

Here are a few notes to help you understand this evening's concert:

Tune – an instrumental piece, as opposed to a song.

Reel – a fast dance tune in 4/4 or cut time.

Jig – another type of dance tune in 6/8 time.

Hornpipe – a dance tune in 4/4, slower and bouncier than a reel.

Slow Air – the air, or melody of a song, played on an instrument.

Sean-nos – in Irish this means “old-style.”

Ceili – pronounced “KAY-lee”; a dance or house party.

Ceili band – a type of ensemble that flourished in the 1950s and 60s, widely credited with keeping the traditional music alive and popular.

Flute – Irish music is generally played on a wooden flute with simple system fingering, comparable to a Baroque flute.

Concertina – Irish musicians generally prefer the “Anglo” fingering system over the “English.”

Accordion – the button accordion, or “box”, has little in common with the piano accordion.

Fiddle – no difference here from the standard violin.

Guitar – a relative newcomer to Irish traditional music; in fact the music was rarely accompanied by any chordal instrument until the 1920's. Many guitarists use the DADGAD open tuning.

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UPCOMING WORLD MUSIC EVENTS

Friday, March 16. 8 pm. Agate Hall Auditorium
BALKAN FOLKDANCE with
UO EAST EUROPEAN FOLK MUSIC ENSEMBLE
UO Ensemble; Free

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Concert Co-sponsors:

UO Office of International Programs and Oregon Humanities Center



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107th Season, 70th program



SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

Beall Concert Hall
8:00 p.m.

Saturday evening
March 3, 2007

THE WORLD MUSIC SERIES

presents

MASTERS OF IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC

*The concluding event of the all-day
Eugene Irish Cultural Festival*

*Randal Bays, fiddle
Aidan Brennan, guitar
James Keane, button accordion
Catherine McEvoy, flute
Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, concertina
Patrick Ourceau, fiddle*



ABOUT TONIGHT'S PERFORMERS

Randal Bays has appeared at such major festivals as the Gaelic Roots Festival in Boston, the San Francisco Celtic Music and Arts Festival, the Festival Des Musiques-Vivantes in France, the Willie Clancy Summer School and Festival in Ireland, the Alaska Irish Music Festival, and California's Sebastopol Festival. He's also a noted album producer and has created scores for award-winning films and documentaries. His recent album "House to House" was picked by the Irish Times as one of the Top Five Traditional Recordings of 2005.

Dublin native **Aidan Brennan** is one of the most sought-after Irish guitarists in the U.S. He has performed with Paddy O'Brien, Brian Dunning, Randal Bays, Martin Hayes, Kevin Burke, Susan McKeown, Breda Smyth, and Lawrence Nugent. He has also recorded and toured internationally with Loreena McKennitt. In 1998 Aidan performed in the hit show Riverdance in Toronto.

Born in Drimnagh, Dublin in 1948, **James Keane** took up the button accordion at age six, drawing his primary inspiration from his mother, father and uncles (musicians all) and the rich cultural legacy of their home counties of Longford and Clare. While still in his early teens, James co-founded the Castle Ceili Band and won the All-Ireland ceili band competition in 1965. He went on to earn four All-Ireland titles as a soloist on the accordion. He plays in the group Fingal, with Randal Bays and Daithi Sproule.

Catherine McEvoy grew up in Birmingham, where she was exposed to the flute traditions of Co. Roscommon. She currently lives in Co. Meath, and has been a senior flute teacher for years at the Willie Clancy Summer School. From 1984-1988 Catherine was a member of "Macalla," the first all female traditional Irish music group. She has released two recordings of traditional flute music, her self-titled "Catherine McEvoy" (1998) and a CD with her brother, fiddler John McEvoy, "The Kilmore Fancy" (2004).

Dr. Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin has dedicated his career to promoting the preservation of Irish traditional music, folklife, and culture. Author, ethnomusicologist, anthropologist, and professional musician, he is Professor of Irish Studies and Music at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. A recognized authority on the cultural impact of the Great Irish Famine and its resulting diaspora, he has taught courses and presented guest lectures, performances, and seminars at universities all over Europe and North America.

Patrick Ourceau was born in France, and currently lives in Toronto. He toured with accordion and concertina player John Williams (ex-member of Solas) off and on over a three-year period. Patrick was a member of céilí band Celtic Thunder from 1995 to 1998 and currently plays for The Big Potato, an educational production for children about the potato famine. He is also a member of the Irish group Chulrua.

MASTERS OF IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC

This concert features several of the world's finest Irish traditional musicians, all regular instructors at the Friday Harbor Irish Music Camp in Friday Harbor, Washington, now in its seventh year. The idea for the "Masters of Irish Traditional Music" concerts grew out of the popularity of the staff concerts at the camp, in which the musicians perform in a series of solos, duos and trios, giving the audience a chance to hear the sounds of the various instruments as well as the stories and lore behind the music. At the end of each half of the concert, the entire ensemble presents a medley of traditional pieces, in the spirit of the *seisún*, or session, which is an informal gathering of musicians, dancers and listeners. These musical gatherings often run right through the night and into the wee hours of the morning.

Irish traditional music has become an international phenomenon, but many people still associate it with well-known commercially oriented stage shows such as Riverdance. The actual traditional music is still, as it was in centuries past, a much more intimate affair. Rather than the grand stage, a kitchen or pub is a more likely venue, and a wide range of music is usually heard in a single evening. While the *seisún* might be dominated by fast and furious dance tunes – the reels and jigs – there would also be a scattering of slower pieces, called "slow airs," and with any luck, a singer would come forth with the occasional song. The mood shifts as the night goes along, and the listener can't help but be moved by the range of emotion encompassed by this ancient repertoire in its natural setting.

The key to understanding Irish traditional music is the fact that it's all about melody, as opposed to harmony. Until the 1920's, accompaniment by a chordal instrument such as piano or guitar was practically unknown. Instead, musicians played single line melodies in unison, and that's still the way the music is generally passed on and shared. A good traditional musician knows hundreds if not thousands of these tunes, all retained in his or her memory. The use of printed music is frowned upon, although in the last century a number of collections have been published.

The melodies employ various modal scales, in addition to the standard major and minor scales, and most traditional players use subtle shadings of intonation – quarter tones, "between" notes, bent notes, etc. These practices don't lend themselves to standard chordal accompaniment techniques on fixed-pitch instruments, and most guitarists today use open tunings to complement the modal nature of the melodies.

You may not know that the native language of Ireland is Irish Gaelic, referred to in Ireland simply as "Irish", or "Gaeilge." The language is still very widely spoken and used, and certain large parts of Ireland are designated as "gaeltachts" or Irish-speaking areas. Not everyone in Ireland speaks Irish, but most Irish people have a working knowledge of the language, and it shows up regularly in the names of tunes and in the stories behind the music. Some of the performers on tonight's concert are fluent Irish speakers, and you may hear the occasional word or phrase in Irish.

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