



TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND SONG

Issue No. 2 Winter 2018-2019



*(Photo: Tanya Rosen-Jones)*

## Rhiannon: Outside the Box

Ronan Browne on Garech de Brún  
Mícheál Ó Súilleabáin • Alec Finn  
A Quarter of Sessions and much more

Fonn is the Irish for an air or a tune. But it can also mean desire or enthusiasm.

This magazine is enthusiastic about airs and tunes – traditional music and song.

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

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

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## in this issue

### Grace Notes: News in Brief – 4-7

- RTÉ Radio 1 Folk Awards
- Lisa O'Neill wins *Guardian* accolade
- Lankum surprise guests at Civil Rights fiftieth anniversary gig
- World music naturally with David Attenborough
- Serendipity strikes
- FairPlé symposium in February
- Doc Martin: honorary degree for Hayes
- Art of song celebrated in Roscommon
- Re-Anam-ation: DCU cultural festival returns
- All-star line-up to benefit Armagh Pipers Club
- Deadline for Arts Council's O'Flynn grant draws near



Pauline Scanlon (left) presents Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh with her RTÉ Radio 1 Folk Award  
(Photo: RTÉ)



### Major Scéal: Rhiannon Giddens – 8-14

- **From the Piedmont to Knockcroghery:** A musical journey with Rhiannon Giddens
- **A spirit of defiance:** Refusing to be defined by others, Rhiannon Giddens is a genuine Renaissance woman – brimming with creative curiosity
- **Outside the Usual Boxes:** An untraditional traditional musician

### Music Network: More concerts in the New Year – 15

### Ómós: Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin – 16-18

- An immense legacy
- Exploring the river of sound

### Ómós: Alec Finn – 19-20

- Musician and artist mourned

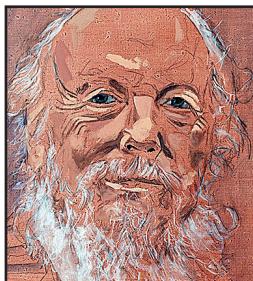


# in this issue



## Festival Fever – 21-25

- Letterkenny Trad Week and Ballincollig Winter Music Festival
- Dublin TradFest
- Imbolc Festival in Derry
- Celtic Connections in Glasgow
- Kilkenny Tradfest

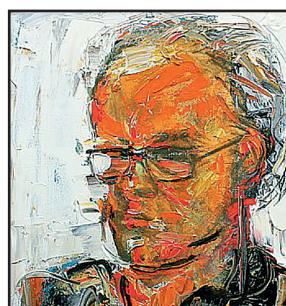


**Airs and Faces:  
Garech Remembered  
– 26-30**  
• Piper Rónan Browne  
reflects on the late head  
of Claddagh records

## Airs and Faces:

### J.B. Vallely – 31

- Sound pictures



## Recent Releases

### – 32-33

## On the Horizon – 34

- Imagining Ireland
- Young'uns in unique show
- The Gloaming to play seven nights at the National Concert Hall

## A Quarter of Sessions

Peerless flawless Landless .....	35
Armagh Pipers Club.....	36
Ballinasloe Singing Circle.....	36
Banagher CCÉ.....	36
Belfast Singing Circle .....	36
Birr CCÉ.....	36
Boyle Traditional Singing Circle.....	36
Bray Singing Circle.....	36
Carlow Singers Session.....	36
Cavan Traditional Music Session .....	36
Chapel Gate Singers Club.....	37
Clé Club.....	37
Cork Singers Club .....	37
County Wexford Traditional Singing Circle .....	37
Croonerista Social Club .....	37
Crusheen Singers Club .....	37
De Barra's Folk Club .....	38
Derry Traditional Singers Circle.....	38
Doonbeg Singers Circle.....	38
Drogheda Singers Circle .....	38
Dundalk Singing Circle .....	38
Edenderry CCÉ.....	38
Ennis Singers Club .....	38
Falcarragh Song Circle/Ciorcal na hAmhráin, An Fal Carrach.....	38
Fanore Singers Club.....	38
Feakle Singers Club.....	39
An Góilín.....	39
Howth Singing Circle.....	40
Inishowen Traditional Singers Circle.....	40
Jim O'The Mills Session.....	40
Kilmaley/Lisroe Singers Club .....	40
Killeshandra Traditional Music Session.....	41
Kilshanny House Singing Circle .....	41
Kinvara Singers Circle .....	42
Malahide Singing Circle.....	42
Navan Singers Circle .....	42
The Night Before Larry Got Stretched.....	42
North Wexford Traditional Singing Circle .....	42
Na Píobairí Uilleann .....	43
Rainbow Singers Circle.....	44
Rhode CCÉ.....	44
Ring of Gullion CCÉ .....	44
Rostrevor Folk Club .....	44
Séamus Ennis Arts Centre .....	44
Shanaglish Singers Circle .....	44
Skibbereen Singers Club.....	44
Sliabh Liag Singers Circle.....	44
Sligo Traditional Singers Circle .....	45
Song Central .....	45
South Roscommon Singers Circle .....	45
Spancihill Singers Club .....	45
Sperrins Singing Circle.....	45
Sult na Sollan/Sallins .....	45
Sunflower Folk Club .....	46
Tower Singing Circle.....	47
Trim Singers Circle .....	47
Tuam Singers Club.....	47
West Limerick Singing Club.....	47



## Radie Peat and Martin Hayes take major individual honours

Female artists clinched some of the most prestigious prizes at the inaugural RTÉ Radio 1 Folk Awards – held in Vicar Street in Dublin on October 25. Radie Peat of Lankum was named as Best Singer. Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh took the Best Traditional Track honour and Emma Langford was acclaimed as Best Emerging Artist.

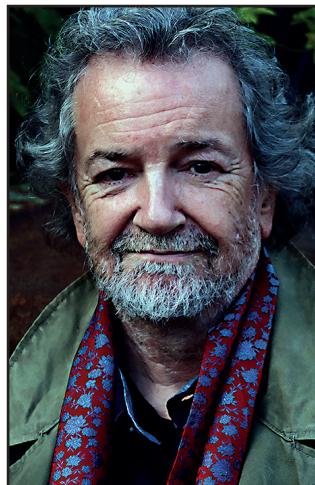
Martin Hayes was named Best Instrumentalist with Lankum as the Best Group.

Declan O'Rourke won for Best Original Track while We Banjo 3 topped the popular vote in the poll for Best Album.

The Lifetime Achievement Award for Andy Irvine had already been announced before the awards ceremony, while the posthumous induction of song collector, Tom Munnely, and singer, John Reilly, into the Hall of Fame was very well received.

Lankum's success in the RTÉ Radio 1 awards follows similar recognition as Best Group at the 2018 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards.

The event included live performances from Lankum, Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh, Andy Irvine, Christy Moore, Iarla Ó Lionard, Landless, Daoiri Farrell, Eleanor Shanley, The Whileaways, Saint Sister, The Lost Brothers, Steo Wall and Slow Moving Clouds.



A LIFETIME OF ACHIEVEMENT: Andy Irvine (Photo: Béla Kásá)



AWARD WINNER: Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh

### RTÉ RADIO 1 FOLK AWARD WINNERS

#### Best Folk Singer

- Radie Peat

#### Best Folk Instrumentalist

- Martin Hayes

#### Best Folk Group

- Lankum

#### Best Emerging Folk Artist

- Emma Langford

#### Lifetime Achievement Award

- Andy Irvine

#### Best Traditional Folk Track

- Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh - *Bean Dubh A' Ghleanna*

#### Best Original Folk Track

- Declan O'Rourke - *Along the Western Seaboard*

#### Best Folk Album

- (*RTÉ Radio 1 Listeners' Poll*)

- We Banjo 3 - *Haven*

#### Hall of Fame

- Tom Munnely and John Reilly.



Lisa O'Neill

## Lisa O'Neill wins Guardian accolade

Lisa O'Neill's *Heard a Long Gone Song* has been acclaimed as the best folk album of 2018 by the *Guardian* critic, Jude Rogers.

"Her resolutely unpretty, belly-deep Irish drawl hymned the decline of industry, depression, and the deaths of young children," said Rogers of the Cavan singer. "Let it submerge you and a modern folk masterpiece emerges."

Another Irish vocalist, Rioghnach Connolly, was commended in Rogers' top ten for her work on the album *Let The Cards Fall* by The Breath. The album's track, *Calm You Down*, was Rogers' favourite original ballad of the year with "Rioghnach Connolly's voice as tender as the grasp of a child's hand."

## Lankum: surprise guests at Civil Rights fifty-fifth anniversary gig

Lankum were the surprise guests at a special concert at Dublin's Liberty Hall in November to mark fifty-fifth anniversary of the birth of the Civil Rights movement in Northern Ireland.

The *We Shall Overcome* concert – which followed a day-long conference – featured a top class line-up of singers, musicians, poets and writers – led off by Tommy Sands with Niamh Parsons, Theo Dorgan, Noel O'Grady, The Dublin Lasses,



CIVIL RIGHTS: Lankum in Liberty Hall (Photo: Fonn)

Compánach (featuring Liz Doherty, Fintan Vallely, Tiarnán Ó Duinnchinn and Sibéal Davitt), Seán O'Reilly, Evelyn Conlon and Ar Scath a

Chéile (featuring Síle Denvir, Barry Kerr, Peter Browne and Des Geraghty). Bláthnid Ní Chofaigh hosted the commemorative concert.



WORLD MUSIC COLLECTOR: David Attenborough (Photo: BBC)

## World music naturally

Two CDs of music from West Africa, South America, Madagascar, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Pacific Islands and northern Australia which was recorded by David Attenborough have just been released.

The broadcaster, naturalist and environmental champion made the recordings between 1954 and 1963 while travelling to remote parts of the world to film exotic animals for the BBC television series *Zoo Quest*.

During his spare time on these field trips, he took an old tape recorder to capture the musical performances and rituals of the local people.

While some have expressed surprise at Attenborough's interest in world music, it should be recalled that one of his first broadcasting assignments as a young producer at the BBC was the television series, *Alan Lomax – Song Hunter*, in 1953-4 (See *Fonn* Autumn 2018).

Following his work with the revered American song

collector in bringing traditional musicians from Britain and Ireland to the newly emerging television audience, Attenborough was inspired to become a music collector, too.

So when he started travelling around the world for the *Zoo Quest* series, he recorded the local music. The recordings were duly deposited in the BBC Sound Archive where they remained untouched for almost 60 years until producer, Julian May, found them.

He prepared them for release in a two-disc set with an accompanying 52-page booklet featuring stories and original photography from the recording sessions as well as commentary from David Attenborough under the title, *My Field Recordings from Across the Planet*.



DOC MARTIN: A month after his success at the RTE Radio 1 Folk Awards master fiddle player, Martin Hayes, received an honorary doctorate in music from NUI Galway in November (Photo: Aengus MacMahon)



BANKS OF THE BANN: Niall Hanna (centre) and Rachel McGarry (right) with RTE's Miriam O'Callaghan (left).

## Serendipity strikes

In an amazing coincidence on RTE Radio 1 recently, two versions of the same tune were played one after the other in different settings in different programmes.

The tune, known as *Slane* is the air to the traditional song, *The Banks of the Bann*. It was sung by Niall Hanna to close the *Sunday with Miriam* show.

The next programme, a religious service from Dundalk, opened with the hymn, *Be Thou My Vision* – set to the

same tune, *Slane*. In fact, it is also used as the air to another hymn, *Lord of All Hopefulness*.

Named after the County Meath village on the northern bank of the Boyne, *Slane* also supports a variation of *The Banks of the Bann* – in which the Boyne is substituted for the Bann.

This version was sung in Drogheda (where else?) by Gilly Cullen at the recent singing concert during the annual Traditional Music Weekend.

### WOMEN AND TRADITIONAL / FOLK MUSIC RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM



## FairPlé symposium

FairPlé, the campaign for gender equality within traditional and folk music, is co-sponsoring a one-day research symposium on 'Women and traditional/folk music' on February 9 in conjunction with the Centre for Irish Studies in NUI Galway.

The event – which was preceded by a call for papers earlier in 2018 – is being organised from the FairPlé side by Dr. Sile Denir and Dr. Una Monaghan with support from Dr. Verena Commins, Dr. Méabh Ní Fhuartháin and Dr. Lillis Ó Laoire from NUI Galway. It will be a ticketed event – €20 for waged and €10 for unwaged.





PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION: Artwork on display at the South Roscommon Singers Circle (Photo: Declan Coyne).

## Art of song celebrated in Roscommon

The ever innovative members of the South Roscommon Singers Circle celebrated the much anticipated launch of their song art project, Interpretations, in Murray's Bar, Knockcroghery, earlier this month (December).

An intriguing collaboration between the Singers Circle and visual artists from the region, the project's aim was to produce a combined album of songs and art works. The South Roscommon Singers Circle and guests (Patsy Hanly, Cathy Jordan and The Songbirds) recorded twelve traditional and contemporary folk songs and invited twelve local visual artists to take one track each, study the lyrics and produce a piece of art work based on their response to the song.

The twelve titles were drawn from a hat and the songs assigned to each artist. The result is a 12-inch vinyl LP of

songs and an accompanying album of printed art work.

The project was conceived and directed by Declan Coyne with support from Roscommon County Council Arts Officer, Mary Mullins, as well as the members of South Roscommon Singers Circle and the artists. Martin O'Hara recorded the songs live at Murray's Bar, Knockcroghery, and Roscommon Arts Centre.

At the album's launch, members of the Singers Circle were joined by the widely acclaimed female vocal group, Landless, whose first major album, *Bleaching Bones*, was released earlier in the year.



VOCAL ARTISTS: Landless at the opening of the Interpretations exhibition in Knockcroghery (Photo: Declan Coyne).



CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP: DCU President, Brian Mac Craith (left) and Philip King (Photo: DCU).

## ReAnimation DCU's cultural festival returns for second year

Dublin City University (DCU) will once again host its Anam festival on April 3-4 in the wake of the success of the inaugural event in 2018.

The two-day festival of music, poetry, literature, drama and film workshops will include performances from established Irish artists, North Dublin community groups and DCU staff and students in a series of venues across DCU's three campuses – the Glasnevin Campus, the St Patrick's Campus and the All Hallows Campus.

The event is a further expression of DCU's ambition to play a central role in creating a North Dublin Cultural Quarter.



MASTER FIDDLER: Liam O'Connor (Photo: Fonn).

A centrepiece of the 2019 festival – which is to be managed by the South Wind Blows team, led by Philip King and Nuala O'Connor – is likely to be a concert at the Helix under the *Other Voices* banner.

The 2018 version of the gig included performances by Lankum, Wyvern Lingo and Loah while the Heart of the Rowl concert in All Hallows included Lisa O'Neill, Mick O'Brien and Aoife O'Brien, Liam O'Connor, Néillidh Mulligan, Ye Vagabonds, Colm Mac Con Iomaire, Philip King and Sile Denver.

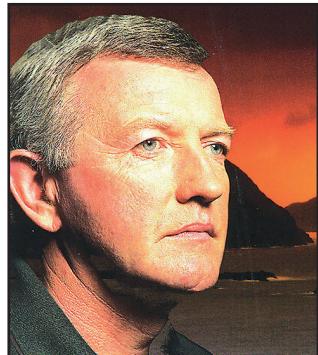
The success of the inaugural event has created a sense of expectation for the 2019 festival – amplified on campus recently with students auditioning for an opportunity to perform in April.



**ARMAGH PIPERS:** Seven pipers from the Armagh Pipers' Club open the twenty-fifth anniversary concert at the William Kennedy International Piping Festival in Armagh in November (Photo: Fonn).



**BENEFIT:** Jarlath Henderson to play benefit for Armagh Pipers Club (Photo: Jarlath Henderson).



## Deadline for Arts Council's O'Flynn grant draws near

The closing date for applications for the Liam O'Flynn Award – worth up €15,000 – to is Thursday, January 17.

A joint initiative of the Arts Council and the National Concert Hall (NCH), the aim of the award is to provide a traditional artist with a period of artistic reflection, inspiration and creation in residence in the NCH and to enhance appreciation, knowledge and enjoyment of the traditional arts within the overall NCH programme.

The award comprises;

- €10,000 towards fees and living expenses during the period, enabling the artist to spend time focusing on practice-based research and creative work in the NCH.
- €5,000 for fees and other expenses relating to collaboration with other artists and presenting work-in-progress.
- work space in the NCH.
- professional support and career advice.

It is open to traditional artists working in any of the following genres: instrumental music; singing; dance; oral arts such as storytelling, agallamh beirte or lúibíní.

For more information, contact Catherine Boothman, Traditional Arts Officer at the Arts Council on 01-6180263 or catherine.boothman@arts council.ie

# All-star line up to benefit Armagh Pipers Club

A top class line-up of former students of Armagh Pipers Club including Jarlath Henderson, Cúig, Ríoghnach Connolly, Niall Hanna, Eilís Lavelle and Maebh and Tiarnán Smyth will take part in a Benefit Concert for the Club to be held in the Duncairn Arts Centre, Belfast on Saturday January 19. Tickets priced £25 are available online from [www.theduncairn.com](http://www.theduncairn.com).

The loss of substantial Northern Ireland Arts Council funding over a bureaucratic technicality in 2018 means that this year has been financially challenging for the Club.

Nevertheless, it has managed to maintain a full teaching programme for a wide

range of instruments in addition to the uilleann pipes.

Of course, the Club also delivered the twenty-fifth annual William Kennedy Piping Festival in November to great critical acclaim and with record attendances – as leading pipers from all over Europe as

well as Cape Breton in Newfoundland joined a wonderful array of Irish pipers along with other artists in Armagh for a remarkable weekend of concerts, workshops, lectures and sessions.

While the Department of Foreign Affairs provided some emergency funding, the forthcoming fundraising concert in Belfast aims to generate more cash to help the Club to stay afloat until the next Arts Council funding round opens in 2019.



**GOOD TRADITION:** Tommy Sands congratulates Brian Vallely as the Armagh Pipers Club is honoured with the Good Tradition Award at the 2018 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards ceremony in Belfast (Photo: BBC).

# From the Piedmont to Knockcroghery

## A musical journey with Rhiannon Giddens

The modest back lounge of a small village pub on the main road from Athlone to Roscommon Town is an unlikely venue for a performance by a Grammy award-winning multi-instrumentalist and singer, whom T-Bone Burnett recently called the most profound musician active today.

But Rhiannon Giddens is anything but conventional – and on a cool Saturday afternoon in October the full house in Murray's Bar in Knockcroghery is every bit as enthusiastic as any audience from the major auditoria Rhiannon Giddens has played around the world.

Her 'song-talk' to the South Roscommon Traditional Singers Festival is an engaging *tour de force*. Her virtuoso banjo and fiddle playing – as well as the amazing range and control of her voice – is interspersed with sharp insights into some of the key influences in her own career as a performer.

Rhiannon outlines how she grew up as a woman of colour from a rural working class background in North Carolina and took the rather unconventional step of heading to the Oberlin College and Conservatory in Ohio to study opera before eventually coming home to find her distinctive musical voice right on her own doorstep with the veteran fiddle player, Joe Thompson, who not only lit the fuse which would lead Rhiannon and two musician friends, Dom Flemons and Justin Robinson, to form the ground-breaking Carolina Chocolate Drops but also fired her growing passion for research into the history and development of popular culture.

Today Rhiannon remains on a continuing mission to explore a

Rhiannon Giddens, first came to public prominence as the lead singer, banjo and fiddle player with the country, blues and old-time music band, the Carolina Chocolate Drops – which won a Grammy in 2010 for its acclaimed debut album, *Genuine Negro Jig*.

She has released two solo albums – *Tomorrow Is My Turn* (2015) and *Freedom Highway* (2017) and was recognised as Folk Singer of the Year in the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards in 2016.

Again in 2016 Rhiannon won the Steve Martin Prize for Excellence in Banjo and Bluegrass.



cultural legacy that is often found in the margins of conventional wisdom – in the work of collectors and researchers like Alan Lomax – that has made an immense but generally unacknowledged contribution to the musical heritage of the United States.

As she brings her audience with her on the journey, she gently unpicks the warp and the weft of the tapestry of cultural history to highlight patterns and motifs often ignored by the largely middle-aged white perspective that has traditionally dominated and defined much of the discourse on culture. So her personal story merges into the broader political narrative of racism in America, where the ghosts of the past often become all too real in the present.

*Oberlin College is probably best known on this side of the Atlantic as the venue for the live album of the same name by the Young Tradition – originally recorded in 1968 and finally released in 2014.*

*"When I got started in this kind of music, I was fresh from opera. I went to the Oberlin Conservatory to study classical music and fell in love with Puccini and Verdi and all those fellas, then burned out on it and came back home and found my people's music from that area. I was lucky enough to fall in love with the banjo and wonder why I loved the sound so much and why I felt like such an interloper because nobody looked like me who played the banjo fifteen years ago. There were a few but I didn't know of any.*

*"So I got a banjo and snuck around in old-time jams. The old-time community in North Carolina were very open and said come on in. For me folk singing started with this. I found my route into African American singing was through the banjo. I discovered that, lo and behold, black people played the banjo and I didn't know that.*

*"I looked into the history of the banjo and found a gentleman by the name of Joe Thompson who was an 86-year-old African-*



American fiddler and the last of his generation. His whole family had been musicians for years. There was a Thompson Family Band. He and his brother played fiddle and banjo for all the social dances and square dances.

"That's when I found out that black people also square danced. There was this huge deep history of square dance all over America and in the South even before the big dresses and the idea of what square dances became. It was the social dance. Before there was electricity, it was all there was to do.

"The people who played for the dances were considered servants. It was like put on the jukebox. So most of them were enslaved. So the players for the square dances and social dancers were most often black and when they weren't, the notices made a point of saying white fiddler or white band. Otherwise it wasn't mentioned.

"So Joe Thompson was one of the last connections to that music that was all over the South played by string band musicians. So me and two other musicians of colour – who eventually became the Carolina Chocolate Drops – went down to his house in rural North Carolina which is where my mother's family are from. I had been down there before, most summers, for family reunions but never knew he was there until I was in my late twenties and he was 86.

"But I wasn't playing anything back then so I probably would have been like: 'Black dude playing the fiddle, what?' So when I was ready and I needed

it, there he was. So we would go down on Thursday nights and we would play the same fifteen tunes. We were apprentices learning to play with a master musician. I feel very lucky to have done that and to have made that connection with my history.

"I discovered my calling when I found Joe. Then we started the Carolina Chocolate Drops. The history had been completely hidden in plain sight almost and when you go back and look at most of the images it is clear that for a very long time the banjo was an instrument played mainly by black folk.

"The banjo is an African American instrument. It's a very interesting journey. Loads of people were taken from West Africa over to the Caribbean to be 'seasoned' and then brought up to the United States. They would have brought either the memories or in some isolated circumstances the actual instruments themselves. There are a lot of gourd and lute style instruments all over West Africa such as the akonting, the ngori, and other instruments with a gourd body and a wooden neck. These instruments morphed into what we now call the banjo.

"If you ended up on a slave ship and were then sold at a dock and taken along with twenty or thirty other Africans who you did not know, you didn't speak their language, you didn't share their religion and you really had nothing in common with them because Africa is an enormous continent with a wide variety of languages and cultures.

"So they had to meet each other somewhere and music is

#### MASTER MUSICIANS:

Odell and Joe Thompson in 1988.  
(Photo: Nancy Kalow)

one of the most universal forms of human expression. So a musical language and culture soon grew up in the Caribbean centred around this instrument – known variously as the banza, bangie, bonjaw, banjer or banjar.

"When I started getting into the history of the music, I uncovered this idea of what the banjo was and I began to wonder what else I didn't know about my own culture. So I started reading a lot about slavery. Even though it is talked about, it is talked about in a very superficial and non-helpful way in the United States because you are talking about many years of how the country was founded and grew based upon this economic reality of enslaved people.

"I started reading slave narratives and began to wonder where are these stories in our music. I realised that, unlike traditional narrative balladry in Ireland, say, where you could sing a song about what's happening in the community, you couldn't do that in the slave quarters because you would be killed. So things were encoded.

"Spirituals are allowed – so they become code for other things – but there are no direct narrative ballads. So I started thinking: 'what if.' What if you could? So songs like Julie started writing themselves from these stories.

GROUND BREAKING  
The Grammy award-winning album,  
*Genuine Negro Jig*



## MAJOR SCÉAL: Rhiannon Giddens

**“**When I first went down to play with Joe Thompson, I was a fiddler. But Joe never played without a banjo player. Unfortunately by the time we met him, he had lost his brother and his cousin who had stepped up and started playing banjo with him. He didn't play without a banjo player.

“So as the lady in the bunch I said 'I will do what needs to be done and I'll switch to the banjo.' So I became the banjo player with Joe. it was very important because we helped him win the highest award as a heritage musician because we came out of it and people saw that he was passing on the tradition to a younger generation in his own community – especially since he was the last in his family. That was a very important part of my life.

“As far as Joe was concerned, we were playing social dance music and all the rhythm and the leadership came from the banjo. So in the Piedmont in North Carolina the banjo was at the front and not the fiddle, whereas in the Appalachian Mountains it was more the fiddle. That may have been because there were higher concentrations of African Americans in the Piedmont.

“But even among African Americans, the fiddle was the star instrument: it had higher status because the banjo was a plantation instrument. It was just used for their own dances, whereas the fiddle was played for the white people's dances. So a lot of African Americans learned not only the music that they were playing in their cabins on the plantation but also the Playford Dance Book, the Scottish tunes if the masters were from Scotland or Ireland or wherever.



**FANZONE:** Declan Coyne (South Roscommon Singing Circle) (left) and Johnny Johnston (Ballinasloe Singing Circle) (right) with Rhiannon Giddens in Knockcroghery.

Rhiannon explains that the enslaved black musicians not only learned the dance tunes, but also the songs and even the language of the “old country” of their masters. So in Scotland County in North Carolina, for example, black slaves not only became accomplished performers of traditional music but also fluent speakers of Scots Gaelic. In exploring this aspect of her own heritage, Rhiannon learned to sing in Scots Gaelic and competed with success. But she recalls that her presence at a highland games singing contest in the US was met with incomprehension.

“So I went and sang my song and won a big gaudy plate. And somebody said to me “why are you here?” because clearly you're not Scottish. But you know, I'm half white so I could be. And that really struck me because I don't go up to a white person playing the blues and say “why are you playing the blues?” Because we don't own the blues and nobody owns this music. And also the music itself comes out of a cultural mixture. So in the Gaelic world, you spoke Gaelic and you had that culture where you worked no matter what colour you were. It is an important distinction.”

“I began to find my voice through the history of the music. Then I began to get into what went on in Appalachia and I found a whole other singing tradition that really spoke to me. I realised that there was a connection to my dad's side of the

family. There is a lot of cross-over especially in the mountains

“Race relations in the States is very tied to economics. Racism is basically a tool that folks in power are using to keep people of the same socio-economic status at each others' throats so they don't realise they are being kept there. It's very clear. There are letters from plantation owners to each other saying this is how you keep your poor whites and your negroes at each other's throats. They were just very blatant about it.

“I am doing research for a project about the Wilmington Massacre of 1898 which was a coup on American soil in North Carolina where white supremacists overthrew a legally elected black and white working-class coalition government and replaced it with their own people and the federal government did nothing. There was a massacre and they killed a bunch of black people.

“It's been very interesting for me to explore the art through that lens. My people are all black and white working-class people.

“Immigration is a hot-button issue in the US at the moment. I like to sing a song about immigration at my concerts because, as you know well, America is a nation of immigrants. When I think about what's going on right now, it really makes me mad. This is why history is so important. This is also why music and folk music is so important.”



# A spirit of defiance

Refusing to be defined by others, Rhiannon Giddens is a genuine Renaissance woman – brimming with creative curiosity

Rhiannon Giddens is on a relentless mission to explore the outer limits of creativity. While other artists find their niche and are content to exploit it for the remainder of their careers, Rhiannon has a restless spirit of boundless curiosity that continues to seek out new challenges – not only across musical genres but also in other areas of the performing arts.

She does not so much defy convention as defy definition. She will not be put in any box. Her creative impulse ranges widely. But she doesn't dabble: once she engages on a project, she commits to achieve complete mastery of the discipline.

So where does she get the time and the energy?

**W**ell I don't know that I am fitting it all in. This year has been a transitional year. I am going from being a performer to becoming a performer and creator. They are two very different disciplines and I am discovering that they are very hard to put together. I have overcommitted myself a bit this year. I am getting it done just barely. I try to only take projects that work with all

**DEFIANT:** Rhiannon Giddens (Photo: David McClister)

Aside from her widely acclaimed work with the Carolina Chocolate Drops and on her solo albums, Rhiannon has just recorded a new album with Francesco Turrisi at Dublin's Windmill Lane Studios for release in 2019.

She has also just launched an opera podcast in conjunction with the New York Met. Meanwhile, she has a continuing role in the US TV drama series, *Nashville*.

In 2019, she will première her score for a new ballet, *Attitude: Lucy Negro Redux*, by the Nashville Ballet.

In 2020 she is due to play Bess in a new production of *Porgy and Bess* in Greensboro, North Carolina.

She is also working with writer, John Jeremiah Sullivan, on a theatrical treatment of the Wilmington Insurrection of 1898.



*the other projects I'm involved in – so that I'm not re-inventing the wheel and doing brand-new research. That helps a lot.*

*"Also I don't have a TV. I don't watch TV. It's not a judgement thing. I have watched plenty of TV in my life. I have wasted hours watching House. I read fiction to unwind with throwaway fantasy novels but they don't take any kind of commitment. They don't take any real brainpower and that's what I need. I don't need to try to keep up with a fictional world like Game of Thrones. I don't have the brain space for it. I don't have the energy for it.*

*"I find that I just want to focus on this stuff. It's all I think about. It's my life and it's either that or I am baking bread for my children. They are the two strands and I am okay with that.*

*"Before I became a musician,*

*I used to come home from work, watch TV for 4 hours and then go to bed. I had that part of my life and I'm done. That's not to say anything against people who do that. Each to their own – but for me I am much more excited thinking about these creative projects including the research and now being with my kids.*

**"**I have been away a lot and part of the MacArthur fellowship is to allow me to be in their lives and to bring them to some music events. It's important to give them the opportunity to be exposed to these experiences. I feel good about the balance they are getting. They are exposed to all kinds of things as part of my career but I am also baking the bread and making the lunches. I took them both on tour. They are very flexible and it's really cool to see them grow.

*The MacArthur Fellowship, unofficially known as a "Genius Grant," is a prize awarded annually by the MacArthur Foundation typically to between 20 and 30 US citizens or residents who have shown "extraordinary originality and dedication in their creative pursuits and a marked capacity for self-direction" in any field.*

*According to the Foundation's website, "the fellowship is not a reward for past accomplishment, but rather an investment in a person's originality, insight, and potential." The current prize is \$625,000 paid over five years in quarterly instalments. Past winners include writer, Cormac McCarthy; jazz musician, Ornette Coleman; civil rights activist, Cecilia Muñoz; and cartoonist, Alison Bechdel.*

## MAJOR SCÉAL: Rhiannon Giddens



When we meet, Rhiannon has just finished recording a new album with Dublin-based musician, Francesco Turrisi, in Windmill Lane Studios. How did that come about?

**“**I reconnected with Francesco Turrisi in Dublin. We had met three years before. He is very good at reaching out and making connections with people on projects that bridge different genres – which is very much up my alley on the other side of the pond.

“We had a jam years ago connecting spirituals and frame drums – basically African-American music with Mediterranean and Middle Eastern type sounds. We thought: “whoa this is awesome!” And then he said “Can you do these dates?” “No.” It was literally like that for three years.

“Then he happened to see me in Songlines magazine. So he made contact. Then we struck up a conversation and realised how similar we are in our approaches to music – even though it might look different on the surface. So we got together last December and had a jam – we posted one of those videos of tamburello and minstrel banjo – and stuff started to develop from there. So I got this idea and said why don’t the two of us just go into the studio for five days and see what happens.

“I sent some of the material to (record producer) Joe Henry and he was really excited about it. So it was an amazing thing.

FRANCESCO TURRISI AND RHIANNON GIDDENS.

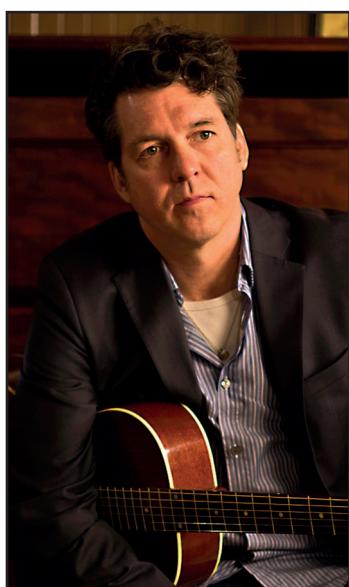
We didn’t know exactly what we were going to do but at the end of five days we had sixteen tracks. It was very intense.

“We did everything live: I played and sang at the same time. We didn’t record each instrument separately or the vocals separately. So that was a really cool experience.

**“**In his background, Francesco has two degrees in jazz improv and early music from the Hague Conservatory but then he spent the last ten years studying frame drums and traditional tamburello techniques from his home country of Italy – specifically Southern Italy and Sicily.

“I’ve got a classical degree in opera but I have spent the last

JOE HENRY (right)  
(Photo: Kaleidoscope Pictures)



ten or fifteen years studying traditional music and the same with Francesco. He started off studying jazz but then went into these other territories.

“So when the two of us got together, I told Joe this is the opportunity to catch us when everything’s really fresh. So it was in that really beautiful moment when we had been playing enough together to know some things but we didn’t know everything.

“We were making discoveries in the studio. There were some songs that were one take. So there are a few original things on there and everything else involves radical reinterpretations of existing pieces. There are a couple of arias but they are sung in the vernacular voice.

“There is a traditional Italian piece and an Appalachian piece done with a daf (the Iranian frame drum).

“Putting these sounds together hadn’t been done in any kind of serious way before. So there is no genre or style to categorise it. It’s not even world music. But if there is a label on earth for this record, it’s Nonesuch. They are thrilled with it. So I feel very lucky about that.

“I have sent it to a few people and have got really good feedback on it. I am very excited about it.”

Rhiannon and Francesco will be playing eleven dates in twelve days in an Irish tour organised by the Music Network for March.

**“**I’m really excited about it. It’s going to be a great show. You never thought you wanted to hear a minstrel banjo and an accordion together but once you hear it, you say: ‘oh my God!’

“We have also been finding a lot of connections between the tamburello (the traditional Italian tambourine) and the banjo in terms of the minstrel show. We think that the tambo most likely came to America from Italy through Britain and that they were using those old Italian techniques until at some point it flipped over.

“I showed Francesco some old iconography of minstrel shows and he said that’s how they still hold the instrument in Italy in contrast to the modern tambourine technique in the US.



**W**hen Francesco was in the States with a frame drum, people would say: "Look it's a bodhrán," even though the frame drum was around for millennia before the bodhrán ever came along but that's how people associate it now even though the bodhrán is a relatively recent instrument. It's interesting that the Irish word is the one that now

### Rhiannon Giddens and Francesco Turrisi On Tour

March 5, 8pm: The Sugar Club, Dublin  
 March 6, 8pm: Pavilion Theatre, Dun Laoghaire  
 March 7, 8pm: National Opera House, Wexford  
 March 8, 8.30pm: Courthouse Arts Centre, Tinahely  
 March 9, 8pm: Lime Tree Theatre, Limerick  
 March 10, 3pm: Siamsa Tíre, Tralee  
 March 12, 8pm: Station House Theatre, Clifden  
 March 13, 8pm: glór, Ennis  
 March 14, 8pm: Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny  
 March 15, 8pm: The Black Box, Belfast  
 March 16, 8pm: Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbridge

#### THE TARAB PROJECT:

From left: Nick Roth (soprano sax, furulya and davul), Francesco Turrisi (accordion, percussion and lavta), Kate Ellis (cello), Emer Mayock (flutes, whistles and pipes) and Robbie Harris (percussion). (Photo: Francesco Turrisi)

#### AFRO-CELT – EARLY VINTAGE:

From left: larla Ó Lionáird (vocals), N'Faly Kouyaté (vocals, kora and balafon) James McNally (whistle, bodhrán and accordion), Simon Emmerson (guitars, mandolin, bouzouki and keyboards) (Photo: Real World)

defines that kind of instrument in the US.

"There is such a fetish now in the US for Celtic identity and culture because white people in America feel that it's an OK ethnicity to be and it's an easy thing to claim. It's an interesting phenomenon because at one point nobody would have claimed Irish ancestry. But now the Irish seem to be regarded as the acceptable immigrants."

larla Ó Lionáird observed recently that folk music has often been seen as white music even though it clearly embraces many ethnicities...

**F**olk music has always been diverse and always been multicultural. But the commercial interests have generally promoted a very narrow sense of folk music.

"For example, bluegrass has always been diverse. But what

happened when it got commercial and what happened to the image of it were deliberate acts. In the States, the whitening of folk music and country music was a deliberate act by racists. It is very clearly documented. There are knock-on effects that have resulted.

"Ireland, in particular, is becoming aware of how to not be a homogeneous country any more because it is not. Now there's all these other folks who have come in and the great thing about Ireland is that it's so small that change can happen quicker than the US which is so large with so many different regions. It's nice to see that."

**F**rancesco had a great thing with Tarab – with Middle Eastern percussion and Robbie Harris on bodhrán. It was really great. But, he said they went to a music expo where bands were auditioning for booking agents and the reaction was they were neither fish nor fowl: the bookers didn't know what to make of them.

"It seems you have to have enough of those groups for people to realise this is a thing. So it's hard for the pioneers. You can be lucky and hit on something like the Afro-Celt Sound System or whatever but for countless one-offs like "we've got this great idea or oh we're just whistling in the dark, OK."

"But it's great that there is more of that going on. The groups that are the most interesting to me are the ones that, instead of just smashing things together, lay things on top of each other and find where they naturally support each other. If you follow that it's really interesting to me. Not everybody does that but for those who do, it can be really cool."



# Outside the usual boxes

## An untraditional traditional musician

One of the most interesting developments in Irish music over the last year has been the growth of the FairPlé campaign for greater gender balance...

**K**aren Casey and I and two other song-writers did a lunchtime gig in the University of Limerick recently where she talked about the FairPlé initiative which is great. When I was guest-curating the Cambridge Folk Festival earlier in 2018 I came across the fifty-fifty initiative in Britain, called Keychange, to raise awareness at music festivals to ensure that line-ups are gender-balanced.

"In Cambridge we had a panel on women in music and I think, for some of the older performers, if you wanted to make it in the business, you just had to plough ahead and pretend that you didn't see anything."

"I have always been very lucky because I was doing something very unique. I was young I was pretty and I was in a band with two other guys. I had to actually work against it and not pop out. I wanted to be like I'm sitting here playing a banjo. I'm not saying I'm being the pretty lead, I'm not doing that. So I myself haven't had a lot of negative experiences with the industry."

"I've actually been very lucky I dealt with very honest people. I was just doing something with Daniel Lanois and he said to me what do you think the split should be on this song. There are times when I wouldn't even have been

**BACK IN OBERLIN:**  
Rhiannon Giddens  
(Photo: Tanya Rosen-Jones)

on the split and I am very aware of that. I think it is very important to speak up for people who are doing the right thing while acknowledging that we still have quite a long way to go.

**B**ehind the scenes it's even harder because there are so few visible women. When I go out with a full band, my crew is all female. And the stories I hear especially from my front-of-house engineer – she's like 5 foot nothing and very positive – but the crap that she puts up with from people who assume that she doesn't know what she's doing because she is a woman.

"What a lot of white men don't understand – because they see themselves doing everything – is that representation matters.

**THE NEW FOLKWAYS**  
**ALBUM:** Featuring  
Rhiannon Giddens  
Amythyst Kiah, Leyla  
McCalla and Allison  
Russell is due for  
release in February.



"If you never see anyone, like you, doing things, of course, you are going to start off thinking that's not for me. That's very damaging.

"I played a set recently with the First Ladies of Bluegrass: they are all the first female winners of the instrumental awards for the International Bluegrass Music Association. Me and Gillian Welch were their special guests. So it was all women on stage – an all-female band and they were killing it. You could see people just losing it. So it seems we have to do this for a while to get over the stereotypical reactions of 'I didn't know women could play' or 'I didn't know black people could play the banjo.' So I am very committed to gender equality in music and in society as a whole.

"I'm just finishing up co-producing a record for Smithsonian Folkways with Dirk Powell showcasing all black female banjo players – of which there are more than just me. There are actually quite a few of us out there now. I'm very excited about it because you talk about gender stuff but then you talk about black women in particular and the intersectionality of it is pretty epic.

"We have just recorded a whole album with Amythyst Kiah, Alison Russell (from Birds of Chicago) and Leyla McCalla responding or talking about the historical place that black women have had in the United States and I am very excited and proud of it. So, yes, gender remains an important issue."



**SYNERGY:** From left: Damien Mullane, Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh, Siobhan Miller and Anna Massie who will play together on the Music Network tour in January (Photo: Paul McCarthy).



**DUO:** Triona Marshall to join Tim Edey in Bray in February

## Award-winning combination

A rather special Hiberno-Scots collaboration promises ten intriguing concerts in January which will see the winner of the 2018 BBC Radio 2 Folk Award for Best Traditional Track, Siobhan Miller from Scotland, perform alongside the winner of the RTÉ Radio 1 Folk Award for Best Traditional Track, Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh.

Acclaimed as “the finest young interpreter of Scots traditional song,” Siobhan Miller is the only ever three-time winner of Scots Singer of the Year. She released her third solo album, *Mercury*, in the autumn – the first to be made up of entirely original material. Among her other credits is a singing role in the television drama series, *Outlander*.

Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh from Kerry is still probably best known as the flute-playing lead vocalist of Danú, although her reputation as a solo performer has been growing exponentially in recent years – crowned by her recent album, *Foxglove and Fuchsia*.

Muireann has also co-presented traditional music programmes for both TG4 and BBC Alba with Scottish vocalist, Julie Fowlis – with whom she had also recorded *Dual* in 2008 – an

January 16, 8pm  
The Sugar Club,  
Dublin  
  
January 17, 8.30pm  
The Dock, Carrick-on-Shannon  
  
January 18, 8pm  
Droichead Arts  
Centre, Drogheda  
  
January 19, 8pm  
Regional Cultural  
Centre, Letterkenny  
  
January 20, 8pm  
Pavilion Theatre,  
Dun Laoghaire  
  
January 22, 8pm  
National Opera  
House, Wexford  
  
January 23, 8pm  
Station House  
Theatre, Clifden  
  
January 24, 8pm  
St. John's Theatre &  
Arts Centre, Listowel  
  
January 25, 8.30pm  
Ionad Cultúrtha, Baile  
Mhúirne  
  
January 26, 8pm  
Birr Theatre & Arts  
Centre

earlier Scots-Irish collaboration which also featured Eamon Doorley (Julie's husband and Muireann's Danú bandmate) and Ross Martin.

Joining Siobhan Miller and Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh will be fellow Kerry native, Damien Mullane, on accordion. In addition to a number of All-Ireland titles on both accordion and melodeon, Damien was a member of De Danann and has played with artists from a variety of genres including James Taylor, Sting and Ronnie Wood.

His debut album, *13*, included contributions from Zoe Conway, Pauline Scanlon, John Joe Kelly, Trevor Hutchinson and Éamonn de Barra.

The fourth member of the touring quartet is guitar, fiddle, mandolin and banjo player, Anna Massie – whose career highlights include performances with Julie Fowlis, Kate Rusby, Capercaillie, Eddi Reader and Bella Hardy, as well as membership of the award-winning Scottish folk band, Blazin' Fiddles, who celebrated their twentieth anniversary in 2018.

A three time nominee for Best Instrumentalist at the Scots Trad Music Awards, Anna recently released a new live album, *Farran*, with accordionist and piper, Mairerad Green.

## Once-off duet is on

Chieftains harpist, Triona Marshall, will join guitarist, Tim Edey, on February 8 in the Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray, for an evening of music and song with support from the young players of Music Generation Wicklow's Rithim Orchestra.

Triona has been playing with The Chieftains for over a decade. She received critical acclaim for *Red and Gold*, her recent album with Scottish vocalist, Alyth McCormack, who has also toured extensively with the Chieftains.

Multi-instrumentalist and singer, Tim Edey – who was the BBC Radio 2 Musician of the Year in 2012 – has also shared the stage with the Chieftains as well as Christy Moore, Frankie Gavin, Sharon Shannon, Altan, Lúnasa and Mary Black.

The Rithim Orchestra from Bray is a traditional ensemble of 25 young musicians formed under the auspices of Music Generation Wicklow. The group comprises harps, flutes, fiddles, uilleann pipes, concertina, bodhrán, banjo and guitar.

**M**usic Network

**M**ícheál Ó Súilleabhaín – musician, composer, academic and artist – died recently after a long illness.

Like many musicians before him, he has left a wonderful catalogue of audio and video recordings of his inspired performances of both traditional airs and new compositions. But, uniquely his legacy includes the realisation of his panoramic cultural vision in the form of the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance on the campus of the University of Limerick.

Mícheál's genius was in not only having this vision – but in also having the personality, the courage and the organisational skills to make the vision into reality – and to continue to develop it by encouraging others to share in the ownership of the project.

Since its foundation in 1994 under Mícheál's leadership, the academy has achieved an international reputation as a centre of global excellence in teaching and research into traditional music and dance – attracting students and faculty members from around the world, supported by many outstanding professional performers as mentors.

Describing Mícheál as the driving force behind the development of the Irish World Academy, its current director, Sandra Joyce, added that his colleagues were “swept along by his incredible energy, *joie de vivre* and vision.”

**D**espite – or perhaps because of – his musical and academic talents, Mícheál was profoundly democratic. For example, even after Mícheál became Director of the Irish World Academy, he continued to see the value of his trade union membership – though no longer perhaps in terms of any specific employment benefits for him but more as a declaration of his inclusive and solidaristic approach to music and society.

In UCC, he had developed a much more inclusive approach to admission to third-level education, as one former student – and now Professor of Music in the Irish World Academy, Mel Mercer, noted: “He was the first to open the door for traditional musicians



## Ó Súilleabhaín marbh

### But his legacy is immense

**Mícheál Ó Súilleabhaín**  
born December 10 1950 – died November 7 2018

*into the university. I walked through the door [at UCC] with a bodhrán and bones in my hand, and it seemed a terribly unlikely thing to have the opportunity to do.*

*“At that time we imagined that to study music at university you needed to have a classical instrument or repertoire. Mícheál began his work of elevating the status of traditional music at UCC, where he did the groundwork. He shepherded and nurtured the first generation of traditional Irish musicians in third-level education.”*

His friend, Donal Lunny, who worked with Mícheál many times over the years, summarised his achievement:

*“Mícheál was always a presence in my life, as a prolific force on the Irish music scene. It was undoubtedly Mícheál's vision and enthusiasm which propelled the World Academy to its brilliant realisation.”*

Beyond his monumental achievements in the worlds of music and academia, Mícheál's personal legacy will endure in the joyous memories of his family, friends and colleagues – but none more so than his wife, Professor Helen Phelan and their son, Luke; and his sons by his first marriage, Eoin and Mícheál and their mother, Nóirín Ní Ríain.



# Exploring the river of sound

## Nicholas Carolan reviews the career of his friend

**R**ecognised from an early age as a talented musician, Mícheál went on to perform to acclaim throughout Ireland and Europe, and in the United States and Asia, on his chosen main instrument, the piano. He created a unique piano style which fused elements of Irish traditional music, classical music and jazz, and these same elements informed his work as a composer.

The recipient of frequent commissions, he composed mainly for solo piano, for voice and piano, for piano and orchestra, and for traditional instruments and orchestra.

Among his larger-scale compositions are *Oileán/Island* (1988), *Woodbrook* (1992), *Templum* (1994), and *Becoming* (1997). He also scored for film, notably for the 1926 silent film *Irish Destiny*, which he accompanied live.

Beginning in 1975 with an eponymous LP on the Gael Linn label, he recorded and produced a series of some thirteen long-playing records for Gael Linn, for Virgin/Venture (commencing with *The Dolphin's Way* in 1987), and for EMI (*Elver Gleams*, 2010). He also produced and played on the recordings of many others.

Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin at his piano, 2000 (Photo: Paul McCarthy)

His numerous musical collaborators included percussionist Mel Mercier, singers Nóirín Ní Riain and Íarla Ó Lionárd, flute players Niall Keegan and Matt Molloy, saxophonist Kenneth Edge, uilleann pipers Liam O'Flynn and Padraig Keane, and the ensembles Tiompán, the Irish Chamber Orchestra, the Irish Concert Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra, the National Chamber Choir, Hiberno-Jazz, and the Abbey Quartet.

Attracted to eighteenth-century Irish harp music and to classical music of the baroque period, he had lately been arranging and performing the music of the harper-composer Turlough Carolan (1670–1738).

Mícheál also led a highly productive interrelated life as an educationalist. He, himself, was educated locally by the Irish Christian Brothers; at the Music Department, University College Cork; and at the Department of Social Anthropology, Queen's University Belfast, where he completed his PhD in 1987 on the Dublin traditional fiddle player Tommy Potts. He was particularly influenced by his teachers Aloys Fleischman, Seán Ó Riada, and John Blacking.

Working as a dynamic and inspirational music lecturer in UCC from 1975 to 1993, he opened up university education to traditional musicians without classical music training by devising new entry requirements and courses, and he created an ethnomusicological model that has been widely imitated in third-level education.

He attracted a range of talented students from all parts of the country, and widened their horizons by involving them in the organisation of ambitious festivals, in the publication of CDs, and in the establishment of archives.

When recruited as Professor of Music by the University of Limerick in 1993 with a brief to establish post-graduate music courses and research, he founded the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, an evolving cross-cultural music, song, and dance educational institution with a concentration on global performing arts. It currently offers over 25 programmes in music, song, and dance, and in related areas such as music therapy and festive arts, and has a student body drawn from over 50 countries.

Mícheál was the driving force in the creation of the Academy's magnificent new building on the banks of the Shannon. ↗



Succeeded as Director by his colleague Sandra Joyce, he became Emeritus Professor of Music on his retirement in 2016.

Mícheál published numerous articles in magazines and journals, many on the subject of his PhD; he edited *Bunting's Ancient Music of Ireland* with Donal O'Sullivan (1983); and, as assistant editor of Aloys Fleischmann's posthumous *Sources of Irish Traditional Music c. 1600–1855* (1998), he managed the last stages of the project and, with others, brought it to print.

He spent periods as a visiting professor at Boston College (where he established a traditional music archive) and the University of Notre Dame, Indiana.

His academic awards included honorary Doctor of Music from the National University of Ireland; honorary alumnus of Boston University; O'Donnell Chair of Irish Studies, University of Notre Dame; and honorary Doctor of Music, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

As a highly articulate and charismatic public figure, Mícheál Ó Súilleabhaín gave unsparingly of his time and energies. He was the Chairman of the Irish Traditional Music Archive for two terms, 1993–99; a board member of the Irish Chamber Orchestra, Dagda Dance Company, the UL Concert Hall, and the Contemporary Music Centre; Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Ard-Ollamh of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann,

### A LIVING MEMORIAL: The Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick.



Nicholas Carolan,  
Director Emeritus of  
the Irish Traditional  
Music Archive

### COMMUNITY MUSIC: Mícheál and his wife, Professor Helen Phelan, attend the opening of the World Music Café in Limerick. (Photo: Lylian Fotabong)

Clonmel, 2006; and inaugural Chair of the Irish arts promotion agency Culture Ireland 2005–14

Much in demand as a conference keynote speaker, in Ireland and abroad, he responded generously to frequent invitations to launch festivals and publications and to give public interviews. He regularly broadcast on radio and television programmes, in English and Irish; a highpoint of his career as a broadcaster was, with Philip King and Nuala O'Connor, the 1995 RTÉ and BBC television series *River of Sound*, which charted the changing nature of Irish traditional music.

Nicholas Carolan is the Director Emeritus of the Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA). This appreciation was first published by the ITMA and is reprinted with its permission.

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*"It's no exaggeration to say that I wouldn't be doing this today if it wasn't for his constant inspiration and enthusiastic support. He opened my eyes and ears to ways of thinking about traditional music and its relationship to the rest of the world and his spirit will always be with me."*

*Concertina player and  
composer, Niall Vallely, who  
began his music studies  
with Mícheál in UCC in 1988*

*Many years ago I was privileged to record a video clip of Mícheál playing Idir Eathartha in a rehearsal studio at the University of Limerick. It was to be part of a video for SIPTU (Mícheál was a proud trade union member). As we only had one camera, we did three takes from different camera positions.*

*Not only were the three takes perfectly synchronised with each other. They were also played at the exact tempo of the CD recording: his internal metronome was faultless.*

*But beyond his exceptional musical mastery, I was struck by his complete engagement and his remarkable generosity with his time to ensure that we got everything we needed for the video.*

*Séamas Sheils,  
Editor of Fonn*

*"His music and outstanding work will forever be enjoyed by countless people, celebrating his humour, his fearless sense of exploration and his talent for harmony, joy and mobilising the peerless power of music."*

*Michael D. Higgins,  
President of Ireland*

# Alec Finn

## Musician and artist mourned

**A**lec Finn, one of the twin pillars at the heart of the acclaimed traditional group, De Danann, died in November at the age of 74.

A multi-instrumentalist who was best known for his prowess on the bouzouki, Alec made a significant contribution to the development of traditional music – both in live performance and on record – in over forty years since the creation of De Danann in An Spidéal in the mid-1970s.

The original line-up which emerged from sessions in Hughes pub included Frankie Gavin, Ringo McDonagh and Charlie Piggott – while fiddler, Mickey Finn, also sat in with the others in the early days.



**Alec Finn**  
born June 4 1944  
– died November  
16 2018

**TOGETHER AGAIN:** Alec Finn and Frankie Gavin (Photo to promote their recent album, *Traditional Irish Music on Fiddle and Bouzouki – Volume II*)



**FOCUS: Alec Finn** (Photo: Stephen Power, [www.stephenpowerphotos.com](http://www.stephenpowerphotos.com))

With Dolores Keane as the first in a series of top-drawer vocalists, they recorded their first album – under the direction of Donal Lunny – for release in 1975.

After Keane's departure, De Danann included as vocalists many of the finest singers in traditional music – some, already well established, and others, at the start of their careers – including Andy Irvine, Johnny Moynihan, Tim Lyons, Maura O'Connell, Mary Black, Dolores Keane (again), Eleanor Shanley, Tommy Fleming and Andrew Murray.

Among the instrumentalists who have also played with Finn and Gavin in De Danann in various line-ups were Jackie Daly, Máirtín O'Connor, Aidan Coffey, Derek Hickey and Colin Murphy.

Following De Danann's debut album, Finn recorded a two-handed album with Gavin in 1977, *Frankie Gavin and Alec Finn*, before further group albums – including *The Mist Covered Mountain* (1980), *Star Spangled Molly* (1981), *Song for Ireland* (1983), *Anthem* (1985), *Ballroom* (1987), *A Jacket of Batteries* (1988), *Half Set in Harlem* (1991), *Hibernian Rhapsody* (1995), *How the West Was Won* (1999) and *Welcome to the Hotel Connemara* (2000).

Alongside his work with De Danann, Alec also featured in highly acclaimed albums by Noel Hill and Tony Linnane and Mary Bergin.

Until De Danann's demise in 2003 after almost thirty years, Alec's subtle accompaniment of Frankie Gavin's fiddle leads was at the core of the band's unique and distinctive sound. In adding colour and tone to the overall sound of the ensemble, Alec once described his approach as a combination of a number of elements:

*"It's a mixture of chord, rhythm and counter-melody. If I can, I'll put in as many harmonies to whatever the lead musician is playing, [and] try and give it a bit of colour, but not dictate the rhythm..."*

**A**lthough the break-up of the band resulted in a sometimes acrimonious dispute between the two principals over the use – and indeed spelling of the name, De Danann or De Danna – the two eventually reconciled.

Last summer, Finn, Gavin and Keane reunited for a special set at Traidphicnic – while just six weeks before his death, Finn and Gavin launched their second duet album together, *Traditional Irish Music on Fiddle and Bouzouki – Volume II* – a mere 41 years after the release of their first duet album!

## From Rotherham to Oranmore

Born in Rotherham in South Yorkshire to steelworker, James Phinn, and wife, Patricia Mullarkey, Alec was the third of four children. His younger brother is the educationalist and author, Gervase Phinn. Alec changed the spelling of his surname from Phinn to Finn on moving to Ireland.

A graduate of Rotherham Art College, he continued to develop his artistic sensibilities along with his musical talents – both of which he combined them to great effect in the design of many of the band's album covers.

Though firmly embedded in the firmament of traditional music stars, Alec was originally a blues man – and his broad musical tastes influenced De Danann's repertoire in sometimes quite surprising directions – like their recording of the Beatles classic hit, *Hey Jude*, and their equally idiosyncratic take on Handel's *The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* (in Galway).

Another 'blow-in' who made his home in Galway is, of course, President Michael D. Higgins who paid a fulsome tribute to Alec:

"Alec Finn, an enormously talented musician and an influential bouzouki player, and founding member of De Danann, helped



UNIQUE TALENT: Alec Finn (Photo: Stephen Power, [www.stephenpowerphotos.com](http://www.stephenpowerphotos.com))

**REFLECTIVE:**  
Alec Finn (left) in the recent television documentary, *Sé Mo Laoch* (Photo: TG4)

bring Irish music to the attention of a global audience.

"From their early beginnings in *An Spidéal* and *Galway City*, De Danann grew to become one of the most significant and best-loved representatives of Irish music at its best.

"Alec Finn was also a distinguished solo artist and session musician, playing on a variety of string instruments, but always bringing his famed sensitivity and skill to every performance.

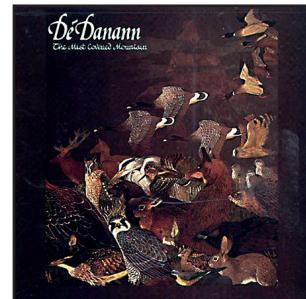
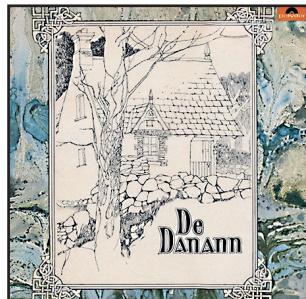
"It has been a privilege to know Alec Finn. Sabina and I send our deepest condolences to his family, colleagues and friends, in the full knowledge that Alec Finn's music will live on and continue to inspire countless people around the world.

In a rather prescient piece of scheduling the TG4 series, *Sé Mo Laoch*, broadcast a new documentary on Alec on November 11 just a few days before his death.

The programme provided not only a sense of his musical and artistic legacy but also a glimpse into his daily life in the fifteenth century Oranmore Castle which he shared with his wife, Leonie King, the artist, and their two children, Cian and Heather.

Ciarán Ó Maonaigh's film also references Alec's lifelong love of game birds – including owls and falcons.

The programme is available to view online at [www.tg4.ie/en/programmes/se-mo-laoch/](http://www.tg4.ie/en/programmes/se-mo-laoch/)



# Music to warm the heart on cold January nights

Three significant music festivals at opposite ends of the island should bring a warm glow on some cool January nights.

The fourth annual Letterkenny Trad Week runs from Saturday January 19 to Sunday January 27. Following hot on the heels of the fifth Scoil na Gheimhrídh in Gaith Dobhair at the end of December, the Letterkenny Festival includes six concerts.

Music Network's Irish-Scots collaboration kicks off the week with Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh, Siobhan Miller, Damien Mullane and Anna Massie on January 19 (see page 15).

Duos on the double in the form of Zoe Conway and John McIntyre, and Letterkenny native, Séamus McGuire and John Lee, will play on January 22.

Daorí Farrell – whose highly anticipated third album is due for release in February – will perform on January 23. So Letterkenny is the place to see him in January as his Dublin Tradfest concert has already sold out.

Another instrumental duo, Mike McGoldrick and Dezi Donnelly take the stage on January 24 – while the twice Grammy-nominated American band, The Special Consensus, promise “bluegrass with attitude,” on January 25.

The festival closes on January 27 with a return to the traditional with Altan, who as well as being local are also genuinely international in terms of their appeal.

**ANTICIPATION:**  
Daorí Farrell  
(Photo: [www.daorí.com](http://www.daorí.com))

**HARMONISATION:**  
The Voice Squad



The Ballincollig Winter Music Festival now in its tenth year overlaps somewhat with the Letterkenny Tradfest – offering some difficult choices for traditional music fans.

Though not exclusively a folk and traditional event, the County Cork festival provides a platform for fine players and singers.

The tenth anniversary concert on Friday, January 25 features what the organisers say are “some of our favourite artists who have performed Upstairs at The White Horse over the years.”

The line-up Andy Irvine, Donal Lunny, Paddy Glackin and Lisa O'Neill in a concert which is to be performed intriguingly as a “song cycle.”



On Saturday, January 26, the focus shifts towards bluegrass and country in the form of the multiple Grammy award-winner, and dobro master, Jerry Douglas.

Although he has played with just about everyone who is anyone in bluegrass and old time music, he is probably best known to local traditional music fans as the joint musical director – with the master Shetland fiddler, Aly Bain – of BBC Scotland's highly successful *Transatlantic Sessions* series.

Sunday, January 27, sees a continuation of the bluegrass theme with West Virginia's Tim O'Brien accompanied by Jan Fabricius. They are sharing the billing with The Voice Squad, the mainly Drogheda-based trio whose unique unaccompanied harmony singing has garnered an international reputation.

Last but by no means least is Tradfest in Dublin – which runs from January 23 to 27 – with a programme packed with concerts, sessions and workshops.

Apart from the aforementioned Daorí Farrell, Jerry Douglas, Zoe Conway and John McIntyre, the Dublin line-up also includes Radie Peat, performing solo, and veteran British folkies, Steeleye Span and Lindisfarne (see pages 22-23).

# Capital gains

## Spoiled for choice

Tradfest continues to grow and develop year on year. Such is the depth and quality of the talent in this year's programme that fans are spoiled for choice with multiple offerings on each evening in a variety of venues.

Making a welcome return to Dublin is the Galician multi-instrumentalist, Carlos Núñez, is best known as a virtuoso player of the gaita, the Galician bagpipes. He also plays the Galician and Irish flutes, the whistle, low whistle and ocarina.

Born in the Atlantic port of Vigo in 1971, Carlos has been playing the gaita since he was eight and has become Galicia's principal cultural representative on the world stage.

A Núñez concert is a special event – full of infectious energy, stirring lyricism and wonderful musicality.



SHOWMAN:  
Carlos Núñez  
(Photo: Jaizka  
Fontenado)



JOURNEY: Kathy  
Mattea (Photo:  
kathymattea.com)

Among the other overseas visitors this year are Steeleye Span, arguably one of the most successful British folk rock bands. Originally formed in 1969, the band has undergone various personnel changes over its fifty-year life-span but lead vocalist, Maddy Prior remains a constant focus in the band's latest seven-member incarnation. Their Dublin gig is the culmination of an extensive autumn tour of the British Isles. As well as classics from the band's extensive back catalogue, the Dublin audience can expect to hear some new tracks as well.

Although she has only half of the Steeleye's longevity, the 'Barnsley Nightingale,' Kate Rusby, has been recognised as a talented interpreter of traditional folk songs as well as a writer of original songs – with both of

these attributes evident in her latest album, *Life in a Paper Boat*.

American country music star, Kathy Mattea, has been described by *The Washington Post* as "one of Nashville's finest song interpreters." With two Grammies and four Country Music Association awards under her belt, Kathy has overcome a significant vocal problem in recent years in order to pursue her career in music.

Prominent among the home-grown artists are three highly decorated artists – Radie Peat, winner of RTE Radio 1 Folk Awards for Best Singer and Best Group (with Lankum) and BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards for Best Group and Best Original Track (again with Lankum); Andy Irvine, winner of the RTE Radio 1 Folk Award for Lifetime Achievement; and Daoirí Farrell, winner of two BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards in 2017 for Best Traditional Track and Best Newcomer. But if you don't have a ticket for their gigs, it is too late: they have already sold out.

Before her concert on Saturday evening, Eleanor McEvoy is scheduled to make an early start in the morning as she leads a song-writing workshop. Revealing some of the key elements in matching words and music, Eleanor will examine structure, form, concept, rhyme, melody and chord progressions as well as the mystery of inspiration.

Tradfest Gig Guide on page 48



F

# Derry ready for Imbolc

## Focus on famine

The annual Imbolc Festival in Derry – which runs from January 27 to February 10 – features music from a number of genres including Irish traditional, roots, world, folk and classical.

Among the artists lined up for the festival are Lankum, Declan O'Rourke with his show, *Chronicles of the Irish Famine*, Ye Vagabonds, Mick Moloney and the Green Fields of America, instrumental trio Ven\_ture, Michael Rooney, Trú – and on their way from the Celtic Connections festival in Glasgow – the Transatlantic Sessions band, led by Gerry Douglas and Aly Bain, the Lonesome Ace Stringband and the Rheingans Sisters.

Rioghnaigh Connolly, Niall Hanna, Niamh Farrell and Alan Burke will present songs of migration and displacement while Séamus McGuire and John Lee will play a selection of tracks from their recent album, *The Legacy of Stephen Grier*.

The most ambitious event yet, this year's festival includes an extensive programme of educational and participatory events including music and dance workshops, master classes, events for children, community events, an extensive session trail, band competition and much more.

**TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP:**  
Aly Bain (left) and Gerry Douglas  
(Photo: [transatlanticsessions.com](http://transatlanticsessions.com))

**LEGACY:** Séamus McGuire (left) and John Lee (Photo: Fergal Magannety)



This year's event runs alongside the famine-related art collection 'Coming Home: Art and the Great Hunger' which will run from January 18 to March 16.

Imbolc will also mark the last leg of the first Irish tour by the sensational Glasgow-based band, Ímar.

Fiddler, Tomás Callister, and bouzouki player, Adam Rhodes, hail from the Isle of Man. Piper, Ryan Murphy, is from Cork while bodhrán player, Adam Brown, is from Suffolk and concertina player, Mohsen Amini, is from Glasgow.

Despite their diverse backgrounds, the five originally met as teenagers through fleadhanna cheoil run by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and they have won nine All-Ireland and eight All-Britain titles between them.

Murphy, is also a double Oireachtas winner and was a student of the late Mícheál Ó Suilleabháin at the Irish World Academy of Music.

Amini has racked up a number of awards in recent years in both the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards and the Scots Trad Music Awards.

F



**FOLK 2018 AWARDS WINNER**

*"genuinely jaw-dropping collective virtuosity"*  
★★★★★ The Scotsman

**Ímar**  
**IRELAND**  
**February 2019**

5th **LIMERICK** Dolan's Upstairs w/ support - dolans.ie  
6th **DUBLIN** Whelan's w/ JigJam - whelanslive.com  
8th **CAVAN** Farnham Arts - cavanarts.ie  
9th **DERRY** IMBOLC Festival - imbolcfestival.com



[www.imarband.com](http://www.imarband.com)

# Celtic celebration

## Blast of bluegrass

**T**hough at first glance, the scheduling clash between Celtic Connections in Glasgow (January 17-February 3) and Tradfest in Dublin (January 23-27) may suggest that the two events are competing for talent, in fact the opposite is the case.

The combined pulling power of the two festivals is particularly effective for international visitors who can make the short hop between Ireland and Scotland to put on a second show to the obvious benefit of the audiences in the two cities.

The cross-over of the two festival schedules produces some cross-overs in the line-ups for the two events.

So, for example, Andy Irvine makes an appearance at both festivals as a solo performer in Dublin and as part of Ushers Island in Glasgow. Lisa O'Neill appears on the programme for both events – sharing the bill in Glasgow with Danny Diamond's

**FROM GRENADA TO GLASGOW:**  
Kaia Kater (Photo: Raez Argulla)

**NEW HORIZONS:**  
BBC Radio 2 Folk Horizon Award winners, Talisk (from left) Mohsen Amini, Hayley Keenan and Graeme Armstrong (Photo: talisk.com)



Slow Moving Clouds – while Danú and Daoírí Farrell are also engaging in a bit of bilocation.

**A**mong the overseas artists, Kathy Mattea takes in Dublin and Glasgow – while bluegrass star, Gerry Douglas, (who is to appear at the Ballincollig Winter Music Festival (see page 21) will be in Glasgow to team up with Aly Bain and a host of other musicians for the Transatlantic Sessions.

Two more North American stars – one established and one emerging – will also be on stage in Glasgow,

The leader of the Grammy-award winning Carolina Chocolate Drops, Rhiannon Giddens (see

pages 8-14) will play with the Celtic Blues Orchestra – while Kaia Kater builds on her successful appearance at the 2018 Cambridge Folk Festival.

Kaia's album, *Grenades* – the title playfully referencing her Grenadian heritage – was recently declared the finest folk album of 2018 by US-based Folk Alley.

The Birds of Chicago – whose vocalist, Alison Russell, recently recorded an album with Rhiannon Giddens, *Songs of Our Native Daughters* – will also appear in Glasgow.

Two Appalachian bands – the Lonesome Ace Stringband and the Local Honeyes – will add a further touch of old time Americana and bluegrass to the festival.

Although Tim O'Brien (who is also playing Ballincollig) hails from West Virginia, he will be joining Naomi Bedford for a concert dedicated to Appalachian Ballads.

Among the Scottish acts, as well as some of the stunning pipers who recently appeared at the William Kennedy Piping Festival in Armagh, the multi-award-winning trio Talisk – with concertina maestro, Mohsen Amini, fiddler Hayley Keenan and guitarist Graeme Armstrong – is guaranteed to excite audiences.

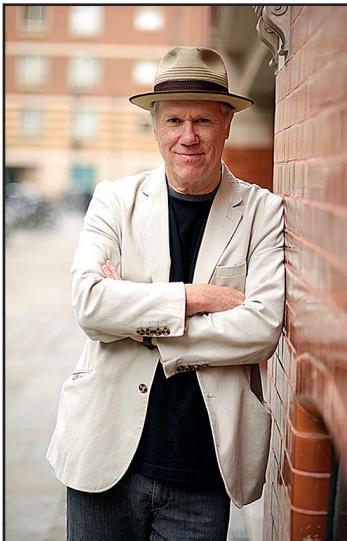
The 2018 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards Musician of the Year, Amini is also a member of the



five-piece band, Imar, which is set to tour Ireland in February – including the Imbolc Festival in Derry.

Karan Casey will take a brief break from the FairPlé campaign for gender equality (see *Fonn Autumn 2018*) to play a set based around her beautiful new album, *Hieroglyphs That Tell The Tale*, in Glasgow.

Karan will share the billing with folk veteran, Loudon Wainwright III, whose repertoire includes powerful songs drawn from his own often difficult personal relationships as well as observations laced with his idiosyncratic sense of humour.



**VETERAN:** Loudon Wainwright III

Taking its name from the Scots Gaelic word for rainbow, the Bogha-frois showcase concert is the culmination of a 2018 project for Scottish LGBT+ folk musicians, aimed at creating new work from their personal stories and a community perspective.

As well as chief organiser Pedro Cameron, the workshop leaders were singers/songwriters Rachel Sermanni and Josie Duncan, fiddler Laura Wilkie, and accordionist Grant MacFarlane and multi-instrumentalist Marit Fält.

The concert will feature performances by both tutors and participants – with guest appearances by Kim Carnie, Anna Massie, Joseph Peach, Alistair Iain Paterson, Christian Gamauf, Eddie Seaman and Finn Anderson – and a short film chronicling the project.

F

**KGB:** Paddy Keenan (left), Frankie Gavin (centre) and Dermot Byrne



## KGB among impressive line-up for Kilkenny Tradfest

**K**GB, featuring three of Ireland's finest instrumentalists – piper Paddy Keenan (Bothy Band), fiddler Frankie Gavin (De Danann) and accordionist Dermot Byrne (Altan) – are among the headline acts at Kilkenny Tradfest which runs from March 14 to March 19.

The impressive festival line-up includes Altan, Iarla Ó Lionárd and Steve Cooney, Scullion (below), Téada with Séamus Begley, Trú and the Kilfenora Céili Band.

A feature of the festival are the various performance

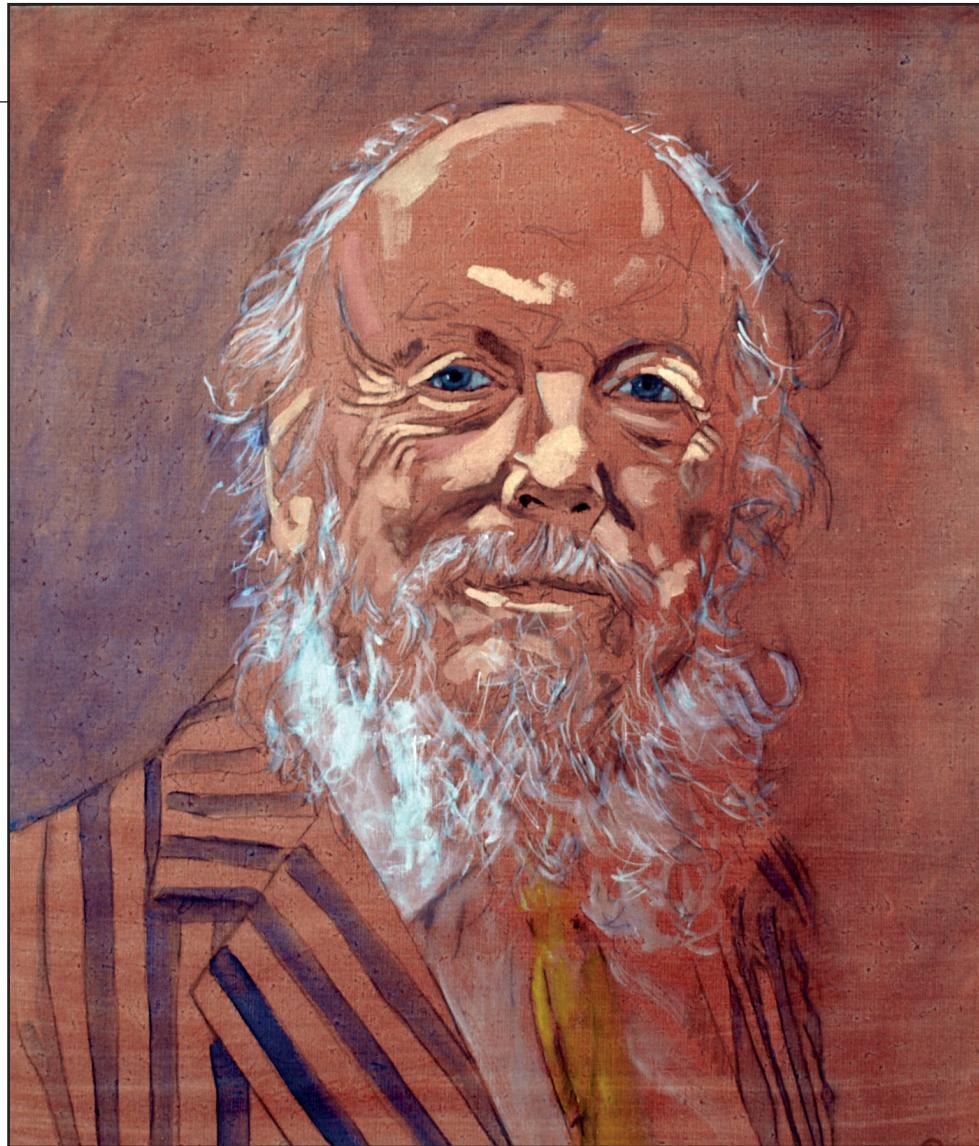
workshops. This year's mentors will include Sibéal Davitt (sean-nós dancing), Orla Fallon (harp), Tommy Lanigan (bodhrán) and Paddy Cleere (instrument-making).

As more artists and events likely to be added to the programme, the full line-up will be available on the website, [www.kilkennytradfest.com](http://www.kilkennytradfest.com)



**SCULLION:** Sonny Condell (left), Philip King (centre) and Robbie Overton

**FRIENDSHIP:** Portrait of Garech de Brún painted by his best man, Anthony Palliser, on exhibition in the Farmleigh Gallery. (Photo: Fonn)



Garech de Brún was a pivotal figure in the renaissance of Irish traditional music. Inspired by the piper, Leo Rowsome, he established Claddagh Records – which has helped to bring the work of many leading musicians and singers to a wider public.

Among them was musician, Ronan Browne, who for a time became de Brún's "court piper" at his home in Luggala, Co. Wicklow, where he entertained celebrity friends and acquaintances from the worlds of art, film and music.

At an exhibition of portraits of some of Luggala's famous house guests painted by de Brún's best man, Anthony Palliser, Ronan Browne told an audience in the Farmleigh Gallery of his long association with the founder of Claddagh Records and its impact on his career as a musician and on his approach to music.

## Garech remembered

Piper Ronan Browne reflects on the late head of Claddagh Records

**Garech de Brún**  
born June 25  
1939 – died 10  
March 2018

Ronan first met Garech back in the 1980s in Inagh in County Clare, where he was introduced by his old playing partner, Peter O'Loughlin, during a session that also included Joe Ryan, Bobby Casey and Junior Crehan.

*"Of course, I was aware of who Garech Browne was. He was a family friend – though I didn't know him personally before then. My father, Ivor, and he were great pals. They set up Claddagh Records together. In fact it was Ivor's idea initially to find some*

*way of making an LP – the new technology at the time – of Leo Rowsome. And Garech said, as Garech used to, 'That's a wonderful idea, Ivor. Let's see what we can do about it.' That was the start of Claddagh Records. The first record, Rí na Píobairí by Leo Rowsome, was made by Ivor and Garech."*

Ivor had met Garech with Leo Rowsome in the early 1950 when they were both struggling to learn the pipes. Ivor eventually gave up and passed on his set on to his son, Ronan.

*"I think it was a lovely closing of a circle when I met Garech because I should have met him years before but my parents were estranged when I was a kid. His connection was with Ivor and I was with my mother. (In fact I didn't actually meet Ivor until I was 20 and luckily we have over 30 years under our belt now.)"*

Meeting Garech in Clare was to have a transformative effect on the young Ronan Browne. In musical terms, he credits de Brún with enlightening him on the value of taste as well as technique.

*"I changed in Luggala from playing mostly dance music to mostly playing slow airs. There is always a story with a slow air. It is very often the music to a song and the song has a story."*

*"So when you are playing the music you are not actually hearing the words but if I tell the story, then when you hear the music, I have opened the door to a landscape and you then create the missing pieces."*

*"And this understanding all came because of Garrett. A lot of things in my life came because of Garech – including many of the great friends that I made over the years."*

**S**ome saw Garech as a foppish dandy for whom they would have no respect whatsoever. But others broke through that perception and got to know the real Garech who was a wonderful person – a man of great depth and great fun to be with. He would educate anyone

**KINSHIP:** Ronan Browne (left) and his father, Ivor, at the Anthony Palliser exhibition in the Farmleigh Gallery. (Photo: Fonn)



who was willing to be educated, just by being in his company. He had knowledge about everything. Whatever subject you could bring up, he would have something to say. He wouldn't pontificate or try to be big headed about it but he would have knowledge.

*"As I grew older, living my own life and no longer able to be his court musician, our relationship was conducted mainly over the phone and wonderful it was too. I'd always try to ring him in the morning because by lunchtime it wasn't as easy to talk to him."*

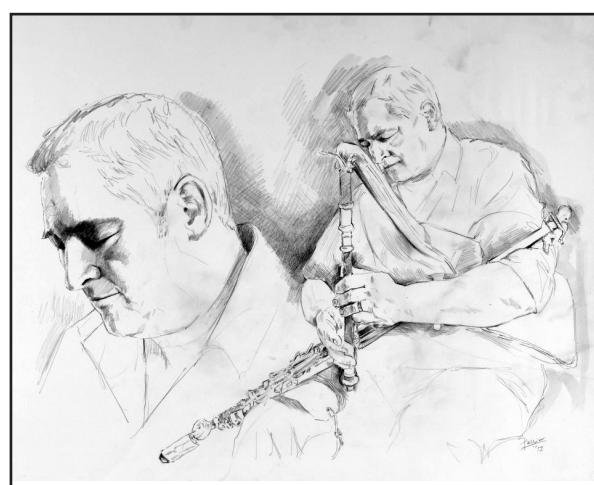
*"Topics of conversation might often include a good gossip (with a fair bit of hacking and ripping of*

acquaintances) or more often we talked about pipes, Irish history or harps. He had a wonderful collection of harps. He was mad into the harp as well as the pipes.

*"Every time, I would learn something new. Sometimes we might discuss an X-ray of the inside of a chanter or maybe a reed. He would be fascinated and he would have something to add every time."*

*"I introduced him to Siobhán Armstrong, the expert on the early Irish harp, and the two of them hit it off – 'anoraking' about musical instruments that were 250 years old."*

**MUSICIANS:**  
Below left: Ronan Browne (Drawing by Anthony Palliser)  
Below right: Siobhán Armstrong (Painting by Anthony Palliser)



## More than the Court Piper

While Garech earned quite a reputation for his lavish parties with the “jet set,” he used the opportunity to promote Irish music, literature and art as the equals of any others.

*“In the world that Garech created he never apologised for Ireland. He excited people about Ireland. When I played to the people gathered under Garech’s umbrella, it was to play Irish traditional music.*

“Everyone knows how Garech moved in the same circles as lords, ladies, actresses, actors, film stars and rock stars. Luggala was full of them. They were the people that Garech gently pushed me in front of. I was terrified at the beginning and a little bit nervous a lot of the time. But I rose to the occasion and learned what I learned.

“One of the things I liked to do was to leave that lovely sitting room of Garech’s and go to my favourite place, the kitchen.

“It was quite small but with a very high ceiling and the sound in there was gorgeous. So they would all come in – all the famous actors, lords and ladies, princesses whoever was there – to sit around the table and on the cold Aga, squat on the floor and I would play slow airs for them.

“I remember one time the Rolling Stones were knocking about and Mick Jagger was there with Jerry Hall who kept saying ‘Mick, Mick, make him play the

**FELLOWSHIP:**  
Portrait of a younger Garech de Brún  
(Painting by Anthony Palliser).



Wild Colonial Boy.’ And Mick was saying, ‘Jerry, I think he’ll do what he’s going to do. He knows what he’s doing.’ But Mick, I want him to play...’

“The piece I played most in Luggala was Port na bPúcaí. I’ve been playing it for years but I still love it. I remember one time Bon Jovi were around and their drummer, Tico Torres (who I had never met before and never met again since) said to me ‘Ronan, that’s the most incredible piece of music but you need to finish it. It’s not finished.’ So I said ‘What do you mean, it’s not finished?’

He said: ‘I don’t know. There’s something missing.’

“Port na bPúcaí comes from the Blasket Islands off the west coast of Kerry – from Inis Mhic Uileáin – one of the smaller islands.

“The story goes that the people heard enchanted music when the spirits were unquiet and they made this air using the sounds they had heard from the cries of the Pookas.

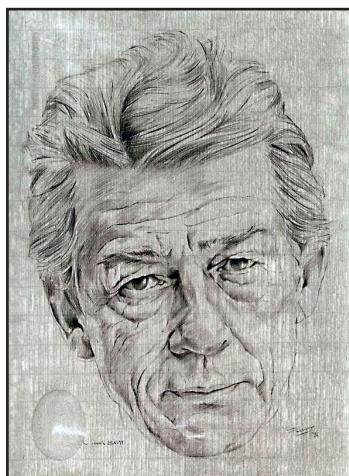
“But the deep scholars now reckon that the sounds they were listening to were possibly whale song coming up through the bottom of the canvas covered

## Hand-winding with Cáit

“When Séamus Ennis went to the west to record and write down Irish music and songs, the first house he went to was to my wife’s grandmother, Cáit Ní Choisdealbha. Garech used to go down to the house as well and he would sit on the ground at her feet with his legs crossed.

“He used to love the hand-winding when sean-nós singers were singing and he would reach up to Cáit and offer his hand. She’d jokingly throw her eyes up to heaven and wind it for him. And though she used to laugh and joke about him in Irish while he was there, it was done with love and respect at the same time.”

**COMRADESHIP:**  
John Hurt (Drawing by Anthony Palliser).



currachs – acting like a loud-speaker. I haven't actually gone out and tested it, myself. Maybe there'd be an Arts Council grant for it!

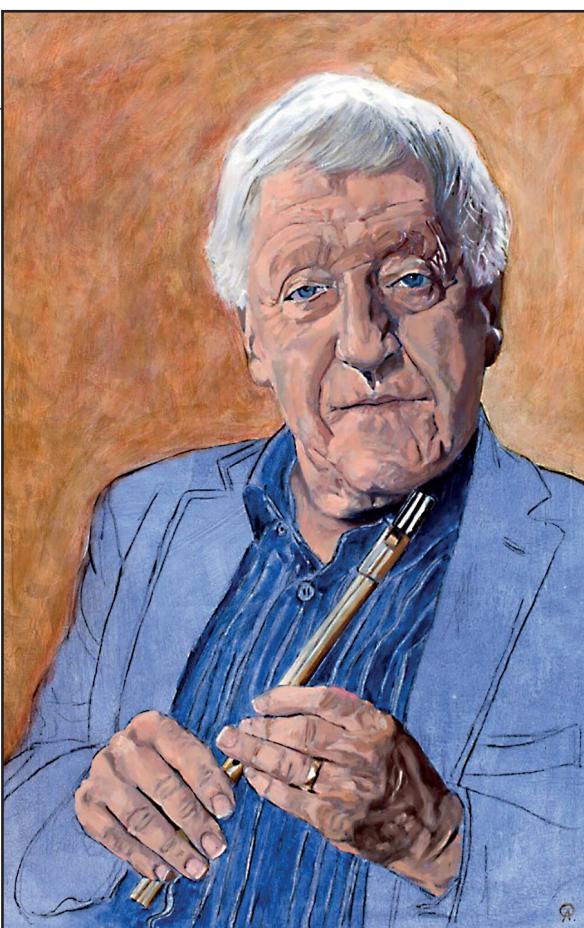
"When a friend gave me a cassette of whale song, I heard killer whales making a sound like the first three notes of this air – which are then repeated throughout the piece. I've since heard similar recordings of hump-backed whales: it seems to be a thing with whales."

"I was brought over to London by Garech for a party in his sister-in-law's house. I was expected to play – but nobody seemed to care. I had my eyes closed as I was playing – wishing I was back in Ireland away from all this – when this lovely honey velvety voice said: 'That was just gorgeous,' and it was John Hurt.

"He sat there beside me for the next two hours and I played tunes for John. He asked me questions and because he had been hanging out with Garech, he had himself somehow been rubbed with the Irish magnet. So he knew how to inquire about the things of depth that I could share with him. And we became fast friends.

"Through him I met Daniel Day Lewis and ended up becoming the godfather to Daniel and Rebecca's son, Ronan – named after me!"

"All of these things came through my friendship with Garech. So the world that Garech shared with me has formed my existence and where I am now."



**PARTNERSHIP:**  
Portrait of Paddy Moloney of the Chieftains – Claddagh's most successful act (Painting by Anthony Palliser).

## Working with Claddagh

"I made a solo record for Claddagh. This was one of the low points of my relationship with Garech. I said I wanted to make this record with Claddagh and Garech agreed. But when it was near the end of the recording, the contract still hadn't arrived. When it finally arrived, it



**AUTHORSHIP:**  
Portraits of John Montague (left) and Séamus Heaney (right) (Watercolours by Anthony Palliser).

came on a roll of fax paper that my wife brought up to Windmill Lane where we were recording and it stretched half the length of the room. It was the most rotten, horrible, draconian contract ever – not the kind of contract that you make with your buddy.

"So I had to 'lawyer up' and he had his super duper expensive lawyer and I had this lad from Mayo who was a bulldog. It ended up in the law library at the Four Courts fighting with the two of them going from room to room with me spitting daggers at Garech and Garech giggling away and having a ball – teaching me what it was like to be in the hard world of business.

"On the sleeve notes for my record, I spoke about Tom Pháidín Tom Ó Coisdealbha who was the first cousin of my wife's grandmother, Cáit Ní Choisdealbha (Bean Uí Chonlán).

"So when Garech was working on my sleeve notes which John Montague had written with information I had given to him, he fixed what he thought was a 'mistake' by separating Tom Pháidín from Tom Ó Coisdealbha. He put a comma in between and created names for two men instead of one. But I fixed it.

"But I realised then that to work with Garech on sleeve notes, you had to design in deliberate mistakes so that he could correct them and not mess with the stuff you really wanted to include.

## A Day in the Life

Apart from entertaining rock stars in Luggala, Garech de Brún had a rather darker connection to pop culture – and specifically *A Day in the Life* which provided the emotional and orchestral climax to the Beatles' album, *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

Lennon's lyrics were inspired by news reports of the death in a high speed car accident of Garech de Brún's 21-year-old younger brother, Tara – a tragedy that had a profound and lasting impact on his older sibling.

**A**lso at Claddagh, I remember a record was to be made by a Scottish highland piper, Robert Wallace of the Whistlebinkies. Garech had done tons of research for this and we were working on the sleeve notes. But it went on so long that the record never came out.

"But Garech discovered in his research that – and this not to be repeated anywhere outside this room (!!!) – Scottish pipers could learn their craft up to a certain degree in Scotland but then they had to go to Ireland for five or ten years to get the final knowledge.

"He had already mentioned this to a few people in Scotland and at that point he became public enemy number one in Scotland. And maybe that's part of the reason why Robbie Wallace's CD never came out."

### Garech the Collector

**G**arech had the most incredible library and only last autumn (2017) he showed me his broadsheet collection that I didn't even know he had. We all collect things and we have five or ten of them. He collected things and had hundreds of them. So he had tons and tons of broadsheets – just sitting in boxes – with maybe half a dozen or ten framed and the rest all sitting there.

"He also collected carriages. When Claddagh was set up, one of the important things was that it be pure Irish music that wouldn't be messed with.

"So Claddagh was set up to record and publish good music – but there were good musicians who were playing music that just didn't really fit into the Claddagh thing.

"So he created a subsidiary label called Phaeton, which was a particular type of carriage, and

**R**ELEATIONSHIP: The portrait of Garech de Brún's mother, Oonagh Guinness – which used to hang in Luggala for many years – was bequeathed on her death to a son by her first marriage, Gay Kindersley, who is believed to his sold the picture to an unknown buyer (Painting by Philip de László).



the logo was one of his carriages. And on that label you could play, excuse me, crap music if you were a good musician.

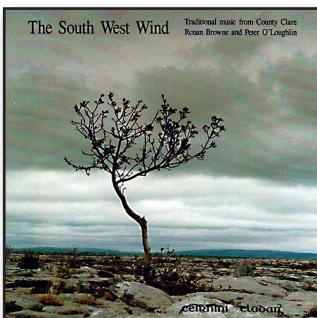
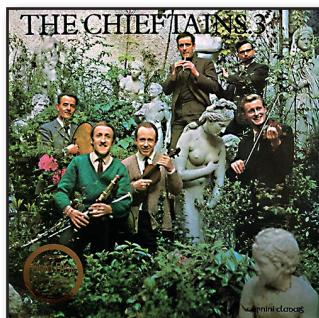
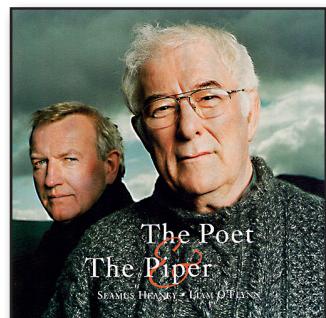
"He had beautiful important harps, gorgeous sets of pipes – one of which by Timothy Kenna) he gave to me. Garech also had the world's best collection of Claddagh rings.

**H**is collection of paintings was stunning. Any time an old painting of Luggala came up he would have bought it. Some of the paintings go right back to the

La Touches when they built the place as a hunting lodge in 1787.

"He had lots of Anthony Palliser and he had Francis Bacon, whose pictures command terrifying prices nowadays. But these were all his buddies.

"A portrait of his mother, Oonagh Guinness, used to hang above a lovely long side table. When his mother died – I played at her funeral and piped her into the ground – she left that portrait to one of Garech's half-brothers. Garech was heart-broken."



# Sound pictures

**B**rian (J.B.) Vallely could be genuinely said to be a Renaissance man – since the founder of the Armagh Pipers Club is, of course, also one of Ireland's foremost painters and a stalwart of the Armagh Athletics Club.

Traditional music and sport also feature strongly as themes in many of the artworks on display in the Sol Gallery in Dublin in a special exhibition to mark 60 years as an exhibited artist.

Brian recalls his first steps into the art world at the age of seventeen:

*"In 1958, following a year at art classes under the direction of a remarkable man Peter McGirr who ran evening art classes in Armagh College of Technology, I took part in the exhibition he organised featuring work executed by his students.*

*"The exhibition took place in the Art Studios in the old Market House, Market Street, Armagh City Centre and I sold my first painting at this show receiving the then unbelievable price of £5 for it."*

Five years later eight of his paintings were bought for the Irish display at the 1963 World Fair in New York and by 1968, the Irish Times acclaimed him as "one of the more exciting Irish painters under the age of thirty."



Port na bPúcaí  
(Painting by J. B. Vallely)

The Living Tradition  
(Painting by J. B. Vallely)

During his prolific career as an artist he has produced over 4,000 works – including commissions for album and book covers. His paintings appear in the collections of major galleries and universities in over thirteen countries. He has received over 250 major awards for his creativity.

*"So here I am 60 years later still enjoying painting as much as ever. The work here has all been completed since the beginning of 2018 and mostly consists of my favourite subject music with a few paintings featuring the Armagh/Cork sport of 'bullet throwing' the name by which the sport of road bowling is popularly known in Armagh. I have also included a few paintings featuring cycling a sport I enjoy watching."*

*"To mark the occasion I worked to produce 60 paintings to celebrate my 60 years' painting."*

His latest pictures display Brian's characteristic method of responding to the energy and passion of his subjects with dramatic brush-strokes and a bold use of the palette knife to texture the paint on the canvas.

The resulting images are lively and dynamic like the music or the sporting action he depicts.

His other cultural creation, the Armagh Pipers Club – which he established with his wife, Eithne, in 1966 – has grown into an amazing centre for the teaching of traditional music – with legions of graduates now playing music both for personal pleasure and as professionals – including, of course, their own children, Niall (concertina) and Caoimhín (piano) in the band Buille, and Cillian (pipes) playing with Lúnasa.

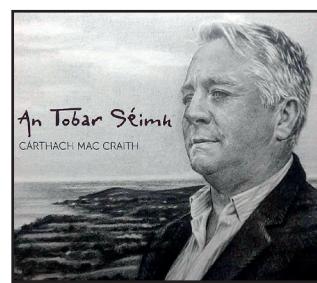
The Club's enduring and impressive role in the promotion of traditional music was recognised earlier this year at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards presentation of the Good Tradition award.

As part of its ongoing fund-raising efforts, the Club is selling a limited edition of fifty prints of one of Brian's paintings – each signed and numbered by the artist.

The painting, *The Living Tradition*, features three traditional musicians – playing fiddle, concertina and flute – and was created especially for the Club. They are available from the Club ([www.armaghpipers.com](http://www.armaghpipers.com)) for £200 (plus postage).



# Recent Releases



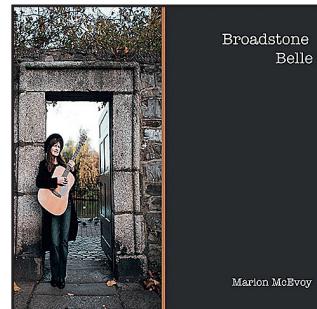
Cáarthach Mac Craith  
An Tobar an Séimh

## Drawing from a deep well

Although he was the original vocalist with Danú and is a long-time member of Cór Fear na nDéise, Cáarthach Mac Craith from the Rinn Gaeltacht, has only just released his first solo album.

*An Tobar Séimh* features impressive renditions of fourteen songs as *Gaeilge* – most of which are from the Déise area of Waterford and Tipperary.

Cáarthach is also supported by brother-in-law, Dónal Clancy on guitar and vocals.



Broadstone Belle  
Marion McEvoy

## Engaging debut for talented tunesmith

For the past 25 years, Marian McEvoy has lived in the shadow of her younger sister, Eleanor. But this album confirms her status as a talented songsmith in her own 'write' – with a great felicity for producing hooks and earworms that embed themselves after just one hearing. As well as songs, Marian also writes music for theatrical productions: one for the 'Scottish play,' entitled *MacDuff's March* is on the album with an all-star line-up from traditional music.

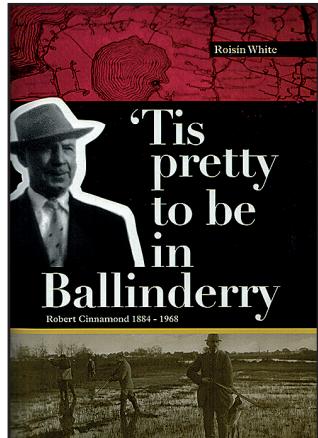
Róisín White and Friends  
A Tribute to Robert Cinnamond

## Unique project honours historic singer

Robert Cinnamond from Ballinderry, County Antrim, was a singer and collector of traditional songs, who died in 1968.

With hundreds of songs in his repertoire and a distinctive singing style, he was recorded by both the BBC and RTE – providing 70 songs for field researchers. A number of these songs were featured on radio and issued on the classic album, *You Rambling Boys of Pleasure*, by Topic Records.

Traditional singer, Róisín White, who is a long-standing admirer of Cinnamond, has produced a remarkable tribute involving a re-issue of *You Rambling Boys of Pleasure* on CD with the permission of Topic as well as a CD of songs collected by Cinnamond



newly recorded by contemporary northern singers, Len Graham, Méabh Meir, Maurice Leyden, Jane Cassidy, Jennifer Orr along with Róisín White, herself.

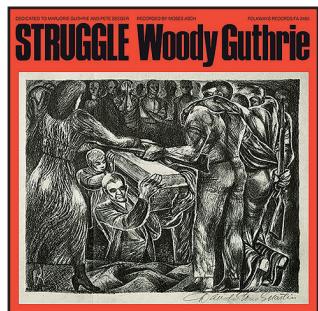
The two CDs come with a substantial booklet providing historical background on Cinnamond as well as tributes and supplementary notes on all the songs.

This labour of love was supported by a number of cultural bodies including the NI Arts Council, ITMA and An Góilín Singers Club in Dublin.

Gerry O'Connor  
Last Night's Joy

## Long wait for second album but worth it

Finally after a 14-year hiatus, Gerry "Fiddle" O'Connor has delivered a second album – full of wit, invention and sparkling technique on the dance tunes – and a heartfelt melancholy on the slow airs. Gerry is backed by an impressive array of artists – including son, Donal, who also produced the album; box player, Máirtín O'Connor, Gerry "Banjo" O'Connor; and even some not called O'Connor!



Woody Guthrie  
Struggle

## The master remastered

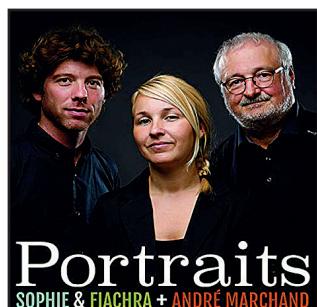
Smithsonian Folkways have just reissued this vintage classic on vinyl. Originally released by Folkways founder, Moses Asch, in 1976 to mark America's Bicentennial, *Struggle* was originally recorded in the 1940s capturing Guthrie at his best with gritty songs about workers like *Waiting at the Gate* and *The Dying Miner*; unions like *Ludlow Massacre* and *1913 Massacre*; and an ode to a bad man, *Pretty Boy Floyd*.

**Sophie & Fiachra with André Marchand Portraits**

## Transatlantic partnership

It is ten years since fiddler and singer, Sophie Lavoie, grounded in the traditional music of Québec, met Fiachra O'Regan, double All-Ireland Champion on the uilleann pipes and whistle. *Portraits* is their fourth album.

With veteran guitarist and singer, André Marchand, and others, the album is an intriguing exploration of two traditions which for all their unique differences also have much in common.



## Portraits

SOPHIE & FIACHRA + ANDRÉ MARCHAND

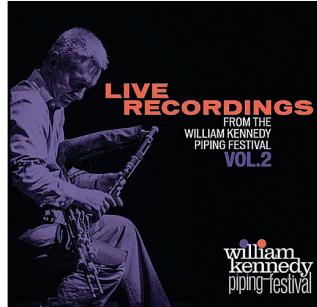
**Various Artists**

Live Recordings from the William Kennedy Piping Festival Volume 2

## Pipers live in Armagh

This double CD showcases recordings of many of the stars who have lit up the WKPF between 2003 and 2016.

Featuring a who's who of pipers and other musicians from Ireland, Scotland and the rest of Europe, the 36 tracks were recorded by the Irish Traditional Music Archive. The final album was engineered by Niall Vallely and produced by Caoimhín Vallely.

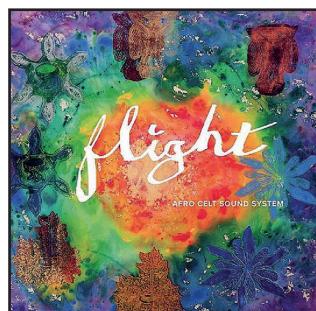


**Karan Casey**  
Hieroglyphs that Tell the Tale

## Karan's best yet

No-one has ever doubted Karen Casey's vocal quality or her emotional capacity to deliver a song. In *Hieroglyphs That Tell the Tale*, she displays both of these qualities in spades and more besides.

Supported by a meitheal of the highest calibre – led by producer/keyboard-player Donald Shaw (Capercaillie) and engineer/guitarist, Séan Óg Graham – Karen has created a coherent musical experience – fuelled by passion, intelligence and commitment.



**Afro-Celt Sound System**  
Flight

## Back in the groove

Now that the split in the band has been amicably resolved – and with Simon Emmerson and Johnny Kalsi refocused after their work on *The Imagined Village* project, the new album represents an accomplished return to form for one of the most successful fusion ensembles.

With less reliance on pre-programmed beats, *Flight* aims to replicate the band's live shows by recording live studio sessions rather than

From Bob Dylan's *Ballad of Hollis Brown* to Karan's own *Down in the Glen*, through to Eliza Gilkyson's *Man of God*, Janis Ian's *I'm Still Standing Here* and Mick Flannery's *In The Gutter*, there is a presumption of the inherent nobility of the human spirit in the face of adversity and a rejection of anyone or anything that would seek to diminish it.

The album includes two traditional songs, *Sixteen Come Next Sunday* – previously recorded by the Bothy Band – and *You're The Doll In Cash's Window* – collected by Cork singer Jimmy Crowley.

The arrangements for these songs – and for the album as a whole – are inventive, tasteful and always sensitively in the service of Karan's lead vocals.

Karan's vocal collaborators include fellow FairPlé campaigners, Pauline Scanlon and Niamh Dunne, as well as Maura O'Connell, Aoife O'Donovan and Karen Matheson – while instrumentalists include Mike McGoldrick (flute), Niall Vallely (concertina), Kate Ellis (cello) and Dirk Powell (banjo).

the layered computer-assisted construction of earlier albums.

Another new dimension is the selective inclusion of brass in the form of the Kick Horns whose emergence in *Missa Luba*, for example, helps to shift the Amani Choir's restrained opening up a few gears into a joyful celebration with more familiar Afro-Celt rhythms.

The underlying theme of *Flight* is migration – either by birds or by people – entwining two particular interests among band members – Emmerson's passion for bird-watching and Ríoghnach Connolly's work with refugee communities in Manchester and north-west England through the Music Action International project.

The latter influence is amplified by the collaboration of the Amani Choir and the Stone Flowers who share the refugee experience to varying degrees.

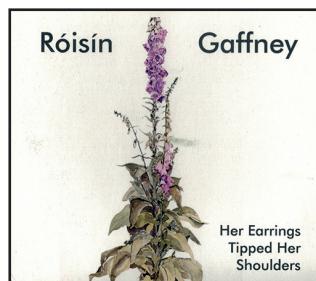
While vocal duties are shared by N'Faly Kouyaté, Griogair Labhruidh (from Dáimh) and Connolly, the album showcases Ríoghnach's growing talent as a creator as well as a performer of songs.



**Helen Diamond**  
Traditional Unaccompanied Singing from Ireland

## Jewel of an album

A Dubliner with strong links to the North of Ireland, fiddler and singer, Helen Diamond relies solely on her prodigious vocal talent for this collection of traditional songs – which include many Child Ballads as well as songs associated with prominent Ulster singers like Sarah Ann O'Neill (of the famous Hanna family) and Brigid Tunney. Recorded, mixed and mastered by brother, Danny, of Slow Moving Clouds, this is an impressive debut album as a soloist.



**Róisín Gaffney**  
Her Earrings Tipped Her Shoulders

## Ó Róisín do bheatha abhaile

One-time member of Macalla – one of the first all-female traditional bands – Róisín Gaffney has finally released a solo album – consisting mainly of classics with which Róisín has delighted the Góilín singers club in Dublin. Songs from her native county of Westmeath also feature – including her own ballad, *The Hills of Knocksheban*. Róisín is supported by some talented artists including piper, Néillidh Mulligan, and producer, Liam Mulvany.

# on the Horizon



Radie Peat

## Imagining Ireland

Described as “a one-off concert of word and music exploring Irish life in England,” *Imagining Ireland* features a stellar line-up of traditional artists – including the Martin Hayes Quartet, Radie Peat, Iarla Ó Lionáird and Lisa O’Neill.

The concert at London’s Barbican on January 30 will also include contributions from Stephen Rea, Fergal Keane, Joseph O’Connor, Eimear MacBride, Martina Evans, Timothy O’Grady and Melatu Uche Okorie.

Lisa O’Neill will also perform at Liberty Hall, Dublin on Saturday February 23 while Radie Peat will join her Lankum bandmates to play the Imbolc Festival in Derry in February as well as Live at St. Luke’s in Cork on March 17.

Meanwhile Iarla Ó Lionáird will join Martin Hayes and the Gloaming for their extended run at the National Concert Hall in March before teaming up with Steve Cooney for the Kilkenny Tradfest.

## Concertinas in concert

The Seventh Annual Concertina Cruinniú will take place in Miltown Malbay from February 15-17.



The Young'uns in *The Ballad of Johnny Longstaff*

## Young'uns in unique show

Winners of the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards title as Best Group two years running in 2015 and 2016, the Young'uns are touring their unique show, *The Ballad of Johnny Longstaff*.

It tells the story of one man’s adventure from begging on the streets in the north of England to fighting against fascism in the Spanish Civil War, taking in the Hunger Marches and the Battle of Cable Street.

It’s a timely, touching and often hilarious musical adventure following the footsteps of one working class hero who

witnessed some of the momentous events of the 1930s

The Young'uns bring together sixteen specially composed songs, spoken word, striking imagery and the real recorded voice of Johnny himself to tell a remarkable human story.

The soundtrack of *The Ballad of Johnny Longstaff* was released as an album in December.

The Young'uns will perform the show at the Pavilion Theatre, Dun Laoghaire on January 30 and the Strand Arts Centre, Belfast on January 31.



## The Gloaming to play seven nights at the NCH

Though only Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh hails from Dublin, the National Concert Hall feels like home to the Irish-American band, The Gloaming, who will play seven concerts at the venue from Monday March 4 to Monday March 11 (with Friday 8 as a rest day). The Saturday concert has already sold out.

# a Quarter of Sessions



PEERLESS: Landless

## Peerless flawless Landless

Landless are Sinead Lynch, Lily Power, Ruth Clinton and Meabh Meir. They sing traditional songs from Irish, Scottish, English and American traditions unaccompanied in close four-part harmony.

A wonderful live act, their repertoire features songs of love, death and lamentation, as well as work songs, shape-note hymns and more recently penned folk songs.

Landless have performed in a variety of settings since 2013, both in Ireland and abroad, and continue to perform at traditional singing sessions in Dublin and Belfast.

*Quarter Sessions is a listings guide to the regular sessions and special events planned by traditional music clubs and singing circles during the next three months.*

Their first album, *Bleaching Bones*, was launched last year to great acclaim.

*Landless will perform at the Highlanes Gallery in Drogheda on January 15; at the Sunflower Folk Club in Belfast on February 7; at Coughlan's in Cork on February 10; and at the Góilín Singers Club's 40th anniversary weekend in Dublin on March 8-10.*

## QUARTER SESSIONS : Armagh Pipers Club

### Armagh Pipers Club

Áras na Píobairí, 43 Scotch St, Armagh BT61 7DF  
Starting at 7pm unless stated otherwise

January 12

**Legacy:** a concert by Armagh Pipers Club students celebrating the music of Mícheál Ó Suilleabháin and Liam O'Flynn, Armagh County Museum.

January 27

**Burns Night Dinner and Concert**, Charlemont Arms Hotel, Armagh

February 3

Harp concert and workshop

February 4

Family session



March 10

**Annual Concert**, Market Place Theatre, Armagh

### Ballinasloe Singing Circle

Dunlo Tavern, Dunlo Street, Ballinasloe  
Second Thursday of each month. Admission free

January 10

Singing session

day that's in it!

February 14

Singing session – songs of love and romance for the

March 14

Singing session

### Banagher CCÉ

Crank House, Banagher Co.Offaly  
Last Sunday of each month from 5pm-7pm.

January 27

Traditional music session

March 31

Traditional music session

February 24

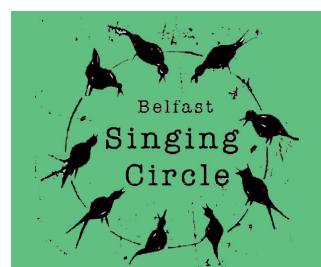
Traditional music session

### Belfast Singing Circle

The Garrick Bar, Belfast  
First Wednesday of each month. Admission free

January 2

Singing session



February 6

Singing session

March 6

Singing session

### Birr CCÉ

Birr Co.Offaly  
First Friday of each month from 7pm.

January 4

Traditional music session  
Kelly's, Green Street

February 1

Traditional music session  
Nolan's, Connaught Street

March 1

Traditional music session  
Craughwell's, Castle Street

### Boyle Traditional Singing Circle

Dodd's Crescent Bar, The Crescent, Boyle, Co. Roscommon  
Third Saturday of each month from 9.30pm.

January 19

Singing session

March 16

Singing session

February 16

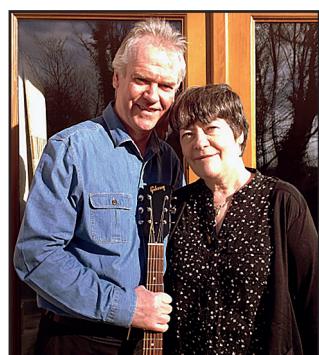
Singing session

### Bray Singing Circle

Tennis Club, Vevay Rd, Bray.  
Third Saturday of each month from 9pm. Admission €3

January 19

**Sangs and Clatter** – singing session with a Scottish flavour with **Jack and Angela Plunkett**



Jack and Angela Plunkett

February 16

Singing session

March 16

Singing session with special guest: **John Condon (Spancihill)** (see page 45)

### Carlow Singers Session

Carlow Town Hurling Club, Park View House, Oakpark Drive, Carlow First Tuesday of each month from 8pm

January 1

Singing session

March 5

Singing session

February 5

Singing session

### Cavan Traditional Music Session

Blessing's Pub, Main Street, Cavan.  
Every Thursday from 10.30pm.

### **Chapel Gates Singers Club**

O'Keefe's Pub, Cooraclare, Kilrush, County Clare.  
Last Friday of each month from 9.30pm.

January 25  
Singing session with special guest **Elizabeth Carrigg**  
(see page 41)

February 22  
Singing session  
  
March 29  
Singing session

### **Crusheen Singers Club**

Fogarty's Bar, Crusheen, Co. Clare  
Third Wednesday of each month from 9.30pm.

January 16  
Singing session  
  
February 20  
Singing session

March 20  
Singing session

### **Clé Club**

Liberty Hall, Dublin 1. Third Wednesday of each month from 8.00pm. Admission €5

January 16  
**Scotland The Brave: Burns, Brexit & The Border Ballads with Angela and Jack Plunkett**  
(Fear an tí: Terry Moylan)

February 20  
Singing session

March 20  
Singing session



### **Cork Singers Club**

An Spailpín Fánach, South Main Street, Cork  
Every Sunday

Check Facebook posts on @corksingersclub for info on upcoming sessions

### **County Wexford Traditional Singers Circle**

Mary's Bar, John's Gate St., Wexford – Fourth Friday of each month from 9.30pm

January 25  
Singing session

March 22  
Singing session

February 22  
Singing session

### **Croonerista Social Club**

Inchicore Sports & Social Club, Dublin 8  
Second Friday of each month from 9.30pm. Admission free

January 11  
Singing session

March 8  
Singing session

February 8  
Singing session

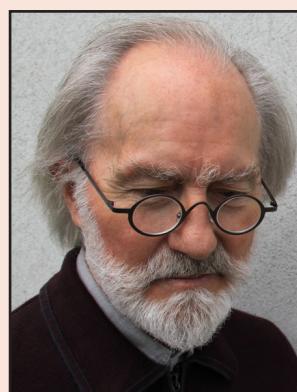
### **De Barra's Folk Club**

55 Pearse Street, Scartagh, Clonakilty, Co. Cork  
Every Monday from 9.30pm.

January 3 9pm  
**John Spillane**  
  
January 7 9.30pm  
Traditional Music Session  
  
January 14 9.30pm  
Traditional Music Session  
  
January 21 9.30pm  
Traditional Music Session  
  
January 28 9.30pm  
Traditional Music Session

February 1 9.30pm  
**Daithí with Anna Mullarkey**  
  
February 4 9.30pm  
Traditional Music Session  
  
February 7 9pm  
**John Spillane**  
  
February 11 9.30pm  
Traditional Music Session  
  
February 18 9.30pm  
Traditional Music Session

February 21 9pm  
**Rónán Ó Snodaigh**  
  
February 22 9pm  
**Jack O'Rourke**  
  
February 25 9.30pm  
Traditional Music Session  
  
March 3 8pm  
**Roy Harper with Bill Shanley**  
  
March 4 9.30pm  
Traditional Music Session  
  
March 7 9pm  
**John Spillane**  
  
March 11 9.30pm  
Traditional Music Session  
  
March 18 9.30pm  
Traditional Music Session  
  
March 25 9.30pm  
Traditional Music Session  
  
March 29 9pm  
**Mary Coughlan**



**VETERAN: Roy Harper**

### **Roy Harper**

English folk singer, Roy Harper has been a professional musician since 1964. He has released 32 albums – including 10 live albums.

Harper is known for his distinctive fingerstyle playing and lengthy, lyrical, complex compositions, reflecting his love of jazz and the poet John Keats.

## QUARTER SESSIONS : Derry Traditional Singers Circle

### Derry Traditional Singers Circle

Tinney's Pub, Sackville Street, Derry  
First Thursday of each month from 9pm.

January 3  
Singing session

March 7  
Singing session

February 7  
Singing session

### Edenderry CCÉ

O'Donoghue's Lounge, Edenderry.  
Third Thursday of each month from 9pm.

January 17  
Traditional music and  
singing session

February 21  
Traditional music and  
singing session

March 21  
Traditional music and  
singing session

### Doonbeg Singers Circle

Comerford's Bar, Doonbeg, Co. Clare  
Third Friday of each month from 9pm.

January 18  
Singing session

March 15  
Singing session

February 15  
Singing session

### Ennis Singers Club

The Grove Bar Restaurant, Roslevan, Ennis.  
Second Friday of each month from 9pm.

January 11  
Singing session

March 8  
Singing session

February 8  
Singing session



### Drogheda Singers Circle

Tí Chairbre (Carberry's Pub), North Strand, Drogheda  
Every Wednesday from 9.30pm.

### Falcarragh Song Circle/ Ciorcal na nAmhráin, An Fal Carrach

The Shamrock Bar, An Fal Carrach, Dun na nGall  
Third Wednesday of each month from 8.30pm.

January 16  
Singing session

February 20  
Singing session

March 20  
Singing session



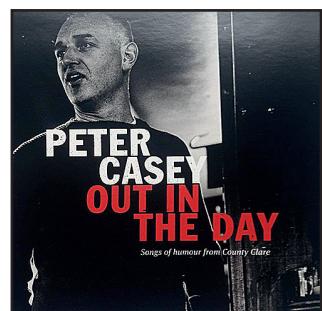
### Fanore Singers Club

O'Donohue's Pub, Fanore, Co Clare  
Third Friday of each month from 9pm.

January 18  
Singing session

February 15  
Singing session

March 15  
Singing session



area of West Clare and informed by his own experiences as a committed supporter of hurling and traditional music.

### Dundalk Singing Circle

Wee House Pub, Anne Street, Dundalk  
First Tuesday of each month from 9pm.

January 1  
Singing session

March 5  
Singing session

February 5  
Singing session

## Feakle Singers Club

Shortt's Bar, Feakle, Co. Clare

Second Saturday of each month from 9.30pm.

January 12  
Singing session

March 9  
Singing session

February 9  
Singing session

## An Góilín

The Teachers' Club, 36 Parnell Square, Dublin 1

Every Friday from 9.00pm Admission: €3

January 4  
Club night - singing session

February 22  
Special guest TBC

January 11  
Club night - singing session

March 1  
Club night - singing session

January 18  
Club night - singing session

March 8-10  
An Góilín 40th Anniversary  
Weekend

(see above right)

January 25  
Club night - singing session

March 15  
Special guests:  
**Ye Vagabonds**

(see right)

February 1  
Special guest TBC

March 22  
Club night - singing session

February 8  
Club night - singing session

March 29  
Club night - singing session

February 15  
Club night - singing session



**Len Graham**

One of Ireland's best known traditional singers, Len Graham has gained an international reputation – not only for his inimitable singing style, but also for the breadth of his knowledge of the traditional music of Ireland, Britain and North America.



**Máire Ní Choilm**

Originally from Gaoth Dobhair in Donegal and now living and working in Dublin, Máire's distinctive voice has won many awards (including Oireachtas, Comórtas na mBan in 1997 and 2009: the All-Ireland Fleadh, Gaeilge 2005 and the Pan Celtic singing competition in 2008.

## An Góilín 40th Anniversary Weekend

March 8-10

**The Voice Squad**  
**Landless**  
**Len Graham**  
**Rosie Stewart**  
**Máire Ní Choilm**  
**Tim Dennehy**  
**Luke Cheevers**

Events to be held in:

*The Teachers' Club, Parnell Square, Dublin 1.*

*The Cobblestone, Smithfield, Dublin 7*

*Hughes Bar, Smithfield, Dublin 7*

See [www.goilin.ie](http://www.goilin.ie) for full programme.



## Ye Vagabonds

Brothers Brían and Diarmuid Mac Gloinn grew up playing music together around their hometown of Carlow. After moving to Dublin in 2012, they quickly made their mark at sessions, playing a mixture of their own original songs and folk classics from Ireland, Scotland, England and America.

They released their debut EP, *Rose and Briar*, in October 2015. Since then, they have been busy touring Ireland, the UK and Europe.

In October 2017 they launched their debut album, called simply *Ye Vagabonds*, featuring folk music rich in harmony – influenced by Irish traditional music, Appalachian singing, and the 1960s folk revival. Their second album is due for release early in 2019.

## QUARTER SESSIONS : Howth Singing Circle



**Niamh Parsons**

Brought by her parents to the local folk club in The Old Shieling Hotel in Raheny, Niamh developed a love of singing and of collecting songs.

*I consider myself more a songstress than a singer – a carrier of tradition.*

Having performed and recorded with a variety of artists, including the bands Arcady and Loose Connections, she has a number of solo albums to her credit. More recently she has been performing and recording with Graham Dunne.



Returning to Howth as special guests at another Burns Nicht are champion musician, Paul Anderson – who is widely regarded as the finest Scots fiddler of his generation – and his wife, Shona Donaldson, who is not only an accomplished fiddler but also a traditional singer of the highest quality – winning the Singer of the Year title at the 2009 Trad Awards and Bothy Ballad Champion of Champions in 2016.



**Eibhlís Ní Ríordáin**

With roots in Fermoy, Co Cork and Ballyduff Upper, Co. Waterford, Eibhlís has a particular grá for the songs of the Déise area.

In 2016 she won Corn Mháire Nic Dhonnachadha at the Oireachtas, and in July 2017 she won the sean-nós singing competition at the Leinster Fleadh Cheoil.

A music graduate of University College Cork, she also holds a MA in Women's Studies.

She recently began studying early Irish harp with Siobhan Armstrong

### Howth Singing Circle

*Abbey Tavern, Howth, Co. Dublin  
First Thursday of each month from 9pm*

January 3

**Nollaig na mBan with Anne and Niamh Parsons (see above left)**

February 7

**Oiche Gaelach le Stiofán Ó hAoláin & Antoinette Daly, agus aoi speisialta Éibhlís Ní Ríordáin (see above left)**

February 2

**Burns Nicht Dinner with special guests, Paul Anderson and Shona Donaldson from Aberdeen (see below left)**

March 7

**Song Project – presented by Howth Singing Circle's Young Singer in Residence, Cathal Caulfield**



### Inishowen Traditional Singers' Circle

*Clonmany, Co. Donegal  
Second Friday of each month from 9.30pm*

January 11

**Singing session  
McFeeley's Bar, Clonmany**

March 22-25

**30th Inishowen International Folk Song & Ballad Seminar  
Ballyliffin Hotel, Clonmany  
McFeeley's Bar, Clonmany  
North Pole Bar, Clonmany**

February 8

**Singing session  
North Pole Bar, Clonmany**

March 8

**Singing session  
McFeeley's Bar, Clonmany  
For more information, see [www.inishowensinging.ie](http://www.inishowensinging.ie)**

### Jim O' The Mills Session

*Jim O' The Mills Pub, Upperchurch, Thurles, Co. Tipperary  
Every Thursday from 9.00pm*

### Kilmaley/Lisroe Singers' Club

*Bogdale House, Kilmaley, Co. Clare  
Third Saturday of each month from 9.30pm*

January 19

**Singing session**

March 16

**Singing session**

February 16

**Singing session**

**Bean an Tí, Aoife Ní Cathasaigh.**



### Killeshandra Traditional Music Session

*Kelly's Pub, Main Street, Killeshandra, Co Cavan.  
Every Thursday from 9.30pm.*

### Kilshanny House Singing Circle

*Kilshanny House, Kilshanny, Co. Clare  
First Sunday of each month from 8.00pm*

January 6

Singing session with special guest **Geraldine Carrigg** (see right)

February 3

Singing session with special guest **Sara Ryan** (see right)



**KILSHANNY HOUSE**  
**BEAN AN TÍ:** Nórín Lynch

March 3

Singing session with special guest **Paula Carroll** (see right)



**Geraldine Carrigg**

A talented singer in both English and Irish, Geraldine from Kilmamona in Co. Clare is also a fine harpist.



**Sara Ryan**

A rising star on the Irish folk scene, Sara Ryan from Kildare via Cork has been building a solid reputation as a gifted vocalist and magnetic live performer.

Her musical ability has impressed Christy Moore, who said:

“I’ve known Sara since childhood. It’s been a joy to witness her young career, to hear her song-writing develop and her singing mature. This young lady has a huge career ahead of her.”



**Paula Carroll**

Clare FM presenter and documentary maker, Paula Carroll is an accomplished traditional singer.

## QUARTER SESSIONS : Kinvara Singers Circle

### Kinvara Singers Circle

*Green's Bar, Kinvara, Co. Galway*  
*First Monday of each month from 9.30pm*

January 7  
Singing session

March 4  
Singing session

February 4  
Singing session

### Malahide Singing Circle

*Oscar Taylor's, Malahide*  
*Last Thursday of each month from 8.30pm*

January 31  
Singing session

March 28  
Singing session

February 28  
Singing session

### Navan Singers Circle

*The Lantern Bar, Watergate Street, Navan*  
*Second Tuesday of each month from 9.30pm*

January 8  
Singing session

March 12  
Singing session

February 12  
Singing session

### The Night Before Larry Got Stretched

*The Cobblestone, Smithfield, Dublin 7*  
*First Sunday of each month from 9pm.*

January 6  
Singing session

February 3  
Singing session

March 3  
Singing session

### North Wexford Traditional Singing Circle

*French's Traditional Bar, Main Street, Gorey, Co. Wexford*  
*Last Tuesday of every month from 9.00pm Admission free*

January 29  
Singing session

March 26  
Singing session

February 26  
Singing session

**The Session with The Pipers**

**Traditional Music Recitals**

*First Tuesday of Every Month*

**THE COBBLESTONE**  
**SMITHFIELD, DUBLIN 7**

Doors Open @ 9pm

Recitals begin @ 9.30pm

Admission - €12.00

(concession - €8.00)

**NPU Ó PÍOBAIRÍ UILLEANN**  
Sharing the Sound of Ireland

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Website: [www.pipers.ie](http://www.pipers.ie)

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funding  
traditional arts  
[arts council.ie](http://arts council.ie)

## Na Píobairí Uilleann

The Cobblestone, Smithfield, Dublin 7

First Tuesday of each month from 9.30pm Admission €12

January 1

**Mick O'Brien Uilleann Pipes**

**Cliodhna Costello Banjo**

**Derek Hickey Accordion**

**Donal Clancy Songs**

February 5

**Noel Carberry Uilleann Pipes**

**Billy Clifford Flute**

**Gerry Harrington Fiddle**

**Róisín Chambers Songs**

March 5

**Cormac Cannon Uilleann Pipes**

**Breda Keville Fiddle**

**Seán Ó Broin Flute**

**Deirdre Hurley Songs**



PIPE MASTER: Mick O'Brien

### Mick O'Brien

Born in Artane, Mick learned the uilleann pipes in the Pipers Club in Thomas Street. His father, Dinny, was a traditional “box” player.

After recording his first album with his family at the age of 13, he has played on numerous recordings with artists like The Dubliners, Frankie Gavin and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra as well as his own highly acclaimed solo album, *May Morning Dew*, and his two duets with fiddler, Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh, *Kitty Lie Over* and *Deadly Buzz/Aoibhinn Crónán*.

Mick's concert pitch uilleann pipes were built by William Rowsome in 1921, with a new chanter and extra A/G drone made by Alain Froment, who also made Mick's Bflat, B, and C sets.



– with acclaimed performances at the Sean-Nós Cois Life and Frank Harte festivals in Dublin.

As a vocalist, her influences are varied, and include singers from both the English and Irish traditions, such as Dolores Keane, June Tabor and Seósamh Ó hÉanaí.



FATHER AND DAUGHTER: Michael and Deirdre Hurley (Photo: RTÉ)

### Deirdre Hurley

Deirdre Hurley hails from a musical family in Ballymote, Co. Sligo. An accomplished flute player, she has played at the Session with the Pipers before as an instrumentalist.

She has also emerged as a singer in recent years

### Donal Clancy

Equally talented as a guitarist and a vocalist, Dónal Clancy has – since the death of his renowned father, Liam – focused his attention on preserving the legacy of the family repertoire of songs.

A founder member of the band, Danú, with his brother-in-law, Carthach Mac Craith, Dónal left to join a trio with his father, Liam, and cousin,

Robbie O'Connell, to tour extensively and to record two albums – before finally disbanding in the 2000s.

As well as touring with the Chieftains, Donal has also toured and recorded with Irish-American fiddler, Eileen Ivers.

He was also a member of the Irish-American band, Solas.

After releasing his first solo guitar album, *Close To Home*, in 2006, he returned to Ireland to live in An Rinn in 2009.

In 2014, he released *Songs of a Roving Blade* – which was very warmly received.

His most recent album, *On the Lonesome Plain*, features a mix of seven vocal tracks and six guitar instrumentals, including two of his own compositions.

LEGACY: Donal Clancy (left)

## QUARTER SESSIONS : Rainbow Singers Circle

### Rainbow Singers Circle

McHugh's Pub Glenfarne, Sligo

Last Sunday of each month from 5pm until 8pm

January 27  
Singing session

February 24  
Singing session

March 31  
Singing session

### Rhode CCÉ

Killeen's Bar, Rhode, Co. Offaly

First Friday of each month from 9.30pm  
(Junior session from 7.30pm)

January 4  
Singing session

February 1  
Singing session

March 1  
Singing session

### Ring of Gullion CCÉ

The Welcome Inn, Forkhill, Co. Armagh

Every Tuesday from 9.30pm

### Rostrevor Folk Club

Crawford's Bar at the Rostrevor Inn, 33 Bridge Street,  
Rostrevor, Co. Down.

Fortnightly on Monday evenings

On January 7, Rostrevor Folk Club hosts multi-instrumentalist and singer, Tim Edey – voted BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards Musician of the Year in 2012

– who has recorded with most of the major names in traditional music.

For more information on future sessions, check the club's Facebook page.



Tim Edey

### Séamus Ennis Arts Centre

The Naul, Co. Dublin

Third Sunday of each month from 2pm. Admission Free

January 20  
Singing session

February 17  
Singing session

March 18pm  
The Johnsons & Krista Citra  
Joonas with Néillidh Mulligan  
& Friends  
Estonian & Irish Traditional  
Music Celebration  
Admission €10-€15

March 17  
St. Patrick's Day Traditional  
Music Session



Néillidh Mulligan

March 24  
Singing session

### Shanaglish Singers Club

Whelan's Pub, Shanaglish, Co. Galway

Last Friday of each month from 9pm

January 25  
Singing session

February 22  
Singing session

March 29  
Singing session

### Skibbereen Singers Club

O'Brien's Corner Bar, 37 Bridge Street, Skibbereen

First Friday of each month from 10pm

January 4  
Singing session

February 1  
Singing session

March 1  
Singing session

### Sliabh Liag Singers Circle

#### Ciorcal Ceol Sliabh Liag

Evelyn's Bar, Carrick, Co. Donegal

Last Friday of each month from 9.30pm

January 25  
Singing session

February 22  
Singing session

March 29  
Singing session

### Sligo Traditional Singers' Circle

Durkin's Pub, Ballinacarrow, Co. Sligo  
Second Wednesday of every month from 9pm

January 9  
Regular night - usual singing session

March 13  
Christmas singing session – with musicians.

February 13  
Regular night - usual singing session



The late Robbie McMahon celebrating his eighty-fifth birthday with John Condon (right) in 2011. (Photo: John Breslin)

### Song Central

Chaplin's Bar, Hawkins Street, Dublin 2  
Second Sunday of every month from 6.00pm

January 13  
Singing session

March 10  
Singing session

February 10  
Singing session

### South Roscommon Singers Circle

Murray's Bar, Knockcroghery, Co. Roscommon  
First Saturday of each month from 8pm

January 5  
Singing session

March 2  
Singing session

February 2  
Singing session

### Spancihill Singers Club

Duggan's Pub, near the cross at Spancihill, Co. Clare  
First Friday of each month from 9.45pm

January 4  
17th Anniversary  
Singing Session

February 1  
Singing session

March 1  
Seisiún speisíalta

### Sperrins Singing Circle

Formerly the South Derry Singing Circle  
Ponderosa Bar, Glenshane Pass, Co. Derry  
Third Friday of each month from 9.00pm

January 18  
Singing Session

March 15  
Singing Session

February 15  
Singing session

### Robbie's First Friday at Spancihill

The late and much loved Robbie McMahon started the Spancihill Singing Session in Duggan's Pub, Spancihill in January 2002. The session quickly thrived mainly due to the popularity, quality and humour of the man himself.

For almost eleven years, Robbie's enthusiasm aided by the eagle eye and regular prompts from his wife, Maura, made Robbie's First Friday a "must go to" fixture on the singing calendar.

In November 2012 Robbie's health took a serious turn and Robbie sadly died the following month.

John Condon, a Cork man living in Clooney and a regular singer at Robbie's session, sat in as Fear a' Tí, for Robbie that November and along with the support of publican Michael Duggan, has kept the session going for over six years.

January 4th, 2019 sees Robbie's First Friday celebrate their seventeenth birthday and a great night of singing is anticipated.

February 1st will see a return to the more "normal" monthly session while on March 1st beidh failte speisíúl roimh amhráin as Gaeilge.

### Sult na Sollan/Sallins

Railway Inn and Bridgewater Inn, Na Sollan/Sallins  
Second and Third Friday of each month from 9pm

January 11  
Singing session  
Bridgewater Inn

February 15  
Music and singing session  
Railway Inn

January 18  
Music and singing session  
Railway Inn

March 8  
Singing session  
Bridgewater Inn

February 8  
Singing session  
Bridgewater Inn

March 15  
Music and singing session  
Railway Inn

## QUARTER SESSIONS : Sunflower Folk Club

### Sunflower Folk Club, Belfast

*Sunflower Bar, 65 Union Street, Belfast*  
*Every Thursday 8.30pm Admission £5*

January 10 Niall Hanna	February 14 The Parlour Girls – Caroline Orr, Janet Henry, Ellen Weir, accompanied by Colin Henry on dobro
January 17 Edelle McMahon	February 21 Barry Gleeson (see right)
January 24 Anna Smyrk (Australia)	February 28 Síle Denvir
January 31 Gerry O'Beirne	March guests to be announced
February 7 Landless (see page 35)	



#### Anna Smyrk

Anna Smyrk is a singer-songwriter from Australia via Cambodia and the Solomon Islands.

Her first solo EP, *Song of the Silver-tongued Magpie*, released in 2016, was described by *Rhythms Magazine* described as "a slow-burning gem."

Anna currently splits her time between Australia and the Solomon Islands, juggling her music with her work in international development.

These experiences have enriched her song-writing as well as providing opportunities to work with musicians from various backgrounds.

#### Barry Gleeson

Dubliner, Barry Gleeson, is a teacher, songwriter and a very fine singer. He is an active member of the Góilín Singers' Club.

He has recorded three solo albums, *Path Across the Ocean* / *I Heard a Bird at Dawn*, and *Tough Night*.

He also featured on the Góilín album, *The Croppy's Complaint*, celebrating the bicentenary of the United Irishmen Rising of 1798.



*Ground*, *Half Moon Bay*, *Western Highway* and *The Shades Of Gloria* which have been sung by Maura O'Connell, Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh, Mary Black and many other fine artists.

*Yesterday I Saw The Earth Beautiful* – a duet album with fiddler Rosie Shipley – featured his own songs, settings of poems by Paddy Kavanagh and Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill along with traditional tunes from Ireland and Cape Breton.

Gerry has toured the world as a solo artist and with the Sharon Shannon Band, Patrick Street, Midnight Well, Kevin Burke and the Waterboys.

His songs were celebrated in a special concert at the Fleadh Cheoil in Sligo in 2015.



#### Gerry O'Beirne

Born in Ennis, County Clare, Gerry O'Beirne is a singer, songwriter, guitarist and record producer.

He grew up in Ireland and Ghana, and has lived in England, California, and Mexico. He lives now near Dingle in Co. Kerry.

His first solo album, *Half Moon Bay*, features *The Holy*



Síle Denvir (Photo: TG4)

#### Síle Denvir

Originally from Inishtearbán in the Connemara Gaeltacht Síle Denvir is a talented sean-nós singer and harpist.

A founding member of the group Líadan, she has also been very active in the FairPlé campaign to promote gender equality in folk and traditional music.

Síle is a regular contributor to television and

radio programmes and she is the presenter of the programme, *Sean-Nós*, on TG4.

She has a particular interest in Irish-language song in a modern context and in 2008 Cló Iar-Chonnacht published her book *Ciarán Ó Fátharta - Amhráin*, an edition of songs composed by the Connemara songwriter Ciarán Ó Fátharta.

Síle has a BA in Music and Irish from NUI Maynooth, an MA in Irish from NUI Galway, a Graduate Diploma in Music Education and an MA in Traditional Music Performance from the University of Limerick.

She also received her PhD from the University of Limerick in 2012.

She is currently employed as a lecturer in Dublin City University.

### **Tower Singing Circle**

*Keeling's Lounge, Donabate  
Second and fourth Monday of every month*

January 14 Singing session	February 25 Singing session
January 28 Singing session	March 11 Singing session
February 11 Singing session	March 25 Singing session

### **Trim Singers Circle**

*Jack Quinn's Bar and Restaurant, Dublin Road, Trim,  
Co. Meath Third Friday of every month 9.00pm*

January 18 Singing session	March 15 Singing session
February 15 Singing session	

### **Tuam Singers Club**

*Reapys Bar, Tullinadaly Road, Tuam, Co. Galway  
Third Monday of every month 9.30pm. Admission free.*

January 21 Singing session	March 18 Singing session
February 18 Singing session	

### **Tullamore CCÉ**

*Joe Lee's Bar, Church Street, Tullamore  
Second Tuesday of every month 9.30pm. Admission free.*

January 8 Traditional music session	March 12 Traditional music session
February 12 Traditional music session	

### **West Limerick Singing Club**

*The Ramble Inn, Main Street, Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick  
First Friday of every month 9pm*

January 4 Club night - usual singing and story-telling session	March 1 Club night - usual singing and story-telling session
February 1 Club night - usual singing and story-telling session	

If you wish to see your singing or music sessions included in the listing for Summer 2019, please send the details to [ssheils@me.com](mailto:ssheils@me.com) by March 1, 2018.

## **Happy New Year to All Our Readers**

Thank you to everyone who has supported *Fonn* during its launch in 2018 – by participating in interviews, contributing information and other material.

As we consolidate the publication, we aim to introduce new features to enhance your experience of *Fonn*.

**Athbhliain faoi shéan is faoi mhaise daoibh**

# TRADFEST 2019 GIG GUIDE

## WEDNESDAY January 23

12.30pm **Brenda Castles, Dublin City Hall**

8.00pm **Loah / Sive / Ailbhe Reddy, Pepper Canister Church**

8.00pm **The Kane Sisters & The Friel Sisters, Dublin City Hall**

8.30pm **Lindisfarne, St. Patrick's Cathedral**

8.30pm **Ré plus support Kern, The Workman's Club**

8.30pm **The Lost Brothers, St. Michan's Church**

## THURSDAY January 24

12.30pm **Mark Redmond & Patrick Fitzpatrick, Dublin City Hall**

8.00pm **Bríd Harper & Arty McGlynn, Séana Davey & Stephen Doherty, Dublin City Hall**

6.00pm **The Fureys, The Arlington**

6.00pm **Stockton's Wing, The Porterhouse**

6.00pm **Ryan O'Shaughnessy, The Porterhouse**

6.00pm **The Young Folk, The Mint Bar, Westin Hotel**

6.00pm **Paddy Casey, The Temple Bar**

6.00pm **The Kilkennys, The Auld Dubliner**

8.00pm **Phelim Drew – A Celebration of Ronnie, The Dubs & Others, Pepper Canister Church**

8.30pm **Steeleye Span, St. Patrick's Cathedral**

8.30pm **David Kitt and Inni-K, The Workman's Club**

8.30pm **Dori Freeman plus support Niall Toner, St. Michan's Church**

10.30pm **Susan O'Neill, The Old Storehouse**

11.20pm **Drops of Green, The Old Storehouse**

12.10am **The Conifers, The Old Storehouse**

## FRIDAY January 25

10.00am **Pólca 4, The Ark**

12.00pm **Pólca 4, The Ark**

12.30pm **Martha Guiney & Aisling Lyons, Dublin City Hall**

6.00pm **The Fureys, The Oliver St. John Gogarty Library Bar**

6.00pm **The Young Folk, Fitzsimons**

6.00pm **The Kilkennys, The Merchant's Arch**

8.00pm **Liz Carroll & Jimmy Keane, Dublin City Hall**

8.00pm **The Black Feathers and The Once, Pepper Canister Church**

8.30pm **Carlos Núñez, Dublin Castle – Print Works**

8.30pm **Cathy Davey, St. Michan's Church**

8.30pm **The Eskies, Button Factory**

8.30pm **Kathy Mattea, St. Patrick's Cathedral**

10.30pm **Lisa Loughrey, The Old Storehouse**

10.30pm **Mules & Men, The Old Storehouse**

## SATURDAY January 26

10.30am **Song-writing Workshop with Eleanor McEvoy, The Irish Family History Centre**

11.00am **Give Trad a Try (drop-in sessions), The Ark**

2.30pm **Martin Harley & Stephen James Smith, Pepper Canister Church**

12.30pm **Sibéal Ní Chasaide, City Assembly House**

1.00pm **Slán leis an gCeol – Farewell to Music (documentary screening), Irish Film Institute**

2.00pm **Pólca 4, The Ark**

2.00pm **Songs of Longing: Sean-nós Workshop, EPIC Immigration Museum**

4.00pm **Stockton's Wing, The Norseman**

4.00pm **Paddy Casey, The Auld Dubliner**

4.00pm **The Henry Girls, The Oliver St. John Gogarty Library Bar**

4.00pm **Pólca 4, The Ark**

4.00pm **Zoe Conway & John McIntyre, Rathfarnham Castle**

4.00pm **Drops of Green, The Old Storehouse**

8.00pm **Eleanor McEvoy plus support Anna Mieke, Pepper Canister Church**

8.00pm **Stockton's Wing with Les Barker, The Workman's Club**

8.30pm **Andy Irvine, Rathfarnham Castle**  
**SOLD OUT**

8.30pm **Kate Rusby, St. Patrick's Cathedral**

8.30pm **Jim Page, St. Michan's Church**

8.30pm **TradFest Gala: Danú / The MGGoldrick Trio / The Green Fields of America, Dublin Castle – Print Works**

4.00pm **Radie Peat, Pepper Canister Church**  
**SOLD OUT**

1.00pm **Starboard Home (documentary screening), Irish Film Institute**

2.00pm **John Sheahan and Michael Howard, Richmond Barracks**

12.30pm **Family Workshop: Bodhrán Beats & Rhythms, The Ark**

3.00pm **Drops of Green, The Arlington**

4.00pm **Caoimhín Ó Raghdhaigh, Rathfarnham Castle**

4.00pm **Stockton's Wing, The Old Storehouse**

4.00pm **Paddy Casey, The Palace**

4.00pm **The Henry Girls, The Oak**

5.00pm **Daoirí Farrell, City Assembly House**  
**SOLD OUT**

6.00pm **The Kilkennys, The Merchant's Arch**

7.00pm **Jerry Douglas / Teddy Thompson / Laura Cortese & The Dance Cards, Dublin Castle Print Works**

8.00pm **Freddie White, Pepper Canister Church**

## SUNDAY January 27

11.00am **Give Trad a Try (drop-in sessions), The Ark**

12.30pm **Children's Open Trad Session (drop-in session), The Ark**

1.00pm **Radie Peat, Pepper Canister Church**  
**SOLD OUT**

1.00pm **Starboard Home (documentary screening), Irish Film Institute**

2.00pm **John Sheahan and Michael Howard, Richmond Barracks**

12.30pm **Family Workshop: Bodhrán Beats & Rhythms, The Ark**

3.00pm **Drops of Green, The Arlington**

4.00pm **Caoimhín Ó Raghdhaigh, Rathfarnham Castle**

4.00pm **Stockton's Wing, The Old Storehouse**

4.00pm **Paddy Casey, The Palace**

4.00pm **The Henry Girls, The Oak**

5.00pm **Daoirí Farrell, City Assembly House**  
**SOLD OUT**

6.00pm **The Kilkennys, The Merchant's Arch**

7.00pm **Jerry Douglas / Teddy Thompson / Laura Cortese & The Dance Cards, Dublin Castle Print Works**

8.00pm **Freddie White, Pepper Canister Church**