

# ANNUAL CRUISE

VOL 8 | 2021



# An Cruitire 2021

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Rachel Duffy and Fiona Gryson

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# Eagarfhocal

# Editorial

A chairde,

Fáilte chuig *An Cruitire 2021*.



We hope you will enjoy looking back on what was another busy year for Cairde na Cruite, and a particularly special one as we celebrated the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of An Chúirt Chruitreachta, our annual harp festival.

2021 saw a welcome return to live performance, combined with a continuation of online events. This edition revisits a selection of the vast array of harp concerts, workshops and events which took place this year, explores new releases and takes a look back at the harp's history.

Collaboration has been at the heart of harping this year, both within the harp community and across a wide range of disciplines, with the harp tradition reimaged in new and exciting ways.

On this note, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to all those who have helped to bring *An Cruitire 2021* to fruition – the contributors who have shared their experiences, achievements and plans with us, the Cairde na Cruite committee who have offered much support behind the scenes, and Mary Guinan who has worked wonders with the newsletter's design.

Wishing you and yours all the best for 2022.

**Rachel Duffy and Fiona Gryson**  
Co-Editors

# Message from the Chair

Buíochas ó chroí do gach duine a thug tacaíocht dúinn dúshlán na bliana a sharú agus an chruit a chur chun tosaigh.

Thanks to all who have contributed enthusiastically to the sharing of the wonderfully rich tradition of harp playing throughout this challenging year. As live concerts have been limited, the lives of so many have been enriched in particular by online events.

Due to Covid restrictions many events were cancelled including our student concerts in the Pearse Museum.

However, we were delighted to present our annual festival, An Chúirt Chruitireachta, virtually and we are extremely grateful to our festival director Aibhlín McCrann for her incredible dedication and inspiration in producing a wonderful festival which was enjoyed by so many both at home and internationally. Huge thanks also to all technical crew, teachers, performers and the backup team.

Thanks to all committee members and special thanks to Rachel Duffy and Fiona Gryson for their work producing *An Cruitire 2021*.

We look forward to more live harp performances in the future, but in the meantime, stay safe and enjoy listening, playing and promoting the harp.

Le gach dea ghuí,

**Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, Chair**



# Cairde na Cruite Activities

## Ceolchoirm an Earraigh | Spring Concert 2021:

Our annual student spring concert, normally held in the Pearse Museum, St. Enda's Park, Rathfarnham took place online this year and premiered on St. Patrick's day, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 3pm. The concert was presented and produced by Áine Ní Dhubhghaill. Many thanks to all who contributed to the concert and to the wonderful duo of Joe Ó Dubhghaill on sound editing and Mary Guinan on video editing. The concert can be enjoyed on our YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/DaGNb8Wg3aY>

We are delighted to confirm that **Ceolchoirm an Earraigh | Spring Concert 2022 will be returning to the Pearse Museum, St. Enda's, Rathfarnham, Dublin on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March**

**2022 at 3pm.** Keep an eye on our website for further details and how to get involved!

**An Chúirt Chruitreachta 2021** See page 7.

## An Chúirt Chruitreachta 2022:

Planning is currently underway for our next harp festival. Stay tuned on our website and social media for updates.

Instagram: [cairde\\_na\\_cruite](#)

Facebook: [Cairde Na Cruite](#)

Twitter: [@CCIHF](#)

## Ceolchoirm an Gheimhridh | Winter Concert

**2022:** Our winter concert will be returning to the Pearse Museum, Rathfarnham at 3pm, on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2022. Bígí linn!

## Scéim Ligin Cruite

All twelve of the Cairde na Cruite harps were rented continuously throughout 2021. There is a high demand for rental harps in Ireland so we would once again like to encourage you to consider donating or loaning a harp to Cairde na Cruite. We would insure the harp and make sure that your harp would give an aspiring harp player the opportunity to learn this wonderful instrument. Donations of harps will also be gratefully received and acknowledged. Please contact Áine at [cairdenacruite@gmail.com](mailto:cairdenacruite@gmail.com) with any enquiries. Prospective harpers can find information about how to rent a harp [here](#).

**Fiona Gryson**

## Harp Hire



# An Chúirt Chruitreachta International Festival *for* Irish Harp 2021 *Emerging Traditions*

For the past 35 years, An Chúirt Chruitreachta, the International Festival for Irish Harp has been at the forefront of Irish harp activity – leading, innovating and supporting the development of harping as well as integrating it with the broader tradition.



For everyone involved with An Chúirt Chruitreachta, the last week of June each year traditionally heralded our gathering in the beautiful surroundings and welcoming environment of An Grianán – all harp roads converged on Termonfechin.

Who would ever have expected on June 27<sup>th</sup> 2021 that once again we would be curtailed by Covid restrictions and welcoming harpers from all over the world to a second virtual celebration of the best of Irish harping? Another tough year for everybody, and for many of us, harping continued to be the beacon of light and guiding star reflected in our ambitious programme for our 35<sup>th</sup> year, where our TG4 award-winning harp festival, funded by The Arts Council and Create Louth, welcomed world-class harpers, and other traditional musicians and singers to perform at an exciting lineup of online events, lectures, workshops and concerts.

Since its inception in 1986, the festival has introduced young harp players to world renowned

Irish harpers of the highest standards, to the early harp tradition, contemporary techniques, repertoire and the singing tradition. Simultaneously, it has softened the boundaries between harpers and other traditional musicians through adopting an open and inclusive attitude, encouraging performances, collaborations and mutual exchanges of ideas and music. Its influence has had a significant impact on harpers and audiences locally, regionally and nationally.

Our 35<sup>th</sup> Festival theme, *Emerging Traditions*, wanted to reflect a harping tradition that is developing and evolving constantly. It attempted to articulate the achievement of our 35-year-old journey – how we sought to maintain the harp's identity but simultaneously to enable its development in an innovative way so that it resounded within the tradition and proudly assumed its place. Festival 2021 celebrated what has been achieved to date and in our workshops and talks attempted to imagine our future direction; chats that continued far into the night on Zoom

as we reminisced about the festival's early days and saluted our founders, Gráinne Yeats and Mercedes Garvey to whom we dedicated this week of harping, *Oscail an Doras* with Maria-Christina Cleary (harp) and Emily Cullen (poet) set the tone for the festival with an inspirational performance of early harp music from Maria in a magical Italian location and original poetry written by Emily, recorded in the historic Farnham Castle.

Monaghan, Anne-Marie O'Farrell and Cormac de Barra, who were joined by flute player, Éamonn de Barra.



Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we made our way to the Highlanes Gallery in Drogheda in early June to record the remainder of the programme, where first of all, we explored the evolving tradition of harping in concert with Úna Cormac de Barra and Anne-Marie O'Farrell at the Highlanes

Staying in the Highlanes, we journeyed back in time to reimagine the Drogheda Harp School concert of 1843 with Dr Teresa O'Donnell, who recounted its story. Harpers Cormac de Barra, Deirdre Granville, Úna Ní Fhlannagáin, Deirdre



Ní Bhuachalla, Anne-Marie O'Farrell and Gerry O'Connor (fiddle) came together to perform some of the music from the original concert. Our thanks to our musicians and to Aoife Ruane and her staff at the Highlanes for making it such a memorable occasion, and for facilitating our recording surrounded by the beautiful Gallery collection.



We were delighted that our festival artist-in-residence was Helen Davies, one of the original founders of the festival along with Gráinne Yeats and Mercedes Garvey, who sadly are no longer with us. Helen hosted an inspiring ensemble day

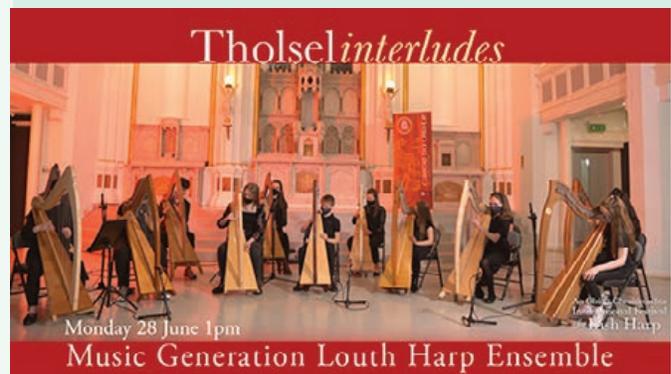
Our Tholsel Interludes lunchtime concerts also took place online. We heard some of our emerging harp talent with the Triad trio, Rachel Duffy, Siofra Ní Dhubhghaill and Fiona Gryson. Louth Music Generation Harp Ensemble were led by their director Deirdre Ní Bhuachalla, while the talented Emer, Caoilfhionn and Sorcha Ní Scolaí treated us to a lively lunchtime session of harp, pipes, concertina and seannós singing.



where she worked with young harpers to perform her arrangement of the haunting *A Welsh Ground (Cynghansail Cymru)*; a Welsh traditional theme and variations, specially edited by Helen for the Festival and performed from their living rooms by young harpers countrywide. Our thanks to teachers and harpers who worked together to make it happen. Special thanks to Gráinne Hambly, who masterminded initial discussions and liaised with the players in the lead up to the festival. The performance is available to view [here](#).

True to its title, our *Réalta ó Thuaidh* or *Northern Stars* mid-week concert featured wonderful performances from Eilis Lavelle, harp and Music Generation Louth Harp Ensemble.

We were thrilled to welcome fiddle player Zoe Conway and singer John McIntyre who have



shown incredible generosity to us throughout our harp festival years. We heard the enchanting sounds of the early harp from Siobhán Armstrong and Donegal singer Doimnic Mac Ghiolla Bhríde

tradition and the steep developmental curve that Irish harping has accomplished through our work throughout that time. We have been joined by many renowned harpers and other traditional musicians

on that journey. I want to pay special tribute to our dedicated teams of festival mentors who have shown such commitment and generosity to generations of young harpers over those years. In particular, Festival 2021 acknowledges Máire, Áine, Kathleen, Anne-Marie, Cormac, Deirdre Ní Bhuachalla,, Deirdre Granville, Gráinne, Kim and Úna, who surpassed all expectations,

as they took on an intensive week-long stint of teaching and performing.

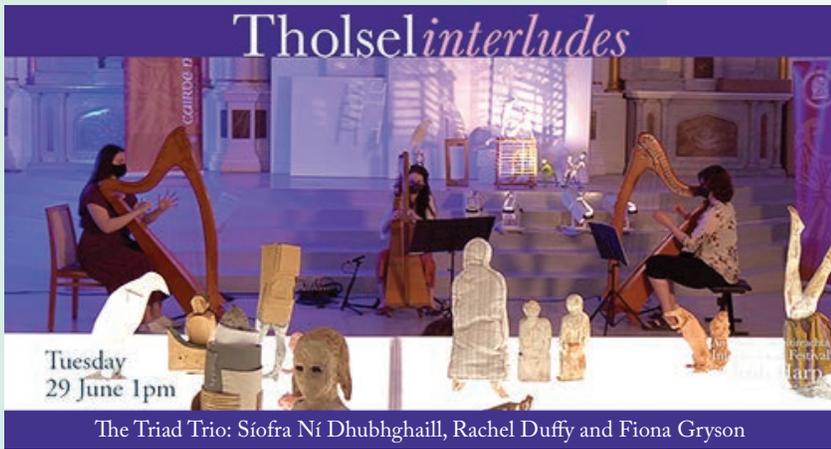
Chair of Cairde na Cruite, Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, who directed the festival between 2012-2016, allocated classes and ensured that participants were placed so that they could make the most of the week. Fiona Gryson, assisted by Mitzi Miculinic, liaised with participants from beginning to end and was a constant reassuring presence, while Kieran Cummins kept a watchful eye on our finances.

in our grand finale concert which concluded with a number of sets from the doyenne of Irish harping herself, Máire Ní Chathasaigh with Chris Newman on guitar, who had recorded their programme in London for us.

Afternoon workshops and talks saw Gráinne Hambly, Kathleen Loughnane, Deirdre Granville, Anne-Marie O'Farrell, Simon Chadwick and Siobhán Armstrong share their insights into various aspects of the harping tradition. Áine Ní Dhubhghaill celebrated 60 years of Cairde na Cruite and Seosaimhín Ní Bheaglaioich presented a very informative 3-part series based on songs of the harpers with recordings from an eclectic array of harpers. Helen Davies painted an intriguing picture of the Welsh harper Thomas, who visited the 1792 Belfast Harp Festival.

In a year where we had just marked the first anniversary of Irish harping's inscription on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list of humanities, our 35<sup>th</sup> festival highlighted the extent to which it has assisted in safeguarding the harping

Mary Guinan, our designer has been a constant source of inspiration and worked many midnight hours in the lead up to the festival. Sound engineer



Joe Ó Dubhghaill's expertise was invaluable, and he worked miracles with the soundtracks submitted by more than 100 harpers for our ensemble project. Videographers Seán McMahon, Dermot Sheedy and Julian Vignoles gave us wonderful footage from our recording locations in Ireland and London and our Italian film crew did us proud in Italy. The Cairde na Cruite committee was a constant source of encouragement while Deirdre Ní Bhuachalla and Deirdre Granville, assisted by Máire Ní Chathasaigh, worked their magic to promote the festival on various social media platforms.

As the curtain comes down on my final festival as director, I have been privileged for more than 26 of its 35 years to guide its development with the

As the curtain comes down on my final festival as director, I have been privileged for more than 26 of its 35 years to guide its development with the support of many dedicated harp colleagues and harp makers. It truly has been a labour of love.

support of many dedicated harp colleagues and harp makers. It truly has been a labour of love. I have a store of happy memories and treasure the enduring friendships nurtured during late night animated harp conversations. Our thanks to The Arts Council of Ireland for its outstanding support, to Create Louth for its work with us at local level, to our colleagues at RTÉ lyric fm, who have unfailingly given us airtime with great generosity. However, the biggest shout must go to all those generations of harpers here in Ireland and farther afield, who have marched with their harps to

the beat of our drum from 1986 until now. Go maire sibh céad.

**Aibhlín McCrann, Festival Director  
November 2021**



# Festival Foundations

## Questions & Answers

We would like to mark the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of An Chúirt Chruitreachta by looking back at the first course in 1986, getting a sense of what it was like and how it has changed and developed over its 35-year history. We asked questions of those involved in the first festival, namely **Aibhlín McCrann**, **Áine Ní Dhubhghaill**, **Helen Davies** and **Máire Ní Chathasaigh** to capture their thoughts, memories and favourite festival moments.

*What was your role in the first course? Who were the key figures involved?*

**AIBHLÍN McCRANN:** I began my association with An Chúirt Chruitreachta as a young teacher. Key figures in 1986 were of course Gráinne Yeats, who was the Festival Director and Mercedes Garvey who was her co-founder. Both of them taught at the first Cúirt Chruitreachta. Helen Davies was the administrator. There was much discussion about what it would be called until eventually Mícheál Yeats came up with the title.

**ÁINE NÍ DHUBHGHAILL:** For me the first annual residential course in 1986 began with a baptism of fire on being elected to the committee of Cairde na Cruite at the AGM on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1985. Subsequent meetings discussed the possibility of an annual harp course. A few harp weekends had been hosted in the 1970s before I had begun playing the harp. A new model was discussed and thus the week-long An Chúirt Chruitreachta was born in 1986.

With Gráinne Yeats as director and Helen Davies steering us all as secretary with her major and



Gráinne Yeats and Mercedes Garvey (Photo courtesy of ITMA)

calm organisational skills the ship was in full sail! Thanks to Eibhlín Ní Chathailriabhaigh's contacts in the ICA the anchor was firmly dropped at An Grianán, Termonfechin, Co. Louth which was to be our annual festival's home.

Both Helen and I had previous experience of harp courses in Wales and this added to my enthusiasm for the project. It's been wonderful to be involved in planning all the festivals since with so many dedicated people.



Eibhlín Ní Chathalriabhaigh

Here is the founding committee, six of whom taught at the first festival in 1986.

**1985/86 Committee:**

President: Eibhlín Ní Chathalriabhaigh

Chair: Róisín Ní Thuama

Secretary: Helen Davies

Treasurer: Nuala Colgan

**Committee:**

Sheila Larchet Cuthbert

Mercedes Garvey

Ann Jones Walsh

Gráinne Yeats

Elizabeth Hannon

Maureen Hurley

Sr Eugene McCabe

Máirín Ferriter

Aibhlín McCrann

Janet Harbison

Denise Kelly

Máire Ní Chathasaigh

Áine Ní Dhubhghaill

**HELEN DAVIES:** My role in the first course was as secretary of Cairde na Cruite.

**MÁIRE NÍ CHATHASAIGH:** I had been on the committee of Cairde na Cruite for a few years when we started talking about organising a residential course for Irish harp. I was living in Cork at the time and used to travel up from there for meetings, usually staying with either Aibhlín McCrann or Helen Davies. I was extremely enthusiastic about the idea of a residential course, as when I was growing up I only ever met other harpers at competitions and it seemed to me that such a course, by creating a sense of camaraderie and a lovely social atmosphere, would have the potential to create a community of harpers in the country. I'm absolutely delighted that this is what actually came to pass: many students who attended the course in the early years are still fast friends and now teach at what has become the festival themselves.

There was a special meeting (it might have been the 1985 AGM) to vote, among other things, on whether to go ahead with the first course. I was anxious to be there, so I squashed the recording session in Scotland for my solo album, *The New Strung Harp*, into one week so I could get back to Ireland in time for the meeting - we were all so idealistic at the time!

The key figures involved were all committee members and the principal movers were Aibhlín McCrann, Helen Davies, Gráinne Yeats, Mercedes Bolger, Sheila Larchet and myself, though of course all the others did their bit too.

It was Eibhlín Ní Chathalriabhaigh, Secretary of Cairde na Cruite before Helen Davies, who arranged for the course to be held at An Grianán. She had her hand in many pies and knew everyone, having been on committees to do with the promotion of Irish culture since the 1930s



An Grianán, Termonfeckin, Co. Louth

(my father remembered meeting her in Irish-speaking circles in Dublin in the mid-1930s). An Grianán, located in Termonfeckin, Co. Louth, had been offering its own courses in crafts such as lace-making for many years, but had never made itself available for hire to outside organisations. However, Eibhlín was friendly with the then President of the Irish Countrywomen's association (I.C.A.), to whom An Grianán had been gifted in 1954, and convinced her to make an exception for us on the basis that we would be a very good fit – which we were of course.

Gráinne was very well connected too. It was she who arranged for Máirín Uí Dhálaigh, widow of Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh, who had been one of the founders of Cairde na Cruite – and President of Ireland 1974-76 – to open the festival with a speech in the hall at An Grianán on the Sunday evening. So Máirín Uí Dhálaigh's speech was the very first event of the first course we ran. Gráinne

spoke herself in response, and gave a short concert immediately afterwards.

Gráinne took on the rôle of Director of the course at the very beginning and performed it with great distinction for many years. She really put her stamp on its ethos from the very beginning and her strength of character swiftly saw off those who might have wanted to dilute its cultural purpose. However, all of the day-to-day administration of the first course (and many subsequent courses) was carried out by the wonderfully calm and efficient Helen Davies!

All of us taught and performed for free the first year. My role in the first course involved teaching the most advanced harp class every morning, giving various afternoon workshops and talks about Irish traditional music and ornamentation in particular, teaching a tin-whistle class every afternoon, performing at the evening concert on

the final night (Thursday), and running around (like all of us!) doing whatever needed to be done.

*What was the impetus behind organising the course?*

**AIBHLÍN McCRANN:** One of the main aims of Cairde na Cruite was to provide harp tuition, which it did by establishing harp schools in Wexford, Mullingar and Derry prior to 1986. At that time, there was a dearth of harp teachers in Ireland and the society had organised some residential weekend masterclasses and workshops as far back as 1965. Gráinne Yeats, who did a lot of adjudicating of harp competitions, felt that young harpers would benefit from concentrated tuition. She had a pioneering zeal to improve standards of harp playing. Eibhlín Ní Chathailriabhaigh, the then secretary of Cairde na Cruite, had connections with the Kelloggs Foundation and Muriel Gahan. She managed to secure permission for us to hold the course at An Grianán and we never looked back!

**ÁINE NÍ DHUBHGHAILL:** The need to continue one of Cairde na Cruite's aims, ie. the revival of the Irish harp, increasing the profile of the harp and in particular to provide teaching to people with limited access to regular tuition and to those seeking to advance skills while being exposed to some of the best harp players and traditional musicians.

There was an emphasis on developing good technique in the early years as it was noted that the standard of harp playing in general throughout the country was not going to be conducive to the development of playing that was needed to fully integrate the harp into mainstream Irish

Traditional Music.

**HELEN DAVIES:** The impetus was to hold a summer school where young Irish students could meet in a non-competition environment and also to create a forum for foreign students who wanted to learn about Irish harp traditions. The early courses were modelled on the Welsh *Ysgol y Delyn* (harp school) founded by Ann Griffiths – residential courses with morning classes and workshops and concerts in the afternoons and evenings.

**MÁIRE NÍ CHATHASAIGH:** Firstly, as I mentioned above, I was extremely enthusiastic about the idea of a residential course, as when I was growing up, I only ever met other harpers at competitions and it seemed to me that such a course, by creating a sense of camaraderie and a lovely social atmosphere, would have the potential to create a community of harpists in the country. Secondly, Gráinne, Mercedes, Sheila Larchet and Elizabeth Hannon were particularly exercised by a conviction that the standard of harping throughout the country was far too variable, due to the patchy availability of good teaching, and that a residential immersive week-long course open to all and providing the best standards of teaching that Ireland had to offer at that time would go some way towards remedying that state of affairs.

Thirdly, Gráinne, Aibhlín, Helen and I felt that a course that concentrated as much on educating harpists about Irish traditional music and song in general as on teaching harp was sorely needed. At that time there was a wide gulf between harpists and the traditional music world – they rarely intersected and looked at each other with mutual incomprehension. I felt it incumbent on me to take every opportunity to explain my own world of



Chris Newman, Máire Ní Chathasaigh & Nollaig Ní Chathasaigh at An Grianán, 2008

traditional music to harpists who were very open to learning about it, but in most cases didn't know where to begin. Aibhlín and I were passionate about bringing the two worlds together and trying to re-establish the harp in the mainstream of the oral tradition. Looking back from the perspective of 2021, when it would be hard to find any player of the harp in Ireland who was unfamiliar with Irish traditional music, the lack of knowledge at that time may seem hard to believe!

All of us on the committee were actuated by a strong sense of cultural purpose.

*What is your favourite memory from the first harp course?*

**AIBHLÍN McCRANN:** If I remember correctly it was called a summer school then. The absolute enthusiasm of all of those involved; I think we did

it on a voluntary basis, the excitement of being involved in such an undertaking and the stimulus of being surrounded by harp music. Nothing like this had ever happened before.

Favourite memories include walking the corridors at the dead of night 'minding' the young harp students who challenged our ingenuity with their high jinks, long nights of session playing, chatting and talking harps in the convivial surroundings of An Grianán's little bar, and strolls on the idyllic beach at Termonfechin. My abiding feeling of utter terror at having to perform a lunchtime recital.

**ÁINE NÍ DHUBHGHAILL:** Ha. So many! I was the new kid on the block. Youngest of the six teachers. Very much in awe and occasionally terrified of the elder lemons.

The haunting sound of the wire-strung harp and lecture by Gráinne Yeats.

Great friendships launched.

Meticulous preparation of arrangements by Gráinne in the early years, emphasis on including music of the harpers while also promoting students to learn by ear.

The first experience of group teaching with a max of 5/6 in each class, some of whom are now professional harp players and teachers.

All teachers performed at evening concerts and afternoon workshops. The teachers at the first course were Gráinne Yeats, Mercedes Garvey, Sheila Larchet Cuthbert, Máire Ní Chathasaigh, Aibhlín McCrann and Áine Ní Dhubhghaill.

So many fun times also. A favourite memory of mine is of Helen, Aibhlín and myself tiptoeing off to bed in the wee hours of the morning after the concert with Liam Óg Ó Floinn. Full of the joys and giggles as we treaded the corridors, we were abruptly greeted by an elder member of the teaching staff with the loud acclamation: “Ladies you are disturbing my knitting”. This of course only caused even more laughter and giggles... which thankfully has continued for many years!

Here’s an excerpt of Gráinne Yeats’ report from an early festival from her notes in ITMA:

As well as tuition, there was a number of seminars which were conducted by the teachers. These included workshops on tuning and presentation, tune and song arranging, ensemble playing, ornamentation and session playing.

Evening concerts were given by Mercedes Bolger, Elizabeth Hannon, Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, Máire

Ní Chathasaigh, Liam Óg Ó Floinn, Paddy Glackin and Gráinne Yeats.

**HELEN DAVIES:** The favourite memory of the first course was just seeing all the students having such a good musical time!

**MÁIRE NÍ CHATHASAIGH:** How exciting it all was! We really believed in the importance of what we were doing and that in a small way we were making history. Aibhlín, Helen and I kept going on adrenalin and practically no sleep. (The older harpists went to bed at a reasonable hour!)

*Any other highlights over the 35 years?*

**AIBHLÍN McCRANN:**

Hearing Gráinne Yeats perform on the wire strung harp.

One of my early festivals as Director at a concert where Máire Ní Chathasaigh and Chris Newman performed and having to hold back Eibhlín Ní Chathailriabhaigh from excoriating them because this wasn’t ‘Irish music as it should be played’ in her view.

Piper Liam Ó Floinn making chips in the kitchen of An Grianán at 6am after a long night of playing tunes.

Visiting traditional musicians – Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin and Nóirín Ní Riain, Tony McMahon, Liam Ó Floinn, Paddy Glackin, Pádraigín Ní Uallacháin, Caitriona McKay and Chris Stout, Moya Brennan, The Chieftains; the list is endless.

Gráinne, Elizabeth and Mercedes acting out *Three Lovely Lassies from Bannion*

Gráinne and Róisín (Ní Shé) having a rapprochement in the bar in An Grianán

singing *Cailleach an Airgid* together – a special moment for lifelong rivals and even more special for the ‘younger’ generation to hear them sing together.

Cairde na Cruite’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary where we held a seminal symposium at the Festival to discuss the future of the harp in Ireland facilitated by Nicholas Carolan.

Our first ensemble day and seeing more than 100 harpers gathered at an Grianán.

**ÁINE NÍ DHUBHGHAILL:** Gosh! There have been so many highlights of the festival over the years. Wonderful musicians, superb teachers and ever-growing group of participants from home and abroad. Watching the festival grow enormously under Gráinne and Aibhlín’s direction. Collaborations with musicians of the highest calibre and the inclusion of local musicians and harp ensembles.

A few of my memories during my tenure as director include:

Presenting the Chieftains in tribute concert to Derek Bell with harper Triona Marshall. A special night!

Colombian harpers and their teacher Hildo Ariel Aguirre Daza, a new and diverse experience for participants and audiences.

TG4 *Harp* programme in 2015 which featured the festival.

TG4 Gradam Ceoil Comaoine Award 2016.

TG4 *Mná Ceoil* (featuring harpers at festival). National Lottery Good causes award and TV feature.

Continuing to present artists, especially Máire Ní Chathasaigh and Helen Davies who have

been so loyal to the festival since its inception and all the dedicated tutors.

**HELEN DAVIES:** There are many highlights over the 35 years. If I was to single out anything it would be the fact that numerous great traditional musicians came and played with great generosity - special highlights for me were the visits of Liam O’Floinn.



Helen Davies and Máire Ní Chathasaigh at An Grianán, 2015

**MÁIRE NÍ CHATHASAIGH:** On one very memorable occasion at a late-night session, Gráinne Yeats and Róisín Ní Shé (Cormac de Barra’s grandmother, who used to come and visit us in Termonfeckin for the day most years), sang a very long version of Cúnnla together that included some very rude verses that I had never heard before, while holding each other’s hands and winding them around in circles - an old custom among Irish traditional singers. It was absolutely magical. Apparently they had long had a prickly relationship (for reasons to which I am not privy) and this was felt to be a burying of the hatchet!

*What for you is the most important aspect of An Chúirt Chruitireachta?*

**AIBHLÍN McCRANN:** It put Irish harping on the map. It allowed the harp to emerge from the drawing room tradition and led the way in integrating Irish harping with traditional music. It

is inclusive. It broke all the boundaries and left space for many voices to be heard. It has groomed a whole new generation of harp players who are now teachers themselves. It provided concert platforms for harpers to be heard. It brought harping out into the community in Drogheda and beyond. It became a festival celebrating the Irish harp rather than an event dedicated to teaching.



Colombian harpers Hildo Ariel Aguirre Daza, Wuilmer Alejandro López Algecira, and Sergio Nicolas Aguirre Gomez at An Grianán, 2015

### ÁINE NÍ DHUBHGHAILL:

Passing on the tradition. Inspiring a new generation of harp players and exposing audiences to the highest quality harp players in innovative collaborations with musicians and artists both local and international. Inclusion of all harps/music.

**HELEN DAVIES:** The most important aspect is the way the course has grown and developed -

from a summer school to a highly regarded festival for harp.

**MÁIRE NÍ CHATHASAIGH:** A very strong Irish cultural ethos and artistic focus, the pursuit of musical excellence, harps casually scattered everywhere, warmth, friendship, camaraderie, conversation, fun! Everybody leaves their ego at the door and mucks in to do whatever needs to be done.



Helen Davies, Kim Fleming, Michael Yeats, Maire Ni Chathasaigh, Mercedes Bolger, Aine Ni Dhubhghaill, Caitriona Yeats, Grainne Yeats at An Grianán, Termonfechin

*What are the main changes you have noticed over the years?*

**ÁINE NÍ DHUBHGHAILL:** The bar! In the early years because of our small numbers we shared accommodation with many other courses that were run by the ICA e.g. embroidery, cookery, lace making. The after concert social area i.e. the bar was a shared space. Not conducive to sessions, sean nós singing, poetry, and whatever else we chose to continue the night's entertainment with. As the festival grew in numbers we were able to book the entire accommodation exclusively for the harp festival. A whole new evening après concerts evolved. So many memorable nights of wonderful informal and spontaneous music and craic from all ages. Gráinne Yeats and Roisín Ní Shéaghda in song together. Superb sessions with visiting musicians, teachers and students.

Transition from a small harp course to an International Harp Festival under the direction of Aibhlín McCrann.

Mobile phones in use during concerts!

**HELEN DAVIES:** The changes are just that – the way the course has evolved and kept pace with changing times...

**MÁIRE NÍ CHATHASAIGH:** What we started was very much a course. The tunes taught in class throughout the week had to be performed by each class of students on the Friday morning for an audience of parents etc., so the pressure was on and the students practised like mad! That was a time before mobile phones, internet and social media, so the level of concentration among the students was phenomenal. They learned an enormous amount in one short week and the



On stage at An Grianán

standard of playing at the Friday morning student concert was incredibly high. A really big change is that in the early years there were no sessions in the evenings, as the attendees had no experience of them and weren't used to learning or playing by ear. That's why so much of my time was spent explaining what traditional music was all about and enabling people to take their first steps on the road to entering and understanding that world and way of musical thinking.

We had lunchtime concerts in the hall from

Monday to Thursday of the first course. We never did it again - until Aibhlín revived the idea in recent years in order to create outreach events in Drogheda - as it was quite stressful and involved bolting down lunch before running to the hall so we could be there by the time the concerts started.

As the years passed and the levels of knowledge and experience of traditional music increased, we moved to sessions guided by teachers; and of course for at least the past ten years student sessions have happened every night without any planning or



(From top left) Michael Yeats, Aibhlín McCrann, Dearbhail Finnegan, Kathleen Loughnane, Deirdre O'Brien Vaughan, Gráinne Yeats, Helen Davies, Gráinne Hambly, (front left) Caitríona Yeats, Máire Ni Chathasaigh at An Grianán, Termonfechin

intervention by the teachers! In the early years, public concerts took place only on the Sunday and the Thursday, as we had zero budget for anything more. I played at all the Thursday concerts for about the first five years, with a selection of guest musicians whom we had inveigled into playing for very little money – among them fiddler Nollaig Casey (my sister), guitarist Chris Newman (my husband), piper Liam Ó Floinn, fiddler Paddy Glackin and accordion-player Tony McMahon. All the concerts were acoustic as we couldn't afford to hire a PA. Over the years the course, under the Directorship of Aibhlín McCrann initially, and then Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, morphed into the amazing fully-fledged festival with nightly concerts that it is today. However, it still retains the strong cultural ethos that it always had, and it is my fervent hope that it will always do so.

participated at the festival coming from teachers at music schools, colleges, Comhaltas branches, Music Generation and private teachers throughout the country. Many are now professional harpers



Siobhán Armstrong and Róisín Elsafty, 2016



Scottish harper Rachel Hair, 2016

and/or teachers and are currently passing on their passion to a new generation of harpers and audiences. And others have formed a love of harp music for life.

Hope all have enjoyed the experiences at An Chúirt Chruitreachta and made friends/musical memories for life.

### *Closing Thoughts*

**ÁINE NÍ DHUBHGHAILL:** A road long travelled. Since its foundation in 1960 Cairde na Cruite's primary aspiration has been the revival of the Irish Harp. More than 2,000 students have



The Chieftains tribute to Derek Bell, 2013

# The Gráinne Yeats Collection at the Irish Traditional Music Archive

Gráinne Yeats (1925-2013) was a founder member of Cairde na Cruite and a key figure in the development of the harp in Ireland in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Gráinne Yeats Collection was donated to the Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA) by the Yeats Family in 2018. Featuring a rich selection of manuscripts, slides, lecture notes, images, recordings, diaries, arrangements, research notes, printed books, artefacts and ephemera, the Collection presents a fascinating insight into Yeats' career as a harpist and her work in promoting the harp.

This year, to mark Heritage Week, ITMA archivist Maeve Gebruers curated three galleries of images from the Collection. Images were selected from over 1,200 items included in Yeats' image collection. Among those featured are pictures of Yeats' harp collection and an image of Yeats with Mercedes Garvey, her long-time musical collaborator and fellow founder-member of Cairde na Cruite. Also included are images of festivals and events attended by Yeats over the years and a selection of colour images from 1972 of Yeats' visit to the Aoyama harp factory in Fukui City, Japan.



GALLERY 1: <https://www.itma.ie/features/galleries/heritage-week-2021-grainne-yeats-collection>

GALLERY 2: <https://www.itma.ie/features/galleries/heritage-week-3>

GALLERY 3: <https://www.itma.ie/features/galleries/heritage-week-5>



The Collection was also the focus of Harp Day celebrations at ITMA, which saw the release of a featurette on the Gráinne Yeats Collection in association with Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland.

Produced by Macdara Yeates and Bob Gallagher, the video presents an overview of the Collection and of Yeats' varied career as a performer, researcher, educator and historian.



The video is online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMgmVQ2KB2c>

Rachel Duffy



# Denise Kelly McDonnell

## Retires as Lecturer in Harp at TU Dublin Conservatoire

Denise Kelly McDonnell's recent retirement as Lecturer in Harp at TU Dublin Conservatoire provides a welcome opportunity to reflect on her significant contribution and dedication to harp education in Ireland. Denise has enjoyed a multi-faceted career in music with a distinguished profile in performance as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestral player. As a composer, she has written solo and chamber works for harp, as well as many arrangements. Teaching figures very prominently throughout her career and in a recent interview for TU Dublin Conservatoire, she says 'I teach because I love it . . . really love it'. She has held teaching positions in concert and Irish harp at Ireland's major music education institutions: Cork School of Music, Royal Irish Academy of Music, City of Belfast School of Music and TU Dublin Conservatoire (formerly DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama). In 2000, she was appointed as the first full-time harp lecturer in Ireland at TU Dublin Conservatoire, a position she held until her retirement this year.

Born in Belfast, she moved to Dublin at the age of eight and began piano lessons at school. Her harp training commenced at the Royal Irish Academy of Music with Gráinne Yeats and later with Elizabeth Hannon. In the College of Music (now TU Dublin Conservatoire) she studied with Cairíona Yeats before pursuing training in



Denise Kelly McDonnell

London under Maria Korchinska and Sidonie Goossens, and with Francette Bartholomée in Brussels. She often speaks of the influence of Maria Korchinska on her musical formation and her affinity with the Russian Harp School.

Denise also studied composition with Robert Barclay Wilson at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and in Dublin with James Wilson. Brian Boydell also had an important place in her musical development through her undergraduate studies at Trinity College Dublin. She spoke very fondly of him and this time in her introduction to the opening performance by TU Dublin Conservatoire at the Brian Boydell Centenary Conference in 2017. Here she performs excerpts of Brian Boydell's 'Four Sketches for Irish Harp' as part of Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland's *Harps for*

Hope 2020 series and for a future recording release.

sing through phrases and musical lines. In her own words she is 'notorious' for singing through her lessons. Before the Conservatoire's move to the Grangegorman campus, the harp room was located adjacent to the staff room in Chatham Row and colleagues enjoyed Denise's soprano voice singing through the full harp repertory. It was not unusual for non-harpist



HARPS FOR HOPE Cliona Doris & Denise Kelly McDonnell performing Brian Boydell's 'Four Sketches for 2 Irish Harps, Op. 52'

<https://youtu.be/B9ZOu0mFTFg>

staff and students to be heard humming the main themes from a well-known harp concerto! She will be greatly missed by the Conservatoire staff and student body. As a highly respected colleague in TU Dublin, her enthusiasm, positivity, energy and work ethic is an inspiration to all.

Contemporary music has also featured strongly in her career as a performer, particularly the work of Irish composers, many of whom are friends and colleagues. Therefore it is not surprising that her teaching ethos is one of adventure and openness, encouraging her students to explore wide and varied repertoires. These characteristics are also seen in her encouragement of her students in diverse career paths, and in entrepreneurship and innovation.

Denise has maintained an international perspective through her involvement with the World Harp

She also studied singing and this training has had a lasting impact on her teaching philosophy. She considers the use of the voice as a crucial tool for the instrumentalist and encourages her students to

Denise has maintained an international perspective through her involvement with the World Harp

Denise has maintained an international perspective through her involvement with the World Harp



Cliona Doris, Méabh McKenna, Fiona Gryson, Tara Viscardi, Denise Kelly McDonnell

Congress as Ireland's Correspondent for many years and as a leading figure in the Ninth World Harp Congress Dublin in 2005. She is a sought after examiner and adjudicator, and has served on the National Committee of the Feis Ceoil for many years. She has organised international masterclasses involving Elinor Bennett, Kathleen Bride, Alice Giles, Maeve Gilchrist, Anneleen Lenaerts and Catherine Michel, amongst others. In recent years, she has nurtured exchanges with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Wales Harp Festival. She also served as the Conservatoire's International Co-ordinator and has been instrumental in initiating and nurturing links with European Conservatoires in Finland, France, Italy, Norway, Poland, Romania and Sweden. She fully embraced this international role and her Erasmus students enjoyed a warm welcome and every care and attention.



Denise's last semester before retirement was spent in the wonderful purpose-built facilities in the East Quad Building on the Grangegorman campus which included the addition of a beautiful new Salvi Diana harp. She has left a considerable and diverse harp library to the TU Dublin harp class containing many of her fingerings and markings, which will be invaluable to current and future students and colleagues.



<https://www.youtube.com/embed/ejUWSDCgngY?start=1250&end=1650>

'The Harps of RCS & TU Dublin Mondays' YouTube video (at 20.50-27:30):

'Eibhlí Gheal/Elizabeth Kelly', Trad arr. Gráinne Hambly & William Jackson



<https://www.walesharpfestival.co.uk/the-meeting-of-the-waters/>

TU Dublin Harp Ensemble 'The Meeting of the Waters', Wales Harp Festival 2022

During her tenure at TU Dublin Conservatoire, she has overseen a vibrant and growing harp class with students at junior, undergraduate and postgraduate levels. A testament to her teaching and enthusiasm for harp education is the establishment and success of the TU Dublin Harp Ensemble. The Ensemble, comprising third-level harp students, is one of the most active ensembles in the Conservatoire performing classical, Irish and contemporary repertoire. It has performed at the Edinburgh International Harp Festival, the Wales International Harp Festival, RDS Rising Stars Series, Lá na Cruite/Harp Days, RTÉ Reflecting the Rising Festival, Brian Boydell Centenary Conference and for HRH The Prince of Wales in Hillsborough Castle. In 2019, the ensemble participated in an exchange with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Harp Ensemble performing together in Glasgow and Dublin.

While touring plans for TU Dublin Harp Ensemble in the last two years were put on hold due to the pandemic, the ensemble performed an online concert for the Wales Harp Festival curated by Denise entitled 'The Meeting of the Waters'.

The ensemble has been invited to perform at World Harp Congress in Wales in July 2022. For this prestigious international event, an augmented ensemble of current students and graduates will unite for a showcase of traditional and contemporary music for harp. This will be a tribute to the depth of Denise's harp legacy at TU Dublin Conservatoire and indeed throughout Ireland.

As part of TU Dublin Conservatoire's 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 2020-21, Denise was the first lecturer to be interviewed for the *Between the Lines* series. In this interview, she



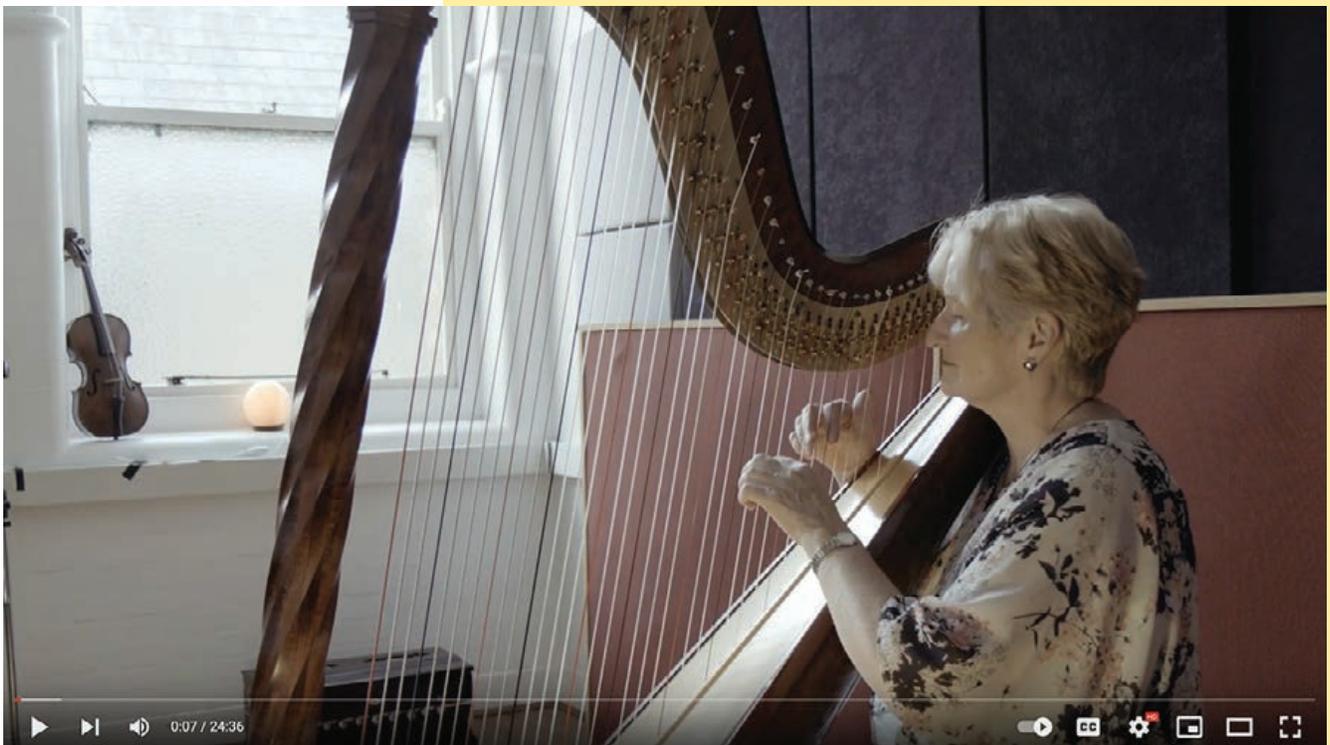
and professionalism in her students – many of whom are pursuing successful and diverse musical careers. She will be very much missed at TU Dublin Conservatoire and we send her every best wish as she turns the page to begin a new chapter full of new harping adventures.

**Professor Clíona Doris**  
TU Dublin Conservatoire



reflects on her forthcoming retirement from TU Dublin Conservatoire, and speaks of her education, career and her love of teaching. <https://youtu.be/cf1DK3wLD8>

We thank Denise for her untiring enthusiasm and expertise in instilling the highest of standards



*Between the Lines* - interview with  
Denise Kelly McDonnell,  
TU Dublin Conservatoire  
<https://youtu.be/cf1DK3wLD8>

# Highlights

## from the Harping Calendar

### Lá na Cruite | Harp Day

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2021

One of Cruit Eireann, Harp Ireland's major initiatives is Lá na Cruite | Harp Day; a special day dedicated to all aspects of harping, supporting harpers and harp makers and continuously seeking out new audiences globally for harping. For the fifth year in a row, Irish harpers extended a warm invitation to harpers everywhere to join with them in this major celebration of our 1000-year-old Irish harping tradition.

The context for Lá na Cruite | Harp Day reflects Harp Ireland's strategic priorities and aligns with the priorities of our main funder, An Chomhairle Ealaíon, the Arts Council, where in our programming we ensured that harpers were supported at key stages in the life cycle of their careers. Moreover, in presenting an eclectic variety of harping, we aimed to attract new audiences by making online and in person content free to watch.



Launch of Lá na Cruite | Harp Day 2021 with the director of the Arts Council, Maureen Kennelly, the director of Lá na Cruite, Aibhlín McCrann and young harpers from Louth, Dublin and Wicklow.



Our 2021 narrative was *Harps Alive*; our response as harpers to a renewed sense of awareness that many people have experienced about the beauty of the world around them over the past 18 months. During COVID-19; our lives were put ‘on hold’, we paused to listen and to look around us with a new perspective; getting out and about, walking on our beautiful hills and coastal areas, and relating to nature in a different way.

we wanted to be inclusive and encourage diversity of expression where possible. We also wanted to promote artistic excellence and we wanted to empower more people to play the harp and to listen to its music. Through our various collaborations, we supported a variety of artists as well as harpers and welcomed new and innovative associations across genres. We were fortunate to have an exceptionally high standard of technical support from our videographers and sound engineers.

### Harp Day Themes

*Connecting, Engaging and Collaborating* were the themes underpinning our programming and reflected our values; we aimed to encourage contemporary expression of harping in Ireland while paying homage to our ancient tradition and supporting the early Irish Harp revival. We wanted to create more access to harping,



Young harpers, Jack Smyth, Abby Lynam and Caoimhe Giles at Cornstown House Farm on Lá na Cruite, Harp Day 2021



Conor O'Brien performing on Harp Day outside the Lexicon, Dún Laoghaire

## Our Programme

Adhering to public health guidelines was at the forefront of 2021's event plan. Thankfully some harpers were able to take to their favourite outdoor spaces, to their local villages and towns to perform.

However, given the Covid constraints and since last year's online activities were such a huge success, we decided to continue the online dimension and turn Lá na Cruite | Harp Day into a hybrid event. For the 2021 celebrations, we curated three online concerts where harpers connected, engaged and collaborated in an exciting series of initiatives partnering with aerial artists, rap artists, singers and other traditional musicians as they pushed the harp to its limits, exploring new possibilities and creating unforgettable musical experiences.



Aileen Kennedy and her students performing at Hook Lighthouse, Co. Wexford

We were delighted to welcome the director of the Arts Council,

Maureen Kennelly, who was joined by a group of young harpers from Louth, Dublin and Wicklow to launch the day for us.



Fiona Gryson at the Millmount Museum, County Louth

Our *Harpers' Call* initiative invited harpers to take their harps on Lá na Cruite, Harp Day and reconnect with nature – letting their harp music reflect the beauty in their favourite outdoor spaces: on hills, beside lakes, on the coast, in forests or



Luke Webb in Bristol, UK



Kayla Martin at the Dromiskin Monastery, Co. Louth even in their own back gardens. Harpers sent us recordings from all corners of the world, in iconic locations throughout Ireland, north and south and from as far away as Australia, New Zealand, across the US, Russia, South Korea and Japan. Closer to home, harpers in France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Switzerland and the UK joined us to celebrate our vibrant harping tradition.



Soomee Han, Uiseong, South Korea



Sparkling Strings Harp Ensemble at Kanturk Castle, Co. Cork



Fiana Ní Chonaill and the Cuistle Harp Ensemble in Limerick on Harp Day

familiar faces and hearing their stories and it featured on our social media platforms in the run-up to Lá na Cruite | Harp Day.

Our *Harpers' Pride* online lunchtime concert showcased a new generation of harpers currently making their harp presence felt in different ways, while our *Harpers' Gathering* afternoon concert welcomed harp ensembles from all over Ireland.

We launched a new online initiative this year called *Humans of the Harp*; our take on the Humans of New York photo blog and book of street portraits and interviews that are collected on the streets of New York City. *Humans of the Harp* aimed to build momentum for Lá na Cruite | Harp Day by highlighting some of Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland's most



Siblings Aisling and Seán Lyons at the University of Limerick



Niamh O'Brien and Aisling Urwin at the University of Limerick



Anna Amigos in Catalonia, Spain



Aisling Ennis and aerialist Emily Aoibheann perform 'The Hare' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-VIHGP2rNM>)



Zoe Conway and John McIntyre with Music Generation Louth Harp Ensemble, director Deirdre Ní Bhuachalla at Carlingford, Co. Louth



Adam O'Neill, Ciara Taaffe and Gráinne Meyer at the Harty Room, Ulster University, Belfast

Our spectacular online finale concert *Harps from all Corners* featured our finest harpers and a variety of artists. You will find a complete list of wonderful performances at [www.harpireland.ie](http://www.harpireland.ie)

None of this would be possible were it not for the generous support that we receive from the Arts Council, An Chomhairle Ealaíon.

Our thanks to each and every harper whose performances made this such a successful day. Míle buíochas daoibh ar fad.

Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland's Advisory Group provided ideas and inspiration at every stage of the planning process.



Siobhán Armstrong (early Irish harp), Rachel Duffy (Irish harp) and Cormac de Barra (Intel laser harp) at UCD ([Watch video](#))

Our backroom team surpassed themselves once again; a big round of applause for Mary, Elsa, Sine, Joe, Ted, Seán, Dermot, Gráinne, Eithne and Frances.

Go mbeirimid beo ar an am seo arís; we are already planning next year's event. Send your ideas to [info@harpireland.ie](mailto:info@harpireland.ie).

We are very grateful to our colleagues at RTÉ lyric fm whose producers and presenters supported us right throughout the day.

**Aibhlín McCrann**  
**Chair,**  
**Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland**



Our thanks to the Department of Foreign Affairs, who circulated our programme to more than 100 missions all over the world.

View all Harp Day 2021 videos at [www.youtube.com/c/HarpIreland](https://www.youtube.com/c/HarpIreland)

# Harping Explorations

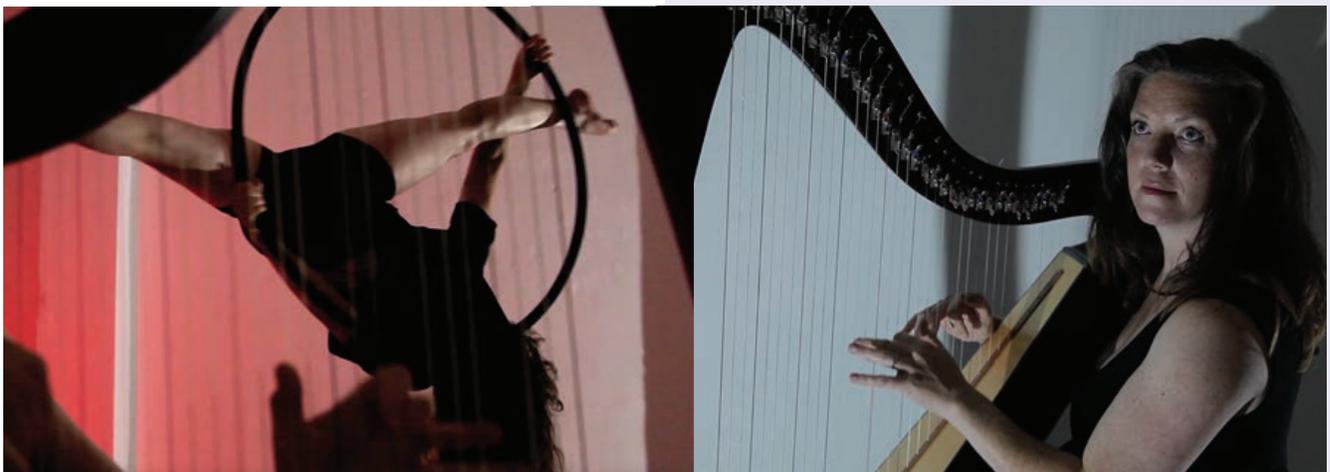


Parkour artist Glenn Mc Mahon (Photo by Matthew Cregan)

2021 proved to be a year of huge exploration for me. My BOUNCE project was a real pipe dream for me; to collaborate with five multidisciplinary artists in open ended exploration.

I have always adored improvisation and have relied on it as a skill throughout my career. This project

allowed me to take a deep dive into the minds and processes of fellow artists. The artists: experimental circus artist Emily Aoibheann, parkour artist Glenn Mc Mahon, Jazz musician Daniel Jacobson aka ZOiD, composer and designer Peter Power and filmmaker Sam O'Mahony.



'The Hare | An Giorria' with aerial artist, Emily Aoibheann for Harp Day 2021 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch...>)



Jazz musician Daniel Jacobson aka ZOiD with Aisling Ennis (Photo by Ger Holland)

I was delighted when Harp Ireland commissioned me to co-create a piece, ‘The Hare | An Giorria’, for Lá na Cruite | Harp Day 2021. This gave myself and Emily the opportunity to consolidate some of our thinking and development into a short video piece. Each collaboration brought about new learning for me as a musician and placed the Irish harp in dialogue with these dynamic artists. I hope the results are inspiring to my fellow harpies!

**Harp O’Clock** continues on a monthly basis since the birth of my third child in October. What started as a weekly zoom concert back in September 2020 has raised thousands for Msizi Africa, has fostered a lovely, global community of music lovers online, and it reignited my love of the harp at a time when I felt artistically numb. The format is simple, it is a request show on harp. Each audience member is invited to share a request

when they purchase their ticket (available through my [website](#)/mailing list) and so, the programme is curated by the audience! Always a wonderfully mixed bag of treats. The pandemic presented us all with such unprecedented challenges, and yet, for me, it was an artistic reawakening and a cathartic journey of self-discovery for which I am incredibly grateful.

I am working away on my music bursary project; to explore the works of 19<sup>th</sup> century harpist-composer, Felix Godefroid. More of this in 2022.

I performed exclusively on a beautiful Irish harp from Tomás Mac Uileagóid for BOUNCE. He kindly gave me use of the harp for the project.

**Aisling Ennis**

# Oblivion | Aisling Lyons



Aisling Lyons | Oblivion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4Ov9ToZGEg>

**Oblivion** is ‘a new cross-disciplinary project that draws parallels between Bunting’s preservation of ancient Irish music and the existential threat to all human culture and existence’ (ITMA 2021). This project features collaboration between Aideen Barry (artist), Aisling Lyons (harper), Margaret O’Connor (artist), Stephen Shannon (composer & music producer) and RIIT (Inuit throat singer & electronic musician).

‘Music Network and the Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA) have appointed visual artist Aideen Barry to create a new artwork inspired by the Bunting Harp Collection, one of Ireland’s national treasures.

‘In 1792 Armagh-born Edward Bunting was commissioned by the organisers of the Belfast

Harp Festival to notate and preserve the music of the last of the professional Irish harpers. Bunting strove to preserve indigenous culture in Ireland at a time of great threat and this task was to prompt a lifetime of collecting and publishing Irish traditional music. His first collection *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland, Volume 1* appeared in 1797 and its influence continues to be seen in live performance, print, recorded and online settings.’ (ITMA 2021)

This multi-disciplinary work was premiered on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December in Dublin and featured solo performances from Aisling Lyons, RIIT and Stephen Shannon.

Aisling speaks about the project as being ‘absolutely mind-blowing! Aideen Barry’s attention to

detail is draw dropping and Aisling was delighted to have been asked to work on this project. At the root, there is the tradition, our heritage and the importance of keeping our ancient music alive but there is also an undeniable emphasis on the ways of modern life and the ever-changing world around us. There is focus on weaving old and new.

It was hugely exciting and inspiring to work with all the Oblivion collaborators.'



**Aisling Lyons**

# Achill International Harp Festival 2021

The 12 months since the last online festival in 2020 have been difficult for people in so many ways. For many, loved ones have been lost. For others, families have been forced to stay separated for intolerable amounts of time. However, things slowly but surely are getting better. This year, 2021, the organisers of Achill International Harp Festival once again moved mountains to create a spectacular online festival. Artists were invited to Achill during the summer months and following a strict Covid-19 safety protocol were recorded by local film company Blue Flag Media and streamed online for the October weekend. A monumental collaborative effort was made by the artists, film crew, sound engineers, web designers and the festival organisers to deliver a programme of outstanding quality of which AIHF are extremely proud.

From all around the world, viewers again tuned in to the Achill International Harp Festival which provided a jam packed programme of events over the course of the October bank holiday weekend. This year's audience came together online and joining the Irish audience were viewers from countries including France, Canada, Brazil, Germany, Spain, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, Netherlands, USA, UK & Australia to name but a few. By the end of the final concert on Sunday evening the festival had already gathered over 12,000 views with the number still rising. It is safe to say that the interest in this year's festival looks set to match that of 2020.

The 2021 festival opened with a stunning film *Casadh na Taoide – The Turning of the Tide*. Earlier in the year, a traditional Galway Hooker,



The crew of Mac Duach with Laoise Kelly, Freda Hatton and Diarmuid Gielty, setting off on a cultural voyage of discovery

Mac Duach, visited Inishbofin, Inishturk, Clare Island, Achill Island and Arranmore. Onboard were AIHF Artistic Directors, Laoise Kelly and Diarmuid Gielty and project manager Freda Hatton. Travelling between the islands the group encountered musicians, artists and storytellers, as well as many memorable island characters. They have gathered stories of shared heritage and culture, with the hope of forging new connections for a shared future. This film by Heavy Man Films captures the essence of this project, with particular focus on selected artists from each island. Having amassed over 8,000 views online within two days, this was without a doubt one of the weekend's highlights.

Achill International Harp Festival 2021 took a look back at Ireland's ancient harpers and music collectors and this ancient harp music was brought back to life with a fresh new energy and perspective in a number of commissioned collaborations. Laoise Kelly and Tiarnán Ó Duinnchinn gave a captivating performance of their new repertoire from the Bunting Collection. The Cafferky Crew, with the support of Cruit Éireann, brought the music of Mayo Harper, Hugh Higgins to the fore, while Siobhán Armstrong provided a wonderful recital of early Irish harp music. Westport acapella group Coda, accompanied by Freda Hatton gave a stunning concert of O'Carolan songs to bring the weekend's events to a close. Engaging and



Coda with Freda Hatton performing for the online festival, recorded in the Valley House, Achill.

informative talks by Simon Chadwick and Eilís Lavelle gave an insight into the ancient Irish harp manuscripts, bringing a glimpse of Ireland's rich harping history to a world audience.

AIHF was very proud that two of the 2021 TG4 Gradam Ceoil recipients, Steve Cooney and Niall Hanna also took part in the weekend's events. A special AIHF collaboration between Niall Hanna and Eilís Lavelle, which was unable to take place in 2020 due to lockdown, was certainly worth the wait. Steve Cooney captivated audiences with music from his award winning album *Ceol Ársa Cláirsí*. Exciting young talents, Aisling Lyons, the Ó Flatharta family and Mayo harpers, Padraic Collins, Andrew Gallagher and Harry Lawlor let the world know that harp music is alive and in safe hands for the future.

As always there were events for all ages and interests, a virtual walk along The Paul Henry

Trail with Tomás McLoughlin and Diarmuid Gielty showcased the spectacular Achill scenery which inspired so many of Henry's paintings, while also providing some wonderful nuggets of local Achill history. The children's story which used an illustrated crankie scroll to depict the legendary tale of the Dagda's Harp captured the imaginations of young and old alike. The beautiful artwork by Pamela Gray along with the captivating storytelling by Martán Ó Mongáin and music by Laoise Kelly transported viewers of all ages back in time to the land of the Irish Chieftains.

Following on from the demand for online harp tutorials during the 2020 festival, AIHF ran a hugely successful series of online tutorials from January to August 2021, with many of the past festival's international and Irish harpers providing tuition. The uptake was again phenomenal with 507 tutorials booked in this period. During the 2021 festival itself, harp tutorials with many

of Ireland's leading harpers along with a harmony workshop with Steve Cooney had a huge uptake from all around the world with over 200 people signing up from as far away as USA, Canada, Japan, Korea and UK, with the tutorials still available after the festival weekend this number looks like it will rise further. The tutorial series was hugely important to AIHF during the pandemic for a number of reasons. It provided a means for AIHF to support some of the festival artists with an income as well as keeping the music alive and available for all those who were eager to learn and found themselves without any form of in-person tuition. A drop in the ocean, but AIHF are delighted to have brought together, over the course of the year from October 2020 to October 2021, eleven harp tutors with over 1200 students from all corners of the world.



Niall Hanna (TG4 Gradam Ceoil, Amhránaí na Bliana 2021) & Eilís Lavelle (Harp) on Achill for their AIHF commissioned collaboration performance

Many events from the 2020 and 2021 festivals can be viewed on [www.achillharpfestival.ie](http://www.achillharpfestival.ie) or on the festival Vimeo channel. The new festival website contains video and photo galleries from all the previous festivals and is well worth a visit to get a glimpse of all AIHF has to offer. Enjoy!

**Catherine Gielty**

Below left: the Ó Flathrta family (Rónán, Caoimhe and Séamus) performing at the AIHF

Below right: the Cafferkey Crew (Padraic Collins, Andrew Gallagher and Harry Lawlor)

The full concert is available to watch at <https://vimeo.com/637350783>



# Harping Highlights *from* Alannah Thornburgh

The year 2021 saw Alannah Thornburgh release her debut single ‘The Front’ - an interpretation of the late minimalist pianist Conor Walsh’s composition. ‘The Front’ was recorded in Swynnerton Lodge, Navan, in collaboration with audio-producer Cian Hamilton. It was released on Bandcamp and all streaming sites on the 2nd April, with all profits going to the Musical Youth Foundation, an organisation aiming to provide children in Ireland with access to musical education. <https://youtu.be/Q8cgHvaLGQE>

She also released her original composition ‘Branjo’ in July. <https://youtu.be/SfaSAE9mwu4>



This year, Alannah was awarded the Arts Council’s Next Generation Award. Alannah spent the year collaborating and recording with folk and ambient



artists such as Brigid Mae Power, Varo and Gareth Quinn Redmond. She also performed in established venues such as the National Concert Hall (Tradition Now), Ballykeeffe Amphitheatre (Kilkenny) and Vicar Street.

In November, she was nominated as Best Folk Instrumentalist and Best Emerging Artist at the 2021 RTÉ Folk Awards. She was invited to perform ‘The Front’ at the awards ceremony in Vicar Street on the 16<sup>th</sup> November. Alannah is currently working on her debut album, as well as an album with her traditional Irish/Appalachian old-time trio Alfi, both due for release in 2022.

**Alannah Thornburgh**

# Harping Lockdown in London



Finding myself in London in the midst of last year's winter lockdown with a harp, some good books, a bundle of housemates and an abundance of time, I knew I needed to set myself some goals in order to keep motivated and remain inspired. I had always wanted to enter the Camac Competition in London and knew it was to be online again in April this year, so decided it would be an excellent opportunity to prepare a programme of pieces that I had always wanted to play and really delve into these works. I did exactly this with Handel's beautiful 4<sup>th</sup> Keyboard Suite in D minor which I transcribed for harp, and Marcel Tournier's mystical *Sonatine pour Harpe*, finishing the programme with our own Brian Boydell's ethereal *Dream of Ballyfarnon* from a *Pack of*

*Fancies for a Travelling Harper*, composed in 1970, which I had played for some time already.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oKdsMYB6Kt0>

I was extremely lucky to be able to continue working with my teachers Irina Zingg and Ieuan Jones (entirely over zoom at this point!), and this work and structure certainly contributed to keeping me focused, and to my being awarded the first prize! In saying that, fitted around three or so hours of practise most days I also remember cooking with friends, wrapping up warm to go for long walks on London's near deserted streets in the snow, reading, writing and late nights watching films or playing cards over a glass of wine – perhaps emphasising how important it is



to give ourselves space to breath and to do many things we enjoy in tandem with music.

Upon graduating from the Royal College of Music this summer, my early music/folk fusion trio *Nobody's Jig* comprising harps, lutes and the voice have been extremely fortunate to present performances at Wigmore Hall as part of our Wigmore Learning/Royal Academy of Music Fellowship, and I have felt very fortunate to bring my beautiful Killarney Harp onto this historic stage for these occasions. My duo partner Louth saxophonist Robert Finegan and I are in

the process of working on our first EP for release next year, supported by the RCM Accelerate Fund, to include a new commission by Anne-Marie O' Farrell for which we are incredibly excited!

As a competitor for the 2022 DHF World Harp Competition, I'm busy working on a programme exploring compositions inspired by improvisation through time and across genres, encompassing both the concert and traditional harp, with the performances of the 20 harpists streamed online in February. At this point I would also like to greatly acknowledge Denise Kelly and Cliona Doris who mentored me through my undergraduate harp studies at TU Dublin Conservatoire and who gave me the best start I could have hoped for, and Marina Cassidy my very first Irish harp

teacher in Killarney. If I was to give any advice to younger harpers on entering and preparing for competitions, I would say to try and pick pieces which really resonate with you as this is how you can best convey your emotions, and truly speak to an audience through your music. A big thank you to Fiona Gryson and Rachel Duffy for your tireless work in compiling *An Cruitire* newsletter again this year and for helping to keep us all connected!

**Tara Viscardi**

# Tionól Harps and Pipes



Music Generation Laois' annual Tionól for harp and pipes took place on Friday 29 October to Sunday 31 October, with events in Portlaoise, Stradbally, and online. Young people from all over Ireland took part. Tionól, which means gathering, includes music workshops, performances and a busy social schedule for all involved.

On Friday afternoon, after a series of music workshops, the teaching team performed for students in the hall of the Dunamase College Campus on Tower Hill, including Michael Rooney, Catriona McKay, Siobhan Buckley, Niamh O'Brien, Jill Devlin, Deirdre Ní Bhuachalla, Gráinne Hambly and William Jackson on harp, and Pádraig McGovern, Joseph Byrne, Alain Carroll and Leonard Barry on uilleann pipes.

Saturday was another busy day of workshops that culminated with a live-stream concert coming from The Malt House, in Stradbally. The livestream concert showcased new harp music by Music Generation Louth, Waterford, Laois, Clare and Mayo composed in collaboration with Catriona McKay, Artistic Director of the Tionól '21 Harp Programme. Young pipers from Waterford, Sligo, Tipperary and Laois performed arranged music they rehearsed with guest piper from Co. Monaghan, Pádraig McGovern. Pipers and harpers also came together and performed a beautiful rendition of 'The Eagle's Whistle.' The livestream concert also included collaborations with Liam Ó Maonlaí of the Hot House Flowers and double bassist Martin Brunnsden, joined by Music Generation Laois percussionist Ros



O'Meara. A very special part of the Saturday evening concert included a performance of Liam Ó Maonlaí's 'Worry Not' accompanied by over 30 young harpers.

Sunday 31 October marked the final day of Tionól 2021. The festival ended with a series of closing parties, a student closing party in the Hall of Dunamase College Tower Hill campus, featuring Catriona McKay on harp, Leonard Barry on pipes joined by the wonderful Shetland fiddle player, Chris Stout. The trio took to the stage once again on Sunday evening for a Tionól '21 Closing Party in Andy Bergin's bar, bringing Tionól '21 to a brilliant musical finalé.



Participating Music Generations in Tionól '21 included Louth, Mayo, Waterford, Clare, Sligo, Tipperary, Donegal and Laois.

Speaking after the festival, Rosa Flannery, Music Development Officer with Music Generation Laois explained, 'Tionól 2021 has been a most magical weekend. We kept Tionól going by moving online in 2020, and I think that really helped sustain our connection with young harpers and pipers across Ireland. We are delighted to say that over 110 young people took part in Tionól 2021.'



Tionól Harp and Pipes '21 is supported by the Music Generation/ Arts Council Partnership Creativity and Collaboration Fund. Music Generation is Ireland's National Music Education programme, initiated by Music Network, and co-funded by U2, The Ireland Funds and The Department of Education. Locally Music Generation Laois is part of Laois Offaly Education and Training Board, and supported by Laois County Council.

See [www.musicgenerationlaois.ie](http://www.musicgenerationlaois.ie) for more details.

**Rosa Flannery**

# Music Generation Louth Harping 2021

Along with harpers around the world, we started 2021 in an atmosphere of uncertainty. Locked down for January and much of February, lessons and ensemble workshops took place online. Among the online activities occupying the Music Generation (MG) Louth harpers during lockdown, were workshops on an arrangement of Robert Miles' "Children" gifted to us by Aisling Ennis, and a Music Generation (MG) Harp Collective project collaborating with MG Laois and MG Mayo harp ensembles. This project is planned to come to fruition in Spring of 2022. The three ensembles are working on a suite of new music with composer Michael Rooney, which was originally scheduled for premiere in the summer of 2020.

Later in the Spring, preparation was well underway on a number of new arrangements for performance at **Cairde na Cruite, International Festival for Irish Harp** which took place online from Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June to Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021. The MG Louth Harp Ensemble performed at the Tholsel Interludes Lunchtime concert on the Monday of the festival and took part in the ensemble day workshops and performance of *The Welsh Ground*. The full ensemble video of *The Welsh Ground* is on YouTube here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OJvKfSjfLN8>

Amongst the arrangements premiered at the festival was a piece composed by Zoe Conway and John McIntyre called 'Ómós Shéamuis'. This was composed in honour of poet Seamus Heaney



Members of the MG Louth Harp Ensemble who took part in the ensemble performance of *The Welsh Ground*.

and arranged by Zoe, John and ensemble director Deirdre Ní Bhuachalla. Together they produced a video and recording to showcase on Lá na Cruite 2021, supported by Harp Ireland, Arts Council of Ireland and Create Louth. The video was filmed by Sean McMahon on board the Carlingford Lough Ferry which connects the north and south banks of the lough travelling between Greenore and Greencastle. Sections of the video were also filmed at Flagstaff Viewpoint, Co Down looking along the border between Co. Down and Co. Louth to Carlingford Lough. The themes of Lá na Cruite 2021 were collaboration and connection which were highlighted in the video through its location and participants. You can view the video here:



Filming on board the Carlingford Lough Ferry for Lá na Cruite  
<https://youtu.be/3Pt5cvHmhN0>

Harping events took place at both ends of Co. Louth on Lá na Cruite | Harp Day 2021. Supported by the Create Louth team at Louth County Council, MG Louth Harp Ensemble members and harp students performed in a number of municipal



MG Louth harpers at the Millmount Museum, (L to R: Aoibhín McGowan, Ciara Schazmann, Priya Mamidala, Evie Knopfler, Fiona Gryson). Photo: Prasanna Mamidala



MG Louth Harp Ensemble at County Museum, Dundalk

MG Louth Harpers performed at the County Museum

buildings in both Drogheda and Dundalk. In Drogheda, local harp students performed with their musician educator Fiona Gryson at the iconic Drogheda Museum, Millmount. In Dundalk members of our ensemble performed solo across the 3 levels of County Museum. Harpers aged from 9 to 19 provided beautiful background music to museum visitors as they visited exhibits on the Industrial, Prehistoric and Early Historic era's of the county.



Hugh O'Hagan's harp on display at County Museum, Dundalk

Visitors to the museum were also greeted by a temporary display of the harp of Hugh O'Hagan, a blind harper and resident of Rampart Lane, Dundalk, known as the "last native harper of Louth" (1906, CLAJ) and one of the students



of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Drogheda Harp School. The harp was made by Dublin-based harpmaker Francis Hewson in 1842.

In the afternoon, a small number of harpers from CCÉ Craobh Dhún Dealgan and Music Generation Louth met in the newly opened garden at the rear of County Library for an informal session and also for a *Try the Harp* event. Some of our highlights from Harp Day 21 can be viewed here: [https://youtu.be/egw\\_eUhXfoA](https://youtu.be/egw_eUhXfoA)

*Miles' Children*, arranged by Aisling Ennis. We are very grateful to Aisling for the arrangement, it was great fun to work on. The video we put together also contains an audio track made by Ardee TY students (Danu Class). The students developed the music as part of LMETB's *REACH OUT* programme which was delivered in partnership with Music Generation Louth. Creative Interventions is supported by the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).



Harpers from CCÉ Craobh Dhún Dealgan and MG Louth in the garden of County Library on Harp Day 2021

In October, MG Louth harpers attended the fantastic MG Laois **Tionól for Harp and Pipes**. Our harpers look forward to Tionól every year and this year's event was hugely successful as always. They participated in a live stream of the Saturday Night Concert from The Malt House in Stradbally where they performed 'Sleeping Bloom', their new collaborative composition with Catriona McKay, Siobhán Buckley and ensemble director Deirdre Ní Bhuachalla.

For **World Children's Day 2021**, on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> November, they premiered the video of Robert

The video can be viewed here:

<https://youtu.be/eNqB7P-DMzo>

The **Gaelscoil Dhún Dealgan Harp Programme** continued to flourish in 2021 with 5 new students starting at the school. A number of school students progressed to the after-school programme with MG Louth also.

We look forward to next year with hope for a return to normality and live performances.

**Deirdre Ní Bhuachalla**

# Scoil Éigse Online

This summer saw Scoil Éigse take place online for the second year, running from 2-5 August as part of FleadhFest 2021. Harp students attended two classes each day under the tuition of the harp tutor team, led by Gráinne Hambly and featuring Eimear Coughlan, Deirdre Murphy and Rachel Duffy. In addition to daily lessons, students of all instruments were invited to attend masterclasses on duet playing, uilleann piping, and the music and musicians of Sliabh Luachra and North Connaught.



Tutor recitals were streamed online each evening, alongside Club Éigse, an online session presented by Eddie Murphy in which students could join tutors in playing selections of popular tunes from the comfort of home. The week was a success thanks to trojan work on the part of Director Kieran Hanrahan, Administrator Liza O'Shea, Peter Denmead and the entire Scoil Éigse team. It was a welcome chance to connect with harpers from around the world.

FÁILTE PROGRAMME STREAMS APPLICATION FOR CLASSES



COMHALTAS





Photos: Darragh Kane

# Bonn Óir Seán Ó Riada do Chruitire as Co Lú

Ba iad **Fionnuala Donlon**, cruit, agus **Colm Broderick**, píobaí, a thug leo Bonn Óir Seán Ó Riada sa chraobh den chomórtas a craoladh beo ar RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta i mí na Bealtaine 2021.

Gach bliain, bíonn an comórtas dírithe ar uirlisi difriúla, agus i mbliana bhí sé dírithe ar na píobaí agus ar an gcrúit. Ba é Peadar Ó Riada a chuir an chraobh i láthair beo ó Bhaile Bhúirne ar an gclár Cuireadh chun Ceoil. Ba iad Mick O'Brien, Laoise Kelly agus Michelle Mulcahy na moltóirí

ar an gcomórtas, agus bronnadh an Bonn Óir agus €2500 an duine ar na buaiteoirí.

Is as Dún Dealgan i gCo Lú d'Fhionnuala, 22, agus thosaigh sí ag casadh ceoil ar an gcrúit nuair a bhí sí naoi mbliana d'aois. Tá sí ina ábhar oide faoi láthair i gColáiste Marino agus bíonn sí ag teagasc ceoil freisin in áiteanna éagsúla. Dúirt sí go raibh ríméad uirthi an duais a bhaint, dea-scéal tar éis bliain a bhí an-dúshlánach dúinn go léir.

Ba é an gabha óir Pádraig Ó Mathúna as Caiseal



President Michael D. Higgins presented the gold medal to Fionnuala at a special ceremony in Áras an Uachtaráin

Mumhan, nach maireann, a dhear an bonn. Tá an bonn déanta as airgead, agus tar éis an chomórtais greantar ainm an bhuaiteora air agus tumtar in ór é. Níos deireanaí sa bhliain, i mí Dheireadh Fómhair, bhronn Micheál D. Ó hUiginn, Uachtarán na hÉireann, na boinn óir ar Fhionnuala agus ar Cholm ag searmanas speisialta in Áras an Uachtaráin.

Tá sé caoga bliain i mbliana ó cailleadh an ceoltóir agus an cumadóir Seán Ó Riada, agus is comhartha ómóis agus aitheantais a bhí sa searmanas ar thábhacht ollmhór oidhreacht an Riadaigh. Ba aitheantas a bhí ann freisin ar a dhúslánaí is a bhí sé do cheoltóirí agus do lucht na n-ealaíon tré chéile le bliain go leith anuas de bharr na paidéime. Chas na ceoltóirí don Uachtarán, agus ansin bronnadh na boinn óir orthu, a bhfuil a

gcuid ainmneacha greanta orthu.

Harper Fionnuala Donlon from Dundalk, Co. Louth, was the winner of the Seán Ó Riada Gold Medal traditional music competition broadcast live on RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta in May 2021.

Each year the competition focuses on different traditional music instruments, and this year it was for harp and pipes. Carlow musician Colm Broderick won in the pipes competition.

The final was presented by broadcaster and composer Peadar Ó Riada on his RTÉ RnaG show, and the judges were esteemed musicians Mick O'Brien, Laoise Kelly and Michelle Mulcahy. The winners were presented with the Seán Ó Riada Gold Medal and €2500 each for their win.



Fionnuala with her Pádraig Ó Mathúna designed medal

Fionnuala Donlon, 22, comes from a musical family and started playing harp at nine years of age. She has won numerous All Ireland medals for her playing, and won the Senior Harp trophy at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Drogheda in 2019. She has taken part in the Comhaltas tours of Ireland, and her music has brought her to places such as France, Germany and Bangkok.

Speaking of her win, Fionnuala said:  
“Being in the final was a great motivation to keep me playing music for myself over these last few months, it kept me focused. Winning this is such a great boost after a difficult year, I’m really delighted. I’m looking forward now to getting back to playing music with people in the coming months.”



President Michael D. Higgins, Fionnuala and her father Pádraig

Fionnuala's performance from the final in May can be viewed at <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=302003714730525>.

The medal was designed by the late Cashel gold and silversmith Pádraig Ó Mathúna. It is created in solid silver, and once the winners have been chosen each year their names are then engraved on the bespoke medal, which is then coated in gold, and later in the year, in October, President Michael D. Higgins presented the gold medals to Fionnuala and Colm at a special ceremony in Áras an Uachtaráin. The 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of musician and composer Seán Ó Riada occurs this month, and the ceremony was held in

recognition of his invaluable legacy, and also to acknowledge the very challenging circumstances faced by musicians and those in the arts world since March 2020. The musicians performed for the President, before being presented with the bespoke gold medals with their names engraved on them

Footage taken at Áras an Uachtaráin can be viewed at <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1040813466755702>.

### **Caitríona Ní Bhaoill**



Fionnuala and Colm with Peadar Ó Riada (centre)



# TU Dublin Conservatoire

*move to*

# Grangegorman Campus

In December 2020, the TU Dublin Conservatoire buildings in Rathmines and Chatham Row closed their doors for the final time. The Rathmines building housed students and staff for 23 years, while the iconic Chatham Row building was home to the Conservatoire for more than 100 years. In March 2021, the Conservatoire made its long-awaited move to the new East Quad and Lower House buildings in Grangegorman.

Many acclaimed Irish musicians both studied and taught at the Rathmines and Chatham Row buildings. They played a significant role in Irish musical life for many years; it was in Rathmines and Chatham Row that many students had their first music lessons, performed in their first concert, or attended third level education. The harp room in Chatham Row saw students from beginner to PhD level playing both Irish and concert harps.

While there was sadness associated with leaving Rathmines and Chatham Row, there is great excitement about the new, state-of-the-art facilities in the Conservatoire's new home in the East Quad and Lower House buildings, Grangegorman. The East Quad's wonderful new facilities include a 400-seat concert hall, a recital hall and a blackbox theatre. The harp department

has also gained a new Salvi Diana concert harp.

The East Quad houses students from multiple disciplines, including law, product design, and music. This is the first time that Conservatoire students have studied on the same campus as students from other courses. As a result, students from different disciplines will have the opportunity to collaborate on projects and to learn from one another.

The move to Grangegorman has been an emotional and exciting time for students and staff at TU Dublin Conservatoire. In this video, Dr. David Mooney, Head of Keyboard Studies at TU Dublin, captures the nostalgia related to Chatham Row and Rathmines, and the excitement associated with moving to our new building:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=522isu3SPkQ>.

This year has been a time of change for the harp department. It has seen the retirement of Denise Kelly-McDonnell, Senior Lecturer in Harp at TU Dublin Conservatoire. In her time at TU Dublin, Denise passed her expertise and her love of the harp on to all of her students.

**Kara Lord Bissett**

# Harping Highlights *from* Anne-Marie O'Farrell

## **International Women's Day 2021**

The third level students of TU Dublin Conservatoire created a short online festival to mark International Women's Day on 8<sup>th</sup> March, at which Kara Lord Bissett performed Anne-Marie O'Farrell's 'AirDance' for solo Irish harp. The speakers discussing their work at the festival were composer Gráinne Mulvey, musicologist Maria McHale and Anne-Marie O'Farrell.

## **The Rising of the Lark (Codiad yr Ehedydd)**

'The Rising of the Lark' (Codiad yr Ehedydd), arranged by Anne-Marie O'Farrell is a new setting of this beautiful Welsh song, using harmonics and arpeggio effects to imitate the effect of the triple strung Welsh harp. The piece was written especially for Cairde na Cruite's re-enactment of the music played in the Drogheda Harp Festival of 1844, as part of their annual An Chúirt Chruitireachta and was filmed at the Highlanes Gallery in Drogheda.

## **Slán le Máigh**

A new solo pedal harp arrangement of 'Slán le Máigh' was written by Anne-Marie O'Farrell especially for London-based harpist Anneke Hodnett, who comes originally from Limerick. Anneke was searching for a solo harp piece with a theme of lament, but also with a connection to County Limerick, for a new recording with Ty Cerdd by Trio Anima, featuring works by John Dowland, Arnold Bax and Sally Beamish for flute, viola and harp.

Anne-Marie at the Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda





Pictured with harps made by Colm are Síofra Ní Dhubhghaill and Anne-Marie O'Farrell with their students.

## Mullingar Harp School

The Mullingar Harp School was delighted to welcome harp teacher Síofra Ní Dhubhghaill who brings a wealth of expertise and musical insights from her distinguished training at home and abroad.

Harpist Eleanor Turner visited the Mullingar Harp School virtually in April to provide a fascinating workshop on group playing, improvising techniques and rhythmic patterns. The young players really enjoyed encountering other styles of playing, and ways of exploring their creativity on the harp.

The Mullingar Harp School held *An Afternoon with the Harp* at Áras an Mhuillinn to perform for their families on 14<sup>th</sup> November. It was so special to hear the sound of live playing from young players, and for them to have an opportunity to perform for a small live audience. For some it was their first public performance. We were delighted to welcome Máire O'Reilly, the sister of the late harpmaker Colm Ó Meachair from Mullingar.

## Edinburgh International Harp Festival

Anne-Marie O'Farrell was invited to give workshops at the Edinburgh International Harp Festival on transcription for lever harp, and on arrangement. Participants joined from both sides of the Atlantic in a fascinating exploration of music by Elizabeth de la Guerre, John Dowland and J.S. Bach. Even though the event was online, there was a lovely sense of international camaraderie, as we met friends from around the globe!

## Irish Harp Recital: music from the last 50 years

As part of the Summer Music in Sandford Series, Anne-Marie O'Farrell recorded a video recital of the following programme: Daniel McNulty: *Berceuse*; Eibhlís Farrell: *An Chruit Draíochta*; Seóirse Bodley: *Love Song*; Daniel McNulty: *Fantasia*; T.C.Kelly: *Interlude*. This recital featured a number of pieces from Sheila Larchet Cuthbert's seminal volume of Irish Harp music, *The Irish Harp Book*, for which she commissioned contemporary composers to write for Irish harp. It is also an opportunity to remember the centenary last year



## Amerghin in Stockholm

The new group Amerghin features Anne-Marie O'Farrell (harp), Aingeala de Búrca (violin), Cormac Breatnach (whistles) and Brian Fleming (percussion). Their debut performance took place at the Stockholm Early Music Festival on 4<sup>th</sup> December, where they wove together Irish repertoire and music from the baroque era with their unique improvisations and arrangements.

of Dublin composer Daniel McNulty, two of whose works are included. One of these, *Fantasia*, features on Anne-Marie's new solo album, *Embrace. New Directions for Irish Harp* released on 24<sup>th</sup> November this year. The assistance of Ben Rawlins and Laoise O'Brien of Jiggery Pokery Productions is most gratefully acknowledged. The recital can be heard here:

<https://youtu.be/-geLqMgY1-s>

## Pipeworks Festival with Harp

The Autumn edition of the Pipeworks Festival included the weekend of Lá na Cruite, Harp Day on 16<sup>th</sup> October, so it was especially apt that it was the premiere date for Anne-Marie O'Farrell's new work, *aVé*, for harp, organ and cello. The piece combines aspects of Marian theology with themes by renaissance composer Josquin des Prez to mark his quincentennial and included reference to Marian hymns well known to Irish audiences. Writing for organ and other instruments brings particular challenges, often arising from the physical distance between the players: this piece was designed with the physical characteristics of St Patrick's Cathedral in mind, where the organist sits high above the other players, with little scope for eye contact. It's one of a number of chamber works for organ by Anne-Marie.



Pictured in Stockholm's Old German Church are from left, Brian Fleming, Aingeala de Búrca, Cormac Breatnach and Anne-Marie O'Farrell

## Anne-Marie O'Farrell

### New Appointment

Cairde na Cruite would like to congratulate and send best wishes to Anne-Marie on her new appointment to the harp post at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, beginning in January 2022.

# Interview with Harp Technician

# Enric de Anciola

in conversation with Áine Ní Dhubhghaill

**ÁINE:**

It was a pleasure to meet you on your visit to Ireland as a harp technician in October 2021 and thanks for agreeing to do this interview. I'm fascinated to hear how you became interested in following the career of a harp technician.

**ENRIC:**

By accident! I started working for a really big guitar importer and guitar maker after my lutherie school in France... but I didn't like the spirit of a huge company. I wanted to get closer to artisan-making... and there were no possibilities to evolve in that company either. So I decided to

try to find something different but still in touch with instrument making... and guess what? Camac harps were not so far from where I was living at that time. And funny fact, in that precise moment they were searching for someone as their senior harp technician was getting retired! So my adventure as a harp tech started there 12 years ago. Today I'm a better harp technician than a guitar tech.

**ÁINE:**

From observing you servicing different types of harps, primarily pedal, but also lever harps, it is clear that you have substantial training, experience and knowledge of many harp types.

**ENRIC:**

Training... well there are not many ways today to learn the job. I had the chance to start my training with Jakez François himself. And then I improved my skills with the senior technician and the experience of servicing thousands of harps, both lever and pedal. The good point is that Camac had a policy of taking back old instruments of all brands from customers that were buying a new Camac and that was deeply interesting for me as I learned how to regulate harps from all brands.

Today I service mainly pedal harps from brands such as Horngacher, David, Salvi, Camac, Lyon & Healy... From time to time I have some demands



for lever harps... Even Llanera harps (from Venezuela or Colombia). But the problem I face with lever harps is that we find so many different levers and those levers have different evolutions... It is impossible for me to get all the spare parts to service all of them...

**ÁINE:**

What are the major difficulties and challenges you face when servicing harps?

**ENRIC:**

Well, I don't know why but a harp can become what I call a REBEL HARP. I would say that the most difficult part of my work is to stop the noises and vibrations... It can be really tricky. But sometimes it is impossible to stop the buzzes. There are more than 2,000 parts in the action of a pedal harp. Any of those parts can start vibrating with any frequency. So a 4<sup>th</sup> octave G in natural can make vibrate a E link from the sharp line... by sympathy... so a buzz appears!

**ÁINE:**

You have experience of many harps from 19<sup>th</sup> century Erard to present day makers. Can you give a brief outline on differences you have observed?

**ENRIC:**

Usually, when I have to explain the differences to my students I say that there are 2 different actions... The first one is what I call the TRADITIONAL action. This one is somehow an evolution from Erard harps. The second is the Camac action, that is really different. In fact, the main difference is that all the makers use rods to transmit the pedals movement to the action. But Camac use cables instead. So they use different approaches and different concepts.

I say that the goal is always the same, you have to

connect the pedals to the action and then make the action move properly. The traditional system solves it in a way. The Camac system solves it using a different method.

After this, all actions from all brands have their good and bad points. On the other hand, it's such a complicated mechanism! We must admit perfection is not reachable...

**ÁINE:**

I was fascinated in chatting with you about your enthusiasm and commitment not just to servicing, but also the entire restoration/repair of harps. Can you tell us more about this aspect of your work?

**ENRIC:**

That's complex... I mean, we tend to forget all the different professions and knowledge that producing a harp involves... from the action, mostly in iron and brass... to the varnish, that in the old times was completely different than today...to the gold leaves or gold paintworks... to the sculpture or plaster castings...the artwork in some soundboards...the marquetry...etc... It is really difficult to find someone that is excellent in all those areas at the same time. Restoring is a really difficult and deep science. Then, repairing a modern harp is a bit easier... But still, it is completely different to repair an action (especially if you need to make a spare part from a disappeared maker) than to re-varnish a harp...

A harp is a universe composed of plenty of different galaxies full of complex worlds.

**ÁINE:**

Tell us about the worst problems to deal with on pedal/lever harps.

**ENRIC:**

The worst problem to fix on a pedal harp (if we

don't think about a soundboard replacement, which will actually change the character and sound of it) would be any broken part in the action. Because it could be a small thing, for example to change a link; but this could also be a nightmare because we need to dismantle everything! All the structure and all the action...that takes ages...

For a lever harp I would say that the most difficult would be to replace the soundboard or the whole soundbox...

**ÁINE:**

All harp players have experienced strange and mysterious buzzes from time to time. Do you have some advice?

**ENRIC:**

All of us have some defects, harps sometimes have theirs... Sometimes the biggest buzzes are the easier ones. The tiny ones can be a nightmare and the worst of it... they come and go... My advice: If one day you have a buzz in a pedal harp, please write down on paper how it happens. I mean: pulling which string/s, in flat/natural/sharp and it's really important in which position the other pedals are in! Then you give all those details to your harp technician. This will be really useful to find the cause of the buzz.

**ÁINE:**

It was intriguing to hear your enthusiasm for Wurlitzer harps when you were servicing the harp which was kindly donated by Caitríona Yeats to the RIAM. I've heard people compare the Wurlitzer mechanism to the Rolls Royce of the harp world.

**ENRIC:**

I really love the Wurlitzer Harps. I've seen a few

of them. There are not that many Wurlitzer harps around Europe. I really would like to buy one if I find it. I would like to study their actions. When I talk about Wurlitzer I compare it to Thomann today. They were a huge company with a huge catalogue of instruments. They were based in the USA. Still today some of their creations are deeply loved by collectors as their jukeboxes or by jazz musicians as their Electric Piano 200A. Did you know that they created an automatic harp? I'm sure that almost all harpists don't know that actually the Wurlitzer company were the inventors of the extended soundboard! I have that feeling that they should be rediscovered! And the one from the RIAM has a really nice and balanced sound!

**ÁINE:**

I'm curious to know if there are any harps which you would prefer not to service or repair. You don't have to answer this question!

**ENRIC:**

Today I refuse to service the old Russian pedal harps. Mainly for 2 reasons. First, I don't have



spare parts. And second, the owner of a Russian harp expects that the technician will make a miracle. Don't misunderstand me. They had actually a really nice sound. But the action of those harps (please, keep in mind that they're really old)... well, they make a lot of noise. And then... the pitch that you can get... especially in sharps... The other harps I don't service are the Budin harps. Even if I think that they are really interesting (they gave a new solution for the double movement action!). They were a bit too darish on their material choice for the classical musicians, but at least they tried! And they have their qualities as well. But unfortunately they weren't reliable enough and really tricky to service... So I prefer not to do it.

**ÁINE:**

The life of a travelling harp technician must produce some interesting and memorable tales. Would you like to share some with us?

**ENRIC:**

I have the chance to meet really interesting people. Some of them are great harpists! I feel blessed sometimes! Can you imagine how lucky am I? I have the honour to work with such wonderful harpists as Isabelle Perrin, Petra van der Heide, Anneleen Lenaerts among many others! The list is so long!!! And I can say that some of them are my friends. They've always been so supportive.

And thanks to the harp I did meet some really good and close friends! I think about Thomas Pontoizeau, Helen Leitner, Alain Rousseau, Manu



Bondu from Camac. After all the experiences we had together, they became so important!

I have plenty of stories to tell from harp adventures... I will just say one because it makes me laugh and I think often about it. Once I was servicing 2 harps in Germaine's Lorenzini home... It was the only place where you could service a harp while smoking a cigarette (I was a smoker at that period) and drinking a beer. We were talking about harps and such... And she told me: Don't you see Enric? That's the devil's instrument... It

is difficult, it is complicated... But once it catches you, you can't do anything else...

**ÁINE:**

What would you say are the worst and most difficult harp afflictions?

**ENRIC:**

From my point of view, there are two really bad things that a pedal harp can face... A broken soundboard and a worn out action.

The soundboard is the soul of the instrument... If you have to replace it, you'll never find your harp back. To replace a soundboard is like playing lotto. You can win, or you can be really disappointed. I mean, it can even sound better than before! But it will never sound the same. Some harpists spend years searching for a sound... So can you imagine if they have to face a soundboard replacement? They may find the same body (structure) but a different personality.

Concerning a worn out action. I think it is the most expensive repair! You can somehow restore an old action with a re-riveting. But you have to be really sure about the investment. It costs between €5000 to €6000! It is a really complicated repair. The point being to re-drill all the holes of the links and the levers and to make all new rivets to make the action work again without noises or buzzes. Said like this, it seems easy. But believe me, it is one of the most complicated things to do on a harp.

**ÁINE:**

Have you any tips for harp players in looking after their harps between services?

**ENRIC:**

I will tell you shortly the best things to do or not to do!

1) Try to keep your harp between 45 to 50% of humidity, between 20 and 22 celsius degrees, avoid sudden humidity and temperature changes!

2) Keep it away from direct sunbeams and away from heating sources!

3) No dust on it or in it! So cover it up with the dust cover when not playing it.

4) If it is a pedal harp: put the pedals in flat when not playing on it. Levers down if it's a lever harp (not touching the strings) when not playing.

5) And remember, strings are not eternal and they are the most important part of the harp. Don't forget, a harp without strings, no sound. A harp with strings in bad shape, awful sound!

**ÁINE:**

As someone who is so passionate about your craft, I have no doubt that you have many plans for the future. Would you like to share some of your aspirations?

**ENRIC:**

First, learn more, and more, and more. And then practice, more, and more, and more! I'm trying to develop my skills as much as possible... From milling to varnish. From computer design and to wood sculpture... And if everything goes as expected I will own a new building by the end of 2022 to develop my harp restoring and repairing workshop! The goal: be able to give all possible services and repairs for all harps of all periods. As you can imagine... I'm a bit busy here!

**ÁINE:**

I detected a little bit of a Dublin accent in your voice as you spoke. Would you like to tell us about your previous trip to Ireland?

## ENRIC:

When Anne-Marie Papin contacted me to ask me if I would be interested in coming to Ireland to service some pedal harps I was really happy and a bit surprised, as honestly I didn't know that there would be so many instruments around. I must confess that I was really excited by the idea of being back in Dublin as I lived there for a half a year!

Do you remember I said that I studied guitar making in France? Actually the idea came to me in Dublin! I finished my studies of Philosophy in la Sorbonne in 2004 and came back to Catalonia... I started working a bit but I had the feeling that I needed to improve my English to get better job opportunities. So I decided to go to Dublin in 2007 to follow some intensive English lessons and to find a job there. Then the plan was to come back to Catalonia to study Economical Sciences.

During those Dublin days, I was working for a really nice restaurant in Dawson St. called Balzac and I was living in the Coombe! That job gave me the opportunity to pay for my really expensive flat that I shared with my best friend who came from Catalonia with me. But a bit more than this! I saved some money and I bought an old Hayman electric guitar in a Dublin shop. That guitar wasn't in good shape... But I decided to buy it anyway... And I said: well I will find someone to refurbish it... But in the end the idea changed to: And why wouldn't you be that guitar tech that will restore the Hayman? So today I see those Dublin days as the beginning of my instrument adventure. That idea grew until the point that I started my guitar repairing studies in 2008!

So when I got back to Ireland to take care of your pedal harps I felt like I was closing a circle.



Somehow I had that intimate feeling that I was getting through one of those life's check-points!

It was great to be back and to meet some Irish pedal harpists! And to get the chance to enjoy again the Irish hospitality! You were all so nice (and some of you were really worried about my schedule and about when I would be able to eat something!)

Great thing, my wife came to join me for the weekend. So on Sunday before we left I showed her that famous Dawson Street where the Balzac restaurant was. We walked around Grafton Street (she knew that street from the film Once!), Saint Stephen's Green, Merrion Square (I love that place). We jumped to my old address in the Coombe and we finished the day in the Phoenix Park. By the way, it was the first time I saw that place without rain!

## ÁINE:

Thank you Enric for taking the time from your busy schedule to do this interview. Wishing you every success in the future and, in particular, with your business plan to develop your harp workshop.

**Enric de Anciola, Harp Technician**

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# An English Captain & An Irish Harper:

Parke's Castle, Co. Leitrim, in the 1630s

by Seán Donnelly

Romantically-sited on the banks of Lough Gill, Parke's Castle – originally Newtown Parke – at Kilmore, Fivemilebourne, Co. Leitrim, became a major tourist-attraction after being restored in the 1980s using authentic materials. Consisting of a Jacobean manor-house and a bawn [a defensive enclosure], the castle was built c.1628 on the ruins of an O'Rourke tower-house by Captain Robert Parke, a native of Kent granted lands in the Plantation of Leitrim (1620). His family had appeared in Co. Sligo in the early 1600s, and his brother William also received lands in Leitrim, including Dromahair Castle.[i]

Like many planters on marginal land in remote areas, Parke seems to have got on well with his Irish

neighbours. With access to ready-cash, he was soon exploiting the local land market as local Irish landowners struggled with the move into a cash-economy. He eventually became a JP and an MP in the Irish Parliament.[ii]

Parke had 'divers Irish servants' in Newtown Castle, among them 'Mullmurry O'Diggennan', his 'bailiff or husband-man', the latter's son, 'Loghlan', who was his footman, and 'Owen Mac O Bryan, Serjeant to Master Robert Parke ...'. [iii] Another Irish servant in Parke's household was possibly linked to a find made in the course of an archaeological investigation of the castle in the 1970s. Two copper-alloy harp-pegs were found in the layer of sand beneath the courtyard cobblestones. A third peg, differing from the other two and also damaged, was recovered from topsoil. Since harp-pegs changed little in form over the centuries, they are extremely difficult to date; but it has been tentatively suggested that the two found in the courtyard may be later in date than the third one. The pegs could date from the

O'Rourke occupation of the site, but it may not have been a coincidence that Parke had had an Irish harper, Dermot O'Ferry, in his household in the 1630s.[iv] O'Ferry is likely to have been an Ulsterman, as his surname, Irish Ó Fearadhaigh, is most common in Co. Donegal.

O'Ferry is named in connection with Parke's reaction (or rather lack thereof) to the outbreak of the 1641 Rising in October that year. Isolated and outnumbered, Parke tried to remain neutral at first, adopting a wait-and-see attitude as did other planters in a similar situation. His inaction infuriated the most powerful planter in north Connacht, Sir Frederick Hamilton (c.1590–1647), founder of Manorhamilton. An aggressive and disputatious Scottish nobleman and courtier, Hamilton was long remembered in local folklore for his violence towards the local Irish. Hamilton appeared with an armed force at Newtown Castle on 1 July 1642, and arrested Parke on suspicion of treason. After pillaging the castle – and burning the village which had grown up around it – he garrisoned it with his own men. He kept Parke a prisoner in Manorhamilton Castle for twenty-one months, ignoring repeated orders to release him. The captain was finally freed through the influence of his father-in-law while Hamilton was away fighting in Ulster.[v]

In 1645 Hamilton published a defence of his conduct in 1641–2, and justified his treatment of Parke by appending depositions from several of the captain's servants, O'Ferry among them:

‘The pegs could date from the O'Rourke occupation of the site, but it may not have been a coincidence that Parke had had an Irish harper, Dermot O'Ferry, in his household in the 1630s.’

The Deposition of Dermond O'Ferry, Harper, taken the 12. January, 1642.

Who deposeth that upon Friday, the 28. January, 1641, this Deponent coming to the Church of Clanclare within half a mile to Mannor-Hamilton Castle, where he found that night Colonel O Roirk with divers other Colonels and Captains, gathered together, with intention, the next morning to burn off the Town and Garrison of Mannor-Hamilton, with both Water-Mills there; which accordingly was performed in this Deponents sight, who afterwards got leave of Owen O Roirk to go back to the Castle of Dromahear, where the said Owen Roirks Wife and family lived, living himself with his brother Bryan Ballogh O Roirk, with five or six hondred more of the

Rebels, incamped near unto the Castle of Mannor-Hamilton, where they lay until Friday, the fourth of February following; which day they were beaten from the Camp, where the said Colonel Owen O Roirk told the Deponent, he escaped narrowly himself, divers of his Regiment being killed, and the rest chased.

The Deponent further saith, That about the 20. of February following, he this Deponent obtained leave, that he might go visit Master Parck at Newtown, whom he had formerly served as his Harper; which granted him, conditionally, that he should stay but one night with Master Parck, and that this Deponent should tell Master Parck, That Colonell O Roirk, and the rest of their Army were informed, that Master Parck had supplied Sir Frederick Hamilton, with what Powder was spent upon them, the last day they were beaten from their Camp; which if Master Parck had done so, it was more than they expected from his hands; For whosoever should lend Armes or Ammunition against them, was to be held, as much an Enemy as those that fought against them.

And withall, Colonel O Roirk bid this Deponent tell Master Parck, that he with his Brother Bryan Ballogh O Roirk, had been desired by severall Letters from the

Gentlemen of the County of Sligoe, to joyn with them in laying a Camp about Master Parck and his Castle, at the Newtown, which they both refused, advising the County of Sligoe Gentleman, rather to joyn with them in camping about Mannor-Hamilton Castle, who had done them so much hart, [sic] Master Parck having done them none; and being able to destroy Sir Frederick Hamilton, Master Parck and his would be easily their own. This Deponent having delivered his message to Master Parck, letting him know withall, That he could stay no longer then that night, being ingaged by his promise to Colonell O Roirk, to return the next morning; whereupon Master Parck, wished the Deponent to tell Owen O Roirk, that whosoever informed, that Sir Frederick Hamilton was supplied by him with any Powder, wronged him much, for he was not stored, as to have spared his Father any; And further, the said Parck told this Deponent, That though he was desirous to have enjoyed his Company longer, yet since he was ingaged by his promise to Colonell O Roirk, to return the next day, he would by no means have him break his word; Master Parck likewise telling the Deponent, That it was reported amongst them, that Colonell O Roirk was likewise killed by Sir Frederick Hamilton, at the breaking up of the Camp, till the Deponent assured him of the contrary; and that he was an eye-witness that day the Town and Garrison of Mannor-Hamilton was burned; Master Parck afterwards asking this Deponent, what the Countrey said was the reason for this Rebellion, they alledged the King to have encouraged them to it; which if he did said Master Parck, we must all do as the King will have us to do; but untill the truth of this appear, I will keep my self quiet, and meddle as little as I can.’[vi]

The date of O’Ferry’s deposition was 12 January 1643, as the new year began on 25 March. ‘Clanclare’, the name of the parish in which Manorhamilton is situated, is usually ‘Cloonclare’. The action O’Ferry described was an ineffective

blockade of Manorhamilton Castle by the O’Rourkes which dragged on from early 1642. (The castle, whose ruins attest to its size and strength, was finally taken and burnt in 1652 by the Earl of Clanrickard in one of the last actions of the Eleven Years’ War, 1641–52.) That O’Ferry could move freely between opposing sides was probably due to his profession. The Elizabethan soldier, Captain Barnaby Rich, had written 30 years previously that the Irish ‘have harpers, and those are so revered among the[m] ... , that in time of Rebellion, they will forbear to hurt either their persons or their goods.’[vii]

## II

‘The Elizabethan soldier, Captain Barnaby Rich, had written 30 years previously that the Irish ‘have harpers, and those are so revered among the[m] ... , that in time of Rebellion, they will forbear to hurt either their persons or their goods.’

Nothing more seems to be known about O’Ferry, but this is true of most Irish harpers of this period. Harps and harpers are occasionally mentioned in the 1641 Depositions, but such references are extremely rare. For example, ‘Patrick mc Tully, harper, of Drumbane’, Co. Cavan, was claimed to have accompanied a band of O’Bradys which robbed and expelled William North, a weaver in Annagh, also in Cavan, on 23 October 1641.[viii] When O’Bradys looted the house of Lieutenant Arnold Cosby at Swellan near Cavan town, their booty included ‘one Irish harp’.[ix] In Co. Longford, insurgent O’Farrells seized two harps from the house of the Revd James Nagle, vicar of Mostrim [Edgeworthstown], as a servant testified on 16 February 1653:

The said Manus mac Tumulty being duly sworn and ... examined, saith that at the first outbreaking of the rebellion, he was servant to Mr James Nagle of Mostrim, minister. He also saith that one Captain James mac

Gerald came with about eight men at ... that time to his said master's house and forcibly entered the house, plundered him of all the goods therein, telling the good wife that he might as well begin with her as to leave it to another, and amongst other things taking away two harps. The said Mr Nagle's wife desiring them, for that she had kept them thirty years, ... the said captain replied, 'you jade, you shall never have the like time hereafter.' Being demanded if he did see the said Captain James mac Gerald Farrell plunder ... the said minister's house as aforesaid, this deponent saith he was in the house when the captain plundered it & heard him speak the words aforementioned.[x]

Examined the same day, James mac Gerald O'Farrell denied this and other charges brought against him.[xi]

Another deposition with a link to Irish harping (though not an obvious one) is that of Henry Rugg, a minister in the diocese of Cloyne, Co. Cork, taken on 18 June 1642. Again, Rugg was in a position to exploit the local land-market, lending money, dealing in mortgages, etc. He deposed that he had been plundered of large numbers of cattle and sheep, besides household goods, by some of his Irish neighbours. They included

... Daniel Duff O'Cahill of Rathcobane in the parish of Templebodan, in the Barony of Barrymore & County

of Cork, gentleman, who, a little before he robbed this deponent of his goods, said to two of this deponent's servants, Andrew Lacy & Richard Turner, that he was sorry that the old prophecy was coming to pass, viz., that the Irish men should wash their hands in Englishmen's blood, the said Daniel having with him in company then & there his two sons Cormack O'Cahill & Daniel Oge Cahill.[xii]

Daniel Duff O'Cahill was the proprietor of 1,345 acres (approx.), and is stated elsewhere to have lived innocently since the beginning of the 1641 Rising, despite Rugg's accusation. As well as the two sons Rugg named, his eldest son, Lodowick [Ludovicus], who married a granddaughter of the poet Edmund Spenser's, was also accused of being in arms in 1641.[xiii] Daniel Duff had built up his estate, mainly through lease and mortgage, with his earnings as a musician at the Stuart court in England, where the Irish harp was popular from the late 1690s until the outbreak of the English Civil War in 1642. Originally harper to David fitz James Barry, Lord Barrymore, he served Anne of Denmark, wife of King James I of England, from c.1607 until her death in 1619. He was later Irish harper to Henrietta Maria, French-born wife of King Charles I, from 1628 until 1641.[xiv]

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- [i] Claire Foley and Colm Donnelly, et al. (eds), *Parke's Castle, Co. Leitrim: archaeology, history and architecture* (Dublin, 2012); Brian Mac Cuarta, 'The Plantation of Leitrim, 1620-41', *Irish Historical Studies* xxxii, no. 127 (2001), pp 297-320.
- [ii] Foley and Donnelly, *Parke's Castle*, pp 13-16.
- [iii] Dominic Rooney, *The life and times of Sir Frederick Hamilton, 1590-1647* (Dublin, 2013), p. 148; The Information of Sir Frederick Hamilton, Knight, and Colonell, Given to the Committee of Both Kingdoms, concerning Sir William Cole, Knight and Colonell ... With divers Letters and Depositions ... (London, 1645), pp 45, 72, 82-4.
- [iv] Foley and Donnelly, *Parke's Castle*, pp 87-8.
- [v] Rooney, *Sir Frederick Hamilton*, pp 37, 49, 95, 116, 119, 130-7, 152-3, 165.
- [vi] Hamilton, *Information*, pp 77-8.
- [vii] Barnabe Rich, Gent., *A new description of Ireland* (London, 1610), p. 37.
- [viii] Aidan Clarke, Thomas Bartlett, John Morrill, et al. (eds), 1641 Depositions volume II: Cavan, TCD Mss 832 & 833, Fermanagh, TCD Ms 835 (Dublin, 2014), p. 363.
- [ix] *ibid.*, p. 230.
- [x] Examination of Manus McTumulty, Co. Longford, 16 February 1653, TCD Ms 817, fol. 250r; abstract concerning James Farrell, Co. Longford [undated], TCD MS 817, fol. 314r. Spelling and punctuation modernised. These depositions are available online @<http://1641.tcd.ie>
- [xi] Examination of James mcGerrald ffarrell, Co. Longford, 16 February 1653, TCD Ms 817, fol. 253v.
- [xii] Deposition of Henry Rugg, Co. Cork, 18 June 1642, TCD MS 824, fol. 238v.
- [xiii] Examination of Henry Parr, 13 June 1654, TCD Ms 827, folk 278r, 280r.
- [xiv] Seán Donnelly, 'A Cork musician at the early Stuart court: Daniel Duff O'Cahill (c.1580-c. 1660), 'the Queen's harper', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, cv (2000), pp 1-26. [Note that the references to the 1641 Depositions on p. 122 are confused and some of them wrong.]

# New Releases

## Harp Albums and Videos

**Aisling Lyons | Aistear** (2021)

Available at [www.aislinglyonsmusic.com](http://www.aislinglyonsmusic.com)



“*Aistear* is a collection of some traditional tunes I grew up playing, my own compositions and tunes of other composers I admire. Music is an incredibly important part of my life and the compositional aspect has allowed me to express and explore emotion during difficult times. *Aistear* is an expression of my journey to date - including the death of my Dad in 2019 and experiencing grief through the Covid pandemic. *Aistear* is also an expression of the fun and humour that I enjoy in music, the playful elements as well as the profound”. **Aisling Lyons**

*Aistear* has already received great praise:

“..wonderful innate musicality, virtuosity & sense of adventure” - **Máirtín O’Connor**

“Her formidable technique gives voice to an intangible, lyrical musicality that keeps the listener in a spell” - **Kathleen Loughnane**

“..a really lovely recording that I think any fan of traditional music would enjoy very much” -

**Martin Hayes**

Website: [www.aislinglyonsmusic.com](http://www.aislinglyonsmusic.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/aislinglyonsmusic](https://www.facebook.com/aislinglyonsmusic)

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/aislinglyonsmusic/>

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**Anne-Marie O’Farrell | Embrace. New Directions for Irish Harp** (2021) Available at <https://annemarieofarrell.com/product/embrace-new-directions-for-irish-harp/>



Anne-Marie O’Farrell’s new solo Irish harp album, *Embrace. New Directions for Irish Harp* was launched by Toner Quinn at the Contemporary Music Centre in Dublin on 24<sup>th</sup> November. The album features world premiere recordings of works by John Dowland, J.S. Bach, Félix Godefroid, David Bremner and Anne-Marie O’Farrell, along with three works from Sheila Larchet Cuthbert’s *The Irish Harp Book*: Daniel McNulty’s *Fantasia*, John Kinsella’s *Allegro Giocoso*, and Joan Trimble’s

*Introduction and Air* transcribed for one harp. It was an opportunity to belatedly mark the centenary in 2020 of Daniel McNulty, and it was with great sadness we felt the absence of John Kinsella at the launch as he listened from the heavenly realms. A centrepiece of the album is a groundbreaking transcription of Bach's famous *Chaconne* from his second violin partita BWV1004. There are two products available, a standard six-page digipack, and a special edition with a stitched booklet featuring close-up images of innovative techniques used on the album, and links to online resources about the repertoire.

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## BRÍDÍN | Ocean of Stars (2021)

Available at [www.bridinmusic.com](http://www.bridinmusic.com) and <https://bridin.bandcamp.com/album/ocean-of-stars-ep>



BRÍDÍN's debut contemporary folk EP, *Ocean of Stars*, consists of 5 tracks, 'Wysteria', 'Floating', 'North West', 'Ocean of Stars' and 'The Salmon's Tale'. 'Wysteria', 'North West' and 'The Salmon's Tale' are all instrumental pieces of different styles and 'Floating' and 'Ocean of Stars' feature her vocals. "I'm so excited to have this EP out, as I've been working on it for a while now getting it right. I've met so many incredible musicians along the way

that I'm lucky to have worked with on my music. I couldn't be more pleased with the result! From hearing them in my head as an idea, to watching them grow was magic and so exciting. I hope *Ocean of Stars* EP can bring some happiness and calm to people in such a challenging time." – BRÍDÍN

By day, BRÍDÍN, works as a full time funeral director and embalmer, taking after her father David McGowan, of RTE documentary fame.

"I've always been involved in funerals, working full time in it, it has completely changed my outlook on life. I see sadness every day and people going through the most horrible time. There are tragic funerals and you have to stay strong, and hold it together. When the funeral is over and I go home that night I erupt. I gravitate towards my harp and write my music, which I find is a huge relief and escape" BRÍDÍN says.

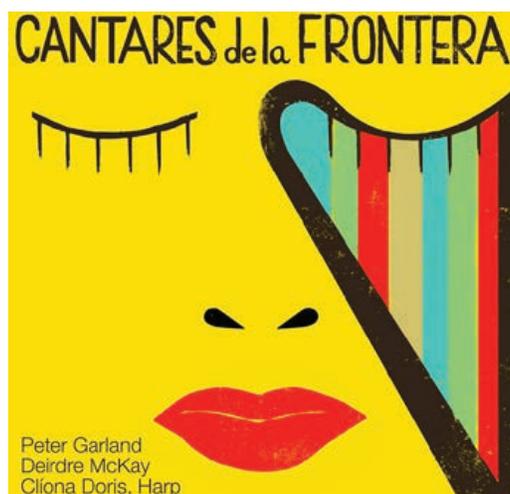
Also featured on the EP are the talents of band members Clare Sands, Jake Curran, Paul Leonard, Brian Dillon and Jack Selby-Smith.

BRÍDÍN celebrated the launch of her EP with a live show from the cockpit of a decommissioned Boeing 767 plane, located at their "Quirky Nights Glamping Village" in Enniscrone Co. Sligo. This launch premiered live on Youtube on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021.



Watch the video *BRÍDÍN - 'Ocean of Stars' virtual ep launch - 'Airplane Mode'* - at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8Lci-4RqVU>

## Clíona Doris | Cantares de la



**Frontera** (2021) Available at <https://louthcontemporarymusicsociety.bandcamp.com/>

Louth Contemporary Music Society released *Cantares de la Frontera* featuring two solo harp works by Peter Garland and Deirdre McKay, performed by Clíona Doris. While the compositions are routed in different places, both explore an introverted soundworld through kaleidoscopic rhythmic and melodic patterns.

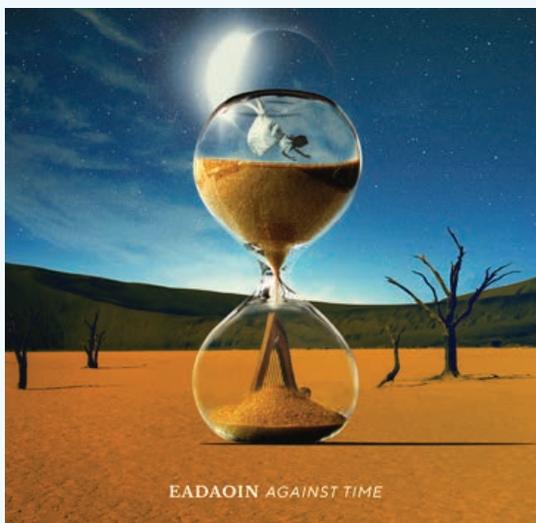
The three movements of Peter Garland's *Cantares de la Frontera* (1986) evoke the landscape of the Mexico-US border. In *handwoven* (2018), Deirdre McKay visualises the movements of the loom, which she describes as 'neat fingers weave, in close quarters, drawing out patternings'. This work was commissioned by RTÉ's *Sunday Miscellany* for their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, and written for and premiered by Clíona Doris. Funded by the Arts Council and Create Louth.

Watch the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BBXFtSWGII>

## Éadaoin Ní Mhaicín | Against Time

(2021) Available at <https://www.lnk.to/EADAOIN?fbclid=IwAR39eaMeg7uhx2oYBo4tf8EZXPYmPXs4HNJFpe-f0evvtWWVgMp8OcuToik>

Released in 2021, *Against Time* is Éadaoin's first purely solo piece. Recorded in Dublin, mixed and mastered in Glasgow, *Against Time* was written



as a contemplative piece which cast an eye back to the year gone by. An almost ironic title as there was definitely not a race against the clock during COVID but it always felt like there was, which is pretty much a mantra of life. It was her way of expressing that even though the world has stopped, we as people need to keep going, pushing through and strive to be our best self because the world never really stops, and life will go on so always express yourself in the way you want to be remembered.

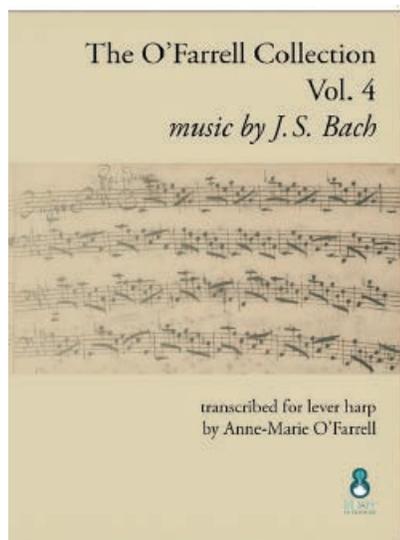
Official video available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpaFVJ2x-C0>

# New Releases

## Harp Publications

**Anne-Marie O'Farrell | The O'Farrell Collection Vol 4: Music by J.S. Bach**  
(2021)

Available at <https://80dayspublishing.com/collections/lever-harp/products/anne-marie-ofarrell-the-ofarrell-collection-vol-4-music-by-j-s-bach>



A new volume of music by J.S. Bach, edited and transcribed by Anne-Marie O'Farrell was issued in April 2021. *The O'Farrell Collection Vol. 4: Music by J.S. Bach* features 7 pieces

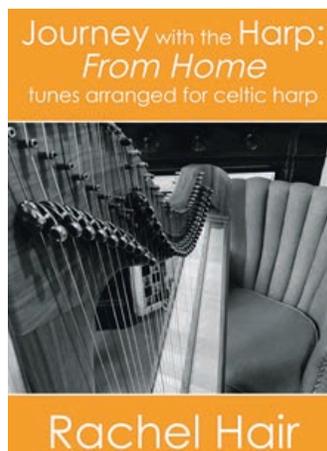
originally composed for cello and keyboard. Published by 80 Days Publishing, it includes lever charts and reset points to aid practice, along with substantial background information relating to aspects of performance, notation and sources.

“Meticulously researched, beautifully notated, and including a revolutionary new way to notate lever changes, this collection is sure to transform playing Bach’s music on the lever harp.”

- Laura Shurman, Miami University.

**Rachel Hair | Journey with the Harp: From Home** (2021)

Available at [www.rachelhair.com](http://www.rachelhair.com)



Scottish harpist Rachel Hair has released her 5<sup>th</sup> book of harp music *Journey with the Harp: From Home* both in hard-copy and PDF format. With over 20 arrangements (elementary-advanced levels), the

book features tunes from Scotland, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Cornwall and Galicia alongside her own compositions, each tune comes with background information and fingering. Rachel says “My new book is really a result of being stuck at home for a year and making the most of having time to revisit old arrangements. It’s been wonderful to rediscover the joy I had playing them and also having the time to discover new-to-me tunes to arrange and fall in love with”. Some of the tunes are featured in her YouTube workshop series *Harp at Home* and she is slowly releasing videos of arrangements of the others.

Purchase direct at [www.rachelhair.com](http://www.rachelhair.com)

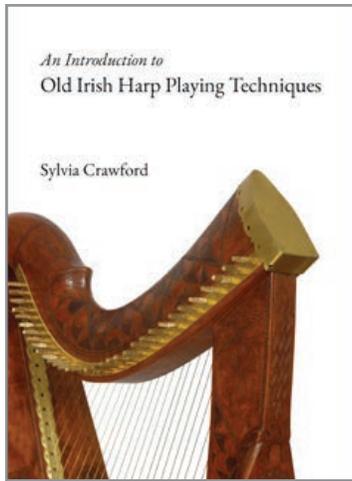
Some videos of the tunes:

*Da Slookit Light*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSn4IOWSsz5c>

*The Duke of Fife's Welcome to Deeside*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fe2o0QeCqhU>

## Sylvia Crawford | An Introduction to Old Irish Harp Playing Techniques (2021)

Available at <https://simonchadwick.net/publishing/crawford>



This book explains how to play the three first tunes traditionally taught to young Irish harpers. Working phrase-by-phrase through each of the tunes, Sylvia's descriptions, photographs and music notation

guide your fingers to learn the playing techniques of the old Irish harpers. There is also an introductory section explaining Sylvia's work in reconstructing the lost art of playing the old Irish harp.

Sylvia is originally from County Armagh. After studying music and musicology at Queen's University Belfast, she moved away from the area in the 1990s. One of her motivations was to seek out and learn Irish traditional music, playing the fiddle, and she also started to play the old Irish harp. It wasn't until she returned to live in Armagh that she discovered the local traditions of Irish harp playing in County Armagh from a bit over 200 years ago. She made a special study of the old Irish harper Patrick Quin, who was from county Armagh.

Patrick Quin was a key tradition-bearer, and the music collector Edward Bunting wrote down the three first tunes from Quin's playing. Sylvia's study of Quin and his music fed naturally into her interest in teaching. This book is the result of her efforts to reconstruct the playing techniques of the old Irish harpers, by marrying the three first tunes, with the traditional fingering techniques

collected by Bunting from the old harpers. Sylvia has taken what she has learned from her study of Patrick Quin and the wider traditions he was part of, and used her insights to bring these traditions back to life. Sylvia's harp was made for her in 2020 by Pedro Ferreira ([www.rumor.pt](http://www.rumor.pt)). It is based on the Castle Otway harp (Trinity College Dublin) which was associated with Patrick Quin.

Published in Armagh by Simon Chadwick, 2021  
ISBN 978-1-8384891-0-6

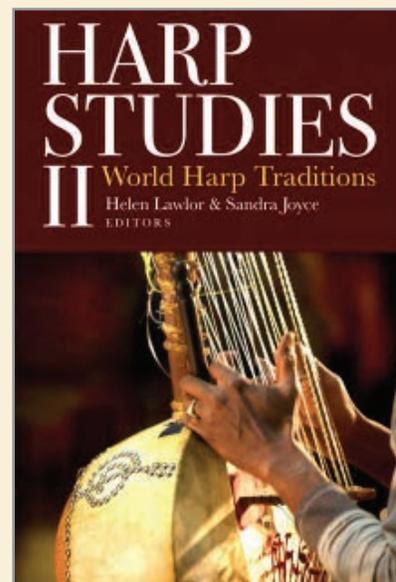
Price: £20, plus postage. All orders and enquiries to [shop@simonchadwick.net](mailto:shop@simonchadwick.net)

Trade enquiries welcome. Harp teachers who wish to use this book with their students can buy copies at the wholesale rate.

## Helen Lawlor and Sandra Joyce | Harp Studies II: World Harp Traditions (2022)

Available at <https://www.fourcourtspress.ie/books/new-year-folder/harp-studies-ii/>

*Harp Studies II: World Harp Traditions* is the second book edited by Helen Lawlor and Sandra Joyce.



*Harp Studies: Perspectives on the Irish Harp* (2016) focused on the history, contemporary practice and developments in harping in Ireland. *Harp Studies II* (2022) takes a very different approach to the

harp following many years of work by Helen and Sandra in academia. Much of our work involves lecturing about music traditions from Ireland and

around the world and participating in conferences on music (Helen lectures at TU Dublin Conservatoire and Sandra is Director of the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick). This book is part of the ongoing work of Ionad na Cruite, the Irish harp research cluster at UL, supported by The Chieftains Fund (in memory of Derek Bell). Through our lecturing, research and conference participation we began to consider new ways of thinking about the harp tradition, or even harp traditions that helped to formulate our approach for *Harp Studies II: World Harp Traditions*.

Our main research questions considered ways in which the harp is used around the world today and reflect on how harping traditions have manifested in history.

“What are the ways in which the harp is performed in contemporary and historical practice? What socio-political meanings are contested and negotiated through music practice on the harp? How does iconography shape our understanding and reception of harp practice? To what extent do models of patronage and power dynamics impact on musical traditions and what agency do musicians have in such power relationships? What are the gendered dimensions of musical practice and how does gender intersect with the negotiation of identity and musical practice?”

In order to assess these questions across time and space we have brought together a collection of essays that each provide fascinating insights into harping traditions around the world. The first section of the book concentrates on harping in Ireland. Deirdre Nic Chártaigh’s essay ‘The Harp in Classical Irish Poetry: An Edition Of Cia An Saoi lé Seinntear an Chruit?’ is an analysis of a bardic poem about

harper Tadhg Ó Cobhthaigh. We learn much about the formulation of poetry and poetic devices here, but also about the associated Gaelic harping tradition. Mary Louise O’Donnell’s article, ‘In the Shadow of Bochsa: A Study of Three Foreign Pedal Harpists in Dublin (c. 1850–1900)’ gives a unique insight into Bochsa, Taylor and Aptommas, three pedal harp virtuosi who graced the Irish stages in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Helen Davies and Lia Lonnert give a detailed account of Adolf Sjödén and his Irish sojourn in “‘When thy slender fingers go forth on the wire’: The visit of the Swedish harp virtuoso Adolf Sjödén to Ireland in 1879’. Cormac de Barra’s article ‘Sustaining the Harp in Ireland: Máirín and Róisín Ní Shéaghda’s Music, Teaching and Legacy’ concentrates on the music, culture and heritage of the Ní Shéaghda sisters. Their promotion of harping and singing was instrumental in keeping the tradition alive during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sandra Joyce reflects on her own music education in harping through an autoethnographic account of studying harp in a convent school environment in her article “‘I Will Praise You with the Harp’: The Influence of Catholic Nuns on Irish Harp Music in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century’. Helen Lawlor’s contribution ‘Learning Together: Participatory Music Practices in Irish Harp Ensembles’ focuses on harp ensembles in historical and contemporary practice. Their growth and development in Ireland has accelerated in recent years and Lawlor assess their benefits to music education and for the social experiences of practitioners.

The second section of the book examines harping traditions around the world. Haley Hodson’s work ‘Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Pedal Harps: A Focus on The Philharmonie de Paris Harp Collection’ provides research from the perspective of decorative arts, detailing how trends from visual

art and architecture inspired fashions in pedal harp design. Catriona Cannon's essay 'The Viggianese Harp: An Exploration of a Musical Diaspora and its Parallels with The Irish Tradition' traces the harp tradition of Viggiano in Italy through the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. 'A Trajectory of The Breton Harp in The Twentieth Century' by Tristan Le Govic analyses the music and culture of the Breton harp with particular reference to Kristen Noguès. She was a very diverse musician who combined Breton traditional music with jazz and electronic elements to create a new and exciting sound. Neil Wood and Joshua Dickson co-authored an essay on harping in Scotland 'A Harper's Perspective on The Revival (or Re-Invention?) of the Scottish harp'. They write about historic attempts to revive harping in Scotland and explore the world of contemporary harp practice.

Sylive Le Bomin and Salomé Strauch present ground-breaking research on the documentation and categorisation of over 500 harps of Central Africa in 'Studying the Diversity of Central African Harps'. They work as part of a large interdisciplinary team at the Université Paris Diderot. Susanne Fürniss gives a historical ethnography of harp types in Cameroon with an intriguing account of a lost harp type in 'Innovation Crushing Cultural Memory: Harps in South Cameroon'. The recording industry and dissemination of traditional music in Gabon is the focus of Rémy Jadinon's article 'Let's Make a Record! Contemporary repertoires of the Ngombi Harp by Mitsogo Artists in Gabon'. In this he critically analyses the music of contemporary Mitsogo artists and ways in which they maintain their tradition in modernity. Paulla Ebron's essay 'Social Life of the Kora' looks at how the Gambian kora tradition has developed and changed in recent years. She references the collaboration between Catrin Finch and Seckou Keita as an example of

how this ancient tradition has emerged on the world stage in recent years. Lucie Rault's essay examines art, iconography and visual imagery to document the changing harp types evident in Asia. 'Harps in Asia: a Historical Survey. The Spread of Various Types of Harps Throughout the Asian Continent'. This is an expansive essay that gives a wonderful overview of a variety of harp types in history. Benjamin Fairfield and Suwichan Phattanaphraiwan write about a particular song type in the Karen tradition, 'Dawpuewae'. Their essay 'Dawpuewae: Forming and performing the Karen collective with the tehniku (harp)' analyses how the harp is used in Karen culture to express social and political messages through music.

*Harp Studies II: World Harp Traditions* will be available in 2022, published by Four Courts Press (<https://www.fourcourtspress.ie/books/new-year-folder/harp-studies-ii/>). It seeks to find new, expansive ways of thinking about the harp in international contexts, showing that musical traditions around the world share many of the ways in which they are meaningful to people. The contributions include essays on music in Ireland, Europe, Myanmar, Africa and Asia. The editors hope also to stimulate further research and discussion on harping in Ireland and around the world.

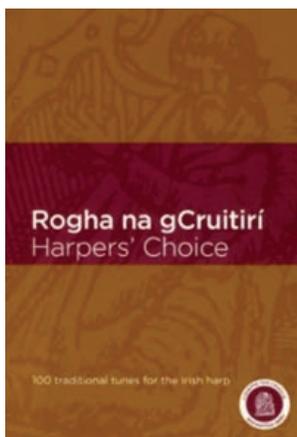
**Dr Helen Lawlor**  
**TU Dublin Conservatoire**



## Cairde na Cruite Publications

Available from: [www.cairdenacruite.com](http://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 21<sup>st</sup> century.

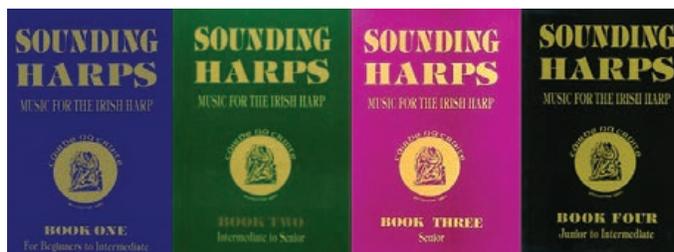
### The Irish Harp Book edited by Sheila Larchet Cuthbert



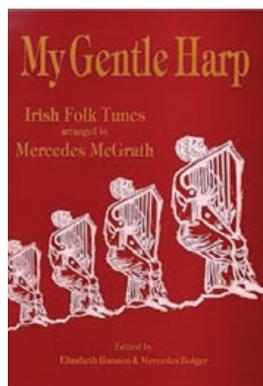
Cairde na Cruite's first publication. A collection of studies and exercises for the use of teachers and pupils of the Irish harp, featuring contributions from leading Irish harpers and composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 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 students respectively. The *Sounding Harps* series contains traditional tunes - traditional slow airs, songs and dance music arranged by well known exponents of the harp.



### My Gentle Harp edited by Elizabeth Hannon and Mercedes Bolger



A collection of studies and exercises for the use of teachers and pupils of the Irish harp with solo and duet arrangements of Irish music.

### Masters of the Irish Harp CD (2011)

Produced in association with Cairde na Cruite, this CD released on the RTÉ lyric fm label celebrates the virtuosity of sixteen of our leading harpers playing music ranging from solo harp tunes collected at the Belfast Harp Festival in 1792 right up to compositions created in the 21<sup>st</sup> century for harp, trumpet and guitar. Artists include Gráinne Hambly, Aibhlín McCrann, Laoise Kelly, Helen Davies, Paul Dooley, Anne-Marie O'Farrell: Siobhán Armstrong, Michelle Mulcahy, Máire Ní Chathasaigh, Kathleen Loughnane, Áine Ní Dhubhghaill, Cormac de Barra, Triona Marshall, Janet Harbison, Dearbhail Finnegan and Gráinne Yeats.



# Competition Time

Complete the *An Cruitime* word search to be in with a chance of winning a Cairde na Cruite t-shirt!

What you need to do:

- Complete the word search below.
- Follow Cairde na Cruite on instagram [@cairde na cruite](https://www.instagram.com/cairde_na_cruite).
- Send a picture of the completed word search to our Instagram account by 11 February 2022 to be entered into the draw.

The winner will be announced on 19 February on our Instagram story.

H	O	R	N	P	I	P	E	X	S	A	S	T	N
E	D	N	R	R	N	T	E	E	O	C	I	X	H
S	R	P	C	R	U	I	T	G	U	T	N	P	T
H	O	T	D	E	N	F	I	G	N	I	R	T	S
I	H	N	E	T	R	J	J	I	D	D	T	E	E
H	C	X	R	L	A	V	I	T	S	E	F	C	I
H	Y	H	A	R	P	R	E	E	L	I	I	P	N
I	E	Y	T	P	M	T	Y	U	E	R	N	T	N
P	K	T	R	L	U	A	E	U	E	C	P	U	U
N	R	O	E	A	S	C	I	L	H	D	R	N	I
E	U	L	C	N	I	S	T	E	D	I	O	I	G
P	N	G	N	X	C	C	E	V	Y	N	G	N	T
E	G	H	O	T	E	X	N	E	V	O	E	G	T
A	G	L	C	Y	A	U	R	R	E	C	O	T	P

FESTIVAL  
SOUND  
PLANXTY  
LEVER  
CHORD  
HARP  
KEY  
MUSIC  
JIG  
REEL  
STRING  
HORNPIPE  
CONCERT  
TUNING  
CRUIT

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/3052603/>

# Harp Makers in Ireland

With a view to promoting awareness among harpers, harp organisations and parents of potential harpers of the range of harps and services harp-makers in Ireland provide, *An Cruitire* has included the following list of full-time and part-time harp-makers currently operating in Ireland

HARP MAKER	COMPANY NAME	TYPE OF HARP	LOCATION	CONTACT
Brian Callan	Callan Harps	Lever	Co. Galway	<a href="http://www.callanharps.com">www.callanharps.com</a> <a href="https://facebook.com/callanharps">facebook.com/callanharps</a>
Pat Cawley & Indra Karklas	Indra's Celtic Harps	Lever	Co. Westmeath	<a href="http://www.irishcelticharps.com">www.irishcelticharps.com</a>
Gerard Doheny	Irish Crafted Instruments	Lever	Co. Laois	<a href="http://www.irishcraftedinstruments.ie">www.irishcraftedinstruments.ie</a>
Paul Dooley		Early Irish	Co. Clare	<a href="http://www.pauldooley.com">www.pauldooley.com</a>
Kevin Harrington	Harrington Instruments	Lever	Co. Cork	<a href="http://www.harringtoninstruments.com">www.harringtoninstruments.com</a>
Tomás Mac Uilleagóid	Eala Harps	Lever	Co. Dublin	<a href="https://facebook.com/Eala-Harps605239709621205/">facebook.com/Eala-Harps605239709621205/</a>
Ruairí McCann	Narrow Water Harps	Lever	Co. Louth	<a href="http://mccannruairi.wixsite.com/narrow-water-harps">http://mccannruairi.wixsite.com/narrow-water-harps</a>
Jan Muyliaert		Lever	Co. Meath	<a href="http://www.irishharps.net">www.irishharps.net</a>
Tim O'Carroll	Killarney Harps	Lever	Co. Kerry	<a href="http://www.killarneyharps.com">www.killarneyharps.com</a>
Davy Patton	Early Irish Harps	Early Irish	Co. Roscommon	<a href="http://www.davypatton.com">www.davypatton.com</a>
Seán Smyth	Hollytree Harps	Lever	Co. Dublin	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/sean.smyth">https://www.facebook.com/sean.smyth</a>
Natalie Surina	Ériú Harps	Early Irish Lever	Co. Galway	<a href="http://www.eriuharps.com">www.eriuharps.com</a> <a href="https://facebook.com/eriuharps">facebook.com/eriuharps</a>
Brian & Mervyn Waugh	Turmennan Harps	Learner	Co. Down	<a href="http://www.turmennanharps.com">www.turmennanharps.com</a>
Graham Wright	Graham Wright Violins & Harps	Lever	Co. Mayo	<a href="https://facebook.com/grahamwrightviolinmaker">facebook.com/grahamwrightviolinmaker</a>

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.

# Support Cairde na Cruite



We greatly appreciate donations to help support our festival, our regular concerts and our activities. [Click here to donate](#). Harpers can also support the society through our [online shop](#) which features a range of harp music and recordings.

## 2022 Harp Dates for your Diary

### JANUARY

Templebar TradFest, 26-30 January 2022

### FEBRUARY

Remembering Bunting Festival, dates TBC

Féile na Tána, 4-6 February 2022

Scoil Cheoil an Earraigh, 23-27 February 2022

### MARCH

Corofn Traditional Festival, 2-6 March 2022

Cairde na Cruite Spring Concert, Pearse Museum, Rathfarnham, 3pm, 27 March 2022

### APRIL

The Gathering Traditional Festival, Killarney, 7-10 April 2022

Blossom Harp Festival, dates TBC

Féile Patrick Byrne, 6-10 April 2022

Clifden Traditional Music Festival, April 2022 TBC

### MAY

Tulla Traditional Music Festival, dates TBC

### JUNE

Blas International Summer School of Irish Traditional Music and Dance, 20 June-1 July 2022

### JULY

Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy, 2-10 July 2022

South Sligo Summer School, 10-16 July 2022

Joe Mooney Summer School, July 2022

Meitheal Summer School, 18-22 July 2022

Scoil Acla, 25-30 July 2022

Scoil na gCláirseach, July 2022

O'Carolan Harp Festival, Keadue, 25 July - 1 August 2022

### AUGUST

Scoil Éigse, August 2022

National Heritage Week, August 2022

### SEPTEMBER

Dingle TradFest, dates TBC

Culture Night, 23 September 2022

### OCTOBER

Cairde na Cruite Winter Concert, Pearse Museum, Rathfarnham, 3pm, 15 October 2022

Lá na Cruite, Harp Day, 15 October 2022

Achill International Harp Festival, October 2022

### NOVEMBER

Féile Patrick Byrne, dates TBC

William Kennedy Piping Festival, dates TBC

Harp and Pipes Tionól, Music Generation Laois, dates TBC

### DECEMBER

Scoil Gheimhridh Ghaoth Dobhair, December 2022 - January 2023



Feis Ceoil 2022 will be taking place online from Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March to Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022. Details of the many harp competitions and how to view them as well as information about the syllabus, prize funds and closing dates can be found online at the website: [www.feisceoil.ie](http://www.feisceoil.ie)

## International Events:

Edinburgh International Harp Festival, 8-11 April 2022. New venue, George Watson's College. Hybrid festival with concerts, courses and workshops both in-person and online.

Somerset Folk Harp Festival, in-person 21-24 July 2022 and online 1 July-31 October 2022

Rachel Hair: Harp at Home, ongoing

Maeve Gilchrist: Harp Talk, ongoing

Ailie Robertson, 'Harp from the Start' Online Harp School for adult learners, ongoing

## World Harp Congress 2022



The 20<sup>th</sup> World Harp Congress, a homecoming for harpists and harp enthusiasts from across the world, will be held in Cardiff, Wales, UK from 22<sup>nd</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022. This will be the first time in 14 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 about the 2022 World Harp Congress, visit [www.worldharpcongress.com](http://www.worldharpcongress.com).



### New Website

Our website has a new design! Visit <https://www.cairdenacruite.com/> to stay tuned with all things Cairde na Cruite. There is something that will resonate with everyone – find information on harp hire and upcoming events, visit our online shop, renew your membership, or take a trip down memory lane with videos, photos and previous issues of our newsletter.

### Stay Tuned

Follow us on social media to stay up to date with our latest news and events.

You can also stay in the loop by following us on social media or by joining our mailing list.



Facebook: [@CairdeNaCruite](https://www.facebook.com/CairdeNaCruite)



Instagram: [@cairde\\_na\\_cruite](https://www.instagram.com/cairde_na_cruite)



Twitter: [@CCIHF](https://twitter.com/CCIHF)

Email: [info@cairdenacruite.com](mailto:info@cairdenacruite.com)

Website: [www.cairdenacruite.com](http://www.cairdenacruite.com)



Facebook: @CairdeNaCruite



Instagram: @cairde\_na\_cruite



Twitter: @CCIHF

Email: [info@cairdenacruite.com](mailto:info@cairdenacruite.com)

Website: [www.cairdenacruite.com](http://www.cairdenacruite.com)