



Tá *Ceol Oirghialla* ag cur i láthair
COIRM CHEOIL TRADISIÚNTA

A Concert of Traditional Music

ÓMÓS DO JOSEPHINE KEEGAN

le Ensemble Cheoil Traidisiúnta ITDD

Déardaoin 14 Márta 2013

7 i.n. in Amharclann Mhic Anna

Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Dhún Dealgan



On behalf of *Ceol Oirghialla* may I extend a warm welcome to all of our distinguished guests who are joining us for a special tribute concert in honour of Josephine Keegan.

At *Ceol Oirghialla* we recognise the unique cultural heritage of this historic kingdom of Oriel especially the strong tradition of music-making in the area, and we value the importance of preserving and promoting the music of our eminent local musicians. To date, research undertaken by Ionad Taighde Ceoil, the Centre for Research in Music at DkIT, has focused on the music and poetry connected to the Oriel region including the manuscripts of Luke Donnellan, the musical traditions of the Sliabh Beagh region, the music of Éamonn Ó Gallchobhair and the compositions of Turlough O'Carolan. Our seminal concert *Ó Riada sa Gaiety* (2009) celebrated the unique cultural heritage of Oriel, and we have continued to promote the music of the region in each of our traditional music concerts.

Following the success in November of the celebration of the Sligo-born fiddle players Michael Coleman and John Joe Gardiner (who later settled in Dundalk), tonight's concert is a fitting acknowledgement of the contribution of one of the leading living performers and traditional composers of the region, Josephine Keegan. We are delighted to welcome Josephine as our special guest in this tribute concert in her honour.

The study of traditional music is fundamental to our academic mission and is an integral component of both our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes where students engage with the cultural, social and historical study of traditional musics while also developing their performance skills. Central to the performance of traditional music at DkIT is the *Ceol Oirghialla* Traditional Ensemble. Comprising nearly forty musicians drawn from the DkIT community, the Ensemble enriches the cultural life of the community and the North-East, performing at a number of events throughout the year, including their contribution to the Institute's annual programme of events for 'Seachtain na Gaeilge' and DkIT Trad Week.

Gabhaim buíochas le gach duine atá ag glacadh páirte sa cheolchoirm seo anocht agus le gach duine a chabhraigh lena n-eagraíocht. Tá súil agam go mbainfidh sibh sult as an ceol.

Adèle Commins
Ceannasaí Rannóg an Cheoil
Head of Section of Music



Biographical note

Josephine Keegan was born in 1935 in Dundee, Scotland, and moved with her family to Co. Armagh in 1939 and later to Mullaghbane in 1950. Her father Joe Keegan was a flute player from the County Laois side of Portarlinton and his mother was Ann Delaney who was related to the late Dennis Delaney the renowned blind piper. Early music performances were playing céili's locally. Her early involvement in the John Murphy Céili Band developed initially from sessions in the houses of members. Keegan won many competitions including the Gold Medal at the Feis Ceoil in Dublin in 1955.

Josephine lived in London between 1963 and 1969 where she played in a number of bands including the Galtymore and Fulham. She began to play in public houses in Ireland with Seán Maguire following their return to Ireland around 1968. Her impact in the recording world was initially as accompanist to musicians including Sean McGuire, Joe Burke, Roger Sherlock, Séamus Tansey and Kevin Loughlin. Prior to 1976 she tended to play more on the piano but between 1977 and 1982 she recorded five solo albums on the fiddle, providing her own accompaniment on piano.

The repertoire of this evening's concert draws from Keegan's recordings and also her compositions, documented in four volumes of *The Keegan Tunes*. Through her own recordings she popularised the compositions of many musicians of her generation including Bobby Casey, Ed Reavey, Finbar and Michael Dwyer, Brendan McGlinchy, Paddy O'Brien, Charlie Lennon, Kevin Loughlin, Seán Ryan and Paddy Taylor and some of these compositions are included here in a manner that highlights the creativity and renewal that exists with Irish traditional music.

In 2002 Josephine Keegan published her first book of compositions. She received an award from Boston College in 2003 in appreciation of her lifelong dedication to Irish traditional music and invaluable contribution to Irish cultural preservation. In 2005 she was awarded TG4 Composer of the Year and received an award from Newry and Mourne District Council for her contribution to music in 2005. In 2006 Keegan was featured in a radio series *Cherish the Ladies* on RTÉ and a programme in the series '*sé mo laoch* focused on Josephine was aired in February 2013. She recently published her fourth volume of compositions and continues to play regularly.

Clár

Bliain a Ceathair

McDermott's / The Cow that Ate the Blanket	Reels
The Exiles Return	Song
Black Rosie / Rosewood	Jigs
Clár Bog Déil	Amhrán
Bishopswood March / The Blueberry Bush	March / Reel

Bliain a Trí

The Battle of Finea / The Rossport March	Marches
Sliabh Geal gCua	Amhrán
The Tailor's Twist / The Men from Ulster	Hornpipes
County Down	Song
The Floating Crowbar / Sweeney's Buttermilk	Reels

Sos

Josephine Keegan agus Kathleen Gavin

The Dance of the Honey Bees / An Droichead Beag	Barndances
The Pigeon on the Gate / Miss Monaghan	Reels
Apples in Winter / the Maid on the Bridge	Jigs
The Water Lily / Colonel Rodney	Hornpipe / Reel
Caoineadh Caoimhín	Air

Ceol Oighialla Traditional Music Ensemble

The Yew Tree / The Gates of Mullagh	Reels
Na Fianna / Bringing Home the Cup	Marches
Out of the Wind and Rain's Way	Air
The Daisy Chain / The Fuschia	Hornpipes
Around and About / The Thingamy Jig	Jigs
Ronnie Cooper's / The Mullaghbawn Reel	Reels

Notai

Josephine recorded ‘Master McDermott’s’ and ‘The Cow that ate the Blanket’ on the album *Fiddle* in 1977 (Outlet SOLP1033). A review in Ulster Folk Oct/Nov 1980 by Maurice Leyden states:

‘Josephine’s style has great fluency, punch and pace, ably and tastefully backed by her own piano accompaniment [...] All of the tracks are good to listen to and it’s difficult to single out a personal favourite but two opening reels, “McDermott’s” / “The Cow that ate the Blanket” get the LP off to a cracking start.’

Josephine believes the first reel was jointly composed by Sean McGuire and Liam Donnelly of Belfast in honour of Michael McDermott. In another version of the story published in *Ceol Rince na hÉireann* 4 (1996), Jackie Small states ‘Master McDermott's Reel’ was composed by the fiddler Michael 'The Master' McDermott in May 1943. McDermott was a schoolteacher in Pomeroy, County Tyrone, who moved to Carrigmore in the same county after he retired from work, and lived there until his death in the year 1947.

‘The Cow that Ate the Blanket’ is also known as ‘Miss Johnson’s’ and many versions exist; this one is adapted from Josephine’s playing and the version that appears in *O’Neill’s Music of Ireland 1850 Selections* (1903).

Like many of her generation, Keegan emigrated to Scotland and England, having initially returned aged four from Scotland. From the pen of John Doyle, ‘The Exile’s Return’ was inspired by The Jeanie Johnston, a ship that was bought by Tralee merchant Nicholas Donovan. During the 1840s and 50s it carried passengers from Tralee to America and unlike many other ‘coffin ships’ never lost a soul and carried over 2,500 people on sixteen voyages to North America.

‘Black Rosie’, from *The Keegan Tunes* (2002) was composed for a kindly neighbour. ‘Rosewood’ from *A Drop in the Ocean* (2004), was composed by James Scott Skinner and called by him ‘Rose Wood’ with the alternative title ‘George Rose Wood of Aberdeen’. Mr Rose Wood was a close friend of Skinner's, and managed many of his tours.

‘An Clár Bog Déil’ was widely sung in Munster in the early decades of the 19th century. It may have been composed by an Augustinian friar, the Reverend William English of Newcastle West, Co. Limerick who previous to his taking the Augustinian habit had produced many striking and beautiful songs in his native tongue.

Bishopswood is a place near Portarlington in the Midlands region of Ireland, near Keegan's father's birthplace. In *The Keegan Tunes* she includes a c. 1900 photo of the Bishopswood Band, apparently a fife and drum marching band, perhaps a school band to judge from the age of the individuals in the picture. 'The Blueberry Bush' is named after a present from Josephine's sister.

The Battle of Finea took place in 1644 but Myles Reilly remains a folk hero in Co. Cavan and some dispute the historical account that he fell in the battle, believing that he had his wounds attended to at Ross Castle before making his way back to mid-Cavan. The second march was inspired by local activism in Mayo in response to the Shell gas pipeline.

Sliabh gCua is a district of west County Waterford, between Clonmel and Dungarvan that is similar in many respects to the Oriel region. It was an Irish-speaking area until the late 19th century and notable sean nós singers Pádraig Ó Mileadha and Labhrás Ó Cadhla came from Sliabh gCua. 'Sliabh Geal gCua na Féile' was composed by Ó Mileadha while he worked in Wales and was recorded as an air on Keegan's eponymous 1980 solo recording for Outlet.



'The Men from Ulster' was recorded by Josephine in 1980 almost exactly as it appears in O'Neill's collection (1903) and is accredited to W.H. Whiddon in *Ryan's Mammoth Collection* (1883). 'The Tailor's Twist', also recorded by Josephine in 1980, was first recorded by fiddler James Morrison (1893-1947) on 10 August 1935, for Columbia Records, one of a set of two hornpipes.

'County Down' was composed by Tommy Sands (b. 1945) from Mayobridge, County Down. The song comprises of themes that are very relevant in the context of Josephine Keegan's own biography and geographical routes.

Two tunes from South Armagh fiddle player Brendan McGlinchy, which Josephine recorded in 1980, bring an end to the first half of the concert. McGlinchy lived for most of his life in the south of England but in his youth he was part of céilí bands in Armagh including Malachy Sweeney's and the Johnny Pickering Band. An All-Ireland champion on fiddle, McGlinchy gave up playing music for fifteen years until returning in 1993.

Josephine has often played tunes composed by her contemporaries and begins with two barndances composed by Charlie Lennon and Frankie Lane respectively. ‘The Maid on the Bridge’ is a composition of Seán Maguire, with whom Josephine often recorded and performed. ‘The Water Lily’ is a composition of Josephine’s and she finishes with the reel, ‘Colonel Rodney’, the Irish name for the Scottish tune ‘Brandlings’, composed by Abraham Mackintosh that appeared in John Watlen's 1798 2nd collection. It also features in the O’Neill collections of 1903 and 1907.

‘Caoineadh Caoimhín’ was composed for Kevin Fegan, a sound engineer who worked on *The Sweets of May* project, recording musicians in south Armagh and digitally remastering old céilí band recordings from Armagh dating from the 1950s. The air is performed by his father Tommy, a postgraduate research student at DkIT.

‘The Yew Tree’ and ‘The Gates of Mullagh’ are the first two tunes in the first collection of Josephine’s tunes published in 2002. The names highlight Josephine’s use of local place names and references to nature in her compositions. ‘The Yew Tree’ takes its name from Newry, the Gaelic name for which is ‘Iubhair Cinn Tragha’ meaning ‘the yew tree at the head of the strand’. ‘The Gates of Mullagh’ featured on Keegan’s first solo recording *Fiddle* (1977) and relates to a brief period during which Josephine lived in Mullagh, Co. Cavan.

‘Na Fianna’ is taken from the 2002 collection while ‘Bringing Home the Cup’ was composed ‘in the excitement of the success of the County Armagh football team, for the first time ever, bringing back the much-prized Sam Maguire Cup as All Ireland Champions in 2002’.

Josephine has many references to poetry in her books and this air from her second collection (2006) draws its name from ‘The Old Woman of the Roads’ by Pádraic Colum.

Many of Josephine’s tune titles make reference to flowers, plants and nature. ‘The Daisy Chain’ and ‘The Fuschia’ are taken from Josephine’s third collection (2010), as are the jigs that follow. *Around and About* is also the name of one of Josephine’s solo albums (2012).

Josephine composed the first in this final set for Sheltand composer, piano and piano accordion player Ronnie Cooper (d. 1982) who was an influence on her piano playing. ‘The Mullaghbawn Reel’, drawn from Josephine’s third collection (2010), was composed for an old dance from South Armagh which is described in *The Sweets of May* (2009).

Masters / PG Dip Traditional Music Studies

Dundalk Institute of Technology are launching a Masters / PG Dip in Traditional Music Studies in 2013. It is rooted in Irish traditional music, analysing extant music, song and dance forms and contexts, but explores outwards into related traditions which have impacted on Irish music, clarifying linkages, overlaps and borrowing. The course combines academic research, performance practice and the latest technological methods and explores the musical, social and historical dimensions of the folk music traditions of many areas of Europe including Ireland, Scotland, Brittany and Scandinavia.

Students engage with the discipline of ethnomusicology undertaking courses in traditional music studies, collection and archiving, popular music theory, transmission and technology. The dissertation/research project provides the opportunities for students to develop an in-depth specialised study, which can be academic or performance based. The programme is designed to inform a variety of interests including musicians, teachers, media commentators, producers and promoters.

For further information on this and all courses in music at DkIT contact ann.coffey@dkit.ie or check out <http://music.dkit.ie>.



Ceol Oirghialla Traditional Ensemble

Harp:	Helen Lawlor
Uilleann Pipes:	Tommy Fegan, Fiachra Meek, Alphonse Ó Maolagáin
Tin Whistle:	Suzanne Kierans, Amy Walsh
Flute:	Lora Gilbert, Martha Guiney, James McCreanor, Paul McGettrick, Áine Murphy, Sinéad O'Malley
Fiddle:	Joyce Lee, Laura Kenny, Ling Wei Chua, Gillian Power
Piano Accordion:	Adèle Commins, Lauren Farquarson, Carrie McCarthy, John McMahon, Ciara Moley
Banjo:	Darragh Brannigan, Barry Hynes, Daithí Kearney, Seán Keegan, Marian O'Brien, Ross Shannon, Seán Stringer
Mandolin:	Brian Casley, Gary Doyle, Gary Smyth
Bouzouki:	Niall O'Reilly
Piano:	David Burke, Ronan Kerr, James McGeehan
Guitar:	Ciarán Coughlan, Mathew Devlin, Cathal Faughnan, Josh Quinn
Percussion:	Siobhán Denton
Bass:	Ciarán O'Brien, Kieran Parker
Dancer:	Róisín Timoney
Special guests:	Josephine Keegan and Kathleen Gavin



Ceol Oirghialla

Section of Music

Dundalk Institute of Technology



For further information
on studying music at
Dundalk Institute of Technology
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David Stalling BA (Hons) (NUIM), MA (NUIM)

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Professor Jeremy Dibble, University of Durham

Professor Pozzi Escot, New England Conservatory

Professor Ray James, Baker University, Kansas

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Dátaí do do Dhialann

Seachtain na Gaeilge 11th–15th March 2013

Traditional Music Concert 14th March 2013

The Yeomen of the Guard 17th–19th April 2013

Choral Concert 25th April 2013

Musica Nova Week 29th April–3rd May 2013

Fís 2013 5th–6th June 2013

Buíochas

Derek Farrell

Alice Hoey

Orla Kelleher

Ann Coffey

Murt Ó Séaghdha

Kathleen Gavin

Henry McLoughlin and the Caretaking Staff

Fiona Rooney and the Housekeeping Staff

Programme: Daithí Kearney and Adèle Commins