

An CRUITIRE

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Cover photo courtesy of Seána Davey following a concert in Marley House, on 24th August 2018 in honour of the late harp maker Colm Ó Meachair. Photo by Michael Duggan.

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An Cruitire is the newsletter of Cairde na Cruite and is issued annually on 1st December.



Cairde na Cruite Events

An Chúirt Chruitreachta 2018

A record number of harpers gathered at An Grianán for Cairde na Cruite's 33rd festival where they experienced an unforgettable week of harping, tuition, workshops and an array of exciting concerts from a host of Ireland's best known harpers and performers. Our 2018 festival focused on the music and times of Turlough Carolan (1670–1738), who has had such a profound influence on harpers and other traditional musicians right up to the present day.

Our Festival mentors are core to the success of each festival; many of them continue to return year on year to be with us, and we are deeply grateful to them for their ongoing enthusiasm and unstinting support. So take a bow Máire, Áine, Kathleen, Cormac, Anne-Marie, Gráinne, Dearbhail, Deirdre and Triona, who as usual, excelled in their patience and generosity in sharing their insights and expertise. They are ably abetted by Seosaimhín who brings her unique 'take' on Irish song to enrich the festival programme.

As usual, we staged our five evening concerts; opening with an atmospheric evening presented by Sylvia Crawford (early Irish harp) and the husband and wife duo, harpers Gráinne Hambly and William Jackson in the beautiful surroundings of 18th century Beaulieu house in Drogheda.



Beaulieu House, Drogheda

This was followed by a concert featuring our team of festival mentors in An Grianán, Termonfechin, who were joined by the inimitable Laoise Kelly, reliving the music of Turlough Carolan. More memorable evenings followed: *Chasing the Breeze*, with music from Denmark and Wales, performed in their own unique style by harper Helen Davies and wind player and story teller Poul Høxbro; a wonderful night of music making from Triona Marshall and Martin Tourish, who were joined by our visiting ensembles, who travelled from every corner of the country to be with us and culminating in our gala Festival concert, where we were joined by acclaimed singer Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh, harper Síle Denvir, Pádraig Rynne on concertina and local fiddle player Dónal O Connor.



Helen Davies(Harp), Poul Høxbro
(Flutes and Percussion)



Helen Davies(Harp)



L to R: Pádraig Rynne (Concertina),
Dónal O'Connor (Fiddle), Muireann
Nic Amhlaoibh (Vocals/Flute) and
Síle Denvir (Harp)



Gerry Cullen and the Drogheda singers



Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh (Vocals/Flute)
and Síle Denvir (Harp)



Seosaimhín Ní Bheaglaoich (Singer)
and Kathleen Loughnane (Harp)

These concerts were supported by an active programme of outreach activity – three lunchtime concerts in the 18th century Tholsel in Drogheda featuring Music Generation Louth Harp Ensemble and Grúpa Ceoil, Oisín Morrison and friends, and the ever faithful band of DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama harpers, who consistently rally to perform for us throughout the year. Harpers led by Fiona Gryson, Rachel Duffy, Maeve McKenna and Tara Viscardi also visited three local schools where they presented a light hearted *Hands on Harp* introduction to young children, who were fascinated by their stories and music. Special thanks to the outreach team and particularly to Rachel Duffy who devised a very informative programme for the outreach programme.

Our workshops focused on different strands of Carolan's music with Dr Sandra Joyce, Director of UL's World Academy of Music and Dance, setting a historical context about the life and times of Carolan, while DKIT's Dr Helen Lawlor led a practical harp-playing session, where she challenged participants to learn and play a Carolan tune in less than an hour, with everyone ending the session one Carolan tune the richer.



Dr Sandra Joyce



Dr Helen Lawlor



Triona Marshall and Martin Tourish

Another memorable highlight included a collaboratively-composed three part suite for harp ensemble led by Triona Marshall and Martin Tourish, which was the output of a concentrated compositional day, where we were joined by more than 55 harpers from Music Generation programmes all over the country to compose a new work for harp which was later performed at our five o'clock concert; this performance swelled our ranks to more than 140 harpers and was a wonderful experience for all involved. We are really delighted to be collaborating with Music Generation on this particular venture and most grateful for their willingness to contribute to our Founders' Scholarship scheme; it opens up new vistas for young harpers and enables them perform and participate in a wider group.

An Chúirt Chruitreachta would not be possible were it not for the generous support received from Louth County Council via Create Louth, Creative Ireland and Louth County Council Tourism Fund together with our core funding from The Arts Council, An Chomhairle Ealaíon. The Trench Trust has provided generous and invaluable support for our Ensemble Day, which is an additional initiative to inspire and encourage other young harpers, who might not have the opportunity to attend the Festival. Louth County Council staff have been unfailingly supportive and our appreciation to Arts Officer Brian Harten and to his colleague Miriam Roe, Economic Development and Tourism, each of whom offer words of encouragement from one festival to the next.



Martin Tourish and Triona Marshall



Collaborative compositional day



Sean-nós singing workshop with Seosaimhín Ní Bheaglaoich



Triona Marshall (Harp), Martin Tourish (Accordion)



Triona Marshall (Harp)



Martin Tourish (Accordion)



Cruitirí Loch Garman/Wexford Harp Ensemble



Meath Harp Ensemble



Music Generation Louth Harp Ensemble



Music Generation Laois Harp Ensemble



Westmeath Harp Ensemble



Bray CCÉ Harp Ensemble



Elver Harp Ensemble



Music Generation Mayo Harp Ensemble



Harp Ensembles exit stage left

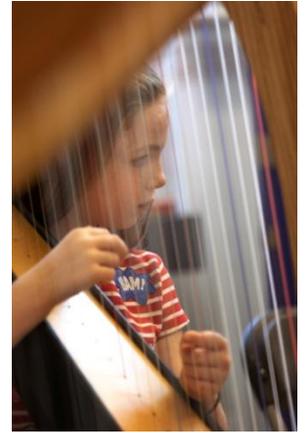
Photographs of evening concerts held in An Grianán, An Chúirt Chruitireachta 2018 by Kieran Cummins



Aibhlín McCrann at the Tholsel
Photo by Robin Barnes



MGL Harp Ensemble and Grúpa Ceoil at the Tholsel
Photo by Robin Barnes



At the Tholsel
Photo by Robin Barnes

A particular acknowledgment to the Festival Team comprising Rachel Duffy, our administrator, who is at the beck and call of our participants from dawn to dusk from one end of the year to the other; Caitriona Rowsome, who facilitates harp hire to our overseas participants; and Kieran Cummins, our hard working treasurer, who also works in numerous different ways, ranging from transporting harps to documenting the festival for us to managing our road signage. They are joined by our hard-working committee members; Cairde na Cruite Chair, Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, secretary Helen Price, Deirdre Ní Bhuachalla, Fiona Gryson, Maeve McKenna, Tara Viscardi and Siofra Ní Dhubhghaill, who form the backbone of our activity, and who rally around both before and during the festival. Caitríona Yeats provided backup in many different ways throughout the week; Deirdre Granville and Catriona Cannon steered our social media activity with help from our social media team, while Clodagh Hannon assisted us with PR and Communications for Festival 2018; coming up with lots of novel ideas to promote the festival and increasing our profile significantly in local and national media. Finally, the staff at An Grianán looked after our every wish from the moment we arrived until the moment we left. Nothing was too much trouble for them; synonymous with the goodwill that we have appreciated throughout our years at An Grianán.

Míle buíochas daoibh ar fad agus go mbeirimid beo ar an am seo arís.

*Aibhlín McCrann
Festival Director
An Chúirt Chruitireachta*



Spring Concert at the Pearse Museum



Spring Concert / Ceolchoirm an Earraigh 2018

Our spring concert on 29th April 2018 in the Pearse Museum, Rathfarnham featured performances from Jessica Berwick, Aoife Ní Bhriain, Conor O'Brien, Kate Keena and Special Guest performers Tara Viscardi (Irish harp) and Fionn Ó hAlmhain (pipes and flute). We are very grateful to Brian Crowley and the staff of the Pearse Museum for generously hosting our concerts in this wonderful setting for many years.

Áine Ní Dhubhghaill



L to R: Jessica Berwick, Aoife Ní Bhriain, Conor O'Brien, Kate Keena



Tara Viscardi (Irish harp), Fionn Ó hAlmhain (pipes and flute)



L to R: Helen Price, Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, Jessica Berwick, Aoife Ní Bhriain, Conor O'Brien, Kate Keena, Tara Viscardi, Rachel Duffy and Caitríona Rowsome

Cairde na Cruite at the Mansion House



Mansion House Reception, May 2018

The Lord Mayor of Dublin, Councillor Mícheál Mac Donnchú, hosted a reception for Cairde na Cruite at the Mansion House in Dublin, on 24th May 2018. The reception was organised to celebrate the harp and acknowledge the work of the organisation. It was a wonderful social event with a very warm welcome from the Lord Mayor and beautiful harp playing by Emer Ní Scolaí, Ruth O Hara and Eadaoin Ní Mhaicín.



The Lord Mayor of Dublin, Councillor Mícheál Mac Donnchú welcomes the gathering at the Mansion House



L to R: Committee Members Rachel Duffy, Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, Dearbhail Finnegan, Helen Price and Caitríona Rowsome



Áine Ní Dhubhghaill addresses the gathering at the Mansion House



Emer Ní Scolaí



Eadaoin Ní Mhaicín



Ruth O Hara



Back row: Sandra Downes, Mary Kelly, Dearbhail Finnegan, Aibhlín McCrann, Ann Finnegan, Peter Finnegan, Eileen Lewis; Eva Bencini



Sandra Downes and Eva Bencini



L to R: Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, Kathleen Watkins, Shane Ó Meachair and Pat Ó Meachair

Cairde na Cruite on National Harp Day

National Harp Day at the Pearse Museum, 20th October 2018

On National Harp Day 2018, the Pearse Museum hosted a harp concert for Cairde na Cruite which was recorded by Virgin Media One and broadcast at a later date as part of the footage of the inaugural National Lottery Good Causes Awards. A full house and enthusiastic audience were captivated by the superb standard of playing by solo and ensemble harpers at the NHD event.



Brian Crowley, curator of the Pearse Museum, gives a warm welcome before recording commences



Áine Ní Dhubhghaill introduces harpers at the concert which was recorded by Virgin Media One



Éadaoin Ní Mhaicín and Eimear Ní Scolaí



Eimear Ní Scolaí



Nini Guo



Music Generation Louth Senior Harp Ensemble



Clayton Burlington Hotel, Dublin 4, 3rd November 2018

The first ever National Lottery Good Causes Awards took place on 3rd November 2018 in the Clayton Burlington Hotel, Dublin 4. This inaugural event paid tribute to 36 Awards finalists in the areas of Health, Sport, Youth, Community, Arts & Culture and Heritage. A Special Award was also presented for the Irish Language.



The National Lottery Good Causes Awards 2018, shone a light on the positive and significant contribution each Awards Finalist has brought to communities all over the country with the help of Good Causes funding.

Precursors to the Gala Good Causes Awards Final were the County and Regional Finals. Cairde na Cruite were delighted to be County Winners and one of six Regional Winners and finalists in the Arts & Culture category. This is testament to the pivotal role the society

has played over the past five decades in reinstating our national instrument, the harp, at the centre of Irish traditional music.

Photo Above Left: Aibhlín McCrann and Áine Ní Dhubhghaill accept the *Regional Winner Award*

Photo Below Right: Cairde na Cruite committee members in attendance at the Gala Good Causes Awards (L to R) Aibhlín McCrann, Helen Price, Caitríona Rowsome, Áine Ní Dhubhghaill and Kieran Cummins

The judging panel, chaired by businessman and broadcaster Bobby Kerr, was made up of Lotto presenter Nuala Carey, Seamus Griffin of The National Lottery Retail Council, Michael Hayes, Head of Marketing with The National Lottery and Miriam Donohoe, PR & Corporate Communications manager with The National Lottery.

Áine Ní Dhubhghaill (Chair of Cairde na Cruite), represented the society on a short recording played at the Good Causes Awards, which included coverage of harpers in concert at the Pearse Museum, Rathfarnham, on National Harp Day (20th October 2018).



National Lottery CEO, Dermot Griffin said: "It is fitting that Ireland's unsung heroes who work quietly under the radar to improve lives and make a difference are honoured in these inaugural National Lottery Good Causes Awards."

Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan T.D. was a special guest at the Gala Awards Dinner. The televised event was hosted by popular TV presenter, Karen Koster and broadcast on Virgin Media One on Sunday, 11th November 2018.

Regular Events with Cairde na Cruite

Spring Concert: A harp concert held annually each Spring at the Pearse Museum in St. Enda's Park, Rathfarnham. The 2019 dates will be published on www.cairdenacruite.com in the New Year.

An Chúirt Chruitireachta: Our International Harp Festival takes place annually in An Grianán, Termonfechin, County Louth. The 2019 event will take place from Sunday 30th June to Friday 5th July 2019. See www.cairdenacruite.com to book your place. #CCIHF

Winter Concert: The 2019 dates for our winter harp concert will be published on www.cairdenacruite.com in the New Year. All are welcome!



Scéim Ligin Cruite, Harp Hire

harphire@cairdenacruite.com

Cairde na Cruite was honoured to accept a number of harps from the Gráinne Yeats collection for use in its harp hire scheme, and donated by her daughter Caitríona. Gráinne was a founder member of Cairde na Cruite and of An Chúirt Chruitireachta, the International Festival for Irish Harp. Together with Mercedes Garvey, she edited the Sounding Harps series of harp music, which have been a source of great joy to harpers all over the world. We are sure that her harps will give equal pleasure to budding young harpers and we thank her family for their generosity.

Gabhaimid buíochas ó chroí libh.

CAIRDE NA CRUIZE



An Chúirt Chruitreachta
International Festival
for Irish Harp

Sunday 30 June –
Friday 5 July 2019
An Grianán, Termonfechin,
Co Louth, Ireland

Where harps inspire..

www.harpfestival.ie • www.cairdenacruite.com



Join us in 2019
for
Cairde na Cruite's
International Festival for Irish Harp!

Sunday 30th June – Friday 5th July 2019



Have you made your Christmas list? Are you wondering about the ideal present?

Why not give a gift of a place at our International Festival for Irish Harp, *An Chúirt Chruitireachta*?

Learn from Ireland's foremost harpers, make new harp friends, be captivated by our array of evening concerts with Ireland's foremost performers and join in harp sessions – all in the beautiful surrounds of An Grianán, a picturesque Edwardian Manor House located just 50km from Dublin.

The fee includes accommodation, subsistence, tuition, workshops and concerts – it's unbeatable value and not to be missed.

We welcome harpers of all ages and abilities to an unforgettable harping event!

What they said:

"Definitely harp therapy at its best! A week I won't forget – the music will be ringing in my ears for a long time; So much music and such beautiful sounds."

"Truly terrific, better than I expected. I'm quite sad to be leaving; it was invaluable and life-altering!"

"It just kept getting better and better. I learned loads of new tunes and made new friends too. Thank you so much."

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

Enquiries and Bookings

info@cairdenacruite.com

www.cairdenacruite.com/festival

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National Harp Day, Lá na Cruite, which took place on October 20th 2018, was Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland's second major initiative to promote Ireland's national instrument, encourage more people to learn the harp, attract new audiences and recognise the harp's unique place in Irish musical and cultural life. Harp events took place at a number of key venues in cities and towns nationwide including Armagh, Belfast, Dublin, Mayo, Galway, Limerick, Laois, Louth, Meath, Cork and Wexford. Audiences from Donegal to Dingle, from Belfast to Bandon were treated to the wonderful sound of harp-playing at concerts, sessions, Harpathons, pop-up sessions, talks and demonstrations of harp making. Associated harp events happened virtually with our harping friends in the Isle of Man, Greece, the USA, and as far away as New Zealand. 2018 saw a significant increase in the number of harpers from Northern Ireland taking part, and we were delighted to welcome them on board. Thanks to one and all for taking part.

Go mbeirimid beo ar an am seo arís.

For more detailed information about the day, please visit www.harpireland.ie

Aibhlín McCrann

Chair

Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland



Highest Harp and Piano Concert in Himalayas

Following the success of Limerick's Siobhán Brady at a Camac sponsored international harp competition in London, in which she was awarded two first place medals, little did she know she was soon to scale new heights to play the harp in a record-breaking concert, high-up in the Himalayas.

"I was approached by Desmond Gentle to take part in the 'Highest Harp and Piano Concert in the Himalayas' in aid of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust (UK). Desmond had already completed the deepest concert [in the world] with the piano and invited me to join the *highest* concert team to work with opera singer, Neil Latchman to perform three concerts," said Siobhán.



High altitudes are known to simulate the breathing difficulties caused by cystic fibrosis. The primary objective of the project was to show how music can help overcome barriers and raise awareness of this life-shortening genetic disease.

"We achieved the objective of the Highest Harp and Piano Concert at 4,755m in the Himalayas on the 6th September 2018, however it was not without its challenges!" recalls Siobhán.

It took Siobhán and her father, Seán, from Castletroy along with their support team, seven hours to ascend and six hours to descend – with a grand piano and a Camac 'Janet' lever harp – from 15,600 feet up, near Singla pass in the Himalayas, Northern India.

One of the challenges faced by Siobhán was minor damage to the bottom C harp lever on the flight from Shannon to London, London to Delhi and Delhi to Leh, in Northern India. "Having brought a full set of replacement levers and strings, which Camac kindly donated to us in their support of the trip, the damage was thankfully repairable before the ascent," recalls Siobhán. "At the summit, the challenges increased with two members of the team requiring oxygen and one had to be rushed down due to breathing difficulties. I had completed three months of Hypoxic Altitude training at Delta Sports Dome in Limerick so I was fine but still felt the effects of high altitude, which included shortness of breath. On arrival at 15,600ft, strong winds led to the challenge of keeping the harp in tune and a heavy hailstone shower threatened the outdoor performance; but luckily the sun came out in time to provide the opportunity to perform in the concert."

Limerick-based CloudAssist provided the cloud technology to assist this international team to collaborate and plan the project while facilitating the necessary work between the composers and artists to prepare and practice their concert pieces leading up to the trip to the Himalayas. Siobhán's father was the communications officer who assisted in the collaboration of the team.



During the Highest Harp and Piano Concert, a video was made of Siobhán playing the Knappogue Medley by Anne-Marie O'Farrell, while Desmond Gentle, the project leader and brainchild of this project, read a poem provided by the President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins, titled "The Prophets are weeping". On 2nd October 2018, only two weeks after returning to London from the Himalayas, Desmond passed away from thrombosis, aged 69. Siobhán fondly remembers

Desmond as a man of 'amazing spirit and vision' for using music and altitude as a medium to raise awareness of, and funds for, Cystic Fibrosis.

Photos of the Highest Harp and Piano Concert courtesy of Chris Philips

WORLD HARP CONGRESS 2020

The next World Harp Congress will be held in Cardiff, Wales, UK from 24th–30th July 2020. This will be the first time in 12 years that the World Harp Congress has returned to Europe.

WHC2020 Performance Venues include St David's Hall, Cardiff Castle, City Hall and Wales Millennium Centre. For further information, visit <https://worldharpcongress.com>



FEIS CEOIL 2019

Feis Ceoil 2019 runs from Monday 1st to Friday 12th April.

Details of the many harp competitions, syllabus, prize funds and closing dates can be found online at the website: <https://www.feisceoil.ie>



Colm Ó Meachair Tribute Concert

On 24th August 2018, a concert celebrating Colm Ó Meachair was held at Marlay House, Rathfarnham. Organised by harpist Seána Davey with generous support from the Youth Music Ambassador Programme, performances were given by harpist Anne-Marie O'Farrell, guitarist John Feeley, singer / songwriter brothers Jimmy and Tommy Swarbrigg, harp maker Brian Callan, renowned songwriter Brendan Graham, The Dixie King Jazz Band led by Daire O'Reilly, harper Emer Ní Scolaí, and the Shane Ó Meachair traditional music group comprising of Shane, Adam Smith, Colm Delaney and Bláthmhac Ó Muirí and Seána herself performing a short duet with John Feeley. Áine Ní Dhubhghaill provided a wonderful foreword of her memories of Colm Ó Meachair, for the programme on the evening. A total of 22 of Colm's harps were on show on the evening – spanning his harp making career – along with a photography display of his life as a musician and harp maker.

Colm is deeply missed by his wife Pat, his daughter and son, Clíodhna and Shane and his extended family.



L to R in Marley House: Shane Ó Meachair, Seána Davey, Pat Ó Meachair and Clíodhna Ó Meachair



John Feeley and Seána Davey



Audience at concert in Marley House



Colm Ó Meachair harps



Anne-Marie O'Farrell



Emer Ní Scolaí



Seána Davey

Photography of the Colm Ó Meachair tribute concert in Marley House, 24th August 2018 by Michael Duggan

My memories of Colm Ó Meachair, Harp Maker by Áine Ní Dhubhghaill

I first met Colm in the 1970's. Tom, Colm's dad, was not a fan of foreign Japanese made Irish Harps for sale in Dublin's leading music shop (to put it mildly!). Acutely aware of the lack of harp makers in Ireland, as a hobby Tom attempted to put strings on the 'auld triangle' which produced some very playable harps, later to be used in the Mullingar Harp School which Tom founded.

Colm, who was working as a school teacher, caught the bug. With the revival of the Irish Harp gathering pace, Colm became a full-time Irish Harp maker with the opening of Marlay Craft Courtyard in 1975. As a teenager playing at the launch of Colm's workshop, I remember being in awe chatting with the recent Eurovision Stars, the Swarbriggs, later to become Colm's in-laws.

When I was in my Leaving Cert year Colm became my first harp student. I don't think Colm had any aspirations to become the next Derek Bell of the harp, but with enthusiasm he sought to understand the playing technique and how to produce an instrument that would meet the modern day players' requirements. He learned a few tunes, and practiced as much as he could between harp making and playing guitar with bands including the Earl Gill band. I just wish we had smart phones then. Youtube clips of Colm playing his own harp would be interesting!

In the early 1980s, I started teaching harp on Saturdays in the room adjoining Colm's workshop. We had visions of this adjoining room being a fancy dust free showroom, with harps on display. Realistically it didn't make economic sense. It was never going to be dust free either! Customers were more than happy to visit Colm in the organic natural setting of the workshop and the 'showroom' idea was not to be.

With passion and his ever-curious mind Colm developed and raised the craft of harp making to a new level. String spacing, string types, blades/levers, choice of wood and most importantly sound quality were constantly researched. Many of today's leading Irish harp makers in Ireland and abroad are indebted to Colm for his generously shared research, innovations and ideas. As a harp maker Colm's professionalism extended well beyond the norm. No such thing as a nine to five job! A typical trip to the workshop might be for a string replacement or an adjustment to a buzzing lever (which should take max 15 minutes); it might also occur as a result of a call from Colm to inspect the latest harp with its new modifications.

Two hours later new modifications and improvements have been thoroughly dissected, the affairs of the harp world, Cairde na Cruite, politics and family have all been aired. Down tools. 'Time for coffee? or sure now it's 5pm, maybe one in the Eden?' How did he ever get time to finish a harp? Colm always had time for anyone regardless of what harp and harp problems they brought to the workshop. He was incredibly encouraging to each new generation of harp players and has left a huge legacy of harps.

Time was a huge gift Colm had for all. I wish Colm himself had more time in this world. The harpers of Ireland miss Colm sorely. *Ní bheidh a leithéid arís ann.*

TIONÓL HARPS AND PIPES 2018

Music Generation Laois' annual Tionól for Harps and Pipes, now in its third year, took place from the 2nd-4th November 2018 in Portlaoise. Over 100 young musicians and 20 tutors took part in this national gathering, which brings young harpers and pipers and their tutors from Music Generations across Ireland together for workshops, masterclasses, sessions, reed-making and concerts. The Tionól also caters for non-Music Generation students who can attend as day students.



Guest musicians this year included Anne-Marie O'Farrell (harp/konghu), Triona Marshall (harp), Catriona McKay (harp), Chris Stout (harp), Mick O'Brien (pipes), David Power (pipes) and Venezuelan musicians Eduard Jiménez (harp), Alis Cruces (cuatro), Nelson Echandía (electric bass) and Andrés Ortiz (maracas). The Tionól 2018 also featured music from Grainne Hambly (harp), Leonard Barry (pipes), Billy Jackson (harp), Fionnán MacGabhann (pipes), Tim Doyle (pipes), James Mahon (pipes), Riko (harp), Siobhan Buckley (harp), Deirdre Ní Bhuachalla (harp), Joseph Byrne (pipes), Lauren O'Neill (harp) and Venezuelan band Compasses.

Speaking at the event, Co-ordinator of Music Generation Laois, Rosa Flannery said, "We are thrilled this year to have had young musicians in attendance from Cork to Mayo to Derry and adult musicians from across Ireland, Scotland, Venezuelan and Japan. It was truly a fantastic weekend, and the final Student Concert on Sunday afternoon was really brilliant, and a credit to all the students and their tutors."

Music Generation Laois is a performance music education programme, part of Music Generation, Ireland's national music education programme, initiated by Music Network and co-funded nationally by U2, the Ireland Funds and the Department of Education and Skills. Locally Music Generation Laois is based in Laois County Council (lead partner) and co-funded by Laois Offaly Education and Training Board.

Music Generation Laois currently has over 120 harp students, three harp ensembles and a harp orchestra. It also runs a very successful uilleann pipe programme in partnership with Na Piobairi Uilleann. The Tionól 2018 was funded by the Music Generation/Arts Council Partnership, The Trench Trust and Local Partners.



Photo credits: Denis Byrne.

The life and works of Charles Egan, composer and harpist

***Extract from a paper presented jointly by Teresa and Mary Louise O'Donnell at the 13th World Harp Congress in Hong Kong on 9th July 2017:*

Charles Egan, a harp teacher, performer, composer, arranger and author of several popular contemporary manuals for Pedal harp and Portable Irish harp, was born in Dublin in the early nineteenth century. His father John was one of the most inventive and innovative harp makers of the nineteenth century. He made single and double-action pedal harps and invented the Triple-action pedal harp and four different types of Portable Irish harp. It seems Charles briefly flirted with a career as a harp maker and he is credited, along with his father and brother John, as the maker of a spectacular Portable Irish harp which is housed at Museo dell'Arpa Victor Salvi in Italy. He eschewed this career in favour of a career as a professional musician and composer. The first reference to a performance by Charles is on the 17th August 1821 when he performed at the Grand Coronation Concerts at the New Theatre Royal in Dublin. This series of concerts, which coincided with a visit to Ireland by the newly-crowned sovereign George IV, was a significant event for Egan but also for R.N.C. Bochsa who made his debut performance in Ireland. Charles Egan regularly attended classes with Bochsa when he visited and performed in Dublin. Bochsa was a mentor and inspirational figure for Charles and he spent much of his life trying to emulate his master's technical skill, compositional prowess and pedagogical expertise.



When John Egan was appointed pedal and Portable harp maker to King George IV in 1821, and later harp maker to the King and royal family, it provided a crucial entrée for Charles into the upper echelons of elite British society. Charles was appointed professor of harp to George IV's sister Princess Augusta in 1822. He performed regularly for members of the royal family, and Adelaide, the Duchess of Clarence and later Queen consort of William IV, appointed him as her personal harpist in 1824. His close connection with British royalty ensured that he was in demand, in particular, as a teacher. Although based in London, Charles returned frequently to Dublin to give instruction on the harp to nobility and gentry who wished to avail of his expertise. During his visits to Dublin he also collaborated on several projects with his father which further enhanced his reputation. These included two publications for Portable Irish Harp, namely, *A New Series of Instructions Arranged expressly for the Royal Portable Irish Harp* (1822) and *A Selection of Ancient Irish Melodies* (1824).

Egan excelled at the composition of songs and they form a considerable part of his oeuvre. *A Selection of National Lyrics*, was published in 1826 and included eight songs arranged with accompaniments for the 'Harp, Piano Forte or Royal Portable Irish harp.' The lyrics were written by the English poet Edward Dowling and, with the exception of the air *Oh! In Life's Sunny Morn* composed by Egan, all texts were set to existing traditional airs from Ireland, Scotland, and Switzerland. Most of Egan's compositions were for pedal harp. Irish airs and Irish harp repertoire

were a fertile source for many of his compositions for the pedal harp and were the inspiration for several pieces, including *Savourna Deelish, Fantasia, with Variations on the Celebrated Irish Air "Aileen Aroone"* and *Brilliant and Short Fantasia for the Harp*. Egan also incorporated melodies of arias from popular contemporary operas and airs from other countries into his compositions and these tunes often formed the basis of works in theme and variations form. He, along with many contemporary composers favoured theme and variations form as a compositional structure and this is reflected in works such as *The Bavarian or Tyrolese Air, Kinloch of Kinloch, The Bohemian's Horn: A German Melody arranged for the harp with variations* (1831) and *Sul Margine d'un Rio with Brilliant and Familiar Variations*.

In addition to a prolific portfolio of compositions for pedal harp, Portable Irish harp, pianoforte, and a selection of sacred music, Egan wrote a number of instruction manuals for harp. *The Royal Harp Director*, published in 1827 was one of his earliest and most successful publications. Egan's other instruction manual *The Harp Primer* (1829) includes a detailed introduction to the rudiments of music, a description of the mechanism of single and double action pedal harps, and a concise chapter on the "Antiquity of the Harp".

Egan continued to compose, perform and teach throughout the 1830s and early 1840s. Indeed some of his most beautiful songs, including 'By our star of early love', 'Awake! Awake mine own love' and 'O Dolce Concerto', based on an air from Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*, were composed during this period. His father John died in 1829 and the family business in Dublin passed to Charles' brother John Junior. With the death of his pupil Princess Augusta in 1840 and his patron Queen Adelaide in 1849, he lost the patronage of the royal family. In fact the last mention of Egan as being part of the royal household is in the *British Imperial Calendar* of 1844. From the mid 1840s onwards, there are few references to performances by Egan or to publications of new music composed by him. In 1850, an article entitled 'On the antiquity and primitive form of our national instrument, the harp' was published in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*. An extensive fourteen-page article beautifully-illustrated by a number of plates is credited to one Charles Egan, Barrister at Law. It seems that Egan opted for a career change in the 1840s and he remained in this profession until his death in 1869.

Teresa and Mary Louise O'Donnell

Forthcoming publications by Mary Louise O'Donnell:

'Heavenly harps, heavenly cloths': The musical collaborations of Brian Boydell and Gráinne Yeats'. In Barra Boydell and Barbara Dignam (eds.) *Boydell Centenary Essays* (forthcoming 2019).

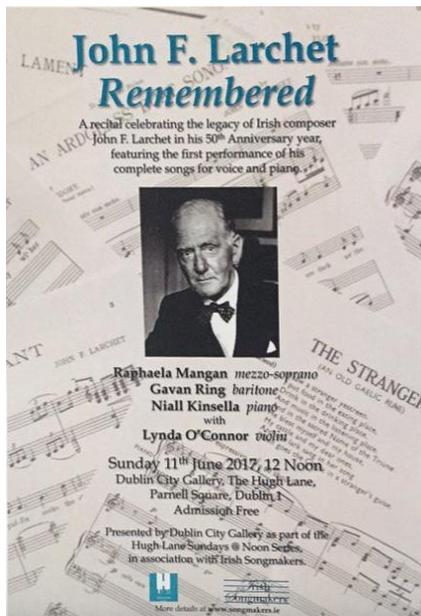
'The Glover Girls: An Irish musical dynasty'. In Ita Beausang and Jennifer M. O'Connor (eds.) *Irish Musical Studies 13* (forthcoming 2019).

John F. Larchet Remembered

A number of concerts and recitals were presented by Irish Songmakers in 2017/18 to celebrate the legacy of Irish composer John F. Larchet (1884–1967), in his 50th Anniversary year. Larchet, an influential figure in Irish music in the 20th Century, studied at the Royal Irish Academy of Music and received his MusB in 1915 from Dublin University and completed his MusD in 1917. He was an eminent composer and Director of Music at the Abbey Theatre from 1907–1934 and as such was responsible for the stage music accompanying many of the pivotal plays of the Irish Literary Renaissance. He was Professor of Harmony and Counterpoint at the Royal Irish Academy of Music from 1920–1955 and Professor of Music at University College Dublin from 1921–1958. Many of Larchet’s pupils went on to become important figures in Irish composition (among those were Brian Boydell, T.C. Kelly, Havelock Nelson and Seóirse Bodley). Irish traditional music was a source for many of his works and his output includes several choral, orchestral and vocal works.

THE HUGH LANE CONCERT SERIES

The Hugh Lane Concert series celebrated the legacy of John F. Larchet, with a concert on 11th June 2017, titled John F. Larchet *Remembered*. The concert, which was recorded and presented by Near FM in association with Dublin City Gallery and Irish Songmakers, took place at Dublin’s Hugh Lane Gallery. It marked the composer’s 50th Anniversary year and featured the first performance of his complete songs for voice and piano. The project, spearheaded by Irish Songmakers, included many gems such as *A Stoirín Bán*, *An Ardglass Boat Song*, and *Padraic the Fiddler*. Interviews with musicians Raphaëla Mangan (mezzo-soprano), Gavan Ring (baritone), Niall Kinsella (piano) and Lynda O’Connor (violin) and with Larchet’s two daughters, Sheila Larchet-Cuthbert and Máire Larchet were also recorded. The concert was broadcast on 4th July 2017 on the Near FM website.



“John F. Larchet influenced a generation of Irish composers through his teaching and is largely responsible for the course 20th Century Irish Music has taken. It’s such a privilege to be able to bring together such talented performers in the sublime setting of the Hugh Lane Gallery to celebrate his memory through the first performance of all of his songs,” says Niall Kinsella, pianist and artistic director of Irish Songmakers.

“I’m delighted that a CD of complete songs (plus some violin music) of John F. Larchet will be released internationally by Champs Hill Records (UK) in May 2019. The CD will feature the first recording of ‘The Small Black Rose’ arr. John F. Larchet from Sheila Larchet Cuthbert’s *The Irish Harp Book*.”

Left: Poster design and background photo by Niall Kinsella. Photo of John F Larchet (by D.A. Duncan) via the Contemporary Music Centre Ireland



L to R: Niall Kinsella, Máire Larchet, Sheila Larchet Cuthbert, Raphaela Mangan and Gavan Ring
At The Hugh Lane, Dublin 11.06.2017, photo credit: Aaron Corr

JOHN F. LARCHET REMEMBERED: THE COMPLETE SONGS

This recital, celebrating the songs of Irish composer John F. Larchet was presented by Irish Songmakers and took place on 19th January 2018 in the John Field Room of the National Concert Hall. It was performed by leading Irish singers Raphaela Mangan (mezzo-soprano) and Gavan Ring, (baritone), accompanied by Niall Kinsella (piano). A captive audience delighted in the recital, which was made extra special by the presence of John F. Larchet's daughters, Sheila Larchet Cuthbert and the late Máire Larchet (d. 26 September 2018). *Suaimhneas síoraí di.*

John F. Larchet
Remembered
The Complete Songs

Raphaela Mangan, mezzo-soprano
Gavan Ring, baritone
Niall Kinsella, piano

A recital celebrating the songs of Irish composer John F. Larchet (1884-1967), who was an influential figure in Irish music in the 20th Century. The complete songs were performed together for the first time recently in a project spearheaded by Irish Songmakers, and include such gems 'A Soiree Ban', 'An Ardeagán Béal-Bog', and 'Deirne, the Fiddler', performed by leading Irish singers Raphaela Mangan and Gavan Ring, accompanied by Niall Kinsella.

Friday 19th January 2018, 1:05pm
Tickets €16 | Concessions €14

PERFORMING AT
NCH NATIONAL CONCERT HALL
01 417 0000 www.nch.ie



Photo credits of *Irish Songmakers* recital at the National Concert Hall, Dublin 19.01.2018: Dan Butler



Irish Songmakers was set up in 2012, with a view to presenting song and vocal recitals in Dublin and Ireland. Since then, Irish Songmakers have presented acclaimed concerts in Dublin’s Freemasons’ Hall, National Concert Hall John Field Room, the Hugh Lane Gallery, and two German Lieder masterclasses given by Alison Browner in conjunction with the Royal Irish Academy of Music. For further information, visit www.songmakers.ie or www.facebook.com/irishsongmakers

Caitríona Rowsome

In Memoriam: *Seosamh Seoighe*, Joe Joyce

It was with great regret that Cairde Na Cruite heard the sad news of the death, on 24 January 2018, of one of its longstanding retired committee members and treasurer, Joe Joyce. I had the good fortune to encounter Joe and his wife Maureen, when Mercedes Garvey asked me to teach the harp to their daughter, Fionnuala, who was eight years old at the time. An ardent and committed Irish language enthusiast, once Joe established that I spoke Irish, we formed an enduring bond and were friends for life.

On his early retirement from the Civil Service in the nineteen eighties, Joe was persuaded to take on the role of Treasurer from Elizabeth Hannon, and he instilled a sense of good humour, compassion and unstoppable optimism to the role. Nothing was ever too much trouble for him; many an evening I called him with worries about harp festival finances, and he would blithely wave them away assuring me that everything would work out, hadn't it been successful the previous year? *'Nár imir sibh éacht anuraidh, éireoidh linn arís. Ná bí od'chrá.'* He never lost that sense of commitment to the harp and to Cairde na Cruite, and would often call me for a chat with as much interest in our progress, as if he had never left us.

Joe was a contemporary seanchaí and saoi with an encyclopaedic collection of seanfhocail and sayings for every occasion. He shared his curiosity, thirst for knowledge and cultural richness with an unfettered enthusiasm and integrity, and enthralled any company he was in with allusions to old stories, and old ways of life. Through his strong sense of what it was to be Irish, he helped us to maintain the strong links to the language and heritage that had been the corner stones of Cairde na Cruite's establishment in 1960, and he was very proud of that.

Joe's last journey was tough but he bore his final illness with characteristic stoic good humour. Our sympathies to his wife Maureen, his daughter Fionnuala and son Aidan and to their families.

'Do thug sé a chúl ar an aisling a chum sé 's ar an ród sin roimhe a aghaidh a thug sé.'

Tá an saol amach romhainn níos loime de bharr a bháis. Ní bheidh a leithéidí arís ann. Suaimhneas síoraí dó agus ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam uasal.

Aibhlín McCrann

News and Events

HARP ENSEMBLE ON RTÉ TV

Following the success of National Harp Day organised by Cruit Éireann a group of 42 harpers from Music Generation Mayo, Laois and Louth and ensembles from Meath, Wexford and the Royal Irish Academy of Music featured on the Ray D'Arcy Show on 10th October 2018. The harpers performed Gráinne Hambly and William Jackson's arrangement of *Elizabeth Kelly's Favourite* and were conducted by Áine Ní Dhubhghaill.

The performance followed an interview with Kathleen Watkins, who was a household name as a harper in the 1960s. Kathleen, who has just released her second children's book *Happy Christmas Pigín!*, was enthralled with the harpers' performance and was particularly delighted to see her granddaughter Sadhbh among the performers.



Congratulations to all the harpers who partook in this event, and especially to their teachers: Gráinne Hambly, Siobhán Buckley, Deirdre Ní Bhuachalla, Aileen Kennedy, Dearbhail Finnegan and Áine Ní Dhubhghaill. Thanks to Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland for facilitating the occasion.

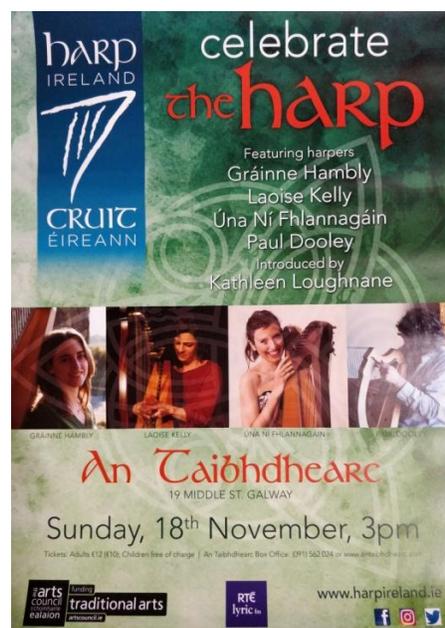


ICONIC HARPERS IN CONCERT IN *An Taibhdhearc*

Galway's *An Taibhdhearc*, resounded with the sound of Ireland's national emblem, the harp, on Sunday 18th November 2018. Harpers Laoise Kelly, Gráinne Hambly, Paul Dooley, Úna Ní Fhlannagáin and Kathleen Loughnane, performed in a Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland concert to celebrate our national instrument. This was the first time that all four performers from the west shared a stage, and was a rare opportunity to hear many highly-acclaimed exponents of the harp in one concert. The sell-out concert was a resounding success.

The concert was presented by Irish Music Meteor Award (2010) nominee Kathleen Loughnane, a renowned researcher and arranger of Irish harp composers of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Kathleen dedicated a piece to the memory of Alec Finn (1944–16 November 2018).



NEWLY COMPOSED HARP MUSIC IN GLENDALOUGH

On Friday 24th August 2018 the Bray CCÉ Harp Ensemble performed a concert in the Brockagh Centre, Glendalough, Co. Wicklow. The event was organised to celebrate the growth of harping in Wicklow in recent years, as well as to commemorate the eleventh-century synod of harpers at Glendalough, which is the first written record of harping in Ireland. Eleven members of the ensemble (Anna Butler, Catherine Ní Fhearraigh, Jasmine Ní Chinnéide, Camille



Heffernan, Niamh Fitzsimons, Rachel Duffy, Róisín Hiney, Aisling Lyons, Rosie Carter, Eoin Mac Thomáis and Aoife Ní Bhriain) performed newly

(L to R): Niamh Fitzsimons, Rachel Duffy, Róisín Hiney and Aisling Lyons

composed works written for the occasion by Rachel Duffy and Gerry O'Donnell. Two new pieces composed by the ensemble themselves, titled 'The Gateway March' and 'The Round Tower Reel', were also performed at the celebratory concert. The ensemble was joined by a number of special guests including Madeleine Doherty (who introduced the audience to the therapy harp), Roundwood harper Ciara Brennan, Claire O'Donnell, Gerry O'Donnell and Joe McKenna who paid tribute to the late Antoinette McKenna. Thanks to Creative Ireland, Bray CCÉ and Caroline Hill for their support in running this event.

Rachel Duffy

DIT HARP STUDENT GRADUATIONS

It is now customary for current students and recent graduates of the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama harp department to perform with a singer at the many annual DIT Graduations. These Graduations take place in the magnificent St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin on Saturdays throughout the months of October and November every year. A harpist and singer perform a song or two once all of the degrees and qualifications have been awarded. However this year was a little different, as more than one harpist was present in the Cathedral at the conferring ceremony. At 3pm on 3rd November



L to R: Clíona Doris, Méabh McKenna, Fiona Gryson, Tara Viscardi and Denise Kelly

2018, three harp students of the Conservatory graduated from their programmes; Tara Viscardi and Méabh McKenna both graduated with a Bachelor in Music (BMus) degree (Performance and Pedagogy respectively) while Fiona Gryson graduated with a Masters degree in Music Performance (MMus). It was a wonderful day of celebration which they enjoyed with their family, friends, fellow graduates and their inspiring and dedicated teachers, Denise Kelly-McDonnell (Head of Harp Department) and Professor Cliona Doris (Senior Lecturer and MMus in Performance Programme Chair). Great memories were made and a fantastic day was had by all!

Fiona Gryson

GALWAY HARPER WINS AT FLEADH CHEOIL

Harper Úna Ní Fhlannagáin from Galway came first in the All-Ireland Senior Harp Slow Airs competition in Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann on Sunday, 19th August 2018. Úna was presented with the silver-plated Granville cup by president of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Vincent Jordan.



Úna Ní Fhlannagáin from Craughwell County Galway lives west of the city in Bearna. She is one of the founders of the Athenry School of Music, and as well as traditional music, she plays jazz, pop, and original composition. Collaborations include Celtic music icon Alan Stivell, Grammy Award winner Bobby McFerrin, and jazz legend Anthony Braxton. A first-class honours music graduate, she won the Seán Ó Riada Gold Medal for harp in 2017.

Established in 2011, the Senior Harp Slow Airs competition requires competitors to prepare 8 slow airs, from which 2 are chosen by judges on the day for performance. Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann is the largest Irish music and culture festival in the world. Opened by President Michael D. Higgins, and attended by Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, this year the 'Fleadh' was held in Drogheda for the first time in its 67-year history.

CONCERT MARKING CENTENARY OF ARMISTICE

On Sunday 11th November 2018, a Fauré & Duruflé Requiem concert took place to mark the centenary of the Armistice.

The concert took place in recognition of a unique moment in history, and the sacrifice made by so many men and women during the war.

It featured The Palestrina Choir, Dublin; St Mary's Pro-Cathedral Girls' Choir; Dublin Bach Singers; Blanaid Murphy (conductor), Sharon Lyons (soprano), Alison Browner (mezzo-soprano), John Magee (baritone), Peter Manning (baritone), Margaret Burns (violin), Claire Fitch (cello), Denise Kelly (harp), David Leigh (organ).



Denise Kelly on concert harp at the Armistice Centenary Concert. Photo credit: Dan Butler

IRISH HARPIST OPENING ACT FOR ALAN STIVELL CONCERT

Celtic music icon, Alan Stivell, is one of the first people of our time to bring the harp to a wide audience. In 1967 he formed a group consisting of himself on harp, bagpipes, and Irish flute, and Dan Ar Bras on electric guitar, backed by bass and drums, pioneering Celtic rock. Alan has been a major influence on a multitude of folk-rock musicians, with his interweaving of electric and traditional instruments. This March, Alan Stivell celebrated his 50th anniversary as a recording artist with a concert at L'Olympia, one of the most prestigious concert venues in the world. Irish harpist and singer Úna Ní Fhlannagáin was selected as his opening act. The sold-out concert finished with Alan and Úna fusing the rousing Irish anthem 'Mo Ghile Mear' with Breton song 'Kimiad' to commemorate the passing of Liam Óg Ó Floinn (1945–14 March 2018). Úna subsequently featured on his latest album, *Human/Kelt*, which also features Bob Geldof, Andrea Corr, and Yann Tiersen. Released on 26th October, *Human/Kelt* is available at all major record outlets.



IRISH MEMORY ORCHESTRA



Performances by the Irish Memory Orchestra continued through 2018 with their London debut at the Cadogan Hall in June, while in October they performed in Glór in Ennis and the CITSM Curtis Auditorium as part of the Cork Traditional Music Festival.

Watch this space for more events on the way!
<https://www.irishmemoryorchestra.com/>

Photo credit of Irish Memory Orchestra in October 2018 courtesy John O'Neill

BLOOMSDAY AT ÁRAS AN UACHTARÁIN

On 16th June 2018, harpist and composer Anne-Marie O'Farrell gave a performance of improvised music with pianist Fintan O'Neill and guitarist Conor Molloy at the Bloomsday Garden Party in Áras an Uachtaráin. "It was wonderful to hear President Higgins' marvellous speech affirming the profound and far-reaching value of the arts in all our lives," recalls Anne-Marie.

Photo right: Anne-Marie O'Farrell at Áras an Uachtaráin



CULTURE NIGHT AT ÁRAS AN UACHTARÁIN

On 21st September 2018, Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland, celebrated becoming the Historical Harp Society of Ireland's Patron this year by inviting the HHSI to be part of the Culture Night programme presented at Áras an Uachtaráin.

Simon Chadwick gave an illustrated presentation, titled 'The Early Irish Harp: From Emblem to Reality'. This was followed by performances by singer, Eibhlís Ní Ríordáin, together with HHSI director, Siobhán Armstrong, who played a copy of the medieval Irish harp depicted in the President's seal.

Photo below left: Simon Chadwick and Siobhán Armstrong at Áras an Uachtaráin

Photo below right: Eibhlís Ní Ríordáin and Siobhán Armstrong at Áras an Uachtaráin



BRITAIN'S PRINCE CHARLES AND WIFE CAMILLA VISIT COUNTY KERRY

The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall spent 15th June 2018 in County Kerry, the final day of a four-day visit to Ireland. The four-day visit began in Belfast and ended in Killarney and included many cultural and historic engagements.

Their County Kerry engagements included a visit to the ancestral home of Daniel O'Connell, Derrynane House, a performance in Tralee by the National Folk Theatre, Siamsa Tíre, and the presentation to the royal couple of the Order of Innisfallen in Killarney. The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall visited both Killarney House and Muckcross House, a 19th century mansion set against the backdrop of Killarney National Park, where Queen Victoria holidayed in 1861.



This Royal Highness, Charles, The Prince of Wales visited Muckcross House, Killarney, with his wife Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall on Friday 15th June 2018. They visited Quills Farm at Muckcross Traditional Farm where they met Irish Harp Maker Tim O'Carroll, and listened to Michelle Mulcahy play the Irish harp. Queen Victoria stayed at Muckcross House in 1861.

Photo credit: Valerie O'Sullivan



Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall, met with Dingle Harper, Deirdre Granville, who was among the guest performers to entertain the royals as they visited Muckcross School House, Killarney, on 15th June 2018.

Photo credit: Radio Kerry



This Royal Highness, Charles, The Prince of Wales and his wife Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall retraced the footsteps of his great great great grandmother, Queen Victoria, who visited Killarney, County Kerry, in August 1861, where she visited Muckcross House and Gardens and Killarney House and Gardens. The Royal Couple met Killarney Harp Maker, Tim O'Carroll, at Quills Farmhouse, Muckcross Traditional Farms.

Photo credit: Valerie O'Sullivan

SUMMER SOLSTICE HARPING

Summer Solstice 2018: Harpist Reidun Schlesinger, celebrates mid-Kerry's ancient rituals and musical heritage at a Unique Kerry Solstice open-air ceremony at Killaclohane Portal Tomb, a 6000 year old burial site, on the second night of Fleadh Cheoil Chiarraí in Milltown, County Kerry.



Killaclohane Portal Tomb, County Kerry
Photo credit: Valerie O'Sullivan



Reidun Schlesinger
Photo credit: Valerie O'Sullivan

CASEY SISTERS' PREMIÈRE FOR CORK FOLK FESTIVAL

Wednesday 3rd October, 2018 saw the première of *Corcach: A Journey* a 40-minute piece commissioned by the Cork Folk Festival from the Casey Sisters for its 40th anniversary. *Corcach: A Journey* is a 40-minute collection of original music inspired by Cork's colourful history, from its romantic origins through to its confident present. The performance which took place in St Finn Barre's Cathedral, featured Nollaig Casey (fiddle and vocals), Máire Ní Chathasaigh (harp), Mairéad Ní Chathasaigh (fiddle and vocals) and some of Cork's finest musicians: Eoin Ó Riabhaigh (uilleann pipes); Johnny McCarthy (flutes); Eithne Willis (violin and viola); and Joan Scannell (cello).



Photo left: The Casey Sisters: Máire Ní Chathasaigh (harp), Nollaig Casey (fiddle and vocals), Mairéad Ní Chathasaigh (fiddle and vocals)

MICHAEL ROONEY COMMISSION: *THE FAMINE SUITE*

Imbolc International Music Festival, having received an award from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, has commissioned renowned harper and composer Michael Rooney to compose a suite of music for IMBOLC 2019. IMBOLC International Music Festival 2019 consists of a multi-layered events programme in a range of venues across Derry city including The Glassworks, Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin, Christ Church, Guildhall and Millennium Forum.

The Famine Suite will be performed on Sunday 10th January 2019 by young musicians from all parts of Ireland. The performance will coincide with the exhibition 'Coming Home: Art and the Great Hunger'.

"I'm delighted to bring the score of *The Famine Suite* back to life again, twenty-two years after it was written. It was my first suite of music and this time around it's been a labour of love orchestrating this suite. It will be my pleasure to work on it with some of the finest musicians in Ireland," says Michael Rooney.



Photo above right: Michael Rooney in concert at An Chúirt Chruitireachta, 2015

CONCERTO FOR IRISH HARP AND ORCHESTRA

RTÉ lyric fm's 20th Birthday Commission

Maynooth based composer Ryan Molloy has been awarded €10,000 by RTÉ lyric fm to write a concerto for Irish harp and orchestra, to celebrate the station's 20th birthday.

The concerto will be premiered by world renowned harper Máire Ní Chathasaigh and the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Gavin Maloney, at a gala concert in the National Concert Hall on 1st May 2019.

Photo right: Ryan Molloy



RTÉ NSO 70th BIRTHDAY CONCERT

Warmest congratulations to the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra (RTÉ NSO) who celebrated their milestone 70th birthday this year, on 14th February 2018!

Having begun life as a small studio band in 1926, at the start of Radio Éireann, the RTÉ NSO grew in stature to become the Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra. On Saturday, 14th February 1948, the RTÉ NSO gave its inaugural concert in Dublin's Phoenix Hall. The concert, which featured works by Brahms, Fauré and Hindemith, was conducted by internationally renowned conductor and composer, Jean Martinon.

70 years on, Gerhard Markson, former Principal Conductor and longtime friend of the RTÉ NSO, conducted the RTÉ NSO for its celebratory birthday concert on Friday, 16th February 2018 in the National Concert Hall. The concert, which was recorded live on RTÉ lyric fm, was a tribute to the contributions and achievements of generations of RTÉ NSO players over seven decades.

Several illustrious former players attended as special guests on the night, including sisters Sheila Larchet Cuthbert and the late Máire Larchet. "Máire played in the RTÉ NSO's first concert in 1948 having been a member of the 2RN orchestra. Sheila returned from Liverpool to join the orchestra in 1949," says RTÉ NSO General Manager Anthony Long.



1953: The Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra with Principal Conductor Milan Horvat and leader Renzo Marchionni at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin. Photo: courtesy of RTÉ Archives



1962: Máire Larchet - viola player with the Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra. Photo: courtesy of RTÉ Archives

SCOIL NA gCLÁIRSEACH—Festival of Early Irish Harp 2019

The HHSI's Scoil na gCláirseach–Festival of Early Irish Harp is a superb international festival for the instrument with interactive presentations, workshops, talks, intensive daily tuition and walk-in Beginners' Taster events.

Join the HHSI at Scoil na gCláirseach—Festival of Early Irish Harp in County Kilkenny from 14th–20th August 2019! For more details, visit www.irishharp.org/festival

GRANARD HARP FESTIVAL

In 2018, the Irish harping community was delighted to see a revival of the historic Granard Harp Festival, with a programme of events celebrating the best of traditional harp and Irish music.

The 2018 Granard Harp Festival took place from 31st August–2nd September and was a huge success thanks to the terrific support the festival received from the community, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Longford County Council and Creative Ireland.

Traditional music enthusiasts of all ages travelled from near and far to take part in workshops, concerts, talks and a walking tour. Despite the inclement conditions on Sunday, large numbers gathered at the grounds of the Granard Motte Enterprise Centre to hear musicians, dancers and singers perform.

There was a fantastic outpouring of good will towards the festival, which was made possible by Creative Ireland funding, and we can now look forward to another even bigger and brighter Granard Harp Festival in 2019!

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 2018 festival ran from 5th–7th October 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.nobberharpfestival.com

ACHILL HARP FESTIVAL

Congratulations to Achill International Harp Festival on the enormous success of this year's festival. The Achill International Harp Festival aligns itself with ancient harping traditions by gathering harpers at Samhain to explore, develop and perhaps challenge this beautiful musical form. The festival not only celebrates the harp as our national instrument, our national emblem, it showcases the instrument in its international context, with harpers from South America and other parts of Europe. Preparations are already underway for the fourth annual Achill Harp Festival which will run from 25th–28th October 2019. For more details, visit: <http://achillharpfestival.ie/>

In Memoriam: Garech de Brún

2018 saw the death of The Honourable Garech Browne. Garech did so much over so many decades to support Irish musicians and musicians, founding, as he did, Claddagh Records, among many other supportive initiatives. It was Claddagh, for example, that first produced recordings featuring The Chieftains and the harpist Derek Bell.

I had the pleasure of being introduced to him originally by his friend, piper Ronan Browne, and then had the great pleasure of staying at his Wicklow estate, Luggala, on many happy occasions. Often greeted at the door with a glass of champagne, one entered there a Shangri-La of culture, art, history, legendary hospitality together with a rare and profound respect for musicians.

Garech had a great love for – and knowledge of – quintessential aspects of Irish music, among them the pipes and the early Irish harp. Indeed, he owned two historic Irish harps himself: an early-nineteenth century (?) Irish harp, strung in wire, and a gut-strung Egan Royal Portable harp.

Garech kindly consented to be a member of the Governing Body of the Historical Harp Society of Ireland, a number of years ago. He often invited the HHSI staff to Luggala to recover from our summer festival in Kilkenny each August, after our presentation of the final concert in our Summer Concert Series, in Dublin. We would collapse into his regal and luxurious – but somehow totally cosy – home, exhausted, would be treated like royalty, and would wake up looking out at roaming herds of wild deer in a secluded valley in the Wicklow mountains. The stuff of one's fantasies!

Garech's hospitality was about creating an ambience where artists could relax and enjoy themselves. And in that space, magic happened: music was played, songs were sung and memories were made. I think he wanted to recreate the patronage of earlier centuries in Ireland and he succeeded in doing so.

Garech Browne's life was one of lofty vision and purpose, which led him to give very practical, down-to-earth support to Irish visual artists and musicians. His death is greatly to be mourned; we will not see his like again.

L to R: Néillidh Mulligan, piper; President Michael D. Higgins; John Boorman, cinematographer; The Honourable Garech Browne; and portrait-artist, Anthony Palliser.

Photo at Luggala, 27.08.2016 by Siobhán Armstrong

Siobhán Armstrong



In Memoriam: Aileen MacArdle

Friends and former colleagues were saddened to be informed of the death of Aileen MacArdle, distinguished harpist and teacher, who passed away peacefully at her home in Brighton on 1st October 2018 just 3 weeks before her 94th birthday. Born on 21 October 1924 in Belfast, she began to play the Irish Harp at 10 years of age. In her early years on concert harp she performed with orchestras in Cork and Belfast and recorded regularly with BBC Belfast.



In 1954, after studies in London with Tina Bonifacio, she was appointed Principal Harp in the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, which made a pioneering tour behind the iron curtain under Rudolf Schwartz, Charles Groves, and Constantin Silvestri. In 1972 she retired from Bournemouth to freelance with all the major London orchestras, notably the Philharmonia Orchestra.

Aileen taught throughout her career. She developed a technique firmly anchored in the Paris Conservatoire school to support an intense focus on quality of sound and relaxation. She held posts in the Welsh College of Music and Drama and in Limerick University. In 1993 she began a 13-year association with the Music Service of the Southern Education and Library Board in Northern Ireland where a Cup is awarded annually in her honour.

A lifelong member and supporter of Cairde na Cruite, Aileen was also selected a Member of the The Royal Society of Musicians of Great Britain in 1990. In 1992 she worked with Janet Harbison as a member of the artistic committee of the World Harp Festival, celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Belfast Harpers Assembly of 1792.

Those of us who knew her well, remember an exceptional lady whose relentless belief in and pursuit of perfection became an inspiration to us in everything we undertook. We didn't always reach her exacting standards but, despite our shortcomings, she still believed in all her students and, generous with her time, she worked selflessly to ensure we reached our potential and to inspire us to achieve perfection in everything we value. Aileen had lived an interesting life and loved nothing better than to share her experiences, often over a glass of wine. An astute observer of human nature, her storytelling was marked by a fascinating and memorable mixture of excitement, humour, and humanity. May she rest in peace.

Aileen is survived by sons Ardal and Brian, daughter-in law Julie, and grandchildren Joshua and Isabelle. She was predeceased by her husband Derek and by many close friends who were prominent figures in the harp world.

Her Requiem Mass on 10th October 2018 was held at Our Lady of Lourdes church in Rottingdean, Brighton.

Eithne Benson

HARP NEWS FROM ANNE-MARIE O'FARRELL

PREMIÈRES OF NEW WORKS FOR HARP

17th April 2018: a recital on Irish and pedal harp by Anne-Marie in the Riverstown Hall, Maynooth University featured the premieres of Ailbhe Kehoe's 'Two-step', John McLachlan's 'Sweeney Exulans', the Irish premiere of Ailís Ní Riain's 'Fear Is...' and the pedal harp version premiere of 'Maeve's Air' by Martin O'Leary.

1st May 2018: Pedal harp was one of three solo instruments (the others being cello and snare drum) in the concertino work 'Three's Company' composed by Anne-Marie O'Farrell for the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Gavin Maloney as part of the Composer Lab project in conjunction with the Contemporary Music Centre and composer David Fennessy. The soloists were Andreja Mališ, Martin Johnson and Richard O'Donnell. The premiere performance and live stream took place on the birthday of RTÉ lyric fm, who subsequently broadcast this new work and Maria Minguella's 'Wah-man' on Ian McGlynn's 'Sound Out' programme.

2nd April, 2018: Performance of Irish traditional music on harp with harmonica player Brendan Power at the Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Hall in Istanbul as part of the Turkish Etnomusik Festival. It was a tremendous pleasure to spend time on this visit with Turkish harpist Şirin Pancaroğlu, sharing experiences of publishing music from different cultural backgrounds for lever harpists at different stages of learning.

1st June 2018: Anne-Marie performed a new transcription for lever harp of John Dowland's fugal and chromatic 'Farewell' at Maynooth University's Riverstown Hall.

Oulu Black Angels Ensemble

27th–29th July, 2018: Performances in at the Camus Calla Festival in Kalajoki, Finland with Adrian Mantu (cello), Timo Kinnunen (accordion), Janos Bali (recorders and electronics) and Yuko Takeda (performance artist). This was an exciting and varied programme as we interacted with electronica, graphic scores, improvisation using music old (Machaut) and new (Bali, O'Farrell), traditional Irish and classical (Handel, Casals) as a springboard from which to explore this unusual combination of instruments. The concerts included the premiere of Anne-Marie's new work for cello, accordion and Irish harp, 'A Finnish Garland'.



31st August, 2nd September, 2018: Concerts by the Black Angels Ensemble (Adrian Mantu, Timo Kinnunen, Anne-Marie O'Farrell) at the Botanical Garden of Oulu, Finland. It was ironic to play in subtropical temperatures within the beautiful greenhouses of Oulu's botanical gardens, but situated in the capital of Lapland!

22nd November 2018: The premiere performance on lever harp of the complete suite *J.S. Bach Cello Suite no. 6 BWV1012* was given by Anne-Marie O'Farrell at DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama Rathmines as part of the Artistic Research Series.

December 2018: new arrangements by Anne-Marie O'Farrell for voice and pedal harp with optional flute part of *Christ Be Beside Me* and of *Dánta Molta Dé*, are being premiered in Stuttgart by Aylish Kerrigan (mezzo), Ulrike Neubacher (pedal harp) and Ulrich Stahlknecht (flute).

FORTHCOMING NEW WORKS FOR HARP BY ANNE-MARIE O'FARRELL

Three forthcoming new works for harp by Anne-Marie O'Farrell include a piece for large harp ensemble for the Athenry Music School to be premiered 6th April 2019, Galway Cathedral; a work for large harp ensemble for Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland; and a harp concerto for the RTÉ Concert Orchestra.

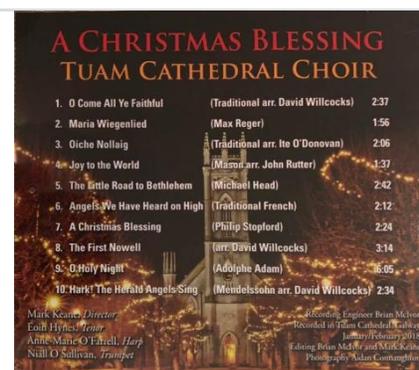
New Harp Albums and Publications



J.S. Bach Cello Suite no. 6 BWV1012 ~ Anne-Marie O'Farrell

Drawing on recent scholarship of numerous editions and sources of Bach's Cello Suite no. 6, this critical edition for lever harp makes this seminal work newly available in a historically informed publication designed for lever harpists. It has six movements: Prelude, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Gavottes I and II, and Gigue. These range in level from intermediate (Sarabande and Gavottes) to advanced (Prelude), and movements may be performed individually, or the suite may be played in its entirety to enhance a longer recital programme. The key of the publication is F major to facilitate E flat lever harp tuning, and the range of the complete suite fits well within that of a standard 34-string lever harp.

Available from: www.annemarieofarrell.com



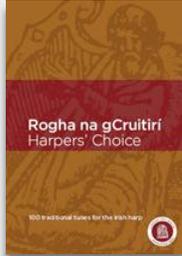
A Christmas Blessing ~ Tuam Cathedral Choir

A Christmas Blessing by the Tuam Cathedral Choir conducted by Mark Keane, with Eoin Hynes (tenor), Niall O'Sullivan (trumpet), and Anne-Marie O'Farrell (harp) was recorded in Tuam Cathedral, Galway in January/February 2018.

CDs available from the Parish Office.

CAIRDE NA CRUIITE PUBLICATIONS (BOOKS AND CDs)

Available from: www.cairdenacruite.com



Rogha na gCruitirí

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

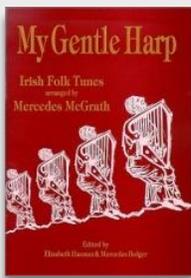
100 traditional tunes for the Irish harp contributed by no less than 52 foremost harp players, giving a unique insight into the diverse character and style of Irish harping in the 21st century.



The Irish Harp Book

edited by Sheila Larchet Cuthbert

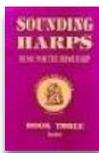
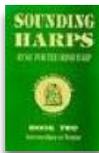
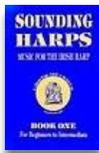
A collection of studies and exercises for the use of teachers and pupils of the Irish harp.



My Gentle Harp

edited by Elizabeth Hannon and Mercedes Bolger

Irish music arranged by Mercedes McGrath



Sounding Harps

edited by Mercedes Bolger and 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.

Irish Harp Makers

With a view to promoting awareness among Irish harpers, harp organisations and parents of potential harpers of the range of harps and services Irish harp-makers provide, *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 Muylleert		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 and Indra Karklas	Indra's Celtic Harps	Lever	Co. Westmeath	www.irishcelticharps.com
Gerard Doheny	Irish Crafted Instruments	Lever	Co. Laois	www.irishcraftedinstruments.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/
Sean Smyth		Lever	Co. Dublin	

This list of harp makers is provided to assist people who may wish to procure a harp from one of the many Irish harp makers. Publication of this list is not an endorsement of any harp maker and we cannot vouch for or recommend any one harp maker over another. Harps are expensive instruments and accordingly we urge consumers to proceed with caution and conduct their own due diligence when purchasing an instrument. Accordingly, the principle of caveat emptor should be applied.

Harp Tuition at

Summer Schools, Festivals and Events

Month	Event
January	Templebar Trad fest
February	Scoil Cheoil an Earraigh, Baile an Fheirtéaraigh, Co. Kerry The Gathering Festival, Killarney
March	Blossom Harp Festival, Tuamgraney, Co. Clare Féile Patrick Byrne, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan
April	Clifden Traditional Music Festival
May	Skerries Traditional Music Festival Féile Chnoc na Gaoithe Tulla Traditional Music Festival Féile Chois Chuain, Louisburgh, Co. Mayo
June	Irish Harp Summer School: players and teachers, Burren, Co. Clare Blas – International Summer School of Irish Traditional Music and Song, University of Limerick
July	An Chúirt Chruitireachta – International Harp Festival, Termonfechin, Co. Louth Traidphicnic, An Spidéal, Co. Galway (instrumental tuition varies yearly) Seosamh MacGabhann Summer School, Kilmovee, Co. Mayo Irish Harp Summer School: players and teachers, Burren, Co. Clare 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	Scoil Acla, Achill, Co. Mayo Belfast Summer School of Traditional Music, Belfast, Co. Antrim O’Carolan Harp Festival, Keadue, Co. Roscommon Scoil Éigse (different locations; precedes Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann) Scoil na gCláirseach, Kilkenny City (early Irish harp) Harp Weekend at Bandon Walled Town Festival National Heritage Week
September	Dingle Tradfest Culture Night Tulla Trad Festival, Tulla, Co. Clare
October	O’Carolan Harp Festival, Nobber, Co. Meath Achill International Harp Festival, Achill Island, Co. Mayo
November	William Kennedy Piping Festival, Co. Armagh Harp and Pipes Tionól, Music Generation Laois, Portlaoise, Co. Laois
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 email news@cairdenacruite.com