

An CRUITIRE



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The cover photo was taken by Kieran Cummins at Cairde na Cruite's annual harp festival
An Chúirt Chruitireachta in An Grianán, Co. Louth, July 2016

AN CRUITIRE

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Caitríona Rowsome

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Caitríona Rowsome, Aibhlín McCrann

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REGISTERED CHARITY

No. CHY 9687

CONTACT

E mail: info@cairdenacruite.com

Website: www.cairdenacruite.com

 www.facebook.com/CairdeNaCruite

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Harps, harps and more harps: A 2016 overview

by Aibhlín McCrann

There is no doubt that Toner Quinn's *Report on the Harping Tradition in Ireland*, published by the Arts Council, An Chomhairle Ealaíon in 2015, was a turning point for the harp in Ireland; it acted as a catalyst and captured a sense of the liveliness and bubbling undercurrent of harp activity simmering all over the country. It empowered the harp community, giving it a confident voice to assert, as Quinn pointed out, 'a tradition that has been recovered, recreated, reimagined and reinterpreted for the present day'. Despite the fact that there was relatively little exposure given to the harp's emblematic position in the official centenary commemorations, 2016 saw the harp in Ireland 'come out' in many different ways; with its diversity and unique sound acknowledged across a number of platforms.

The harp received national prominence with the award of a TG4 Gradam Ceoil to Cairde na Cruite where it acknowledged the organisation's special contribution in working to restore the harp to a central position in mainstream Irish traditional music and throughout the world. Special mention was given to An Chúirt Chruitireachta, Cairde na Cruite's International Festival for Irish Harp, under the artistic direction of Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, with the support of festival mentors; some of the most renowned Irish harpers in the world. Other prominent festivals such as Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy where the demand for harp classes, led by Kathleen Loughnane and her team, is increasing year by year; the community-led O'Carolan Harp Festival at Keadue; the Joe Mooney Summer School in Drumshanbo; the Historical Harp Society of Ireland's festival in Kilkenny directed by renowned harper Siobhán Armstrong; the O'Carolan Harp and Cultural festival in Meath led by Dearbhail Finnegan, which had an attendance of more than 70 harpers at its harp workshops; Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann's Scoil Éigse; Laoise Kelly's highly successful, newly established Achill International Harp Festival and the Tionól of harps and uilleann pipes led by Music Generation Laois, remind us of the extraordinary level of interest in the harp at the moment. Each plays their part in enabling the harp's unique sound to be heard by new audiences, creating further connections between the harp and other musicians as well as creating more connectivity within the harping community.

Cohesion underpins the establishment of Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland, an organisation formed by harpers with the help of the Arts Council and a pivotal point in the continuing evolution of the harp. Representatives of the various strands of the harp tradition met at the Arts Council Merrion Square headquarters and conducted their first formal meeting at An Chúirt Chruitireachta in Termonfechin in June 2016, ably facilitated by Nicholas Carolan, Director Emeritus of The Irish Traditional Music Archive, where differences in style, opinion and approach to the harp were discussed and debated. One of the outcomes of that meeting was the appointment of a ten member interim steering group chaired by Aibhlín McCrann and comprising representatives from – among others – the Historical

Harp Society of Ireland, Cairde na Cruite and Cláirseoirí na hÉireann. The group agreed to act for a period of six months.

With the support of the Arts Council, Cruit Éireann met again at the Achill International Harp Festival where it signed off on its terms of reference and reiterated its mission: *As the national umbrella resource organisation for the harp, its organisations, harpers and harp makers, Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland affirms and promotes inclusive, contemporary expression of the one thousand years old harp tradition. It acknowledges the harp's diversity and its unique status as Ireland's national emblem. It encourages a breadth of harp repertoire and performance across a broad range of genres.* It was decided at the Achill meeting that the steering group should co-opt additional members to ensure that it would reflect as far as possible of the geographic spread and current diversity of harp practice, and interested parties were asked to self-nominate. Catherine Boothman, Arts Council Traditional Arts executive, agreed to assist with this process and it is currently underway. This has been a historic step for the harp and harpers in general; our strength is in our unified approach and we are very energised by the opportunities that lie ahead over the next few months.

It was an exciting year too for harp composition the scale of which was quite unprecedented. Harpist Anne-Marie O'Farrell's new work *Songs for Ireland: A 1916 Trilogy* was premiered on RTE Lyric FM in March. Anne-Marie also featured in the Music Network series of commissions for 2016 when she premiered *Claria* a work for harp and clarinet duo performed by Anneleen Lenaerts (harp) and Dionysis Grammenos (clarinet) in a recent Music Network nationwide tour. Audiences can look forward to more music from Anne-Marie in December 2016, when her new work '*A Psalm for Christmas*' for female voices with trumpet, French horn, trombone and harp will be performed in Mary Immaculate College Chapel in Limerick, where she is composer- in-residence. Harper Michael Rooney's *Macalla Suite 2016* was performed by the Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann National Folk Orchestra as part of its contribution to the centenary. Tim Doyle's *Rithim na Réabhlóide*, commemorating the children of the 1916 rising, included harpers led by Rachel Duffy at Cairde na Cruite's Spring concert in the Pearse Museum. Composer and pianist Peadar Ó Riada featured harper Oisín Morrison in a special Gael Linn 2016 commission, *Onóir* with Cór Chúil Aodha and the group Téada together with renowned uilleann piper Mick O'Brien, Cór Chúil Aodha and Cór Ban Chúil Aodha.

The Meath Harp ensemble continues to commission new works for its ensemble, and recently released a recording of Vincent Kennedy's *The Chronicles of Meath*. Music Generation Laois, forging ahead with more than 100 young harpers, has added a new composition, *Rising of the Harps* by Scottish harper Caitriona McKay and *1916: Visions and Voices*, a collaborative composition, to its repertoire, while Achill International Harp Festival featured a newly composed suite, *Sraith Oileán Acla*; composed for harp, pipes and traditional ensemble and incorporating the vibrant indigenous piping tradition in Achill, with harpers Laoise Kelly and Gráinne Hambly from Ireland and Scottish harper Mary McMaster performing. Music Network's *Edges of Light*, a new collaboration between prodigiously talented dancer Colin Dunne, ebullient fiddler Tola Custy, renowned harper Maeve Gilchrist and master uilleann piper David Power scaled new heights in terms of pushing out harp boundaries, and engaging with other instruments and art forms – a very innovative departure indeed.

Even though there are harpers who rightly assert that the harper's function was primarily as a solo performer, an indication of the growing significance and popularity of the harp ensemble concept was given at Music Network's 30th birthday finale in the Irish Museum of Modern Art, where it acknowledged *the harp's close links with Irish identity and nationality and celebrated the richness of contemporary harp practice* by commissioning a work from Philip Martin. Inspired by the harpers' music collected by Edward Bunting at the Belfast harp festival in 1792, *Avoca, a Celtic Journey* was preceded by an evocative performance on early Irish harp from Paul Dooley, followed by the Albiez Trio; Cormac Breathnach, Tola Custy and Laoise Kelly showing the melodic and rhythmic harp colours in a different light. The large scale harp ensemble, including Laoise Kelly, Anne-Marie O'Farrell, Gráinne Hambly, Dearbhail Finnegan, Triona Marshall, Michelle Mulcahy, Deirdre Granville, Fiona Gryson, Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, Claire O' Donnell, Eilís Lavelle and 40–50 professional and non-professional harpers, was conducted by former principal conductor of the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, David Brophy. They were joined by traditional singer Liam O'Maonlaí, in a haunting rendition of a number of Edward Bunting's harp airs, Aoife Nic Athlaoich (cello) and Cuan Ó Seiradáin and Jacqueline McCarthy (French horns). Listening to the performance, I couldn't help but think that we had come a long way from 1963 when Cairde na Cruite was hard pressed to provide 6 harpers for Archie Potter's new work *Teach Lán na gCruitirí*; possibly the first time that a group of harps had been heard in a solely instrumental ensemble context, apart from TC Kelly's trio for three Irish harps composed in the late fifties.

Despite the undoubted veracity of the occasional naysayer's views about the harp's solo instrument status, the occasion really highlighted that ensemble playing fulfils a welcome social function and provides young harpers with an opportunity to connect with one another, to listen to one another and to swap harp experiences. Playing the harp is cool and fun. In this instance, the provision of accessible harp tuition, which was for many years rooted in our second and third level music institutions, and more latterly joined by the Music Generation initiative and other harp schools throughout the country, has contributed to the resurgence of interest in the instrument. There is also no doubt that the demands of more complex 'art music' composition for harp ensemble has given some younger harpers a more grounded understanding of the nuances and complexities of harp technique, phrasing and dynamic variety.

2016 celebrated a number of new Irish harp recordings: Laoise Kelly with uilleann piper Tiarnan Ó Duinnchinn; Dingle based Deirdre Granville; Seána Davey from County Meath and Fiana Ní Chonaill from Limerick. Each of these recordings adds to the well of repertoire for the harp, and showcases individual styles and interpretations. We should also acknowledge the support from Na Píobairí Uilleann and the Traditional Music Archive who have given harpers opportunities to perform and present over the past twelve months. Notable among these was Mary O'Donnell's lecture on Mary O'Hara's contribution to Irish Music.

Bringing the year to a close on a scholarly note, *Harp Studies, Perspectives on the Irish harp* is a newly published collection of essays from noted harpers and non-harpers focusing on many aspects of harp practice and dealing with a series of wide-ranging harp themes. This volume is a long-awaited and very welcome addition to existing harp scholarship, and addresses new research on the Irish harp with perspectives from the disciplines of ethnomusicology, musicology, history, arts practice, folklore and cultural studies. The harping community in Ireland owes an enormous debt

of gratitude to Ionad na Cruite, the Irish harp research centre at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick, and to the book's two editors, Sandra Joyce and Helen Lawlor who in assembling this body of original research are contributing to the longer term sustainability of the harp in Ireland, and ensuring an enduring legacy.

In 1992, Cairde na Cruite commissioned a work from Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin for solo Irish harp, tablas and tambura. Based on a line from a poem of TS Eliot, *At the still point of the turning world, there is the dance*, was performed at IMMA for the 200th centenary of the Belfast Harp Festival. Twenty four years later and with many hurdles crossed, the richness of what has been achieved by harpers in 2016 in terms of creativity, participation, partnership and scholarship has brought us to that **still point**. Now for the dance...



Historic Meeting in Dublin of the harp community at the Arts Council Wednesday 16th October 2013. In the front row from left: Máire Ní Chathasaigh, Siobhán Armstrong, Sheila Larchet Cuthbert, Aibhlín McCrann, Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, Caitriona Yeats, Helen Lawlor. Second row from left: Caitriona Rowsome, Sandra Joyce, Deirdre Granville, Michelle Mulcahy, Laoise Kelly, Janet Harbison, Aisling Ennis, Teresa O'Donnell, Joleen McLaughlin, Ann Jones, Mary O'Donnell. In the third row from left: Paul Flynn, Tim O'Carroll, Máire Uí Chróinín, Colette Moloney, Deirdre Malone, Pádraigín Ní Uallacháin, Gay McKeon, Geraldine O'Doherty, Úna ní Fhlannagáin, Claire O'Donnell. In the fourth row from left: Cormac de Barra, Kavan Donohoe, Seosaimhín Ní Bheaglaoich, Kathleen Loughnane, Nicholas Carolan, Mary Nolan, Catriona Cannon, Jan Muyliaert. In the back row from left: Kieran Cummins, Simon Chadwick, Fintan Vallely, Peter Browne, Toner Quinn, Paul Dooley. Photograph courtesy of the Arts Council

Cairde na Cruite Events

An Chúirt Chruitireachta 2016

The 31st anniversary of An Chúirt Chruitireachta at An Grianán, Termonfechin, County Louth from 26th June to 1st July 2016 was a resounding success. Visitors and participants were treated to a week-long memorable series of workshops, lectures and concerts featuring Irish and international guests of the highest calibre.

A diverse set of afternoon workshops and concerts included Italian Ensemble Girotondo d'Arpe, Gráinne Hambly's 'The Story of the Irish Harp', 'Music from Mann' with Rachel Hair, 'Ensemble Playing for the Stage' with Janet Harbison, 'Singing Workshop' with Seosaimhín Ní Bheaglaíoch, 'Getting your music out there' with Áine O'Neill and 'Learn the Tune/Dance the Dance' with Dearbhail Finnegan.

The opening concert featured sisters Michelle and Louise Mulcahy with local fiddle player Gerry O'Connor. A tribute to the 1916 Rising on Monday night was performed by the Festival Harp Tutors. The Meath Harp Ensemble took the stage on Tuesday night to accompany Janet Harbison from Ireland and Rachel Hair from Scotland. The Festival took a trip into town on Wednesday afternoon, performing a lunchtime concert in Barlow House, Drogheda. It was a lively event with Kathleen Loughnane and Cormac de Barra on harp and Seosaimhín Ní Bheaglaíoch on vocals. Back at An Grianán that night guests were in for a treat with An Chruit Abú, a fantastic line-up of harp, fiddle, flute and vocals with the Albiez Trio including virtuoso harpists Laoise Kelly, Siobhán Armstrong, singer Róisín Elsafty, Gerry Cullen and The Drogheda Singers.

Cairde na Cruite were honoured to host Tionól na gCruitirí, National Harp Forum, an Arts Council Initiative on Wednesday afternoon. A very productive meeting concluded with a decision to hold the next meeting in Achill in October.

The finale of the week was "The Power of Three" concert featuring Cormac de Barra on harp, Éamonn de Barra on flute and the hauntingly beautiful voice of the wonderful Julie Feeney.

The inspiring festival team this year set the tone for the participants. Cormac de Barra, Máire Ní Chathasaigh, Dearbhail Finnegan, Gráinne Hambly, Kathleen Loughnane, Anne-Marie O'Farrell and Seosaimhín Ní Bheaglaíoch worked their magical spell on the talented and enthusiastic players who responded making the week a musically vibrant and memorable occasion.

At the conclusion of the festival Áine Ní Dhubhghaill thanked all committee members for their dedicated work and commitment in preparing for the festival and in particular Rachel Duffy for her gentle, kind and dedicated work as student supervisor during the week. After five years as director, Áine wishes Aibhlín McCrann, the incoming festival director every success and assures her of her continued support.



Gerry O'Connor (Fiddle)



Michelle Mulcahy (Harp & Fiddle) and Louise Mulcahy (Uilleann Pipes & Flute)



Janet Harbison (Harp)



Rachel Hair (Harp)



Ablez Trio, Laoise Kelly (Harp), Tola Custy (Fiddle) and Cormac Breatnach (Flute)



Siobhán Armstrong (Harp) and Róisín Elsafty (Singer)



Gerry Cullen and the Drogheda Singers



Cormac de Barra (Harp) and Éamonn de Barra (Flute & Bodhrán)



Julie Feeney (Singer)

Photographs of 2016 Evening Concerts at An Chúirt Chruitireachta, An Grianán, Termonfechin, County Louth by Kieran Cummins



Spring Concert at the Pearse Museum

On April 10th 2016, Cairde na Cruite held its Spring Concert at the Pearse Museum in St. Enda's Park, Rathfarnham. This annual event gives harp students a chance to play in front of an audience in an informal and relaxed setting. A feast of Irish Harpers once again saw the harp resonate in this historical venue. Wonderful performances by some of our younger members were followed by the performance of a thirty minute newly composed piece by Tim Doyle, *Rithim na Réabhlóide*. The piece which is in five movements is a tribute to the forty children killed during the 1916 rising. The 27 members of Bray Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann included harpists led by Rachel Duffy. It was very special to have this performance in Pádraic Pearse's school and Áine Ní Dhubhghaill wished the group well in their further performances throughout the 1916 anniversary year including one at Creative Connexions in Sitges, Spain. Many thanks to Director Brian Crowley and the staff at St. Enda's for welcoming and facilitating this annual event for the seventh consecutive year.

Rithim na Réabhlóide will perform Tim Doyle's suite of music dedicated to the Children of the Rising on December 3rd 2016 at 3pm in the Commemoration Gallery of the GPO. This is a complimentary once off event of 30 minutes in duration and is available with your normal admission fee.

Christmas Concert at Foras na Gaeilge

The Cairde na Cruite annual Christmas concert will be held in Foras na Gaeilge headquarters in Merrion Square on Sunday December 4th. *Fáilte roimh chách!*



Gabhaimíd ár mbuíochas le Foras na Gaeilge a chuireann fáilte 'gus fiche romhainn gach bliain.

Regular Events with Cairde na Cruite

Spring Concert: Held annually each Spring at the Pearse Museum in St. Enda's Park, Rathfarnham. The 2017 dates will be published on www.cairdenacruite.com in the New Year.

An Chúirt Chruitreachta: International harp festival that takes place annually in An Grianán, Termonfechin, County Louth, from the last Sunday in June to the following Friday. The 2017 event will take place from Sunday 25th June to Friday 30th June 2017. See www.cairdenacruite.com to book your place.

Christmas Concert: Held annually in Foras na Gaeilge, Merrion Square, Dublin 2. All are welcome! *Fáilte roimh chách!*

TG4 Gradam Ceoil 2016

Traditional Music Awards

Cairde na Cruite are delighted and honoured to have been the recipient of the 2016 Gradam Comaoine (Special Contribution Award) at this year's TG4 Gradam Ceoil awards ceremony. The 2016 Gradam Comaoine was awarded in recognition of Cairde na Cruite's work since its foundation in 1960 in the revival and development of interest in the Irish Harp. The full list of TG4 Gradam Ceoil 2016 recipients were: Gradam Ceoil – *Kevin Burke*, Ceoltóir Óg (Young Musician) – *Órlaith McAuliffe*, Gradam Saoil (Hall of Fame) – *Arty McGlynn*, Comharcheol (Collaboration) – *Our Dear Dark Mountain with the Sky over it*, Amhránaí na Bliana (Singer) – *Pól Ó Ceannabháin*, Comaoin (Special Contribution) – *Cairde na Cruite*, Gradam 1916 – *Gael Linn*.



The Gradam Comaoine TG4 Award – a specially-commissioned piece by sculptor John Coll, presented by Moya Brennan (right) to Áine Ní Dhubhghaill who accepted the award on behalf of Cairde na Cruite

The 2016 awards were broadcast live on TG4 at the Gradam Ceoil Concert in the Cork Opera House on Sunday 21st February. The programme, hosted by well-known musician/broadcasters Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh and Tristan Rosenstock, featured a presentation of awards and concert where the 2016 Gradam recipients were joined on stage by their special musical guests, in a unique celebration of traditional music and song. The concert featured performances by Cairde na Cruite members Kathleen Loughnane, Rachel Duffy, Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, Cormac de Barra, Máire Ní Chathasaigh, Anne-Marie O'Farrell, Dearbhail Finnegan and Gráinne Hambly.

TG4 Leascheannasaí Pádhraic Ó Ciardha says that the Gradam Ceoil continues to honour major figures in Irish traditional music during their lifetime. “We are privileged to organise and sponsor this deserved recognition for these extraordinary and talented artists who instil such pride in our culture and adorn our lives with their music,” he said.



Harpers representing Cairde na Cruite at the TG4 Gradam Ceoil concert 2016. L-R: Kathleen Loughnane, Rachel Duffy, Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, Cormac de Barra, Máire Ní Chathasaigh, Anne-Marie O'Farrell, Dearbhail Finnegan and Gráinne Hambly

An Chúirt Chruitireachta

**International Festival
for Irish Harp**

Sunday 25 June – Friday 30 June 2017
An Grianán, Termonfechin,
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inspiring .. enriching .. memorable

Be inspired by the best of harping
Book your place NOW

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www.cairdenacruite.com

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Join us in 2017 for Cairde na Cruite's International Festival for Irish Harp

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Book now for an exciting programme of tuition, workshops and concerts!

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five day harp festival of workshops, sessions, tuition and concerts
world-class teachers, visiting artists and performers
open to harpers of all standards
broaden your understanding of Irish music, song and dance
collaborative, multidisciplinary teaching approach
develop skills and repertoire
Irish harping techniques
traditional ornamentation



Music Network

30th Anniversary Concert



Established in 1986 by the Arts Council, Music Network organises several music tours and one-off concerts nationally every year involving Irish and international artists. A major initiative of Music Network has been the establishment of its subsidiary company Music Generation – the national music education programme which has radically improved access to music education since it was first established. Music Network is today an essential part of the Irish music infrastructure.



On Sunday 20th November, at 5.30pm in the Great Hall, Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Dublin, Music Network presented the world premiere of a newly commissioned work for large-scale harp ensemble by the celebrated Irish composer Philip Martin.



Former principal conductor of the RTÉ Concert Orchestra David Brophy conducted a large scale harp ensemble including Laoise Kelly, Anne-Marie O'Farrell, Gráinne Hambly, Dearbhail Finnegan, Triona Marshall, Michelle Mulcahy, Deirdre Granville, Fiona Gryson, Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, Claire O' Donnell, Eilís Lavelle and 40–50 professional and non-professional harpers. The ensemble was completed with traditional singer Liam O'Maonlai, Aoife Nic Athlaoich (cello) and Cuan Ó Seiradáin & Jacqueline McCarthy (French horns). In celebration of Music Network's 30th anniversary year, this event is designed to acknowledge the richness of contemporary harp practice in Ireland.

"For centuries the harp has been closely linked with Irish identity and nationality, so given the year that's in it, it seems only fitting that we celebrate our own anniversary with a large-scale harping event," says Sharon Rollston, Music Network CEO.



This spectacular live performance follows in the tradition of the Belfast Harp Festival of 1792, when folk music collector Edward Bunting annotated dozens of traditional harp tunes, helping to preserve our ancient harping tradition. As a complementary second strand within this project, leading solo harpers will be filmed and recorded in a studio setting performing the entire first volume of the



historic Bunting Collection, creating an audio-visual archive that both preserves these melodies, and through their interpretation, reflects the diversity of practice of today's harpers.



The Philip Martin commission is one of three Music Network commissions this season, along with 'Edges of Light', a new collaboration between prodigiously talented dancer Colin Dunne, fiddler Tola Custy, harpist Maeve Gilchrist and uilleann piper David Power and a new commission by Anne Marie O'Farrell, continuing Music Network's practice of commissioning and including contemporary Irish works in its touring programmes.

Music Network's mission is to make live music available and accessible to as many people as possible, giving Irish audiences the chance to experience the very best in international chamber, jazz and traditional music in venues throughout Ireland at affordable prices.

Music Network tours are funded by the Arts Council and presented in association with RTÉ lyric fm.



Philip Martin's *Avoca: A Celtic Journey* is presented with funding from the Arts Council's DEIS & Traditional Arts Commissions Awards.

Programme:

Paul Dooley – Irish harp (wire strung)

Albiez Trio – Laoise Kelly (harp), Tola Custy (fiddle), Cormac Breatnach (whistle)

Interval

Philip Martin's Avoca: A Celtic Journey





Photo Credits: Fran Marshall

Willie Clancy Summer School, Milltown Malbay

by Kathleen Loughnane



We are now in our tenth year hosting a harp class and concert at the Willie Clancy Summer School. The terrific team that has been delivering excellent teaching, enthusiasm and encouragement to this project are Gráinne Hambly, Cormac de Barra, Máire Ni Chatasaigh, Laoise Kelly, Paul Dooley and myself. We have welcomed surprise guests over the last few years who gladly offered a workshop to our students, Maeve Gilchrist from Scotland and Janet Harbison, featured among these.

The number of students in attendance has increased yearly, topping last year at approx. 40 students. They come from afar and near, from Germany, Australia, America and Europe, but increasingly from the western regions of Ireland. The harp having an ancient historic context casts a wide musical net. It had remained dormant for a time but its lineage is centuries old.

We know that we are not playing 12C harp music. Society has changed, musical fashions have changed. They were always changing. Most of the music we now play dates back not later than the end of the Jacobite era C1750. Dance music is now perhaps an innovation in the harp repertoire, and why not – Tradition is always absorbing new influences, new excitement.

To move rapidly forwards, we are in a period of post prosperity where our young people have excellent instruments, often playing concertina, fiddle, accordion and harp. The Willie Clancy School is a gift to us in this journey across the range of traditional music. Families and children are in an environment where they are absorbing our cultural legacy in an authentic respectful environment.

We remain indebted to Harry Hughes and the warmest and most gracious management team at The Willie Clancy School of what remains one of the most remarkable festivals in our country.

Music Generation Laois: Harp and Pipes Tionól

by Deirdre Ní Bhuachalla-Malone

The inaugural Music Generation Laois Tionól for harps and pipes took place in Portlaoise from November 4th – 6th, in Portlaoise Youth Education Centre (PYEC). This weekend event was a national gathering for harps and pipes, and attracted young people from all over Ireland, including Antrim, Donegal, Louth, Sligo, Mayo, Dublin, Leitrim, Wexford, Cork, Tipperary, Limerick and Laois. The weekend included concerts, workshops and reed making demonstrations, and over 80 young people participated.



Music Generation Harp tutors Siobhán Buckley (Laois), Deirdre Ní Bhuachalla-Malone (Louth), Ramona Sakalauskaite (Sligo) along with Ceolan School of Music's Jolene McLaughlin (Inishowen) attended to give workshops to the 52 harp students that attended the tionól. In addition, a range of guest harp tutors contributed hugely to the weekend, namely Catriona McKay (Scotland), Cormac de Barra (Dublin) and Portlaoise's own Triona Marshall.

The harping timetable for the weekend included ensemble, instrumental and technique workshops along with a number of performances. A concert on Friday 4th of November in the Dunamais Arts Centre featured performances by guest tutors, and the Music Generation Laois Trad Orchestra performed their suite of music, '1916: Visions and Voices' with Altan Accordionist Martin Tourish.

Saturday Night's Concert which took place in the performance space of the PYEC, comprised groups that travelled to take part from around the country. Along with several groups of pipers, the line-up included performances from the Music Generation Laois Junior harp ensemble, some members of Music Generation Louth's Harp Ensemble and harp students from Ceolan School of Music from Inishowen. The Concert came to a close following a performance by the Music Generation Laois Harp Ensemble of the wonderful 'Rising of the Harps' a new suite of music created by Scottish Harpist Catriona McKay, in collaboration with the members of the harp ensemble.



Catriona McKay with student harpers
Photo credit: Music Generation Laois

The Sunday afternoon performance encapsulated the atmosphere of the weekend perfectly and showcased the workshop groups and all of their hard work. It was opened by 'Cormac's Giant Harp Ensemble' and was closed with a performance by 'Catriona's Giant Harp Ensemble'. Both Cormac and Catriona, assisted by the other tutors, lead Ensemble workshops and this concert showcased the creativity of the students and tutors who worked as a team to produce the performances.

Coming from a piping family, I was moved by the standard of piping by those who performed at the concerts, and it is especially fabulous to see an increase in the amount of girls taking up the pipes. Sadly, there were only two young men included in the 52 harp students attending the *tionól* so it would be great to see that number increase in the future.

From my perspective as a music tutor, it was a great opportunity for all of the tutors within the wider Music Generation team, to meet and observe each other's methods. It was inspiring to watch the young musicians working together and helping one another, especially those who would ordinarily be very quiet in class. For some students, it was their first time attending workshops and for many, it was their first time to stay away from home without their parents. Watching their excitement grow about their music, made the weekend a great success as far as I was concerned. During "freetime" you could hear sessions starting up with pipes, harps, flutes, pianos, fiddles.....anything they could find to play. Lots of new friends were made, others got to meet up existing or old friends and they are now suitably baited for the 2017 workshop season to come, counting the sleeps until the next one.

On behalf of all of the tutors, students and parents, I would like to thank Rosa Flannery and her team for all of the hard work that made the weekend possible and the success that it was. I for one am delighted to hear that plans are now underway for next year's *Tionól*, which will run from the 3rd, 4th and 5th November 2017.

Deirdre Ní Bhuachalla-Malone,
Music Generation Louth, Harp Tutor.



The Music Generation Laois Tionól was funded by the Music Generation National Projects Fund



Photo credits: Denis Byrne

Achill International Harp Festival

Féile Chruite Acla



Achill Island hosted the inaugural International Harp Festival over the October bank holiday. Excitement was palpable as participants and visitors enjoyed this unique musical and cultural experience.

The local community demonstrated exemplary goodwill to the festival. Indeed, the people of Achill are to be commended having given so generously in terms of sponsorship, time, expertise, equipment and labour. The local national school children were busy in the weeks leading up to the festival writing poetry about the Irish Harp. These wonderful verses were displayed at Festival HQ in Keel Hall for all to read. The students of Coláiste Pobail Acla assisted the festival through music, art, library and woodwork projects. Their efforts were evident across the island throughout the weekend also.

Harp music tuition

Ireland is fortunate to have a new generation of harpists such as Laoise Kelly, Gráinne Hambly and Úna ní Fhlannagáin. These harp experts gave daily master classes in harp musicianship. They were joined by international harpists Ismael Ledesma from Paraguay, Rodrigo Romani from Galicia and Mary MacMaster from Scotland. Attendees at the festival benefited from their tuition in various workshops at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. Places filled up in record time. In all, over 60 students took part. Interestingly, many famous musicians signed up to try their hand at one of the world's oldest instruments. Not to be outdone, the beginner classes had a real Halloween feel. Students played with lights on their fingers in the dark!

Harp-Making Workshop

Musicians could also make their own harp over a four day workshop led by master craftsmen Graham Wright (Ireland) and Charles Perpoil (France). The very first harp made in Achill, created during the workshop by Wright and Perpoil was donated as a prize for a draw. On Sunday night, the harp left its island home to join its new owner Amy Hatton.

The AIHF awarded a place on this workshop to a local TY student from Coláiste Pobail Acla. Raymond Gallagher from Tonragee took up the momentous task of creating a harp. Raymond has excelled at Materials Technology in school and so was the perfect candidate to avail of this opportunity. True to form, Raymond completed his harp over the weekend and presented it to his Principal Ms. Anita Gallagher on his return to school after mid-term. Raymond presented the harp to Coláiste Pobail Acla who will make good use of it in their vibrant music department.



Sraith Oileán Acla



Mary O'Hara and Laoise Kelly



Úna ní Fhlannagáin



Mary O'Hara



Mary MacMaster



Gráinne Hambly



Rodrigo Romani



Ismael Ledesma

Photographs of the inaugural Achill International Harp Festival 2016 by Marianne Mangan

Concerts

Nightly concerts during the festival and the late night Festival Club provided audiences with an opportunity to hear some of the finest exponents of the harp and other traditional instruments. Special mention must go to the first of these which was performed on the opening night of the Festival, when Scottish music legend, Allan MacDonald premiered his specially commissioned ***Sraith Oileán Acla*** Achill Island Suite. This production explored the connections forged over centuries between Achill and Scotland. MacDonald composed and arranged his score for the harp, whilst incorporating the vibrant indigenous piping tradition of Achill and Scotland. The combination of these two iconic instruments is one rarely heard. MacDonald was joined on the night by a range of elite musicians for a truly moving musical welcome to our international visitors for the weekend. This phenomenal event was produced by Achill woman, Siobhán O'Malley.

At the closing concert, AIHF in conjunction with Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland, were delighted to honour legendary soprano and harpist Mary O'Hara with a lifetime achievement award. In terms of contributions to harp music, Mary has completed an astonishing 22 albums, five volumes of harp accompaniments and continues to travel promoting harp music and performance. On Sunday night Mary intrigued those present with her effortless grace and self-deprecating charm. The AIHF presented a specially commissioned Ronan Halpin piece to this extraordinary musician.

Achill is a special place and proved to be the perfect location for the reacquaintance of people from all over the world with the Irish harp and all it represents. Young and old were mesmerised by some of the finest harp music in the world, in the beautiful surroundings of our island.

www.AchillHarpFestival.ie

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

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The Irish Harp in the Context of the Centenary Year: An Evening in Keadue

by Catherine Rhatigan

Now drawing to a close, The Centenary Year of 2016 leaves us with many vibrant images of a nation celebrating, a clearer sense of recent history, and a better understanding of symbols that have represented our state for many years, among them the harp.

One harp festival that took the responsibility of providing insight into the instrument and its place as a national symbol very seriously was the O'Carolan Harp Festival in Keadue, now in its 38th year. As part of the Festival's Summer School the mid-week concert on 27th July 2016 was held in the olde-worlde surroundings of Kilronan Castle, not far from the grave of the bard himself. The event in question showcased a vibrant performance from two of the local Keadue Harpers and got the evening off to a wonderful start. Though still in their teens, the two blazed through music from Michael Rooney's various suites, the tunes modern but distinctive, driven by their dynamic accompaniments and distinguishable by graceful melodies. A fitting tribute to the vibrancy of Irish harp music in 2016.

The next set was appropriately very different, as three members from *Tale of the Gael* took the audience back in time through the cobwebs of history to the world of the ancient Irish harpers. Guitar, harp, voice and commentary wove a fine fabric of tales and tunes, tracing the path of the harp through Irish history from the days when it was used to accompany the spoken word in the 1600s and before, to how it became the symbol of the State in 1928.

The story is colourful and expansive and flows over into the neighbouring county of Sligo where Nobel Prize winner WB Yeats spent much of his youth. As a Senator, Yeats suggested in 1928 that the harp be retained as the national symbol of Ireland. The instrument first appeared on Irish coins during the reign of Henry VIII and currently appears on all formal Irish documentation.

O'Carolan Harp Festival Chairman, Stephen Hennessy, reminded us that Keadue had been part of the *Yeats 150: Harp Festival of Moons* the previous year, hosting a small but magical event where Paul Dooley spoke and played when the February full moon shone down on the frozen grave of O'Carolan and lit the surrounding countryside in icy silver. (Caitríona Yeats guested in Thoor Ballylee on the October full moon, and refers to her experience in last year's publication)

As the focus of the evening shifted from O'Carolan's time to the 20th century, and in particular to 1916 and Easter week, the sentiment was conveyed by a rendition of 'The Minstrel Boy', and towards the end, a cracking version of 'All round my Hat I wear a tri-coloured Ribbon' sung from the heart by all present.

The evening was a harp journey, laced with tunes, with songs, with anecdotes, with laughter and humour, with history and with a strong sense of community: seemingly effortless in its programming but with a sharp sense of focus that resonates with an audience.

For a small village with a small festival budget, the people of Keadue managed to deliver a festival that quietly pulsed authenticity and heritage and never lost sight of the massive legacy Turlough O'Carolan left them for safe keeping.

Not an easy task and long may it continue.

www.ocarolanharpfestival.ie

Irish Harp Makers

Toner Quinn's *Report on the Harping Tradition in Ireland*, Oct 2014 – commissioned by the Arts Council – gives invaluable insight into and awareness of the diversity and vibrancy of the rich harping tradition in Ireland. One of the many recommendations which emerged from the report was to promote awareness among Irish harpers, harp organisations and parents of potential harpers of the range of harps and services Irish harp-makers provide. In acknowledgement of this recommendation and drawing from information within the report, *An Cruitire* has included the following list of full-time and part-time Irish harp-makers currently operating in Ireland:

NAME	COMPANY NAME	TYPE OF HARP	LOCATION	CONTACT
Brian Callan	Callan Harps	Lever	Co. Galway	www.callanharps.com www.facebook.com/callanharps
Davy Patton		Early Irish	Co. Roscommon	www.davypatton.com
Jan Muyllaert		Lever	Co. Meath	www.irishharps.net
Mervyn Waugh	Turmennan Harps	Lever	Co. Down	www.turmennanharps.com
Natalie Surina	Ériú Harps	Early Irish Lever	Co. Galway	www.eriuharps.com www.facebook.com/eriuharps
Pat Cawley & Indra Karklas	Indra's Celtic Harps	Lever	Co. Westmeath	www.irishcelticharps.com
Paul Dooley		Early Irish	Co. Clare	www.pauldooley.com
Paul Doyle			Galway	www.pauldoyleinstruments.com
Ruairí McCann	Narrow Water Harps	Lever	Co. Louth	http://mccannruairi.wixsite.com/narrow-water-harps
Tim O'Carroll	Killarney Harps	Lever	Co. Kerry	www.killarneyharps.com
Tomás MacUileagóid	Eala Harps	Lever	Dublin	https://www.facebook.com/Eala-Harps-605239709621205/

Paddy Cafferky and Larry Egar are no longer making harps, and harp-maker Colm O Meachair sadly passed away in 2013. Colm's son Shane does some minor harp repair work.

Despite the general low profile of Irish harp-making, the demand for Irish harps and harp rental from performers and learners is steadily increasing. In addition, harp festivals and events are excellent opportunities for harp makers to exhibit their harps and generate orders.

Athenry Plays The Albert Hall!

by *Úna ní Fhlannagáin*



In early 2015, Suzuki teachers in Ireland were approached about sending students to perform in an international Suzuki gala in the Royal Albert Hall March 2016. We couldn't refuse this remarkable invitation. But in order to perform, harp students need ... harps! So a harp coordinator was needed, and I took on the job.

First we did some preliminary staging calculations. I got the stage dimensions from the stage manager, and drew out the exact shape of the Albert Hall risers on my kitchen floor. After much discussion, we estimated that we could fit 30 – 40 harps on the stage. With this figure in mind, we contacted Suzuki harp teachers from Italy, Germany, Switzerland and Spain to invite them to participate in the project. Ultimately we had three students from France, one from Switzerland, nine from Italy, and a whopping twenty candidates from Ireland register. We also had six young students, aged 4 – 7, who wished to perform in the “Playtogether” concerts the day before in the Royal College of Music. These students would be accompanied by their teachers, so in order to make the harp section happen, we somehow had to find 37 lever harps, one pedal harp, and six small harps in London on the busiest weekend of the year: Easter weekend 2016. Simple, right?!

The biggest database of harp sheet music in the UK is in Holywell Music, London, and years of indulging my harp music addiction meant I was on first-name terms with staff there. To kick things off I rang up Allison and described our situation, hoping against hope they might be able to help us in some small way. I was hoping for the loan of a few harp tuning keys or, at very best, one harp... Imagine my shock and joy when she came back to me saying that they would be able to loan us 26 lever harps and a pedal harp!! I was so relieved. The back of my seemingly-impossible task had been broken in one fell swoop. However, we weren't out of the woods yet. We had to find the shortfall of eleven lever harps and six small harps. One day I was moaning to a harp student's parent about my difficulties in sourcing harps in the UK. The parent happened to be Jimmy Griffin, of Griffin's bakery, Galway. His response was: “Why don't you just take our company van and bring the student's own harps over?!” I perked up – upon reflection, this was definitely the most practical option. But I didn't feel confident about my ability to drive €40,000 worth of instruments across two countries in a vehicle other than my trusty Peugeot 206... The tin-whistle, flute and uilleann pipes teacher in Athenry Music School, Colman Connolly, is passionate about motorised vehicles; a London native; and exceedingly generous, which all colluded to make him the perfect candidate for the job. Somehow I convinced Colman that driving across two countries and manhandling harps for six days would be a lovely way to spend his holidays. Callan Harps, Killarney Harps, and the Harpsicle Harps Co. kindly agreed to sponsor our petrol and ferry fare. So finally we had harps, we had a van, we had petrol, and we had a driver! All systems were go!

The next few months were spent in a frenzy of activity, as students prepared their repertoire. The harp programme was very engaging; “Minuet in G” (Petzold, commonly attributed to Bach), Weber’s “Hunter’s Chorus”, “Wishing” (a 3/4 variation on Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star), “Siciliana” by Mary Kay Waddington, “The Good Little King of Yvetot”, and of course “Twinkle...”. I prepared video tutorials on each piece in order to facilitate the student’s progress in case of sickness / schedule clashes with harp class. We had a group harp rehearsal every single week as well as regular individual lessons. Meanwhile I was in constant contact with Juan Drown, the stage manager of the project, trying to figure out the logistics of storing the harps in London, finding a rehearsal space the day before, and getting thirty-eight harps and harp stools onto the stage, tuning them, etc. Because the Albert Hall stage and building is so big, I couldn’t do my calculations inside. Ergo I spent a day walking my harp around the garden counting my steps and talking aloud. I’m quite surprised the neighbours didn’t call a psychiatric unit! Our final logistics plan was spread over four days, had columns for harp teachers, students, and harp movers, was timed down to the minute, and was ten pages long. A little excerpt: ‘6:09 Arrive RAH. Úna, Colman and 5 harp movers unload 38 harps plus stools into foyer of Door 1. (Estimated duration: 10.4 min. Allocated duration: 21 min)’.

One of our core values in Athenry Music School is inclusivity, and as we drew close to the final week, this had a lovely consequence for one student. A small number of students had decided not to apply to perform in the Royal Albert Hall for personal reasons, schedule clashes, etc. It was important for me that every student be treated the same pedagogically, and not feel left out. Therefore I had liaised with “Music For Galway” and organised a concert in the Aula Maxima, NUIG in the week preceding the London trip, and promoted this as our ‘big gig’, which all students would be working towards, rather than our trip to London. I then taught the whole student body the same repertoire, which was the Albert Hall programme. One week before departure, a parent rang me in a tizzy; her daughter had chosen not to apply for the London concert because she felt oversubscribed at the time of registration. However, the student had then participated in the whole rehearsal process, learnt all the pieces, would perform in the Aula Maxima and now regretted her decision not to apply for the London concert. Was there any way that she could still go to London? Due to the emphasis I had placed on equality of preparation, this student was perfectly musically well-prepared for the Albert Hall, despite not having signed up to go. And meanwhile, an Italian student had pulled out so a slot had magically appeared! We contacted the BSI and thankfully, managed to organise the substitution. Equality had won the day, and the Irish musical invasion had gained yet another recruit!

On Tuesday 11th March at 3am, Colman and I, plus eleven lever harps, five small harps, six rolls of duct tape, and around 100 metres squared of bubblewrap, set off from Co. Galway for the Royal Albert Hall. Thankfully (it being the only thing we couldn’t plan for!), the seas were calm and our sailing and drive across the UK went according to schedule. We arrived in London at 7pm that night. Colman and I, plus Irish Suzuki teacher Audrey Lovern, spent the next few days getting the harps ready for the rehearsal and performance. This sounds like a small task, but when you have to move 39 harps and stools, belonging to twelve different owners, across one of the world’s largest cities, on one of the busiest days of the year, in three different vans, and set them on stage in a certain

order while 1100 students are milling around you, there's quite a bit of preparation! Colman, Audrey and I stayed up to 2am labelling and numbering harps and harp stools, tuning and stringing the instruments. All I'll say is... brightly-coloured duct tape is a wonderful thing!

Finally, rehearsal day dawned. At 7am on Saturday morning we sent a "Harp Dad" out with balloons, signs and a step-ladder to advertise the rehearsal venue in central London. He did his job well – at 9am all students arrived for their rehearsal with Gabriella Bosio, European Suzuki teacher trainer. The rehearsal went well; all students knew their pieces and Gabriella had excellent feedback on how to improve tone and have a common musical interpretation. After rehearsal it was off to the Royal College of Music, where the younger students performed beautifully for Gabriella in the stunning venue. After this lovely gig we returned to our rehearsal venue to pack the HarpMobile full of the first shipment of three, ready for moving the next day. The next morning at 3am Colman, Audrey and I came out to the van to start the drive to Holywell Harps. I saw glass on the road as I neared the van, and my heart began to shake. I came closer to see that – somebody had broken into the van! My heart was in my mouth as I opened the back door to see if we still had our harps. *Buíochas le Dia* the thief was either incredibly silly or had been interrupted in his act, and hadn't checked the back compartment of the van: all instruments were untouched. Having swept all the glass from the cab, and saying hundreds of prayers of gratitude, Colman, Audrey and I set off to meet the rest of our dream team – five highly dedicated parents, two vans and van drivers – at Holywell Harps at 5am. Despite the slight delay of the van break-in, we managed to pack the remaining two vans, make our way across London in convoy with all harps, and arrive at the Albert Hall on schedule. Over the course of the next two hours, fuelled by lots of caffeine, we got all harps on stage in order. I was in the middle of slightly shifting a harp at 9am when the conductor raised his baton and gave the sign for the first note from the orchestra: I will never forget that moment. The sound of 1100 young musicians, playing together in perfect harmony, with such concentration and great expression, was just *incredible*. The rehearsal continued as well as it had started, and then at 15:00 the concert began.

There are no words to describe how magical this performance was; each performer performed with such intensity that the whole concert had a spiritual quality. Even the most hardened listeners were moved to tears! As one father said: *"I was gobsmacked and will treasure the memory. The people beside me were not sharp enough to see me wiping my watery eyes"*. It being the weekend after a terrorist attack in Brussels, it was a wonderful reminder of the glory of humanity, rather than its dark expressions. Athenry Music School profoundly thanks concert organiser Helen Brunner, the BSI, Holywell Music, Griffins' Bakery, Callan Harps, Killarney Harps, the Harpsicle Harp Company, and Colman Connolly for enabling us to have this experience; truly the experience of a lifetime.



Oidhreacht Uí Chearulláin ins An Obair

An Dr Séamus Mac Gabhann



Rugadh Ó Cearulláin i mbaile fearainn an Spidéil, in aice leis An Obair, sa bhliain 1670. Fuair sé scolaíocht ar dtús i mBaile Crúis, cóngarach don Obair, i scoil a bhí ansin ag na Crúisigh, dream den uasaicme Normannach ónar ainmníodh an baile. Is ann a bhuaill sé le Bríd Crúis (Bridget Cruise), agus thit sé i ngrá léi. Chum sé foinn agus amhráin ina dhiaidh sin á moladh. Féach ceolmhaireacht na bhfocal aige sa bhéarsa seo do Bhríd:

*A bhéilín páirteach is binne ná an chláirseach tabhair ón mbás mé más féidir,
Is seo mo lámh duit go bhfuil mé i ngrá leat is nach ndéanfainn d'athrú ar aon chor.
Mar an eala bhán ar an loch ag snámh atá píoba agus bráid mo chéad ghrá,
'Sé mo chreach is mo chrá gan mé leat fáiscthe i ngleanntán fásaigh nó sléibhe.*

Thart ar 14 bhliain d'aois a bhí an Cearullánach nuair d'athraigh a mhuintir siar go dtí Ros Comáin. Ghlac Máire Mhic Diarmada Rua faoina pátrúntacht é agus thug breis oideachais dó. Nuair a fágadh an Cearullánach óg gan radharc na súl de dheasca na bolgaí, shocraigh Máire é a chur chuig cláirseoir de chuid na nDiarmadach lena cheird a fhoghlaim uaidh. Ansin, nuair a bhí traenail iomlán faighte aige, bhronn Máire airgead, capall agus giolla treorach air le dul amach ag triall bóithre na hÉireann mar cheoltóir taistil.

Fuair an Cearullánach gradam agus pátrúntacht ón dá náisiún in Éirinn ag an am, ó na Gaeil agus ó shliocht na bplandóirí. Ar an ábhar sin, is féidir an Cearullánach a shamhlú mar cheann de na droichid idir an dá náisiún in Éirinn a linne, na Plandóirí agus na Gaeil, i ré na bpéindlithe. Ar ndóigh, bhí bá ar leith aige lena chéad phátrúin i gCúige Connacht, na Diarmadaigh agus na Conchubhraigh. Ach taobh amuigh díobhsan ba mar a chéile dó, cuid mhaith, na Gaeil agus na Plandóirí. Rinne sé freastal ar an dá thaobh agus is léir go raibh meas ag an dá thaobh air.

Bhí meas ar leith ag a chomhfhilí Gaeilge ar an gCearullánach. Tharla go raibh cairdeas ar leith aige lena chomhcheoltóir, Cathaoir Mac Cába, fear aerach spraoiúil ón Mullach i gCo an Chabháin, agus ba mhinic don bheirt bheith ag sárú ar a chéile. Cleas amháin a d'imir seisean ar an gCearullánach ná ligint air go raibh sé taréis bás d'fháil agus go raibh sé curtha i gcré na cille nuair a chas Ó Cearulláin an treo: láithreach bonn do chum seisean marbhna ar Mhac Cába, 'Uaillchumha Chearulláin, os cionn uaigh Mhic Cába.'

*Is trua sin mise agus mé tuirseach i ndiaidh mo shiúil,
Ar uaigh mo charad agus mé 'folcadh na ndeor go buan,
Ní bhfuair mé agam, sé do lagaigh ar radharc mo shúl,
Ach crua-leac dhaingean agus leaba den gcré bhí cúng.*

Blianta ina dhiaidh sin, nuair a fuair an Cearullánach bás sa bhliain 1738, chum Mac Cába marbhna éifeachtach air.

Bhí cáil ar leith ag an am ar an bhfile Ultach, Séamus Dall Mac Cuarta, agus dá bharr san thug an Cornal Constantín Mag Uidhir an Cearullánach soir go Co. Lú i 1732 chun bualadh leis. Chan Mac Cuarta dán breá ina onóir nuair a casadh an bheirt ar a chéile i mBaile Mhic Scanláin:

*Dhá mhilliún déag fáilte dhaoibh
Ó áras Mheadhbha, iníon Eochaidh
Go fearann Oirghiall glúnmhar, grinn,
Lérbh ionmhain éachta Chon Chulainn.*

Mhair cuimhne na hócáide i mbéaloideas Óméith anuas go dtí an lá inniu – agus giotáí de chomhrá na beirte san áireamh: ‘Is binn bog bréagach a sheinneas tú’ arsa Cearullán nuair a chuala sé Mac Cuarta ag seinm. ‘Is minic a bhíos an fhírinne féin searbh’ a d’fhreagair an fear eile.

File eile a casadh ar an gCearullánach an babhta sin i gCúige Uladh ná File an Fheadha, Pádraig Mac Giolla Fhiondáin. Bhí cur amach aige siúd ar chumadóireacht Uí Chearulláin do Bhríd Crúis, an cailín óg ar thit sé i ngrá léi ins an Obair, sular fhág a mhuintir Co. na Mí. Chum Mac Giolla Fhiondáin dán gleoite in onóir na beirte, rud a léiríonn go soiléir an chaoi ar cheanglaíodh a n-ainmneacha le chéile in aigne na ndaoine. Seo véarsa de, mar shampla:

*Mo chreach is mo léan! ó fheartaibh Dé
Nachar theagaimh mé ‘mo dhealbh-chruit;
Ní mar gheall ar shéadaibh ach mar gheall ar mhéaraibh
Dhaltáin éigse Banbha:
Nó go nglacfadh sé mé in ‘ucht go séimh
Ar aiste an Ghaedhil ghloin Cearbhall,
‘S do thiocfainn féin dá fhios i gcéin
Mar do-rinne an ré-bhean Fearbhlaidhe.*

An bun-smaoineamh anseo ná gur trua le Bríd Crúis nach cláirseach í féin, mar go seinnfadh méara oilte Chearulláin go binn, grámhar uirthi.

D’fhill Ó Cearulláin ar a cheantar dúchais i gContae na Mí. Ins An Obair dó, chum sé fonn álainn do Neillí Pluincéad agus tá cáil forleathan ar an gceol aoibhinn seo inniu. De réir an scéil, chuala an giolla i dTeach Mór na bPluincéadach focail an amhráin á réiteach ag an bhfile agus dúirt leis ‘chuala mise na focail sin go minic cheana in amhráin eile’, ráiteas a chuir Ó Cearulláin le báiní. Seo an chéad bhéarsa den amhrán:

*‘Neillí an chúil chraobhaigh, a bhfuil do dhá shúil ar dhath an fhéir ghlais,
‘S tú féachaint gach lá, is ní bréag a bhfuil mé a rá,
Gur tú, a ghaoil na bhfear éachtach ó Ardamacha bréige
Fuair clú mhór ó Ghaelaibh le tréine do lámh.*

I measc na bhfilí eile a raibh aithne ag an gCearullánach orthu bhí Toirdhealbhadh Óg Mac Donnchadha, abhcóide cáiliúil agus pátrún nótalta ó Cho. Shligigh; Pilib ‘Ministir’ Mac Brádaigh ó Cho. an Chabháin; agus Aodh Mac Gabhráin ó Ghleann Ghaibhle i gCo. an Chabháin. Ba é Mac Gabhráin a chum an píosa barrúil ‘Pléaráca na Ruarcach’. Chum an Cearullánach ceol don amhrán seo agus chuir Jonathan Swift leagan Béarla de ar fáil faoin teideal ‘The description of an Irish Feast’.

Is léir mar sin go raibh cáil go forleathan ar Chearullán lena linn féin. Tá sé soiléir gur aithin a chomhfhilí é mar Ghael neamhchoitianta, laoch dá gcuid féin, a raibh meas tuillte aige ó na Plandóirí féin i ngeall ar a éifeacht mar chumadóir ceoil agus file. Nuair d’éag sé i 1738 cuireadh tórramh cheithre lá air agus tháinig na sluaite ó chian is ó chóngar. Scríobh a phátrún Cathal Ó Conchubhair ina dhialann go raibh ‘an tsaol intleachtach agus príomh-oirfideach ciúil na hÉireann uile’ taréis bás d’fháil. Thuig a shean-chara Cathaoir Mac Cába go raibh deireadh ré tagtha. Tá doimhneacht mhothucháin le sonrú ar an marbhna éifeachtach, brónach a chum sé ar a chomhfhilí d’fháil ó chlár na Mí :

*Mo bhrón! mo mhilleadh! mo thinneas is mo bhuaireamh trá!
Do cheol-chruit mhilis gan bhinneas faoi ghruaim mar tá,
Trá éirím ar maidín is dearcaim ar an tír faoi chiach,
Agus suím ar na cnoca go bhfeicim an dubh aniar,
A Aonmhic Mhuire fortaigh dom cúis is riar,
Is go ndearna loch fola do amharc mo shúl ‘do dhiaidh.*

B’shin cuid de chumhacht neamhghnách Uí Chearulláin: go raibh éifeacht agus tionchar ar leith aige ar dhaoine. Cúis áthais dúinn inniu mar sin go leanann an tionchar dearfach sin go beo, bíogach inár measc: mar thionchar ar an obair éachtach atá curtha i gcrích ag Féile Uí Chearulláin thar na blianta, tá ceoltóirí óga ina sluaite ag foghlaim a gceirde sa cheantar seo. Cuireann pobal an cheantair spéis láidir i gcultúr agus in oidhreacht an náisiúin. Níl an traidisiún ina laicis nó ina bhac orthu, ach a mhalairt ar fad: tá traidisiún Uí Chearulláin ina ndúshlán acu, idir óg agus aosta, rud a spreagann iad chun taighde, ceiliúradh agus athnuachan a dhéanamh ar an gcuid is luachmhaire d’oidhreacht na hÉireann. Ábhar inspioráide sa bhreis dóibh anois bunú ionad nua George Eogan ar an mbaile, 5 Iúil 2016, nuair d’oscail Uachtarán na hÉireann, Micheál D. Ó hUigín an áis iontach seo do mhuintir an réigiúin uilig.

Léitheoireacht bhreise:

Nollaig Ó Muraíle, ‘Toirialach Ó Cearulláin’, *Léachtaí Cholm Cille IV*, 1975.

Ciarán Ó Maitiú, ‘Turlough O’Carolan: an appraisal of his Gaelic verse’, *Ríocht na Midhe XIX*, 2008; agus *Ríocht na Midhe XX*, 2009.

The Significance and legacy of Turlough O'Carolan

An Dr Séamus Mac Gabhann

The O'Carolan Harp, Cultural and Heritage Festival has transformed the cultural life of the composer's native region in the 25 years since it began. Hundreds of young musicians have now learned the skills of Irish music in the O'Carolan branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. The Meath Harp School currently has over 40 pupils. Under the direction of the talented Dearbhail Finnegan, the Meath Harp Ensemble performs to acclaim at home and abroad. O'Carolan is fittingly commemorated at the heart of the village by a splendid bronze monument, close to the townland of Spiddal where he was born in 1670.

The Cruise family of the nearby Cruisetown House operated a school which O'Carolan attended in the 1680s, before his family moved to Roscommon. One of the Cruise family, Murtagh, who died in 1702, was the subject of a lament by the great Oriel poet, Séamus Dall Mac Cuarta. The poem highlights the striking hospitality of the Cruises and their cultured support of Gaelic literature, learning and harp music here in Nobber. The young O'Carolan was shaped by this Gaelic heritage in his native place. He is also said to have fallen in love with Brigid Cruise, for whom he afterwards composed both music and verse.

O'Carolan's Gaelic formation was reinforced when his family moved to north Roscommon. There he fortunately gained the patronage of two families of Gaelic, aristocratic descent, the Mac Dermottroes and the O'Conors, who cherished traditional Irish learning. The O'Conors were descended from the last Irish High King. When O'Carolan was blinded by smallpox, Máire Mac Dermottroe of Alderford House, Ballyfarnon had him trained with the family harpers and launched him on his career as a harper and composer. Hence, shortly after the defeat of Catholic Ireland at the Boyne in 1690, O'Carolan set out as an itinerant harper. He composed for Gaelic patrons such as the neighbouring O'Conors of Belanagare House and also for Anglo-Irish planter families. At the hospitable Belanagare House, O'Carolan met the residual leaders, clergy and literati of Gaelic Ireland and also taught young Charles O'Connor to play the harp. Thus it is entirely appropriate that the composer is today commemorated also by the vibrant Keadue Harp Festival, close to Kilonan Abbey where he was eventually laid to rest in the Mac Dermottroe vault.

Although he was a product of Gaelic Ireland, composing Irish verse and melodies, yet to a remarkable degree, O'Carolan bridged the gap between Gael and Planter in the course of his career as a composer and harper. The names of the Planters for whom he composed are evidence of this: Coote, Cooper, Crofton, Brabazon, Pratt, all colonial hard-liners. In addition, there were more liberal Protestants like O'Hara, Irwin, Betagh, Stafford and Blayney.

On one of his return visits to Meath, for example, O'Carolan performed for the Dillon family of Lismullin House. When Grace Dillon married the Rev. Charles Massey in the 1720s, O'Carolan

composed a tune each for the bride and the groom. Rev. Massey liked O'Carolan so well that he had his portrait painted by the notable artist, Francis Bindon. This is the only portrait of O'Carolan from his own time. Rev. Massey's grandfather had been sent from England to suppress the Irish rebellion of 1641. Another of the Dillon family, Mary, a widow, married Lord Blayney. O'Carolan composed for her the tune "Lady Blayney". The original Blayney had fought against the Irish at Kinsale in 1601.

Clearly, Anglo-Ireland relished O'Carolan's genius. In Dublin, Dr. Patrick Delaney of TCD was a patron. Dean Swift translated verse for which O'Carolan had composed the music. When John and William Neale published *Most Celebrated Irish Tunes* (1724), half the works were by O'Carolan, as Nicholas Carolan has shown in his editions of the work (1986 and 2010). Poets of the era such as Thomas Pilkington and Laurence Whyte lauded him in verse.

Ireland in the eighteenth century was strongly influenced by the European taste for baroque music, a highly ornate style which emerged from northern Italy. O'Carolan encountered baroque melodies and idioms in the big houses of the gentry and in Dublin, where a number of Italian musicians had settled, including Francesco Geminiani. Charles O'Connor recorded that O'Carolan loved the Italian compositions: "Vivaldi charmed him, and with Corelli he was enraptured". Although O'Carolan's formation was in native music, nevertheless his brilliant technical ability enabled him to combine the traditional Irish mode he had inherited with an overlay of the latest, most fashionable Italian and French styles. This superb technical virtuosity is at the heart of his success. His creative fusion of baroque and native styles generated highly attractive melodies which enhanced his stature and assured his reputation as a composer both in Anglo-Irish and in Gaelic circles. It was this musical genius, in addition to his very vivacious personality, which so deeply fascinated people in all subsequent generations.

Yet such was the destructive impact of the colonial conquest upon Irish culture that by 1760 Oliver Goldsmith in an essay on O'Carolan regards him merely as a quaint cultural curiosity, symbolic of an Ireland that was remote and exotic. An attempt to salvage O'Carolan's legacy was made in 1786 by the Protestant antiquarian Joseph Cooper Walker, helped by O'Carolan's former harp pupil, Charles O'Connor, in *Memoirs of the Irish Bards*. But the foremost English music critic of the day, Charles Burney, savagely ridiculed as absurd Walker's thesis of an indigenous Irish music, and condemned the role of the Irish bard as 'little better than that of piper to the White Boys, and other savage and lawless ruffians.' The imperial centre had spoken. Thus the latent symbolism of O'Carolan as a cultural bridge between native and colonist was dismissed and Irish traditional music was largely banished from the Big Houses to the alien and subversive margins.

Thus, as the penal laws took their toll, the landlords in their Big Houses were spellbound by England's imperial grandeur. Gaelic culture suffered gravely. The fate of Irish harp music is shown by the Belfast Harp Festival in 1792. On that occasion only 10 harpers could be located; six were blind, all were poor, most were old and the oldest, Denis Hempson from Derry, was 97 years of age. Luckily, their music, which included tunes by O'Carolan, was recorded by the 19 year-old Edward Bunting, the son of an Englishman.

Yet despite colonial domination, his own people have retained a strong racial memory of O'Carolan. In Nobber, O'Carolan's genius inspired the foundation of the O'Carolan Harp Cultural and Heritage Festival in 1988, the 250th anniversary of the composer's death. The Festival Committee, led by the late Tony Finnegan, consisted of a group of dynamic and talented people, some of whom are still actively involved. With flair and enthusiasm, they have staged a succession of major Irish music acts in Nobber, a daring venture in a small venue. Year after year, many of the greatest exponents of Irish music have performed at the Festival. These have included The Chieftains, Máire Ní Chathasaigh and Chris Newman, Dordán, Noel Hill, Arty McGlynn, Buttons and Bows, Pádraigín Ní Uallacháin, Len Graham, Antóin Mac Gabhann, Nollaig Ní Laoire, The Belfast Harp Orchestra, the Australian group, Mimburi, The Angel Band from the USA, Girotondo d'arpe from Italy, Cordaí and Beoga. In playing O'Carolan's music on the world stage, they demonstrate that Irish tradition is a rich stimulus to innovation. With the continuing support of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Cairde na Cruite and Foras na Gaeilge, the dynamic Festival Committee in Nobber can look to the future with confidence. Gura fada buan iad.

Séamus Mac Gabhann, editor, *Ríocht na Midhe (1994–2014)*.
Chairman, County Meath Heritage Forum.

Many thanks to Dr Séamus Mac Gabhann for his kind permission to include both Irish and English articles on Turlough O'Carolan in An Cruitire 2016. First published in Treoir in 2012.

O'Carolan Harp, Cultural & Heritage Festival

Harpers from near and far attend the annual O'Carolan Harp, Cultural & Heritage Festival in Nobber, County Meath. The 2016 festival ran from September 30th to October 2nd and included participants from all corners of the globe. This annual program of events runs over the course of a weekend and includes a festival opening and wreath laying ceremony, harp exhibition, music sessions, instrumental workshops, harp competitions, historical tour, festival recital, Aifreann Traidisúnta (Traditional Mass), lecture, recital and a closing Céilí. Further information on the O'Carolan Harp, Cultural & Heritage Festival is available online at: www.carolanfestival.com



Castle Otway and the Castle Otway harp

by *Caitríona Rowsome*



The Castle Otway harp from
*The Irish and Highland Harps*ⁱ

The Castle Otway Harp, believed to have been made in the 17th century, was once owned and played by the harper Patrick Quinⁱⁱ. Quin of Portadown, County Armagh was born in 1745 (and was the second youngest who attended at Belfast in 1792). Of Quin, Bunting writes that he ‘was the only harper at the Belfast Meeting who attempted to play “Patrick’s Day,” of which he was very proud, having set, or, as he expressed it “fixed it” for the harp’. This accomplishment obviously won Bunting’s favour, as Quin, a blind harper, was among the ‘foregoing list’ [of harpers] that ‘made themselves conspicuous by their abilities as composers or performers’.ⁱⁱⁱ

According to Charlotte Milligan Fox, Quin was brought from the North as instructor for the Dublin Harp Society which was inaugurated in 13th July 1809. She writes of Quin, that he was patronised by Bernard Trotter (founder of the DHS), for whom he ‘used to delight the numerous guests [at his residence (Richmond) in Dublin] on festive occasions with the strains of his harp’. Miss Trotter took a sketch of him ‘amid these picturesque surroundings’. Quin’s master, Patrick Linden of the Fews, County Armagh was a distinguished performer and poet.^{iv}

Quin was chosen among other distinguished contemporary musicians to perform at a 'grand Carolan Commemoration' concert at the Rotunda, Dublin in 1809. Of the concert Hardiman notes that 'the strains of Patick Quin, an old Irish harper, who performed publicly in Dublin in 1809, are still remembered with delight'. Of Carolan, Hardiman notes that he 'lives in his own deathless strains'. Quin also played the fiddle and performed his own arrangements of traditional fiddle music on the harp. Quin was reportedly so proud of his performances, that on his return to the North, he refused to ever again play the violin at wakes and 'merry meetings' – engagements which had previously earned him a good income.^v

A 19.7x14.2cm drawing and watercolour titled *The Blind Harper, Patrick Quin c.1745–1812 (c.1800)*, is currently held in the Ulster Museum, Belfast and can be seen online at The Ulster Museum, Belfast.^{vi} An 18x23cm print with the description 'mounted engraving by Miss Trotter pinx't Brocas Sculpt of Patrick Quin (1745 – 1812), harper to the Belfast Harp Society, taken from an engraving in the possession of F. J. Bigger' can also be seen online at the Ulster Museum, Belfast.^{vii}

Robert Bruce Armstrong describes the Castle Otway harp as an 'extremely interesting and profusely decorated instrument'. This large low-headed harp of 34 strings (the longest 77cm) was described as bearing four representations of a wolf-dog with very slight variations depicting 'a crouching attitude with his head turned backwards' and also 'sitting more upon the haunches'. Armstrong also maintains that 'at what time it became the possession of the Otway family cannot be stated, for when the late Admiral Otway succeeded to the estate in 1850 the harp was at Castle Otway, and it was not known when or from whom it had been acquired'.^{viii} In the 19th and much of the 20th centuries the harp was kept by the Otway-Ruthven family of Castle Otway, Templemore.



Castle Otway, Tipperary North ^{ix}

Castle Otway was the seat of the Otway family in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was a mid 18th century house with a tower house attached, altered and renovated in the 19th century. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) describes Castle Otway, Tipperary North as a 'detached seven-bay two-storey over half-basement country house' that was built c. 1750, and having a medieval towerhouse (which contrasts with the Georgian façade of the main house) rebuilt in the nineteenth century. The house was built for the Otway family, and the medieval towerhouse 'incorporates part of the original Cloghanane castle which was granted to John Otway in 1665'. It is

now in ruins. Most of the structures included in the NIAH surveys are privately owned and are therefore not open to the public. ^x

The Castle Otway harp is now in the care of Trinity College Dublin and is part of their Manuscripts Special Collections at the Old Library. A colour photograph of the Castle Otway harp can be seen in *Early Music Oxford Journals*. ^{xi}

The following setting of 'Patrick's Day' is transcribed here from Bunting's, *The Ancient Music of Ireland*. ^{xii}

Patrick's Day



NOTES

- ⁱ Armstrong, Robert Bruce, *The Irish and the Highland Harps: Musical Instruments*, Volume I, 1904, pp. 74-75
- ⁱⁱ Referred to as 'Quinn' in publications such as *A History of Irish Music* by Grattan Flood, 1905
- ⁱⁱⁱ Bunting, Edward, *The Ancient Music of Ireland*, Hodges and Smith, Dublin, 1840, pp. 76, 82
- ^{iv} Fox, Charlotte Milligan, *Annals of The Irish Harpers*, Smith, Elder & Co., London, 1911, pp. 56,57,128
- ^v Hardiman, James. *Irish minstrelsy*, Volume I, J. Robins, London, 1831, pp. 181, lxxviii
- ^{vi} <http://nmni.com/Home/Online-Collections/Art/Drawings-and-Watercolours/BELUM-U1571>
- ^{vii} <http://nmni.com/Home/Online-Collections/History/Artworks/BELUM-P329-1927>
- ^{viii} Armstrong, Robert Bruce, *The Irish and the Highland Harps: Musical Instruments*, Volume I, 1904, pp.73-79
- ^{ix} Images of Castle Otway, Tipperary North by kind permission of the Photographic Archive Unit, National Monuments Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (National Inventory of Architectural Heritage's database: www.buildingsofireland.ie)
- ^x National Monuments Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (National Inventory of Architectural Heritage's database: www.buildingsofireland.ie)
- ^{xi} *Early Music*, vol.36, no.4 Nov 2008 p. 523 em.oxfordjournals.org/content/36/4.toc
- ^{xii} Bunting's, *The Ancient Music of Ireland*, Hodges and Smith, Dublin, 1840, p. 67.

Harp Hire

Cairde na Cruite's harp-hire scheme enables aspiring harpers to borrow a harp for a trial period of 6 months up to a maximum of one year. The society currently has a number of harps out on hire. If you are interested in hiring one of these harps, please contact our harp hire coordinator.

Phone: 01 6586224 or by **Email:** harphire@cairdenacruite.com



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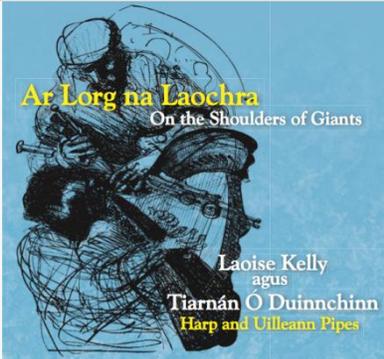
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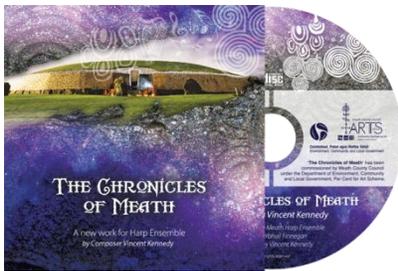


Ar Lorg na Laochra ~ Laoise Kelly

Released on October 29th 2016 at the Achill International Harp Festival.

This new CD – a duet of harp and pipes by Laoise Kelly and Tiarnán Ó Duinnchinn – denotes their journey on the pathways laid down by their musical ancestors.

Available from: <http://www.harppandpipes.ie>



The Chronicles of Meath CD ~ Meath Harp Ensemble

The Chronicles of Meath CD is a new work for Harp Ensemble.

Composed by Vincent Kennedy.

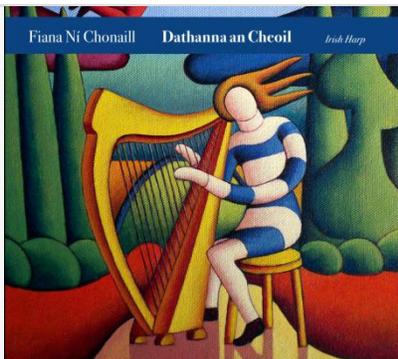
Performed by the Meath Harp Ensemble.

Musicians: Dearbhail Finnegan, Patrick Horgan, Mary Horgan, Jennifer Leahy, Deirdre Caulfield, Grace Ruddin, Aedin McConnell
Recorded at Annesbrook Country Home, Duleek, County Meath.

Recorded, engineered and mastered by Aidan Reade, Black Rose Recording Studio.

The music is in seven movements each depicting a different aspect of history of County Meath: 1 – Newgrange, 2– The Hill of Tara and The Hill of Slane, 3 – The Book of Kells, 4 – O’Carolans Arrival, 5 – Lament at the Boyne, 6 – O’Carolan’s Concerto, 7 – Have you ever been to Nobber in the County of Meath?

Available from: www.dearbhailfinnegan.com



Dathanna an Cheoil ~ Fiana Ní Chonaill

Guest Musicians: Alan Reid (Bouzouki), Niall Carey (Bodhran)

Recorded, Mixed, and Mastered by Jack Talty in Raelach Studios, Lissycasey, Co. Clare.

Available from: www.fianaharpmusic.com



HARPOPHELIA ~ Seána Davey ~ Pathway Records

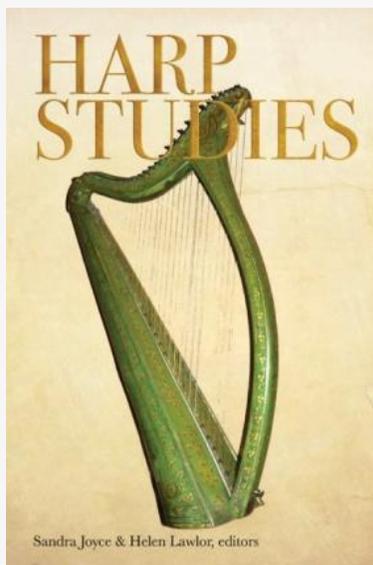
Debut Album by multi-talented harpist Seána Davey.

Released on October 14th 2016.

Guest musicians are Robbie Harris, Stephen Doherty, Johnny Kalsi, Kenneth Edge, James Blennerhassett.

Recorded at Sonas Recording with Tony O'Flaherty.

Available from: [iTunes](#)



Harp Studies ~ Sandra Joyce and Helen Lawlor (editors)

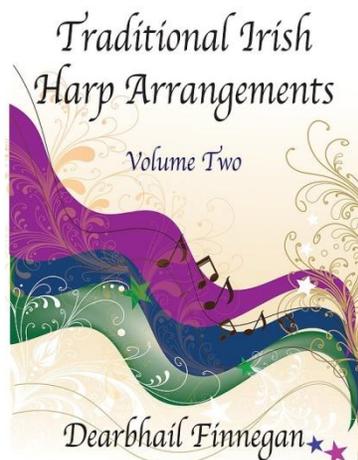
Book published by Four Courts Press

Launched on 29 November 2016 in the ITMA, Dublin 2.

Harp Studies presents new research on the Irish harp with perspectives from the disciplines of ethnomusicology, musicology, history, arts practice, folklore and cultural studies.

Contributors include Ann Heymann (ind.), Paul Dooley (UL), Colette Moloney (Waterford IT), Sandra Joyce (UL), Harry White (UCD), Mary Louise O'Donnell (ind.), Ruán O'Donnell (UL), Adrian Scahill (MU), Helen Lawlor (DkIT), Thérèse Smith (UCD), Eibhlís Farrell (DkIT), Michelle Mulcahy (UL), Anne-Marie O'Farrell (DIT, QUB).

Available from: www.fourcourtspress.ie/books/2016/harp-studies



Traditional Irish Harp Arrangements

Volume Two ~ Dearbhail Finnegan

Book Contents:

Blind Mary

Pick the Lock

Barney, Barney from Killarney

The Blacksmiths Daughter

Sergeant Early's Dream

Seamus O'Shanahan's

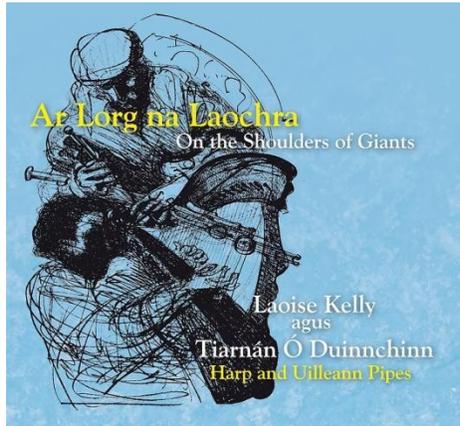
The Unwanted Hen

McIntrye's Fancy

The Humours of Tuamgraney Castle

Available from: www.dearbhailfinnegan.com

Featured CD: *Ar Lorg na Laochra*



Laoise Kelly & Tiarnán Ó Duinnchinn are a duet of Irish Harp and Uilleann Pipes; two very identifiable instruments of Ireland. The image and sound of these two instruments are quintessentially Irish in many respects. The sound of the two instruments are like echo chambers into the past.

The tunes that we play, amongst others, are tunes that come from between 17th –19th centuries, mostly to be found in old manuscripts.

The CD is called 'Ar Lorg na Laochra' which denotes our journey on the pathways laid down by our musical ancestors. The album tune selection encompasses quite a lot, but not all, of the various tune and song air types. The tunes come from different parts of Ireland. There is a barn dance that we learned from the lilting of Kitty Seáin Ní Chuinneagain from Teelin, Co. Donegal; polkas from Kerry and Cork, song air and reels from Donegal, a strathspey from Cape Breton, Canada, reels and jigs from Sligo, Clare, Leitrim, Cork and Kerry.

Our intention, on choosing the title, was to be deferent to all those that paved the musical path before us. To this end, we chose an English language translation, 'On the Shoulders of Giants'. In essence, it means; 'discovering truth by building on previous discoveries'. Its most familiar expression in the English language is by [Isaac Newton](#) in 1676: 'If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants'. The 'Laochra' or 'heroes' are all those harpers and pipers, be they exalted or exiled, that kept playing, performing and composing during the historical and sociological upheavals of their day to pass on a rich heritage of music to generations later. We can now enjoy this music in all sorts of places and for all sorts of occasions, thanks to them.

We play sets of tunes primarily based on those tunes that appeal the most to us and those tunes that suit the two instruments best. We were very clear from the outset that it would be a recording of just the 2 instruments. The musical range and possibilities of the Harp and Uilleann Pipes are vast, complete and self-contained. Both instruments can carry the melody very strongly, both have accompaniment which can be harmonic and/or percussive. The chordal, contrapuntal and percussive possibilities of the left hand of the harp, and the regulators on the Uilleann Pipes are myriad.



Available to buy and download from: <http://www.harpanpipes.ie/>

Edited extract from

Sisters of the Revolutionaries:

the Story of Margaret and Mary Brigid Pearse

by Teresa and Mary Louise O'Donnell

Mary Brigid Pearse (1884–1947)

Mary Brigid was born in Dublin in April 1884 and was the youngest of four children born to James and Margaret Pearse. She was named after her two grandmothers and her arrival in the Pearse household generated much excitement amongst her older siblings Margaret, Patrick and Willie. She suffered ill health from a young age. Mary Brigid was often confined to bed for extended periods and, consequently, did not receive her education at school. Her social circle consisted of her sister and two brothers, but her closest bond was with Patrick. To say she idolised him would not be an exaggeration. During her periods of convalescence, Patrick often sat for hours with her reading about the adventures of fascinating characters in weird and wonderful locations. The hours that Patrick and Mary Brigid spent together as children had a lasting effect on both siblings. She wrote plays, children's stories and a novel, and Patrick was inspired by Mary Brigid's childhood convalescence to write several children's stories that included sick children as characters such as 'An Gadaí' and 'Eoghainín na nÉan'.

Despite her illness, Mary Brigid showed considerable aptitude for music from a young age and was recognised as the most musically talented of the Pearse family. She was an accomplished pianist and studied theory and harmony with Carl Hardebeck, a noted organist, folk-song collector and leading figure in the Gaelic League and Feis Ceoil. Hardebeck was famous for his arrangements of Irish folk songs, and his style influenced Mary Brigid's arrangements of Irish airs for voice and harp, and voice and piano.

From its inception in 1896, Mary Brigid and her siblings were active and enthusiastic members of the Gaelic League. It was through the League that she met her harp teacher Owen Lloyd (Eoghan Laoide), a renowned Irish and pedal harpist from Co Clare. Mary Brigid's fascination with the harp began after she attended a concert featuring a pedal harpist at the Round Room of the Rotunda in Dublin. She expressed an interest in acquiring a harp but following the closure in 1872 of Francis Hewson's Irish and pedal harp manufactory in York Street, Dublin, it became increasingly difficult to source an instrument in Ireland in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, knowing how enthusiastic she was about the instrument, Patrick eventually purchased an Irish harp for her. The memory of getting her first harp remained with Mary Brigid for the rest of her life, 'I still remember the intense rapture with which I at last held the long-wished-for treasure in my trembling arms. I just *loved* my harp; and I am proud to say that, despite many vicissitudes, the same precious little instrument can sing to-day as sweetly as it sang in those far-off happy days so long gone by!'

Under Lloyd's guidance, Mary Brigid progressed quickly on the Irish and pedal harps. She performed at branch meetings of the Gaelic League and at concerts of An t-Oireachtas as part of Lloyd's band of harpists who performed two-part arrangements of repertoire including 'Carolan's Concerto' and 'Dear Harp of my Country'. Mary Brigid later took over the role of harp teacher from Lloyd at St Enda's (Scoil Éanna), Rathfarnham and also provided piano and voice lessons as part of the extracurricular activities offered at the school.

Despite her close bond with her brothers Patrick and Willie, Mary Brigid was unaware of her brothers' plans for an insurrection. At some stage during Easter Monday 1916, she is reputed to have made her way to the city centre, met Patrick and pleaded with him, 'come away Pat, and leave this foolishness'. After her brothers' executions, Mary Brigid chose to remain out of public and political life. As her mother and sister were increasingly burdened with the legacy of Patrick and Willie, Mary Brigid focused on teaching music and writing at her home in Terenure. In addition to her main instruments, piano and harp, she also offered lessons in violin, cello and mandolin. Her first major literary work, *The Murphys of Ballystack*, was published in 1917 by M.H. Gill & Son. During the 1920s and early 1930s, she spent much of her time writing short stories, plays, children's stories and articles. She also gave a number of radio interviews on Patrick's life and work.

Mary Brigid continued to write and teach music throughout the 1930s and 1940s, but suffered from high blood pressure and neurosis. She died aged sixty-four on 12 November 1947. Although Mary Brigid did not agree with her brothers' military activities and did not share in the political and social honours heaped on her mother and sister, she was accorded the respect that membership of the Pearse family engendered, and *was interred in Glasnevin Cemetery along with her mother and father.*

To pre-order a copy of this book, please contact Fiona Dunne (Irish Academic Press) at Fiona.dunne@iap.ie

NEW / FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS:

O'Donnell, Teresa, 'The Music Association of Ireland: Fostering a voice for Irish composers and compositions,' *The Journal of Music Research Online* 7 (2016).

O'Donnell, Mary Louise, "'One step above the ornamental greenery": A survivor's guide to playing to an audience who does not listen'. In Elina Hytönen-Ng and Ioannis Tsioulakis (eds.) *Musicians and their Audiences: New Approaches to a Timeless Division* (Ashgate, 2016).

O'Donnell, Mary Louise, 'The Bengal Subscription: Patriotism, patronage and the perpetuation of the Irish harp tradition in the early nineteenth century'. In Sandra Joyce and Helen Lawlor (eds.) *Harp Studies* (Four Courts Press, 2016).

O'Donnell, Mary Louise, "'Those half creatures of Plato": the musical inspiration behind Moore's Sacred Songs and National Airs'. In Sarah McCleave and Brian Caraher (eds.) *Thomas Moore and Romantic Inspiration* (Routledge, forthcoming)

News and Events

OPENING OF CS LEWIS SQUARE

Tuesday 22nd November 2016 marked the opening of a new artistic space, the CS Lewis Square in Belfast to commemorate the life of one of Belfast's most famous writers. The opening of the square marks the 53rd anniversary of the author's death (Clive Staples Lewis), who was known to his friends as Jack.

CS Lewis Square is located at the intersection of the Connswater and Comber Greenways in east Belfast. The opening marked the unveiling of seven permanent sculptures by Irish artist Maurice Harron based on characters from Lewis' novel *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (including the White Witch, Mr and Mrs Beaver, the Robin, Mr Tumnus, The Stone Table and Aslan).

Harpist and composer Nodlaig Brolly wrote a piece inspired by the new artwork entitled 'Land of Dreams' which was performed live as the finale to the opening. The piece was arranged for orchestra and choir by Graeme Stewart.

Performing at the event were:

Ruaidhrí Dall harpers – Lucy Kerr (Lead harper), Catherine Ní Cheallaigh and Cian Mac Bloiscaidh

Soprano – Alex Sharpe (formerly of Celtic Woman)

Baritone – Karl McGuckin

Grosvenor Grammar Chamber choir (conducted by Rosemary Foster)

The event was compèred by actor Dan Gordon and a special guest at the event was Douglas Gresham (stepson of C.S. Lewis).

The event was concluded by a snow machine transforming the magical space into a winter wonderland, revealing Aslan to the public.

Top right: Soprano Alex Sharpe and Karl McGuckin

Bottom right: Lucy Kerr, Cian Mac Bloiscaidh, Nodlaig Brolly and Catherine Ní Cheallaigh at the stone table



HONORARY AWARD FOR MARY O'HARA AT AIHF

Irish soprano and harper Mary O'Hara received an honorary award recognising her contribution to the Irish harp, spanning more than 60 years, at the first Achill International Harp Festival on Sunday 30th October 2016. The Festival, together with new organisation Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland, presented a specially commissioned work by sculptor Ronan O'Halpin.



Mary O'Hara, an iconic figure on both sides of the Atlantic, is one of Ireland's most successful musicians on the world stage. Her enduring legacy of recordings and music has made a big impact on a generation of Irish female singers who credit her with influencing their style. She completed five volumes of harp accompaniments and continues to travel promoting harp music and performance. Her papers are held in The Burns Library in Boston College, where an exhibition on her work was held in 2010. By a couple of years, she preceded the folk era that many associate with Joan Baez, The Clancy Brothers and Bob Dylan. She performed at the Carnegie Hall and in the Sydney Opera House, had her own BBC series and appeared on the *Ed Sullivan Show*.



MACALLA 1916

The Comhaltas 1916 Programme of Events can be viewed online at www.macalla1916.ie and include MACALLA 1916, an Orchestral Suite of Music composed and conducted by Michael Rooney reflecting on Ireland's history: from famine times, through the Easter 1916 Rising to the present day.



Michael Rooney, a native of County Monaghan, is widely respected as a composer and harper and is a regular visitor to Cairde na Cruite's annual summer festival in Termonfechin. Over the past fifteen years, Michael has composed seven suites of music, including The Battle of the Books Suite, The Famine Suite, The Millennium Suite, The De Cueller Suite and BORÓIMHE.

CHILDREN OF THE REVOLUTION CONCERT SERIES

'Children of the Revolution' is a unique concert series which brings together traditional musicians and singers from throughout Ireland who are descended from men and women who were involved in the 1916 Easter Rising.



Three unique performances in 2016 in County Kildare, County Waterford and Limerick City – explore and celebrate the rich cultural legacy of Irish traditional music and song, aspects of our culture which were foremost on the minds of the political leaders of 1916. The project was devised by Michael Fortune and Aileen Lambert and is supported by Kildare County Council, and Limerick and Waterford City and County Councils as part of their 2016 Commemoration Programme. www.childrenoftherevolution.ie

RIAM HARP CONCERT, NATIONAL HERITAGE WEEK

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) describes Holy Trinity Church of Ireland, off Fethard's main street in Co Tipperary, as a building of "outstanding architectural, archaeological and historical importance." In August of this year this historic church provided the setting for unique and memorable performances on both Irish and pedal harps.



The Heritage Council in conjunction with Fethard's Historical Society invited the Royal Irish Academy of Music to produce a harp concert in celebration of Heritage Week. The concert, entitled *Rising Stars & Heavenly Harps*, featured Gloria Birardi, Rachel Duffy, Lucy Ní Fhaoláin and Emer Ní Scolaí and included classical and traditional pieces played to a packed and appreciative audience.

The director of the RIAM, Deborah Kelleher, introduced the performers and thanked Áine Ní Dhubhghaill for her work in preparing the event. She then went on to discuss the long and rich harp tradition at the RIAM including the connection the academy's home on Westland Row had with harp-making with both John and Dan Quinn making harps in the last century. Each of the performers then played four pieces individually culminating in the finale –*Sliabh na mBan*.

An enthusiastic audience gave our young musicians a sustained standing ovation and many described the concert as a magical experience.

HARPS AT ÁRAS AN UACHTARÁIN

A number of events at Áras an Uachtaráin proudly showcased our national instrument in 2016. Bloomsday on June 16th was one such occasion with a nod to Shakespeare's 400th anniversary, and included a performance by Laoise O'Brien (recorders) with Anne-Marie O'Farrell (Irish harp) featuring airs and dances mentioned in the plays of Shakespeare. Performing at Áras an Uachtaráin on Culture Night on September 16th were Siobhán Armstrong (early Irish Harp), Róisín Elsafty (singer) and Ronan Browne (uilleann pipes).

FEIS CEOIL 2017

Feis Ceoil 2017 runs from 27th March–7th April. Details of the many harp competitions, syllabus, prize funds and closing dates can be found online at www.feisceoil.ie



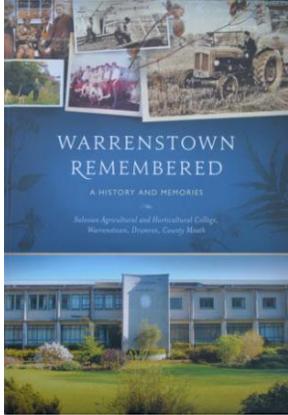
MUSIC TO TAPESTRY

Kilkenny-based visual artist Tia Vellani creates pieces of art from prints to tapestry woven with glass using pieces of music as an underlying template for patterns. She has used Anne-Marie O'Farrell's solo Irish harp piece, 'Chromatétude' as the basis for a series of prints, available as a range of items, from tote bags to duvet covers! www.tiavellani.weebly.com



BOOK LAUNCHES

Warrenstown Remembered



Book Launch Sunday 27th November 2016

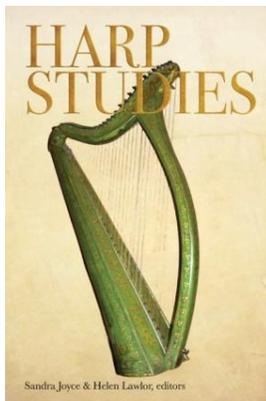
Cairde na Cruite's multi-talented treasurer and photographer Kieran Cummins contributed a chapter to a new book titled *Warrenstown Remembered: A history and memories* which was launched on Sunday 27th November 2016 by Sean Boylan, after a mass in the college chapel.

The book contains a history and memories of the former agricultural and horticultural college, Warrenstown, Drumree, County Meath. The book launch event was hosted by Cumann na bhFiann. Kieran who plays the Irish harp – and is the proud owner of a beautiful hand-crafted harp made by the late Colm O Meachair – entertained at the launch with harp music and song.



Kieran Cummins(harp) at the launch of *Warrenstown Remembered*

Harp Studies



Pictured (L to R) at the launch of *Harp Studies* in the Irish Traditional Music Archive, Merrion Square, Dublin 2 on Tuesday 29th November 2016 are Aibhlín McCrann, Anne-Marie O'Farrell, Helen Lawlor, Sandra Joyce and Nicholas Carolan.

HARP NEWS FROM ANNE-MARIE O'FARRELL

A chamber work featuring the harp was programmed in the nationwide Kaleidoscope tour earlier this year, when Anne-Marie O'Farrell's Joyce song cycle, 'Pomes Penyeach' for soprano, string quartet and harp was performed in Limerick's Belltable Arts Centre by Colette Delahunty, the ConTempo Quartet and the composer on harp on 25th February. The work was placed alongside Bill Whelan's 'A State of Light' and Dave Flynn's 'Stories from the Old World' featuring Mick O'Brien on popes and singer Breannán Ó Beagláoch.



The Edinburgh International Harp Festival hosted harp and 'mouth harp' duo Anne-Marie O'Farrell and Brendan Power following the release of their album 'Harp to Harp'. Brendan, who comes from a very different background where a 'harp' is half the size of a mobile phone, was intrigued to discover what life is like for those of us who play the stringed sort! Brendan and Anne-Marie shared the stage with Park Stickney and Violaine Contreras.

2016 was a busy year of commemoration, including performances in Ireland and a tour of Arizona by Anne-Marie O'Farrell with mezzo soprano Áine Mulvey. One of their concerts took place in the historic setting of Rathfarnham's Pearse museum, where they performed settings of poetry by Pearse, Plunkett, Joyce, Yeats and works by T.C.Kelly and Bodley alongside original songs by Anne-Marie. Their US performances were supported by Culture Ireland, and local symphony harpist from Phoenix, Stephen Hartmann very kindly loaned Anne-Marie a beautiful Lyon & Healy Salzedo for her concerts.

In their commemorative broadcast on Easter Monday 2016, RTÉ Lyric FM featured 'Songs for Ireland: A 1916 Trilogy' by Anne-Marie O'Farrell, performed by Colette Delahunty. These are three songs for voice and harp, setting poems by Seumas O'Sullivan, Thomas Mac Donagh and Dora Sigerson Shorter. This short cycle has since received numerous broadcasts and performances in Ireland, Germany, America and Australia since then, and the songs are also available for soprano, mezzo or alto with piano accompaniment. The recital recorded for Lyric FM included repertoire by Muriel Herbert, O'Farrell, Jenkins and Moeran for soprano, harp and cello with Colette Delahunty and Carmel Comiskey.



Mezzo soprano Aylish Kerrigan curated an Irish Cultural Festival in Stuttgart this year, which gave pride of place to the harp in its final gala concert in the Neues Schloss on 27th March, attended by His Excellency Michael Collins, Irish ambassador to Germany. The performers were Aylish Kerrigan, Ulrike Neubacher (pedal harp), Anne-Marie O'Farrell (Irish harp), Gerry O'Connor (fiddle), Tiarnan Ó Duinnchin (pipes) with a team of dancers. This was kindly supported by Culture Ireland and the Stuttgarter Musikhochschule very graciously stepped in with the loan of a harp from Toby Southcott!

The Mouth on Fire Theatre Company continue to feature the Irish harp in their trilingual performances of poetry by Samuel Beckett. In their presentation to open this year's Samuel Beckett Summer School at TCD in August, texts in English, French and Irish were interspersed with works by Anne-Marie O'Farrell, Eibhlís Farrell, David Bremner and Martin O'Leary. This included the premiere of Farrell's 'An Chruit Dhraíochta' on Irish harp (originally for pedal harp). Their next performance is at the Howth Literary Festival on Sunday 11th June.



In September the Association of Irish Composers released a video about Gráinne Mulvey's solo harp piece, 'Exploration' as discussed and performed by Anne-Marie O'Farrell. It was compiled by Dr Jennifer McCay as part of their Composers' Commentaries series within the AIC New Music Journal. The video examines the structure of the piece, playing techniques it requires, and the way in which it explores the boundaries of the instrument's range. It can be seen online at aicnewmusicjournal.com

The organ and harp joined forces in a recent concert in the Pipeworks series, including a performance of Anne-Marie O'Farrell's 'Airs and Grace Notes' for organ and Irish harp with organist Siobhan Kilkelly. This took place at the Pepper Cannister Church on 5th November, and also featured the flautist, Ciarán O'Connell.

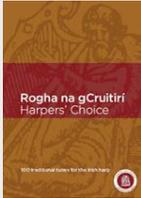
A recent tour by musicians from the Vienna Philharmonic orchestra, harpist Anneleen Lenaerts and clarinetist Dionysis Grammenos showcased a new composition by Anne-Marie O'Farrell for clarinet and harp, commissioned by Music Network. The tour took the duo all over Ireland from Tralee to Castlebar, fitting in workshops with local harp schools including Portlaoise Music Generation, and harp students at the Music School of Athenry, and a pedal harp masterclass at the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama. Their concert programme consisted of music from the nineteenth century featuring the Lieder composers Schubert and Schumann, and O'Farrell's new work, 'Klaria' was designed to complement this while also acknowledging the scope of today's musical language. Any composer would be delighted with a premiere, but to have six successive performances was a tremendous privilege, allowing the music to find its home in the hands of these wonderful players.



Photo credit: Fran Marshall

BOOKS AND CDs

Available from: www.cairdenacruite.com



Rogha na gCruitirí

edited by Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, Anne-Marie O'Farrell and Aibhlín McCrann

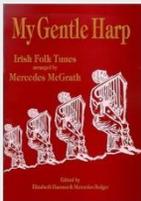
100 traditional tunes for the Irish harp contributed by no less than 52 foremost harp players, giving a unique insight into the diverse character and style of Irish harping in the 21st century.



The Irish Harp Book

edited by Sheila Larchet Cuthbert

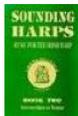
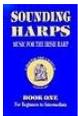
A collection of studies and exercises for the use of teachers and pupils of the Irish harp.



My Gentle Harp

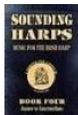
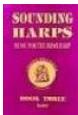
edited by Elizabeth Hannon & Mercedes Bolger

Irish music arranged by Mercedes McGrath



Sounding Harps

edited by Mercedes Bolger & Gráinne Yeats



This series consists of four books containing Graded Music for Irish Harp suited to beginners, intermediate, senior, and junior to intermediate respectively. The "Sounding Harps" series contains traditional tunes - traditional slow airs, songs and dance music arranged by well known exponents of the harp.



Masters of the Irish Harp (CD)

Produced in association with Cairde na Cruite, this CD is the latest release from RTÉ lyric fm and it celebrates the virtuosity of sixteen of our leading harpers.

Harp Tuition at Summer Schools and Festivals in Ireland

The following is a list of summer schools and festivals in Ireland that feature harp tuition

Various Round Dates	Year	Irish Harp Centre www.irishharpcentre.com
January		<i>No information</i>
February		Féile Patrick Byrne, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan Scoil Cheoil an Earraigh, Baile an Fheirtéaraigh, Co. Kerry
March		<i>No information</i>
April		<i>No information</i> for Ireland (Edinburgh International Harp Festival takes place in Scotland)
May		Féile Chois Chuain, Louisburgh, Co. Mayo
June		Blas – International Summer School of Irish Traditional Music and Song, University of Limerick An Chúirt Chruitireachta – International Harp Festival, Termonfechin, Co. Louth
July		Traidphicnic, An Spidéal, Co. Galway (instrumental tuition varies yearly) Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy, Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare South Sligo Summer School, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo Joe Mooney Summer School, Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim Meitheal – Residential Traditional Music Summer School, Limerick City
August		O’Carolan Harp Festival, Keadue, Co. Roscommon Scoil Éigse (different locations; precedes Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann) Scoil Acla, Achill, Co. Mayo Scoil na gCláirseach, Kilkenny City (early Irish harp) Harp Weekend at Bandon Walled Town Festival
September		Tulla Trad Festival, Tulla, Co. Clare
October		O’Carolan Harp Festival, Cultural & Heritage Festival, Nobber, Co. Meath Achill International Harp Festival, Achill Island
November		William Kennedy Piping Festival, Co. Armagh
December		Edward Bunting Festival, Armagh Town, Co. Armagh

If you know of other summer schools or festivals in Ireland that offer harp tuition, or of any changes in dates / venues that should be made to the above list please contact news@cairdenacruite.com