect and employees are on the take).

The title of the album is found inside his song *The Rides*, a lament for the winter laying up of fit-up fairgrounds, a metaphor for the slow death of traditional ways of life. There's a summer contrast on *Maria (Recuerdos)* with *Track Dogs* adding a burst of Latin sunshine. Knightley is in perfect sync as he plays the Chilean cuatro (tuned ADF#B) and incidentally he has an immersive tutorial on the instrument on his Facebook page.

Irish listeners will resonate with *Requiem*. Written to the tune of the *Parting Glass*, it's a live recording with harmony backing from True Foxes. This is followed by the bluesy *I'll Never Forgive You* (there's paradoxical twist in the narrative, it's very clever). There is an English Folk rock diversion on the *Mermaid*, a happy wedding anthem, pairing the fiddle and a national steel guitar. More of that twangy six-string on *If You Ever Come Back*, which has been compared to Springsteen's *Nebraska* vibe.

The album closes with *Transactions*. Like many of Knightley's songs, it is a 20/20 observation on where we sit in the maelstrom of modern life. In this instance he exposes the power of the press to shape opinion at the expense of our concerns.

Musically rich, sonically varied, impeccably produced, Knightley is still arguably the major songwriter of his, and many other English generations. Critically he has never succumbed to the mediocrity of a national treasure. Knightley hones and revels in that uncomfortable sharp edge we need in folk music.

Seán Laffey**LIZ SIMMONS****Wander Free****Own Label, Single 3 Minutes, 30 Seconds www.lizsimmons.net**

Liz Simmons is a free spirited poet and songwriter based in Vermont. Her *Wander Free* is a song that would find a welcome home at any Mass, and indeed, if you are looking for stirring music for your Church this Christmas time, then *Wander Free* might be the perfect song for the occasion. The Christmas story is, after all, about the displaced and the dispossessed, the vulnerable and weary travellers looking for an inn or a stable. Her song has a life affirming chorus:

*I will falter, of that I am sure**I will wander and I will flow**I will find many ports in the storm**I will travel always with you*

This works beautifully both on a secular and a spiritual level; her message is one of universal hope, something that we need today more than at any time this century. The song builds to a swelling crescendo with some stunning playing from Natalie Haas on cello and Scottish fiddler Louise Bichan. The online notes were unclear, but I presume it is Gabe Bradshaw's wizardry on synth programming that is responsible for emulating uilleann pipes at the end of the track.

Wander Free is a magical song, delightful in its simplicity and a present to be unwrapped any time of the year.

Seán Laffey

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SUNJAY**I'm Just Like You****Mighty Tight Records, 15 Tracks, 60 Minutes www.sunjay.tv**

Sunjay Brain is a virtuoso guitarist from Derby, now living in the West Midlands of England. A prodigious talent from an early age, he was a finalist in the 2012 BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Award. Now just tipping over into his thirties, his latest album is one of exemplary, effortless playing, with a stamp of authentic electric-blues imbuing the whole enterprise.

He has worked in musical theatre, playing the lead in a Buddy Holly-biog production, and his versatility has led to many comparisons, and reviews where he has been labelled with the phrase "... he plays like..." The title of the album references his sardonic reply "I'm just like you..." There are influences here for sure and a well-tuned ear for blues will detect Lightning Hopkins and shades of rockabilly, but taken as a whole, Sunjay's is a singular talent.

Link of Chain begins as a solitary front-porch blues lick and picks up with a driving back beat, his voice pure Americana, the riff enhanced by a blues harp as he extemporises over Hammond keys. He delves into talking blues on *Mail Order Mystics* with the drum kit anchoring the groove. *Up On The Lowdown*, for me recalls some early Rolling Stones; his voice here is particularly strong on the lower register. He shifts into country flavoured blues on *Don't Call Me Stranger* and *Never Needed It More*. His command of the idiom is superb; for example on a line from that second track: "If love is the meal for the hungry feel, call for the waiter". *Train Home* reminded me of some of the work by Irish singer songwriter Billy O'Dwyer Bob with an additional dimension from the subtle backing of the Hammond organ.

The album ends on a song close to home, the late night life of a gigging musician, *Leave the Light On*, a perfect track to play on any Irish country radio show, acoustic guitar and uncluttered vocals, every line a killer phrase.

If you like your folk painted with a big blues brush, this album will surely become a favourite.

Seán Laffey**MIA KELLY****To Be Clear****Own Label, 10 Tracks, 30 Minutes www.miakellymusic.com**

Mia Kelly is a young singer-songwriter from Quebec, Canada who writes and performs her material in both English and French. Musically, it's a minimalist blend of folk, rock and blues influences, and she's recently won two categories at the 2024 Canadian Folk Awards, building on the success of her debut album *Garden Through The War*.

Her vocals are deeply personal and engaging, drawing in the listener with carefully structured instrumentation, which leaves plenty of sonic space for the singer. Mia plays acoustic and electric guitars as well as piano, and for this album she enlisted a close-knit team – alongside producer Jim Bryson, who contributes additional instrumentation himself. There's a very relaxed feel to the album, reflecting a young artist who feels at home with her songs and how to communicate them to her audience.

Si J'etais Franche (If I'm Honest) has been released as a single and has a nice backbeat – it's probably the most commercial track and highlights her sultry voice with appealing harmonies – at times very reminiscent of Norah Jones to this listener. Elsewhere the album addresses more personal themes, some of which reflect her experiences when she took several months off to travel around and figure out her next steps before recording the album.

She's a keen observer of humanity on songs like *Lone Dog* and *Oleander*, while she can assume another character effortlessly as on the opening track *Bonefish Boys*, which features a sneaky reggae-tinged backbeat. Her music is full of clever touches, reflecting someone who crafts her material carefully, aided by collaborators with real empathy for her songs. This is a highly accomplished follow-up to her award-winning debut, and here is a young composer of real ability with a lot to say. Her compelling vocal delivery is what distinguishes her from many of her peers.

Mark Lysaght**HANDS OF THE HERON****Quiet Light****Cuculi Records, 12 Tracks, 43 Minutes****www.handsoftheheron.bandcamp.com**

The psych-folk trio Hands of the Heron is a long-running collaboration that has released four albums to date, the latest of which *Quiet Light* is subject to the IMM microscope. Hands of the Heron is a Bristol-based female trio of Bec Garthwaite, Beth Roberts, and Claire Vine, each of whom brings a signature songwriting style to the band. They move effortlessly between sparse choral folk and shimmering instrumental textures, with their interlocking vocal harmonies a constant thread running through the various hues of a series of dreamlike, mercurial folk songs.

Musically the backings are spare and echo the English folk revival of the 1960s, where the banjo and harmonium backing to *Evergreen* recalls Shirley and Dolly Collins traditional song accompaniments. While the guitars are dexterous and melodic, always acting as a background to the vocal leads on *Picturing Myself*, the effect is gentle and dreamlike. Their vocal harmonies have a shimmering, almost transparent aura that floats between traditional and contemporary folk styles with a welcome reserve. Vocally, echoes of the Staves and the Incredible String Band, especially the work of Licorice McKechnie and Rose Smith in their late 60s /early 70s halcyon days creep through. The effect is neither insipid nor twee, their individuality serves the songs rather than vice versa. This achieves a worthy balance centred on the tension expressed between self-sufficiency and connection with others.

Their practical approach extends to their adoption of a DIY ethos. To their credit, the band founded Cuculi Records together as a DIY space to release their own albums and music by friends and collaborators from the grassroots alt-folk community. *Quiet Light* offers a celestial dreamscape for any willing ears to join their already considerable following.

John O'Regan**EVE GOODMAN****Summer Sun, Winter Trees****9 Tracks, 41 Minutes****www.evegoodman.co.uk**

Eve Goodman is a singer songwriter from North Wales, who sings in English and Welsh, yet on this album she chooses the latter language to make her songs. They are so deeply personal, that it is a privilege to hear them and a caution to listen to the album. That this kind of album is possible at all, speaks volumes about the nature and support of the folk song community, and why? Eve's songs stem from a period of grief. We all will experience the emotion I'm sure, but for Eve and unhappily thousands of others, her grief was triggered by a family suicide. In Eve's case when her father took his own life in 2017. Happier times are recalled with some photographs taken by her Dad Phil Goodman, in 1974.

The title track opens the album, it's a quiet beginning, guitar and bass weaving below the lyrics: "a friend left me flowers... I count the hours, I'm not ready to say this, I'm not ready to lose you, I'm not ready to say goodbye..." On *Burn*, a finger-picked guitar plays a rolling riff, as Eve reflects on loss and the hopeless anger of a shared future cut short. She looks intently at the time of the suicide on *That Day*, and imagines the hurt her father would have known if he'd realised how fragile and broken Eve felt afterwards. On *Pick Up All The Pieces* she sings about "longing for a light that won't go out, and picking up all the pieces of the life that you let go". There's an uplift as the song nears its end, when she admits to herself she's getting good at letting go.

The final track contains the telling lines, "Oh brother we are singers", and now "we sing a different song". For some, this album will be cathartic, for others a reminder that no matter how alone we feel, we are connected, often in unspoken ways, to many others around us, to whom we mean the world.

In the age of the smiling selfie and an obsession with self-generated celebrity, Eve Goodman's album reminds us that pictures catch but passing moments, whereas songs endure and capture feelings for ever.

Seán Laffey



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THE TRACKLESS WILD

Recently an album came to our attention called the *Trackless Wild - Irish Songs of the Pampa*. Seán Laffey saddles up the Saino and wanders off to find out more.

The album is from Charlie O'Brien, a film maker and musician from Killarney who has a grá for the unusual songs and stories of Ireland's past. He runs *Trouble or Fortune Films*, and his film "Macalla Chill Árne" is well worth checking out.

Living in Buenos Aires, Charlie was gifted a number of old newspaper cuttings that carried songs written by a mysterious character; 'Wandering Tip'. Our song first appeared in *El Monitor de la Campaña*, N° 49, on the 27th of May, 1872.

Only the lyrics of the songs were printed in the paper, but Charlie realised they'd fit into popular Irish folk melodies. One called *The Jolly Shephard* matched the *Jolly Beggar-man*, another was a shoo in for *Lanigan's Ball*.

Irish emigration to Argentina was modest, around 20,000 Irish people settled there in the second half of the 19th century. Hailing from the midland counties and they were mostly men, working chiefly in agriculture. *El Monitor de la Campaña* printed the lyrics in English - they must have had a literate local clientele at the time.

The Trackless Wild is sung to the air of *The Homes of Donegal*. Today Paul Brady's version has become the go-to Irish classic. *The Homes of Donegal* was composed by Seán McBride in 1955. He melded it to the melody of the Scottish song *Tramps and Hawkers* that was becoming popular in the folk revival clubs. *Tramps and Hawkers* was first recorded from Jimmy McBeath by Alan Lomax and Hamish Henderson in Elgin, Scotland on 19 July

1951. Peter Kennedy recorded a version from Scottish traveller Davie Stewart in Kennedy's London flat in 1956. Both Luke Kelly and John Denver sang *Tramps and Hawkers* on albums that came out in 1964. Lomax had sourced its roots back to the late 1870s and an itinerant farm labourer called Brechin Jimmy.

Sam Henry had a murder ballad *Pat O'Brien* to the same air from Mary Getty of Coleraine in 1924, and he traced the tune as *The Winding River Roe*; a song of the same name was written by William Allingham from Coleraine around 1853.

Obviously Wandering Tip shaped the new words over an existing melody. It's a good one, it has been used for the sea shanty *Paddy West* as sung by Dan Milner, and Ewan MacColl set his *England's Motorway* to the tune (there is a fine version by

"The one Argentina word in the song is *Saino*, slang for a russet coloured horse"

Cyril O'Donoghue RIP on YouTube). The melody must have been in widespread circulation as it also carries the Canadian song *Peter Emberly*, which dates to 1881.

The one Argentina word in the song is *Saino*, slang for a russet coloured horse, favoured by shepherds in the trackless wilds of the Pampa, named after the Argentinian wild brown pig the *Saino*, called the peccary in English.

The Trackless Wild, In Pursuit Of A Wandering Tip is the newest Trouble or Fortune documentary. Filming has been completed and the film is scheduled for release later next year.

Find out more at www.charlieobrien.net

THE TRACKLESS WILD With Nashville chords

- (1) At ere as o'er the (2m) trackless wild my (1) *saino* bounds (4) along,
 (1) My thoughts are of the (6m) pleasant past and of a (1) gladsome (6m) throng,
 (1) Of scenes no southern sun can (6m) scorch in memory's (1) verdant (6m) plain
 (1) Tho' bronzed may be the (1) tenement (2m) in which (1) such (4) fancies (1) reign.

But as I near the distant mount my thoughts come back again,
 And place before my longing eyes, the children of the plain,
 Whose merry laugh recalls the days of innocence and joy
 Ere cares and blighted hopes of youth could sweets of life destroy.

Yet little reck I for them both, when my good steed and I
 Are sailing o'er the pampa main, beneath his care on high;
 And every bound my *saino* gives rewards a weary strife,
 And makes me gay and happy in this wilderness of life.

Then hail! La Plata! tho' by birth an exile from your shore,
 Adopted land both wild and grand and I'll try to love you more,
 For freedom unadorned holds fast my roving mind,
 And makes me scarce lament the land and friends I left behind.



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| DEC 6 | PORT WASHINGTON, NY - LANDMARK ON MAIN STREET | MAR 6 | BEACON, NY - THE TOWNE CRIER CAFE |
| DEC 7 | RIVERHEAD, NY - THE SUFFOLK - 2PM | MAR 7 | SOUTH ORANGE, NJ - SOUTH ORANGE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER |
| DEC 7 | RIVERHEAD, NY - THE SUFFOLK - 8PM | MAR 8 | WEST LONG BRANCH, NJ - POLLACK THEATRE, MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY |
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