



Cairde na Cruite

Newsfeed November 2008

Fáilte roimh eagrán an fhómhair de Nuachtlitir Chairde na Cruite. Bhíomar an-ghnóthach i gcaitheamh an tsamhraidh. Tharraing an Chúirt Chruitireachta a bhíonn ar siúl againn gach bliain i dTearmann Feichín mic léinn agus éisteoirí ó gach cearn den domhan. Ina theannta sin, bhíomar ag cuid den iliomad féiltí ceoil a bhí ar siúl ar fud na tíre, mar a raibh mórán deiseanna chun tuairimí agus tiúineanna a mhalartú le cláirseoirí agus celtóirí traidisiúnta eile.

Welcome to the Autumn issue of Cairde na Cruite's Newsfeed. We've had a busy summer, with our annual Cúirt Chruitireachta at Termonfeckin drawing students and listeners from all corners of the world. We were also kept busy attending some of the many music festivals held throughout the country, where there were plenty of opportunities to exchange ideas and tunes with harpers and other traditional musicians.

We hope you'll find lots to entertain and inform you in the current issue of our Newsfeed. There's an interview with Triona Marshall, who shares some of her experiences of touring with the Chieftains, as well as dates for your diary, new releases and harps for sale. As always, Aisling is keen to receive contributions, so if you have news of concerts, new recordings, competition results or anything that might be of interest to readers, please forward these to info@aislingennis.ie.

One of our main goals in Cairde na Cruite is to ensure that the harp will remain an integral part of the cultural and musical heritage of Ireland in the twenty-first century. It would be impossible for us to achieve this goal without the support given so generously by our members in many forms – organising and attending public concerts and the annual Cúirt Chruitireachta, contributing to our website and Newsfeed and providing essential financial support in the form of annual membership subscriptions. With this in mind, we would like to remind everyone that the annual membership fee (Family €30, Individual €25, Students €10) provides vital funding for our various activities. If you've forgotten, now's the time to renew your membership! Just send a cheque, made payable to Cairde na Cruite, directly to our membership secretary: Dearbhail Finnegan, Clongill, Donagh Patrick, Co. Meath, Ireland; e-mail irishharper@mac.com. For more information on Cairde na Cruite, check out our website at www.cairdenacruite.com.

We look forward to meeting our members and friends at the various harping events organised throughout the year and at the annual Christmas concert. In the meantime, thanks to everyone who has contributed to Cairde na Cruite in the past and we welcome your continued support for the future.

Táimid ag súil le bualadh lenár gcuid ball agus cairde ag na himeachtaí cláirseoireachta éagsúla a chuirfear in eagar i gcaitheamh na bliana agus ag coirm cheoil bhliantúil na Nollag. Idir an dá linn, ba mhaith linn ár mbuíochas a chur in úil do gach duine a thug cúnaimh do Chairde na Cruite san am a chuaigh thart agus fáilteimid roimh a thuilleadh tacaíochta uaibh san am atá romhainn.

An Chúirt Chruitireachta

Annual International Festival for Irish Harp

An Grianán, Termonfeckin, Co. Louth, Ireland

An Chúirt Chruitireachta, which was established in 1986, is recognised as one of the premier events for Irish harp in the world. It is a six day residential festival and has always been held in An Grianán, Termonfeckin, Co. Louth. Its main principles promote total immersion in all aspects of Irish harp playing, singing in Irish and dancing, as well as aspiring to integrate Irish harpers with other Irish traditional musicians through collaborative workshops, sessions and public concerts. It also aims to develop interest and participation in the Irish harp and its music among non-harper audiences while influencing and establishing relationships with traditional musicians of Ireland and the other Celtic countries. Apart from meeting the needs of Irish harpers, An Chúirt Chruitireachta attracts interest from international participants of all ages and standards.

Highlights 2008

An Chúirt Chruitireachta 2008 saw the development of a relationship with Seosaimhín Ní Bheaglaoich as traditional singer in residence, in order to instil an understanding of the significance of the song tradition in Irish Music and how the harp may idiomatically reflect the integrity of that tradition.

We continued our dialogue with the uilleann pipes initiated at the 2007 festival both in workshops and public concerts featuring Grainne Hambley on harp and Brian McNamara on uilleann pipes.

Siobhán Armstrong set the Irish harp in its historic context in a workshop on the early Irish harp and was joined by sean nós singer Róisín el Safty in a memorable evening of music making shared by Cormac De Barra, harp and Rick Epping, harmonica.

Breton harper Anne Postic gave a workshop and evening concert continuing our practice of inviting a harper from a Celtic country to share the particular harping tradition of that country.

The relationship between Irish and Danish music was demonstrated by Helen Davies and wind player Poul Hoebro in workshops and public concert emphasizing its crosscutting impact on the Irish harp tradition. This followed an exploration of the crossover between the Irish and Scots and Welsh harping traditions at the 2007 Festival.

The final festival concert saw the dynamic all-girl Limerick based group Liadan take the stage.

An initiative taken during the past five years has been to establish a pedal harp class where young Irish students are given an opportunity to either begin or continue their study of the instrument, with an internationally renowned teacher. This action has had a twofold impact: introduction to a new instrument as well as reinforcement of their interest in Irish music through exposure to the programme of events at An Chúirt Chruitireachta. A number of workshops and concerts were held throughout the week focusing on the specific needs of pedal harp students. It also allowed Irish harpers experience the classical harp repertoire and appreciate the capacity of the orchestral instrument particularly in its exploration of contemporary Irish 'Art' music. Dr Cliona Doris was the visiting master class tutor in this instance.

Lunchtime public concerts (open to public) featured An Chúirt Chruitireachta teachers. Performers included: Cormac de Barra, Kathleen Loughnane, Helen Davies (Copenhagen), Caitriona Yeats (Copenhagen), Kim Fleming, Dearbhail Finnegan, Gráinne Hambley and Anne Marie O'Farrell. There was also an exhibition of Irish and Pedal harps mounted by exhibitors from Ireland and abroad. We were pleased that the collaboration with Louth County Council in staging the opening concert of the Festival in Beaulieu House was very successful and attracted a lot of local attention. Our media campaign, where we decided to focus on encouraging local audiences to attend, rather than attempting a national reach, also proved successful in that ticket sales showed an increase on previous festivals. We hope to consolidate and develop this audience base in future festivals.

Another positive outcome of the festival was the continuation of our relationship with the Willie Clancy Summer School where 6 of our teaching staff took the harp classes in the following week.

While the festival has gone from strength to strength since its inception, it is a cause of concern that for the first time it showed a greater deficit than in previous years. On a preliminary analysis of figures the overriding reason for this would appear to be artistes' fees, increased residential costs and a larger proportion of students (whom we would endeavour to subsidise costs wise) than adult participants. This will become clearer when a final assessment of figures becomes available. It increases the imperative for us to investigate the possibility of a corporate sponsor for the 2009 Festival.

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2008 Tulach Mhór COMÓRTAS CRUIT / HARP RESULTS

Fé 12

1st. Aisling Lyons, CCÉ, An Tulach, An Clár

2nd. Gráinne Nic Ghiobúin, CCÉ, Caisleán Uí Chonaill/Atháin/Baile Iorbairt, Luimneach

3rd. Megan Ni Chearúil, CCÉ, Seán Treacy, Áth Cliath

12 - 15

1st. Eimear Ní Chochláin, CCÉ, An Tulach, An Clár

2nd. Éadaoin Ní Mhaicín, CCÉ, Caisleán a' Bharraigh, Maigh Eo

3rd. Alannah Thornburgh, CCÉ, Cr. Micheál Mac Dáibhéad, Maigh Eo

15 - 18

1st Síona Nic Oireachtaigh, CCÉ, Baile an Daighin, Maigh Eo

2nd Gearóid Ó Cochláin, CCÉ, An Tulach, An Clár

3rd Lillian Reasor, CCÉ, Irish Musicians Association, Chicago IL, USA

Senior

1st Lisa Ní Cheannaigh, CCÉ, Baile an Daighin, Maigh Eo

2nd Niamh Denmead, CCÉ, Cr. Naithí, Áth Cliath

3rd Cathy Potter, CCÉ, Loch Beag, Aontroim

AN INTERVIEW WITH TRIONA MARSHALL

By Aisling Ennis



I was thrilled when Triona Marshall agreed to be interviewed for the C airde na Cruite newsfeed. As a musician who straddles both the concert and Irish harp, I was eager to hear more about Triona's experience with the Chieftains and where her music might take her next.

Enjoy!

A: I would love to know how you came to learn the harp and about your early years learning the harp...

T: How did it all start? To be honest I don't know when I first became aware of the harp. I can't remember a moment when I knew I wanted to play the instrument. Mum and Dad like to say my first words were "mum, dad, harp, gimme" but as you know parents have a tendency to exaggerate. Three years later my father's job moved from Portlaoise to Mountmellick and we all moved school, where I studied with Sister Dolorous Marie for about two years. I then began in the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin with Helen Davis and later Aine N  Dhubhghaill. One of the most influential teachers I've had is Aileen McArdle. She taught me my technique and how to create my tone. She did this in an intellectual way, which gave me the tools to understand and translate this knowledge to whatever type of harp I'm playing. Even to this day when I encounter problems the answer always lies in the lessons she taught me. I also studied with Edward Witsenburg in The Netherlands. He used to say that I had the wild Celtic spirit in my playing like all his other Irish students. To finish I went to London and studied with Daphne Boden. During my time with her I auditioned for the job with the RTE Concert Orchestra and in my final year with her I did both the orchestral job and my post graduate performers degree... Thank God for Ryanair...

A: The move back to Ireland...

T: When I was a student I really had no intention of returning to Ireland. But I found a job here and while I was away studying the Celtic Tiger happened. When I came back I realised that I loved it here and I was staying. I think that you only realise how beautiful this place is when you leave and come back. Now I travel so much and have seen so many places and I can honestly say that Ireland is the best place by far for me.

A: As a concert harpist who always admired your playing so much, I was fascinated to hear that you had moved from your position with the RTE Concert Orchestra to perform with the Chieftains. How did this come about?

T: I had to make one of the most difficult decisions I've ever had to make. I loved being part of the orchestra, as they were like family to me and so supportive in all my endeavours. But the opportunity arose and after six months debating with myself I decided that I just couldn't do both. It was quite a risk because I left to do an American tour with the Chieftains without knowing if they'd ever ask me to do anything afterwards but I took this risk because it meant that I could wipe the slate clean and explore music from a completely new perspective. Lucky for me it's five years now and they're still asking me to do gigs for them.

A: The 'move' from concert harpist to Irish harpist – what were the biggest challenges / changes?

T: First of all I'd like to clarify that I don't see myself as an Irish harpist in the traditional music sense. I play the Irish harp and use my understanding of the medium of traditional music as a template to explore music. In a funny way this exploration has been just as much a life lesson as a musical one.

Probably the first and biggest change I went through was learning to trust my own feelings about music. When you've spent your whole life honing your skills to a universally perceived and recognized idea of perfection, it is quite a shock to find yourself in completely foreign territory. I had no idea what made one traditional musician great and the others mediocre. When I heard a brilliant musician playing I could hear something amazing was happening but I could no more tell you what made it so brilliant than I could tell you how to build a TV set. Pretty much none of the familiar rules applied. So I had to learn to understand this music, what made it tick, and with no guide but my impressions of what was around me I had to trust my own instincts about what I was hearing. As a classical musician this is quite a scary situation to find yourself in because there is something wonderfully safe about feeling that as long as you keep up your side of the bargain and play 'perfectly' you are beyond reproach. Now suddenly that safety net is gone.

A: Do you continue to play the concert harp / classical music?

T: I'm afraid I haven't played the concert harp for almost four and a half years now. I suppose the question on people's minds is whether I miss classical music or not. The answer is I don't really miss it at all. I love everything I do now; I love the freedom I have to try out new things. When I sit down to do so called 'practice' I invariably find myself doing something I'd never thought of before.

A: Would you be interested in an orchestral position again?

T: No not really.

A: Concert harp V Irish harp: Do you think you use much the same skills, or is it a very different experience?

T: It has been a completely different experience for me but inevitably I use the tools that I have to play the best that I can. I have had amazing training from amazing teachers like Aileen McArdle and Edward Witsenburg that will always stand to me no matter what I'm playing. But here again I'd like to reiterate that I don't see myself as a traditional Irish harpist. There is so much knowledge and experience that goes with being a true traditional player that to say that I'm one just because I happen to play the Irish harp and some Irish tunes is like saying a traditional player who sits behind a concert harp and plays La Source is automatically a classical player. There is another type of musician, one who plays from their own experience. That is what I aspire to do.

A: What do you think traditional Irish harpers can learn from their classical counterparts and vice versa?

T: You are only as limited as your imagination. And this statement applies both ways.

A: What's it like to perform and tour with the Chieftains?

T: Sitting on stage with the Chieftains for the first time gave me a severe case of eating humble pie. Most people will find this hard to believe but the first time I heard the Chieftains really play was on stage. The rehearsal beforehand consisted of ... "we'll play this tune in G three times, then that tune in D twice, then you move to the piano for this other tune in A" ... etc ... So, even in the rehearsal I had no idea how the guys really played.

A: What's next for Triona Marshall?

T: I'm looking forward to playing some solo concerts in the future but the immediate future besides Chieftains gigs is a few shows here in Ireland with TREAD in November. TREAD is a group which I formed with Jon Pilatzke, Cara Butler, Nathan Pilatzke and Jef McLarnon (guitar). One thing I haven't touched on yet is that I enjoy playing music from all over the world. I play a bit of Scottish, Breton, Galician, French Canadian, Cape Breton and anything else that takes my fancy. TREAD is a band that encapsulates music from many different Celtic regions. I'm pretty much open about what the future holds for me. I think I'll do what I've always done and just go with the flow. I know for one thing, six years ago I could not have imagined I'd be touring the world with the Chiefs, so who knows...

HARPS FOR SALE

Yan Muylaert harp, 34 string, cherry finish with transport cover. Excellent condition. Contact Ciara Taffe 046 9053536 / 086 3677975.

Howard Harp 34 strings 12 months old, perfect condition with transport cover. Contact: 087 9633811

Camac Hermine, 34 string, maple finish with transport cover, excellent condition. Contact: 086 8124440.

Camac Hermine, 3 years old and comes with carrying case. Contact 087 6795297

Jan Mullyaert 34 string harp for sale. 4 years old. Excellent condition. Cover included. €2000. Contact Zoe at 087 2184609

Kawai upright Piano for sale Model A 938009. Excellent condition. Piano leather stool also included. €4000 Contact Zoe at 087 2184609

Walton Harp – renovated to high standard. Price on request. For more information phone Darragh on 0872358716

Mc Fall Harp – in need of renovation. Price on request. For more information contact Aisling Ennis at 087 9217353

THE LATEST NEWS FROM HARP SCHOOLS COUNTRYWIDE

CHURCHTOWN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Churchtown School of Music is now offering weekly individual harp lessons with Aisling Ennis. For more information contact Ann 01-2989185 amaybin2@eircom.net

GRANARD HARP SCHOOL & FESTIVAL

The Granard Harp School re-opened on Saturday September 27th. As some of our students have gone on to third level education, we welcome our new students and hope they enjoy their time with us. We also extend a warm welcome to Gráinne Ní Rinn who has joined our teaching staff. Students from 2008 received fantastic results in their grades taken during our school year, a number getting distinctions. Our 2009 Festival will be held from April 16th to 19th. We thank the Board of Management of the Sacred Heart School for the use of their premises for our classes.

MULLINGAR HARP SCHOOL

Tom Maher founded Mullingar Harp School in the 1980's. He sought to promote the Irish harp by way of establishing a harp school in Mullingar, along with arranging recital performances. Author of the book *The Harp's a Wonder*, his love, knowledge and enthusiasm for the harp and its history is apparent. His friend Patsy Sheridan who also shared his vision supported him. Not only did they promote the education and performance of the harp, but they also had the foresight to encourage the tradition to be passed on. Today, some of the first students of this school have taught and continue to teach at the harp school. Tom also made harps and his son, Colm is a well renowned harp maker.

The teachers involved in the Mullingar Harp School are Kim Fleming, Tracey Fleming, Helen Price and Aisling Ennis. Lessons take place 3 Saturdays each month in The Newbury Hotel, Mullingar. Lessons are generally individual, but group lessons take place a few times a year. The Mullingar Harp School continue to perform publicly in the spirit of performing as fostered by Tom Maher and Patsy Sheridan.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

During November 2008

Kylemore Harp Ensemble perform at Kylemore Music Centre Ballyfermot to welcome 08/09 intake of new harp students.

TREAD with Triona Marshall:

Friday 28th November 2008, 20.00: Duiske Abbey, Graignamanagh

Saturday 29th November 2008, 20.00: The Dunamais arts centre, Portlaoise

Sunday 30th November 2008, 18.00: The Crane Bar, Galway

Monday 1st December 2008, 21.00: Matt Molloy's Bar, Westport

30th November 2008

Cairde na Cruite Ceolchoirm na Nollag. 30u Samhain. Foras na Gaeilge, 7 Cearnóg Mhuirfean.

Cairde na Cruite Christmas concert at Foras na Gaeilge offices on 7 Merrion Square. All welcome!

3rd - 8th April 2009

Anne-Marie O'Farrell will teach and perform works from her new album *Just So Bach* at the Edinburgh International Harp Festival, Merchiston Castle School.

15th - 19th April 2009

Camac International Lever Harp Competition in Nantes, Brittany.

NOTICES

Congratulations to Carmel Comiskey, who performed Grandjany's Barcarolle at the John Field Room on Sunday 7th September as part of the ABRSM High Scorers' Concert.

Anne-Marie O'Farrell's new album *Just So Bach* (Lyric FM album of the week) is now available online at www.annemarieofarrell.com and www.cdbaby.com

A free track can be downloaded from www.myspace.com/annemarieo39farrell.

We would love to hear from you! To send us an article, or information on your upcoming concerts and events, contact Aisling 087 9217353 or info@aislingennis.ie