



**The
Séamus
Connolly
Collection
of
Irish Music**

Sheet music, stories, and essays from the digital collection

*The
Séamus
Connolly
Collection
of
Irish Music*

Séamus Connolly dedicates this collection to the memory of

*Chrysandra "Sandy" Walter Connolly
(1947-2011)*

and

*Dr. Ciarán Mac Mathúna
(1925-2009)*



The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music

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FOREWORD TO THE E-BOOK EDITION

While preparing this e-book edition of *The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music*, we were thrilled to learn that Gradam Ceoil TG4 had chosen our longtime colleague Séamus Connolly to receive the 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award. Conferred by Ireland's premier traditional music award academy, the Gradam Saoil recognizes a musician who has "encouraged, influenced and promoted traditional music in a positive and unselfish way for many years."

The values of generosity and community that are at the heart of this award can be seen and heard throughout Connolly's collection. Over 130 contemporary musicians graciously offered recordings and compositions with the understanding that their music would be made freely available; the same is true of the essayists and the visual artists. The spirit of the Gradam Saoil is evident in the beauty of their work. Taken as a whole, the collection at connollymusiccollection.bc.edu links three generations, paying special tribute to mentors who encouraged and influenced Connolly as a young fiddle player.

While the public response to the digital collection has been gratifying, it has long been a dream of Connolly's to present the music notation and stories in traditional book form. Where the digital collection facilitates discovery and online sharing, the e-book presents the collection as a page-by-page reading experience. For each tune and song, musicians in particular will appreciate being able to view the music notation, story, and audio track information at a glance. Anyone wishing to follow the narrative through ten consecutive audio playlists will enjoy this new version as well. The layout is designed to facilitate printing the entire volume, selected sections, or individual tunes and songs.

The digital collection, including all 338 audio tracks, continues to be freely available online. The textual content of this e-book edition is largely consistent with the digital collection, with a few minor edits to stories and song lyrics. The e-book also includes a table of contents, tune indexes, and a 2017 review essay by musician and scholar Mick Moloney.

During his 25 years at Boston College, Connolly fostered community among musicians, dancers, students, and audience members. He directed instruction and public programming, organized festivals, taught, performed, and generously shared expertise with Burns Library's Irish Music Archives. He also donated his personal papers to the Library, including field recordings made over a lifetime. Five years into retirement, he is still esteemed at BC both professionally and personally. We are excited to celebrate his decades-long connection with the University with an e-book version of the collection that he spent 15 years compiling. We trust that this resource will be educational and provide enjoyment for years to come.

*Elizabeth Sweeney, Irish Music Librarian
John J. Burns Library
Boston College*



Audio recordings for all ten playlists in The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music are freely available online at connollymusiccollection.bc.edu

A MESSAGE FROM SÉAMUS CONNOLLY

It is a warm April day, 2016. A bright sun against a stark blue sky welcomes me back to Rome, Italy. As I take my first steps on the Ancient Appian Way (Via Appia Antica), memories begin flooding back. It was on this same ancient road, marked with grooves from the Roman chariots, that an idea to publish a music collection of old and newly-composed tunes was first spoken of. It was fifteen years ago, in the spring of 2001, when my wife Chrysandra ‘Sandy’ Walter and I took a holiday to Italy. We came to visit longtime friends, Enrica and Stuart, and their lovely young children Julia and William. A holiday never to be forgotten!

One of our first escapades from the Eternal City in 2001 found us heading north through the beautiful Italian countryside towards the city of Cremona, believed by many to be the birthplace of master luthier Antonio Stradivari (1644–1737). In the Museo del Violina, Sandy and I had the euphoric experience of seeing and hearing the master’s historical violins played in an exquisite and professional performance. We discussed the importance of preservation and were overjoyed and delighted to see how pristine the master’s instruments looked and resonated centuries after they were built.

On another day, fate would have it that we came across the home of another Italian master, Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901). We discussed at length how Verdi’s music and the music of past masters and composers lives on through transcriptions, performances and recordings by world-renowned artists. We were reminded of the legendary Irish tenor Count John McCormack (1884–1945) and his celebrated performances of maestro Verdi’s superb arias.

Our conversation then turned to Irish music. We discussed the monumental work carried out by Dr. Ciarán Mac Mathúna, the beloved Irish broadcaster and music collector. Ciarán travelled the length and breadth of Ireland for many years, recording Irish



Séamus Connolly. Photo by Bachrach Studios.

music, stories, songs and poetry. His recording sojourns also took him to England and North America. He presented these recordings to the Irish nation through several educational radio programmes: *Ceolta Tire*, *A Job of Journeywork*, *American Journeywork*, and the wonderful Sunday morning series *Mo Cheol Thú*. Thanks to Ciarán’s labour of love, the Irish nation and many listeners throughout Great Britain heard, often for the first time, music and song from all parts of Ireland. In my own county of Clare, listeners such as myself were delighted to be introduced to music and song in the great northern traditions, from singers and musicians who lived in such far afield places as Donegal, Derry, and Antrim. Ciarán often visited Clare, Sligo, Galway, and Kerry as well, documenting and recording yet more of Ireland’s wonderful music and song. At all times, Ciarán was mindful of the importance of capturing and recording ordinary people who had their very own distinctive styles and dialects.

One such person I remember hearing on Ciarán’s programmes was Julia Clifford, the master fiddle player from the Sliabh Luachra area of County Kerry. When I was just sixteen years old, Mrs. Clifford offered to play tunes for me to record, learn, and add

to my repertoire. This generous lady, along with her son Billy on flute, played some lovely music for me. Many of the tunes were unfamiliar to me, and upon asking Julia the name of a tune that she and Billy had played, she would ask in surprise, 'You don't have it — do you?' What a lovely memory of a wonderful evening of music, chat, and inspiration to continue learning and playing my beloved fiddle.

Upon hearing this story, and thinking back to our conversation in Rome about a music book, Sandy suggested that Julia's question, 'You don't have it — do you?' would make an interesting and engaging title for a music book. As an official in the United States National Park Service, Sandy had long been an advocate for education, preservation, and restoration. Forever thinking of new projects, she envisioned a book that would include transcriptions, recordings, songs, and oral history. She knew that I had been inspired by Ciarán Mac Mathúna's work, and that I and many people of my generation had collected and recorded music on big Grundig reel-to-reel machines. It was from these source recordings, along with others from Ciarán's programmes, that I learned many of my favourite tunes. Sandy and I agreed that these tunes and songs should be enjoyed, learned and performed by others, especially up-and-coming young musicians, giving them a greater awareness of the tradition while preserving the music and its history for posterity. It was at this time that our commitment to creating a collection was born.

On returning home to America, I began the task of selecting 100 tunes from my private archive of source recordings for inclusion in a music collection. These tunes had special meaning for me and still do. Although some of them had fallen out of favor, I knew that my contemporaries in music would be quite familiar with the selections. And so, my grand plan was to have these tunes become popular once again. I was absolutely confident that if my music friends were to play and perform these gems, the tunes would quickly return to circulation, to be enjoyed by musicians, young and not so young alike.

Sandy, the master organiser in my life, was also at work on her computer. She began creating files of colour-coded documents, noting the original source recordings, the type of tune (reel, jig, etc.), and other information pertinent to each selection. Due to copyright issues, we realised we would be unable to publish these private source recordings in the collection. I imagined myself personally performing each tune for the project, while only utilising the

source recordings to create transcriptions that would become part of a proposed book.

Over time, the vision for the project developed to include additional tunes and songs, making it potentially a much larger collection. It would be a daunting task for me to try and learn all the tunes and record them for this compendium. At this juncture something wonderful and noble happened that altered the course and direction for the collection, reshaping the idea into a more educational and interesting music assignment. Friends and contemporary masters of the tradition, learning of the project, generously offered their time and talents to learn and record selections for the collection. These masters were delighted and honoured to pass along the music and song in the same spirit of collegiality in which they and I had learned this oral and aural tradition. In doing so, they knew that the music would be heard, learned, played and passed along to future generations.

Deeply grateful for my colleagues' generous offers, my next assignment was to transfer to CDs some original source recordings that I had made so long ago, and mail the CDs to these masters of the tradition. These friends had kindly offered to go to their own hometown studios to record the tunes that I had chosen for them. This approach was most helpful, as it allowed me time to concentrate on other aspects of the project. Going beyond the call of duty, a number of these artists offered their own compositions for inclusion as well.



Ciarán Mac Mathúna, Irish music collector and RTÉ broadcaster © Gael-Linn.



Chrysandra "Sandy" Walter, Superintendent of the Lowell National Historical Park. Photo at Booth Mills, Lowell © Higgins & Ross Photo-Design / James Higgins.

In the meantime, Sandy and I brought my recording equipment to Ireland, where we met with some of the musicians and singers who had offered to record for us. In doing so we collected some beautiful performances for inclusion in the project. Once back in America, we travelled to a number of different places and again collected other outstanding musical gems. Eagerly awaiting the new recordings to arrive by post from my collaborators, I set about sequencing the tracks that I already had, putting them in an order in which they would appear in a ten-CD set together with a planned music book.

At this time my friend John McGann, a producer, transcriber, and faculty member at Berklee College of Music, as well as a master performer on stringed instruments, began transcribing the recordings. John truly was a natural musician and he loved every minute of his work in music. Sadly, John left us all too soon, and he is missed by many. Then life took yet another turn for the worse when my darling wife, Sandy, was stricken with cancer. The news was devastating for both of us, but we did our best dealing with it day by day while she battled the illness for a number of years. Then my life crumbled all around me when Sandy, my best friend and confidante, succumbed to her illness. I so missed her and still do. After she passed away, I knew that I was loved by friends and family, but I still found grieving and trying to cope very difficult.

And then, another tragedy. My son Darragh, loved by everyone who knew him, died suddenly. He and Sandy are a huge loss to our family. They both leave a void in our hearts. I thank God that I still have two children in my life, my son Ronan and my daughter Keelin. I am grateful for their love and understanding. After the loss of Sandy and Darragh, I lost the will, motivation, and inspiration to persevere with this enormous task of compiling a collection of music to share with the world. After much deliberation I decided to put the project to rest.

After a long hiatus, my dear friend Dr. Cindy Polo offered much encouragement to resume working on the collection. As a first step, she offered to refresh Sandy's document and to bring the information up to date. Deep down inside me, I knew that I really needed to complete what Sandy and I had begun. After a little more persuasion by Cindy, I began to believe in myself again and in my music. The wheel always turns, and I was now ready to move forward.

Sandy's sister Diane and her husband Chuck visited me for a few weeks to help with personal tasks, one of which was to locate Sandy's files for the collection. Not finding a music-related file on the computer, they were puzzled. They knew that she had worked long and hard on this project, but were at a loss as to where the files were stored. I was distressed by the thought that the documents may have been lost. At Diane and Chuck's suggestion, I sat at the computer and together we opened every folder. Coming to the very last folder on the computer, I said, 'Click on that'. There it was in full view, the document that Sandy had aptly named 'You Don't Have It — Do You?' Many years of hard work and dedication came back to life. This earlier proposed collection title, 'You Don't Have It — Do You?' somehow had not been shared with Chuck and Diane. Now on a roll, Chuck forwarded the document to Cindy. Hundreds of miles apart, she and I collaborated during hours of telephone conversations, updating the document and getting the project back on track.

I continued John McGann's work of transcribing the tunes. My friend Bonnie Bewick Brown, who recorded for the collection, also contributed a number of transcriptions and arrangements. Collaborating with another friend, music scholar, music editor, and transcriber Paul Wells, brought this important segment of the collection to a welcome closure. Thanks, Paul, for the knowledge, experience, patience, and commitment that you brought to the project over many months.

During the time when I was working with Paul on the transcriptions, I was also hand-writing narratives and anecdotes about the tunes and songs. When I completed my first draft of these stories, another friend, Brenda Cerino, offered to type them for me. (I am blessed with many friends!) At this same time, music scholar, piper, flute and whistle player Kieran O'Hare and his wife, fiddle player, arranger, and composer Liz Knowles moved to Maine. Keenly interested in the collection, Liz recorded some beautiful tracks for the enterprise and Kieran, another champion for the cause, worked long hours reviewing and editing my music stories and anecdotes. Thank you Kieran for your knowledge and skills. You are indispensable!

I began to record my own tracks for the collection with help from my friend Gabriel Donohue, an extraordinarily talented musician and recording engineer. Gabriel's many contributions included adding his own accompaniment to a few tracks on the sequenced CDs that I brought to his studio, and digitizing a selection of source recordings for the project. He matched the volume from one track to another, and never once did he have to edit any of the new tracks. Such was the mastery of these generous and talented musicians, who recorded the tracks while interpreting the source recordings in their own way. It is a testament to their musicality and skills. What a gift they have given to all of us.

With many components of the project completed, and the digital world having complicated many aspects of music publishing, I was at a loss as to how this compilation of music and song might be published and distributed. After many years of hard work, I was concerned that Sandy's and my dream of leaving to posterity this valuable collection, my life's work, might never come to fruition. Then, while in New York City at a Boston College function, Dr. Thomas Wall, University Librarian of the Boston College Libraries, inquired about the status of my project. Upon hearing my concerns, he generously offered the libraries' support and staff to digitally publish the collection. My fear that the collection would not be published disappeared. I knew that from that point on, the collection would be in good hands.

After three years of collaboration with the Libraries' staff on this digital project, we have decided that our production from now on will be known as *The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music*. What began simply as 100 tunes for a book and CD production is now a digital collection of over 330 audio tracks, each with its own transcription and story. And so, it is from this

collaboration that the Boston College Libraries and I are delighted to present *The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music* in October 2016, free of charge via the Internet, for all to enjoy, download, learn, and play.

I am indebted to Ciarán Mac Mathúna for his work in travelling the highways and byways of Ireland, collecting the music of our country, and thereby introducing me to the wonderful music of County Kerry and Julia Clifford. Through her music, Julia's name lives on. Somehow I know that the question she asked when I was sixteen years old, 'You don't have it – do you?' will again surface and be put to good use somehow, somewhere in time.

Through their artistry, and love for what they do, the musicians in this project together stand tall as torch bearers, enabling Gaelic music and song traditions to endure the test of time. Such is the work of a true master.

And now, fifteen years after the dawning of this project, I have once again returned to Rome to visit my friends Enrica and Stuart and their two children, Julia and William, now teenagers and still lovely. Enjoying wonderful gelato while we stroll along the grey cobblestones of the queen of roads, Via Appia Antica, Enrica proudly points out the astonishing architecture and describes her native city as an 'outside museum'. We fondly remember my beloved wife, Chrysandra 'Sandy' Walter Connolly, whose incredible determination and inspiration will live forever through this collection. The spectacular country of Italy bore witness to the conception of this project, and whilst here in Italy, the circle is finally coming to a close.

Now you do have it – don't you?

Enjoy!

Séamus Connolly
October 2016

A 2013 NEA National Heritage Fellow, Séamus Connolly served as Sullivan Artist in Residence in Irish Music at Boston College from 2004 to 2015.

PART ONE:

MUSIC & STORIES



Leslie Mansmann

PLAYLIST ONE

THE GOLDEN FLOWER

FOR CHRYSANDRA WALTER CONNOLLY

Air

Bill Black

5

9

13

17

21

25



My long-time friend Bill Black, who lives on Cape Cod, would often send tunes to my wife Sandy that he had composed in her honour. Bill's compositions greatly cheered my dear wife during her illness. She particularly liked his tune 'How Are You, Sandy', or as Bill re-named it, 'Sandy Connolly's', a jig featured elsewhere in this collection played by yours truly.

I know that Sandy would be proud of this tune, 'The Golden Flower' (a translation of her full name, 'Chrysandra'), which Bill composed after she left us to go to her eternal reward. As soon as I heard it, I knew that I wanted it to be the first tune in this collection. I was moved to tears by Bill's gift.

The other gift associated with Bill's composition is this hauntingly beautiful performance of 'The Golden Flower' by our special friends Hilary and Duncan Cumming on violin and piano. Hilary and Duncan played at our wedding at Saint Anne's Church in Lowell, Massachusetts. I somehow feel that their playing of Bill Black's gift has eased Sandy's journey to the Land of Peace where she will have pain no more. She is watching over all of us. Thank you Bill, Hilary, and Duncan.

Copyright 2011, Bill Black – ASCAP

OLD TORN PETTICOAT

Reel



I believe it is important to feature master fiddle player Julia Clifford and her son Billy playing the first dance tune in this collection. It was the first reel that they recorded for me that night in Tralee over fifty years ago, when Julia invited me to record herself and Billy playing tunes she thought I might not have. When they played a tune I admitted to never having heard, she would ask me in surprise, 'You don't have it, do you?'

As I look back now, I realise that it was an act of musical generosity to a young musician, which perhaps contained within it the inspiration not only for this project, but also for how I, throughout my life as a musician and teacher, have been driven and encouraged to do my utmost in passing along to others this incredible and astonishing oral and aural tradition. For that I say, 'Thank you, Julia; thank you, Billy'. Little did you both realise fifty years ago when you made that tape for me how much influence your music would have on today's musicians and students alike.

THE PLANTING STICK

Jig



'The Planting Stick' is a variant of the venerable jig 'Bryan O'Lynn', a tune I first learned from my grandmother Elizabeth Collins (née Rochford). A number of versions of 'Bryan O'Lynn' are to be found in this collection. The tune appears in Patrick W. Joyce's collection *Ancient Irish Music* as 'The Planting Stick'. However, the first time I heard the version which Maeve Donnelly plays for us on this track was on a cassette tape recorded in New York in the 1950s, played by an unknown fiddle player. Paddy Canny from Tulla in County Clare was in the company in New York that same evening, and he played yet another version of 'Bryan O'Lynn'.

MAGPIE IN THE TREE

Jig



And now to confuse things even more or, as they say at home in Ireland, 'to throw more turf on the fire', my brother Martin Connolly here plays 'Magpie in the Tree', which is yet another version of the classic jig 'Bryan O'Lynn'. Martin, a great accordion player and the maker of the 'Kincora' accordion, told me that the County Kerry fiddle player Johnny Cronin played this jig for him over the phone. Johnny was in New York and Martin was in John's sister's house near Killarney.

JOHNNY'S 21ST BIRTHDAY

Jig

Tomás Ó Canainn



Dr. Tomás Ó Canainn wrote this tune and recorded it with his daughter Nuala to honour and celebrate the twenty-first birthday of their musical friend Johnny McCarthy. Their recording was named *Béal na Trá* and was issued in 1982 on the Outlet label. In keeping with Tomás' being a piper, the tune on this track is played on the pipes by my good friend from New York, Jerry O'Sullivan.

IS IT ANY GOOD, SÉAMUS?

Jig



Fiddle player, accordionist, and composer Eddie Kelly played this tune for me and asked, ‘Is it any good, Séamus?’ I recorded Eddie playing it in a session on the street at an All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil around 1990. The title somehow suggests that it is a composition of Eddie Kelly, but I’m not certain. I am honoured to have Manus McGuire associated with this collection, and here he gives us his interpretation of this grand jig.

FAREWELL TO WHISKEY

Polka

Adapted from a Niel Gow composition



Composed by the legendary Scottish fiddle player Niel Gow in 1799, this tune's title is apparently a reaction to the temporary prohibition of distillation in Scotland due to the failure of that year's barley crop. Played on this recording by master musician Monsignor Charles Coen, it first came to my attention when Ciarán Mac Mathúna, the well-known broadcaster on Radio Éireann, featured it on his *Ceolta Tíre* programme. He had recorded it from Paddy Neil, a concertina player from near Newport, County Tipperary. Paddy's version, in particular the second part, is different from what is usually played. Thanks to Monsignor Coen for learning and recording it for me, and to Nicky McAuliffe from County Kerry for the tune information.

JIMMY NEARY'S

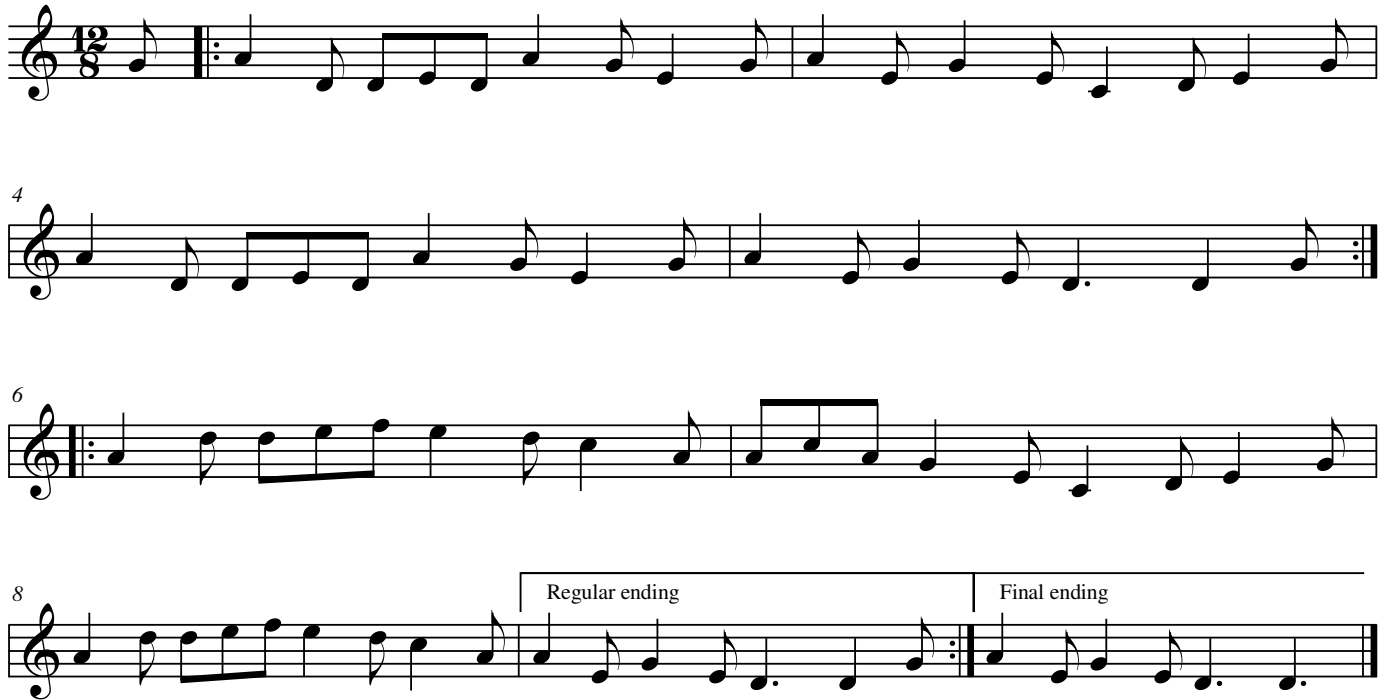
Jig



Jimmy Neary was a fiddle player from County Mayo who lived in Chicago. Johnny McGreevy, another fiddle player from Chicago and a hero of mine, gave me this tune in 1972 when I was on my first visit to that city, on the first ever Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann concert tour of North America. The tune is played here by my friends Jimmy Noonan from Cleveland, Ohio, who now lives in Boston, and Dan Gurney from New York State, two musicians who do much for traditional Irish music through their teaching and performing. Jimmy is on the faculty of the Boston College Irish Studies Program where he teaches flute and whistle. Dan, who plays the accordion, graduated from Harvard University with a degree in music.

MRS. RYAN'S

Slide



Ciarán Mac Mathúna from Radio Éireann recorded this tune from concertina player Mrs. Ryan from Ballinaclough, Nenagh, County Tipperary. Although this tune is played as a slide, the area around North Tipperary and Limerick is particularly well-known for its polka music. Monsignor Charles Coen lilted the tune using his mother's words to it on the first track, then plays the tune on the concertina on the following track.

*My poor father is minding sheep,
Me sisters and brothers are fast asleep,
I've been out in the hay all night,
Get up and let me in.*

HUMOURS OF CASTLELYONS

Jig



I am joined on this track by my friends Kathleen Lawrie from Birmingham, England, and Kevin McElroy from Freeport, Maine. Kevin played banjo and Kathleen played piano. I first heard this tune played by musicians from Ballinakill, County Galway on an old 78 RPM recording. (More on Kathleen on the tunes 'Kathleen Lawrie's' and 'The Fiddler Around the Faerie Tree'.)

GEARÓID Ó LAIDHIGH'S

Hornpipe

Gearóid Ó Laidhigh



Fiddle player Gearóid Ó Laidhigh and flute player John Darcy recorded this tune, a composition of Mr. Ó Laidhigh's, for Ciarán Mac Mathúna. Ciarán traveled throughout Ireland recording musicians and singers, and later presented them on his weekly radio programmes, *Ceolta Tire* and *A Job of Journeywork*. On this recording, the tune is played on fiddle by my dear friend, colleague, and musical collaborator Laurel Martin.

HUMOURS OF TOONAGH

Reel



This reel first came to my attention when it was played by a group of wonderful young musicians from Dublin. Their band, known as The Castle Céilí Band, made a big name for themselves in the 1960s and were much admired throughout Ireland for their rhythm, phrasing, and selection of tunes. James Keane and his brother Seán – the fiddle player with The Chieftains – were central to the success and popularity of the band, so who better than accordionist James Keane from Dublin and New York to play this tune for us?

CORNEY DREW'S

Hornpipe



This hornpipe as played on this recording comes to us courtesy of fiddle player Liz Knowles. The original sources for the tune, Denis Murphy and Charlie Mulvihill (fiddle and accordion, respectively), recorded it for Ciarán Mac Mathúna's *American Journeywork* programme in 1963. I gave this recording to Liz and she graciously played Denis's and Charlie's version for this project. A different version may be found in Captain Francis O'Neill's *1001 Gems* collection of music.

GRANNY IN THE WOODS

Polka



Tom Morrison from Dunmore in County Galway recorded this polka in the early 1920s. Catherine McEvoy, originally from Birmingham, England, and now living in County Meath, delights us with her recording of this same tune: two great flute players at work with the same tune almost one hundred years apart.

MARTIN WOODS' REEL

Reel



A fine fiddle player from County Clare was Martin Woods. I had the honour of playing with him often in the early 1960s. Both of us were members of a céilí band known as The Lough Derg. That was so long ago! Martin Woods had fine old tunes which he loved playing for me.

Johnny McCarthy, the accordion player and great hurler from County Clare, recorded this tune on his CD *Solo Run*. Thanks, Johnny, for all those solo runs on the playing pitch and for your mighty accordion music. Thanks also to Laura Byrne, flutist; Donna Long, pianist; and Billy McComiskey on accordion for their excellent rendition of this reel.

SHORES OF MY NATIVE LAND

Song



Rita Gallagher from County Donegal recorded this song for me in her own inimitable style over twenty years ago at an All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil. I have loved the song and Rita's masterful interpretation of it.

*When I left Ireland long ago, my age it was scarce eighteen
And many's a time I often thought, that I'd go back again
But the years rolled on and I grew old, now feeble is my frame
And I'm dying in Amerikay, far, far from my native land.*

*When I told my parents I should go, 'twould break your heart to see
They looked at one another, and then they both looked at me
Saying 'son we've reared you from a child, and 'tis now you are a man
Don't leave us here in grief and woe, and sail from your native land'.*

*I think I see that little cot I was born in long ago
I see her standing on the spot, where she kissed me leaving the shore
I long for things I never had, like my mother's dying prayer
And I long to see her face once more, not the green grass o'er her grave.*

*My father died and mother too, when I was far from home
I often thought I heard them say, 'our boy we'll ne'er see more'
They both lie mouldering in the clay, and I know what they want
For there's room for me between them both, on the shores of my native land.*

LIAM ROWSOME'S

Jig

Liam Rowsome



The name Rowsome is ubiquitous in the world of Irish music. Down through the years I have had the honour of playing music with the piping master Leo Rowsome and with his children, Leon, Liam, and Helena. Fiddle player Liam Rowsome composed this tune in the key of A major. It is recorded here by fiddle player Brendan Bulger, All-Ireland fiddle champion from Boston. Brendan chose to play it in a different key. He told me he had fun doing so. Well done, Brendan.

COME TO THE FAIR

Waltz

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket labeled '1.' and '3.'. The second staff is marked with a '10' at the beginning. The third staff is marked with an '18'. The fourth staff is marked with a '26'. The fifth staff is marked with a '34'. The sixth staff is marked with a '42'. The music is a waltz, characterized by its 3/4 time signature and the 'Waltz' label.

‘Come to the Fair’ was a very popular waltz/song played by The Kilfenora Céilí Band in the 1960s. I have always enjoyed listening to the band’s singer Mary Higgins performing the song on a recording made at a céilí in Ennis in 1960. The recording of all of the tunes and songs played on that night was given to me to learn when I was invited to join The Kilfenora and embark on my first ‘big’ tour of England. What a thrill and an honour for me! The tune is performed here on this track by Tara Lynch (daughter of Jerry Lynch, the accordionist with the band in the 1950s) and myself. The track was enhanced by the musicianship of Gabriel Donohue on piano and keyboards.

THE LYNCHES AND WARDS OF CLOGHER

Hornpipe

Tommy Peoples

5

10

14

19

23

28

32

Throughout its illustrious career, the celebrated Kilfenora Céilí Band from north County Clare has had various band members with the surnames Lynch and Ward, including P.J. Lynch, Tom Ward, and Jimmy Ward. This composition by the extraordinary Tommy Peoples – who was himself a member of that great band – gives well-deserved honour to the Lynch and Ward families for their great contributions to Irish music.

Copyright Tommy Peoples

MCGREEVY'S TANSEY'S

Reel



Johnny McGreevy from Chicago played this reel for me in 1972. I have given it this title because it reminds me of 'Tansey's Reel', a tune recorded by the Sligo fiddle player Paddy Killoran. My good friends Jimmy Noonan and Dan Gurney recorded this version at my home in Maine. Thanks, lads. Well done: great swing!

THE FLOWERY HILLS OF SCOTLAND

Reel



According to Nicky McAuliffe, Michael Coleman and James 'Lad' O'Beirne, master fiddle players from County Sligo, recorded this reel on a 78 RPM recording machine in Mr. O'Beirne's home on November 5, 1941. I have not had the opportunity to hear that old recording, but Brendan Bulger's playing on this track reminds me of the lilt and swing of yet another County Sligo man's music, that of flute player Eugene Preston, from whom I learned the tune.

JACK COUGHLIN'S

Reel



I met Jack Coughlin only once, sometime in the early '60s. Jack was a lovely flute player in the lyrical and flowing style associated with East County Galway. He was living in London when I was introduced to him by my lifelong friend, master musician Joe Burke. Joe also gave me this reel and told me that it was a favourite of Jack Coughlin's. My nephew Damien Connolly plays the tune on this track on his two row button accordion. It is interesting to note that he begins the tune on what might at first seem to the listener to be its second part, or as we say in Ireland 'the turn of the tune'. When one listens to the wonderful double CD recording of master musician Eddie Moloney, a neighbour of Jack Coughlin's, one hears Eddie play on flute this same reel with the parts reversed. One could ask the question then, which is the first part of the tune, and which is the second part? My answer would be that, delightfully, the parts work beautifully when played either way.

Incidentally, Sean Moloney, in his notes on the CD recording of his father's music, tells us that Eddie learned many tunes, including the one featured here, from Tommy Whelan. A flute player, Tommy was a member of the Ballinakill Traditional Players and a composer of many fine tunes. In all probability then, these masters from the past, Jack Coughlin, Eddie Moloney, and Tommy Whelan, played this tune often. This amazing flute tradition from in and around Ballinakill, County Galway made its way across the Atlantic Ocean, brought to America by two other masters from East Galway, Mike Rafferty and Jack Coen. Both these gentlemen were awarded National Heritage Fellowships for their contributions to the living arts and culture of the United States. What an amazing life's journey in the name of music. Enjoy the tune and decide for yourself which part you would prefer to begin the tune on!

JIMMY NEARY'S POLKA

Polka



Another tune from the repertoire of fiddle master Johnny McGreevy. It is played on this recording by the talented flute player Shannon Heaton, who at one time lived in Chicago but now resides in Boston. Thanks, Shannon, for taking the time to travel up to Maine to record for this project. Lovely playing.

A VISIT TO CHICAGO

Reel



Johnny McGreevy had an amazing repertoire of Irish music. He kept so many tunes circulating in his native city, and he was always generous in passing them along. The prolific composer, fiddle player, and pianist Josephine Keegan graciously recorded this tune for the collection, and I was delighted when she also included it on her 2011 recording, *A Few Tunes, Now and Then*, where she named it in Johnny's honour.

THE SILVER SLIPPER

Hornpipe



Dan Sullivan's Shamrock Band from Boston recorded this tune in 1929 on a 78 RPM record. I came to befriend the band's banjo player, Neil Nolan, back in the '70s, and we had many good times playing music. Neil played his instrument left-handed and was a very confident musician, as can be heard on some of the band's recordings. Uilleann piper Jerry O'Sullivan recorded the hornpipe for this collection.

TART AR AN ÓL

Jig

5

9

13

17

21

25

29

Regular ending

Final ending

A version of this tune can be found in *The Roche Collection*, but I first heard it played by Eddie Moloney from Ballinakill, County Galway. Eddie, Tommy Mulhaire, and his son Brendan were among those who travelled on a number of occasions in the 1960s with Mulhaire's Céilí Band to perform in different towns around County Kerry. These performances were part of a series of concerts and music weekends organised by Diarmuid Ó Catháin, who was later to become president of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. I was thrilled when Joanie Madden, daughter of yet another Galway musician, Joe Madden, recorded the tune for me. Thanks, Joanie – keep up the great work that you and Cherish the Ladies do. We cherish you! Sláinte to you all!

JENNY DANG THE WEAVER

Reel

5

9

13

Regular ending

3

17

Final ending

3

This tune is also known as 'Tom Fitzgerald's'. A version may also be found in O'Neill's *Waifs and Strays of Gaelic Melody*. Thanks to Johnny McGreevy, who introduced this tune to me, and thanks to one of America's wonderful young musicians, Tina Lech, for playing it for this project.

MRS. GALVIN'S BARNDANCE

Barndance

6 *Fine*

10

15

19

23

27

31 *D.C. al Fine*

The fiddle playing of Mrs. Ellen Galvin, who was born in the 1880s, certainly did sound as though it were from an earlier time in history. I remember seeing her perform in a concert in West Clare in the late 1950s. I was enthralled with her music then, and I still am. The tune transcribed here was recorded and collected from Mrs. Galvin, and a copy of the tape was passed along to me by accordion master Tony MacMahon. Thanks, Tony! My friends Barbara MacDonald Magone and Kevin McElroy helped out on the recording you are about to hear.

We shall hear Barbara play some of her own compositions ('Ashcraft-Fraser House', 'The Reel Bus', and 'A Riverview Cabin') as we venture through this collection.



THE WHISTLER AND HIS DOG

Reel



Rose Murphy, a sister of accordionist Peter 'P.J.' Conlon, recorded this reel for fiddle player Paddy Ryan from County Roscommon. Kevin Burke, my good friend and wonderful fiddle player, plays the tune on this recording with his lovely swing and lift. Thank you, Kevin.

DAN SULLIVAN'S

Jig



Another tune recorded by Dan Sullivan and his band, it is played on this recording by Billy McComiskey (accordion), Laura Byrne (flute), and Donna Long (piano). Their relaxed style brings out the beauty of the melody.

THE WEE FOLK

Hornpipe



David Curry was born in 1899 in Belfast, where he worked as a conductor, arranger, and broadcaster. He also played violin. I have always enjoyed listening to his music, which included his own arrangements of traditional melodies. I recorded some of these tunes from the radio when I was young, which allowed me an opportunity to learn them. One such tune is the hornpipe featured here, played and arranged in a two-part version for piano by the inimitable Barbara MacDonald Magone. By presenting tunes associated with Mr. Curry, I pay my sincere homage to him in the hope that his name and musical works are never forgotten.

A POLKA FOR MATT

Polka

Séamus Connolly

5

9

13

18

22

27

Final ending

Matt Cranitch, the well-known fiddle player and scholar from County Cork, came to visit Sandy and me in Maine a few years ago. Matt loves to play polkas, so I composed this three-part tune for him. I play it here with my friends Kevin McElroy on bodhrán, Barbara MacDonald Magone on the piano and, on the fiddle, Meghan Mette, who at the time of recording was a young and enthusiastic sixteen-year-old.

Copyright Séamus Connolly

MCELLIGOTT'S

Hornpipe



Boston accordionist Billy Caples played this tune for me in the late 1970s. Billy was a well-known musician who played in the dance halls around Boston. When not performing, Billy spent his time teaching music. The tune is played on this recording by my nephew Damien Connolly, who now lives in Connecticut.

THE MOUNTAIN PATHWAY

Polka

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, key of D major (one sharp), and 2/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1 through 4. The second staff, starting with a measure number '5', contains measures 5 through 8. The third staff, starting with a measure number '9', contains measures 9 through 12. The fourth staff, starting with a measure number '13', contains measures 13 through 16 and includes a bracketed section labeled 'Regular ending' at the end. The fifth staff, starting with a measure number '17', contains measures 17 through 19 and includes a bracketed section labeled 'Final ending' at the end.

Kevin McElroy, Barbara MacDonald Magone, and I came together to record this tune, which we learned from the cassette tape of fiddle player Mrs. Ellen Galvin that was given to me by Tony MacMahon. A version of this tune was recorded by the great Sligo fiddle master, James Morrison.

2

PLAYLIST TWO

GENTLE MOTHER

Song

The musical score for 'Gentle Mother' is written in G major (one sharp) and 3/8 time. It consists of eight staves of music, each containing four measures. The melody is simple and folk-like, featuring a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing beamed eighth notes. The score is marked with measure numbers 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, and 29 at the beginning of each staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/8. The melody is written on a single treble clef staff.

During those trips Mulhaire's Céilí Band made to Lixnaw and other towns in County Kerry in the 1960s (see 'Tart ar an Ól'), ballad singer Josephine McNamara was another artist who made the long journey – in her case from County Leitrim – to perform in Diarmuid Ó Cathain's concert series. She was always a special favourite at these events. Coming as she does from the musical McNamara family it is no surprise that she was All-Ireland champion singer for a number of consecutive years. Josephine left Ireland in the 1960s, and I was delighted to meet her in New Haven, Connecticut, thirty years later. She sang this song for me for this collection, a song we both first heard many years ago on an old 78 RPM record.

Gentle Mother

*By the side of a clear crystal fountain,
There is a lonely churchyard closely by.
There's a tombstone covered over with primroses
In remembrance of the one who said goodbye.*

*Shall I e'er see you more gentle mother
In the field where the wild flowers grow?
How I'm sorry for a loss I can't recover
'Neath yon willow lies a gentle mother low.*

*I remember in the days of my childhood
As I toddled by my dear old mother's side,
I plucked flowers as they grew up in the wildwoods
When all cares and all troubles I defied.*

*Shall I e'er see you more gentle mother
In the field where the wild flowers grow?
How I'm sorry for a loss I can't recover
'Neath yon willow lies a gentle mother low.*

*Some children love their mother with affection
While some children break their mother's heart with pain.
But some day or other they'll be sorry
For crying will not bring her back again.*

*Shall I e'er see you more gentle mother
In the field where the wild flowers grow?
How I'm sorry for a loss I can't recover
'Neath yon willow lies a gentle mother low.*

TOM TURKINGTON'S IN C MAJOR

Reel



I met Tom Turkington, a fiddle player from Cookstown, County Tyrone, only once. It was at the beginning of the 1960s at a County Clare Fleadh Cheoil, when he performed at a celebrity concert with his son David on the piano. Musicians love talking about and trying one another's instruments, and on that occasion Tom played a number of tunes – none of which I knew at the time – on my fiddle. This experience reinforced a fascination I have always had with regional styles of music.

Knowing the close connection the music of Northern Ireland has with Scottish music and the music of Cape Breton Island, I asked Kimberley Fraser, the great young fiddle player from Cape Breton, to give her interpretation of this and some of the other tunes that Tom Turkington played that night. Kimberley's remarkable blending of her own Cape Breton style with a Northern Ireland fiddle style on these recordings produces powerful, driving, and rhythmic music much in the spirit of the way Tom Turkington himself played. Thanks, Kimberley, for your splendid fiddle playing.

BOBBIE LAWRIE'S

Jig

Bobbie Lawrie



Roberta (Bobbie) Lawrie comes from the musical Lawrie family from Birmingham, England. On one occasion when I was visiting her home, Bobbie recorded some of her compositions for me. At that time, nobody in her household knew that she was composing tunes on her whistle. I'm glad that I had the opportunity to capture some of these tunes on tape. Catherine McEvoy was delighted to learn and play this tune for this collection. As mentioned elsewhere, Catherine also grew up in Birmingham.

Copyright Bobbie Lawrie

KATHLEEN LAWRIE'S

Reel



Kathleen Lawrie, Bobbie's sister, recorded this reel for me when she visited me in Limerick in the early '70s. When Kathleen and her husband, Tommy Boyle, visited Sandy and me in Maine just a few years ago, I played the tune for her on the fiddle and asked her if she had any idea where it came from. To my surprise, she told me that she had never heard it before, so to remind her I played that old tape back to her.

We all had a big laugh when Kathleen discovered herself playing the reel on her accordion! That was my way of reminding her that she did indeed know the tune. I was thrilled to have Kathleen perform it with me for this collection even though she had not played the piano for thirty-five years. She practiced for two days on a piano we borrowed from Kevin McElroy and his wife, Kate Butler, in order to give us this performance. I was delighted to have a chance to play with her and I am happy to say that she has returned to the music and once again plays her beloved piano.

MAGHERAFELT MAY FAIR

March



The Pride of Erin Céilí Band, led by All-Ireland fiddle champion Sean Nugent, was held in high esteem throughout Ireland. Sean, from Lack in County Fermanagh, was a vibrant, energetic, and fun-loving man who adored the music. On a recording issued by Outlet Records in 1977, he and the band played this great march. The lyrics of this song, sung by Sean's daughter Rosemary in her County Fermanagh accent, give us a clear picture of the Magherafelt May Fair:

'I am a nice wee bouncing girl,
And my age it is scarce sixteen,
And when I'm dressed all in my best
Sure I look like any queen...

On the first of May I will make my way,
To the Magherafelt May Fair...

My mother cautioned me going out
Do not stay long in town
For if you do, your father and I,
On you we will surely frown.
Be sure to shun bad company
And of young men beware,
How nice you be, don't make too free
At the Magherafelt May Fair!'

Listening to those All-Ireland champion band members play along with Rosemary's singing, one can sense the exuberance and pride that they felt playing their music. For this collection, the march is played by Sean Nugent's son Larry on the flute, accompanied by Pat Broaders on the bouzouki.

THE FIDDLER AROUND THE FAERIE TREE

Set Dance



On the aforementioned occasion some forty years ago, Kathleen Lawrie played 'The Fiddler Around the Faerie Tree' for me as a set dance. Kathleen had learned the tune from dancing master Brendan de Glin from Derry. A shorter version of this tune may be found in O'Neill's collection *The Dance Music of Ireland, 1001 Gems* as a hornpipe called 'The Mullingar Races'. I am delighted that Kathleen agreed to record it again for this collection.

LARRY REDICAN'S IN F MAJOR

Reel

Likely by Larry Redican



I am delighted to feature the fiddle playing of composer Larry Redican, who lived in New York City. This music comes to us from a recording he made for his friend Roger Casey, an Irish dancer from New York. Both of these gentlemen would get together and Larry would play his fiddle as Roger danced and practiced his steps. Roger is now an Irish dance adjudicator, and during the years that I played for the feiseanna, Roger kindly gave me the recordings that he had of Larry Redican. It seems likely that Larry composed this tune, as I have never heard anybody else play it.

KEITH CORRIGAN'S

Waltz

1

7

13

21

29

Regular ending

Final ending

I learned this tune from accordionist Keith Corrigan. Keith had a wonderful repertoire of fine old Irish and Québécois tunes. On one memorable visit to his home in Valcartier, north of Québec City ('God's Country', as he called it), we played music long into the night and on that occasion Keith played this waltz for me. I recently found my recording of it on a microcassette and asked Damien Connolly to learn and record it for this collection. Thanks, Damien.

JIMMY HOGAN'S (NUMBER ONE)

Single Jig

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket. The second staff starts at measure 5 and includes a first and second ending bracket. The third staff starts at measure 10. The fourth staff starts at measure 14 and includes a first and second ending bracket. The fifth staff starts at measure 19 and is labeled 'Final ending' with a bracket. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing beamed sixteenth notes.

Jimmy Hogan from Liscannor in County Clare loved to play his whistle and batter out the County Clare set dances on the floor. Jimmy was an icon in Boston and he was loved by everyone who met him. This tune from north County Clare was one of his favourites. It is recorded here for us by Josephine Keegan from County Armagh.

OLD WHEELS OF THE WORLD

(LARRY REDICAN'S VERSION)

Reel

6

10

14

18

Regular ending

Final ending

'The Wheels of the World' is known to musicians as the title of both a reel and a jig. The two tunes are not related musically, and both are unrelated to the tune presented here. I learned 'The Old Wheels of the World' from pianist Eleanor Kane Neary when I visited Chicago in 1972. It is played on this track by fiddle player Larry Redican, slightly differently from the way I heard Eleanor playing it.

JOHN EGAN'S

Reel

James Murray



John Egan from County Sligo lived in Dublin, and he had a distinctive West of Ireland style of playing the flute. He and his musical colleagues formed a music club in that city, made up mostly of fiddle and flute players. John Egan's repertoire was much admired and he was most generous in passing these tunes to some of the younger musicians who played alongside him.

The reel played on this recording is named for him. It is played by flutist Kevin Crawford. Kevin had spent a few hours recording tunes for me in the home of my brother Martin and his wife Pauline in Ennis, County Clare. The tea was made, and we all sat down to listen to the recordings Kevin had just completed. Somehow, unfortunately, the digital recorder had been unplugged before the tracks could be saved (the electric kettle of course had needed to be plugged in and the water boiled!) with the sad result that every tune that Kevin had recorded was erased. I was so upset at the time, but the wonderful person that Kevin is just said, 'What harm, we'll do them again', and he did! Thanks, Kevin, for being so gracious and understanding.

P.S. It has come to our attention that the composer of this reel is Sligo flute player James Murray.

Copyright James Murray

THE VICTOR'S RETURN

Jig



I recorded this tune with another nephew, Karl Connolly, playing piano, on the same day as Kevin Crawford's unfortunate experience. I first heard the tune in the 1950s played by the Tulla Céilí Band from County Clare. A version of this tune with the above title may be found in *O'Neill's 1001* collection. At the very least, it is a close relative!

ANY AULD THING AT ALL

Jig

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket. The second staff starts at measure 5 and includes a first ending bracket. The third staff starts at measure 10. The fourth staff starts at measure 14 and includes a first ending bracket. The fifth staff starts at measure 18 and includes a second ending bracket labeled 'Final Ending'.

My brother Martin learned this version of 'The Victor's Return' from fiddle player Johnny Cronin from County Kerry. When Martin asked Johnny for the tune's title, Johnny told Martin to call it 'any auld thing at all'! Martin was reluctant to play the tune for me as he had not played for many months. He felt that he might not be able to get through it. When he did agree and got going he was loving the tune so much I couldn't get him to stop. I hope you never stop playing, Martin!

JOHN DOHERTY'S

Highland



I loved the times that I visited with John Doherty, the fiddle master from County Donegal. Playing music with him was an inspiration. Hearing his stories and listening to him play made me ask myself why I even bothered to play the fiddle. Mr. Doherty was so encouraging and generous with his music, and I treasure the tapes that he made for me. The highland played here by Paddy Glackin was recorded by piper and producer Peter Browne from Raidió Teilifís Éireann during a visit that Sandy and I made to the Dublin studios. Thanks, boys. John Doherty would be proud of your rendition.

THE SCOLDING WIFE

Reel



The royal welcome Sandy and I received when we visited the home of Geraldine Cotter outside Ennis, with the turf fire burning, really made us picture ourselves one day moving back to Ireland. As we set up our recording equipment, we happened to record (as they say in Ireland, 'accidentally on purpose') Geraldine's playing of what she called 'The Clare Reel'. As it is printed in the *O'Neill's 1001* collection, this tune is named 'The Scolding Wife'. I was delighted to hear it again. It was in 1974 that I first heard it played by Tipperary accordionist Paddy O'Brien. Paddy and I had considered recording it for our *The Banks of the Shannon* record that we made back then.

TOM TURKINGTON'S IN A MAJOR

Hornpipe



Here is another tune from the playing of Tom Turkington of County Tyrone. I searched for its name, and I asked a number of reliable sources for a title, but I have come up empty-handed. So, what better name than 'Tom Turkington's in A Major'? Tom's playing that night, many years ago, has kept the tune alive, as does Kimberley Fraser's playing here, on fiddle and piano. Thanks, Tom and Kimberley.

THE HAIRPIN BEND

Single Jig

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 6/8 time signature. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket. The second staff starts at measure 5 and includes a first and second ending bracket. The third staff starts at measure 10. The fourth staff starts at measure 14 and includes a first and second ending bracket. The fifth staff starts at measure 19 and is labeled 'Final ending' with a bracket. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

This tune is named for a winding part of the road leading into Lisdoonvarna, County Clare. Try pedalling a bicycle up or down those hills! This single jig was very popular with The Kilfenora Céilí Band during my tenure with them. It is performed on this track by Geraldine Cotter on the whistle. Thanks for the memories, Geraldine. As they say in County Clare, 'keep the fire down, and keep pedalling'.

BRIDIE'S JOY

Reel



Peadar O'Loughlin's name seems to be eternally present in the world of Irish music. His music brought much joy to the Connolly household when I was growing up in County Clare. It was such a heartwarming pleasure to have him visit the home of Geraldine Cotter the afternoon that he and Geraldine recorded 'Bridie's Joy' for Sandy and me. Years earlier, on an LP record issued by Ceirníní Cladaigh, he and piper Ronan Browne played this same reel. A great tune that's worth hearing again.

MAURICE O'KEEFFE'S

Slide



I will be forever grateful to Máire O'Keeffe, the County Kerry-style fiddle player, for her enthusiastic response when I told her about the project I was about to undertake. Máire's reaction was loud and clear: she said to me, 'Come on over here to Kinvara in County Galway and I will give you some tunes!' I could ask for no more encouraging invitation. Sandy and I arrived late in the night, having had to phone Máire and her husband Pat for help when we got a puncture in one of our tires a few miles away from their home. Pat came to the rescue and brought us back to their house where we were made most welcome. After a delicious dinner and all that goes along with it, the music started, and the first tune we recorded was this slide. Máire learned it from Toimín O'Connor, an old fiddle player from the mountains in Kerry.

NED AND DAN O'CONNOR

Slide

5

9

13

Regular ending

17

Final Ending

Another tune from the playing of Máire O'Keeffe. Ned and Dan O'Connor, two musicians from the Scartaglen area of Sliabh Luachra, were often heard playing this slide.

LARRY LYNCH'S

Hornpipe



This next tune comes from the playing of another fiddle player from County Kerry, the great master Paddy Cronin. When Paddy lived in Boston he always had his fiddle on the dining room table next to one of O'Neill's collections of music. Most every time that he walked past the table he would play a tune or look through 'the bible', as he called it, for new tunes to play.

This tune can be found as 'Larry Lynch's' in *O'Neill's Music of Ireland* and 'Lincoln's' in *Ryan's Mammoth Collection*. The wonderful fiddle duet here by Liz and Yvonne Kane would very much please the ear of Paddy Cronin, and would most certainly bring a smile to his face.

THE FLEADH DOWN IN ENNIS

Song

Robbie McMahon



In 1956, Robbie McMahon from Spancilhill in County Clare composed this song about the All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil held in Ennis that year. When it is sung today, it is a wonderful piece of musical history, as it is also a litany of the names of musicians who are no longer with us. It was these people, during a time when it was not popular to play Irish music, who kept the music alive for all of us to enjoy today. Listen and see how many names you can recognise. They are enshrined for all time in this song, as is the memory of Robbie McMahon himself.

The Fleadh down in Ennis

*Will you sit back a while til I sing you a song
'Tis not very short or its not very long.
It's about the Fleadh Cheoil down in Ennis you see
So to me will you pay your attention?*

*I'm not a great singer but I know there are worse
I cannot help trying to sing you a verse,
Or to let you all know how the Fleadh Cheoil got on
And for you now who couldn't attend it.*

*They came from the North and they came from the East
From the West and the south 'twas a thriller to see
With fiddles and bagpipes and piccolos too,
And drumsticks to keep them in order.*

*They came down from Dublin so hearty and gay
They brought Leo Rowsome to show them the way
Himself and Seán Seery they played all the way
With their flute player Vincent O'Broderick.
Scithereee-idle dum dithery-dum dithery-di-dee.*

*They came down from Cavan so far, far away
I'm sure they were travelling for most of the day
With singers and players, the best I can say
To compete at the Fleadh down in Ennis.*

*Their players were good and their singers were keen
But Margaret O'Reilly was the best of the team
And big Doctor Galligan he worn the báinín
Just to swank at the Fleadh down in Ennis.*

*From the Kingdom of Kerry they all made their way
And brave Denis Murphy he started to play
The auld 'Flogging Reel' and the black 'Cup of Tea'
Sure you'll feel ten times younger right after.*

*From Limerick's fair city they came by the score
And Johnny McMahon he played an encore
And the bold Andy Keane sure he played us much more
And to finish he played 'Colonel Fraser'.*

*From Wicklow and Carlow they all fell in line
And up from Portarlinton came Johnny Ryan
He resined his bow and he watched every line
For he won the first prize on the violin.*

*From Galway they came every man and his wife
With Eddie Moloney who played on the fife
And young Kieran Collins would make the dead rise
When he played us 'The Lark in the Morning'.*

*There was music and song from all over Clare
The Macs of Crusheen and sure all the Mulkeres
The Mike Preston Trio and Martin Mulhaire
Not forgetting the Mister Joe Leary.*

*Mrs. Crotty she came all the way from Kilrush
She took a high note for 'The Bird in the Bush'
She played all the day and she never did blush
'Twas good girl yourself, Mrs. Crotty.*

*Now Peter O'Loughlin from Connolly came
He brought Paddy Murphy sure 'twas all in the game
They played a duet and they made a big name
For they won at the Fleadh down in Ennis.*

*And down from Belharbour Chris Droney he came
He played on a matchbox I thought 'twas that same
Til someone said, 'Robbie, what's that you are saying?'
Isn't that his own small concertina?*

*They came down from Quilty to sing and to play
With big Martin Talty from Miltown Malbay
And the bold Willie Clancy he gave a display
Sure we know he's The King of the Pipers.*

*And someone said then, 'who's that man over there?
Isn't that Jimmy Ward from the north side of Clare?'
He plays on the banjo with music to spare
For he plays with the great 'Kilfenora'.*

*Our own Paddy Canny he took o'er the fair
He played through the streets and right up to the square
Said Daniel O'Connell my life I knew there
And I think you're the best of them all sure.*

*And o'er from America more of them flew
And Paddy O'Brien he was one of the few
He played on the accordion you'd swear there were two
He got so many notes in together.*

*Now Ciarán MacMahon was busy, bedad,
Recording them all sure, the good and the bad,
But for him our music was gone to the bad
So 'tis welcome Ciarán Mac Mathúna.*

*'Tis all over now but was something to see
So thanks to Seán Reid and the great Committee
So I wish you good health now and good luck from me
Until we all meet in Dungarvan!
Scithereee-idle dum dithery-dum dithery-di-dee.*

MINNIE'S FAVOURITE

Reel

Sean Nugent



Here, we hear one of Sean Nugent's many fine compositions, played by his son, Larry. Sean named it for his sister, Minnie.

Copyright Sean Nugent

A LONGING FOR PEACE

Air

Sean Nugent



Another of Sean Nugent's compositions is the slow air appropriately titled 'A Longing for Peace'. How happy Sean would be were he with us today, to know that the struggle is almost over and we now have peace again in 'Dear Old Ireland'. The tune is beautifully played with emotion by Larry Nugent, Sean's son. It can also be heard on Larry's fine recording *Traditional Irish Music on Flute and Tinwhistle*, on the Shanachie label.

Copyright Sean Nugent

FREDDY KIMMEL'S

Hornpipe

6

11

15

20

24

29

Final ending

As the howling winds from the Atlantic Ocean blew into Kinvara Harbour, Máire O'Keeffe continued to play her fiddle into the night without interruption (see 'Maurice O'Keeffe's'). The tune that she plays here was learned from the playing of Julia Clifford and her husband John.

VARNEY HOUSE

Reel



The unique musical heritage of County Kerry has had a profound impact on the survival of traditional music. Paddy Cronin from Sliabh Luachra gave the above title to a reel more commonly known as 'Miss Johnson's'. It is played here by uilleann piper Jerry O'Sullivan of New York.

THIRTEEN ARCHES

Reel

Séamus Connolly

3

6

10

14

18

22

26

30

A thirteen-arched bridge spans the majestic River Shannon as it flows through my hometown of Killaloe, County Clare. On the opposite side of the bridge is Ballina, County Tipperary. As a child I had fun saying, 'I can stand in Killaloe and Ballina at the same time'. I composed this tune in remembrance of my father, Michael 'Mick' Connolly, who, when working as the skipper of a tugboat named the St. Patrick, piloted it underneath the largest of the arches. The young fiddle player Kelsey Lutz, from Ann Arbor, Michigan, was sixteen years old when she recorded the tune for this project. Irish music will forever remain vibrant when young people play our music as Kelsey does.

Copyright Séamus Connolly

THE FLEADH AT TULLA

Single Jig

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1 through 4. The second staff, starting at measure 5, includes a first ending bracket over measures 8 and 9, followed by a repeat sign and a second ending bracket over measures 10 and 11. The third staff, starting at measure 10, contains measures 10 through 13. The fourth staff, starting at measure 14, includes a first ending bracket over measures 17 and 18, followed by a repeat sign and a second ending bracket over measures 19 and 20. The fifth staff, starting at measure 19, is labeled 'Final ending' and contains measures 19 and 20, ending with a double bar line.

At a county Fleadh Cheoil in Tulla, County Clare, in the late 1950s, I recorded fiddle player Paddy Canny and accordionist Mattie Ryan playing this tune in a duet competition. Here, Kevin Crawford joins me in playing this single jig.

MAUDE MILLER

Reel



Nicky McAuliffe is an expert on the history and names of Irish music, as well as being proficient on many instruments and a noted teacher. Nicky and his wife Ann, herself a teacher and champion on a number of instruments, recorded this version of 'Maude Miller' for me in their home in County Kerry. We first heard it played by master accordionist Joe Burke in the early 1960s.

GRÁINNE MURPHY'S

Jig

Gráinne Murphy



The first time that I saw Gráinne Murphy was when her mother and father, Joan and Dan, brought her to a music session in Watertown, Massachusetts. Gráinne did not have a fiddle with her then because she was just a little baby in a basket! One could see that day that Gráinne was excited and charmed by the music. Those of us there that afternoon somehow knew that she would become a musician of note, and that she did. She is a fine fiddle player who has recorded a solo CD which was given a number of excellent reviews, and she has been a member of the renowned group Cherish the Ladies. The tune on this track is performed by Gráinne herself and is one of her own compositions.

Copyright Gráinne Murphy

BRENDAN MCCANN'S

Hornpipe



Accordian player Brendan McCann lived near Hartford in the state of Connecticut. He had many fine tunes in his repertoire, including this hornpipe which he first heard in his hometown of Moate, County Westmeath, many years ago. I was thrilled when Brendan sent it to me on a cassette tape. It is played here by Damien, my nephew, who also lives in Connecticut.



AN MHAIGHDEAN MHARA

Song



All-Ireland champion harpist and singer Pádraigín Caesar attended Boston College as a Fulbright Scholar, and we became great friends. When Sandy and I lived in Groton, Massachusetts, 'Paudi', as we called her, visited us on a number of occasions, and traveled with us to Philadelphia and other places of note in the northeast region of the National Park Service. Despite her busy academic schedule at Boston College, she found time to study fiddle and whistle. I marveled at her enthusiasm and at the huge amount of time she put in to practicing her music at home during Boston's long, snowy winter season. So much dedication, so much talent. Pádraigín sings to her own harp accompaniment on this track. The English translation of the lyrics is provided by Dr. Philip O'Leary, Boston College.

An Mhaighdean Mhara

*Is cosúil gur mheath tú nó gur thréig tú an greann,
Tá sneachta go freasach fá bhéal na mbeann',
Do chúl buí daite 's do bhéilín sámh,
Siúd chugaibh Mary Chinidh 's í i ndiaidh an Éirne 'shnámh*

*A mháithrín dhílis, dúirt Máire Bhán,
Fá bhruach an chladaigh 's fá bhéal na trá
'Mhaighdean Mhara, mo mhaithrín ard,
Siúd chugaibh Mary Chinidh 's í i ndiaidh an Éirne 'shnámh*

*Tá mise tuirseach agus beidh gach lá
Mo Mháire bhroinngeal 's mo Phádraig bán
Ar bharr na dtonnta 's fá bhéal na trá
Siúd chugaibh Mary Chinidh 's í i ndiaidh an Éirne 'shnámh*

Translation from the Irish by Dr. Philip O'Leary, Boston College

The Mermaid

*It's likely you have languished and given up fun,
Snow is abundant on the mountain peaks,
Your yellow-coloured hair and your lovely little mouth,
There coming towards you is Mary Chinidh and she after swimming Lough Erne.*

*O my own dear mother, said fair-haired Máire,
Around the edge of the shore and around the mouth of the strand,
O mermaid, my tall dear mother,
There coming towards you is Mary Chinidh and she after swimming Lough Erne.*

*I am tired and will be every day
My white-breasted Máire and my fair-haired Pádraig
On top of the waves and around the mouth of the strand
There coming towards you is Mary Chinidh and she after swimming Lough Erne.*

BALLYKINLER REEL

Reel

Larry Redican



Here, Larry Redican introduces and then plays a reel he composed to memorialise his friend, the Dublin fiddle player Frank O'Higgins. Ballykinler, in County Down in the North of Ireland, was an army base used as an internment camp during the War of Independence in 1919.

Copyright Larry Redican

THE CLARE GLENS

Polka



If ever you get a chance to visit the Clare Glens you will not be disappointed. They are a beautiful wooded area, very picturesque, with walkways on both sides of the Clare River. The Glens are very close to Newport, County Tipperary, and are only seven or eight miles from where I grew up. There are a number of swimming areas and a waterfall. Standing under the falls with the cold mountain water flowing over you is most invigorating.

Not having a name for this polka, I thought, why not call it 'The Clare Glens'? I was honoured to get the opportunity to play it on my fiddle with Monsignor Charlie Coen on concertina. The tune originally came to us from another recording that Ciarán Mac Mathúna made of concertina player Paddy Neil from around that same area of Newport, County Tipperary, a place well-known for its polkas.

2

PLAYLIST THREE

JACKSON'S

Reel



Nicky McAuliffe gave me the name for this tune. It may be attributed to the eighteenth-century piper Walker 'Piper' Jackson from County Limerick. This is another of the tunes played for me fifty years ago in Tralee, County Kerry, by Julia Clifford and her son Billy Clifford (see 'Old Torn Petticoat').

THE STRANGER

Set Dance

6

10

15

19

23

Mrs. Crotty from the town of Kilrush in County Clare played this set dance for Ciarán Mac Mathúna's radio programmes, *Ceolta Tire* and *A Job of Journeywork*. I had the honour of playing it with Mrs. Crotty in her home many years ago. As I look back on those years, now long gone, and think how privileged I was to have played music with some of the giants in Irish music, I realise that my world would not have been the same had I not met those people. I can say the same for Father Charlie Coen! Now listen as the Monsignor plays 'The Stranger'.

JOHN RYAN'S (NUMBER TWO)

Polka



Concertina player John Ryan lived on Thomas Street in Dublin, just opposite the old Pipers' Club. One can only imagine the music echoing up and down the streets of that part of the city! Ciarán Mac Mathúna visited John Ryan's home and recorded this polka, one of many tunes that he brought with him from his native County Tipperary. It is played here on melodeon by my nephew Damien.

THE MAN FROM CLARE

Jig

Damien Connolly



This tune, played by Damien Connolly on fiddle this time, is one of his own compositions. I'm not sure who the title refers to, but since he was born in County Clare, maybe it's himself!

THE ROLLING HILLS OF CLARE

Reel

Damien Connolly

The musical score is written for a fiddle in treble clef, key of D major (one sharp), and common time (C). It consists of five staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1 through 4. The second staff, starting with a measure number '5' above the first measure, contains measures 5 through 8. The third staff, starting with a measure number '9' above the first measure, contains measures 9 through 12 and includes a triplet of eighth notes in the final measure. The fourth staff, starting with a measure number '13' above the first measure, contains measures 13 through 16 and includes a triplet of eighth notes in the final measure, which is labeled 'Regular ending' with a bracket above it. The fifth staff, starting with a measure number '17' above the first measure, contains measures 17 through 19 and includes a triplet of eighth notes in the final measure, which is labeled 'Final ending' with a bracket above it. The score concludes with a double bar line at the end of the final measure.

The rolling hills and valleys in east County Clare, close to the river Shannon, are known for their beauty. This area is well-known too for its music. Here Damien once again plays the fiddle on another of his compositions. Yes, as I've said, I am very proud of him!

Copyright Damien Connolly

CRUCA GLÁS NA HÉIREANN

Waltz



The music lives and breathes in the soul of Tara Lynch. Tara, daughter of Jerry Lynch (accordionist in the 1950s with the celebrated three-time All-Ireland champion Kilfenora Céilí Band), was born in New York. She learned her music from her father, and her style is steeped in the tradition of the old Kilfenora Band. The tune she plays on this track was part of the repertoire of the band in the 1960s and '70s, of which I was so honoured to be a member. I am also honoured to have Tara playing it for us: an unbroken link.

MISS CATHY CHILCOTT'S

Reel

Liz Carroll



The amazing and distinctive fiddle music of Liz Carroll from Chicago is featured on this track. Here, she performs one of her own compositions in the creative playing style which is very much her hallmark. I am honoured that this great player so generously gave of herself and her composition for this collection. The tune named above was composed as a birthday present for Miss Chilcott. It also may be found in Liz's book, *Liz Carroll Collected: Original Irish Tunes*.

BROTHER GILDAS/BRYAN O'LYNN

Jig



The exciting recording on this track was made by RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta, featuring master musicians Tony MacMahon and Steve Cooney. The first jig is associated with the piping of Brother Gildas O'Shea. The second jig of the set, 'Bryan O'Lynn', is one of a number of closely related tunes, variants of which include 'The Planting Stick' and 'Magpie in the Tree', found elsewhere in this collection. The two tunes on this track were played together previously by Tommy Potts and Tommy Reck, and they make for a beautiful pairing. Although the first tune does not appear in sheet music form in this collection, both tunes may be found in *The Leo Rowsome Collection of Irish Music*. Thanks to Malachy Moran, manager of Audio Services and Archive at RTÉ Radio, for permission to use the recording for this project, and to Raidió na Gaeltachta. A special 'thank you' to Steve Cooney for his generous help in tracking down the original recording, and for the great guitar playing that complemented Tony's magical performance. Tony, thanks for the music and for bringing this track to my attention.

CLOONLISH HOUSE

Hornpipe

Eddie Kelly

The musical score for 'Cloonlish House' is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, featuring a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a common time signature (C). The piece consists of 20 measures. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth, sixteenth, and thirty-second notes, as well as rests. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' in measure 4. The score is divided into five systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 5. The second system, starting at measure 6, includes first and second endings. The third system, starting at measure 11, continues the melodic line. The fourth system, starting at measure 15, also includes first and second endings. The fifth system, starting at measure 20, is labeled 'Final Ending' and concludes the piece with a double bar line.

‘Cloonlish House’ was played for me years ago by its composer, Eddie Kelly. This hornpipe is played creatively and wonderfully here by Liz Carroll. Liz’s masterful interpretation seems to slowly open the doors of Cloonlish House, inviting all of us in.

Copyright Eddie Kelly

OLD TIPPERARY

Jig

5

10

14

18

22

Regular ending

26

Final Ending

A great old jig that I first played with the legendary Clare piper Willie Clancy. It seems appropriate that Padraic Mac Mathúna, son of Ciarán Mac Mathúna, the radio and television presenter, should play it with me for this collection. Padraic spent much of his youth in Miltown Malbay where Willie Clancy lived, and Padraic's playing on the pipes is certainly a musical reflection of the nuances of Willie Clancy's music. Hospitality is at its best in the home of Padraic, his good wife Anne, and their lovely children. Sandy and I often reminisced about the evening we spent with them in Dublin, which was topped off when the man himself, Ciarán Mac Mathúna, shared a wonderful dinner with all of us.

QUADRILLE

Jig



I had no idea of the name of the fiddle player who performed this jig on a cassette tape I had of an old 78 RPM recording. However, my friend Paul Wells knew the tune and the fiddle player, whom he identified as Leizime Brusoe. Mr. Brusoe was born in 1870, of French-Canadian stock, and lived in the North Woods region of Wisconsin. He was a champion fiddle player who was recorded by the Library of Congress in the 1930s and '40s. The jig, played here for us by Jerry O'Sullivan on the uilleann pipes, will be saved for posterity thanks to Mr. Brusoe and my dear friend Jerry.

CRYSTAL SCHOTTISCHE

Schottische

6

11

15

20

24

28

32

Here is another tune from the playing of Leizime Brusoe. Paul Wells provided the name 'Crystal Schottische'. I sent the tape over to Séamus and Manus McGuire, two wonderful fiddle players, who gave graciously of their time to learn and perform it for this collection. Beautifully played, lads.

A book I have called *Mellie Dunham's 50 Fiddlin' Dance Tunes*, published by Carl Fischer in 1926, happens to include another version of this tune, called 'Old Times'. It was taken from the playing of Mellie Dunham, a fiddle player born in 1853 who lived in Norway, Maine.

SANDY'S REEL

Reel

Bob McQuillen



The first time that I heard New England contra dance music was in 1972 in St. Louis, Missouri. It was on an LP recording of The Canterbury Country Dance orchestra from New England. Among the members of that band was Bob McQuillen, the prolific composer and long-time stalwart of the New England music scene. Bob had, at last count, over fourteen hundred tunes to his credit. The reel he plays here with his band, Old New England, was composed for my wife Sandy on May 20, 2006. Bob had met Sandy at Boston College during one of the Gaelic Roots summer schools of music, song, and dance. He had received a special award from Boston College on that occasion, an award well overdue, for his amazing contributions to the world of music. Thank you, Professor, for the tune and all your music and friendship. Bob's tunes may be found in his own published collections and manuscripts.

Copyright Bob McQuillen

WILL HARDY'S TWIGGY JIG

Jig

Beth Sweeney

5

10

14

18

22

My friend Beth Sweeney is the librarian for the Irish Music Archives at the Burns Library of Boston College. When she finds time in her schedule, Beth likes to play music and compose. On this track she plays one of her own tunes, which she describes in this way: 'In the early 1990s I recorded a cassette tape of a few fiddle tunes I had composed, including this jig, and gave the tape to Séamus Connolly, my first teacher of Irish fiddle music. Years later, after listening to the tape again, Séamus asked me if I would record this particular jig for his collection. On this track I play both fiddle and piano. The tune is named for a dear friend of mine, Will Hardy, an award-winning designer and a great appreciator of music. The "twiggy" of the jig is a play on words, a reference to my friend Forrest, with whom I exchanged many a tune around the same time that this jig was written.'

Copyright Beth Sweeney

HETTY'S

Hornpipe

Bob McQuillen

5

9

13

3 Regular ending

17

Final ending

This is another of master composer Bob McQuillen's tunes. It may be found in his seventh book of compositions. It was composed for Miss Hetty Thomae from Vermont. On this track I had the honour of playing it with Bob and his band, Old New England.

Copyright Bob McQuillen

MCQUILLEN'S MARCH

March

Rodney Miller



This tune is not a composition of 'Professor' Bob McQuillen, but of the master fiddle player from New Hampshire, Rodney Miller. Rodney is considered today to be the foremost exponent of the music of New England. He has traveled all over the world playing his music and passing it on through his teaching. Spending the day with Rodney at his home was an inspiration for me, and trying out the beautiful fiddles that he makes and sells was truly special. Thank you, Rodney, for the music and for the memories: you are one of my heroes.

Copyright Rodney Miller

O'BRIEN THE BLACKSMITH

Song

Robbie McMahon



Another song from the pen of Robbie McMahon. I first heard him sing it at a County Clare Fleadh Cheoil over fifty years ago, and it has stayed with me down through the years. Robbie sang it again for me the afternoon that I visited his home in 2009, and I was delighted to capture it on disc. Thanks again, my friend, for the joy that you have given to all of us who knew you and who loved your expressive interpretations of all those lovely songs.

*O'Brien the Blacksmith forged a pike
And better ne'er was made.
The ashen handle six feet long
And two feet long the blade.
Father Murphy blessed it
Down by the Slaneyside
And brave Brian Bán caressed it
As a lover would his bride.*

*On the grand old hills I remember as the stars began to shine,
The captain came to drill us on that clear bright moonlit night.
And as he gave the orders we long had wished to hear,
Thirty-thousand Fenian men made answer with the cheer.*

*Soon glad and joyful tidings
Across the sea had flown.
Lord Edward he is coming
With Emmet and Wolfe Tone
Soon our own dear flag we'll raise o'er many a hill and glen,
With brave Lord Edward at the head of thirty-thousand men.*

*O God be praised, he proudly said, the day has dawned at last.
Soon our own dear flag we'll raise aloft and freedom blast
So men be up and ready with pikes in proud array
And we'll march through Enniscorthy at the dawning of the day.*

*When they came to Enniscorthy, they found the place in flame.
The dead and dying blocked the way,
Their blood flowed like the rain.
And hemmed around on every side with bayonets bloody red
Were a band of noble Fenians with O'Brien at the head.*

*Right well and bravely had he fought
With his brave comrades all,
Through Enniscorthy's blazing streets
Up to the barrack wall.
And when they reached the barrack wall to their dismay they found
That a band of ruthless foe-men had encircled them around.*

*Charge my gallant countrymen with faith in fatherland
And if we die among their ranks, we'll die with blade in hand.
Once again we'll meet them with defiance loud and high
And if we do not beat them we'll show them how to die.*

*At length a fatal volley from the cowardly Saxon foe
O'Brien wounded through the heart, the weltering in his gore
As his life blood was ebbing fast, he raised his aching head.
He called unto his comrades and this is what he said:*

*Here, Maurice, take this bloodstained pike, a weapon made for thee
And if for Ireland's cause you strike, strike one more blow for me.
I'm dying as my forefathers died with freedom blade in hand.
Do thou the same. God guard the Green. Three cheers for Ireland.*

THOMAS REILLY, CLERK OF FORE

Single Jig



Rev. John Quinn from County Leitrim sent me this tune in the 1980s. It was a copy of handwritten music from *The Mulvey Manuscript*. Stephen Grier wrote it out on the twenty-fifth of May, 1883. Father John has supplied me with many tunes from his part of the country over the last thirty years, for which I am most grateful.

I am grateful also to the wonderful fiddle player Martin Hayes for taking time from his busy schedule to record this tune for me. Martin's playing, as always, has depth of soul, with an understanding of the tune's beauty and simplicity. Beautifully played with feeling and emotion. Up the Banner, Martin!

TARA AND DÁIRE

Reel

Jim Sutherland

6

1. 2.

11

16 Regular ending

20 Final ending

Marie Reilly, the fiddle player from New York, played this reel at a Gaelic Roots Festival concert at Boston College, her alma mater. Thanks to Marie for bringing the tune to our attention. I did my utmost to find the tune's composer in order to give credit in the collection, but my efforts were unsuccessful. I now know that this delightful reel is a version of 'The Easy Club' composed by Jim Sutherland. The track is played here by Tara Breen and Dáire Mulhern, for whom I named the tune before I learned of its correct title. Thanks to composer Jim Sutherland for his lovely reel.

Copyright Jim Sutherland

AN OLD 78 RECORD

Jig



Geraldine Cotter liked this tune the first time she heard me playing it. 'Let's try and record it', she said, and as I played the jig a second time she followed right along. This track is the result of our efforts. I do not have a name for this jig, but I have given it a title based on the fact that I first heard it many years ago on a 78 record.

SUMMER'S WALTZ

Waltz

Eliza Mette

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A beautiful waltz played by its composer, Eliza Mette, from Cape Elizabeth, Maine, with Kimberley Fraser at the piano. Eliza made up this tune for her friend Summer, another young and talented musician. Eliza generously took the time (from doing her homework) to record it for this collection. When she went away to college, I missed hearing her play. I am happy to say that she is still playing her beloved fiddle and composing other tunes. Thank you, Eliza: keep playing and composing.

Copyright Eliza Mette

PRIDE OF ERIN

Jig

6

10

15

Regular ending

Final ending

Sean Nugent and his Pride of Erin Céilí Band from County Fermanagh loved to play this jig. So too did Johnny McGreevy from Chicago, who played it for me in 1972 with piano player Eleanor Kane Neary. Jimmy Noonan on flute and Dan Gurney on accordion took the time in 2009 to learn it and record it for this collection. Thanks, boys: beautifully played with that great old swing! For want of a better or more current title, 'Pride of Erin' is fine in my book.

TOM TURKINGTON'S IN G MAJOR

Reel



The young Cape Breton fiddle player Kimberley Fraser gives us an exciting blend of Irish and Cape Breton fiddle styles. She plays another reel from the music of County Tyrone fiddle player Tom Turkington (see 'Tom Turkington's in C Major').

BUDDY MACMASTER'S

Strathspey



Cape Breton fiddle legend Mr. Buddy MacMaster gave this tune to our mutual friend, piano player Barbara MacDonald Magone. Barbara graciously passed it along to me when she recorded it for this collection in Portland, Maine, almost ten years ago.

DOMINICK MCCARTHY'S IRISH BARNDANCE

Barndance

Jimmy Shand, Jr.



The name Shand is synonymous with the traditional music of Scotland. The rock-solid rhythm and strict tempo of master accordionist and composer Sir Jimmy Shand are forever embedded in my mind. Joyous memories of Mr. Shand's music have remained with me all my life. They take me back to my youth in Killaloe, as we tuned our crackly radio to the Scottish airwaves to listen to the star of radio and television playing with his band.

Moving further along in years, my wife Sandy and I visited Sir Jimmy's hometown of Auchtermuchty, Scotland in the hope of meeting the maestro. Deciding that an unannounced visit might be intrusive, we continued on our journey.

This introduction to 'Dominick McCarthy's Irish Barndance' may seem unusual; nevertheless, it seems appropriate to write about Sir Jimmy in order to write about his equally talented son Jimmy Shand Jr., accordionist, composer, and accordion tuner. On a recent visit to Auchtermuchty with my friends Drs. Jim and Cindy Polo, we were welcomed into the beautiful home of Jimmy Shand Jr. and his lovely wife, Margaret. Jimmy had invited us, and on that trip I did not hesitate to knock on the door of the Shand residence. The kind warm hospitality that we received from Mr. and Mrs. Shand will now also be embedded in my mind. Music, stories, photographs, and holding Sir Jimmy's accordion were special treats on that occasion.

And then our conversation turned to Jimmy Jr.'s music compositions. I told Jimmy that Dominick McCarthy from Clara in County Offaly had played the barndance for me over thirty years ago. Mr. Shand told me that he did not have any recollection of the tune. Upon giving Jimmy Jr. the sheet music, he began to whistle, and with a twinkle in his eye he smiled as the tune instantly came back to him. He was delighted to be reminded of this tune while saying it would be a welcome addition to his forthcoming book, *Jimmy Shand, Jr. Music Compositions*.

Unforgettable memories all around. Thank you, sir, for your composition and for the welcome that you and Margaret gave to Cindy, Jim, and myself. Jimmy, I hope you never stop playing and composing!

Copyright Jimmy Shand, Jr. – MCPS

IN MEMORY OF LEO ROWSOME

Air

Larry Redican



The name of the legendary piper, pipemaker, composer, and teacher Leo Rowsome (1903–1970) is synonymous with the uilleann pipes. An icon of Irish traditional music, Leo devoted his entire life to the uilleann pipes and has numerous recordings to his credit. His friend Larry Redican composed this air in Leo's memory. I got it from Larry himself and had the honour of recording it with Liam O'Flynn, a former student of Leo's, on a record entitled *Notes From My Mind*. The pipes that Liam used on that recording were made by Mr. Rowsome. The air is soulfully played here by fiddle player John Daly from County Cork. More of John's own music and compositions may be heard on his CD entitled *John Daly*.

Copyright Larry Redican

THE GALWAY JIG

Jig



Accordionist Larry Gavin, a longtime friend, put this tune on tape for me a few years ago at his home in Tulla, County Clare. Larry is a repository of Irish music, and he raised this tune up from his deep well. Apparently the tune was played by members of the old Aughrim Slopes Céilí Band from County Galway back in the 1940s. Larry, together with East Clare fiddle player Micheál O'Rourke and piano accompanist Charlie Lennon, recorded this version of the tune especially for me. The tune may also be heard on their own CD recording *Two Miles to Tulla* in a set with 'The Plains of Mayo'.

THOMAS POWER'S POLKA

Polka



Thomas Power, fiddle player from Doonbeg, County Clare, had a repertoire of unusual old tunes. His son Michael, who lives in upstate New York, sent me a recording of his father playing this and a number of other tunes. Fiddle player Kevin Burke did a masterful job of learning this fine forgotten tune and endowing it with his magic swing. Incidentally, piper Padraic Mac Mathúna suggested to me that this melody might well be related to the old song 'An tSeán Bhean Bhocht', or 'The Poor Old Woman'. Musician and scholar Kieran O'Hare has brought to my attention the similarity between 'Thomas Power's Polka' and the song 'The Shearin's No for You' as performed by Scottish singer Ed Miller.

CONNOLLY'S CHAIR

Slip Jig

Brian Hebert



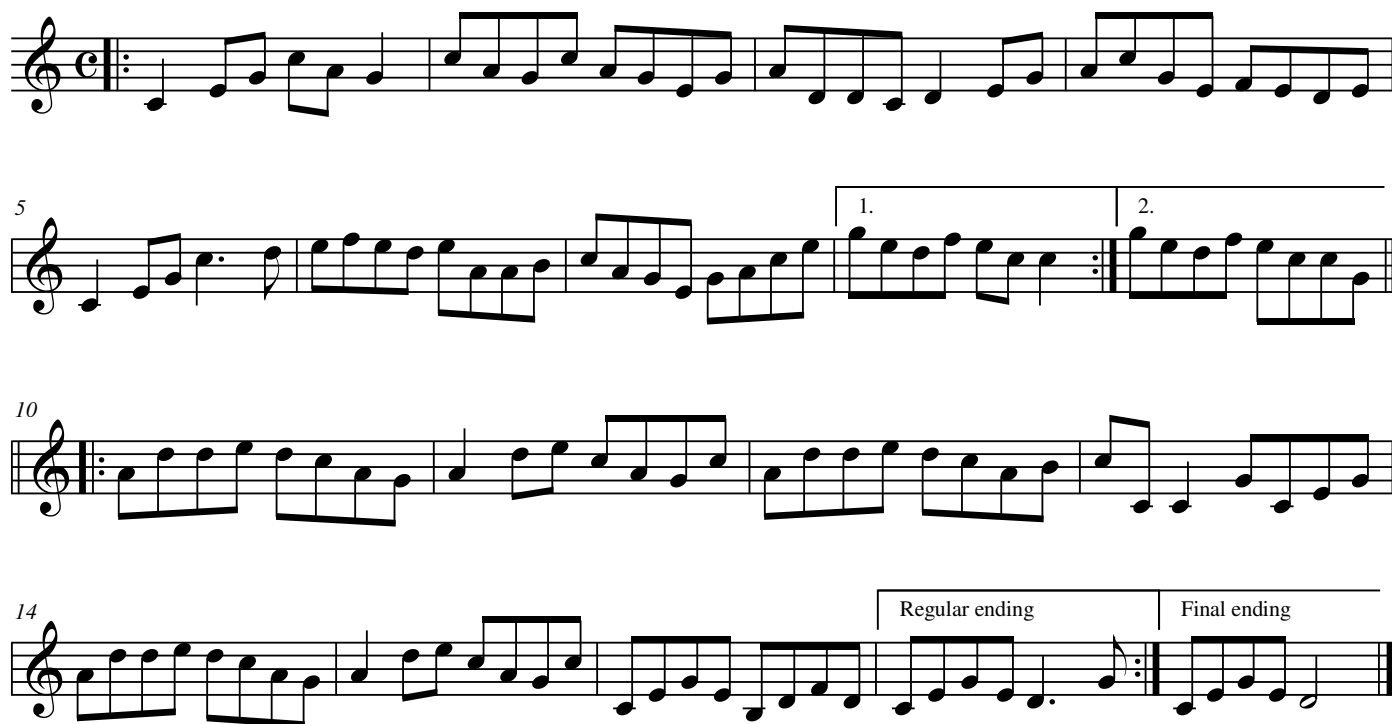
Multi-instrumentalist Brian Hebert from the Boston area conferred on me special recognition by composing and playing this slip jig. The chair mentioned in the tune's title is my endowed position as Sullivan Artist in Residence at The Center for Irish Programs at Boston College.

Copyright Brian Hebert

BOBBY GARDINER'S (NUMBER ONE)

Reel

Bobby Gardiner



Master accordionist Bobby Gardiner from Clare composed this reel. I first heard it on an LP he recorded in Ireland, produced by his fellow accordionist Dermot O'Brien: exciting and wonderful music. When I asked Bobby if he would perform it again, for this collection, he told me that he had no recollection of the tune but I certainly could put the tune in the book. I convinced him to play it for me, but for that to happen, I had to send him a copy of the tune so that he could re-learn it. On a visit to Boston College, Bobby did record it and I greatly enjoyed that session. Barbara MacDonald Magone was with us that day and she – with her stories and laughs – made it a memorable occasion.

Copyright Bobby Gardiner

TRIP TO MOULTONBOROUGH

Strathspey

Meghan Mette



Meghan Mette was one of the musicians featured on 'A Polka for Matt'. She is the younger sister to Eliza Mette, who can be heard on 'Summer's Waltz'.

Here Meghan plays one of her own compositions and, below, she tells us in her own words how the tune came to be. What beautiful sentiments about our music and song from such a young person. It tells us much about her soul.

'Every summer of my life I have gone with my family down to New Hampshire to spend a week on Squam Lake. These weeks are always wonderful, but my fondest memories come from a time when I was much younger, a time when the entire family was able to join us at the lake.

For us, as children, the lake was a sea of mysteries waiting to be discovered and fully taken advantage of on sunny days: swimming, canoeing, going to the rope swing in Sandwich Bay, or maybe a motorboat ride out to

Copyright Meghan Mette

the islands, setting up camp for a picnic. However, when a rainy day came along, we were far from disappointed. Today there would be a trip to Moultonborough. We would all pile into our cars and drive through the sprinkling rain – or the downpour – to Moultonborough Country Candy Shop.

The tired floorboards would creak as all of us children ran to collect our brown paper bags at the front of the candy bar, our mothers calling “Five dollar limit!” It is amazing, however, how much candy one can purchase for five dollars at a penny candy store. On the car ride home we would trade some candy – as long as it was an equal trade of course...

I wrote this strathspey in honor of those memories. Although we have grown up since then and many of my cousins no longer join us at the lake, we continue to go to Moultonborough once a year, because the tradition – like the music – must be passed on, never forgotten. Tradition is what allows us to hold the past dear, while all the time making and adding new memories and creations to our lives. We can never let these traditions die.’

O'BRIEN'S TOWER

Reel

Paddy O'Brien



Paddy O'Brien, the learned and beloved accordionist from County Offaly who now lives in Minneapolis, recorded 'O'Brien's Tower', one of his many compositions, for me while on a visit to the home of Sally K. Sommers Smith Wells and her husband, Paul Wells. Paddy possesses a vast repertoire of music, an encyclopedic knowledge of its history, and a profound understanding of the tradition. In his published music collections, a must for scholars and enthusiasts of Irish music, Paddy has compiled hundreds and hundreds of tunes, with stories for every one. Thank you, Paddy, for your music, your encouragement, and your enormous contributions to the traditional music of Ireland.

Copyright Paddy O'Brien

2

PLAYLIST FOUR

MESSAGE TO SÉAMUS

Barndance

Tony Ellis

6

11

15

20

Final Ending

One of America's most distinguished master musicians, North Carolina banjo player, fiddle player, and composer Tony Ellis was out on his tractor one day when he began to hear this barndance in his head. Not knowing whether he'd heard the tune somewhere before, or if it was something new, he went inside and pulled out his fiddle.

I was not at home when he rang me, but he played the tune onto my answering machine and asked if I had ever heard it. As soon as I received his message, I returned his phone call and told him that I had never heard the tune before.

Later, on one of his CD recordings, *Quaker Girl*, Tony recorded the tune for posterity and gave it the above title. I am very proud that my friend, the wonderful fiddle player Liz Knowles, kept Tony's interpretation and feeling in mind yet added her very own nuances, colour, and variations when she played the tune for this collection. Thanks, Liz!

Copyright Tony Ellis

NORTH CLARE JIG

Single Jig



Paddy Kierse, as Ciarán Mac Mathúna said on his Radio Éireann program *A Job of Journeywork*, was a lovely old musician. Ciarán recorded his playing of this tune on a visit to north County Clare. Mr. Kierse, from Kilnaboy, near Kilfenora, had wonderful old tunes, stories, and history from that part of the county.

Monsignor Charlie Coen from New York State, formerly of Woodford County Galway, did an excellent job playing the tune in the style of Mr. Kierse. We recorded the tune at my home in Maine. Kevin McElroy pulled out Sandy's old guitar and strummed along.

DAN SULLIVAN'S

Highland/Reel



America's foremost uilleann piper, Jerry O'Sullivan, learned this and a number of other tunes from recordings of Dan Sullivan and his band that I sent to him. Jerry recorded the tunes with the engineering expertise of Gabriel Donohue, himself an amazing musician, singer, and a man of many talents. The tune here is played by Jerry as a highland but it could also be played as a reel.

KATHLEEN COEN'S

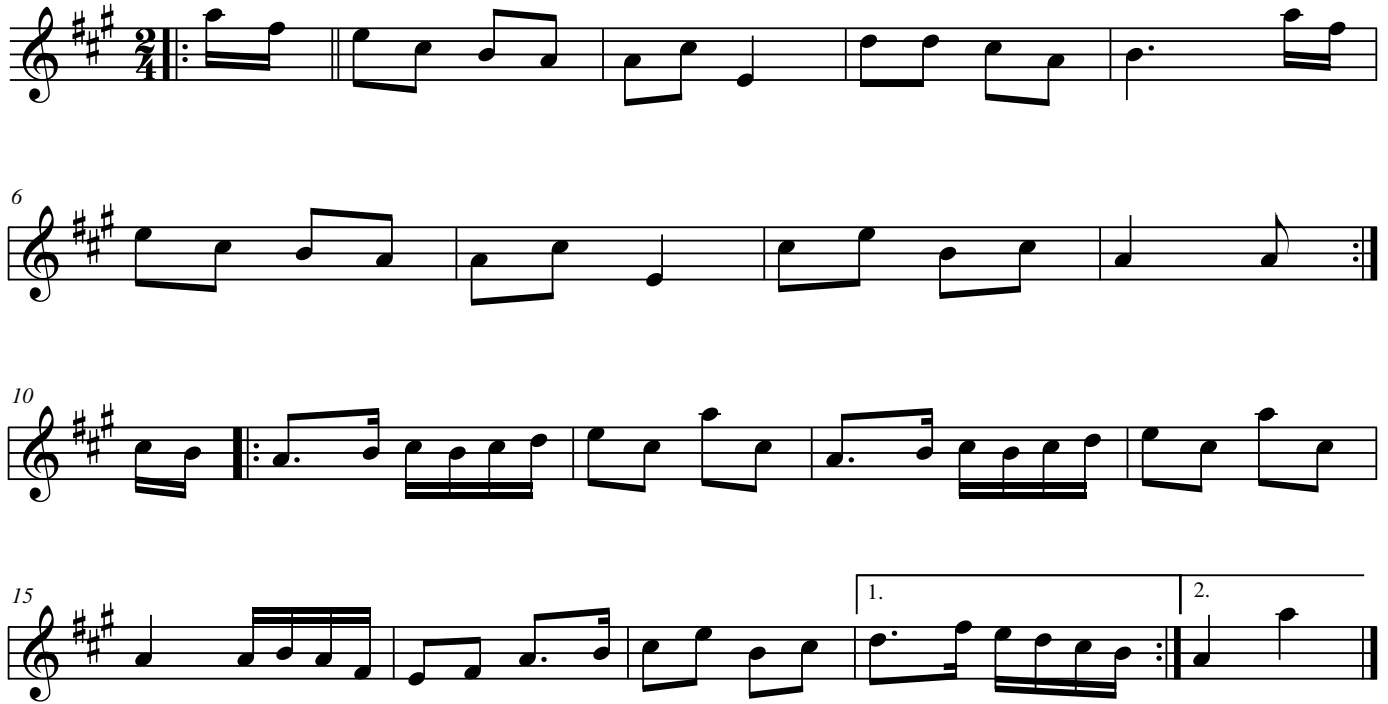
Polka



Flute player Mr. Jack Coen, brother of Monsignor Charlie Coen, was visiting his daughter Kathleen in Clinton, Massachusetts. I took a trip down that same day to meet Jack and to play a few tunes with him. Many of the tunes we played that day I had learned from a reel-to-reel tape of Jack and his friend Paddy O'Brien from County Tipperary. The tape was recorded in the Bronx, New York, in the 1950s, and a copy was sent back to Ireland. That day, Jack told me that Kathleen played the piano and, if I encouraged her, she might play a tune. Kathleen did play this polka with her father and I captured it as my prize for the day. With such a family connection, it is appropriate then that Father Charlie would be our performer on this track.

MOYASTA POLKA

Polka



Another tune from the repertoire of Mrs. Ellen Galvin. It is played on this track for all of us to enjoy by one of my heroes, Josephine Keegan. Josephine again makes full use of modern recording technology in order to be recorded playing both fiddle and piano. A beautiful blend of West Clare and Northern Ireland fiddling. I have taken the liberty of naming the tune after the home area of Mrs. Galvin in County Clare.

DUNBOYNE STRAW-PLAITERS

Reel



The reel played here by Jerry O'Sullivan is another tune from the music of Boston's Dan Sullivan's Shamrock Band. Nicky McAuliffe told me that the tune is in P.W. Joyce's collection, *Old Irish Folk Music and Songs*. Nicky, you are a walking encyclopedia!

THE HARVEST FIELD

Fling

6

10

15

3

3

3

Regular ending

Final ending

I had a scratchy old 78 RPM recording of a band from Boston and could barely identify the tune they were playing. I believe the person playing the accordion on the track was Billy Caples, a well-known Boston accordion player and teacher. I sent it to Baltimore to Billy McComiskey. He and flutist Laura Byrne learned the tune and made this recording with Donna Long playing the piano: shades of Boston's Dudley Street dance halls in the 1950s.

P.J. CONLON'S

Jig

6

10

15

Regular ending

Final ending

The accordion master Peter 'P.J.' Conlon recorded an amazing series of 78 RPM records. He recorded this jig (under the title 'Clancy's Jig'), as did his friend Bill Sullivan, who called it 'Conlon's'. Here it is played on melodeon by my nephew Damien Connolly.

PARKERSBURG LANDING

Barndance

6

10

15

19

23

27

32

1. 2.

The music of Ed Haley, a fiddle player born in West Virginia in 1883, has for over twenty years given me much enjoyment and pleasure. My good friend Mr. Joe Wilson, former director of The National Council for the Traditional Arts, gave me a tape of Haley's music. He played this particular tune in a very distinctive West Virginia style, but with a definite Irish influence, incorporating ornamentation similar to that employed by the Sligo fiddle players Coleman, Killoran, and Morrison, who came to America in the early 1900s. I asked Séamus McGuire to learn and play the tune for my collection. Masterfully played, thank you, Séamus.

FRANK QUINN'S

Reel



Accordion player, fiddle player, and all-around entertainer Frank Quinn lived in New York and recorded for a number of record companies in the 1930s. I heard this reel played by him on an old 78 RPM recording. Jimmy Noonan plays flute on this selection and is joined by Dan Gurney on accordion. Together they give us a wonderful rendition of this tune. A great afternoon of music played at my home in Maine culminated in this reel which they had only learned that day. Thanks again, lads, for all the hard work.

FLY BY NIGHT

Hornpipe



The musical score for 'Fly by Night' Hornpipe is written in treble clef, 2/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The score consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a double bar line. The second staff starts at measure 6. The third staff starts at measure 10 and includes two triplet markings (3) over the final two measures. The fourth staff starts at measure 15 and includes two first and second endings, marked '1.' and '2.'. The fifth staff starts at measure 20 and is labeled 'Final ending' with a bracket above it.

I first heard this hornpipe in the early 1960s, played by Mr. Kieran Kelly, a wonderful accordionist from near Athlone, County Westmeath. The tune has been recorded by a number of musicians and has been given different titles, including 'The Low Level' and 'Fly by Night'. Settings of this hornpipe in two different keys may be found in *Ryan's Mammoth Collection*, where one is named 'Best Shot'. As my friend Peter Catto of Brookline, Massachusetts, cleverly suggested, 'When you fly by night, your best shot is to not fly at a lower level!' The tune is played on this track by Boston's own fiddle player, Brendan Bulger. Brendan gives the hornpipe a bouncy lift, clearly imparting his own unique musical imprint.

JIM CONROY'S

Jig



Jack Coen had a storehouse of older tunes from his native East Galway. Jack learned this tune from the playing of Jim Conroy, a flute player from his part of the country who was a great musical influence. It is played here for us by the one and only Joanie Madden.

BRIAN O'KANE'S

Hornpipe

Brian O'Kane



I have a tape of a wonderful evening of music in the home of the Gavin family of Balbriggan, County Dublin, which includes this hornpipe played by Jimmy Keane from Chicago. I wanted to include the tune in this collection, so I phoned Jimmy to ask about its origins. He said the tune wasn't his composition, so after some thought I phoned Brian O'Kane (a member of the All-Ireland Champion Siamsa Céilí Band in the 1960s) in Dublin to ask if he knew anything about the tune. He informed me that he indeed had written it himself, but had no name for it. Looking back now, it seems that I had made an association between the names Keane and O'Kane, and their styles of playing, which happily led me to the identity of the actual composer of this fine hornpipe. Thanks for the tune, Brian, and thanks to Gráinne Murphy for learning and playing it here for us.

Copyright Brian O'Kane

JIMMY HOGAN'S (NUMBER TWO)

Single Jig



Another of Jimmy Hogan's North County Clare tunes. It is played here, as was 'Jimmy Hogan's Number One', by Josephine Keegan on fiddle.

JACK ROWE'S

Reel



Recorded by Seán Maguire, the celebrated master fiddle player, with Josephine Keegan on piano, as well as by Maeve Donnelly and Peadar O'Loughlin on their CD *The Thing Itself*. A version of this tune was given to Breandán Breathnach by John Maguire, a whistle player from County Cavan. John Maguire was Seán's father. Brendan Bulger's playing of the tune is heard on this track.

HUMOURS OF BALLYHAUNIS

Slip Jig



The 'goings on' or happy and fun times in Ballyhaunis, County Mayo, give this slip jig its name. I first heard the tune played by the talented musical Quinn family from New York. A version of the tune may be found in O'Neill's great collection of Irish music. A tune well worth playing and worth its weight in gold: on this track performed for us by Shannon Heaton.

SEÁN MCCUSKER'S

Reel

Seán McCusker



Mentioned earlier in this collection was The Pride of Erin Céilí Band from Fermanagh, a group of wonderful people who loved to play their music. One of the band members was flutist and button accordionist Seán McCusker. Seán has a number of fine tunes attributed to him and this tune is, I believe, one of his compositions. It is beautifully performed for us here by Damien Connolly.

Copyright Seán McCusker

PATSY HANLY'S

Reel



I played a recording of this reel for my friend Jimmy Noonan. The identity of the player was a mystery to me, but Jimmy's astute judgment identified the musician as Patsy Hanly, the flute player from County Roscommon. Who better, then, to play this reel for my collection than Jimmy Noonan himself? Jimmy is joined by two-row button accordionist Dan Gurney. Patsy would be proud of their rendition.

THE BIRD'S NEST

Reel



Tina Lech, a former fiddle instructor at Boston College, performs this tune for all of us to hear. Tina learned the reel from a tape I gave to her of Larry Redican, the Dublin fiddle player who lived in New York. The tune's title was given to me by Nicky McAuliffe from County Kerry. Expert that he is, Nicky told me that master Cape Breton fiddle player Angus Chisholm had recorded it under the name 'The Bird's Nest'.

THE FIRST SLIP

Slip Jig



On that night in Ennis in the home of my brother Martin and his wife Pauline (see 'John Egan's'), I thought I had captured Kevin Crawford playing a slip jig called 'What Care I for the Minister?' However, in the confusion, commotion, and mayhem that ensued when we realised that the tape recorder had been unplugged, it turned out that the slip jig Kevin played that evening was one called 'The First Slip'.

Featured here on this track, this melody also appears in *The Dance Music of Willie Clancy*, a collection compiled by Pat Mitchell and published in 1976. Everything turned out just fine, as it happens: 'The First Slip' is a wonderful melody, and I was able to get my friend Kathleen Guilday to play 'What Care I for the Minister?', found elsewhere in this collection.

THE CORNBOY

Reel



When we were traveling throughout America on the first Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann tour of champion musicians, singers, and dancers in 1972, I had the great pleasure of playing this reel with fiddle player Paddy Glackin. Paddy and I played it again in the Raidió Teilifís Éireann studios for this collection. Thanks to Peter Browne for his assistance in making this recording.

CON CASSIDY'S

Slide

12

Final ending

This tune bears the name of noted fiddle player Con Cassidy, and it may well have been played as a single jig in his native County Donegal. There was no doubt about West Limerick accordion player Donie Nolan's interpretation of it as a slide. He played it throughout Australia in 1994 when he and another group of artists, including 'Mé Féin', toured that amazing continent. For this collection, Donie took the time to meet me and Sandy at Peadar's Bar in Ardagh, County Limerick, and over the humming of the fridge, he recorded Con Cassidy's slide.

ROSEANNE'S REEL

Polka



The lovely fiddle music of Máire O'Keeffe is once again heard on this track. The tune was passed down from John Lenihan to Maurice O'Keeffe, who in turn gave it to Máire.

THE BRIDGE AT NEWTOWN

Reel

Séamus Connolly

6

11

15

19

23

27

31

Regular ending

Final ending

'The Bridge', as it was affectionately called, was home to Dinny O'Brien, concertina and fiddle player. It was also the home of accordionist Paddy O'Brien, my musical colleague in the 1960s and '70s. The bridge in question is on the road between Portroe and Nenagh, County Tipperary. As a tribute to the O'Brien family, and in particular to Paddy, I composed this reel. It is played on this track by a former student of Máire O'Keeffe's, Tara Breen, a young fiddle player who has won the Fiddler of Dooney competition and the All-Ireland Championship. Tara's playing is a special treat. The tune is in E major, a key not commonly used in Irish music.

Copyright Séamus Connolly

PEIG AND MICK RYAN

Polka



Traditional Irish music is on a strong footing, due in no small way to Peig and Mick Ryan from Murroe, County Limerick. At a time when the music was unpopular, Peig and her husband Mick worked diligently to promote Irish music and culture in all its forms. We have been friends forever it seems. Peig and Mick would visit my home in Killaloe, County Clare, and hearing Peig's flute playing and Mick's singing was always a delight.

When my wife Sandy and I visited Peig a few years ago we recorded her music including this polka (with me playing along). At eighty-four years young, Peig had the same old enthusiasm and fondness for the music. Paddy Neil from near Newport, County Tipperary, recorded this polka for Ciarán Mac Mathúna over fifty years ago. I had originally named it for Mr. Neil, but I'm confident he would approve of my naming it for his friends and neighbours, Peig and Mick Ryan.

AH, A SIMPLE LITTLE YOKE

Jig

Finbarr Dwyer



When I visited the accordion master Finbarr Dwyer at his home in County Clare, he played this jig, which he had composed when he was about ten years old. Finbarr did not think too highly of the tune: he can be heard on the recording describing it with the words in the above title. But I have no doubt that whoever hears this track will enjoy the creation of this prolific composer and extraordinary musical genius.

Copyright Finbarr Dwyer

THE LIMERICK JIG

Single Jig

3

1. 2.

6

8

10

12

Regular ending Final ending

Back in the early 1960s, I was very friendly with Mrs. Taylor, the concertina player from West Limerick who lived in London. We exchanged many letters over the years in which music was always a topic. The well-known flute player Paddy Taylor learned 'The Limerick Jig' from his mother and recorded it for the Claddagh record company many years ago. It is played on this track, at a slower pace than Mr. Taylor's recording of it, by Nicky and Anne McAuliffe on fiddle and flute, respectively.

GRANDFATHER'S THOUGHT

Hornpipe



This hornpipe from Julia, John, and Billy Clifford is played here for us by Shannon Heaton on flute. The tune may be found on an LP that the Cliffords recorded during their years in London, England, entitled *The Star of Munster Trio, Music from Sliabh Luachra, Volume 2*.

SCULLY CASEY'S

Reel

The musical score for 'Scully Casey's' Reel is written in D major (two sharps) and 2/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1 through 4, with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 3. The second staff contains measures 5 through 8, with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 7. The third staff contains measures 9 through 12, featuring a continuous eighth-note pattern. The fourth staff contains measures 13 through 16, with a bracket labeled 'Regular ending' spanning measures 14 through 16. The fifth staff contains measure 17, with a bracket labeled 'Final ending' spanning measures 17 through 18, which ends with a double bar line.

John 'Scully' Casey, father to the great County Clare fiddle player Bobby Casey, was a well-known and respected fiddle player in his day. Bobby, in his generosity, recorded this reel for me years ago. It is played on this recording by Gráinne Murphy.

GOING HOME

Reel

Eamon Flynn



I have known and admired the music of Eamon Flynn since 1957. Eamon, like myself, lived in Boston for many years, and we often played music together. When Eamon decided to move to the state of Vermont he began to compose some smashing tunes, including this one which he plays here on accordion. And, yes, Eamon did eventually go home to his native Mountcollins in County Limerick, where he now resides and continues to play and compose.

Copyright Eamon Flynn

CARRAIGÍN RUADH

Reel

Brendan Tonra

5

10

14

18

22

Another composer of fine tunes was fiddle and flute player Brendan Tonra from County Mayo, who immigrated to Boston around 1959. Brendan played this tune, one of his compositions, on a recording made in 1979 by the Boston branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. It may be found in Brendan's own collection, *A Musical Voyage, with Brendan Tonra*, produced by his friend Helen Kisiel. My setting of this reel can be found on a 1989 recording called *Here and There*, on the Green Linnet label. The tune is played for this collection by Séamus and Manus McGuire.

Copyright Brendan Tonra

THE BONNIE LASS OF HEADLAKE

Hornpipe

Gordon MacQuarrie



I first heard this tune played as a hornpipe by Paddy O'Brien with The Lough Gowna Céilí Band in the early 1960s. In fact, the tune was originally composed as a four-part march by Gordon MacQuarrie of Cape Breton. MacQuarrie, a noted fiddle player and composer, published the tune in 1940 in his book *The Cape Breton Collection of Scottish Melodies*.

It is fascinating to imagine the musical meetings that occurred when musicians from Ireland immigrated to America and encountered not only American-born players of Irish traditional music, but also players of Scottish music from Cape Breton. This tune is a great example of such musical cross-pollination. Perhaps Paddy O'Brien picked the tune up in America from a fiddle player, or from MacQuarrie's book, converted it to a hornpipe, and took it back to Ireland with him when he returned in the early 1960s. And now, 'The Bonnie Lass of Headlake' has travelled back and forth across the Atlantic many times; this time in fine style indeed, played by John Daly on the fiddle with Kevin Brehony at the piano.

Copyright Gordon MacQuarrie

DANNY MEEHAN'S

Reel



Master fiddle player Danny Meehan from Donegal lived in London for many years. During his time there, Danny worked by day in the building trade. At night he would do what he liked best: he played his fiddle with his friends and colleagues, and in a group named Le Chéile. The group made two wonderful and exciting recordings. On their second CD, entitled *Arís*, Danny played this reel. It is masterfully played on this track by Liz Knowles, with that driving rhythmic style peculiar to County Donegal.



THE CELTIC LAMB

Air

Phil Edmonds

7

15

22

30

37

44

50

55

Ending

D.C.

Copyright Phil Edmonds

This track comes from the CD *To The Dance Floor*, released in 2006 by a Rhode Island-based group called The Gnomes. Among its members is Phil Edmonds, the composer of this beautiful tune. Phil and I went to the same school in Killaloe, where we learned to play the tinwhistle, and Phil's father, Eddie Edmonds, was one of my secondary school teachers. The words below are taken from the notes to their CD:

'The Celtic Tiger is the term referring to the system of economics and way of life in Ireland for the past several years. While it has resulted in much wealth for many people (not all), the Celtic Tiger is devouring Irish Culture. Wherever money and material possessions become a priority, the quality of life decreases. Phil wrote this air, "The Celtic Lamb", hoping that Ireland, and all of us, will move towards a more sustainable and gentler lifestyle.'

It gives me great pleasure to have another Killaloe man associated with this collection. Thanks, Phil, for the tune, and thanks to the rest of the band for their participation in this project.



ULLULU MO MHÁILÍN

Polka



Played here as a polka, this melody is a macaronic song, with Irish and English words. It is the one and only tune that fiddle player Matt Cranitch and I recorded for this collection. It came very naturally to us, since it is a famous song in our native province of Munster. The tune also appears in P.W. Joyce's collection *Ancient Irish Music*.

PLAYLIST FIVE

BOBBY GARDINER'S (NUMBER TWO)

Reel

Bobby Gardiner



The art form of lilting is demonstrated here by Bobby Gardiner. My grandmother Elizabeth Collins (née Rochford), herself a very good lilter, told me that 'jiggers', as she called them, were commonly called upon whenever musicians were not available to play for dancers. Button accordionist Bobby Gardiner both lilt and plays with 'The Clare Swing'. Listen to him on these tracks lilting, then playing his very own tune. Barbara MacDonald Magone joins in on the piano.

Copyright Bobby Gardiner

JIM CORCORAN'S POLKA

Polka

Laurel Martin



Jim Corcoran is a wonderful friend who plays the fiddle and loves polkas. So does his teacher Laurel Martin, who composed this one for him. Here she plays it for all of us to hear and learn.

Copyright Laurel Martin

MR. AND MRS. TED MCGRAW

Jig

Jimmy Shand, Jr.



I have known Ted and Bridget McGraw of Rochester, New York, since the 1980s. I have great memories of playing with Ted in The Village Coachhouse, in Brookline, Massachusetts, a veritable musical institution that was owned by the Varian family of Cork. Here Ted recounts how he came to have a tune written for him and Bridgie by Jimmy Shand, Jr., renowned Scottish accordionist, composer, and accordion tuner: 'We were in Scotland in '86 heading out of Auchtermuchty looking for Jimmy Shand's house when I spotted Jimmy Jr. standing by his gate across the road. He was instantly recognizable from his record jackets. His famous father was adjudicating somewhere up the country so Jimmy Jr. graciously invited us in for a chat. When I saw his shop I immediately asked if he could convert an old Hohner Club Morino to Irish tuning. The bargain was made and even at that time, it was difficult to match the quality of Artiste reeds, so about a year later the box came back to me in Rochester with the tune enclosed, dated Oct. '87. The tone quality of the box, by the way, was beautiful!' The jig is played here for us by Josephine Keegan on fiddle and piano.

Copyright Jimmy Shand, Jr. – MCPS

LISA AND PATRICK

Reel

Frank Claudy

5

10

14

19

Final ending

I remember listening to Frank Claudy playing his whistle in the room next to mine at Gavin's Golden Hill Resort in East Durham in the Catskill Mountains of New York during a week of Irish music, song, and dance. The reel on this track, a composition of Frank's, caught my attention. Frank kindly recorded it for me for this collection. He named it for Patrick McComiskey (a son of Billy and Annie McComiskey) and his bride-to-be, Lisa Farrell.

Copyright Frank Claudy

CHESTNUT HILL

Reel

Séamus McGuire

5

10

14

19

Final ending

This reel was composed by Séamus McGuire in honour of Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, the location of Boston College. Séamus was invited to teach and perform at the Boston College Gaelic Roots Festival. He plays his tune here with his brother Manus McGuire on fiddle and Garry O'Briain on mandocello and piano. Séamus, Manus, and Garry were also part of the teaching staff at the University's Gaelic Roots Festival.

Copyright Séamus McGuire

ASHCRAFT-FRASER HOUSE

Reel

Barbara MacDonald Magone



Barbara MacDonald Magone is the composer of this happy reel. She plays it for us in her own beautiful style. Barbara is admired by musicians for her solo piano playing and her sensitivity when performing with others. She composed 'Ashcraft-Fraser House' for Sally Ashcraft and Alasdair Fraser, the great ambassador of Scottish fiddle music, when they bought their first home in California.

CATHERINE'S CLASSROOM

Jig

Catherine McEvoy



Catherine McEvoy composed this jig. I named it 'Catherine's Classroom' after reading her story of how the tune came about. In her own words: 'I have a wooden cabin at the back of the house that I use for teaching in, and for musical purposes. I was on my own one evening waiting for pupils to come, and playing a few tunes, and it just came to me. I called it "The Cabin Jig" just to give it a name when I wrote it down, hoping to come up with something better. Unfortunately, it's not a very exciting story, and I never did get round to re-naming it.'

Copyright Catherine McEvoy

FATHER TOM'S WAGER

Jig



This grand old jig appears in *O'Neill's 1001*. I first heard the legendary Joe Burke play this tune with the lovely surprise variation in the second part. Thanks to Holland Raper for learning the tune and playing it on her fiddle. She is a former student of Mick Gavin of Meelick, County Clare, and Detroit, and, at the time of writing, a student at Berklee College of Music in Boston.

THE BRIDGE OF PORTUMNA

Reel

Martin Mulhaire

5

9

13

17

21

Regular ending

Final ending

The town of Portumna in County Galway was a port of call for my father, Mick Connolly, when he worked on the River Shannon. During school holidays I often sailed with my Dad up and down the river and I always looked forward to docking in Portumna after the twenty-five mile trip on Lough Derg.

The bridge spanning the Shannon at Portumna always held a fascination for me, particularly when it was raised to let larger boats sail underneath. I loved to swim in the clear waters of the Shannon, and diving from the high bridge of Portumna was always a test of nerves and possibly a way of being a 'show off'. During one of my crazy show-off dives I twisted my back and though I lived to tell the tale, I carry a souvenir of that dive to this day!

I wonder if my good friend, accordionist and composer Martin Mulhaire, ever jumped or swam near the bridge. However, I do know that he composed this grand reel, which is masterfully played here by Liz Carroll on her fiddle.

Copyright Martin Mulhaire

LORD GORDON'S FATHER

Reel



The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and contains the first four measures. The second staff starts at measure 5 and includes a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.'). The third staff starts at measure 10 and contains four measures. The fourth staff starts at measure 14 and includes a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.'). The fifth staff starts at measure 19 and is labeled 'Final ending' above the staff, containing the final two measures of the piece.

The long version of the reel 'Lord Gordon', which the great Michael Coleman recorded in the 1930s, contains a number of parts which are attributed to that master County Sligo fiddle player. Another version, with two parts, was recorded on a 78 by musicians from the Ballinakill area of County Galway. Here, Monsignor Charlie Coen gives us still another two-part setting of the tune, which he has given the clever title 'Lord Gordon's Father', surmising that the origins of Michael Coleman's masterpiece lie in an older, simpler setting of the tune, perhaps somewhat like this one.

FLY AS A BIRD

Hornpipe

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It consists of 31 measures, divided into seven staves. The melody is characterized by frequent triplet rhythms and a lively, bird-like quality. The score includes repeat signs and first/second endings at measures 10-11, 18-19, and 30-31. The notation includes various note values (eighth, sixteenth, and thirty-second notes) and rests, with triplet markings (3) indicating groups of three notes played simultaneously.

A two-part version of 'Fly as a Bird' is another tune which I recorded from Julia Clifford and her son Billy in the early 1960s. It can be heard elsewhere in the collection. Here, a longer setting of the tune, which can be found in *Ryan's Mammoth Collection*, is performed by the wonderfully talented Kimberley Fraser from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada. Kimberley spent a few days with Sandy and me in our home in Maine, and we had lots of laughs and great music.

DAN GURNEY'S

Reel

Dan Gurney



The rock-solid accordion music of Dan Gurney is heard on this track. When I asked Dan if he composed any music he was very humble as he answered, 'I did but it's not much good'. I'm sure that those who listen to this track will love your tune, Dan, and sing your praises. It's a lovely composition and you play it beautifully. Thanks for being so gracious.

Copyright Dan Gurney

MARG'S JIG

Jig

Matilda Murdoch



Maeve Donnelly plays a composition of master composer Mrs. Matilda Murdoch, the queen of New Brunswick fiddle playing. Matilda has numerous compositions to her credit and she takes great pleasure in passing the tunes along to musicians eager to learn them. Matilda was delighted to hear the musical confluence that resulted when Maeve played this New Brunswick tune in her wonderful Irish fiddle style.

Copyright Matilda Murdoch

SARAH'S WEDDING

Reel

Paddy O'Brien

O'CAROLAN'S (NUMBER 174)

Waltz

Turlough O'Carolan



Turlough O'Carolan's eighteenth-century compositions have attracted the attention of musicians all over the world. His music occupies a unique and permanent place in the repertoire of Irish traditional music. I learned this tune from the guitar playing of my friend Anisa Angarola. We played it together on Anisa's CD *Birdwatcher Hill*, and that track appears here. The tune can be found as number 174 in Donal O'Sullivan's magisterial collection *Carolan: The Life, Times and Music of an Irish Harper, Volume 1*.

PEGGY MONAGHAN'S

Reel

Sean Nugent

5

10

14

19

Final ending

Peggy Monaghan was Sean Nugent's sister, and he honoured her with this fine reel. It is played here by his son Larry Nugent. Thanks, Larry, for the tunes!

Copyright Sean Nugent

THE DRUNKEN GANGER'S

Slip Jig



This is another tune that was given to me by accordionist Larry Gavin, who lives in Tulla, in east County Clare. A version of this slip jig may be found in *Ryan's Mammoth Collection*. It is played here in fine style by the talented Gráinne Murphy.



SPANCILHILL

Song

Michael Considine



Spancilhill in east County Clare gives its name to this song which I first heard around 1958, sung by Robbie McMahon, who was himself from that very same neighbourhood. Robbie gave us his updated rendition during a wonderful afternoon of singing in his home a few years ago, after Mrs. Maura McMahon, in her usual manner of hospitality, served us a fine Irish meal. Robbie told my friends and me that Michael Considine from Spancilhill wrote the song. Mr. Considine was born around 1850 and immigrated to America as a young man. His intent was to bring his sweetheart to America when he had saved enough money for her passage, but, suffering from poor health, he somehow knew that his dream would never materialise. He passed away around 1873 in California, but the song found its way back to County Clare and was popularised by Robbie's singing of it.

*Last night as I lay dreaming of the pleasant days gone by,
My mind being bent on rambling and to Erin's Isle I did fly,
I stepped on board a vision, I sailed out with a will,
And I quickly came to anchor at my home in Spancilhill.*

*Enchanted with the novelty, delighted with the scenes,
Where in my early childhood, I often times have been.
I thought I heard a murmur, I think I hear it still,
'Tis that little stream of water at the Cross of Spancilhill.*

*And to amuse my fancy, I lay upon the ground,
Where all my school companions, in crowds assembled 'round.
Some have grown to manhood, while more their graves did fill,
Oh I thought we were all young again at the Cross of Spancilhill.*

*It being on the twenty-third of June, the day before the fair,
Sure Erin's sons and daughters, they all assembled there.
The young, the old, the brave and the bold, came there to sport and kill,
What a curious combination at the Fair of Spancilhill.*

*I went into my old home as every stone can tell,
The old boreen was just the same, and the apple tree over the well,
I missed my sister Ellen, my brothers Pat and Bill,
And I only met strange faces at my home in Spancilhill.*

*I called to see the neighbours, to hear what they might say,
The old were getting feeble, and the young ones turning grey,
I met with tailor Quigley, he's as brave as ever still,
Sure he used to mend my breeches, when I lived in Spancilhill.*

*I paid a flying visit to my first and only love,
She's as pure as any lily and as gentle as a dove.
She threw her arms around me, saying, 'Mike I love you still.'
She is Mac the Ranger's daughter, the Pride of Spancilhill.*

*I thought to stoop to kiss her, as I did in days of yore
Says she, 'Mike you're only joking, as you often were before.'
The cock flew on the roost again, he crew both loud and shrill,
And I woke in California, far far from Spancilhill.*

*But when my vision faded, the tears came in my eyes,
In hopes to see that dear old spot, some day before I die.
May the joyous King of Angels, His Choicest Blessings spill,
On the glorious spot of nature, the Cross of Spancilhill.*

JIMMY MCHUGH'S

Reel

Jimmy McHugh



This tune is a composition of master fiddle player Jimmy McHugh, the 1957 Tyrone-born Senior All-Ireland fiddle champion. I remember well witnessing Jimmy's performance in the Senior Fiddle Competition in Dungarvan, County Waterford, and watching him holding the Michael Coleman Perpetual Cup when he was awarded first prize. It was the first All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil I ever attended. Jimmy's son Benny McHugh, a fiddle player who lives in Glasgow, graciously recorded a number of his father's compositions, including the one heard here. Not having a name for it, I decided on the above title, 'Jimmy McHugh's'. Sounds good to me.

Copyright Jimmy McHugh

SMALL FOX, BIG FIELD

Reel

Eric Eid-Reiner

5

10

14

19

Final ending

One of the young musicians featured in this collection and for whom I have much admiration is Eric Eid-Reiner. In his own words he tells us about his composition's title: 'This tune has nothing to do with hunting, despite what one might logically guess. I wrote this reel while waiting a long time for a taxi from a company with "fox" and "field" in its name. I observed several taxis from that company pass right by before mine finally arrived.' Since writing this tune in 2007, Eric has slightly revised the melody, which can be found in his book of original tunes and heard on a 2014 CD by The Moving Violations. The band members on that recording are Van Kaynor and Ron Grosslein on fiddles, Eric Eid-Reiner on piano, and Chuck Corman on bass.

Copyright Eric Eid-Reider

TOP OF THE BOW

Reel

Shannon Heaton

5

9

13

Regular ending

17

Final ending

Flute player Shannon Heaton wrote ‘Top of the Bow’ for her friends Emerald and Eden, two fiddle-playing sisters. They had their fiddles out in the car, learning a tune on the way to a gig. However, after realizing that their playing had left little marks in the car’s ceiling, they decided that it’s best to use just the very tip-top of the fiddle bow when playing in the car...

Copyright Shannon Heaton

MUG OF BLACK TEA

Jig

Josephine Keegan



Growing up in Ireland, and while practicing my fiddle in the home of my grandmother Elizabeth Collins (née Rochford), I drank many's the mug of black tea. I remember her tea being very strong and having to drink it without milk. I questioned my granny as to why she made it so strong. Her response to me was that it was 'no good unless you could trot a mouse on it'. Food for thought I suppose.

My good friend, the wonderful musician Josephine Keegan, composed this lovely tune. She plays it here for us on fiddle to her own piano accompaniment. Josephine did make some tea for Sandy and me when we visited her home in County Armagh and she did have milk! Josephine's composition may also be found in *The Keegan Tunes, Cuid a Trá* (Book 3).

Copyright Josephine Keegan

JOHN RYAN'S (NUMBER ONE)

Polka

The musical score is written in treble clef with a 2/4 time signature. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign. The second staff starts at measure 6 and includes first and second endings. The third staff starts at measure 11 and includes a triplet. The fourth staff starts at measure 15 and also includes first and second endings. The fifth staff, starting at measure 20, is labeled 'Final ending' and concludes the piece with a double bar line.

Broadcaster and collector Ciarán Mac Mathúna recorded this tune from John Ryan, the concertina player from County Tipperary, who lived on Thomas Street in Dublin City, across the street from the headquarters of the old Pipers' Club. The tune is played here by my nephew Damien Connolly on melodeon.

THE ROVING BACHELOR

Reel



This tune was played for me by Johnny McGreevy in 1972 on my first visit to Chicago. It may be found in *Ryan's Mammoth Collection* and in *O'Neill's Music of Ireland*. My gratitude to Tina Lech for her interpretation of this fine old reel.

DAN SULLIVAN'S FAVOURITE

Hornpipe



Uilleann piper Jerry O'Sullivan recorded this hornpipe for the collection. Taking it from an old cassette tape of Dan Sullivan's Shamrock Band which I gave him, Jerry reversed the order of the parts. I was never certain as to which was the first and which was the second part, as the recording on the tape I had began in the middle of the tune. At least now my mind is set at ease, thanks to Jerry. I never did have a name for the tune, hence 'Dan Sullivan's Favourite' became its title. Dan Sullivan was an amazing musician who did much for Irish music through the many 78 RPM recordings that he and his band made.

JABE MEADOW

Hornpipe



A hornpipe in the key of B flat beautifully played for us by Kimberley Fraser. It may be found in *Ryan's Mammoth Collection*. Somehow, the tune found its way to Ireland and into the hands of Seán McLaughlin, a fiddle player from County Antrim. Seán won the Senior All-Ireland fiddle championship in 1958 in Longford. He played many fine tunes when he broadcast on radio and television, including this hornpipe.

KEITH CORRIGAN'S

Jig



Keith Corrigan played melodeon and had some grand old tunes including this jig. It is another of the tunes that he played for me at his home in Québec. It is played on this track by Damien, my nephew.

MAXWELL'S

Reel

5

9

13

Regular ending

3 3 3

17

Final ending

The inimitable fiddle master Seán Maguire recorded this tune, with Josephine Keegan at the piano, on one of their records. Here we hear Gráinne Murphy giving us her special rendition of Maxwell's Reel.

WHELAN'S AULD SOW

Jig



The leader of the band Cherish the Ladies is Joanie Madden, who plays this tune for us on the flute. I first heard Eddie Moloney play it. Eddie came from Ballinakill in County Galway and may have named the tune. Tommy Whelan was a member of the Ballinakill Traditional Players. However, I do not know if he indeed owned a sow...

LAME CROWLEY

Jig



I knew that Billy McComiskey, Laura Byrne, and Donna Long, with their superlative musicianship, would be the right people to play this tune. I learned it many years ago from my long-time friend Mr. Larry Gavin. Billy was curious as to where the jig had come from, while saying in a few words that it sounded to him like a beautiful old melody. Glad you like it as much as I do, Billy.

THE BLUE-EYED RASCAL

Set Dance



The musical score for 'The Blue-Eyed Rascal' Set Dance is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The piece consists of five staves of music, each containing a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped in threes (triplets). The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a triplet of eighth notes. The second staff starts at measure 6. The third staff starts at measure 10. The fourth staff starts at measure 15. The fifth staff starts at measure 19 and ends with a double bar line and repeat dots. The music is characterized by its rhythmic complexity and the frequent use of triplets.

A tune not often heard is this set dance. I am grateful to Mr. Larry Redican Jr. for giving me permission to present his father's performance of it in this collection. I have fond memories of Larry Sr. playing it for me in my home when I lived in Ireland.

THE DUET

Hornpipe



A hornpipe played with great feeling and understanding by the great accordionist, the one and only James Keane from Dublin and New York. This tune first came to my attention a number of years ago when Larry Gavin performed it at Aonach Paddy O'Brien, in Nenagh, County Tipperary.

LARRY REDICAN'S

Jig

5

9

13

17

21

25

Kevin Burke learned this tune from a tape of Larry Redican which I sent to him, one of a number of tapes given to me by dancing master Mr. Roger Casey. Kevin plays this jig in his own lonesome and swinging style.

WEST LIMERICK

Slide

4

1. 2.

7

9 Regular ending Final ending

Another tune recorded the evening that Sandy and I traveled to Ardagh, County Limerick, to Peadar's Pub to record the exciting music of accordionist Donie Nolan. This is also a tune that Donie played in concert during our musical tour of Australia in 1994.

A LETTER FROM HOME

Reel



I first heard this tune played by fiddle legend Mr. Paddy Cronin from County Kerry. Paddy had a gift for breathing new life into lesser-known tunes. This reel is performed for us here by Liz and Yvonne Kane, two well-known musicians from County Galway. I love the fiddle music of Paddy Cronin, and in asking Liz and Yvonne to learn and record this reel I think I made the perfect choice.

PLAYLIST SIX

THE QUEEN OF MAY

Hornpipe



Leo Rowsome recorded this intricate hornpipe many years ago on a 78 RPM record. I recorded it with master piper Liam O'Flynn in 1988 on my record *Notes From My Mind*. On this track flute player Kevin Crawford joins me in keeping the tune alive.

LURGY STREAM

Song



The beautiful singing voice of All-Ireland Champion Rita Gallagher is once again heard on this track. The words of the song, and the others that she sang for the miscellany, appear courtesy of Rita. Thank you, my friend. More wonderful singing from Rita may also be heard on her 2010 CD recording, *The May Morning Dew*.

*When to this country I first came, my mind from love being free
'Til the beauty of a female fair, it so enticed me
Her cheeks were like the roses red, and her breath it smelled of perfume
Her golden hair waved in the air, most comely to be seen.*

*It being on a Monday evening, my love I chanced to meet
I took her in my arms, and gave her kisses sweet
I asked her if she would marry me, or single would remain
And if she'd cross over the seas with me, and leave sweet Lurgy Stream.*

*If I would cross over the seas with you, I might be much to blame
If I'd cross over the seas with you, and leave sweet Lurgy Stream
Young men are false in general, perhaps you are the same
You might leave me there to rue the day I left sweet Lurgy Stream.*

*Oh, that the sun it may withdraw, no more to show us light
And that the moon it may refrain, no more to rule the night
That the twinkling stars they may fall down, and never more be seen
The day or the hour that I'd prove false, when far from Lurgy Stream.*

*Farewell to Letterkenny it's a place of sport and fame
Likewise to Kilmacrennan, that stands near Lurgy Stream
Farewell a while to sweet Errigal, likewise to Swilly Shore
Where I spent many's a happy day, will I ever see you more?*

MORDAUNT'S FANCY

Jig

The musical score for 'Mordaunt's Fancy' is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign. The second staff includes first and second endings. The third, fourth, and fifth staves continue the main melody. The sixth staff includes a 'Regular ending' and a 'Final ending'.

This jig was played in my home in Killaloe, County Clare, when I was a young boy. It was not played by me, but by button accordionist Terry Lane on the turntable of our record player! Now, whenever I hear Mr. Lane's recordings, or 'Mordaunt's Fancy', it brings back childhood memories. My friend Geraldine Cotter from Ennis, County Clare, joins me on piano. We recorded the track in Geraldine's home in front of a blazing turf fire.

TURN OF THE SEASON

Hornpipe

Rodney Miller



I have had the great pleasure of living in New England for many years, first in Massachusetts, and now in Maine. When I reflect on the beauty of the region, I picture its snow, its mountains, rivers, and lakes. I think of springtime when everything greens up and comes alive. I think on the changing colours of autumn leaves, the amazing foliage, and the turning of the seasons. All of the above are wonderful gifts and all are part of nature's beauty. These visions are forever captured for me in this lovely musical piece, composed and performed on this track by fiddle player Rodney Miller from New Hampshire.

Copyright Rodney Miller

THE PLAINS OF MAYO

Jig



This jig is tune number 304 in [George] *Petrie's Complete Irish Music*. It is given a special melodic lift by Larry Gavin and Micheál O'Rourke on accordion and fiddle. Charlie Lennon adds his own unmistakable accompaniment on piano. They recorded this version of the tune especially for me. The tune may also be heard on their own CD recording *Two Miles to Tulla* in a set with 'The Galway Jig'.

AMBROSE MOLONEY'S

Reel

5

10

14

18

Final ending

Regular ending

Joe Burke, my lifelong friend, was leader of The Leitrim Céilí Band, named not for the county of Leitrim, but for a townland in east County Galway. I was honoured to have been a member of that musical group when we won the Senior Céilí Band competition in 1962. Ambrose Moloney was one of the flute players in the band and during a tour of England he gave me this tune. I had the honour of recording this reel in the early 1970s with the legendary Tipperary accordionist Paddy O'Brien, with Charlie Lennon at the piano.

THE REEL BUS

Reel

Barbara MacDonald Magone

5

10

14

1.

2.

On this track we hear a lovely reel performed by its composer, Barbara MacDonald Magone. Barbara tells us in her own words below how the tune came to be: 'In the spring of 2005, the San Francisco Fiddle Club (of which I am a member) took a tour of the Pacific Northwest. We traveled in two huge buses which were somewhat modified to accommodate the fiddle players (i.e., an area for sessions and refreshments). These buses were aptly named "Strathspey Bus" and "Reel Bus". I rode on the latter. Although I was a bit apprehensive at first about the trip, it turned out to be a wonderful experience. Bonnie Rutherford, a younger member of the SFFC, helped me to come up with the name of this tune.'

Copyright Barbara MacDonald Magone

ANCIENT STONES

Air

Margaret Lawrie



My long-time friend Margaret Lawrie from Birmingham, England, composed this lovely air. The tune was the title track on her latest CD recording, which was dedicated to ten-year-old Rose Cronin, who died of leukemia. Meg told me that she took pictures in the grounds and graveyard of Hereford Cathedral and began to think of all the musicians down through the ages who had played music in this ancient place. Thus, 'Ancient Stones'. Margaret and Michael Burnham perform the tune on this track on piano and violin.

Copyright Margaret Lawrie

SAVAGE PADDY

Reel

Damien Connolly



My nephew Damien Connolly plays his own composition on this track. I asked Damien for information on the tune and its title. He writes: 'I composed this tune on an old fiddle I purchased at an auction. The fiddle itself wasn't great, but it had a really nice tone. One day while playing around with the overtones on the lower strings, this tune came out. I just loved how gutsy the tune sounded so I called it "Savage Paddy". Whenever I love anything I say that it's "savage".'

Copyright Damien Connolly

THE BOAT TO BOFIN

Jig

Joanie Madden

Joanie Madden of Cherish the Ladies fame composed this happy jig. In her own words Joanie tells us of her inspiration: 'I was inspired to write this tune after a very rocky ferry ride to the beautiful island of Inishbofin off the coast of Connemara in County Galway.'

Copyright Joanie Madden



THE FOLLIES OF YOUTH

Strathspey

Sean Gavin



Another young player who contributed to this project is Sean Gavin from Detroit, son of fiddle player and teacher Mick Gavin from Meelick, County Clare. Here Sean plays the flute on one of his own compositions, a strathspey that somehow must have many stories behind its title. He is joined by his musical friend, fiddle player Devin Shepherd.

Copyright Sean Gavin

THE KEY IN THE KILN

Jig

Musical score for the Jig "The Key in the Kiln". The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 6/8. The melody consists of 26 measures, organized into six systems of five measures each. The first system (measures 1-5) begins with a repeat sign. The second system (measures 6-10) starts with a measure rest labeled '5'. The third system (measures 11-15) starts with a measure rest labeled '9'. The fourth system (measures 16-20) starts with a measure rest labeled '13'. The fifth system (measures 21-25) starts with a measure rest labeled '17' and includes a first and second ending bracket over measures 24 and 25. The sixth system (measures 26-26) starts with a measure rest labeled '26' and is labeled "Final ending".

Monsignor Charles Coen recorded the jig on this track. In his own words, Father Charlie tells us what he knows about the tune:

'This tune "The Key in the Cill" or "The Key in the Kiln" was popular in Woodford when I was growing up. It was a great favourite of Bill Logue's. Bill took a strong sweet tone from a flute and had amazing breath control. As with many Irish tunes, the title doesn't have to make sense. "Cill" being the Irish for "church", the title could mean "The Key in the Church", or "church key", or the latter sometimes a humorous name for a corkscrew, or "Kiln" being a place for burning lime, it may have some strange connection with that. The tune is important for me because I made my debut along with Bill's son Josie at a church concert playing it on two fifes. I was ten and Josie was eight and it was the only tune we both knew. My mother had some words to that melody as follows:

"The girls are on the lookout young men,
The flowers are blooming,
It is Spring and June will surely a wedding bring.
The girls are on the lookout young men."

Slán, Charlie.



CHABONELLE

Reel

Matilda Murdoch



Another fine tune from fiddle player and composer Mrs. Matilda Murdoch from New Brunswick, Canada. Maeve Donnelly from Quin in the County of Clare delightfully performs it on this track with an Irish interpretation. This was exactly what I was hoping to hear, and it also pleased Mrs. Murdoch very much.

Copyright Matilda Murdoch

THE OLD MILL ROAD

Reel

Paddy O'Brien



As I travel throughout the country, I have a compulsive habit of looking at street signs in the hope of discovering a good name or title for a new musical composition. I have seen a few variations on the above title and often wondered what road accordionist Paddy O'Brien was referring to when he named this tune, one of his many fine compositions. Paddy, from County Offaly, has been a friend and inspiration for many years. I have fond memories of him and me as teenagers playing music together in Tullamore, County Offaly. We were both young then, but the memories live on.

Copyright Paddy O'Brien

OLD AS THE HILLS

Jig



Jack Coen gave me the name for this jig, which can be found as a two-part tune in A major in the *O'Neill's 1001* collection. I first heard the tune played by 'The Man of Many Tunes', Larry Gavin. I also heard a version of it performed by Mr. David Curry and his orchestra in a radio broadcast when I was still living in Ireland. A classical musician, David Curry took traditional tunes in the public domain and arranged them for orchestra. Maine flute player Nicole Rabata and I play David Curry's four-part setting of 'Old as the Hills'. We transposed it to the key of G major, the key that Larry Gavin played it in many years ago.

A POKE AND A TICKLE

Single Jig

Eric Eid-Reiner

5

1.

fine

9

2.

13

17

1.

2.

D.C. al Fine

While reflecting on Eric Eid-Reiner's musical compositions, my first thought was that he created 'happy music'. Indeed, as Eric himself described it, this is 'a light-hearted jig with a sense of humour'. Eric kindly arrived at Boston College one Sunday morning at eight o'clock to record this tune in the Irish Room at Gasson Hall. An unreasonable and unnatural hour, one might say, for a musician to record. Thanks for being so gracious, as always, Eric.

SARAH'S VALENTINE

Jig

Eamon Flynn



Eamon Flynn composed this slow jig for his daughter Sarah on Valentine's Day when she was five years old. Sarah asked her dad to 'do a song' for her. What a lovely present to get, one that will remain documented forever. This recording comes to us courtesy of Eamon. It was taken from his CD *Down by the Glenside*, which he recorded with our mutual friend Helen Kisiel playing piano.

Copyright Eamon Flynn

CHECK YOUR BALANCE

Reel

Devin Shepherd

5

10

14

18

Regular ending

Final ending

The wonderful young fiddle player Devin Shepherd, from Chicago, composed this tune and gave it to me for this collection. Lovely music, Devin. He gives us the tune's history: 'My idea with this tune was to compose something that sounded truly traditional. Therefore, I was delighted when the Cork fiddle player John Daly, who lived in Chicago for many years, commented that this tune was "like one the old guys would play back home".'

Copyright Devin Shepherd

HEALY'S HOUSE

Reel

Richard Dwyer



This fine tune comes to us through the courtesy of Richard Dwyer, multi-instrumentalist, singer, and composer from west County Cork, now living in Ennis, County Clare. Richard graciously allowed me to use this excerpt from his solo accordion and fiddle CD *In a Creative Mood*, a recording which is a must for admirers of his music and compositions. The title of the tune refers to the home of Richie's sister Margaret in West Cork, where he stayed while making the recording. Richard is accompanied by Micheál O'Rourke on piano, who is heard elsewhere in this collection ('The Galway Jig' and 'The Plains of Mayo') on the fiddle.

Copyright Richard Dwyer

FLY AS A BIRD

Hornpipe



And here is Julia and Billy Clifford's version of 'Fly as a Bird', which they recorded for me that night so long ago in Tralee, County Kerry. (Kimberley Fraser's version of this tune is in playlist five.)

AN CHÚILFHIONN

Song/Air



There are a number of versions of the ever-popular air 'The Coolin'. Two versions may be heard on this track, performed by harper/singer Pádraigín Caesar and her sister Siobhán on whistle. An English translation of the poem, written in the Irish language in the seventeenth century by Maurice O'Dugan, may be found in the anthology *1000 Years of Irish Poetry*.

TOM TURKINGTON'S IN B FLAT

Hornpipe



Tom Turkington's performance on my fiddle that night long ago in County Clare featured this hornpipe in B flat. I don't have a title for this tune, so I pay tribute to Tom Turkington by naming it for him. Listening to the great Kimberley Fraser's performance of the tune brings me back in time and somehow makes me long for that old fiddle of mine.

THE BLUE RIBBON POLKA

Polka



Another tune popular in Boston during the days of the Dudley Street dance halls was this polka. It is played here on uilleann pipes by Jerry O'Sullivan from New York.

WINIFRED'S WELL

Air

Margaret Lawrie



Another composition by Margaret Lawrie, twin sister of Kathleen Lawrie, who plays on several tracks in this collection. The tune somehow reminded her of scenes she encountered in the Welsh Highlands, so Michael Burnham, who plays fiddle on this track with Meg on piano, suggested she name it for Winifred, a Welsh saint. The tune was also recorded by Margaret and Michael for their CD *Bygone Days*. I am delighted to have the tune included in this collection.

AROUND LOUGH GRANEY

Reel



Who better to perform this tune than Martin Hayes, whose home place in County Clare is close to Lough Grane? This reel was shared back and forth across the Shannon among musicians from counties Galway, Tipperary, and Clare. Martin's treatment of the tune gives us exactly what I hoped to hear: his deep insight into the stylistic elements of this lovely reel.

THE VANISHING KEYS

Reel

Richard Dwyer

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, featuring a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature (C). The piece is a reel, indicated by the 'Reel' label. The score is divided into five systems of music. The first system contains measures 1 through 4. The second system, starting at measure 5, contains measures 5 through 8. The third system, starting at measure 9, contains measures 9 through 12. The fourth system, starting at measure 13, contains measures 13 through 17 and includes a first and second ending bracketed together. The fifth system, starting at measure 18, is labeled 'Final ending' and contains measures 18 through 20. Measure numbers 5, 9, 13, and 18 are placed at the beginning of their respective systems. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' in measure 14.

Many of my fellow chronic misplacers of keys can relate to the above title. What a great name for a great tune! It is played here in grand style by its composer Richard Dwyer in another excerpt from his solo CD *In a Creative Mood*. Richie's wonderful playing of this happy reel on the accordion brings a smile to my face and lifts my heart along the way.

Copyright Richard Dwyer

TURLOUGH

Air

Rodney Miller



Rodney Miller once again demonstrates that he is not only a fiddle player of extraordinary talent, but also a fine crafter of tunes. Here he plays his composition 'Turlough'.

THE FIDDLEMASTER

Strathspey



During one of his short visits to Boston from his native County Donegal, the great gentleman Tommy Peoples took time out of his busy schedule to record this tune for me at The Center for Irish Programs at Boston College. It was a thrill and an honour for me to spend time with this master musician, an afternoon of music that will stay with me forever.

LOUGH KEY

Slip Jig

Larry Redican

5

9

13

Regular ending

17

Final ending

A lovely slip jig played here for us by its composer, master fiddle player Larry Redican. Lough Key in County Roscommon is one of the beautiful lakes in Ireland famous for its fishing.

Copyright Larry Redican

SÉAMUS CONNOLLY'S

Hornpipe

Matilda Murdoch



I was honoured when Mrs. Matilda Murdoch from New Brunswick composed this hornpipe for me on her ninetieth birthday. After a night of playing music together at her daughter's home in Massachusetts, Matilda presented me with this very recording of herself playing her composition. A wonderful lady, a great composer and fiddle player, Matilda Murdoch has done much for the music of the Gael. God bless you, my friend. Gabriel Donohue added piano accompaniment to Matilda's fiddle, and we both spoke to her at her home as she celebrated her ninety-second birthday. She loved the track with Gabriel's piano playing. She asked Gabriel if he would go on tour with her – so young at heart!

Copyright Matilda Murdoch

THE SWALLOWS' RETURN

Clog

Matilda Murdoch



Another tune from the pen and heart of fiddle player Matilda Murdoch is the one played on this track by Maeve Donnelly. Maeve remains true to the spirit of Matilda's own style of playing, while giving it her own personal interpretation, weaving through the tune with an Irish and Canadian touch. Thanks again, Maeve, and thank you, Matilda: from Canada to County Clare.

Copyright Matilda Murdoch

BILLY CAPLES' BARNDANCE

Barndance



This barndance is another tune from the repertoire of Boston accordionist Billy Caples. I am joined by Nicole Rabata playing flute and Kevin McElroy playing the tenor banjo. Gabriel Donohue later added his piano playing to the track.

JACK O'HANLEY'S

Reel



Mr. Jack O'Hanley from Boston via Prince Edward Island, Canada, was ninety years of age when he gave me this tune. Jack's command of the fiddle at such an advanced age was simply amazing. I visited his home often and we enjoyed one another's company and music very much. The reel as played on this recording is a joy to hear. John Daly from County Cork does us the honour with his beautiful expressive fiddle playing, remaining faithful to the relaxed tempo that Mr. O'Hanley employed when he recorded this tune for me.

OLD MAN IN THE HOB

Song

Robbie McMahon



In this song, the old man sitting by the fireside calls his sons together to relate to them what it was like living and surviving in days gone by: true stories of tough times. Running somewhat parallel with the words of this song are words spoken to me by a wonderful lady in Killaloe who was born in the year 1866. I interviewed her in 1960 and asked what she attributed her long life to. She answered, 'Hard work and plain food, with half enough of it sometimes'. Sobering words, indeed.

Robbie McMahon, the master balladeer and composer, sings for us once again on this track. I first heard him singing this song around the same time as I did that interview with the lady from Killaloe. Robbie's compositions often tell of days gone by. He was a powerhouse of information and history, and his delivery of these songs had a way of transporting us back in time. He was a household name in County Clare, and in my home he was loved by all within.

The final verse in his song opens with a call for Father Dan. It was this same verse that appeared by kind permission on my mother's Memorial Card when she 'passed on to her eternal shore'. Thanks to my brother Michael for reminding me of Robbie's composition. The master kindly sang it for me again when I recorded him in his home in Spancilhill, County Clare, a few short years before he himself went to his place 'far beyond the sky'. The lines below are from that same last verse:

'Oh Father Dan, how are you, and come over here to me.
Come lay your holy hand on me for I am on my way,
To a land that's far beyond the sky where I'll have pains no more,
For God himself has called me to his own eternal shore.'

Robbie, we will miss you. Your likes will not be seen again.

Old Man in the Hob

*Sit back into your chairs my boys
And I'll stay in the hob.
I'll fill me twisty pipe once more
And put it in me gob.
And when the smoke ascends me boys,
A tale I'll tell to you
Concerning my youthful days
A story sad and true.*

*Come all you wild craiceálaighs
Come listen here to me.
Shure I am old and feeble now,
My age being eighty three.
But I was once so young like you,
But times have changed since then.
Ah'h God give me my memory now
'Til I think back again.*

*And talk of eighty years ago
When I was very small.
I had no bike to ride on
Or motor car at all.
For all I got were stumpy feet
Which pained when snow did fall.
Cáibín and torn petticoat
Them times shure that was all.*

*When I was but a buachaillín
'Twas badly I was fed.
To school I went a barefoot boy,
No butter on me bread.
And boys when I did scamper home
Or do you think it great
For all I got was buttermilk
And praties on me plate.*

*When I had grown to manhood,
Those times were very tough.
My land was small and very poor.
I scarcely had enough.
I dug those hills with spade me boys
With sweat down from me brow.
Them times we had no horse at all,
And no one knew a plough.*

*Ah'h boys when I was young like you,
I never will forget,
The hunger and the pains of cold,
And the hardships which I met.
But then it was so great to be
Let live from day to day.
Ah'h God be with my youth a stór
Is all that I should say.*

*Come pass me o'er me snuffbox now
And I will take a sniff.
It satisfies a man like me,
Who's feeble, old, and stiff.
Come lift me from this hob me boys
For something's happening queer.
If those chairs aren't moving boys
Then death for me is near.*

*Come take me by the arm now
And bring me o'er me stick
To walk me to my bedroom door
For I am feeling sick.
Now lay me gently on me bed
And call in Father Dan.
For something strange came o'er me,
Come hurry if you can.*

*Oh, Father Dan, how are you?
And come over here to me.
Come lay your holy hand on me
For I am on me way
To a land that's far beyond the sky
Where I'll have pains no more.
For God Himself has called me
To His own eternal shore.*

PLAYLIST SEVEN

EOCHAILL

Song



My dear friend Ann Mulqueen, formerly of Castleconnell, County Limerick, and now living in An Rinn, the Gaeltacht area of County Waterford, is the singer on this track. Ann travelled throughout Ireland competing at Fleadhanna Ceoil, and she was much sought after as a performer of the great ballads of Ireland. She amassed a huge collection of songs from her grandmother, which no doubt were helpful to her during her competitive years, when she won a number of All-Ireland singing titles. On this track we hear her singing 'Eochaille', a love song in Irish which she learned from the great Gaeltacht singers of An Rinn. This track appears on her CD *Mo Ghrása Thall na Déise*. The English translation of the lyrics is provided courtesy of Tomás Ó Ceilleachair.

*Maidin Domhnaigh 's mé ag dul go hEochaille,
Do casadh an óigbhean orm sa tslí.
Bhí scáil 'na leacain ar dhath na rósaí,
'S ba bhinne a glór ná na ceolta sí.
Leagas mo lámh thar a bráid le mórtas,
Agus d'iarr mé póigín ar stór mo chroí.
'S é dúirt sí stad is ná strac mo chlóca,
'S gan fios do ghnósa ag bean do thí.*

*Seo mo lámh duit ná fuilim pósta,
'S gur buachaill óg mé thug gean do mhnaoi;
'S dá dtriallfá liomsa thar n-ais go hEochaille,
'S go bhfaighfeá ómós mar gheobhadh bean tí.
Chuirfinn high-caul cap i gceart 's i gcóir ort,
Gúna, clóca 'gus caipisín.
Beidh siopa drám' agat don bhfíon 's don bheoraigh
'S do leanbh dóighiúil ag tarraingt dí.*

Níl ann ach uair bheag ó d'fhágas Eochail,
'S ní ligeann an brón dom filleadh arís.
Do bheadh mo mhuintir i bhfeirg mhór liom,
'S ní bhfaighinnse fóirhint óm' chairde gaoil.
Leath a n-abair siad, ní dhéanaim a gcomhairle
Ach buailim an bóthar de ló a's d'oích'.
Is cailín scaite mé tá ag siúl an bhóthair,
Ag lorg an eolais ar Cheapach Chuinn.

Translation from the Irish by Tomás Ó Ceilleachair

Youghal

*One Sunday morning as I walked to fair Youghal, I met a young woman whom I thought I could lure.
The hue on her cheeks was as red as the roses and no fairy sang sweeter, of that I am sure.
I proudly embraced her and requested a sweet kiss,
But she told me have manners and not tear her cloak, 'You've a young wife at home who knows nothing of this.'*

*I'll give you my word that I am not married, but your beauty attracts me so fondly to thee,
And if you'll come with me back to fair Youghal I'll make you a wife of the highest degree.
I'll dress you serenely in a high caul cap, a dress and a cloak and a lovely caipín,
You'll have fun and enjoyment with beer, ale and fine wine, and on your breast you'll nurture your little stoirín.*

*It's only a while since I left Youghal and great misfortune will not let me return.
My parents are angry and will not support me and friends and relations will leave me to mourn.
I listen not to what they tell me and I'll hit the road when the light is dim.
I'm a wayward lady of great misfortune so pray tell me the way to sweet Cappoquin.*

JOY OF MY LIFE

Jig



This well-known jig is performed on this track by yours truly, Séamus Connolly. With help on the banjo from my friend Kevin McElroy, we offer this grand two-part jig as a way to invite musicians to play this tune once again. The interesting second part of the tune comes from the fiddle playing of Thomas Power from Doonbeg in County Clare.

I LOVE YOU NOT AND I CARE NOT

Jig

5

1. 2.

10

14

1. 2.

19 Final ending

One could say not a very pleasing or romantic title, but certainly a tune worth preserving, even more so when it's played on the fiddle by Maeve Donnelly. Whilst driving through Italy with Chrysandra (Sandy), my wife, this old jig came into my head, and I scribbled some of the notes on paper so that I would remember it again. I had first heard the tune played on the Céilí House programme in the 1960s by the well-known nine-brother band The McCusker Brothers, from Northern Ireland. What a pleasant coincidence it was, upon my return from Italy, to hear the tune on Maeve's 2002 recording *Maeve Donnelly*. Maeve has done me the honour of playing it again for this collection.

MÁIRE MO CHARA

Air

Josephine Keegan

9

17

25

33

41

49

57

This air, played here by its composer, Josephine Keegan, is a special tribute to her friend Máire McDonnell-Garvey, author of numerous books on the history and music of the West of Ireland. Máire worked all her life promoting traditional Irish music. She was secretary to the Dublin County branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, and she was a fine fiddle player in the Roscommon and Sligo styles of playing. Thank you, Josephine, for remembering Máire with this lovely air.

Copyright Josephine Keegan

CANYON JIG

Jig

David Reiner

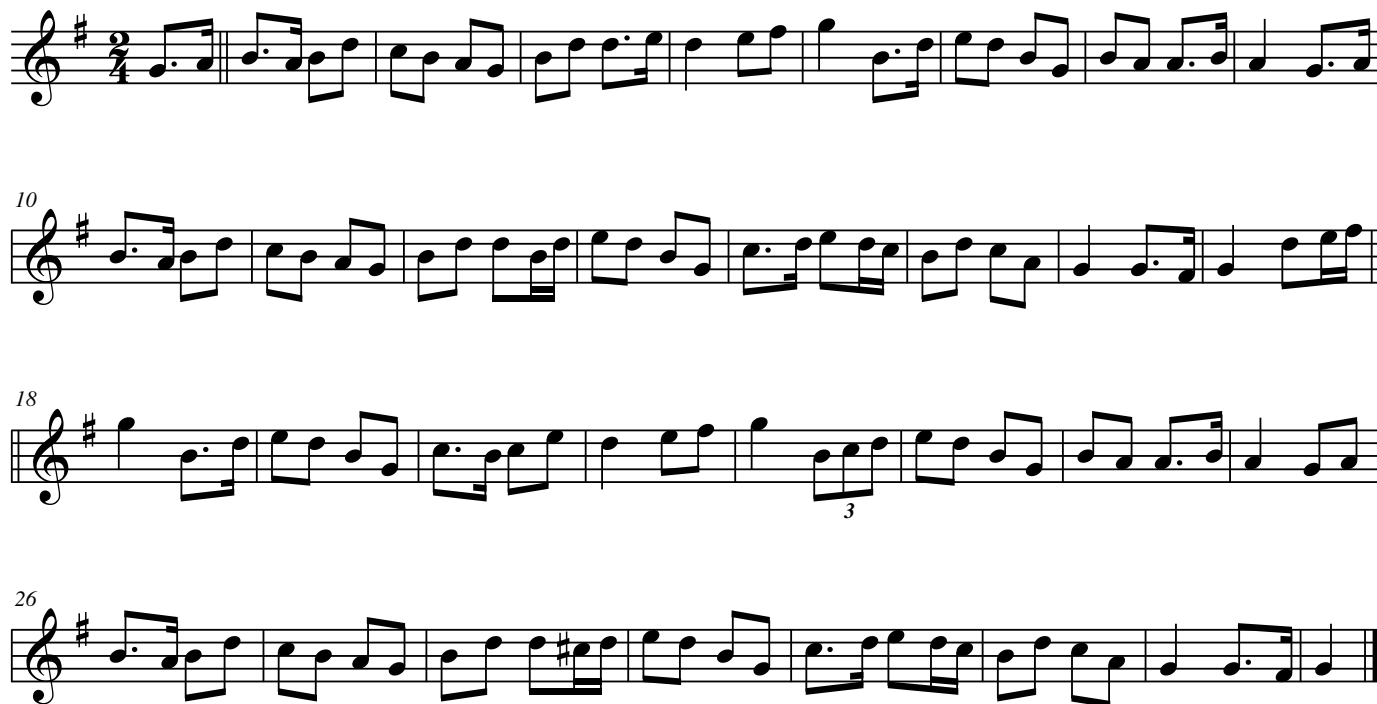


David Reiner has published a number of fiddle books, including *Anthology of Fiddle Tunes* (Mel Bay). According to Dave, this tune came together in his head while he was hiking with his parents and brother in the Canadian Rocky Mountains. After he returned from the hike he picked up his fiddle and, he writes, 'made a few improvements to the tune, including the ending that tumbles down arpeggios like a waterfall into a canyon'. The great Liz Carroll recreates Dave's musical hiking adventure with her interpretation of this composition.

Copyright 1983, David Reiner

THE BRAVE IRISH BOYS

March



Irish céilí dancing was very popular in the late 1950s and early '60s, and dancers loved the idea of dancing to the music of different bands. In the late 1950s I was invited to join The Ormond Star Céilí Band, one of a number of bands that were formed around the banks of the Shannon and Lough Derg. The Ormond Star counted among its members many fine musicians, including All-Ireland champion button accordionist Paddy Ryan from Coolbawn, Nenagh, County Tipperary, and fiddle player Liam O'Connor, originally from Brosna, County Kerry. Liam taught me many tunes, including the one played on this track by my friend Nicole Rabata on flute, with myself on fiddle. Just for the record, The Ormond Star did travel to Dublin to make a long-playing recording – exciting times for me as a teenager.

LEAMANAGH CASTLE

Reel

The musical score for the reel 'Leamanagh Castle' is written in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The melody consists of six staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1 through 4, with a triplet of eighth notes in the fourth measure. The second staff contains measures 5 through 8, also with a triplet in the eighth measure. The third staff contains measures 9 through 12. The fourth staff contains measures 13 through 16, with a triplet in the fourth measure and a sharp sign on the eighth note of the fifth measure. The fifth staff contains measures 17 through 20. The sixth staff contains measures 21 through 24, with a bracket labeled 'Regular ending' spanning measures 23 and 24. A seventh staff, starting at measure 25, is bracketed and labeled 'Final ending', showing a short concluding phrase.

Flute player Frank Neylon had a repertoire of fine tunes associated with his native Kilnaboy in north County Clare. Frank was living in Boston, Massachusetts, when I arrived there from Ireland in the 1970s. He was well-known and respected by all as a gentleman and a fine musician. He made some 78 RPM recordings with the County Kerry fiddle player Paddy Cronin, and he was featured on a long-playing record that I produced of musicians living in and around the Boston area in 1979. I asked Nicole Rabata to learn this reel from Frank's flute playing. For want of the tune's real title, I took the liberty of naming it after a landmark in Frank's home area.

AFTERMATH OF THE ICE STORM

Slow Reel

Rodney Miller



New England is known for its ever-changing weather patterns, and for snow, rain, sleet, and ice. In 2008, the New England states were badly hit with an unforgettable ice storm. People were stranded and without heat in their homes for weeks. Trees were laden down with ice, and the roads were treacherous to drive and walk on. One of the good things that came as a result of the ice storm is this tune composed and played here by Rodney Miller. Certainly, Rodney, your tune will forever remind us of those glittering shiny trees, the downed electrical and phone lines and, of course, the wonderful people who work so hard and so diligently to bring our lives back to normal in the aftermath of such a storm.

Copyright Rodney Miller

WEST CORK MAESTRO

Reel

Finbarr Dwyer

5

9

13

17

21

25

29

Regular ending

33

Final ending

When I visited Finbarr Dwyer at his home in Clarecastle, County Clare, he generously made a recording for me which included this less familiar composition of his. Finbarr was most humble and did not give his tune much credit, let alone a title. He would probably have given us a different interpretation had he played it again for me. That's Finbarr, a master musician, composer, and improviser – surely a genius if ever there was one.

Copyright Finbarr Dwyer

THE STONE FIDDLE

Reel

Josephine Keegan



Josephine Keegan, the prolific composer, fiddle player, and pianist, made up this top-notch tune. Thanks, Josephine, for sending it to me for inclusion in this collection.

CATHAL'S REEL

Reel



The revered traditional music group The Boys of the Lough performed in Boston in the late 1980s. At a house gathering that same evening, their flutist Cathal McConnell played this tune for me. The tune is performed for us on this track by Catherine McEvoy, who brings to bear her very own masterly interpretation and style.

TYRONE AMONG THE BUSHES

Hornpipe



Another tune from the playing of Tom Turkington from County Tyrone. This hornpipe is one of the tunes that he played on my fiddle so long ago at a concert at a Fleadh Cheoil in County Clare. Séamus Duffy, the traditional singer and adjudicator, introduced Tom that night with the words, 'We'll go up north now to Tyrone among the bushes!' I think it makes a great title for this hornpipe, which is played on this track by Kimberley Fraser from Cape Breton. Again, my sincere thanks to Kimberley and to all the musicians who took the time to learn tunes and perform them for this collection. All of you are heroes.

WEAVER FLYNN

Reel

Eamon Flynn



Multi-instrumentalist and composer Eamon Flynn wrote this tune to honour his wife, Vicki. Vicki's maiden name was Weaver. This track comes from a CD Eamon recorded with our mutual friend Helen Kiesel, who is often sought after as a piano accompanist by traditional musicians in the Boston area. The CD is named *Down by the Glenside*, and it features Eamon in full flight on a number of instruments. He is a wonderful musician, composer, and my friend for over fifty years. Thanks, Eamon, for all the music. Your influence in the Boston and New England music scene will forever remain strong.

Copyright Eamon Flynn

IDENO

Reel

Damien Connolly

5

9

13

17

My nephew Damien Connolly plays another of his compositions on the fiddle on this track. When I asked him the name of the tune he gave me the answer, 'Ideno', a Killaloe contraction of 'I don't know'!

Copyright Damien Connolly

HOW ARE YOU, SANDY?

(SANDY CONNOLLY'S)

Jig

Bill Black



It meant much to my wife Sandy and me when Bill Black, our friend from Cape Cod, sent us a tune that he composed in her honour entitled 'How Are You, Sandy?' Bill later sent the tune under the new title 'Sandy Connolly's' when she left us to go to her eternal reward. Thank you, sir, for caring so much. Sandy was very moved by your thoughtfulness. My friend Kevin McElroy joins me on this track.

JOHNNY'S WELCOME HOME

Reel



Billy Clifford recorded this tune for me that night long ago in Tralee, County Kerry. The memories of that evening remain with me always, especially delightful when I listen to the tape Billy and his mother made for me that evening so long ago. What generosity. A version of 'Johnny's Welcome Home' appears in *O'Neill's 1001*.

THE HOMECOMING

Waltz

Kathleen Boyle



Kathleen Boyle, a great musician from Glasgow, composed this tune for her mother and father. They had returned home to County Donegal after living for forty-seven years in Scotland. Kathleen, who plays her composition on this track, travels back and forth from Scotland to America very often. She is a member of Joanie Madden's Cherish the Ladies ensemble. There is more on this young lady elsewhere in the collection.

Copyright Kathleen Boyle

AN TÓSTAL

Reel

Leo Rowsome



Leo Rowsome, known as ‘The King of the Pipers’, wrote this lovely reel. It is played on this track by fiddle player John Daly. ‘An Tóstal’, according to my good friend Helena Rowsome, Leo’s daughter, means ‘a pageant or assembly of ordinary people’. Here Helena describes ‘An Tóstal’ in her own words. Thank you, dear friend.

‘I well remember when An Tóstal was held in Dublin. The entire city was cleaned up and flower baskets, flags and bunting of all colours placed on O’Connell Bridge. I recall thinking that Dublin must be the best place on earth. It provided a great incentive to tidy the city and instill civic pride again in its people. It was from An Tóstal that the current well-known “Tidy Towns” competition came.

On one designated Sunday during An Tóstal (which would last for a couple of weeks), the GPO would be decorated with more flags than usual and a big platform placed outside for dignitaries of the State... I recall seeing the President, Seán T. O’Kelly, on the platform addressing the people during his presidency in 1954. I was eight then and daddy lifted me up to see the goings on...

Dad played at many events during An Tóstal, including a céilí at the Mansion House. He composed the reel for obvious reasons: his celebration of a great festival. An Tóstal lasted from 1953 into the 1960s when it sort of phased out.’

Copyright Leo Rowsome

O'REILLY'S FANCY

Reel



My friend in Tulla, Larry Gavin, sent me this reel thirty-five years ago. I love Larry's accordion playing and I am grateful to him for supplying many wonderful tunes to me during all the years that I have lived in America. Larry, as they say, you 'kept me at it'. The reel is played on this track by Joanie Madden.

CHARLIE MULVIHILL'S JIG IN A

Jig

Charlie Mulvihill



Accordionist, concertina player, and composer Charlie Mulvihill from New York composed this tune. Charlie was very friendly with the great Paddy Killoran, master fiddle player from County Sligo. When Paddy Killoran died, his wife Betty gave Charlie the 78 RPM recordings that Paddy had recorded in the 1930s and '40s. Charlie transferred the records to tape for Mrs. Killoran to enjoy once again. Along with the Killoran recordings, Charlie gave her a tape of his own compositions which includes this jig cleverly structured around the recurrence of the note 'A'. He plays it on this track with his daughter Geraldine on piano and son Tommy on fiddle. I am grateful to Tommy Mulvihill for giving me permission to feature the track with this collection.

Copyright Charlie Mulvihill



THE SAVAGE SEAS

Song

Ed Fitzgerald



I first heard this song many years ago, sung by Ed and Ruth Fitzgerald from Kildare, Prince Edward Island, Canada. The song tells the story of the seas surrounding the Island. Ed composed the song for a competition on the Island, but forgot about it for many years until we got together one night for some music and song in the home of our friends, Alice Bérubé and her husband Gerry Gill in Summerside, Prince Edward Island. We set up the recording machine after a lovely dinner prepared by Gerry, and this song was revived for us by Ed and Ruth. We had a wonderful evening.

The Savage Seas

*Come listen to the savage sea
As it batters the rocky shores
And above the seagull plaintive call
Hear the mighty breakers roar.
Travel with me to a land I love
Where the air is fresh and clean
To Prince Edward Island in the gulf
Alive with nature's green.*

*The springtime smells of fresh turned earth
Mingle gently with the breeze,
And the cattle from their winter's lair
To the pastures are set free.
The strengthened sun sinks to the west,
Beyond the hill and lea.
And the joys of nature do abound
On the island by the sea.*

*Though I may travel far and wide
Through this whole world ramble free,
There is a fond place in my heart
For this island by the sea.
A vision of this land I love
And a longing there to go
To Prince Edward Island in the gulf
Where the towering spruce do grow.*

*Come listen to the savage sea
As it batters the rocky shore
And above the seagull's plaintive call
Hear the mighty breakers roar.
Travel with me to a land I love
Where the air is fresh and clean
To Prince Edward Island in the gulf
Alive with nature's green.*

RIVERVIEW CABIN A

Reel

Barbara MacDonald Magone

5

9

14

Regular ending

Final ending

3

Barbara MacDonald Magone composed this tune on a trip to one of the best-known and best-loved fiddle camps. She writes, 'This reel was written for the great cabin I inhabited (with many good musician friends) over the many years that I taught at the Valley of the Moon Scottish Fiddle camp in the redwoods in northern California.'

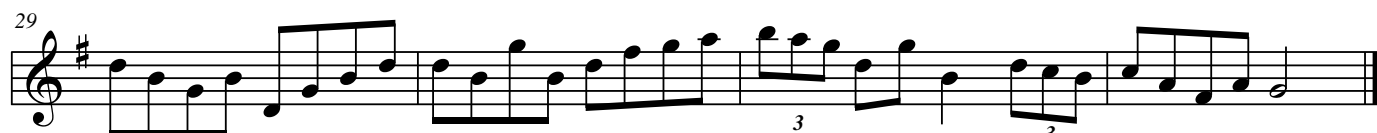
MAN AT THE HELM

Reel

Séamus Connolly



The recording ends with the music below:



I made this tune to honour the late Larry Reynolds of Galway, my friend for many years. Larry took me under his wing when I arrived in Boston in the 1970s. As president of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann in Boston, he guided the organisation from strength to strength. Larry always gave a great welcome to any musician young or old who came to visit or live in Boston.

Copyright Séamus Connolly

SHANDON BELLS

Jig



Having lived in the beautiful and historic city of Cork in the 1960s, I often think back to the happy times I had while beginning to find my feet in the big world of city life. The clock tower of St. Anne's Church has special meaning for me because the Bells of Shandon often chimed as I walked past the church. Whenever I hear the wonderful poem 'The Bells of Shandon', penned by Francis Sylvester Mahony, it is with deep affection and recollection that I think of the Shandon Bells. Mahony's words are very meaningful to me, and I quote from his poem here for all to read:

'With deep affection
And recollection
I often think of
Those Shandon Bells
Whose sounds so wild would,
In the days of childhood,
Fling round my cradle
Their magic spells.
On this I ponder
Where'er I wander,
And thus grow fonder,
Sweet Cork, of thee.
With thy bells of Shandon,
That sound so grand on
The pleasant waters
Of the river Lee.'

The grand old jig 'Shandon Bells', the first in O'Neill's *The Dance Music of Ireland, 1001 Gems*, is played on this track by Nicole Rabata on flute and myself on fiddle. We play it as a four-part tune. I played it many times as a two-part jig in the city by the River Lee. I first heard the two extra parts played by David Curry and his orchestra. They are two parts well worth hearing and preserving for posterity.

DOMINICK MCCARTHY'S

Fling



The many accordion styles in Irish and Scottish music have always held a fascination for me. The music of Mr. Dominick McCarthy is a mixture of the music of these neighboring countries. I first heard his music on Radio Éireann, and I remember seeing him perform with fiddle player Seán Ryan at one of the early All-Ireland Fleadhanna Ceoil in the 1950s. Both of these men played a lot together where they lived in the Midlands of Ireland. Dominick McCarthy played this fling for me in his own distinctive style when I was on a visit to his home in the 1980s.

THOMAS POWER'S JIG

Jig



This jig, played here for us by Josephine Keegan from South Armagh, was learned from the cassette tape that Michael Power sent me of the playing of his father, Thomas Power, a lovely fiddle player from Doonbeg in west County Clare (see 'Thomas Power's Polka').

CON'S RETURN

Reel

Eamon Flynn

6

10

15

19

1.

2.

3

3

3

3

Final ending

This reel is another composition of the talented Eamon Flynn from County Limerick. Eamon's brother Con was not heard from for many years and when he suddenly returned home there was rejoicing all around the neighbourhood. Eamon celebrated his brother's return with this reel. The track here was taken from an old cassette tape of Eamon. Thanks to Gabriel Donohue for cleaning it up for me in his studio for all to hear.

Copyright Eamon Flynn

THOMAS POWER'S MARCH

March

6

11

15

20

Final ending

Another tune from the playing of Thomas Power from Doonbeg in County Clare. On this track, I am joined by Kevin McElroy on bodhrán and Nicole Rabata on flute to perform our interpretation of the march.

THE BELLS OF CONGRESS

Planxty

Séamus Connolly



The Bells of Congress were presented to the United States by the Ditchley Foundation of Great Britain in 1976. A replica of the bells in London's Westminster Abbey, they are rung in honour of the opening and closing of Congress, and on state occasions and all national holidays. The Old Post Office in Washington houses the Bells of Congress and a guided tour of the building by the National Park Service is worth taking.

In the 1980s, as part of a musical delegation to Washington, D.C., representing the State of Massachusetts, I had the honour of visiting the Old Post Office and hearing the bells ring. When in full peal, the bells can take up to three and a half hours to complete their continuous performance. However, my composition on this track takes only a few minutes. I am joined by Gabriel Donohue on guitar.

Copyright Séamus Connolly

BRÍD DONNELLY'S

Reel



I first heard this reel played by Bríd Donnelly, a fine flute player with The Pride of Erin Céilí Band from County Fermanagh. My friend Nicky McAuliffe calls it 'The West Clare', but I'm sure the musicians in West Clare would be pleased with the title I have given it here, just as they would have been delighted with Bríd's playing of it. Catherine McEvoy plays the reel on this track, with her nephew Paddy McEvoy on the piano. The music lives on.

TIGH AN CHEOIL

Song

Ann Mulqueen



My good friend Ann Mulqueen, one of Ireland's wonderful traditional singers, composed 'Tigh an Cheoil'. Tigh an Cheoil, the great pub in An Rinn in County Waterford, should be on everyone's list of places to visit when looking for a good pint, great songs, and music. Listen as Ann brings us back to her time as Bean an Tí sa Tigh an Cheoil. Beautiful words, beautiful singing by the author. This track appears on her CD *Mo Ghrása Thall na Déise*.

Tigh an Cheoil

*Oh, slán to you dear Tigh an Cheoil where once the music rang,
With fiddles, flutes and bodhráns, and some lovely songs were sang.
But now a stór we leave you although our hearts are sore;
We will think of you for many a day as we stroll down by your door.*

*Ah, well do I remember when first I came to you,
From the far green fields of Limerick to Baile na nGall so true.
Where first I saw a trawler coming in from out of sea
And hear the draíocht of the native tongue, then I knew 'twas the spot for me.*

*On Tuesdays we'd have the Helvick boys, Paddy Tobin and Daveen,
Doug Shanahan and the China Doll, their likes you ne'er have seen.
And when everything was nice and snug Daveen would start the show,
With 'Boolavogue' or 'Danny Boy' and always 'Róisín Dubh'.*

*From Old Parish came the Comedian and oh, his eye was keen,
But the man who stole my heart away was gentle Nioclás Tóibín.
He sang with great sincerity and in his native tongue did shine,
With 'Sliabh na mBan', or 'Eochail', or 'An Bhuatais' so fine.*

*We had lots more with the Helvic Boys, Micil Tobin and Johnneen,
The coxwain and the Hardy Boy with his shirt so neat and clean.
Those were the days and now they're gone but I'll join them again once more,
Outside the counter in Tigh an Cheoil and we'll talk of days of yore.*

THE GREAT COMPOSER

Jig

Larry Redican



A prolific composer in the world of Irish music was master fiddle player Larry Redican. I didn't have a name for this jig, hence the title 'The Great Composer' came to mind. Larry plays the fiddle on this tune, which was a favourite of his friend Mr. Roger Casey, an Irish dance adjudicator. Roger kindly gave me all the recordings of Larry Redican which are featured in this collection, with the exception of the recording of 'Larry's Strange Jig'.

Copyright Larry Redican

MY MEITHEAL CLASS

Jig



A week-long Irish music school known as Meitheal is held every year in Limerick. The five-day immersion in Irish music is directed by flute player Garry Shannon. As a teacher at the summer school, I had an assignment to work with a group of students who were interested in learning how to make up tunes. The music of composers Liz Carroll, Josephine Keegan, and Phil Cunningham from Scotland were used as examples. Students were asked to study the approach and methods used by these well-known composers. ‘I’m not too sure where this is going to go’, I said to myself. ‘Music, I believe, happens when one is least thinking about it.’ However, after much listening, discussion, agreement, and collaborating, the students composed this tune. A talented group of young musicians – concertina players, accordionists, and other instruments all performing together — a wonderful sight to hear and behold! I have no fear for the future of Irish music. Nicole Rabata, a young flute player from Portland, Maine, joins me on this track. Listen and enjoy.

BILL SULLIVAN'S JIG

Jig

The musical score for 'Bill Sullivan's Jig' is written in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature. It consists of several staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign. The second staff includes a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.'). The third staff continues the melody. The fourth staff is marked with a '15' at the beginning. The fifth staff is marked with a '19' at the beginning. The sixth staff is marked with a '23' at the beginning and includes a 'Regular ending' section. The seventh staff is marked with a '27' at the beginning and includes a 'Final Ending' section.

Accordion player William Sullivan immigrated from Clifden, Ireland, to New York City in the 1920s, later settling in Parlin, New Jersey. He recorded this tune on Sampler Records in the late 1980s in a duo with Mitzie Collins, a hammered dulcimer and piano player. Bill Sullivan was a friend of the 1920s accordion player Peter 'P.J.' Conlon, and they often played music together. My friend Ted McGraw from Rochester told me that both these accordionists appeared on a 78 RPM recording on the Clarion label, with Peter Conlon on one side of the record and Bill Sullivan on the other. The jig is played on this track by my nephew Damien Connolly on melodeon. The title that I gave to the jig is 'Bill Sullivan's'. Names change from time to time: Bill Sullivan had named it for Mr. Conlon.

LARRY'S STRANGE JIG

Jig

6

10

14

18

22

26

30

34

39

Final ending

Ted McGraw has an amazing collection of music in his library. He sent me this recording of Larry Redican and suggested that it was 'a strange jig'. Ted doesn't know where the recording took place, and he has little or no information about the tune. My own intuition seems to suggest that the jig may be of Canadian origin. Thank you, Ted, for bringing the tune to light once more.

GAELIC ROOTS

Reel

Rodney Miller



The New England fiddle player Rodney Miller composed 'Gaelic Roots' at Boston College during one of the University's weeks of Irish music, song, and dance, when he was a special guest and visiting professor. Rodney honours us on this track with his beautiful music and sweet tone. He performed this tune on one of his own handmade instruments.

Copyright Rodney Miller

REMEMBERING CURLY

Air

Séamus Connolly

5

9

13

17

21

25

Copyright Séamus Connolly

Paula, a fiddle student in one of my classes at the Rocky Mountain Fiddle Camp, asked me to 'make a tune' in honour of her late father, Curly. Paula really wanted to play something new at the student concert which was to be held at the end of the week of classes. I agreed at the time, but somehow managed to forget her request until one afternoon, I awoke from a nap in a panic. I had only then remembered my promise to Paula, and then panicked more. Never having known Curly or anything about him, it was not easy to make a tune for him. However, I did take out my fiddle and gave it a few strokes. Happily, I began to get some ideas into my head of what 'Remembering Curly' might sound like. With some shape to the tune, Paula was able to play it at the concert.

A more complete version of the tune is heard on this track, with my good friends the late John McGann playing guitar and Gabriel Donohue on keyboard. John was very involved with the transcription of the tunes for this project but, alas, he left us too soon. So in John's memory, perhaps 'Remembering Curly Remembering John McGann' might be a perfect title for this tune. Thanks, John, for all the music, stories, laughs, and friendship.

PLAYLIST EIGHT

THE ROAD TO ATHENS

Reel

Paddy O'Brien

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature (C). The melody consists of five staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1 through 4. The second staff, starting with a measure number '5', contains measures 5 through 8. The third staff, starting with a measure number '9', contains measures 9 through 12 and includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 10. The fourth staff, starting with a measure number '13', contains measures 13 through 16 and includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 14. A bracket labeled 'Regular ending' spans measures 15 and 16. The fifth staff, starting with a measure number '17', contains measures 17 and 18 and includes a bracket labeled 'Final ending' spanning these two measures. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 18.

The wise man of traditional Irish music, Paddy O'Brien from County Offaly, composed this tune and graciously recorded it for me for inclusion in this collection. The Athens mentioned in the title is in southeastern Ohio, along the Hocking River. Athens is home to Ohio University. Paddy has fond memories of visiting Athens. Perhaps when he writes his autobiography he will reveal to us what went on down that road.

Copyright Paddy O'Brien

PADDY THE PIPER

Reel

The musical score for 'Paddy the Piper' is written in treble clef, key of D major (one sharp), and common time (C). It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket. The second staff starts at measure 6, includes a triplet of eighth notes, and has two first ending brackets. The third staff starts at measure 11 and continues the melody. The fourth staff starts at measure 15 and includes a first ending bracket. The fifth staff starts at measure 19, includes a second ending bracket, and concludes with a 'Final ending' section marked with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Brendan Bulger plays a lovely version of 'Paddy the Piper' on this track. Another version may be found in *Ryan's Mammoth Collection*. I first heard the tune played by Paddy Cronin, who loved playing tunes from that wonderful nineteenth century collection.

GO EASY, YOUNG HAG

Jig

Devin Shepherd

5

1. 2.

10

14

18

22

Regular ending Final ending

The fiddle playing of Devin Shepherd from Chicago is heard once again on this track, playing one of his own compositions. He is joined by Marta Cook, who plays the harp. A lovely tune, Devin, thanks for sending it along. Thank you too, Marta, for helping with the recording.

Copyright Devin Shepherd

WILLIE WEEK

Hornpipe

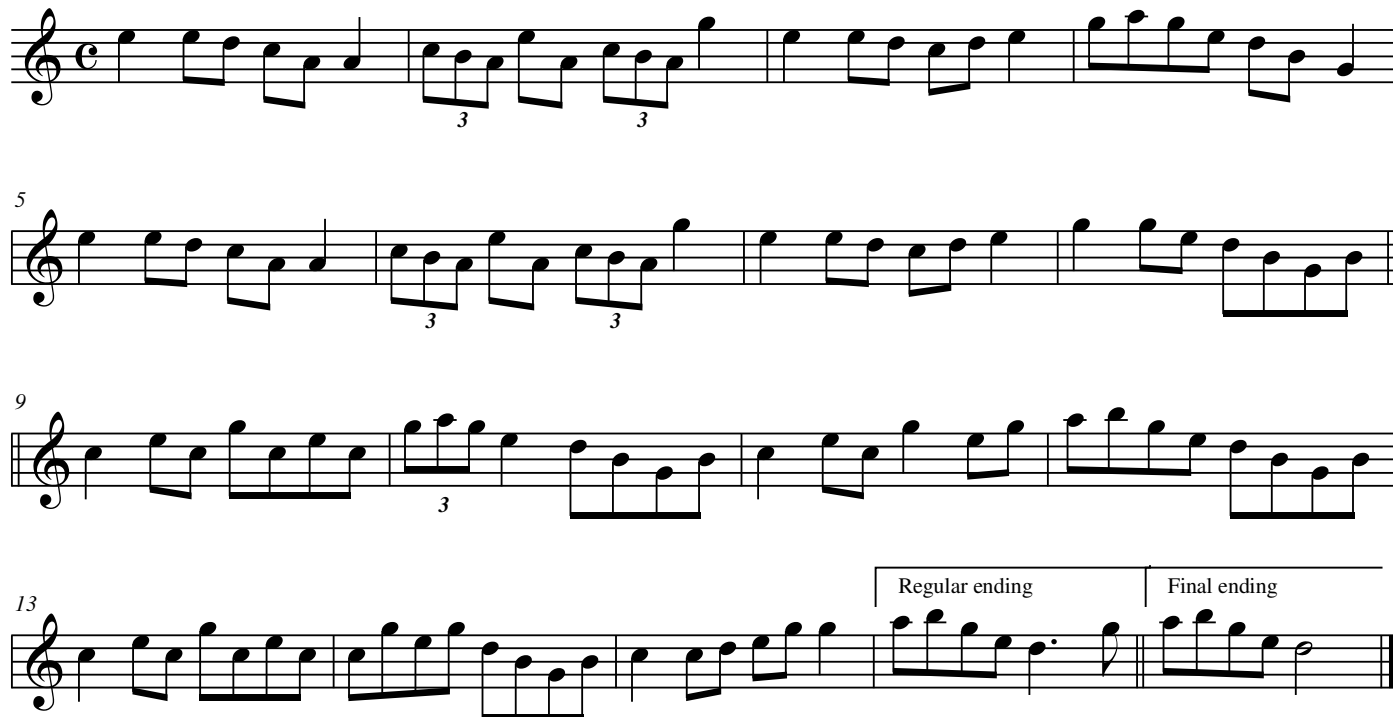
Jimmy McHugh



The memory of legendary piper Willie Clancy from County Clare continues to be immortalised with this fine hornpipe. A composition of County Tyrone's All-Ireland champion fiddle player Jimmy McHugh, the tune is played here for us by Jimmy's son Benny. Benny kindly recorded a number of his father's compositions for me in Donegal in 2009. The Willie Clancy Summer School, affectionately known as 'Willie Week', has special memories for me and for thousands of musicians and music lovers from around the world.

FRANK NEYLON'S

Reel



Flute player Frank Neylon lived in Boston when I arrived there in 1977. I loved listening to his beautiful, distinctive North Clare style of playing, and to the unusual tunes that he had brought with him to America. This is another of the tunes that he recorded for me on the long-playing record that I produced in Boston in 1981 (see 'Leamanagh Castle'). I played Frank's recording for Nicole Rabata, from Portland, Maine. She listened a few times and played along with Frank, capturing elements of his style, and said, 'Do you want me to record it for the book?' I'm glad I said yes. Enjoy Nicole's playing.

THE KILFENORA BARNDANCE

Barndance

6

11

15

3

3

1.

2

Regular ending

Final ending

This tune was one of the ones that I did not know on that tape sent to me over fifty years ago by Kitty Linnane, then leader of the famous Kilfenora Céilí Band (see 'Come to the Fair'). Indeed, many of the tunes on that tape were new to me. I had my work cut out for me, having to learn all of them for our upcoming tour of England. I am delighted that Tara Lynch (of the famed Kilfenora name) joined me on this track. It felt like home having Tara play with me. Thank you, my friend.

QUEEN OF THE FAERIES

Set Dance

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and contains measures 1 through 5. The second staff starts at measure 6 and includes a first ending bracket (1.) and a second ending bracket (2.) spanning measures 10 and 11. The third staff begins at measure 11 and contains measures 12 through 14. The fourth staff starts at measure 15 and also includes first and second ending brackets. Triplet markings (3) are placed under specific groups of notes in measures 5, 8, 9, 14, and 16. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the second ending in measure 17.

I learned this set dance from the playing of Larry Redican. Its first few measures seem to be related to the melody of an old tune – also a set dance – called ‘The King of the Fairies’. And so, ‘here’s me’ (an old Irish expression) playing ‘Queen of the Faeries’.

JUST BECAUSE IT'S YOU

Waltz

Cynthia Keane Polo



My dear friend Cindy Polo wrote this lovely tune in memory of her Dad. In her own words she tells us how it came to be:

'My first attempt at Irish fiddle playing was at a music camp in 2008, a violin novice, where I had the opportunity to learn from Séamus Connolly. He suggested that I could create a tune if I thought about a meaningful event. The tune played here by Séamus was my first attempt at composing music. It is in waltz time, and I wrote it in memory of my father, Edward Thomas Keane. As a young child, we would waltz across the living room, me riding on his feet. In later years there were father-daughter dinner dances and the dance at my wedding. We had our last waltz in 2001, the weekend before he died in the World Trade Tower on September 11th.'

Copyright Cynthia Keane Polo

BARNEY'S JIG

Jig

Kathleen Boyle



This track comes to us courtesy of Kathleen Boyle from Glasgow. Kathleen recorded it in Donegal in 2011 in the county where her grandfather, the great Néillidh Boyle, lived. Kathleen carries on her grandfather's tradition of composing as she plays her own tune, 'Barney's Jig'.

A BOTTLE OF COP-ON

Reel

Damien Connolly



An expression in Ireland when I was growing up was ‘Ah, cop-on’, which means something like ‘get with it’. Damien Connolly, my nephew, remembers the saying too, and he suggested the above title as a name for the composition which he plays on this track. Damien writes: ‘A Bottle of Cop-On: One of my friends from Sixmilebridge, Paul Delaney, used to say, “You need a good bottle of cop-on”. Perhaps he was right! Maybe I still need a good bottle of it. The first few bars of the second part kept coming to me for months til I finally decided to do something about it. I wrote this tune back in 2006.’

OLD WHEELS OF THE WORLD

(JOHNNY MCGREEVY'S VERSION)

Reel



Some of the lovely variations in Shannon Heaton's playing of this reel came from Johnny McGreevy, the Chicago fiddle master. They were given to Shannon by the one and only Liz Carroll, who also comes from that City by the Lake.

THE VERMONT JIG

Jig

Eamon Flynn

5

10

14

18

22

1.

2.

Regular ending

Final ending

Another composition from the multi-instrumentalist Eamon Flynn from Mountcollins in County Limerick. Eamon moved from Boston to The Green Mountain State, Vermont, in 1987. His memories of the hills and fishing brooks of this beautiful state in New England live with him now as he enjoys his retirement (not from music!) in his native Limerick. We hear him playing his own composition with our mutual friend Helen Kisiel playing piano, on a track taken from Eamon's CD *Down by the Glenside*. Courtesy of Eamon and Helen, I give you 'The Vermont Jig'.

Copyright Eamon Flynn



THE JOHNSON STATE JIG

Jig

Eric Eid-Reiner

5

Fine

9

D.C. al Fine

13

1.

2.

Another tune that Eric Eid-Reiner played for me during that early morning recording session in Gasson Hall on the Boston College campus. Eric told me that he wrote the jig after listening to a lively session at Johnson State College in Vermont. The music session was part of the Northeast Heritage Music Camp.

DON'T GET ME ANYTHING

Jig

Alice Bérubé, Jeannine Webb,
Séamus Connolly

6

11

15

20

24

28

32

Copyright Alice Bérubé, Jeannine Webb, and Séamus Connolly

My friends from Winnipeg, Canada, Alice Bérubé and her sister Jeannine, visited with Sandy and me a few years ago. Both of them play fiddles and they enjoy getting together to talk, laugh, and play music. They meet once a year, as Alice lives on Prince Edward Island and Jeannine three thousand miles away in Vancouver. We played music in my house for a few days and had much fun. On the day of their departure, they told me that they were going to go shopping for a gift for me. I appreciated their kindness, but told them, 'Don't get me anything!' I left the house to do some errands and when I returned my friends were nowhere to be found. I somehow thought I heard fiddle music in the house but did not know where it was coming from.

A few days later, after my friends had returned home, a fax came to my house with a tune written on manuscript paper. It was a jig that the ladies had composed while up in my attic. They had somehow found their way up there. Unfortunately, on the day the fax arrived my machine was running low on ink. The lines on the paper all ran together on the tune's second part, and I was unable to make it out. At Sandy's suggestion, I sat at the kitchen table to compose a temporary replacement for it.

I next met the ladies a year later at the Northeast Heritage Music Camp, and we began to play the jig, but with a few surprises and laughs as our two competing second parts clashed against each other! I had to explain to them what had happened to their original second part, and my addition was demoted to a third part. We recorded it with help from Ken Perlman on banjo and Pete Sutherland on piano, two fellow teachers at the camp. Thanks, ladies, a nice gift, better than 'anything' from a shop.

THE BALLINA LASSIES

Reel



I can picture Jimmy Noonan with his eyes closed and his shoulder going up and down as he plays this tune with accordionist Dan Gurney. When Jimmy moves like this playing his flute, it is a visible sign that he is 'in the groove', giving the music the swing that is such a part of his playing. Listen as these wonderful musicians give 'The Ballina Lassies' that lilt and swing that was associated with the older musicians. One can hear that happy lift in the music of master fiddle player Paddy Killoran, from whose recording Dan and Jimmy learned this tune.

TUREENCAHILL POLKA

Polka

5

10

14

18

22

1.

2.

Regular ending

Final ending

Another track from fiddle player Máire O'Keeffe. Her title for this tune refers to an area near Rathmore, County Kerry, famous for its music. Máire learned this polka from Sonny Riordan.



THE WEST END

Hornpipe

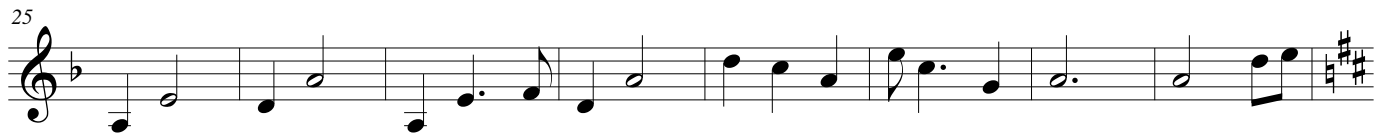
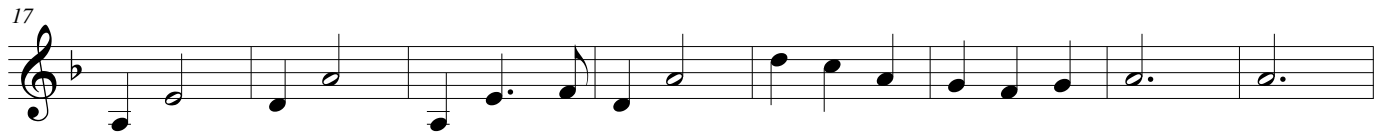
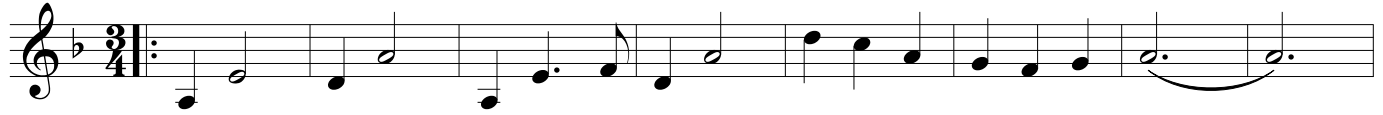


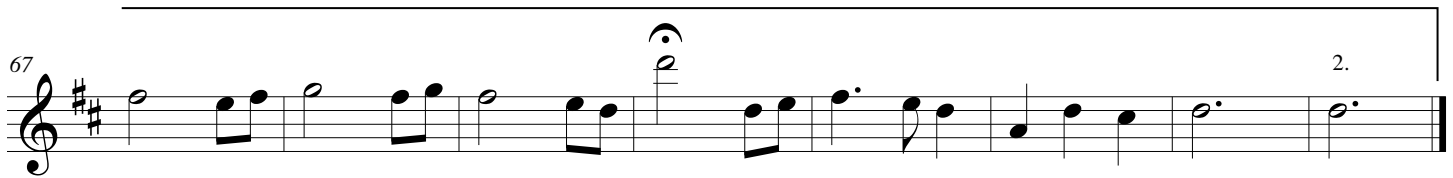
I recorded Mrs. Galvin playing this hornpipe at a concert over fifty years ago in County Clare. Jerry O'Sullivan plays it on this track with a slightly different arrangement. This tune is sometimes attributed to the nineteenth-century Newcastle fiddle player and composer James Hill, and it appears in William Honeyman's *The Strathspey, Reel, and Hornpipe Tutor*. In parts of New England, it is played as a reel for contra dancing.

RAVEN'S WING

Waltz/Air

Donna Hébert and Max Cohen





This track comes to us through the generosity of its composers, fiddle player Donna Hébert and guitarist Max Cohen. It is track number two on their CD *In Full Bloom*. Donna writes:

'My father passed away in early March 2008 while our band was visiting the Grand Canyon. We were stalked by ravens all day until, at sunset, one landed among us. It looked straight at me and gestured, croaking; after a few minutes it flew off. Within moments, the call came through that my father had passed. Max and I wrote the tune and only then did I discover that my father's bomber unit in World War II was called The Ravens... When I heard the last mix from Canada, I wept with joy. Mark Busic (engineer) had captured the feel of the day, the canyon, the wonder, perfectly. Max's guitar is the raven's wings. My violin and viola are the spirit breaking free...'

HENRY SAVAGE'S FAVOURITE

Barndance

5

10

13

14

19

Final ending

I first heard this tune on a long-playing record titled *Music from the Glens*, featuring the musical Quinn family from New York. Mr. Louis Quinn, father of this talented family, was a fiddle player who came to America from South Armagh. Mr. Quinn probably heard this tune growing up in that beautiful part of the county, an area well-known for Irish music and céilí dancing. The tune gets its name from Henry Savage, who came from a long lineage of fiddle players in that area. Here, Shannon Heaton plays her interpretation of this barndance. I am very grateful to Shannon and her husband Matt, who so generously took time from their busy schedules to come all the way from Boston to spend time with Sandy and me, for playing such delightful music for this project.

TERRY'S JIG

Jig

Matilda Murdoch

5

1. 2.

10

14

1. 2.

19 Final ending

Here we have another melody composed by the Grand Lady of New Brunswick fiddle music, Mrs. Matilda Murdoch. Its performer on this track, who once again gives Matilda's music a genuine Irish flavour, is none other than Maeve Donnelly.

THE GREEN MOUNTAIN BOYS

Jig



I first fell in love with this tune when I heard fiddle master supreme Winston 'Scotty' Fitzgerald from Cape Breton playing it on a recording. I had in my collection a tape of my friend, pianist Barbara MacDonald Magone, playing the jig in two different keys. I sent the recording to pianist Donna Long. Donna recorded the tune, also in the same two musical keys that Barbara had played them in. I am grateful to Donna for this track and to Barbara for the original recording. The tune is named for the Green Mountain Boys, headed by Ethan Allen during the American Revolution in the 1700s.

LAUREL MARTIN'S JIG

Jig

Laurel Martin



The musical score for 'Laurel Martin's Jig' is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 6/8 time signature. The piece consists of 19 measures. The first measure is a repeat sign. The second measure is a half note G4. The third measure is a quarter note A4. The fourth measure is a quarter note B4. The fifth measure is a quarter note C5. The sixth measure is a quarter note B4. The seventh measure is a quarter note A4. The eighth measure is a quarter note G4. The ninth measure is a quarter note F#4. The tenth measure is a quarter note E4. The eleventh measure is a quarter note D4. The twelfth measure is a quarter note C4. The thirteenth measure is a quarter note B3. The fourteenth measure is a quarter note A3. The fifteenth measure is a quarter note G3. The sixteenth measure is a quarter note F#3. The seventeenth measure is a quarter note E3. The eighteenth measure is a quarter note D3. The nineteenth measure is a quarter note C3. The score includes first and second endings at measures 12-13 and 16-17. The final ending is at measure 19.

My musical colleague and friend Laurel Martin made this lovely tune. Laurel did not think highly of her composition, nor did she think it good enough for this collection. Laurel, I love your jig, as do many others who have heard it. Thanks for playing it and recording it for all of us to hear and learn.

Copyright Laurel Martin

SEÁN ÓG

Reel

Larry Nugent



Another composition of Larry Nugent, who plays a reel named for one of his twin sons, Seán. The contribution of the boy's father and his grandfather, Sean Nugent Sr., to Irish music and culture will have a lasting impact. Let's hope that Seán Óg and his brother Emmet carry on the family tradition.

Copyright Larry Nugent

JOHNNY MCGREEVY'S OWN

Reel

Johnny McGreevy



A happy reel given to me in the early 1970s by Johnny McGreevy. Johnny told me it was the only tune that he composed and that he did not think too much of it. Brendan Bulger from Boston, Marty Fahey from Chicago, and Kathleen Gavin from Balbriggan near Dublin had other ideas. They recorded this tune on their CD *Music at the House* and gave it the swing that was so reminiscent of Johnny's playing. Playing the reel on this track, Brendan Bulger gives us that same swing.

Copyright Johnny McGreevy

MOLLY, PUT THE KETTLE ON

Reel



Joanie Madden gives us her interpretation of a tune I first learned from Larry Gavin. It also appears in *O'Neill's 1001*. I temporarily mislaid the recording Joanie made for me, so the tune almost didn't make it into this collection. I'm glad I found it, Joanie. Great playing!

DAVID GRADY'S

Slip Jig



I love slip jigs and I enjoy playing them. Patrick W. Joyce collected this one from David Grady, a flute player from Ardpatrick in County Limerick, but he did not get the tune's name. 'David Grady's' sounds good to me. Mr. Joyce's collection was published in 1876. I have it in my library, and my copy once belonged to a Bríd O'Callaghan from County Limerick. She signed the book in 1961, when she was 16 years old. I wonder where she is now. Wherever you are, Bríd, this tune lives on and I play it here for you.

THE NIGHT ABOVE THE ABBEY

Reel

Sean Gavin



A tune composed by Sean Gavin when he was nineteen years old. The tune is in honour of good musical times that were had at the famed Abbey Pub in Chicago, a traditional music hub for many years. Sean plays his creation on flute (he is a multi-talented musician), joined by Brian Miller on the guitar.

Copyright Sean Gavin

THE MEN OF ULSTER

Hornpipe



Seán Maguire recorded this tune and gave it the above title. It may be found in *Ryan's Mammoth Collection* in the key of G major under the name 'Norfolk'. The beginning of the tune always brings to mind the hornpipe 'The Wily Bachelor'. Laurel Martin plays it in her own distinctive style on the fiddle. Thanks, friend. As our mutual friend Peter Barnes once said of you, 'You're the hornpipe queen!'

MAURICE O'KEEFFE'S

Polka



Máire O'Keeffe is the fiddle player on this track. It is once again a delight to hear my good friend Máire demonstrate the captivating fiddle style of County Kerry. Máire learned this polka from fiddle player Maurice O'Keeffe, a wonderful source of the music of the 'Kingdom' of Kerry.

MARY OF THE GROVE

Reel



A slightly different version of this reel may be found in *The Roche Collection of Traditional Irish Music*. On this track, we again hear Kevin Crawford giving us a lovely performance.

GENTLE ANN

Reel

Eamon Flynn



Eamon Flynn first recorded his above-titled composition for the Boston branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. It was featured on their 1981 LP *We're Irish Still*. It is played here for us in fine traditional style by Manus McGuire on fiddle.

Copyright Eamon Flynn

GER BROOKS' POLKA

Polka



My next door neighbour when I was growing up in Killaloe was known to me as Mister Brooks. He loved to play the accordion, and he had many fine polkas in his repertoire. The polka I play on this track was one of his favourites. In almost sixty years of playing and listening to music I have yet to hear someone else play it. Happy memories of a wonderful neighbour and of his wife and family.

CURRAGH OF KILDARE

Air



The Curragh is a flat open plain in County Kildare, an area well-known for Irish horse breeding, training, and racing. My original source for this tune was Cathal McConnell, the master musician and singer from County Fermanagh. He played it for me when on that visit to Boston with his musical friends, The Boys of the Lough (see 'Cathal's Reel').

I gave the recording to my good friend Jerry O'Sullivan, who plays the tune on this track, but with his very own arrangement and interpretation. The phrasing, as one will see, is different from that of the written transcription of Cathal's playing. Fascinating, really, when one thinks of how music can be changed to suit the performer and the instrument. Thanks to both these fine exponents for their contrasting versions.

THE CROOKED HURRICANE

Jig

Cynthia Keane Polo



My good friend Cindy Polo made this tune and dedicated it to another friend, Randy Bridgman. I enjoyed playing this tune with Cindy and Gabriel Donohue. In Cindy's own words, she tells us about 'The Crooked Hurricane':

'What else to do while the power is out in the middle of a hurricane? Fiddle and fiddle! I composed this tune as Hurricane Irene battered eastern North Carolina in 2011. The hurricane did not travel as expected. Its unusual pattern of travel was described as crooked. The tune too is crooked in the style of some Canadian fiddle tunes. I dedicate the jig to my friend Randy Bridgman, a native of Newfoundland. This tune is also crooked, somewhat like the shape of many of the trees in my garden when the storm subsided.'

DRUMNAGARRY STRATHSPEY

Strathspey

The musical score for 'Drumnagarry Strathspey' is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The piece consists of five staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1 through 4, the second staff measures 5 through 8, the third staff measures 9 through 12, the fourth staff measures 13 through 15, and the fifth staff contains measures 16 through 18. The melody is characterized by frequent triplets, indicated by the number '3' above groups of three notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots. The final staff is divided into two sections: 'Regular ending' and 'Final ending', both of which end with a double bar line.

Tommy Peoples played this tune for me at a recording session at Boston College. The tune may also be found on Tommy's fine albums *Traditional Irish Music Played on the Fiddle* and *Waiting for a Call*.

THE MONTAGUE PROCESSIONAL

March

David Kaynor



David Kaynor graciously played his own composition for me, with Pete Sutherland at the piano, at the Northeast Heritage Music Camp held at Johnson State College in Vermont in 2009. David told me that this tune occurred to him after he hosted a fiddle convention, about 1985, in Montague Center, Massachusetts. David is well-known as a caller and fiddle player in the world of New England contra dancing. His tune is very popular at weddings and celebrations. One can certainly imagine a bride walking to this elegant and stately composition. Thanks, David, and a special thanks to Jay Ungar and Swinging Door Music for permission to include the tune in this collection.

THE SHOEMAKER'S FANCY

Jig



The musical score is written on a single staff in treble clef, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. The melody consists of 29 measures. Measures 1-4 are the first line, measures 5-8 the second, measures 9-12 the third, measures 13-16 the fourth, measures 17-20 the fifth, measures 21-24 the sixth, and measures 25-28 the seventh. The final measure (29) is part of a section labeled 'Regular ending' and 'Final ending'. The 'Regular ending' consists of measures 29-32, and the 'Final ending' consists of measures 33-34. The score is written in a clear, legible font with standard musical notation.

The young fiddle player Liam Lewis played this jig on a tape given to me by a friend one night after a concert. I stuck the tape into the cover of my fiddle case and forgot about it. Finding it later was a lovely surprise. My friend Laurel Martin learned the jig from the tape and traveled all the way to my home in Maine to record it. A version of the tune may be found in *The Roche Collection*. This tune was a favourite of flute player Eddie Moloney from Ballinakill, County Galway.

FOR BETTY KILLORAN

Jig

Charlie Mulvihill

6

10

14

18

22

Regular Ending

Final Ending

Another composition of accordionist and concertina player Charlie Mulvihill from New York. It is played on this track by Charlie and his children Tommy on fiddle, and Geraldine on piano. It is another of the tunes on the tape that Mr. Mulvihill made for Mrs. Betty Killoran, wife of Sligo fiddle player Paddy Killoran. Hopefully, some day in the not too distant future, we will see and hear a CD recording of more of the music of Mr. Mulvihill, this great tunesmith.

Copyright Charlie Mulvihill

2

PLAYLIST NINE

MISS CHRYSANDRA WALTER

Air
Violin

Séamus Connolly

The musical score is written for Air Violin in the key of D major (two sharps). It consists of eight staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a 3/4 time signature. The second staff has a 5/4 time signature. The third staff has a 4/4 time signature. The fourth staff has a 3/4 time signature. The fifth staff has a 6/4 time signature. The sixth staff has a 4/4 time signature. The seventh staff has a 3/4 time signature. The eighth staff has a 4/4 time signature. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and triplets. There are also repeat signs and a 'Tag' section indicated by an arrow. The score is numbered 7, 11, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, and 37 at the beginning of each staff.

Copyright Séamus Connolly

Writing the stories of these tunes brings back many memories. When Sandy, my late wife, was diagnosed with kidney cancer, my life was turned upside down. We were so happy together and loved doing and planning different things: places to see, friends to visit, recordings to make. To help and encourage young and talented people, and to travel, were part of our dreams. After I left Chrysandra at the hospital, late at night whilst driving home I thought of how good she was to me and how she wanted to make my life comfortable and easy. She always said, 'When you are with me, Baby, all you have to do is breathe'. She gave her whole life to me and, until the day she left us, was dedicated to me and to her beloved National Park Service of the United States of America.

Anyway, as I drove home that night, many tears flowed like a river and the pain hurt, but the beginning notes of this tune came to me. As I sat in her hospital room for the next few days I worked on the air, writing it on the corners of the local paper 'The Boston Globe'. The end result is what you have on this track. It is played by my friend Bonnie Bewick Brown, a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Bonnie also arranged 'Miss Chrysandra Walter' for cello and viola and invited her friends to perform it, and they did so beautifully. I am forever grateful to Bonnie for this wonderful arrangement and for all the help she gave to me on this project. I know Sandy would be very proud of this tune and how it was played. My dear wife and friend Chrysandra will be forever remembered by me, and through this tune her memory will live on!

MISS CHRYSANDRA WALTER

Air

Séamus Connolly
Arr. Bonnie Bewick Brown

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

Measures 1-5 of the musical score. The Violin part starts with a treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The Viola and Violoncello parts start with a bass clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The Violoncello part has a 5/4 time signature in measure 5. The Violin part has a 3/4 time signature in measure 5. The Viola part has a 5/4 time signature in measure 5. The Violoncello part has a 4/4 time signature in measure 5. The Violin part has a 4/4 time signature in measure 5. The Viola part has a 4/4 time signature in measure 5. The Violoncello part has a 4/4 time signature in measure 5.

6

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Measures 6-10 of the musical score. The Violin part starts with a treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The Viola and Violoncello parts start with a bass clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The Violoncello part has a 4/4 time signature in measure 10. The Violin part has a 4/4 time signature in measure 10. The Viola part has a 4/4 time signature in measure 10. The Violoncello part has a 4/4 time signature in measure 10.

11

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Measures 11-15 of the musical score. The Violin part starts with a treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The Viola and Violoncello parts start with a bass clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The Violoncello part has a 4/4 time signature in measure 15. The Violin part has a 4/4 time signature in measure 15. The Viola part has a 4/4 time signature in measure 15. The Violoncello part has a 4/4 time signature in measure 15.

16

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

21

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

25

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

29

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

After repeat

34 Tag →

Vln. Tag

Vla. Tag

Vc. Tag

3

37

Vln. 5

Vla.

Vc.

Copyright Séamus Connolly
Arrangement copyright Bonnie Bewick Brown

SPORTING NELL

Reel

The musical score for 'Sporting Nell' is written in treble clef, key of D major (two sharps), and common time (C). It consists of five staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1 through 4, with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 1 and measure 3. The second staff contains measures 5 through 8, also featuring triplets in measures 5 and 7, and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 8. The third staff contains measures 9 through 12, with a sharp sign above the eighth note in measure 10. The fourth staff contains measures 13 through 16, with a sharp sign above the eighth note in measure 14. The fifth staff contains measures 17 through 19, with a bracket above measures 15 and 16 labeled 'Variation Bars 15 and 16'. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 19.

A fine version of 'Sporting Nell', played here for us by one of my favourite young fiddle players, the talented Tina Lech from Boston. I first heard this reel in Chicago in 1972 played by another of my favourite fiddle players, the great Johnny McGreevy.

MICHAEL RELIHAN'S

Reel



A lovely tune that came from the playing of John Kelly, the fiddle and concertina master from west County Clare. John had a storehouse of unusual tunes and was ever so generous in handing them down to other interested musicians. Michael Relihan was a neighbour to John Kelly before John moved to Dublin City. I first heard my friend Larry Gavin playing the version played here by Catherine McEvoy.

WALTZING DOWN THE AISLE

Waltz

Kathleen Boyle

7

13

18

25

31

37

43

Another tune from the pen of Kathleen Boyle from Glasgow in Scotland. She wrote this waltz for her sister's wedding, for her to walk down the aisle to. Here we hear 'K.T.' beautifully playing her own composition on piano and piano accordion.

Copyright Kathleen Boyle

ROCK POINT LANE

Jig

Séamus Connolly

5

9

13

17

21

25

29

Copyright Séamus Connolly

‘Rock Point Lane’ is the name of the street in California where Sandy’s parents live. One Christmas day, around 1990, when she and I were visiting them, the basic outline of this jig came to me. After working on it for a while and deciding which key would best suit the fiddle, Sandy subtly suggested that we videotape it. Secretly understanding her motive, I reluctantly agreed.

I had forgotten completely about the tune and did not remember any of it when years later we came across the videotape and watched it together. She said as we watched it, ‘See I told you, I knew you wouldn’t remember it.’ How right she was! That was Sandy. Always thinking and a step ahead. The tune is more complete now as I give it my best shot on this track. Another transcription of the jig is to be found in *A Drop in the Ocean*, a book of Irish traditional tunes compiled by my friend Josephine Keegan.



THE BROSNA REEL

Reel

Eamon Flynn



This reel is another composition of Eamon Flynn, taken from his CD recording with permission. It is named for the village of Brosna in County Kerry, a place well-known for great Irish music and whose name has been given to a number of tunes including 'The Brosna Slide'.

THE FOUR-FINGERED FISHERMAN

Jig

Devin Shepherd



The young Chicago fiddle player Devin Shepherd composed this fine jig. He plays it on this track with his musical friend, flute player Sean Gavin from Detroit, accompanied by Brian Miller on guitar and Jackie Moran on bodhrán.

Copyright Devin Shepherd

MIKE DUGGAN'S POLKA

Polka



On this track we once again hear Eamon Flynn on fiddle as he plays 'Mike Duggan's Polka'. Thanks to Brosna-born accordionist Michael Mulcahy for the tune title.

MARGARET LAWRIE'S GALLIARD

Galliard

Form: ABABCBA

Margaret Lawrie

A



B

6



9



(end)

C

14



18



Margaret Lawrie wrote this third and final tune that she and Michael Burnham recorded for this collection. It may also be heard on their own CD *Bygone Days*, a recording dedicated to Meg's grandfather, fiddle player Michael Cullen from County Roscommon. The tune is based on the gaillarde, or gagliarda, a dance form which was popular in continental Europe in the sixteenth century. Margaret also told me that the galliard was popular in England, but not so with The Birmingham Céilí Band of which she was a member!

THE NORTH ROAD

Reel

Meghan Mette



My young friend Meghan Mette composed this reel. I was delighted that she asked me to play it with her, along with Nicole Rabata on flute and Kevin McElroy on mandolin. She tells us how the tune came about:

‘I wrote this tune for Séamus first and foremost as a “thank you” for all of the musical wisdom he has imparted to me. However, it is also a tale of the many afternoons spent in Séamus’ music room, learning, listening, playing... Some days we just sat and listened to old albums on the wonderful sound system, the notes vibrating through the varnished floorboards and bouncing off the walls...

My favourite afternoons, however, were when it was just the two of us, sitting side by side, playing tunes for the fun of it; maybe Séamus would think of a special ornament he wanted to show me or a specific tune that was fun to play in a different key. I often enjoyed just sitting back and observing Séamus when he went on a rant of tunes. I was, and still am, mesmerised by the fluidity and grace of his fingers as they tickle the fingerboard, his bow flying over the strings, his mind at obvious peace. These are my favourite images, frozen in time, Séamus in another world entirely, just playing because he loves it so. When I play “The North Road”, it reminds me of these moments...’

Copyright Meghan Mette

SÉAMUS CONNOLLY'S

Reel

Bob McQuillen



I am so honoured that my great friend, the prolific composer Bob McQuillen, wrote this tune for me. 'The Professor', as I call him, is a special person in my life and I have for many years admired his compositions and music. Bob is heard playing his beloved piano with his 'Dear Girls', as he likes to describe Deanna Stiles, the flutist, and Jane McBride Orzechowski, the fiddle player, in his band. Old New England, as they are known, recorded this track for me in Bob's home in New Hampshire.

Copyright Bob McQuillen

THE GRACIE M. PARKER

Song



Sung here by Edward and Ruth Fitzgerald from Prince Edward Island in Canada, this song tells the story of a ninety-one-ton, two-masted schooner built in Massachusetts in 1869. According to Edward, the boat was based in Tignish, PEI, and it was primarily used in the fishing and lumber trades. The song tells the story of a voyage from Northport in dangerous icy waters in the year 1893, culminating in a terribly sad ending as the schooner tried to reach the French islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon. The melody to this song is well-known on the Island and has been used for other songs about marine tragedies.

The Gracie M. Parker

*Fair Miquelon Isle how can you smile
While we do so lament?
You've deprived us of our ones so dear,
Why do you not repent?
Your rocks and seas have done their deed,
Their bodies lie beneath the sea;
Our precious one from us have gone,
We never more will see.*

*On the fifteenth of December,
In the year of ninety-three,
The schooner Gracie M. Parker
From Alberton put to sea.
She was heavily timber-laden,
For St. Pierre she was bound;
We little thought 'twould be their lot
On that dreary Isle to drown.*

*The wind came from the east north-east,
And blew a heavy gale,
The schooner heavily-laden
With closely reefed topsail
And then she struck a sunken rock
All with a deadly sound;
The seas ran high, no help was nigh,
And all on board were drowned.*

*'Twas early the next morning,
A man by chance did stray
Far down along the sea beach
Where two dead bodies lay,
And later on as daylight came
He chanced to spy the wreck,
Of the schooner Gracie M. Parker
That sailed from Cascumpec.*

*There was Captain Farrell, his brother Will,
The mate John Docherty
Frank MacAlduff, Alf Matthews,
All married men were they.
The cook was Johnny Oliver,
Supercargo was Doiron,
I've enumerated all the crew
In this my simple song.*

THE RAKISH HIGHLANDER

Reel



Larry Redican, the great New York fiddle player and composer, once told me he loved going through old books and manuscripts 'looking for strange tunes'. The reel on this track is certainly a version of the tune found in *Ryan's Mammoth Collection*, known as 'The Rakish Highlander'. Here Larry gives us his interpretation.

G. CRAIG AND MAUREEN SULLIVAN

Hornpipe

Brian Hebert

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature (C). It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and contains measures 1 through 4. The second staff starts at measure 5 and ends with a repeat sign. The third staff starts at measure 9 and ends with a repeat sign. The fourth staff starts at measure 13 and includes a bracketed section labeled "Regular ending" at the end. The fifth staff starts at measure 17 and includes a bracketed section labeled "Final ending" at the end. Triplet markings (a '3' over a group of three notes) are present in measures 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, and 16.

Brian Hebert plays a hornpipe he wrote to honour my special friends Craig and Maureen Sullivan. I will forever be grateful to them for their benevolent generosity to me, to Boston College, and to the world of Gaelic music and song. It is through their kindness that I have been able to turn the inspiration for this collection into a reality.

Copyright Brian Hebert

I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU

Air

Séamus Connolly

Chords: G, Am, G/B, C, A7, D, D7, C, D, G, Am, D, G, Am, G/B, C, A7, D, D7, C, D, D7, G, C, D, G, C, G, Em, D, D, G, D, A, D, G, Am, G, G7, C, G, Am, D, G, D, D7, G.

Copyright Séamus Connolly

Performed by my friend Bonnie Bewick Brown on violin, along with her friends Julianne Lee on viola and Mickey Katz on cello, this tune came to me on the morning in 1988 when my mother passed on to her place of eternal joy and rest. Being away from one's homeland and receiving a phone call at 6 A.M. somehow sends chills through your body. Usually, these calls relay some bad news or something you would prefer not to hear. 'Yes, Mama has died,' my brother Michael said. For some unknown reason, when I hung up the phone the first thing that I did was take out my fiddle and play. And play I did, all the while thinking of the music we had in our home as I was growing up. I played some of the tunes that my mother taught me, and I thought of all that she did for me as I endeavoured to play the music that I loved. Somehow and from someplace, this tune came to me. I went to Ireland that night and said goodbye to my Mom and when I returned to this great United States I began to work on the tune and make it my own. Looking back now over the last twenty-six years, I have come to realise that this was the last tune that my mother, Lena, gave to me. The beautiful arrangement of the melody comes to us courtesy of Bonnie. Bless you, my friend. Lena Connolly will always be remembered.



I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU

Air

Séamus Connolly

Arr. Bonnie Bewick Brown

The musical score is arranged for Violin, Viola, and Violoncello in 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of staves, each with a Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vc.) part. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and half notes, as well as rests and ties. Chords are indicated above the staves: G, Am, G/B, C, A7, D, D7, Em, and G. The score is divided into measures by bar lines, with measure numbers 5, 9, and 13 indicated at the start of their respective systems.

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

5

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

9

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

13

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

17 C D G Am

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

21 G G D A D

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

25 G Am G G7 C G

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

29 Am D G D D7 G

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

Copyright Séamus Connolly
Arrangement copyright Bonnie Bewick Brown

EMMET'S DOUBLE

Reel

Larry Nugent

5

10

14

19

1.

2.

3

1.

Regular Ending

Final Ending

Emmet is Seán Óg Nugent's twin brother, and their father Larry Nugent composed this tune (Seán has his own tune in this collection). The young Nugent twins are well-placed to carry on the great family legacy of Irish music.

LINDA RAY'S

Reel

Tony DeMarco

5

10

14

18

22

The great fiddle player from New York City, Mr. Tony De Marco, composed this reel for his friend Linda Hickman, herself a lovely flute player. When I heard this reel performed by Tony and Charlie Lennon on Tony's CD *The Sligo Indian*, I fell in love with it instantly. Tony was so gracious when I asked him if he would record it for this collection. 'Consider it done,' he said. Tony, the reel brings a smile to my face. It is a wonderful tune, so happy and full of love.

Copyright Tony DeMarco

MIST ON THE OCEAN

Reel

Richard Dwyer



This reel comes to us by kind permission of my good friend Richard 'Richie' Dwyer, its composer. It is taken from his CD *In a Creative Mood*, which he recorded in his native West Cork looking out to sea and the mist on the ocean. Richie is again joined by Micheál O'Rourke on piano.

Copyright Richard Dwyer

THE GALLANT TIPPERARY BOYS

Jig



This tune may be found in the *O'Neill's Music of Ireland* collection under the title 'Gallant Tipperary'. It also appears in *The Roche Collection of Traditional Irish Music* in the 'Airs' section of that book. The tune, played here by Laurel Martin, was popular in Boston in the 1930s and 1940s.

EDWARD ON LOUGH ERNE'S SHORE

Song



There are a number of songs that mention Lough Erne in County Fermanagh, and much has been written about this beautiful spot. Rita Gallagher's performance of this song is a dream. Listen as one of Ireland's great singers tells the story.

Edward on Lough Erne's Shore

*O the sun was setting behind the mountains, a dew was falling upon the leas
And I was seated beside a fountain, a feathered songster sang on a tree
With love and blisses his notes were sounding, made me reminded of days of yore
Wherein a bower I picked a flower, and I dreamt of Edward on Lough Erne's shore.*

*O the cuckoo's notes in the air resounding, appeal to feeling and please the ear
And every note is a bliss abounding, herein the valley if he were here
Each step I take by the winding river, where we have wandered in days of yore
Reminds me of Edward my banished lover, and makes me lonely on Lough Erne's shore.*

*A crop of sorrow my heart is reaping, my rose has faded and my hopes decayed
For it's in the night time when all are sleeping, awake I am weeping 'til the break of day
Delight hath fled me and woe hath wed me, why did you leave me my love a stór,
But law compelled him and banished Edward, which left me lonely on Lough Erne's shore.*

*O could I move like a moon o'er the ocean, I would send a sigh o'er the distant deep
Or could I move like a bird in motion, by my Edward's side I would ever keep
I'd fondly soothe him, with songs amuse him, I'd gently soothe him and he'd sigh no more
For seven years would soon pass over, and we'd both live happy on Lough Erne's shore.*

PÁDRAIG O'KEEFFE'S

Jig



I first heard this tune played by Nicky McAuliffe and Connie O'Connell on two fiddles. They played it at a concert in Miltown Malbay at the Willie Clancy Summer School in 1988. They learned the tune from a Pádraig O'Keeffe manuscript. Here we listen to fiddle player Kevin Burke playing the jig in his unmistakable lilting style.

THE MCDONNELL-GARVEY HORNPIPE

Hornpipe

Josephine Keegan



On this track we once again hear Josephine Keegan performing one of her compositions. The tune is dedicated to her friend, the late Máire McDonnell-Garvey, who was a fiddle player and the author of a number of books about her native province of Connacht.

Copyright Josephine Keegan

THE QUINN FAMILY

Barndance

The musical score for "The Bird Song" is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff in D major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. The score consists of 17 measures, organized into five systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 4, featuring a repeat sign at the beginning and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 4. The second system contains measures 5 through 8, with a first ending bracket over measures 7 and 8. The third system contains measures 9 through 12, including a second ending bracket over measures 10 and 11, and a "Final ending" section starting in measure 12. The fourth system contains measures 13 through 16, featuring two triplet markings. The fifth system contains measure 17, which concludes the piece with a double bar line. The tempo is marked "Moderato" and the key signature is D major.

Shannon and Matt Heaton give vibrant life to a barndance which I first heard on the long-playing record *Music from the Glens*. The album featured the talented Quinn family from New York, hence the title I've given the tune to honour this musical clan led by Mister Louis Quinn of County Armagh.

THE KILLALOE REEL

Reel

Damien Connolly

5

9

13

17

Regular ending

Final ending

My nephew Damien Connolly plays a reel of his own composition. In his words he tells us about his native Killaloe: 'I am very proud of my hometown of Killaloe, County Clare. I lived there for twelve years before moving to Ennis. Killaloe is my first love, as it were. Every morning I would open the window and look out on the hills of the surrounding countryside and breathe in the fresh air. I have so many fond childhood memories from that old town. It's situated right on the river Shannon, so it's a beautiful place indeed... A couple of years ago, I purchased a bouzouki off eBay, tuned it up, and this is the tune that fell right out.'

GROVER JONES' WALTZ

Waltz



The great Appalachian fiddle player Alan Jabbour recorded this tune for me with Ken Perlman on banjo and Pete Sutherland at the piano. Alan told me that Grover Jones loved to play this tune on his fiddle, and even when in the company of other musicians without his fiddle he would always request this waltz. Although Mr. Jones did not compose the tune, it was because of his enthusiasm, love, and eagerness to hear it that his name automatically became associated with it. Dr. Jabbour also told me that he learned the waltz from the legendary West Virginia fiddle player Henry Reed. Listen to the beautiful, sensitive, and refined music of Alan Jabbour. Alan, I have listened to this track many times and every time a little happy tear runs down my face. Lonesome music, my friend.

TULLA LODGE

Reel



Martin Hayes, the great fiddle player from East Clare, gives us this beautiful rendition of a tune I have given the title 'Tulla Lodge'. This tune was given to me by Larry Gavin.

THE MAGIC SLIPPER

Polka

The musical score for 'The Magic Slipper' is written in treble clef with a 2/4 time signature. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and contains the first four measures. The second staff starts at measure 5 and includes a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.'). The third staff starts at measure 10 and contains measures 10 through 13. The fourth staff starts at measure 14 and includes another first ending (marked '1.') and second ending (marked '2.'). The fifth staff starts at measure 19 and is labeled 'Final Ending', containing measures 19 through 21. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Flutist Nicole Rabata joins me to play 'The Magic Slipper', a polka I learned from Boston accordionist Billy Caples. Mr. Caples was a well-known musician who had his own orchestra during the Dudley Street era of music and dancing.

THE OLD SCHOOLMASTER

Reel

6

1. 2.

11

15

19

23 Regular ending

27 Final ending

‘Maestro’ Seán Maguire played this tune in the key of A major at a concert in Kilfenora, County Clare, many years ago. My friend Sally K. Sommers Smith Wells reminded me that it somehow was like the song ‘Love Will You Marry Me?’ Brendan Bulger from Boston plays the tune, a version of which may be found in O’Neill’s 1001 collection.

THE EDENDERRY

Reel



Larry Gavin sent this tune to me on a tape over thirty years ago. Getting a tape of music from Ireland, and more especially from Larry, was always special. I was always assured of getting a new tune or two from my good friend. On this track we hear Joanie Madden playing the version found in *O'Neill's 1001* collection, the same version that was played by Larry so long ago. Lar, I still have that tape. Thanks for the memories.

PLAYLIST TEN

PADDY CRONIN'S REEL

Reel



Paddy Cronin was always very eager to learn new tunes. Paddy loved 'going through the books' with his fiddle in hand. He had a vast store of old tunes and an amazing repertoire, including this reel, played here for us by the lovely ladies of music, Liz and Yvonne, the wonderful Kane sisters from County Galway.

THE ONE-HORNED BUCK

Reel



Another tune from the legendary Cathal McConnell. He gave me this tune, and the others in this collection, during that visit to Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts, over thirty years ago (see 'Cathal's Reel').

FOR DENIS MOYNIHAN

Set Dance



Dancing master Denis Moynihan, as he was known before he officially changed his name to its Irish version, Donncha Ó Muineacháin, was a popular teacher of Irish dance. He was known throughout Ireland for his choreography and repertoire of older steps. Some of these were passed down to Donncha from the County Cork dancing masters Joe O'Donovan and Cormac O'Keeffe, and we mustn't forget his own dance teacher, the Grand Lady of Irish Dance, Peggy McTaggart. The set dance played on this track by Séamus McGuire and Garry O'Briain was learned from a recording of Larry Redican who introduced the tune as 'For Denis Moynihan'; this perhaps implies that Redican composed the tune.

FIGURING IT OUT

Reel

Joe Liddy



I tried as best I could to learn this tune from a tape made in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Paddy Gavin in Balbriggan, County Dublin, almost forty years ago. The tape was damaged a little but one could hear a great session of music played that night by the Gavin family and Jimmy Keane from Chicago. At one point on the tape, someone sat down at the piano and began to pick out the melody of the reel heard on this track, as though composing, reading, or trying to remember it. I loved the tune and what I could make out of it, so I reconstructed it in my own way, whilst trying my utmost to remain faithful to what I could decipher of the original version. After all that and years later, I spoke to Kathleen Gavin, who recalls being at the piano that night sight-reading the tune from a piece of manuscript paper. The tune's origins remain a mystery. Its composer may not like my reconstruction, or how I played it on this track, nor the title that Kathleen has suggested. Please know though, whoever you may be, that we certainly like your tune or composition, and we thank you for it.

P.S. It has come to our attention that this tune is a composition of Leitrim fiddle player and multi-instrumentalist Joe Liddy (1906-1992). He titled the tune "The Sweat House."

Copyright Joe Liddy

ACHONRY LASSIES

Reel



Yet another great old tune that was given to me by Chicago fiddle player Johnny McGreevy. The young fiddle player Tina Lech, one of my favourite musicians, plays the tune for us on this track.

PORT AN DEORAÍ

Slip Jig



The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 9/8. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff contains measures 1 through 4. The second staff, starting with a measure number '5', contains measures 5 through 8. The third staff, starting with a measure number '9', contains measures 9 through 12. The fourth staff, starting with a measure number '13', contains measures 13 through 16 and includes a bracketed section labeled 'Regular ending' covering measures 15 and 16. The fifth staff, starting with a measure number '17', contains measures 17 and 18 and includes a bracketed section labeled 'Final ending' covering measures 17 and 18, which concludes with a double bar line.

This lovely and unusual slip jig is played here by Geraldine Cotter. It may also be found in her collection of fifty traditional Irish tunes called *Rogha, Geraldine Cotter's Choice*.

THE NEW ROAD TO SLIGO

Jig

David Reiner

5

9

14

19

23

David Reiner composed 'The New Road to Sligo'. It is played for us by Liz Carroll. David told me that he composed this tune 'to tell the story of a musical road trip, from the bold beginning in G minor, to the detour into B flat, to the simpler and lyrical third part.'

Copyright 1994, David Reiner

THE LAGAN RIVER

Jig



David Curry's broadcasts from the BBC studios in Belfast were eagerly awaited in my home. He broadcast many fine tunes, including this one, which Nicole Rabata and I arranged for flute and fiddle. Not having the tune's original title, I have named it for the river that flows through Mr. Curry's hometown of Belfast.

LAMENT FOR MICK MACKEY

Song

Críostóir Mac Gearailt



Poet Críostóir Mac Gearailt penned the words of this song in tribute to one of Ireland's greatest sportsmen, the mighty Mick Mackey from Ahane, County Limerick. Mick Mackey played hurling for his native county in the 1930s and '40s, and the county depended on him to bring home the McCarthy Cup, the prize for winning an All-Ireland championship. Like many before me, I had the honour of shaking Mr. Mackey's hand. My father had introduced me to him when they worked together for the ESB, the Electricity Supply Board of Ireland.

In addition to Mick Mackey, the Limerick teams back in the 1930s and '40s that won All-Ireland championships had among them on the field men like Paddy Clohessy and the star goalkeeper Paddy Scanlon, who, as the song says, was 'defiant in the goal'. I got to know this great County Limerick goalkeeper and had the special honour of sitting beside him on a number of occasions when both of us travelled on the Killaloe-to-Limerick bus that wound its way through Castleconnell, where Mr. Scanlon would board. We talked at length about hurling and about other greats such as the mighty Christy Ring from Cloyne in County Cork. I have always had a fascination with the game's goalkeepers and, with my encouragement, Paddy would discuss the great ones. Doctor Tommy Daly from County Clare was many times mentioned in our discussion, as was the legendary Tony Reddin, who played in goal for counties Galway and Tipperary. I mentioned to Paddy Scanlon that I knew Tony Reddin: Tony lived in Banagher, County Offaly, and he often visited my sister's home, where I had the honour of chatting with him. Paddy Scanlon's praise for Tony Reddin was like that of many others, regarding him as one of the greatest goalkeepers of all time.

Today, May 24, 2015, it is by some strange coincidence that I write these few lines whilst listening via Internet radio to counties Limerick and Clare battling it out in Semple Stadium, Thurles, County Tipperary, in the first round of the Munster Hurling Championship. This stadium has over the years established itself as the leading venue for Munster hurling finals and a field where other Limerick teams of the past paraded with pride before

capacity crowds. And so, you stalwart heroes of the 1930s and '40s, Mick Mackey, Paddy Scanlon, and Paddy Clohessy, I somehow know that your hearts would be filled with pride were you to watch the Limerick team of today running up and down the pitch in Thurles, as they hopefully make their way to Croke Park, the stadium in Dublin where the All-Ireland hurling finals are played each September, to reclaim the McCarthy Cup.

Ann Mulqueen sings with pride Críostóir Mac Gearailt's song about Ann's neighbour, the great Mick Mackey, and the giants of hurling of days now long gone. A lot of ramblings, one might say, but memories worth remembering! The ramblings themselves are part of an Irish tradition whenever our national game of hurling is discussed. And always looking for a win, the hurler on the ditch could be heard desperately shouting, 'Come on, let the game begin! Never mind the ball, play the man!'

Thank you, Críostóir, for your lovely song and for permission to use it here. Thank you Ann, and thank you Micheál Ó Conghaile and Cló Iar-Chonnachta for permission to use this recording, along with the two other songs that Ann beautifully sang for us in this collection. All of the songs were taken from her CD *Mo Ghrása Thall na Déise*.

P.S. I, too, played in Croke Park, but not with a hurley!

Lament for Mick Mackey

*From lovely Castleconnell where the lordly Shannon flows,
Came a prince of Ireland's hurlers whose fame forever glows.
His skill and craft and valour is known throughout the land,
This man who held a hurley then just like a magic wand.*

*'Twas in the early thirties that Mick Mackey hit the scene;
This youth, a hurling genius in Limerick's white and green.
His name is proudly written now in letters made of gold;
His deeds at home and o'er the foam will be forever told.*

*'Twas a sad day in September in the year of eighty two,
This giant of our national game met with his maker true.
And thousands from the Shannonside and places far away,
Went down to bid a fond adieu and a loving tribute pay.*

*In Limerick's golden era of our grand old hurling game,
The Mackeys and the Clohesseys have won eternal fame.
The Ryans, Mick and Timmy then who played a gallant role,
And the mighty Paddy Scanlon too, defiant in the goal.*

*So farewell to you Mick Mackey as you cross the great divide,
Where hurlers of those happy days will gather by your side.
And the stalwart men from Fedamore, Ahane and sweet Adare,
Will all line up to welcome you, the hurling cavalier.*

THE CHAMPAIGN JIG GOES TO COLUMBIA

Jig

Liz Carroll

6

10

15

19

23

Regular Ending

Final ending

During that musical evening at the Gavins' in Balbriggan so long ago, Jimmy Keane, the piano accordion player from Chicago, played this tune. He informed me that it is one of Liz Carroll's compositions, entitled 'The Champaign Jig Goes to Columbia'. It can be found in *Liz Carroll Collected*, a beautifully produced book of her wonderful compositions. Gráinne Murphy plays her version of the tune on this track.

Copyright Liz Carroll

DR. MICK

Reel

Séamus Connolly

5

10

14

18

22

I have much respect and admiration for National Heritage Fellow Dr. Mick Moloney, a man who has, in my humble opinion, done more to promote Irish music in America than anyone. Through his teaching, music performances, research, productions, recordings, and promotion of young musicians, traditional music in America is on a very strong platform and foundation. I made this tune to honour Mick. I hope I do him justice and that he and I will have an opportunity to play the tune together sometime.

Copyright Séamus Connolly

FLYNN'S REEL

Reel

Eamon Flynn

5

10

14

19

Final ending

This is the first tune that Eamon Flynn composed over forty years ago. He plays it for us on accordion with our mutual friend, Miss Helen Kisiel, on piano. The tune may also be heard on Eamon's CD recording *Down by the Glenside*.

Copyright Eamon Flynn

THE DOGWALKER

Strathspey/March

Cynthia Keane Polo & Séamus Connolly



Cindy Polo, my good friend, phoned me one night and lilted part of this melody to me. I loved the sound of it and suggested to Cindy that it might fit naturally on the fiddle in a minor key. We talked about 'doing something with it', and so we began to collaborate on making a tune. For inspiration, we talked about Cindy's evening ritual of walking her dogs: an evening parade in her neighbourhood of people young and old, big and little, walking and being walked by a vast array of canines. Our musical thoughts and ideas were sung and played to one another over the phone for a few weeks, until we finally decided that our tune didn't sound too bad. In fact, we liked it! We are still unsure, though, as to whether it is a strathspey or a march. Time and distance did not allow Cindy and I to record our tune together, so, for what it's worth, and for your pleasure, here I am playing 'The Dogwalker'.

Copyright Cynthia Keane Polo and Séamus Connolly

THE LADIES OF LEINSTER

Reel



I first heard this reel played by the man who influenced many musicians of my generation, the great Séan Maguire. Séan had a happy knack of transposing tunes to different keys than those that might have been originally documented. The reel is played here by Boston's own Brendan Bulger.

DENNIS WATSON'S

Reel

Shannon Heaton



Dennis Watson from County Roscommon, now living in Chicago, is a flute player and piper. Shannon Heaton recorded this tune, her own composition, on her recent CD *The Blue Dress*. She plays it again for this collection and dedicates it to Dennis Watson.

Copyright Shannon Heaton

OLD TIMES

Schottische



I found an old brown manuscript page and remembered that my former sister-in-law Maureen Glynn had given it to me. Maureen grew up in Brooklyn, New York. She was a talented lady and widely respected in the Irish music and dance world. Maureen was a great musician: a piano, fiddle, and whistle player who taught hundreds of children in and around The Big Apple. She was also an Irish dance teacher, but most times could be heard playing music at the feiseanna instead of adjudicating the dancing. Maureen loved the old music and it was always a delight to play with her.

The track heard here is taken from a cassette recording that I made years ago of myself playing the tune from that manuscript. If memory serves me well, I believe it was a handwritten transcription of a page from *The Roche Collection*, where this tune occurs in the key of G under the title above. I moved the tune to the key of A, in order to give it a more open, pipes-like sound on the fiddle. At the time of recording, some variations had come to mind and I did not want to forget them, so onto the tape they went. I forgot about the tune after that, but I recently found the tape in a drawer in my music room. I thought it would make a worthy addition to this collection. So here is Maureen Glynn's old brown manuscript. A tune not to be forgotten. Enjoy!

THE FOURPENNY BIT

Reel



Another tune that Larry Gavin sent to me is this reel. Larry found it in 'The Bible' of Irish music, the *O'Neill's 1001* collection of tunes. It is played here for us by the great Catherine McEvoy with accompaniment by her nephew, Paddy McEvoy, on piano.

THE ROAD TO DURHAM

Jig

Armin Barnett & David Molk



Cathal McConnell, 'The Great One', gave me this tune, and he also gave it the above title. Recently, I discovered that the other 'Great One', Liz Carroll, had recorded her rendition of the tune on her long-playing record *A Friend Indeed*. Liz informed us in the liner notes of the recording that Armin Barnett and David Molk composed the tune while driving to Durham, New York. Liz called this smashing tune 'The Ride to Durham', and her playing is a delight to listen to. The lovely fiddle playing of John Daly from County Cork is heard on this track as he remains true to the version from the tape of Cathal McConnell's flute playing. John's fiddle playing is also a delight to hear.

ROGER CASEY'S REEL

Reel

Likely by Larry Redican

5

9

13

17

Regular ending

Final ending

One of the most gratifying experiences for any musician is to have the opportunity to play for good dancers. Roger Casey from New York, now an Irish stepdancing adjudicator, was an excellent competitive dancer. When he practiced for competitions back in the 1950s and '60s, Roger had the pleasure of dancing in his kitchen to the music of fiddle master Larry Redican.

The reel heard on this track is played by Tina Lech on fiddle. She learned it from the fiddle playing of Larry Redican and, not having a name for the tune, I gave it the above title to honour my good friend Roger. I was so touched and honoured when Roger presented me with a number of tapes of Larry Redican's fiddle music from those practice sessions. Incidentally, the tunes performed by Larry Redican in this collection are used by kind permission of Mr. Larry Redican Jr.

THE MOATE REEL

Reel

Josephine Keegan

5

1. 2.

10 3

14 1. 2.

The town of Moate is in County Westmeath. It has a strong musical tradition and at one time had a famous céilí band that made a number of 78 RPM recordings. The late accordionist Brendan McCann, who lived in Connecticut, grew up near Moate. As a tribute to Brendan and his music, Josephine Keegan from County Armagh, whose music is to be found throughout this collection, composed and recorded this track.

Copyright Josephine Keegan

THE BANKS OF THE SHANNON

Reel



The reel played on this track by Catherine McEvoy was one that Paddy O'Brien and I had considered recording with Charlie Lennon for *The Banks of the Shannon* mini-LP that we made in the 1970s. I'm not exactly sure why we did not record it. Then, thirty years later, I had the distinct honour of recording a CD called *The Boston Edge* with another maestro of the accordion, Joe Derrane, with John McGann playing guitar. Joe, like Paddy O'Brien, came up with this very same reel, and also suggested that we record it for *The Boston Edge*. In the end, for whatever reason, the tune did not make it onto that record either.

Looking back now on both these situations, maybe the reason the tune was not recorded was because we never could find a name for it. One could say that that in itself is not a good reason, and so to redeem ourselves I asked our good friend Catherine McEvoy to do us the honour. In giving it a name for this collection, I had two good choices: 'The Banks of the Shannon', or 'The Boston Edge'. Both titles sound good to me; after all, both masters of the accordion clearly liked the tune. However, I have chosen to call it 'The Banks of the Shannon' because the version Catherine plays on this track comes from a recording of Paddy O'Brien. Unfortunately, I never did capture Joe Derrane playing it. Now it's Catherine's turn.

SITTING IN THE WINDOW

Slide

Séamus Connolly

6

10

14

18

22

26

30

Regular ending

Final ending

Copyright Séamus Connolly

When my wife Chrysandra worked in Washington, DC, we lived across the Potomac in Alexandria, Virginia. During the summer months while she was working I would play my fiddle all day. I wish I had that same energy now! The tune that I play on this track came together out of nowhere. I worked on it on and off for years and finally gave up on it. Not having a recording device the day I finished it (or was trying to), I phoned my good friend Laurel Martin and asked her if she would record it as I played it over the phone. Thanks to Laurel, the tune surfaced again and survives in this form.



BIDDY FROM SLIGO

Jig

The musical score for 'Biddy from Sligo' is written in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 6/8 time signature. The melody starts with a repeat sign. The second staff continues the melody, with a measure number '5' at the beginning. It includes a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.'). The third staff continues the melody, with a measure number '10' at the beginning. The fourth staff continues the melody, with a measure number '14' at the beginning, and includes a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.').

The fiddle master Néillidh Boyle recorded this tune as part of a two-jig set in Dublin in 1937. That recording happened to be the very first record of Irish fiddle music that I had when I was growing up. It is performed on this track by Néillidh's granddaughter Kathleen on piano accordion and Gráinne Murphy on fiddle. They both did me the honour of recording the track in Donegal, home to Kathleen's parents and grandfather.

WHAT CARE I FOR THE MINISTER?

Slip Jig



This slip jig from the Scottish tradition was taught to me by Boston harpist Kathleen Guilday. I told her about this project and asked her if she would record it for me. Kathleen was delighted, and graciously agreed to come to Maine to do the recording. I also told Kathleen of the mishap in my brother's home in Ennis, County Clare (for further insight into the recording of this slip jig, see 'The First Slip').

When Kathleen did arrive in Maine, guess what happened? Yes, my machine would not record. I was so upset, especially because she had driven over 150 miles for nothing. Well, that's not true: we turned the day into something special by having dinner and a nice bottle of wine while reminiscing about friends in Boston and our musical exploits together around New England. Kathleen did eventually get to record the slip jig, this time in her own home and with her own equipment. I ask myself if there was a jinx on this tune. Maybe it had something to do with its title. I'm puzzled. Anyhow I am grateful to you, Kathleen. Thank you, my friend. I think we beat the odds.

YOUNG WHEN HE'S DANCING

Jig

Devin Shepherd



This tune was composed by Chicago fiddle player Devin Shepherd. He plays it here with his friend Sean Gavin on flute. Devin named the tune for Mike Doyle from County Wexford, who now lives in Chicago. Mike is an avid enthusiast of the music and can be found on the floor youthfully dancing wherever music is played.

Copyright Devin Shepherd

MEMORIES OF EAST CLARE

Reel

Damien Connolly

The musical score is written in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It consists of seven staves of music. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a key signature change to one flat (Bb). The melody features several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' over the notes). The second staff starts at measure 5 and includes another triplet. The third staff starts at measure 9 and has a triplet. The fourth staff starts at measure 13 and includes two triplet markings. The fifth staff starts at measure 17. The sixth staff starts at measure 21 and is labeled 'Regular ending' with a bracket. The seventh staff starts at measure 25 and is labeled 'Final ending' with a bracket, leading to a double bar line.

The tune on this track was composed by my nephew Damien Connolly. When I asked Damien what memories this tune's title referred to, he immediately said, 'Well, I grew up listening to a blend of Clare, Sligo, and Kerry fiddling. This is a tune that kind of reminds me of Paddy Canny and East Clare music in general.' Listen as he tells of his memories.

Copyright Damien Connolly

THE OLD BLACKBIRD

Hornpipe

The musical score for 'The Old Blackbird' Hornpipe is written in treble clef, key of D major (two sharps), and 4/4 time. It consists of 17 measures. The score is divided into five systems. The first system contains measures 1-4. The second system contains measures 5-8, with a first ending bracket over measures 7-8. The third system contains measures 9-12, with a second ending bracket over measures 10-12. The fourth system contains measures 13-16. The fifth system contains measures 17-17, with a first ending bracket over measures 17-18 and a 'Final ending' section following. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Looking back in time, one of my special memories of working on this project was the visit I made to Finbarr Dwyer. As I was setting up my recording machine he was playing this, his very own version of 'The Old Blackbird'. I have always loved this tune, but hearing it played by Finbarr that day made it even more special. I captured most of his remarkable playing of this tune, and here it is now. Finbarr's playing is a perfect lesson on the difference between the 'bones' of a tune that can be found in a transcription and what that tune can become in the mind and hands of a true master. The transcription included with this collection is taken from a book entitled *Forget Me Not*, which Laurel Martin and I compiled for Mel Bay.



THE PARTING GLASS/THE PEACOCK'S FEATHER

Song



The majestic vocals of the one and only Len Graham bring us near the end of this collaborative collection as he sings 'The Parting Glass'. His is an old County Antrim setting of the song, one that he and Joe Holmes sang together in the Guild Hall, Derry, shortly before Joe passed away. For those wishing to further their knowledge of the music, song and traditions of an Ulsterman, Len Graham's book, *Joe Holmes: Here I am Amongst You*, is a must read! In 'The Parting Glass', Len wishes us goodnight and bids joy to all, but the feeling is tinged with the sadness of a goodbye. Len told me that Joe used to speed up the slow air of the song until it became the dance tune 'The Peacock's Feather'.

'The Parting Glass' somehow makes me nostalgic, bringing to mind many wonderful moments of joy and laughter as I reminisce on the years of recording and collecting for this project. These memories, the songs and music, will forever remain in my heart. Not wanting to say goodbye, I would prefer something a little more upbeat, in the spirit of what my father always said to me as I was leaving home: 'Never say goodbye, always say Cheerio'. So, I have chosen Len's song as a way of saying not goodbye, but for now, 'Cheerio'. Len, my friend, thank you for the wonderful singing, and for 'The Peacock's Feather' schottische at the end, a happy surprise!

The Parting Glass

*A man may drink and not be drunk,
A man may fight and not be slain,
A man may court a pretty girl
And perhaps be welcome back again.
But since it has so ordered been,
Be a time to rise and a time to fall,
Come fill to me the parting glass,
Good night and joy be with you all.*

*If I had money for to spend,
I would spend it in good company,
And for all the harm that I have done,
I hope it's pardoned I will be,
But as it has so ordered been,
What is once passed can't be recalled,
So fill to me the parting glass,
Good night and joy be with you all.*

*My dearest dear, the time draws near
When here no longer I can stay.
There's not a comrade I leave behind
But is grieved that I'm going away.
For since it has so ordered been,
What is once passed can't be recalled,
So fill to me the parting glass,
Good night and joy be with you all.*

BIDDY FROM SLIGO/ THE CONNAUGHTMAN'S RAMBLES

Jig



And as we present this last selection, we come to the end of a long musical journey. It is my hope that whoever reads my stories, anecdotes, and ramblings will get some insight into the tunes' histories, and some new information about them.

Preferring to end this collection with lively, happy music, I asked my young musical friends, Kathleen Boyle from Scotland and Gráinne Murphy from Massachusetts, to do me the honour of recording the above-named tunes for this last track. These same jigs were recorded in 1937 by Kathleen's grandfather, the famed fiddle maestro Néillidh Boyle from County Donegal. The young ladies are joined by Néillidh's son Hughie Boyle, who plays piano, and together, with pride, they give us that same lift and drive associated with the wonderful music that is peculiar to County Donegal. I was thrilled when Kathleen invited me to join herself, her dad, and Gráinne in remembering her grandfather, completing an extraordinary musical circle. The torch has indeed been passed.

It so happens that the last tune on the track, 'The Connaughtman's Rambles' shown above, is the first jig I ever learned, and I did so from the 78 RPM recording that Néillidh Boyle recorded seventy-eight years ago. In a way, then, this track is symbolic of how Irish traditional music keeps coming full circle, shared back and forth between musicians across the broad Atlantic and across generations.

And lest I forget about the not-often-heard tune dedicated to a certain Bidy (a nickname for 'Bridget') from Sligo, my mind goes back in time to my grandmother sitting by the fireside listening to me trying to learn and play this fine jig. And so, in remembrance of my grandmother Elizabeth Collins (née Rochford), a wonderful lady of tunes, songs, and stories, I hereby offer an account of the lyrics she had for 'Bidy from Sligo':

'Oh mother dear, may I go for a swim?
Yes, my darling daughter!
Mind the boys don't see your shins,
Keep them well under the water!'

CLOSING MESSAGE: A BIT OF CLARE

And so, as my friend Dr. Paris Mansmann said, 'The tunes and songs have been told.'

Let us lift our parting glasses and toast all who have been associated with this collection. To our younger generation of musicians, singers, and dancers, may I suggest keep the tradition alive, enjoy life; live, love, and laugh, and always keep the flag flying. Or, as they proudly say in County Clare, 'Up the Banner!' Remember, there's a bit of Clare in us all.

'A Bit of Clare' was written by Killaloe poet and family friend J.P. "Jack" Noonan. Thanks to Jack's family for allowing me to publish his wonderful poem in this collection.

Séamus Connolly

Sullivan Artist-in-Residence, 2004-2015

Boston College

A Bit of Clare

*There's a bit of Clare about you
That I cannot quite explain.
It's elusive as the fragrance
Of wild-woodbine after rain.
Or it may be I was dreaming
When I first looked in your eyes
Of the grey mists o'er the Shannon
Mingling with the star-specked skies.*

*With your fingertips caressing
I can feel again the thrill
Of the breezes that steal softly
O'er the turf-banks on the Hill
And I hear the lark at dawning
When your lilting laughter peals
It's that bit of Clare about you
Which your ev'ry act reveals.*

*But whatever is that something
It brings back a memory
Of the wild rose in the hedges
And the berried rowan tree;
There's a breath of Irish Springtime
Fragrant flowers and April rain
In that bit of Clare about you
That I cannot quite explain.*

-- Jack Noonan



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PART TWO: ESSAYS & INDEXES

2

SÉAMUS CONNOLLY: A LIVING LEGEND IN IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC

by Earle Hitchner

During 2013 and 2014, fiddler, teacher, author, composer, recording artist, album producer, summer school and festival founder, and concert and lecture series organizer Séamus Connolly received three prestigious awards. The first was the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, bestowed in 2013 by the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations in recognition of distinguished career achievement by an immigrant or descendant of immigrants to the United States. The second was the National Heritage Fellowship, bestowed in 2013 by the National Endowment for the Arts in recognition of distinguished lifetime achievement by a folk or traditional artist residing in the United States. The third was local: the Faculty Award, bestowed in 2014 by the Boston College Arts Council to honor outstanding achievements in and contributions to the arts by a faculty member of Boston College, from which Séamus retired on December 31, 2015, capping a quarter century of extraordinary service.

All three awards underscore the crucial, enduring importance of Séamus Connolly's accomplishments in preserving, promoting, and passing on his love for and consummate skill in Irish traditional music. No single award reflects those accomplishments more than the NEA's National Heritage Fellowship, deemed the pinnacle honor for a folk or traditional artist living in the United States. That National Heritage Fellowship in 2013 ushered Séamus, a longtime Massachusetts resident now living in Maine, into an elite company of previous Irish and Irish-American recipients: sean-nós (old-style) singer Joe Heaney in 1982, uilleann piper Joe Shannon in 1983, fiddler and teacher Martin Mulvihill in 1984, stepdancer and choreographer Michael Flatley in 1988, flutist Jack Coen in 1991, fiddler Liz Carroll in 1994, stepdancer and choreographer Donny Golden in 1995, singer and multi-instrumentalist Mick Moloney in 1999, fiddler Kevin Burke in 2002, button accordionist Joe Derrane in 2004, and flute, whistle, and uilleann pipes player Mike Rafferty in 2010. Joining those twelve as National Heritage Fellowship recipients were two

more Irish Americans: stepdancer Kevin Doyle in 2014 and button accordionist Billy McComiskey in 2016.

I have been writing about Irish traditional music and musicians since 1978, and in my roles as critic and columnist, I cannot think of anyone who is more qualified and deserving of this extremely rare combination of honors than Séamus Connolly, whose reputation in Ireland is no less lustrous. There is no hint of hype or whiff of wishful thinking in stating that Séamus Connolly is one of the living legends of Irish traditional fiddling in the world.

I had first heard about Séamus from a number of U.S. resident musicians who had lived in Ireland during the early 1960s and were quite aware of his celebrated friendly rivalry back then with Armagh fiddler Brendan McGlinchey at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, Ireland's most hallowed traditional music festival and most rigorous competition. Those two were widely acknowledged as the young fiddle titans of their generation, and the virtuosity of one seemed to spur the virtuosity of the other, creating an intense, mutually respectful duel of horsehair bows that is still recalled with fond admiration by those who watched and heard it firsthand. Out of that nearly folkloric early rivalry between the two has sprung a friendship lasting to this day. It is a testament to what competitiveness can foster when it starts in mutual inspiration and appreciation.

Séamus Connolly has the distinction of being one of just five fiddlers (as of 2016) ever to win two All-Ireland senior solo championships and the only fiddler ever to win both the under-age-18 solo title and the senior solo title in the same year, 1961, before the rules were changed. Even more impressive is the fact that no one in the history of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, founded in 1951, has won more overall All-Ireland solo fiddle championships than Séamus: ten. Besides that unmatched total, he won the coveted

Fiddler of Dooney title in 1967 in Sligo, where Ballybofey, Donegal-born fiddling master Hughie Gillespie (1906–1986) was one of the adjudicators and where Séamus met for the first and last time another fiddling master, Killavil, Sligo-born, and longtime New Yorker James “Lad” O’Beirne (1911–1980), who was in the audience. Séamus also won four separate duet titles (two on fiddle and flute, and two on fiddle and uilleann pipes) with Kilmaley, Clare, instrumentalist Peadar O’Loughlin at the Oireachtas championship competition in Dublin.

Commanding encomium equal to that for his music are Séamus Connolly’s integrity and generosity. When I was hosting and programming a noncommercial radio show devoted exclusively to Irish and other Celtic traditional music from 1984 to 1989 in the greater New York/New Jersey metropolitan area, I organized an initial fund-raising concert in support of my program and the radio station at an American Legion hall in Lyndhurst, New Jersey. I asked Séamus, who then lived in Massachusetts, if he would perform at the concert. He said yes, but I remember thinking at the time that he was just being nice or polite. I did not contact him further. Yet on the night of the concert, he was the first musician to arrive. He had driven all the way down from his Massachusetts home, and, after performing and otherwise making himself available all night long, he drove back. Séamus Connolly is a man of his word—in this case, “yes,” his one-word reply to my lone request. He has repeated that gesture at other times in other situations, and each instance reminded me of his selflessness as well as his commitment to and passion for Irish traditional music.

Born on April 2, 1944, in Killaloe, County Clare, Ireland, Séamus Connolly is the son of Lena Connolly (née Collins), a homemaker, who played piano, button accordion, and, to some extent, fiddle, and Michael “Mick” Connolly, the skipper of the pleasure cruiser St. Brendan and later a tugboat on the River Shannon, who played flute, whistle, and button accordion and was also a stepdancer of singular style. Séamus’s older brother, Michael, currently the choirmaster and organist at St. Flannan’s Church in Killaloe, plays piano, and their younger brother, Martin, plays button accordion and also makes the instrument by hand under his Kincora imprint in Ennis, County Clare. Though not a musician, homemaker and oldest sibling Marie enjoys Irish traditional music with equal fervor. Together, the Connollys turned their household into a nurturing hub of music.

A true wunderkind on fiddle, Séamus grew in demand as a soloist. He was invited to contribute two tracks, accompanied by Galway’s Micheál Ó hEidhin on piano, to *The Rambles of Kitty*, a 1967 Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann LP reissued as a CD in 2007. Moreover, Séamus’s various musical alliances in Ireland—the Kilfenora and Leitrim céilí bands (the latter won the 1962 All-Ireland senior céilí band title with Séamus as a member), Inis Cealtra (comprising Séamus Connolly and Paddy Canny on fiddles, Tipperary’s Paddy O’Brien on button accordion, Peadar O’Loughlin on flute, and George Byrt on piano), and especially Séamus’s legendary partnership with Paddy O’Brien—constitute, in and of themselves, outstanding achievements. And *The Banks of the Shannon*, the 1974 “little LP” of six tracks (reissued as a CD with nine other tracks in 1993) made by Séamus with O’Brien and pianist Charlie Lennon,



LEFT: Séamus Connolly with his mother, Lena Connolly, in Killaloe, circa 1987. Photo by Michael Connolly.

RIGHT: Michael “Mick” Connolly, captain of the passenger cruiser St. Brendan, circa 1955. (Box 17 Folder 4, Séamus Connolly Papers, John J. Burns Library, Boston College)

is an indisputable masterpiece.

Séamus Connolly's feats on the fiddle were the stuff of legend across Ireland by 1976, the year he immigrated to the United States and four years after he had initially visited as a member of the first Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann North American tour. It is hard to imagine equaling, let alone outshining, his exceptional musical legacy in Ireland, but Séamus did precisely that in the United States.

Whether through private tutelage, classroom instruction, summer school curricula, or music camp workshops, he has steadfastly taught U.S.-born students the techniques and regional styles of Irish traditional fiddling. Among his more prominent pupils were Boston-born Gráinne Murphy, a past member of the internationally popular band Cherish the Ladies; Rhode Island-born Sheila Falls, who is assistant professor of music in performance and director of the World Music Ensemble at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts; and Boston-born Brendan Bulger, who won the All-Ireland under-age-18 fiddle championship in 1990 and was inducted into Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann's Northeast Region (of North America) Hall of Fame in 2011. All three of those former students have recorded fine solo albums attesting to the positive impact of their teacher: Bulger's *The Southern Shore*, produced by Séamus in 1991, and the self-titled *Brendan Bulger* in 2001, Falls's *All in the Timing* in 2009, and Murphy's *Short Stories* in 2010.

In the estimation of Bulger, Séamus Connolly's impact on Boston's Irish traditional music scene is especially salient. "His teaching and stylistic influence will be felt for generations to come in Boston," Bulger told the *Boston Irish Reporter* newspaper in 2010. "It is a testament to his great personal and musical presence that in an age when local, geographically delineated styles are eroded by ease of migration and the ability to share music electronically, he has left a clearly discernible and lasting impression on the community of Boston fiddle players who have known him. It is a rare accomplishment and an important one that a large, fundamental section of the definition of Boston-based Irish fiddle playing style during the late 20th century to early 21st century can be directly attributed to his influence. He has steadily and unassumingly created an enormous, even worldwide profile for Boston Irish fiddle playing in conjunction with many others, and should be recognized as a primary driver in that process over the course of the past 30-plus years. Those effects will not erode quickly."

From 1993 to 2003, Séamus Connolly was the director of the Gaelic Roots Summer School and Festival that he founded on the campus of Boston College in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. In the estimation of many, including myself, it was the finest Irish traditional music and dance summer school ever to emerge on U.S. soil. From the outset, Séamus was determined to use his very strong connections to bring Ireland's best traditional musicians and dancers to Gaelic Roots so that they and their U.S. counterparts could gather together in one place at one time to share tunes, swap stories, and forge a more powerful musical bond between them. I emceed the inaugural festival in 1993 and a few others thereafter, and I also audited a few summer school workshops and attended several special events on the schedule, so I witnessed firsthand the deep, indelible effect on the singers, instrumentalists, dancers, students, and audience members who were lucky enough to be there during that decade-long run of Gaelic Roots. Happily, its legacy lives on as a vibrant series of concerts and lectures founded by Séamus and, until his retirement at the end of 2015, organized by him throughout each academic year at Boston College under the Gaelic Roots rubric. In March 2010, Boston's Celtic Music Fest, better known as BCMFest, formally honored Gaelic Roots founder-director Séamus Connolly with a special tribute concert at Club Passim in Harvard Square, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Séamus has performed at many major folk and traditional music festivals in the United States, including the National Folk Festival, Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, Washington, D.C.'s Irish Folk Festival, and American Roots Fourth of July Celebration at the Washington Monument. He represented the best in Irish traditional music on the first "Masters of the Folk Violin" tour—he ultimately did three such tours—organized by the National Council for the Traditional Arts, the oldest U.S. folk arts organization, based in Silver Spring, Maryland. He also performed on the *Folk Masters* radio series broadcast nationwide on National Public Radio. And his international itineraries as a performer, teacher, and lecturer have taken him to Spain, France, Australia, England, and Canada in addition to Ireland.

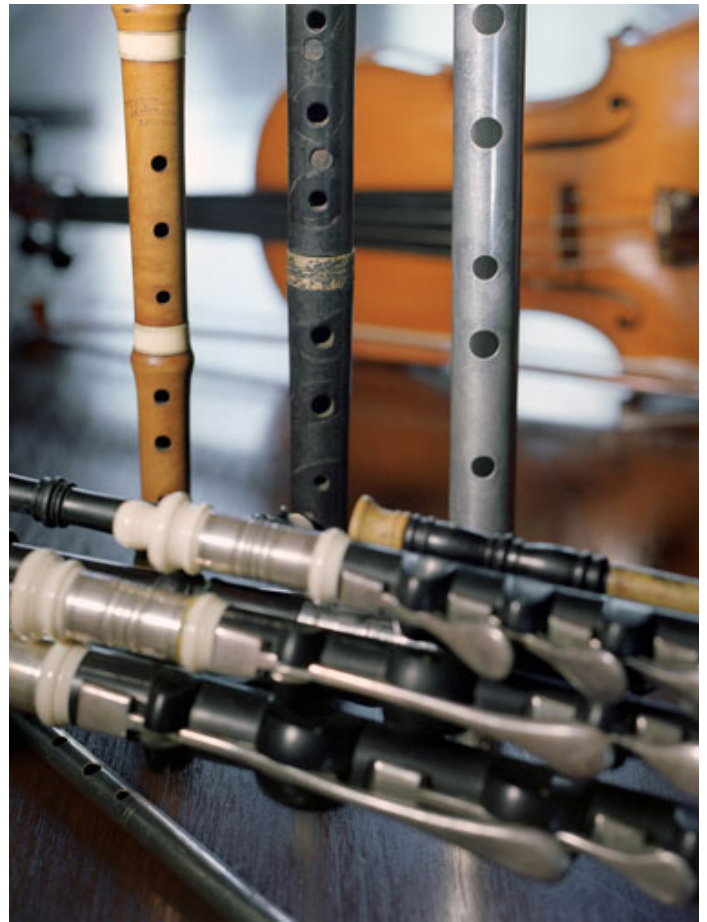
In 1990, Séamus was one of three recipients—out of a pool of over 2,500 applicants—to win a Massachusetts Cultural Council Fellowship Award. A year later, he was the subject of an excellent documentary film, *The Music Makers: Séamus Connolly and Friends*. The National Endowment for the Arts and Refugee Arts (Country Roads) recognized Séamus Connolly's

exceptional efficacy as an Irish traditional music instructor by awarding him three consecutive Master/Apprentice Grants. And in 2002, he was inducted into Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann's Northeast Region (of North America) Hall of Fame and was named "Irish Traditional Artist of the Year" by the *Irish Echo* newspaper.

Among Séamus Connolly's lengthy list of TV and radio appearances or profiles are NBC-TV's *Today Show* in New York City, WCVB-TV5's *Chronicle* in Boston, Kathleen Biggins's *A Thousand Welcomes* on National Public Radio affiliate WFUV-FM in New York City, and *A Celtic Sojourn*, hosted by Clonakilty, Cork-born Brian O'Donovan on Boston's National Public Radio flagship station WGBH-FM. Séamus initiated, produced, and co-hosted a weekly radio program of Irish traditional music sponsored by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann on Boston's WNTN-AM. He also co-hosted the Irish segments of the WGBH-FM/National Public Radio series *Ethnicity*.

Séamus has made or appeared on more than two dozen U.S. recordings, including a pair of highly lauded solo albums: 1988's *Notes from My Mind* (remastered and reissued by him in 2006) and 1989's *Here and There*, the latter selected as one of the top five Celtic/British Isles recordings for that year by the National Association for Independent Record Distributors and Manufacturers. Those two recordings offer compelling proof not only of Séamus's skill as a fiddler but also of his skill as a composer. They feature his tunes "The Bridge at Newtown," "The Thirteen Arches," "Thoughts of Carignan," "Bells of Congress," and, in memory of his mother, "I'll Always Remember You." Besides the 1993 CD reissue of *The Banks of the Shannon*, which included an unaccompanied fiddle track by Séamus and three tracks by him with pianist Charlie Lennon, Séamus recorded *Warming Up*, a brilliant 1993 album with Jack Coen on flute, Martin Mulhaire on button accordion, and Felix Dolan on piano. In 2004, Séamus recorded another outstanding album, the aptly entitled *The Boston Edge*, with Joe Derrane on button accordion and John McGann on guitar and mandolin.

In 2002, Séamus Connolly and Laurel Martin, another of his fiddle pupils who would record and teach in her own right, co-authored the book *Forget Me Not: A Collection of 50 Memorable Traditional Irish Tunes*, published by Mel Bay Publications. In addition, Séamus and Laurel recorded those 50 tunes in ornamented and unornamented versions on two companion compact discs, which enable neophytes and journeymen to acquire those melodies in simple



Signature photograph for Boston College Gaelic Roots Festival by Gary Wayne Gilbert

or embellished forms. Other musicians playing on some of the CD tracks include Joe Derrane, John McGann, and flutist Jimmy Noonan, who has been teaching Irish traditional music at Boston College since 1996.

But surely Séamus Connolly's magnum opus is what you are now perusing: *The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music*, produced and published in digital form by the Boston College Libraries. It is an extraordinary project with a large bounty of music available for free and readily accessible online to Irish music lovers and appreciators around the world. This collection features more than 330 tunes and songs in 10 playlists, offering mostly traditional and some original content, compiled by Séamus and performed by himself and an array of other standout musicians numbering well over 100.

One of the original tunes is "Miss Chrysandra Walter," a beautiful slow air composed and named by Séamus for his wife that is played movingly by Boston Symphony Orchestra violinist Bonnie Bewick Brown

with accompanying cello and viola. Also included is a selection of songs sung by such accomplished vocalists as Len Graham, Rita Gallagher, Ann Mulqueen, Pádraigín Caesar, Josephine McNamara, Robbie McMahon, and, from Prince Edward Island, Ed and Ruth Fitzgerald. Only the hornpipe “The Old Blackbird” is common to both the trade paperback *Forget Me Not*, where it’s played by Séamus Connolly and Laurel Martin on the companion compact discs, and *The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music*, where it’s played by Castletownbere, Cork-born button accordionist Finbarr Dwyer (1946–2014). Dedicated to Chrysandra “Sandy” Walter (1947–2011) and Irish radio broadcaster and music collector Ciarán Mac Mathúna (1925–2009), *The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music* is indisputably one of the most ambitious and momentous ventures ever undertaken in the United States by an Irish traditional musician.

Part of this collection’s genesis came from a remark made by renowned Sliabh Luachra fiddler Julia Clifford (1914–1997) from Lisheen, County Kerry, who generously played a large assortment of tunes for 16-year-old Séamus and asked him after certain ones, “You don’t have it, do you?” As he explained, “She wanted to be sure that she was adding new tunes to my repertoire and not repeating what I already knew.” That is what Séamus and the other musicians who contributed to this collection have also done: liberally sharing their talent and knowledge so that others might learn and grow in the music as they did through concentrated exposure to tunes and songs familiar, unfamiliar, or forgotten. This altruistic act of “paying it forward” helps to ensure the future health of a musical tradition cherished by every performer here.

To gauge further just how ardently Séamus Connolly is dedicated to the preservation and promulgation of Irish traditional music, you can visit the Irish Music Archives of Boston College’s John J. Burns Library, where the “Séamus Connolly Papers” are kept in no fewer than 97 boxes. They include 400 cassettes and several reel-to-reel tapes, now digitized, of priceless field recordings conducted by him with many of the great past masters of the tradition, as well as research notes and materials, correspondence, photographs, press clippings, awards, and publications. The items donated by Séamus to the Irish Music Archives date from 1929 to 2013 and thereafter. In spring 2013 the John J. Burns Library mounted an exhibit culled from those materials, “The Musical Roots of Séamus Connolly, Sullivan Artist in Residence in Irish Music,” the latter reflecting an endowed position established

by the generosity of G. Craig Sullivan (Boston College Class of 1964) and his wife, Maureen, that Séamus held from its inception in 2004 to his retirement in 2015 at Boston College. His sporadic additions of new or newly found materials merely reaffirm that the “Séamus Connolly Papers” represent a unique, widening window into his far-reaching musical career and life.

As Sullivan Artist in Residence in Irish Music and as Gaelic Roots Music, Song, Dance, Workshop, and Lecture series organizer and director, Séamus Connolly had a crowded schedule without factoring in his performing, music researching and collecting, and other teaching. Not to be overlooked throughout all of that are still more examples of his giving impulse. Three memorable ones, which I witnessed firsthand, focused on his dear friend and frequent playing partner, Joe Derrane. The first was Séamus’s stellar performance at “A Concert for the Ages: An All-Star Tribute to Joe Derrane” on November 13, 2010, at the Fairfield Theater Company’s Stage One in Fairfield, Connecticut. The second was Séamus’s seamless organizing and superb fiddling at “The Genius and Growing Impact of Joe Derrane” event on September 22, 2011, in Boston College’s Gasson Hall. And the third was Séamus’s poignant playing of “I’ll Always Remember You” during the funeral Mass on July 29, 2016, inside Saint Mary’s Church in Randolph, Massachusetts, for Joe Derrane, who passed away seven days earlier at age 86.

Add in such historic recordings as 1991’s *My Love Is in America*, showcasing the March 25, 1990, Boston College Irish Fiddle Festival featuring Séamus and 15 other preeminent fiddlers, and 1997’s *Gaelic Roots*, a double CD he produced of performances recorded at the summer school and festival of the same name, and what you have is an arc of Irish traditional music attainment in both Ireland and the United States that is inarguably seismic.

Yet Séamus remains humble about the achievements he has compiled and the praise his achievements have elicited. He prefers to redirect the light of attention to older musicians whom he reveres. Decades ago at a festival sponsored by the Philadelphia Céilí Group at Fisher’s Pool in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, I remember Séamus telling me how eager he was to meet a musical hero of his: New York City native Andy McGann (1928–2004). In the same way I had acted in awe of first meeting Séamus, he had acted in awe of first meeting McGann, hailed in the United States and in Ireland as one of the most accomplished Irish

traditional fiddlers ever. I have never encountered a musician of Séamus's stature who is more deferential and openhearted toward master players preceding him. And like them, he has helped to chart a path in Irish traditional music so that others could follow.

Since his retirement from Boston College, Séamus has maintained an energetic schedule of performing and mentoring. Among those activities was serving as an invited special guest at the 2016 Catskills Irish Arts Week in East Durham, New York, and at the 2016 Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Ennis, County Clare. As part of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann's Fídal Beo concert series held in the theater complex of Glór, Séamus performed in a Connolly family concert alongside his brother Martin on button accordion, Martin's son Damien on fiddle and button accordion, Damien's wife Sally on flute, and their son Colman as well as Ennis friend Geraldine Cotter on piano. Three aspects of the concert made it even sweeter for Séamus: It was the first time that he, Martin, Damien, Sally, and Colman formally played together on stage; it drew the largest audience in the entire Fídal Beo series; and it was Séamus's first direct participation at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in 26 years. The standing-room-only turnout and the standing ovation from the crowd confirmed that Séamus's fame as a fiddler and the esteem for the Connolly family name in music remain ascendant in his native county and country.

The result of almost 15 years of careful conception, development, and attention to detail, *The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music* will undoubtedly raise Séamus Connolly's already lofty reputation as a quintessential presence in Irish traditional music. "I believe talent carries a responsibility to use it well," he said. "My memories of musicians like Julia Clifford helping me along the way have motivated me to do something similar for others."

This collection, huge in scope and likely impact, is another instance of his transcendent talent put to exceedingly good use. He has given us so much for so long, and he is nowhere near finished. For Séamus Connolly, music is central to life, and his has incalculably enriched our own.

Earle Hitchner, who earned a doctorate with distinction from Drew University in 2015, has been called "arguably the pre-eminent Celtic critic in this country" by The Boston Globe, "the foremost Irish music critic in the United States" by the Boston Irish Reporter, and "one of the most authoritative commentators on Irish music on the international scene" by Ireland's Treoir magazine.

Among the newspapers, magazines, journals, and books to feature his writing on music are The Wall Street Journal, Billboard, Irish Echo, Irish Voice, Irish America, Irish Music, An Gael, The Companion to Irish Traditional Music, The Grove Dictionary of American Music, Journal of the Society for American Music, MTV's Sonicnet, The Oxford American, Rhythm Music, New Choices, and Boston College Magazine. He has also written liner notes for 70 recordings, including the Boston Pops Orchestra's The Celtic Album that was nominated for a Grammy award in 1998, and appeared in four film documentaries about Irish traditional music that have been broadcast on PBS-TV.

MERGING THE PAST WITH THE PRESENT: THE SÉAMUS CONNOLLY COLLECTION OF IRISH MUSIC

by Sally K. Sommers Smith Wells

Collections of tunes play important roles in the life of a musical tradition. They serve to define the tradition itself over time, as the tunes and songs contained in collections preserve the special qualities of the music that have evolved in the practice of musicians and listeners alike. Collections can also stretch the boundaries of the tradition, as often happens when new tunes are introduced into current practice by a composer or a musician. Because many traditional tune collections are personal, or at least reflect the musical preferences of a player within the tradition, tune collections function as the literature of a traditional music. They take an oral communication and preserve its fleeting beauty for posterity, and welcome both study and interpretation by future generations. Musical collections have always been invaluable resources for students and scholars, and are often the first references consulted by those who are just learning about the music.

In the Irish tradition, tune collections have historically served two separate yet complementary functions. The first purpose has always been a documentary one. Printed and handwritten collections are important windows on the past: they document the tunes that were popular among players in a particular time in the long history of the music, and provide glimpses of the styles and versions of the melodies that were preferred at that time and place. Secondly, collections amassed from the repertoire of a single player give insight into the creation of an individual musician's repertoire.

The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music, a digital collection presented by the Boston College Libraries, represents a dramatic departure from previous collections of traditional dance music, both in terms of intended audience and, especially, in its manner of presentation. First of all, it includes not only transcriptions of tunes and songs from the Irish tradition, but also images and stories that offer an immersive multidimensional context to the



Burns Library Exhibit / Gary Wayne Gilbert

music. Second, it offers models for interpretation of tunes rather than prescribed versions for learning, and thus invites the user to participate in the future direction of the tradition. This approach is actually a recapitulation of a very old process in the tradition: Irish traditional musicians in the past have crafted their distinctive sounds by listening broadly and critically to what was available to them; creatively imagining the possibilities for performance of the tunes; and eventually choosing an approach that would allow them to express a personal vision of the music.

This collection of tunes and songs is crafted upon the premise that this process is open to everyone who loves and studies Irish traditional music. While novice users will find a superb introduction to the history and power of Irish traditional music, musicians who have played in the tradition for years will also discover much to shape their own performance practice. The tunes that appear in the music notation are drawn from performances that master fiddler Séamus Connolly has recorded and collected throughout his musical lifetime. The more than 330 tunes that are available here are carefully chosen from a larger archive of recordings to represent the Irish tradition, its multigenerational transmission

process, and its focus on a tune or a song as a personal expression of artistry and/or remembrance. The music comes from at least three generations of performers and composers, and thus stands as a kind of intergenerational conversation that comments on the past and present of the Irish tradition, and points towards its future. The choice of the tunes on this site represents the personal aspect of the collection – these are, quite simply, tunes that Connolly enjoys. Many of the tunes will be familiar to those who love and who play traditional Irish music; some will be new to the tradition; all deserve to be widely known.

Transcription of a selection of these choice tunes would by itself constitute a significant addition to the body of Irish traditional dance music currently in print. But for Connolly, transcriptions alone did not seem like enough to illustrate their possibilities for performance. Over the course of the last decade, he has sent source recordings of his musical selections to Irish traditional musicians both in Ireland and in North America, and asked them to interpret the music and produce their own versions of the tunes. Some of these musicians are famous, and some are only locally celebrated; all bring a powerful interpretive gift to the music. The musicians range in age from sixteen to ninety years of age, and therefore represent several generations of interpreters of the Irish tradition. Songs are included along with dance tunes in many tempos and forms. Some of the new versions of the tunes are quite close to music notation; other versions use the source recordings only as an inspiration for great flights of fancy. The results serve to illustrate the evolution of the tradition over the past tumultuous century.

Compare, for example, the transcription and the recording of “Mrs. Galvin’s Barndance.” The transcription that appears in this collection is of Mrs. Galvin’s playing (she hailed from Moyasta, Co. Clare). The recording is the interpretation of Connolly himself, accompanied by Kevin McElroy on banjo, and Barbara MacDonald Magone on piano. Theirs is a joyous, yet respectful, rendering of the dance tune that preserves the character of Mrs. Galvin’s creation while placing a personal stamp upon the performance.

If changing times call for different interpretations of tunes, changing instrumentation can also have a huge impact on the listener. Consider the transcription of the tune “Nano’s Favorites” from the piano playing of Dan Sullivan Jr., who led the Boston-based Dan Sullivan’s Shamrock Band in the 1920s and 1930s, masterfully interpreted here by the New York

uilleann piper Jerry O’Sullivan. (The Dan Sullivan Jr. performance is available on *The Wheels of the World* – Yazoo 7009, 1996. This track is also available on YouTube.) The change from the piano to the pipes produces a very different sound, and Jerry O’Sullivan’s temperate pacing makes for a startling departure from the original.

Tunes can also change because the composer wishes to reinterpret them at a later date. Many enthusiasts of Irish traditional music are familiar with Connolly’s recording of his own composition, “The Bells of Congress.” (It can be heard on *Here and There*, Green Linnet GLCD 1098, 1989.) Compare the original recording with the version on this site, in which Connolly re-imagines his own tune with the able assistance of Gabriel Donohue. It’s a marvelous example of a maturing performer re-interpreting a previously recorded composition.

Musical interpretations may also carry distinct regional accents. For a taste of the differences between Irish and North American fiddle styles, compare the transcriptions of the compositions of Mrs. Matilda Murdoch (from New Brunswick, Canada) with the recording of these tunes by Irish fiddler Maeve Donnelly. Or sample tunes from Tom Turkington, which have a Northern Irish flair; and then note the Cape Breton stylings that Kimberley Fraser brings to this music.

What do the different recorded and written versions of a tune mean for the learner, the listener, the enthusiast? First of all, and most fundamentally, this collection illustrates the maxim that written versions of Irish tunes are not prescriptions for how they are



Matilda Murdoch. Photo by Séamus Connolly.

to be performed. Musical notation is meant to inspire and to suggest possibilities, and these possibilities differ from instrument to instrument, and musician to musician.

In this collection, the transcriptions are meant to serve as bridges between the source recordings of original musicians and the contemporary interpretations that can be selected for study by the listener and learner. This collection invites the learner to experiment, to imagine new settings, to “picture” the tune in different ways. The creative re-imagining of a tune is an important step in crafting a personal musical style. The learner may appreciate that interpretations and re-imaginings of a tune are critical parts of the Irish tradition: if the tradition is to continue to grow it must mold to the creative force of its practitioners.

A musician may play a tune in any manner that may be imagined, but the result can only be acknowledged as part of the tradition if it recognizes and hews to the conventions that define that form. To play Irish music in a traditional manner, the performer should understand those elements that make the music Irish, and use them as building blocks that will result in a creative and personal version of a tune. This new collection allows a listener to eavesdrop upon musicians as they apply their inspiration to the tune, and honor the form that makes it recognizably Irish and wholly traditional. Moreover, the enormous scope of this project enables the listener to become more than a passive consumer of the music; instead, the listener is welcomed as a participant and invited to be fully immersed in the traditional process.

Part of the power of Irish traditional music is its ability to evoke a particular time and place with a vividness that is palpable to even the casual listener. One of the most personal and affecting qualities of this new collection is the inclusion of stories and anecdotes from Connolly’s experience. These stories invite the participant to experience the music in its context: as an integral part of the fabric that weaves the music into the lives of Ireland’s musicians, both past and present.

With so many features in one collection, *The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music* resembles an immersive class in the Irish tradition. Participants in this class have an opportunity to witness the creative process of a master player, and to adapt that process to their personal musicianship. The digital collection is distilled from one of the great personal collections of recorded Irish traditional music, recorded by a

constellation of superb traditional performers, and carefully chosen and curated by the inimitable master of the Irish fiddle, Séamus Connolly. Listening to the collection, working with the transcriptions, and reading the personal stories that accompany the music are singular privileges, offering pleasures not to be missed.

Sally K. Sommers Smith Wells is a biomedical scientist and educator. She is an associate professor and chairman of the division of natural science and mathematics at Boston University. Sally is also a fiddler in the Irish and Cape Breton traditions and publishes widely on the evolution of traditional music in North America. She lives in Kennebunk, Maine with her husband and frequent musical collaborator, the noted American musicologist Paul F. Wells.

NEW SETTINGS, OLD SOURCES

by Elizabeth Sweeney

The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music is a product of Connolly's six decades of engagement with Irish traditional music in Ireland and beyond. Within the digital collection are tunes and songs old and new. In the online version, available at connollymusiccollection.bc.edu, more than fifteen types of tunes are played on a multitude of instruments by musicians of all ages. A number of regions and styles are highlighted, offering a glimpse of the vitality within Irish traditional music today.

While the online audio consists mainly of new performances by contemporary musicians, it is the traditional music of earlier generations that inspired Connolly to undertake this project. Much of the collection is drawn from older Irish repertoire, tunes carefully selected from source recordings that were compiled by Connolly over five decades. He listened to these source recordings with an artistic ear, selecting tunes that continued to be particularly meaningful to him and that are perhaps not often heard today. When a tune captured his imagination, ideas for new instrumentation often came to mind. He then invited specific musicians to reinterpret these tunes, using the source recordings as a starting point. Many subtle and exciting changes can be heard in their new versions of older repertoire.

To complement each audio track in the digital collection, Connolly has provided a story that seeks to acknowledge the tune's earlier source. He has also provided a transcription where the notation leans toward capturing the source recording, enabling comparison with the new performance. When a tune's title was not readily available, Connolly often named the tune for the source musician. Taken together with the audio, the transcriptions and the stories offer ways to appreciate both old and new interpretations of traditional melodies and songs.

a single tune, rather than sets of tunes, mirroring Connolly's selection process. More than half of the audio tracks in the digital collection are new interpretations of older tunes, with contemporary compositions representing another significant component of the collection. The collection also includes a few previously-released tracks, and a handful of "source recordings" by performers of previous generations, such as Julia Clifford, Charlie Mulvihill, and Larry Redican.

With modern performances that convey deep understanding of tradition, *The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music* pays tribute to earlier generations and today's master musicians. At the same time, the collection looks toward the future, in anticipation of these tunes being put into wider circulation.

Elizabeth Sweeney, Irish Music Librarian at Boston College, worked closely with other members of the Boston College Libraries' project team and with Séamus Connolly during the full three years (2013-2016) of the Libraries' collaboration on this project.

It is worth noting that most of the tracks in *The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music* contain

THE LEGACY

by Mick Moloney

Irish music is among the most prominent global representations of Irishness. Genres range across traditional, popular, and classical music—the fifes, drums, flutes, and lambegs of the Northern Unionists; the rock sounds of bands such as U2 and the Pogues; the musical fusions created by composers such as Bill Whelan, of Riverdance; and the magisterial collaborations between traditional and classical musicians spearheaded by innovators like Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin and Shaun Davey.

But it is traditional Irish instrumental music that remains the core: music played on instruments such as the fiddle, uilleann (pronounced “illen”) pipes, flute, concertina, accordion, tenor banjo, harp, and tin whistle—music that’s been preserved for centuries in efforts dating back to 1724, when the father-and-son team of John and William Neal of Dublin, instrument makers and concert promoters, published the first volume of Irish traditional music, the 49-melody *A Collection of the Most Celebrated Irish Tunes: Proper for the Violin, German Flute or Hautboy*.

Nearly 300 years later, a new work of preservation and dissemination, *The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music*, has been published by the Boston College Libraries. Launched in October 2016, this online compilation features traditional music collected and curated by master fiddle player Séamus Connolly. A renowned teacher, impresario, and composer, Connolly was the Sullivan Artist in Residence at Boston College at the Burns Library from 2004 until his retirement in 2015. He is also a legendary player of 20th-century Irish traditional music, winning 10 all-Ireland solo championships, an achievement that seems unlikely to be surpassed. In 2013, the country he adopted in 1976 declared him a National Heritage Fellow, the most distinguished award bestowed by the United States upon practitioners of traditional arts.

The collection developed by Boston College offers 338



Mick Moloney and Séamus Connolly
Séamus Connolly Papers, John J. Burns Library

audio recordings, featuring more than 130 musicians, with accompanying commentary, stories, musical transcriptions, and several specialized essays by scholars and music journalists. While the largest Irish music archives in Ireland are severely constrained by copyright law, the materials on the Connolly Collection site can be downloaded or printed under a Creative Commons license, thanks to the foresight of Connolly and his librarian collaborators.

Scores of traditional music collections have been produced since the publication of the Neal volume. During the 19th century, inspired by the nationalistic movements sweeping Europe, earnest Irish antiquarians hurried to preserve a national art that appeared to be in danger of disappearing. Their work was not in vain. Over the past 50 years, these collections, and others published in the 20th century, have been a primary resource for the global renaissance of Irish music.

It’s not volume that makes the Connolly Collection special. The 338-piece grouping is dwarfed by 1909’s Pigot Collection—“842 Irish Airs and Songs Hitherto

Unpublished”—which was assembled by Dublin lawyer John Edward Pigot (1822–71). And the tunes amassed by Canon James Goodman (1822–96), a Church of Ireland minister who himself played the pipes and preached in Gaelic, number nearly 2,500.

What the Connolly Collection offers, however, is depth, Connolly’s singular taste, and a manifestation of its time, which is pretty much the span of the 72-year-old Connolly’s life, at least from the moment when he first heard Irish music performed as a young child and, according to family lore, climbed a stage to stand with the musicians and pretend to play a fiddle with them. The music is sorted by categories. In dance: reels, barn dances, flings, jigs, slides, highlands, schottisches, clog dances, strathspeys, waltzes, polkas, hornpipes. In non-dance: airs, marches, planxties. The most arcane category is that of galliard, a form popular in Europe during the 16th century. A few songs are also offered and one instance of “mouth music”—a form of vocalizing that mimics the sound of instruments.

The audio recordings are sometimes field samples but more frequently were made by contemporary performers selected and enlisted by Connolly. These range from such eminences as the globally renowned Clare fiddler Martin Hayes to gifted locals, such as the Maine flute player Nicole Rabata. Complementing the entries, Connolly offers musical transcriptions and a reflection on each tune or song, which more often than not involves a meeting with the composer or the person from whom he learned the music or both.



Séamus Connolly and New York musicians / Higgins & Ross, Séamus Connolly Papers, John J. Burns Library

Though often thought to be representative, collections of Irish music assembled over the past two centuries have invariably been filtered through the aesthetic sensibilities of the curators. If the Irish painter George Petrie (1790–1866) thought a song or tune was weak, he simply did not include it in his important 1855 *Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland*. Likewise, when the classical musician Edward Bunting (1773–1843), another devotee of “ancient Irish music,” thought a tune to be an inferior recent composition, he left it out of the seminal three-volume collection he published between 1796 and 1840.

Working in that tradition, what Connolly offers is a selection of tunes and songs filtered through the aesthetic sensibility of a master musician with impeccable taste. Seekers of top-40 Irish folk tunes, or songs that Irish traditional musicians might consider common or overplayed, should look elsewhere.

Connolly, rather, adheres to an aesthetic rooted in what some musicians call “The Pure Drop”—the perceived core of the tradition. And judgment in this arena of Irish music, which is without an inherited canon of formal criticism such as exists for Western classical music, comes down to an individual’s informed taste and discernment.

Identifying the Pure Drop can be a quixotic, even puzzling adventure. The late Frank Harte, one of Ireland’s most noted 20th-century singers, had an exquisite sense of taste when it came to styles in Irish traditional singing. Ornamentation was important, he would say to me, but only in some songs. Slow songs might need a different approach than fast songs. But not always. Tone, timbre, and pitch might be important, but they were not the main thing. Harte didn’t care too much for “pretty” or over stylized singing, but then he would make exceptions for certain singers. After maintaining that the quality of voice wasn’t really that important in traditional Irish singing, he would then describe somebody as having a “good hard voice.”

Similar considerations are in play when one is trying to come to terms with the notion of excellence in traditional instrumental playing. Virtuosity, ornamentation, tone, technique, and intonation are among the variables, but how they are valued depends on one’s taste—and hopefully a sensibility that has been honed by years and experience.

As did Harte, Connolly has such years and such



Julia Clifford / Séamus Connolly Papers, John J. Burns Library

experience. It should be noted, however, that Connolly is no antiquarian. There are as many new compositions and songs in his collection as there are ancient ones, and as many young musicians as veterans.

The Séamus Connolly Collection is a record not just of music and its social and historical contexts, but of Connolly's life as a musician. The recordings themselves manifest the relationships Connolly built with fellow players over the decades. These friendships are why the participants agreed to donate their talents, to create original performances, and to make their art available without charge.

Among the recordings are some that seem to me particularly important. Of the great musicians who played Irish music in Boston over the past century, none was more celebrated than Dan Sullivan (1874–1948) who was a Tin Pan Alley songwriter, piano player, and leader of Dan Sullivan's Shamrock Band, which recorded prodigiously in the 1920s and early 1930s. His band members numbered some of the finest Boston musicians of the early 20th century. The Connolly collection brings his music alive through no fewer than five stellar recordings dating from the 1920s, and new recordings of pieces such as "Dan Sullivan's Favorite," played beautifully by New York uilleann piper Jerry O'Sullivan who also plays on nine other pieces in the collection.

On both sides of the Atlantic, Irish traditional music was essentially a male-dominated tradition up to the 1970s. One of the few women musicians who played Irish music in public prior to that time was Julia Clifford, a redoubtable County Kerry woman with

the strongest of personalities. The first piece of dance music in the Connolly collection features her playing a lovely reel called "Old Torn Petticoat." The story Connolly tells of the effect on his life of meeting her underscores, I think, his main rationale for spending more than a decade on this challenging project: gratitude.

He writes on the website, "I believe it is important to feature master fiddle player Julia Clifford and her son Billy playing the first dance tune in this collection. It was the first reel that they recorded for me that night in Tralee over 50 years ago, when Julia invited me to record herself and Billy playing tunes she thought I might not have. When they played a tune I admitted to never having heard, she would ask me in surprise, 'You don't have it, do you?'" Connolly continues: "As I look back now, I realise that it was an act of musical generosity to a young musician, which perhaps contained within it the inspiration not only for this project, but also for how I, throughout my life as a musician and teacher, have been driven and encouraged to do my utmost in passing along to others this incredible and astonishing oral and aural tradition."

The collection also features four songs from the charismatic singer Robbie McMahon, who like Connolly came from east County Clare, including "Spancilhill," one of the Clare anthems of the emigrant experience. Connolly is again poignant both in his knowledge of the music and in his warm recollection of his past.

"Spancilhill in east County Clare gives its name to this song which I first heard around 1958, sung by Robbie McMahon, who was himself from that very same neighbourhood. Robbie gave us his updated rendition during a wonderful afternoon of singing in his home a few years ago, after Mrs. Maura McMahon, in her usual manner of hospitality, served us a fine Irish meal. Robbie told my friends and me that Michael Considine from Spancilhill wrote the song. Mr. Considine was born around 1850 and immigrated to America as a young man. His intent was to bring his sweetheart to America when he had saved enough money for her passage. He passed away around 1873, in California, but the song found its way back to County Clare and was popularised by McMahon's singing of it."

Connolly concludes his essay on how the collection came to be, and the troubled stages he went through during a decade of work on the project, with a

reflection on “The Parting Glass,” a classic song of farewell popularized by Tommy Makem and the Clancy Brothers in the 1960s, but with roots that are believed to date back to 17th-century Scotland. It is performed for the collection by legendary Northern Ireland singer Len Graham.

“‘The Parting Glass,’” Connolly writes, “[brings] to mind many wonderful moments of joy and laughter as I reminisce on the years of recording and collecting for this project. These memories, the songs and music, will forever remain in my heart. Not wanting to say goodbye, I would prefer something a little more upbeat, in the spirit of what my father always said to me as I was leaving home: ‘Never say goodbye, always say Cheerio.’ So, I have chosen Len’s song as a way of saying not goodbye, but for now, Cheerio.”

Who will benefit most from this treasury? To some degree anyone interested in Irish and Irish-American history and culture. But its enduring beneficiaries are likely to be scholars of Irish music and musicians and singers. Connolly has built a storehouse of tunes he personally respects—that seem to him well worth preserving—and while many of the tunes will be unfamiliar to listeners, the fact is that many will now end up in the repertoires, recordings, and concert performances of musicians over the next decades, who will then themselves determine what should be passed on. This is the folkloric tradition at work.

Mick Moloney is a folklorist, musician, and professor of music and Irish studies at New York University. He is the author of Far From the Shamrock Shore: The Story of Irish Immigration Through Song (2002) and Across the Western Ocean: Songs of Leaving and Arriving (2016).

WORDS OF THANKS FROM SÉAMUS CONNOLLY

The music that appears in this collection is very much alive and part of a living tradition. All of the musicians, instrumentalists and singers alike, from the youngest performer at sixteen years old to the oldest at ninety years of age, are to me, masters in so many ways! I will forever be grateful to each and every musician for their generosity and talent, and for every note that they sang and played for the world to hear. I would like to say this to all of the musicians and composers: you are my heroes, and you will remain in my heart forever. God bless you and your talent. The collection would not be complete without you.

To the recording engineers, master musicians in your respective musical fields, your dedication and expertise are major contributions to my collection. To my family and friends who submitted photographs for the collection, and to Leslie Mansmann for her lovely illustrations, my sincere thanks. To my many other friends and family members, having walked with me on this incredible journey offering support, love and encouragement, my message for you is ever so much as that written above.

For producing and designing the e-book, I am grateful to Christian Dupont, Elizabeth Sweeney, Kate Edrington, Nancy Adams, and Shelley Barber. To Boston College University Librarian Thomas Wall, and to Associate University Librarians Christian Dupont and Kimberly Kowal, my wholehearted thanks to you and your superb staff. This collection might never have been completed without your participation and commitment.

Words are not adequate to thank my Boston College colleagues Elizabeth 'Beth' Sweeney (Burns Library Irish Music Archives & Public Services) and John 'Jack' Kearney (Digital Library Programs) for their invaluable work on the digital collection. Our strong working relationship, developed over many years, provided a foundation for the project to go forward.

I would like to thank Mick Moloney for permission to include his 2017 Boston College Magazine essay, 'The Legacy' in this e-book. Dr. Mick, thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to review the collection. Your expertise, musical knowledge, and

complimentary remarks are greatly appreciated. Dr. Earle Hitchner, your biographical essay on my music career is a journalistic masterpiece. Thank you Earle for unearthing, from so long ago, many happy events that I had forgotten. Sally Sommers Smith Wells, I thank you for capturing the true spirit of my collection in your essay. Dr. Sally, I am proud to have your noteworthy work be part of my work.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to Paul Wells, Dr. Cynthia Polo, Kieran O'Hare, Gabriel Donohue, Bonnie Bewick Brown, and John McGann for sharing your expertise and commitment with me on behalf of the project. As my essay describes in detail, your dedication provided staying power for the project at a critical time in my life.

Having spent twenty-five years working at Boston College, I have come to know many friends and supporters of the arts. To all of you who offered guidance and support, including my Music Department colleagues, thank you.

To my co-workers, scholars, and friends in the Center for Irish Programs, your inspiration, assistance, and advice were most helpful in completing the project. As they say in Ireland, keep the flag flying! In my book you are 'the best'.

A special 'thank you' to University President William P. Leahy, S.J., for believing in me and in my work at Boston College. Thank you, too, for appointing me as the Sullivan Artist in Residence in Irish Music in 2004.

Thanks also to G. Craig and Maureen Sullivan, for your friendship, support for this project, and for generously endowing the chair. It was a great honour for me to be the first Sullivan Artist in Residence in Irish Music.

Were I asked to define this collection in a few short words, I would not hesitate to say, 'so much love from so many people.'

Séamus Connolly

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