



Irish Arts Minnesota

April
2024
Aibreán

42nd Year, Issue No. 4

The mission of Irish Arts Minnesota is to support and promote Irish music, dance, and other cultural traditions to ensure their continuation.

Thank You for a Great St. Patrick's Day Irish Celebration

What was your favorite part of IAM's 42nd Annual St. Patrick's Day Irish Celebration and Day of Irish Dance?

Wasn't it grand to start the day a bit early with our friend Ross Sutter on the Main Stage?

Wasn't it grand to have the Minnesota Boychoir filling the Cortile and lifting our spirits?

Wasn't it grand to have the skirl of the pipes as the Brian Boru Irish Pipe Band took the stage?

Wasn't it grand to feel the excitement of the dancers, to hear the thunder of their hard shoes?

Wasn't it grand to see the little ones decked out in their St. Patrick's Day finery?

Wasn't it grand to see so many of your friends in the crowd?

Wasn't it amazing to have so many Decade of Dance Award winners?

Did you love all the special activities for your little ones?

Did you love the new food options?

Thank you to everyone who came out to help celebrate all things Irish.

Together, we enjoyed the things we love about being at Landmark Center – the outstanding music from our local musicians, the intricate footwork and brilliant smiles of the dancers, the intimate setting of the Weyerhaeuser Auditorium, the warm music with treats in the Tea Room, one of Sarah's pies, an Irish Coffee, a bit of shopping.

Your support, in the form of your ticket purchase, means the world to us!

AND One Hundred Thousand Thanks to the wonderful volunteers who pitched in to make all of it possible!



www.irishartsmn.org

The Kids Had So Much Fun!



With an early start and the wonderful Ross Sutter welcoming our youngest audience members and their families, Irish Arts Minnesota's St. Patrick's Day Irish Celebration was packed full of fun.

Here are some of the highlights:

- Ross Sutter's music filling the Cortile, with a bit of help from an Irish Dancer and a young man playing bodhrán
- Miss Sarah taking the little ones on a magical dance adventure
- Wee ones making music on fiddle, concertina, and tin whistle
- Kids with their parents learning to ceili dance with the Mooncoin Ceili Dancers
- Dancing with Ross Sutter
- Little actors becoming fairies that turn into mushrooms
- Little dancers transported by the music in the Tea Room





IAM Recognizes Dedicated Dancers

By Jan Casey

The Decade of Dance Award is Irish Arts Minnesota's way to recognize the very special commitment that some students make to Irish dance. The dancers who receive this award have studied Irish dance for at least 10 years; for most, it represents the major portion of their young lives. They have shared a unique element of Irish culture with audiences in all kinds of settings – from community festivals to concert halls to nursing homes to schools. Along the way, they delight audiences, have fun, make friends, travel the world, and serve as very visible and engaging ambassadors for Irish culture to the greater community.

The awards were presented on the Main Stage at IAM's St. Patrick's Day and Day of Irish Dance Celebrations at Landmark Center. The dancers received a certificate and a special Decade of Dance medal.

What does 10 years of Irish dance mean?

- At least 1,500 hours of class and rehearsal time
- At least 1,000 hours of individual practice outside of class
- 10 pairs of soft-soled dance shoes
- 5 – 6 pair of hard soled dance shoes
- 4 solo costumes
- For the girls, hundreds of pairs of poodle socks, bottles of sock glue, and 8 – 10 wigs

Why do they do it?

Because it's fun, athletic, creative. They love the focus on teamwork and being a part of a community. They love the sense of belonging – family, community – you will hear the dancers talk about “my Irish dance family.”

Where have they danced?

Irish Fair, IAM's St. Patrick's Day and Day of Irish Dance, community festivals, concerts, nursing homes, schools, dance competitions (*feis*), private parties and weddings. And with The Chieftains, Katie McMahon, Gaelic Storm, Cherish the Ladies, We Banjo 3, Lúnasa, JigJam and more.

See the 54 award recipients on the next page!



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Because of the large number of dancers qualifying for the award this year, we will share their favorite dance memories as a series in future IAM newsletters.

This is the nineteenth year that this award has been presented. In that time, Irish Arts Minnesota has recognized 319 dancers. This year is the largest group yet with 54 dancers recognized!

Heartfelt congratulations to these dedicated dancers and to their parents and families who support and encourage them.

These dancers received the award:

Ashley Andersen ~ Corda Mór Irish Dance
Jenna Berg ~ Onórach Mulhern Geraghty School (OMG) and Mactír Academy
Izzy Carlson ~ O'Shea Irish Dance
Keri Carlston ~ Ardaigh Suas Academy, O'Neill School, Rince Nua Irish Dance
Charlotte Carlyle ~ Rince na Chroi
Susanna Carlyle ~ Rince na Chroi
Emme Couillard ~ Rince na Chroi
Emaliah Danner ~ Ardaigh Suas Academy, O'Neill School, Rince Nua Irish Dance
Sophia DeMers ~ Ardaigh Suas Academy, Hudson Irish Dance, Eilís Academy
Emaliah Danner ~ Ardaigh Suas Academy, O'Neill School, Rince Nua Irish Dance
Sophia DeMers ~ Ardaigh Suas Academy, Hudson Irish Dance, Eilís Academy
Brita DePhillips ~ Rince na Chroi
Frances Duffy ~ Corda Mór Irish Dance
Molly Faulken ~ Rince na Chroi
Katie Foley ~ Corda Mór Irish Dance
Jack Frohnauer ~ Rince na Chroi
Piper Fuhr ~ Corda Mór Irish Dance
Brenda Gant ~ Ardaigh Suas Academy, Hudson Academy, Eilís Academy
Clare Gramling ~ Corda Mór Irish Dance
Magdalena Hanson ~ Onórach Mulhern Geraghty School (OMG), Corda Mór
Evelyn Husband ~ Onórach Mulhern Geraghty School (OMG)
Ginger Husband ~ Onórach Mulhern Geraghty School (OMG)
Lucy Husband ~ Onórach Mulhern Geraghty School (OMG)

Erin Joyce ~ Corda Mór Irish Dance
Margaret Kenny ~ Rince na Chroi
Kathleen Kiely ~ Corda Mór Irish Dance
Ingrid Kotnik ~ North Star Irish Dance
Allegra Larson ~ O'Shea Irish Dance
Nevellie Larson ~ O'Shea Irish Dance
Gabby Lenzmeier ~ Corda Mór Irish Dance
Mairi Ling ~ Rince na Chroi
Svea Lund ~ Ardaigh Suas Academy, O'Neill School, Rince Nua Irish Dance
Isabelle Mimick ~ Corda Mór Irish Dance
Ava Motl ~ O'Shea Irish Dance
Sophia Motl ~ O'Shea Irish Dance
Chrystal O'Hanlon ~ Rince na Gréine, Loring Community School Irish Dance
Molly O'Malley ~ Rince na Chroi
Lucy Paddock ~ Rince na Chroi
Lauren Petrie ~ Corda Mór Irish Dance
Lyla Preshiren ~ Hudson Irish Dance
Maura Regan ~ Rince na Chroi
Quinn Rich ~ Rince na Chroi
Alaina Scanlon ~ Rince na Chroi
Ellie Schirmer ~ O'Shea Irish Dance
Lacy Schmidt ~ Rince na Gréine
Maeve Callahan Schreiber ~ O'Shea Irish Dance
Norah Smith ~ Rince na Chroi
Frances Steichen ~ Corda Mór Irish Dance
Sylvie Taylor ~ Corda Mór Irish Dance
Bernadette Thelen ~ Rince na Gréine, Mactír Academy
Maggie Tuhy ~ Rince na Chroi
Lailana Vandermeuse-Siteki ~ Eilís Academy
Zachariah Vandermeuse-Siteki ~ Eilís Academy
Berit Wicker ~ Mactír Academy



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Thank You to Our Sponsors and Partners!

Thank you to **Kate Wade** of [Get Her Hired!](#) for her sponsorship of our St. Patrick's Day Irish Celebration and Day of Irish Dance! IAM appreciates her support.

Thank you to **Jody Dunlavey McDonough** of [St. Croix Wealth Management](#) for her sponsorship of our St. Patrick's Day Irish Celebration and Day of Irish Dance, with a special focus on the IAM Raffle. IAM is grateful for her support.

Thank you to the volunteers from **the St. Paul Blackhawks Soccer Club** for hosting the Tea Room this year. The Blackhawks welcomed guests with tea and treats as part of their fundraising for a planned trip to compete in the *Gothia Cup Tournament*, the World Youth Cup in Sweden this July.

Thanks so much to our friends who contributed to the IAM Raffle:

- Cara Irish Pubs
- The Center for Irish Music
- Jan and Mike Casey
- Eileen Dahill
- Cindy Ladany
- Roots Roasting
- St. Croix Wealth Management

Thank you to **Dave Cammack** for the use of the Marley flooring for the main stage. Every year for many years, Dave has brought in the flooring, installed it, and returned at the end of the event to remove it. This important contribution ensures that we have a safe, non-slip surface for the dancers.

Thank you to **Jaci Marier** for creating and organizing the very popular Children's Crafts on St. Patrick's Day. This is the second year that Jaci and her wonderful helpers have delighted our youngest guests with the opportunity to make an Irish themed craft project.

Thank you to **Patrick Kratz** of **Larkin Hoffman** for his continuing help with our performers' contracts and for his invaluable advice.

Thank you to our partners and hosts **Minnesota Landmarks** at *Landmark Center* and for including our Day of Irish Dance as part of their **Sundays at Landmark Series**. Landmark Center celebrates the cultural diversity and collective history of the community and provides a gathering place for organizations and activities that enhance the quality of life in our community. IAM is honored to be a part of their mission. And our dancers love "dancing in the Castle."



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2024
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42nd Year, Issue No. 4

Thank you to the 2024 St. Patrick's Day and Day of Irish Dance Volunteers!

Irish Arts Minnesota extends our gratitude to you for volunteering over the St. Patrick's Day weekend!

Thanks for greeting our guests so warmly, for making a great cup of tea, for helping to make the experience for the performers so nice – thanks for everything!

Thanks to YOU, our volunteers, we brought authentic Irish culture to the Twin Cities for the 42nd year and raised money for our educational grant program and Irish Arts Minnesota!

Only your involvement, talents, flexibility, and generosity made this all possible. Thank you for helping us to continue the tradition of Irish Culture in the MN community!

Clearly, you had more fun than anyone!!



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42nd Year, Issue No. 4

It's All in a Day's Work – Make that Two Days!

Irish Arts Minnesota's St. Patrick's Day Irish Celebration and Day of Irish Dance are, by far, the highlights of the year for the organization. IAM is a completely volunteer-run organization, drawing on the talents and passions of a small but hard-working board of directors and an army of dedicated volunteers.

Did you ever wonder just what goes in to making our Landmark Center events successful? Lots of hard work and planning starting months in advance. Everyone on the IAM Board wears at least two hats (some several) on St. Patrick's Day.

- President **Amber Ladany**, coordinated the logistics for St. Patrick's Day at Landmark Center, managed our relationship with the Landmark Center staff, managed IAM's active Social Media presence, as well as served as Volunteer Coordinator for the events.
- Vice-President **Jan Casey**, who chaired the Entertainment Committee for our Landmark Center events, is also Grandma to an Irish dancer. Jan flitted all over the building both days trying to hear and see as much of the entertainment as possible.
- Secretary **Cindy Ladany** coordinated the Shenanigan's Craft Fair, managed the Celtic Marketplace (with a special emphasis on food vendors), created the IAM logo merchandise, organized the flower concession, and managed the IAM Pizza Booth!
- Treasurer **Maureen Engelhardt** managed the financial requirements of the events, coordinated Gaeltacht MN's booth in the Marketplace, organized the seminar presented by Gaeltacht Minnesota, and delighted the Tea Room audience by singing with *the Giggin' Siles*.
- Board Member **Michele Berg**, a dance mom with two Irish dancers, organized pre-sale tickets for our larger performing groups, recruited volunteer help from dance families, and filled in where needed.
- Board Member **Jody Dunlavey McDonough** organized the Raffle, with help from **Amber and Cindy Ladany**.
- Board Member **Bridget Dinter** coordinated publicity for the events and welcomed her first child in early February!
- Board Member **Eileen Dahill** supervised the dancers' dressing rooms at Landmark Center.
- Board Member **Laurelie MacKenzie** staffed the Photo Booth, filled in where needed, as well as helped with *Out of the Mist Celtic Theatre's* Creative Dramatics presentations.

Haven't you heard? If you want something done, give it to a busy person.

A Special Thank You to our Sponsors for 2024!



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SCROLL-STOPPING RESUMES

for women who don't have time to fool around with DIY

Kate Wade, MA

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Sponsor Spotlight:

ST. CROIX WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Jody McDonough

Thank you to our generous sponsors from St. Croix Wealth Management their support this year!

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Educational Grants Available for Students of the Irish Arts

By Jan Casey

Irish Arts Minnesota recognizes that ours is a community rich with Irish cultural activity of all kinds – music, dance, language, and more. Irish Arts Minnesota is delighted to be able to encourage the study of the traditional arts of Ireland by making funds available for additional study in nearly any area of Irish culture.

IAM's Educational Grant Program is a merit-based program, designed to give a helping hand to students who have already made a commitment to their art – whether it be Irish dance, Irish music, learning the Irish language or whatever interests them. Our goal is to encourage the study of these traditions in our community. The grants are typically between \$300 and \$700 and are available for use in 2024 and 2025. Recipients then bring their new skills back to the community by participating in an IAM event. As they continue to learn and grow, they add to the vitality of our community and help to preserve these traditions for future generations.

Students of any age are eligible. The application requires the recommendation of a teacher or an elder in the community who is familiar with the applicant's work. The 2024 application deadline is April 15, 2024.

Previous recipients range in age from 8 years old to adult and include musicians, dancers, Irish language students, a food historian and a costume designer. They have used their grants for tuition to programs near and far, for travel expenses and to help with the purchase of their own musical instruments.

Here are examples of how last year's recipients used their grants to further their study:

Musician Kate Durbin of St. Paul is using her grant to help purchase her own concertina.

Dancer Daisy Haney of Zimmerman used her grant for preparation and travel expenses for the North American Irish Dance Championships in Nashville last Summer.

Musician Will Johnson of St. Paul used his grant for travel expenses for the St. Louis *Tionól* (gathering of pipers).

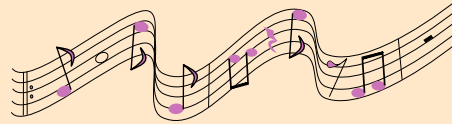
Dancer Kinley Kennedy of Delano used her grant for preparation for the Mid-America Oireachtas (regional championship competition) in Indianapolis last Fall.

Historian and archivist (and musician) Ella Padden of Corcoran used her grant for travel expenses to complete essential interviews with archivists, food historians and community leaders across Ireland for her Master's thesis at University College Dublin.

As a part of the grant program, each recipient will bring their new skills back to an IAM event at some time in the future. And each will continue to enrich our community in the years to come.

If you are interested or know a student of one of the traditional arts of Ireland who would be, look for the program description and the 2024 application on the IAM website - irishartsmn.org/programs-events/grants-awards/

Jan Casey coordinates IAM's Educational Grant Program.



EDUCATIONAL GRANTS AVAILABLE



- Students of any age are eligible
- Grants may be used for any educational purpose
- Apply by April 15, 2024
- Funds to be used by the end of 2025

Mary Sue McFarland Brooks named 2024 Distinguished Irish Woman

By Hayden Kilkenny, President, St. Paul St. Patrick's Day Association



Many of you already know who she is, but just in case you don't, let me tell you something about my good friend Mary Sue.

When she was a college student at St Kate's, she worked for the Catholic Bulletin, which would eventually become the Catholic Spirit Newspaper. There she met her husband Jim Brooks, and they have been creating shenanigans ever since.

She and Jim were among the first group who created the Irish Fair, and commemorated the event with a booklet to celebrate the artists that performed there. This work is what eventually became the Irish Gazette, a publication that is still around to this day, in print and online. It has been a great resource for the community to stay connected and involved with goings on in St Paul as well as in Ireland.

Mary Sue also founded the Minnesota branch of Irish Network US. This is an organization that connects people all over America to Ireland for business, economic, cultural and sports ventures. The Minnesota branch focuses mainly on cultural and literary events.

Mary Sue is a past president of the St Patrick's Association. During her tenure, she started the tradition of honoring an Irish American woman who has contributed greatly to the community. At a time when the association was mostly run by men, she wanted to build up the women around her.

Last year, Mary Sue retired from the Minnesota Department of Transportation with a rousing good party. Unfortunately, just a few months later, she suffered a massive brain bleed which led to a stroke. This year has been a whole new journey for her, relearning skills through physical therapy. She has done so with such dignity, grace, and acceptance.

With her ever inquisitive mind, she was determined to learn as much as she could about the injury she had suffered. She recently published an article about it, which blew me away. It has been so incredibly inspiring to see her go through this experience.

This is the St Patrick's Association's first year presenting a St Brigid award. St Brigid lived so long ago that most of her life is shrouded in myth and mystery. She is thought to have run a monastery that was a cultural center in Ireland. I can think of no one more deserving of this award, our 2024 Distinguished Irish Woman, Mary Sue McFarland Brooks.

The Gaelic Corner- By Will Kenny

"April showers bring May flowers" we are told. Of course, given the crazy (non)winter we have had, we saw signs of those early flowers, crocus and tulips, poking up through the ground in February and March.



That said, I've never liked the month of April. It is usually just chilly and damp. And April brings something else:

Taxes!

"Tax" is *cáin* in Irish. April is when we have to settle what we might owe on our "income tax" (*cáin ioncaim*). Over more than thirty years of running a consulting business out of my home, I came to dread that time of year with its endless paperwork.

Naturally, "income tax" is not the only tax most of us pay. You can also pay "property tax" (*cáin mhaoin*) and "sales tax" (*cáin díolacháin*). In Europe, "value-added tax" is common, represented by *cáin bhreisluacha*. *Bhreislucha* comes from a combination of *breis* ("excess") and *luach* ("value"), so that translation is fairly literal. Whatever the tax in question, we all expect everyone to pay their fair share. Nobody likes a *caimiléir cánach*, a "tax cheat."

And among the lowest "taxes" we may pay is *cáin bhealaigh*, the tax of a "way," for using a certain stretch of road. That's the Irish phrase for a "toll," a small usage tax that can, all the same, be pretty annoying.

"Tax" certainly has negative associations in English, although many of us might favorably view the development of "carbon tax" (*cáin charbóin*) incentives to encourage large organizations to do more to slow down climate change.

In Irish, the word *cáin* not only means "tax" but is more commonly used to express concepts with even more negative connotations. For instance, *cáin* is widely

used to mean a "fine," paid for various offenses. It is more broadly used to mean a "penalty" or "punishment."

Thus *cáin* comes to be used in phrases like *cáin an pheaca*, "the penalty for sin" (not a tax). *Cáin*

shaolta refers to "temporal punishment," the punishment we receive in this life. That's in contrast to *cáin shioraí*, the "everlasting punishment" that is meted out in the next life.

As a verb, *cáin* is used not only for "fining" someone, but more generally for "to condemn" or "to censure" or even "to criticize." Some unpleasant people spend a lot of time *ag cáineadh daoine gan ábhar*, "condemning people without any cause." And there's an old Irish proverb that ends, *Más maith leat do cháineadh, pós*: "If you like being criticized, get married!"

We use the noun *cáineadh* to separate "condemnation" from *cáin*, "tax, fine, etc.". Thus you might find something *saor ó cháin*, "free from tax," in the duty-free shop at the airport. But finding someone *saor ó cháineadh*, "free from blame," is a considerably more challenging project.

Simply said, although *cáin* in its various forms has several different meanings, all of them are something bad. The less of *cáin* and *cáineadh* in your life, the better off you are likely to be!

Instead of May flowers, why not let April bring you the ability to speak Irish? But don't dawdle! The Celtic Junction is offering an Irish language workshop, appropriate for all levels, April 12-14. Go to www.gaelminn.org for links to this event, or to celticjunction.org for more information.

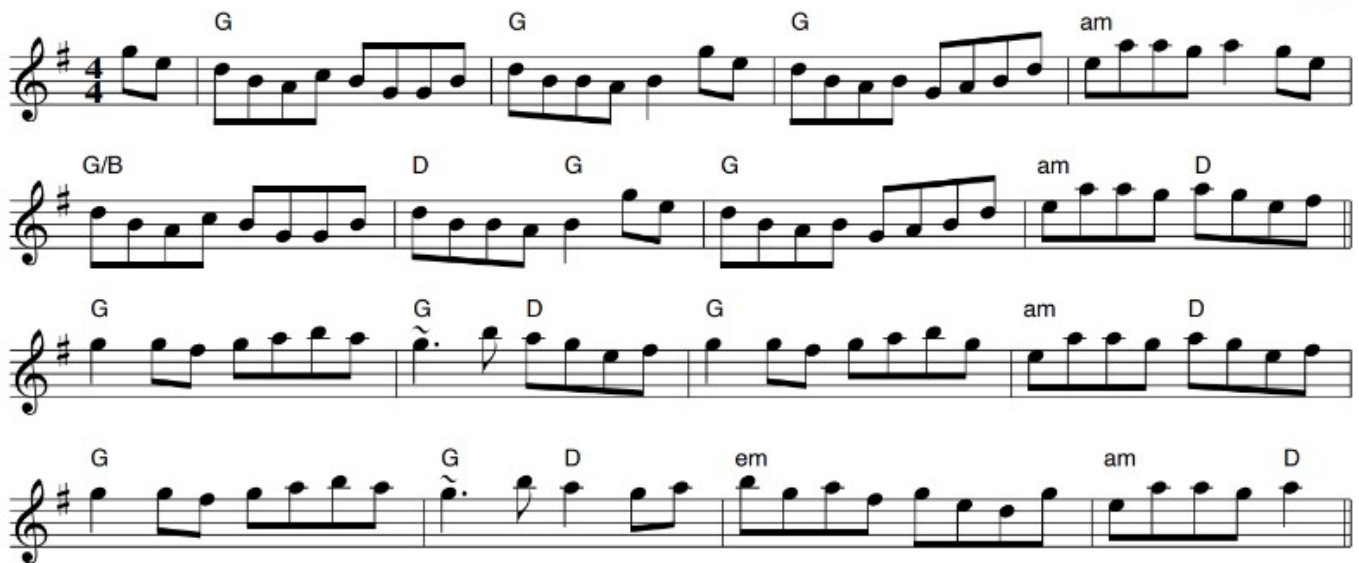
Nil sé le cáineadh mar cheoltóir
"He is not to be condemned as a musician,"
in other words,
"He's not bad" (high praise in Minnesota!)

www.irishartsmn.org

TUNE OF THE MONTH

The Blackberry Blossom

reel



The musical score for 'The Blackberry Blossom' is presented in four staves. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written in treble clef. Chords are indicated above the notes: G, G/B, D, G, G, am, D, G, G, D, G, am, D, G, G, D, em, am, D.

Spring is getting underway and soon we'll be seeing all sorts of fruit and berry blossoms! Wild blackberries are common in both Ireland and the United States, so it's no wonder there is a tune that pays them homage. This reel shares the name with a popular fiddle/bluegrass breakdown, and has been recorded many times as far back as 1916 (accordion player John Kimmel), and James Morrison on *From Ballymote to Brooklyn* in 1936, and more recently on *Life is All Checkered* by Nathan Gourley, Laura Fedderson, and Brian Miller.

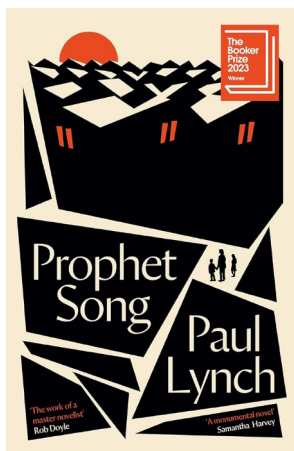
Respectfully submitted by Rosa Wells on behalf of the Center for Irish Music (CIM), a traditional Irish music school based in St. Paul, located inside the Celtic Junction Arts Center. We publish a tune each month with dots (sheet music), suggested chords and some basic background information including how CIM is connected to the tune. To hear a recording of the tunes or to print sheet music, go to the archive under 'resources' on the Center for Irish Music website: www.centerforirishmusic.org



836 Prior Ave North, St. Paul MN 55104

On Leabhragan (The Bookcase)

Prophet Song — Paul Lynch — *Atlantic Monthly Press 2023*



We hear the news daily of atrocities happening far away, in Syria, Ukraine, Gaza. Now imagine that Ireland has been taken over by an authoritarian state, with secret police interrogating, detaining, and sometimes "disappearing" enemies of the state: people like teachers, scientists, union organizers, other activists. The level of discomfort rises as *Prophet Song*, winner of the 2023 Booker Prize, describes armed police in riot gear locking down Dublin and not allowing free movement of citizens. Paul Lynch is saying that this *could* happen in your own city.

A family of five, the Stacks, comes under scrutiny for the father Larry's teachers union activism. When he disappears at a political rally it is up to his wife, scientist Eilish, to try to keep her family safe. Their two teenage kids want to join protests to publicize their dad's disappearance. Eilish wants them to keep quiet. Family members urge them to flee to another country while there is still a chance to

escape. Very soon it will be too late to escape the perimeter of Dublin.

To anyone who believes that chaos and fascism can't happen in one's own country, this book is a chilling wake-up call. As you read this plausible, beautifully crafted but dark novel you will believe that this degree of oppression could indeed happen anywhere. Our own current national state of affairs shows evidence of seeds of misinformation, political chaos, and fragmentation. To believe everything will somehow turn out OK on its own is naive, magical thinking. As one character in *Prophet Song* says, "All your life you've been asleep, all of us sleeping, and now the great waking begins. The end of the world is always a local event." This is not an easy read, but it is an eloquent and brilliant book; one that disturbed me as much as when I read *1984* in high school. George Orwell could not have imagined the sophistication of modern social media and the way it could be twisted and used.

Sherry Ladig is a Saint Paul based trad musician and a former reviewer for *Hungry Mind Bookstore's* newsletter, *Fodder*. She welcomes books of Irish, Irish-American, or local interest to review, or---write a review yourself! Sherry may be reached at ladig-dunquin@msn.com. Happy Spring reading!

Northwoods Songs: Irish Songs from Lumberjacks and Great Lakes Sailors

By Brian Miller

The Zenith of the West



They may sing a- bout Kil- lar-ney's- lakes and the lit- tle sham- rock shore, Where the
 Ri- ver- Shan- non gent- ly- flows, Ar-rah Gra Ma- chre As- thore, But
 when a- tot, a charm- ing- spot filled me with joy and- zest, Du-
 luth you- are the- bright- est- star the- Ze- nith of the West.
 Come for a stroll where the white caps- roll, to the place where you con- fessed, To-
 be my- bride, my- joy and pride in the Ze- nith of the West.

They may sing about Killarney's lakes and the little shamrock shore,
 Where the River Shannon gently flows, Arrah Gra Machre Asthore,
 But when a tot, a charming spot filled me with joy and zest,
 Duluth you are the brightest star, the Zenith of the West.

CHORUS:

Come for a stroll where the white caps roll, to the place where
 you confessed
 To be my bride, my joy and pride in the Zenith of the West.

They may sing of bonnie Scotland and the heather in the glen,
 Let Harry Lauder sing in praise of the Highlands and his kin,
 But let me dream of that beauty stream and the scenes that I love best,
 Where Lester flows in sweet repose through the Zenith of the West.

So let them sing of other lands but I will sing of mine,
 As I go sailing "Round the Horn" while the silvery moon doth shine,
 O take me back to Fond du Lac where my true love I caressed,
 I loved her there for she's as fair as the Zenith of the West.

Come out with me for a "joy ride," come for a row or sail,
 Then after dark see Lester Park, see the aerial without fail,
 Take the "Incline" for a sight sublime when you reach the mountain crest,
 The electric rays will you amaze in the Zenith of the West.

Though I have wandered far away in other lands so fair,
 Dear old Duluth I ne'er forgot none could with you compare,
 In future days I'll sing your praise for you have stood the test,
 In 1916 we'll crown her queen the Zenith of the West.

The nights are cool in summer time each day there comes a breeze,
 So balmy and refreshing from the Queen of unsalted seas,
 Duluth for health, Duluth for wealth, and when I'm laid to rest,
 Just let me sleep near Superior's deep in the Zenith of the West.

We have a third song this month from the prolific pen of James Somers who spent a sizeable portion of his life in Duluth and composed this song in praise of that place. Somers opens his 1913 book *Jim's Western Gems* with a Foreword in which he lists "Zenith of the West" as one of his several composed "songs with their music" that he hoped to publish "in the near future." I have yet to find evidence that Somers did publish a song-focused book but, luckily, the words for "Zenith of the West" appear in *Jim's Western Gems*. I have set them here to my adaptation of the tune used by Maine singer Carrie Grover for "The Lily of the West."

Duluth's nickname has long been "The Zenith City." Beautiful Lester Park is on the east side of Duluth where the Lester River enters Lake Superior. The "aerial" must be Duluth's famous aerial bridge connecting mainland Duluth to Minnesota Point. At the time Somers published this song (1913) the bridge was an "aerial transfer bridge" where cars and people rode on a suspended gondola across the span. The reference to 1916 (three years in the future when the song was published) is intriguing. It is possible it could be referencing the upcoming 44th annual regatta of the National Association of Amateur Oarsmen which fascinated Duluthians in 1916 but it is hard to imagine that event was already hyped so far in advance. Maybe someone with more Duluth history knowledge than me will have a guess!

I have always loved Duluth and this is a wonderful text full of nods to other Irish songs and conventions of English language ballad-making!

Northwoods Songs features a new song each month pulled from my research into old songs collected in the pine woods region that stretches from New Brunswick west through northern Minnesota. In the 1800s, a vibrant culture of singing and song-making developed in lumber camp bunkhouses and on Great Lakes ships. The repertoire and singing style were greatly influenced by Irish folk repertoire and singing styles. Many singers in the region had Irish background themselves.

Each installment of Northwoods Songs is also published online at www.evergreentrad.com. My hope is that others will learn some of these songs and make them their own as I have. -Brian Miller



Celtic Junction Marks 15 Years with 2024 Irish Arts Weeks

Marking a milestone of 15 years, CJAC invites the community to a celebration of Irish arts and culture from April 12 through April 30, offering an extensive lineup of events designed to entertain, educate, and inspire.

Enjoy presentations on topics such as [Cúchulainn](#), the [Dublin Lockout of 1913](#), [Celtic and Viking Knotwork](#), the [Irish Bungalow](#), [Ireland's Immigration Story](#), [Irish mythology in Dungeons and Dragons](#), and [Lady Gregory and the Irish Literary Renaissance](#). Hear Galway poet [Geraldine Mills read from her recent collection *When The Light*](#). Attend [Into the Woods: Irish Music and Dance in Logging Era Minnesota](#), a local history presentation by McKiernan Library Director Brian Miller.

In addition to Irish dance classes, ceilis, live music, film screenings, sessions, hurling, and the highly anticipated Irish Language Weekend, we'll wrap up Irish Arts Weeks with two big events. First, CJAC's 15th-anniversary party on April 27 promises to be a festive evening of fun and fond memories which will culminate in a raffle for two round-trip tickets to Dublin, Ireland on Aer Lingus. Then, we'll commemorate the [30 Year Eurovision Anniversary](#) on April 30! Take a deep dive into *Riverdance's* legacy with original cast members Cormac O'Se and Katie McMahon who will share their experiences and reflect with Patrick O'Donnell, Natalie O'Shea, and Brian Miller on the globally transformative power of *Riverdance*.

Irish Arts Week caters to all with a blend of in-person and virtual events, ensuring accessibility through both free and ticketed activities. With over 40 events, there's truly something for everyone during our Irish Arts Weeks!

For details and tickets, visit celticjunction.org/iaw-2024/.



Deireadh Seachtaine Gaeilge Irish Language Weekend in Saint Paul



April 12-14

**Tosaitheoirí go
Cainteoirí Líofa**
Beginners to Advanced

celticjunction.org/DSG-2024

Presented by Celtic Junction Arts Center and Gael Linn
Held at Celtic Junction Arts Center, 836 Prior Ave N, St Paul, MN 55104

Celtic Junction Events

Celtic Junction Concerts



[Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas at the Cedar](#), April 3 @ 7:30 pm. \$30-\$35. Sponsored by Celtic Junction Arts Center and Presented by The Cedar Cultural Center. The cutting-edge fiddle and cello explorations of Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas return to The Cedar located at 416 Cedar Avenue South Minneapolis, MN, 55454. This musical partnership spans the full spectrum between intimate chamber music and ecstatic dance energy.



[Orkestar Bez Ime's "21" Album Release](#), April 6 @ 7 - 9:30 pm. \$20/\$25. Balkan Party Music perfect for social dancing! The band (OBI) features bold and border-crossing vocals; dizzyingly ornamented violin, clarinet, and accordion; and a metronomic rhythm section of bass, guitar, Bulgarian tambura, and drums, together amplifying the impulse to dance and celebrate. Space will be allotted both for sitters and dancers. Please join us for this special family-friendly album release party!



[Matt and Shannon Heaton in Concert](#), April 14 @ 7-9:30 pm. 5:30 pm. \$20/\$25. Boston-based Matt & Shannon Heaton play updated and traditional Irish music on flute, accordion, guitar, bouzouki, and voices. They feature husband-and-wife harmonies and instrumental virtuosity. The Heaton's are world-class American performers with Irish roots, universal appeal, and a new album *Whirring Wings*. Integral to the East Coast trad scene, they will attend the Celtic Junction Sunday session from 5-6 pm before their concert on April 14th.



[Celtic Woman: 20th Anniversary Tour at the State Theatre](#), April 16 @ 7-10 pm. \$44. (Use code IRISH for a special discount!) This momentous occasion promises an evening filled with the ethereal harmonies and captivating melodies that have defined Celtic Woman as a powerhouse in world and folk music.



[Taking Flight Collective Concert with Morien McBurnie](#), April 19 @ 7 - 9:30 pm. \$10. The 2024 Taking Flight Collective is headed up by multi-instrumentalist Morien McBurnie (banjo, guitar, bouzouki, song) who will be performing a concert of gorgeous songs and driving instrumentals with special guests. The Center for Irish Music's Taking Flight Collective is a program that supports the next generation of artistic leaders in the community by providing performance opportunities and mentorship with inspiring musicians.



[Ceilidh with the Gunn Slingers](#), April 20 @ 6 -9 pm. \$10. CJAC's Youth Advisory Council (YAC) presents a social dance featuring the Gunn Slingers! Our talented YAC musicians will also be taking the stage, showcasing their skills alongside the band. This event is a celebration of vitality, fun, and a passion for music that brings us all together. Designed with the young and the young-at-heart in mind, this social dance is the perfect opportunity for energetic souls to mingle, move, and make memories.



Irish Arts Minnesota

April
2024
Aibreán

42nd Year, Issue No. 4

Laura MacKenzie Music

[Twinflower - Nordic Wooden Flute Music](#) Sat, Apr 6 @ 2:00PM
[Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church, 170 Virginia Street, St. Paul, MN](#)

Twinflower presents their program of Swedish music on duo wooden flutes, with Chris Bashor joining on guitar. Free (donations welcome), in the Cathedral Hill neighborhood of St. Paul. A beautiful venue for this performance program. For more information: <https://www.lauramackenzie.com/twinflower>

[SimpleGifts - "The Young & The Rest"](#) Sat, Apr 6 @ 7:00PM
[Parley Lake Winery, 8280 Parley Lake Road, Waconia, MN](#)

Billy McLaughlin and members of SimpleGifts present their show "The Young & The Rest", a tribute to the music of Neil Young and others of the time, as interpreted by the ensemble's trio of wonderful women singers. (MacKenzie adds instrumental interest on wooden flutes, whistles, concertina and pipes). This concert is held in the winery's charming and cozy barn. Doors open at 5:00. Food truck onsite. \$35

[GET TICKETS](#)

[Twinflower - Nordic Wooden Flute Music](#) Fri, Apr 19 @ 12:00PM
[National Music Museum, Vermillion, SD](#)

Twinflower, the duo of Amy Shaw and Laura MacKenzie, present their program of Nordic music on wooden flutes, joined by Chris Bashor on guitar. This program is free and open to the public.

[SimpleGifts - May Day in Marine](#) Wed, May 1 @ 7:00PM
[Marine on St. Croix Town Hall, 121 Judd Street, Marine on St. Croix, MN](#)

The full ensemble of SimpleGifts, featuring Billy McLaughlin, presents their show "The Young & The Rest", a tribute to the music of Neil Young and other artists of the era. Doors to the historic Town Hall open at 6:30 for general admission ticket holders.

General Admission: \$35 general advance / \$45 door \$30 senior advance (65+) & student advance (18 & under) / \$35 door

[GET TICKETS](#)

[International Respect for Chickens Day at CRR](#) Sat, May 4
[Chicken Run Rescue, Minnesota](#)

Laura MacKenzie will be providing music on International Respect for Chickens Day, at Chicken Run Rescue (south of the Metro). The day's activities will be run in partnership with Compassionate Action for Animals. The day will include activities with the rescue residents of the CRR sanctuary, presentations, music and a vegan potluck. Details available soon!



Celtic Woman 20th Anniversary Tour

7 PM April 16th at the State Theater 805 Hennepin Avenue

Tickets available at www.celticwoman.com

Or at the box office at 612-339-7007

Use the Promo Code Irish for a discount!

www.irishartsmn.org

Smidiríní*

(*Irish for 'Bits and Pieces')

by Copper Shannon

Comhghairdeas léi (Congratulations to) Mary Sue McFarland Brooks, who was named Distinguished Irish Woman by the St. Paul St. Patrick's Day Association and was featured in the St. Paul St. Patrick's Day Parade. Mary Sue has a long and rich history in the Twin Cities Irish Community, as a founding member of both Fáilte Minnesota and Irish Network Minnesota. She is Board Chair of Irish Network Minnesota IN-MN, a Committee Chair with the St. Patrick's Association, and the Editor for the Irish Gazette.

Comhghairdeas leo (Congratulations to) Greg and Lisa Padden, who were named King and Queen of the Fitzpatrick Clan of Waverly for 2024. Greg and his son and daughter received an IAM Educational Grant a couple of years ago as the family band Knotted Clover. Greg serves on the Board of the Center for Irish Music.

Comhghairdeas léi (Congratulations to) Natalie Berg, who has earned her Gold Award from Girl Scouts River Valleys. The Gold Award is the highest award in Girl Scouts, equivalent to Boy Scouting's Eagle Award. The award requires completion of a significant community service project. Natalie's project focused on promoting children's literacy. Natalie dances with the Onórach Mulhern Geraghty School (OMG).

Go dtuga Dia suaimhneas síoraí dá hanam (May God grant eternal peace to her soul.) Our deepest sympathy to Chuck Lentz and his family on the death of his mother, just shy of her 100th birthday. Chuck sings with the Eddies.

The Center for Irish Music – Come check us out at
The Celtic Junction Arts Center
836 Prior Avenue, St Paul MN

Please check the website for information on our full range of instruction in traditional Irish music, language, culture and fun.

For class schedule and other information call or email
651-815-0083 admin@centerforirishmusic.org

Or visit our website
www.centerforirishmusic.org



Irish Arts Minnesota

April
2024
Aibreán

42nd Year, Issue No. 4

IAM Members

Members are reminded that IAM membership is renewable annually. If you haven't renewed for 2024, please do that today!

Irish Arts Minnesota thanks these new and renewing members for their financial support:

Mary McKay

And these band and dance school new and renewing members:

Kindred

The Inland Seas

New and renewing supporting members receive the following:

- A one-year (January to December 2024) subscription to the IAM's monthly newsletter
- "Priority listing" for bands, organizations, pubs and businesses in our popular on-line Community Resources Directory, used by people who are seeking local Irish musicians, bands, dancers and entertainers for performances, ethnic festivals, and other events.
- Public recognition in a "New or Renewed Members" section of future IAM newsletters and in related posts to the IAM web site and Facebook page.

**Note: The Community Resources List on the Irish Arts Minnesota website has been refreshed. Check it out at irishartsmn.org/resources/. It's very easy to use – just click on the band or dance school name to be connected to their website or Facebook Page.*



Irish Arts Minnesota

April
2024
Aibreán

42nd Year, Issue No. 4

Newsletter Submissions

We welcome our readers to submit articles of interest, news, and notices of events to be published in the newsletter. The deadline is the 18th of the preceding month.

Send to: Editor [@irishartsmn.org](mailto:Editor@irishartsmn.org)

IAM Board

President	Amber Ladany
Vice President	Jan Casey
Treasurer	Maureen Engelhardt
Secretary	Cindy Ladany
Newsletter Editor	Bridget Dinter
Board Member	Michele Berg
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Board Member	Jody Dunlavey McDonough
Board Member	Laurelie MacKenzie

Questions? Comments? Contact Us!

Info@irishartsmn.org

www.irishartsmn.org

Ceili CORNER By **Bhloscaidh O'Keane**
Check www.lomamor.org for all up-to-date Irish folk dancing information.



IAM Membership

Demonstrate your support of live Irish music, dance and cultural activities by becoming a member of Irish Arts Minnesota. Become a supporting member by making a financial contribution. Member bands, businesses and organizations receive priority listing in the IAM Community Resources List.

All IAM members receive the newsletter by e-mail.

Name: _____	Date: _____
Address: _____	How did you hear about us? _____
Membership Type (circle one) Individual \$20 _____ Family \$25 _____ Band/Organization/Business \$25 _____ Name _____ (Name of Band/Organization/Business)	
Interests (circle all that apply) <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; text-align: center;"> Music Dance Theatre Language Volunteer </div>	
E-mail Address: _____ Phone Number: _____ Your monthly newsletter is delivered electronically via e-mail. Please advise us at Info@irishartsmn.org if your e-mail address changes.	
Tear out the above form and send it with a check made out to "IAM" to: The IAM Membership Coordinator c/o Jan Casey 400 Macalester St. St. Paul, MN 55105 Or visit the IAM website (www.irishartsmn.org) to pay electronically.	