



1. Paddy's rambles through the park

Óró, sé do bheatha 'bhaile (trad.)

Paddy's rambles through the park (trad.)

Ned of the hill (trad.)

The album starts off with a selection of three well known melodies in Irish traditional music

The march *Óró, sé do bheatha 'bhaile* is known as a hauling home song. The 'hauling home' was bringing the bride to her husband's house after they had been married. It was usually a month or so after the wedding, and was celebrated as an occasion next only in importance to the wedding itself. The tune probably traces back to the 18th century, and during the 20th century was also used as a welcome home song to Irish exiles who took part in the 1916 uprising. We took our version of the tune from P.W. Joyce's book "Old Irish Folk Music and Songs" (1909), which features a rather unusual B part of the melody.

Paddy's rambles through the park is one of the "big" slow airs in the Irish traditional music repertoire. Our version is inspired by the playing of fiddler Dezy Donnelly, who recorded a beautiful rendition of this air in his recording "Familiar footsteps".

Ned of the Hill (*Éamonn an Chnoic*), is a well known song, which dates back to the 19th century. The rather unusual 6/8 version we play is one of the three versions of the melody published in the first volume of Francis Roche's "Collection of Irish Airs, Marches and Dance Tunes Compiled and Arranged for Violin, Mandoline, Flute, or Pipes". We tried to play the air a bit faster to a slow jig tempo and we liked the way the tune sounds at this pace.

2 Erin on the Rhine *(trad.)*

We learned this beautiful, sad song from Nuala Kennedy, who sang it with the great Cathal McConnell on her album "New Shoes". The song tells the story of a young Irish soldier going to war and asking his love to remain faithful to him until his return, which unfortunately will never come to pass.

3. Sister's reels

Sister's reel (trad.)

Eanach mhic coilin (trad.)

Sheepskin and beeswax (trad.)

Ballina lasses (trad.)

Sister's reel (also known as Mary McMahon of Ballinahinch) is a traditional tune often associated with the playing of co Clare legendary tin whistle player Micho Russell. Eanach mhic coilin reel is featured as the #194 tune in Breandán Breathnach's book "Ceol Rince na hEireann vol. 2". We got our version from the playing of fiddle player Fergal Scahill. Sheepskin and beeswax is a québécois reel, which we got from a recording of La Bottine Souriante. We end up with Ballina Lasses, a lively tune which was recorded by fiddle player Paddy Killoran.

4. Edward on Lough Erne's Shore

(trad.- lyrics by P. Magennis)

Poet and writer Peter Magennis from Derrygonnelly wrote the lyrics to this song, to be sung to the old Irish air "Eochaill" or Youghal Harbour (the same air used for the famous ballad "Boolavoque" a few years later) and included them in a short novel, called "The Treasurer - A Story of the Great Irish Famine", serialised in the Lisbellow Gazette between 1879 and 1889. The song is a woman's lament for her beloved Edward, who has been exiled from his land. The subject of the song is Edward Cassidy, whose family lived in County Fermanagh and was evicted from their land around 1826. His father, Stephen Cassidy, was a leading figure within the local Catholic community and was possibly linked with the Ribbonmen, an agrarian secret society whose objective was to prevent landlords from changing or evicting their tenants. When a horse owned by a protestant tenant was killed in 1929 near the Cassidy's former lands, Stephen and his three sons were accused of the crime and sentenced to death, but fortunately the following year their sentences were commuted: due to his age, the father was imprisoned for only two years, while his sons were transported to Australia for life.

5. Three deer and a hare

Sally Sloane's (trad.)

Three deer and a hare (comp. Liz Kane)

Charlie over the water (trad.)

Sally Sloane was one of the most important Australian "source musicians" to have been recorded during the Australian folk music revival of the 1950s and onwards. Australian folklorist John Meredith recorded over 150 traditional tunes and songs from her. We got Sally Sloane's jig from the playing of Australian band Trouble in the kitchen. Three deer and a hare is a lovely composition by Liz Kane. We end up the set with Charlie over the water, which comes from the collection "Tunes from the Munster Pipers" by Canon John Goodman.

6. Mountains of Pomeroy (trad. - lyrics by G. Sigerson)

Dr. George Sigerson (1836-1925), a physician, scientist, writer and poet from Co. Tyrone wrote the lyrics of this song, published in 1869 in the collection "The Harp of Erin: A Book of Ballad-Poetry and of Native Song", curated by Ralph Varian. The poem cites "The Mountains of Pomeroy" as the melody, so it is reasonable to assume that the tune existed under that name before Sigerson wrote words to it. The song tells the story of a woman in love with an outlaw called Reynardine, since her family opposes their union, she tries to meet him in secret, but gets caught in a violent storm and drowns in the consequent flood. The figure of Reynardine, a bandit leader of noble origins who fights for freedom, is inspired by a fictional literary character, the Italian brigand Rinaldo Rinaldini, protagonist of the homonymous adventure novel by the German writer Christian August Vulpius. The book, edited in 1798, was translated into English and became so popular that it is mentioned in Mary Shelley's diary, as well as Melville's "Moby Dick".





7. Elevated

Gabriella's waltz (comp Michel Balatti)

The Galtee hunt (trad.)

Elevated (comp Caitlin Nic Gabhann)

Gladstone Bill (trad.)

Michel composed the first tune in this set for his mother-in-law, Gabriella. The Galtee Hunt is a well known Irish traditional set dance. Elevated is a composition of our good friend Caitlin Nic Gabhann, who joins us here, together with fiddle player Ciarán Ó Maonaigh. She composed it while stuck in an elevator in Australia! Finally, we got our version of Gladstone Bill from the playing of piper Brian MacNamara, who recorded it in his wonderful album "Fort of the Jewels".

8. Land o' the leal

Land o' the leal (trad. - lyrics by C. Oliphant Lady Nairne)

The road to Glountane (comp Terry "Cuz" Teahan)

This deeply moving ballad about leaving earthly life to go to a better place (Land o' the Leal = heaven) is a favourite in the Scottish repertoire. The authorship of this song, which first appeared in anonymous form in George Thomson's "Select Scottish Airs," in 1802, has been strongly debated among scholars, since it's been attributed to two of the most beloved personalities in Scottish literature: Robert Burns, who is said to have written it shortly before his death as a dedication to his wife Jean, and Lady Nairne, who claimed to have composed it as a gift for a friend in the sad occasion of the loss

of her child. The dispute is still ongoing, although it has seemingly been settled by Alexander Crichton in his 1919 essay "The land o' the Leal irrefutably proved from a searching investigation to be the deathbed valediction of Robert Burns". Albeit probably not the original, Lady Nairne's version is very popular and commonly sung, so we chose her lyrics for our rendition. We end the song with The Road to Gluntane (also known as The Kerry Fling, or Terry "Cuz" Teahan's), presumably a composition of Sliabh Luachra musician Terry "Cuz" Teahan.

9. O'Rourke's

Trip to Athlone (trad.)

Chapel Bell (comp Frank McCollum)

All about weaving (comp Charlie Lennon)

O'Rourke's (trad.)

A lively set of two jigs and two reels, which we usually play as our encore set at the end of our concerts. Trip to Athlone is a well known traditional jig. Chapel Bell was composed by co. Antrim fiddle player Frank McCollum. All about weaving is a reel composed by Charlie Lennon; one of the most gifted and prolific composers of Irish music. O'Rourke's reel is a well known standard; made famous by Sligo fiddler Michael Coleman.

10. Bonny light horseman

Bonny light horseman (trad.)

It takes one to know one (comp. Michel Balatti)

Our rendition of this famous ballad concerning the Napoleonic Wars is based on Martin Howley's version of the lyrics (called "The Young Horseman"), together with some verses we took from other versions. Albeit originally sung to a different melody, and less popular than the most commonly sung versions, Howley's verses struck us for their domestic setting and their intimate and homely character, describing how irreplaceable young soldiers missing from home were for their loved ones, as opposed to the complete depersonalization war condemned them to, where they were regarded as nothing more than cannon fodder. As they create a feeling of nostalgia, tenderness and resignation, we found those verses worked well as a sort of "introduction" to the more popular ones, which are set directly on the battlefield. There's an inconsistency in Howley's lyrics, as the song is initially set in the context of the Egyptian Campaign but later refers to the Peninsular War; since this incongruity was already present in Howley's singing, and since many versions don't refer to any particular battle, we decided to preserve it.

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