

## **Special Irish Culture Concert at The Irish Folk Club Munich.**

**Eine Reise durch die traditionelle irische Musik von 1688– 2016 mit Fintan Vallely, Gerry (fiddle) O'Connor & Tiarnán Ó Duinnchin  
Montag, 18 September 2017 – Irish Folk Club Munich im Stemmerhof –  
<http://www.irishfolkclubmunich.com/contact-us-booking/4535003508>**

Ausgangspunkt für unsere Reise sind Melodien aus dem 17. und 18. Jahrhundert, die damals täglich zu hören waren, aber erst gegen Ende dieser Epoche von engagierten Musiksammlern zu Papier gebracht und veröffentlicht wurden. Diese Melodien erlebten ab den 1960ern eine Renaissance und sind heute – auch dank dem neuen irischen Selbstverständnis, das sich im späten 19. Jh. entwickelte und Irland grundlegend veränderte – fester Bestandteil der modernen traditionellen Musik, fließen in die klassische Musik ein und beeinflussen Rock und Pop. Im weiteren Verlauf führt uns unsere musikalische Reise zu moderneren Tanzmelodien. Melodien, die vor dem zweiten Weltkrieg populär waren und zu denen in ganz Irland getanzt wurde. Die Musiker spielen die „uilleann pipes“, eine spezifisch irische Dudelsackart, die im frühen 18. Jh. entwickelt wurde, und die Holzquerflöte, eine Flötenart, die vor 1860 entstand und die Geige.

<http://www.imusic.ie/>  
<http://www.tiarnan.ie/>  
<https://www.gerryoconnor.net>  
<http://www.irishfolkclubmunich.com>

### **Celebrations at The Irish Folk Club Munich.**

Fintan Vallely, Gerry (fiddle) O'Connor & Tiarnán Ó Duinnchin -  
A Traditional-music progress around Ireland, c. 1688-2017

This is a music journey that begins with melodies from the 17th and 18th centuries that were committed to print by dedicated collectors in the dying years of their period of daily use. As a result of revival from the 1960s on, and driven by the ideology of the late 1800s which changed Ireland dramatically, this music has now become part of the stock, expressive variety of modern-day Traditional music, while also enjoying a life in Classical performance as well as in Rock and Popular musics. More-modern dance tunes and airs are played also in the recital, the material that was the core of pre-World War 2 popular music for social dancing all over the island. The instruments used are uilleann pipes, a unique Irish form of the bagpipe developed in the early 1700s as the 'Irish pipes' or 'union pipes', and the pre- 1860s, wooden concert flute and the fiddle.

## The Performers

**Fintan Vallely** has been playing music since his younger teens in the early 1960s, first on whistle, then on flute and uilleann pipes. From Armagh, he was the author of the first tutor for Irish flute in 1986, and is a tutor at the annual Willie Clancy summer school in Co. Clare. He recorded an LP - Irish Traditional Music - in 1979, this and a 1990 album with guitarist Mark Simos, The Starry Lane to Monaghan, both on CD. He toured with singer and accordionist Tim Lyons, with whom he recorded satirical song on Big Guns and Hairy Drums. Over the years 1995-2009 he performed A Fool's Errand with the late poet Dermot Healy in which he played his own compositions; this has been broadcast on radio. A commentator on Traditional music, he has written as a critic (The Irish Times and the Sunday Tribune), he has lectured on it at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, later at University of Ulster, Trinity College Dublin, Dundalk Institute of Technology, Queen's University Belfast and in Britain and the USA. In 2011 he left academic life to concentrate on performance. Drawing together his experiences is his remarkable 880-page encyclopedia Companion to Irish Traditional Music (1999 & 2011); so too his other dozen or more books which deal with a variety of musicians and issues. His flute tutor was revised and reissued in by Waltons in 2013, now A Complete Guide to Learning the Irish Flute, this with a full range of techniques involved in traditional flute playing, drawing on his 2004 doctoral research into the flute in Ireland. Currently he tours with Tiarnán Ó Duinnchín, Gerry O'Connor and Sibéal Davitt in Compánach, a musical interpretation of his Companion. He has travelled widely playing music - in Ireland, North America, Asia and Australia.

**Gerry (Fiddle) O'Connor** one of Ireland's most outstanding fiddle players. His family has played fiddle for at least four generations and Gerry is able to draw on this wealth of music learned from his mother Rose O'Connor and also from hand-written manuscripts passed down through the family. Later he came under the influence of Joe Gardiner the great Sligo fiddle player, who lived in Dundalk for many years. Gerry breathes new life and intensity into many long forgotten tunes from his home area in the North East of Ireland. His unique personal style and splendidly fluid bow-hand combined with technical virtuosity have brought him to concert stages throughout the world and have earned him international renown. Gerry is sought after throughout the world as a master musician for masterclasses . Over the years Gerry has brought his vibrant fiddle music to Siberia, Denmark, Sweden, Italy Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Norway, Brittany and Spain. Some of this was with "Lá Lugh" but other projects included working with various musicians including Donal Lunny, Breton guitarist Gilles le Bigot, and Italian pianist Antonio Breschi. Gerry was also a founder member of the now legendary Skylark.

**Tiarnán Ó Duinnchín** is from Monaghan. He has played uilleann pipes since the age of nine, taught by the Armagh Pipers Club. He has achieved four All-Ireland fleadh cheoil titles, as well as two in An t-Oireachtas, and in 2013, the Seán O Riada Bonn Óir award. Highly commended in reviews for his precise, articulate playing, he has been touring professionally since 1995 both as a member of various bands and as a solo performer. This has taken him to Europe, United States, Asia, Africa, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and Australia. He has partnered numerous musicians over the years, including Tommy Peoples, Laoise Kelly, Paul O Shaughnessy, Brian Finnegan and brothers Niall and Cillian Vallely. He worked with Máire Ní Bhraonáin (Clannad) from 1997-2001 recording on two albums with her, and he has recorded with many different artists; his music has also featured in two films. In 2015 his performance gained him an award from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to purchase uilleann pipes in furtherance of his career. He has played on and presented radio and television programmes for BBC, RTE and TG4, and he features on several albums, notably with his partner Stephanie, a singer who is great-grand-daughter of Sarah Makem, and on CDs by Na Dorsa, Dana and Hazel O'Connor.

## **Here is an overview of the programme: (subject to change)**

1/Antrim, top of the island. We open with music of the period when the curtain was coming down on the old school of indigenous court or classical music in Ireland, when harpers were in decline, but the political interest in the music of Ireland was on the rise. Popular among harpers, Molly St. George was published by Edward Bunting in 1811, his interest stimulated by the Belfast Harpers' Assembly of 1792. In 3/4 time, this harp tune is in a metre common in the early period, heralding indeed in many ways the 20th century Irish interest in 3/4 waltz-time and in Country music. It is followed by Carolan's Concerto, a piece composed a century earlier by Turloch Carolan, one of the major Irish pre-Classical melodies. Also published by Bunting, in 1796, which is simultaneously Irish and baroque, indicates the fluidity of 18th century music and musicians in Ireland as well as the art of composition by harpers, the 'classical' musicians of their time. 2/ The pre-famine Set. The concert opens with three tunes which were collected in the 1860s and '70s in Co. Kerry by the Rev. James Goodman – Rector of Skibbereen, a town badly hit by the famine. Goodman became Professor of Irish in Trinity College in 1879; his students included the writer John Millington Synge and President-of-Ireland-to-be, Douglas Hyde who himself collected songs. The music has been published by the ITMA in two large volumes edited by Hugh and Lisa Shields titled Tunes of the Munster Pipers. The final tune is one which is still played widely today – An Staicín Eornan (The Little Stack of Barley). 3/ Armagh - Borderline music. Úrchnoc Chéin Mhic Cáinte, the melody used for a classic lyric by a famous south Ulster poet Peadar Ó Doirnín (1700-69) is played as a slow air. This is followed by a local 'set' dance tune The Sweets of May - music which was matched with a set of dance movements. This version of the tune, from the Kilcreevy area of South Armagh, was played by the McCusker Brothers Céilí Band. 4/ America – hope, survival and revival. The major emigration destination after the Great Famine, the United States, became a haven for Irish communities and their cultural associations. Music was strong among these, and Irish dance music - on pipes, fiddles, flute and accordion - was developed to a high standard, reaching a peak in the early years of recording, when it was sent back home on 78rpm discs; there it in turn stylistically reinvigorated the post-1950s revival of Traditional music. The set opens with the song air of The green Fields of Americay, moving on to four American-titled tunes: the hornpipe Off to California , and reels The Green Fields of America, Chicago reel and My love is in America. 5/ The émigré barn dances. A type of hornpipe rhythm widely danced to in the 19th century was the popular-dance form the 'barn dance', so named for its venue, as a social dance in an empty barn, typically in the early to mid summer when the crops were not yet stowed away. Jamesy Gannon's was popularised by Sligo-USA exile Michael Coleman's recordings, The Dances at Kinvarra was composed by Cavan-USA exile Ed Reavey of Philadelphia, and Lucy Farr's barndance is named after the East Galway-London émigré fiddler and composer Lucy Farr. 6/ Follow me up to Carlow. The first tune is an air dedicated to a neighbour, but not a likely fan, of Castletown, Fiach MacHugh O'Beirne, a song written as part of the 1798-centenary commemorations by P.J. McCall, in Songs of Erin, 1899. Popularised by Christy Moore in the band Planxty, it is based on a c. 1775 Scottish melody Bonnie Anne already collected by Canon Goodman as Miss Murphy, and by Francis O'Neill in Chicago in 1903 as Follow me Down ... We then play Breandán Breathnach's 1963 Ceol Rince na hÉireann version titled An Ríl Cam. Next is The Humours of Ballyconnell (Co. Cavan), a reel again of Scottish origins published in the 1760s by Neil Stewart as The Duke of Atholl's Rant. 7/ Clare Airs. The iconic place for Traditional music in Ireland is Co. Clare. This has much to do with

the 19th century creation of tourism and lauded, favoured 'beauty spots', for Clare has indeed fabulous seas, uncluttered landscapes and light, and a relaxed demeanour. Already having had a century or more of experience of the idea of being looked at, Clare could in the later 20th century rapidly adapt to now being 'listened to'. The air An Páistín Fionn (The Fair-haired Boy) is followed by the jig Humours of Ennistymon, then Bill Harte's (a veteran musician), and, again collected by Canon Goodman, The old Cliffs of Moher. 8/ Toothless in Tulla. Song is also a part of Clare social traditions, among its repertoire many satirical and comic pieces. This one is modern, from the 1980s, the story of the fate of a local dance-aficionado's missing choppers – The Ballad of Malley's Teeth. 9/ Soaring away. We leave Clare from the East, with The Hawk strathspey and two reels An Phíob Bhocht and Humours of Tulla. 10/ The Munster Cloak. The air Banks of Sullane introduces our closing mixed set, followed by the provincial anthem An Falaingín Mumhnach (The Munster Cloak), the jig Top of the Cork Road, reel Maids of Mitchelstown and The Ballyvourney Polka.

#### INTERMISSION

11/ The Derry-Donegal swing. Here is a variety of tune types: popular music, harp music and dance melodies, indigenous and borrowed, which give a spectrum of what was being played and listened to in the late 1700s. The music is still fashionable in the present, played by both professional and non professional performers. We open with Tabhair dom do lámh [Give me your hand – a tune of reconciliation] a 3/4 (waltz-time) composition from the 1600s by Co. Derry harper Ruairí Dall Ó Catháin. Next is a 19th-century European tune type, a mazurka, Sonny's Mazurka; many of these remain iconic in Co. Donegal. It is followed by the Irish version of a Scottish Strathspey – a highland, The Bluestack, titled after the mountainous region of Donegal that it comes from; we finish with another of these tunes, Charlie O'Neill's (aka The Fermanagh Highland). 12/ The uilleann pipes. Tiarnán gives a brief demonstration and history of this uniquely-Irish, bellows-blown form of the bagpipe, and demonstrates their classic features of melody, drones and harmony, their association with the 18th and 19th century gentry and 'big' houses. He displays the instrument's finesse on a slow air, a composition and arrangement by Eithne Ní Uallacháin for a Gaelic poem, Mal Bhán Uí Chuileannáin (a melody which on account of its quality is mistakenly assumed by its many modern players to be of antiquity). It is followed by the superbly-demonstrative, 18th-century hornpipe Poll Ha'penny. 13/ Down to Dublin. We open with the iconic air which is performed tirelessly by everybody, Star of the County Down, first the old-Irish version as it is sung, then the popular one. We follow with two reels devoted to the capital city, Dublin Porter and Within a mile of Dublin, winding up on the emigration boat again with The London Lasses 14/ Kerry Dances. The polka may have Bohemian origins in early-19th century Europe, but in Kerry it is a classic contemporary tune type. We play two wonderful, original pieces from the repertoire of the iconic Kerry fiddler Pádraig O'Keeffe - O'Sullivan's and O'Callaghan's. The tin whistle has antecedents in hollowed-wood flutes in all parts of Ireland, but its present form is product of the industrial era. It is however no trivial instrument, being musically true and, on that account, technically demanding and capable of great virtuosity. 15/ The loyal flute. The concert flute as played in Irish music is the onetime orchestral wooden flute. It has no history in particular in Ireland, but flute expertise was brought in with army regiments, and the flute band became a staple of all political agitation, particularly with Loyalism in Ulster, and the Land League in Connacht. Local expertises remain in both regions. Here Fintan plays a tune from Scotland that is now associated with Orange bands, The Shanghai March, followed by the same tune as it is played for dancing, as a jig, The Boys of Tandragee, and as a reel, The Swallow's Tail. 16/

Tyrone among the bushes. Tyrone has had many major names in Irish music history, the renowned harper Arthur O'Neill, who bequeathed us both the tale of the last of the travelling harpers, and the first account by a professional, touring musician. The song Sweet Omagh Town somewhat light-heartedly celebrates his county seat. This is followed by Marcaíocht Uí Néill (O'Neill's Cavalcade), put in print by Bunting in 1811, popularised by Seán Ó Riada in the 1960s, and picked up and flogged to death in the name of Celtic Rock Popular music by the band Horslips. 17/ Lord Mayo. A county with a history marked by both power, in Grace O'Malley (Gráinne Mhaol), and tragedy during the famine, this is a county with a great variety of music forms from big lyric songs through marches to tight reels. Here we play the grand celebratory piece Lord Mayo, and the reel Pretty girls of Mayo. 18/ The Belles of Sligo. Counties Sligo and Roscommon have been highly visible in Irish music revival on account of key stylists, notably the fiddlers Michael Coleman and James Morrison from Sligo, and, latterly, Matt Molloy of Ballaghaderreen for his role in The Chieftains ensemble. Here we play The Plains of Boyle hornpipe, and The Humours of Lissadell, Boys of Ballysodare and Five Mile Chase reels. 19/ Over the Sea to Skye. We step back in history to the 18th century again with a Jacobite tune which has been hugely popular in Ireland, Johnny Cope, and its other Irish variant, Mo Ghile Mhear, concluding with the reel Slán le hÉireann [Goodbye to Ireland]. 20/ A long way to Tipperary. We head for the finish post on this music tour of Ireland now on jigs visiting The Rakes of Westmeath, The Miners of Wicklow and The maids of Tramore [Waterford], winding up in Old Tipperary.

