

Notes on the Music – MUCH-BLINDIN’-DOWN-THE-MARSH – LLM 029

The Music and Songs on this CD consists of material which I have collected, learnt, written or osmosicised from frequenting bars, houses (of ill and fair repute) in the Drogheda area and further afield right down to Mullacrew and Louth Village.

Some of my influences have come from recordings and tapes, in particular I was drawn to regional traditional music – a good instance being Muckram Wakes’ album ‘A Map of Derbyshire’ where regional versions of (mundane)songs and tunes presented a unique perspective on well-worn material and regional or local songs such as ‘*The Cow in the Gate*’ were given the prominence they deserved.

My experience in playing music has been greatly enhanced by former musical buddies like Mary Ann Carolan , Tommy MacArdle, Brian Leahy, Joe Ryan and many others, and it is sustained and renewed by Eilis, Wally and Donal on a regular basis. The centre of my musical world for the last 50 odd years has been in Carberry’s Pub on the North Strand and its still the same today as it was in the 1960s - a good thing.

A feature of the pub in times gone by was the Sunday Morning session where visiting musicians or singers would often drop in and Caitlin would introduce them to the customers, reminding all that ‘*ciunas*’ would be required. My old pal, Joe Ryan used to say ‘*There’s no point in playing music in a pub unless you have the Landlord with you!*’ And Caitlin filled this role to a tee – being a Musician herself she understood that sometimes the musician is not necessarily interested in civilised conversation and respect for the common man (or woman) – they just want to play and be treated with the utmost respect and have their glass topped-up, even though they don’t deserve it.

In our ‘Lunchtime’ session, we quickly got over the guilt of missing Mass (an enjoyable sin), and the music would often extend way past Two O’Clock and Tom Sullivan would say to me - ‘if I don’t go soon, I’ll meet the chicken coming down Laurence’s Gate!’. As the closing time would pass, very often in the summer we would be moved out onto the street and we would play there until Caitlin re-opened at Four O’Clock. The motely crew of musicians consisted mostly of Eilis, Wally, Tom, Paddy(Buckshot) Buckley, Francie & Richie Taaffe and others too numerous to mention. Them was the days, but the days are still here and we will poke out the music as long as we can.

1. **The Two and Sixpenny Girl/Cailleach an Tuirne** *Jigs*
2. **Love is Teasing.** *Song*
3. **Är du galen gutt?** – (Schottis)
4. **Georgie.** *Song*
5. **Much Blindin’ Down the Marsh.***Song*
6. **Paddy Fahey’s Jig/The Jockey’s Breakfast.** *Jigs*
7. **The Poor Ditching Boy** (Richard Thompson) *Song*
8. **Mrs Merry’s Ball .** *Song*
9. **The Queen of Whatever/Tommy’s Boys** *Hornpipes*
10. **Gammel Boon/Malthouse** *Hornpipes*
11. **My Father’s a Hedger and Ditcher.** *Song*
12. **Johnny Sands.** *Song*
13. **The Quail is a Pretty Bird .***Tune*
14. **Ally with the Long Nose.** *Song*

Musicians : Jim MacArdle-vocals,guitar, concertina, harmonica,dulcimer,autoharp

Donal Black-vocals, banjos, guitars, drums, piano, mandolin.

Eilis Quinn-vocals, accordeon, Wally Murphy-vocals,banjo

Recorded & Mastered by Donal Black at Amergin Studios. Produced by Donal Black & Jim MacArdle.

*All titles traditional arranged by J.McArdle except **The Jockey’s Breakfast** and **The Queen of Whatever**, the melody for **Johnny Sands** composed by J.McArdle ,**The Poor Ditching Boy** composed by Richard Thompson and **Malthouse** composed by Roger Watson.*

1. **The Two-and-Sixpenny Girl/The Maid of the Spinning Wheel**

The first tune is from the late Joe Ryan from Inagh, Co Clare, whom I was privileged to play with for thirty years in the Drogheda area and further afield. I learnt the second tune from *Ceol Rince Na*

hEireann Part One, and have been playing it for years, and it reminds me of Sunday mornings in Carberry's Pub in the company of Wally, Eilish, and the late Paddy (Buckshot) Buckley on the harmonica.

Jim: *Concertina* Eilish: *Accordeon*, Wally: *banjo*, Donal: *Guitar*

2. Love is Teasing

This version is originally from Mary Ann Carolan and the arrangement comes from a version on a home tape recorded by Liz King and Irene Bagnall. Additional verses to those of Mary Ann Carolan come from Mudcat.

Jim: *Guitar & Vocals* Eilish: *Accordeon & Vocals*, Donal: *Guitar, Mandolin & Vocals*

3. Ar Du Galen Gutt ?

I learnt this tune from the great Swedish Fiddler Carina Nygren, who was frequent visitor to Ireland when we had the road to Milltown Malbay worn out, and all the summers were sunny and the sessions lasted forever.

Jim: *Concertina* Eilish: *Accordeon*,

4. Georgie

This comes from a version by Martin Carthy which I heard at the Cambridge Folk Festival in the 70s. The words are mostly from the *Penguin book of English Folk Songs*.

Jim: *Gorge Orthey autoharp, Vocals* Donal: *Weissenborn lap slide guitar, Vocals*

5. Much-Blindin'-Down-the-Marsh

Bill Murphy, Wally's father wrote this song as a wry comment on unemployment in Drogheda in the post-war years. It is a parody of the theme song to the BBC Radio sitcom based in the fictional RAF base (1944-1954) *Much-Binding-in-the-Marsh*. Bill served in the RAF during the war. In Bill's words, Blindin' was a reference to '*effin and blindin'*'. The Marsh was the Marsh (Mash) Road, on the south side of the River Boyne where the Port flourished in days gone by.

Jim: *Guitar, Vocals* Eilish: *Accordeon, Vocals*, Wally: *Banjo, Vocals*, Donal: *Mandolin, Drums, Tenor Banjo, Vocals*

6. Paddy Fahey's Jig/The Jockey's Breakfast

Paddy Fahey was a true original in Irish traditional Music, from his lonesome touch on the fiddle to his brilliant original compositions. On a couple of occasions, I visited the pub in East Galway which was Paddy's local and as the night progressed, the word went round '*we think he's goin' to play*' – and when he did, it was magic. The second tune is one of my own compositions.

Jim: *Concertina, Guitar*

7. The Poor Ditching Boy

A great Song by Richard Thompson from his album '*Henry the Human Fly*'

Jim: *Guitar & Vocals* Donal: *Piano & Vocals*

8. Mrs Merry's Ball

I had collected a number of local versions of this song but decided to record this version from Muckram Wakes.

Jim: *Guitar, harmonica, Vocals* Eilish: *Accordeon, Vocals* Wally: *Banjo, Vocals* Donal: *Piano, Drums, Tenor Banjo, Vocals*

9. The Queen of Whatever/ Tommy's Boys.

The first tune came about when I was trying to get one to go with the second one. The title is a phrase from the brilliant Dixie Chicks song, 'Takin' the Long Way'. The second tune is a version of the well-known hornpipe played by Tommy & Peter McArdle from Tallanstown – two great originals in Louth traditional music.

Jim: *Concertina* Eilish: *Accordeon*, Wally: *banjo*, Donal: *Guitar*

10. Gammel Boon/Malthouse

The first tune comes from Fanö, Denmark. The second tune was written by Roger Watson.

Jim: *Concertina*

11. My Father's a Hedger and Ditcher

From the singing of Mary Ann Carolan.

Jim: *Mountain Dulcimer*, *Vocals* Donal; *Weissenborn lap slide guitar*, *Vocals*

Johnny Sands.

I collected this version of Johnny Sands from a man in Slane many years ago. I should've written down his name. The air is my own, as I had lost the original field recording. The words collected match printed ballad sheet versions of the song.

Jim: *Guitar & Vocals* Donal; *Guitar & Vocals*

12. The Quail is a Pretty Bird

Learnt from a recording of the late great American fiddler and songwriter, John Hartford. As a songwriter he achieved great success with 'Gentle On My Mind', but he always stayed true to his first love – American traditional music.

Jim: *Concertina*. *Guitar* Donal: *Banjo*

14. Ally with the Long Nose.

This song comes from the late Petie Curran, from Tenure, Drogheda – a cousin and neighbour of Mary Ann Carolan. Mary Ann often told of how Petie would follow her father Pat around while he carried his farm work, like ploughing, to hear him sing and learn some of his songs. Petie often introduced or bookended this song with 'apologies to the ladies'. Petie played the warpipes with the Dunleer Pipe Band and showed me the remnants of a chanter which was made for his father by the great Billy Taylor, who had a workshop in Stockwell Lane, Drogheda before emigrating to America. Taylor is generally credited with inventing the modern set of Uilleann Pipes. The tune is from Tommy McArdle

Jim: *Guitar, Concertina, Vocals* Eilis: *Accordeon*., Donal; *Tenor banjo*