

SNNW 2012
Festival Artists Biographies

Ronan Regan, Sean-nós Dancing

As a sean-nós dancer Ronan captures the heart, humour and subtlety of traditional music and dances percussively to the essence of the tune. He performs extensively at events such as the Cóilín Sheáin Dharach Festival, An tOireachtas, Aonach Ceoil Baile Mhúirne and in venues such as the National Concert Hall, the Cork Opera house and the Cutler Emerson Majestic Theatre in Boston. Ronan won the All-Ireland Fleadh (Cavan 2010) Sean-Nós Dance Competition.

Described by many as a natural teacher with an infectious love of dance, Ronan offers sean-nós dance workshops throughout Ireland and abroad. He has provided tuition to all ages in educational centers' such as the Clann Resource Centre, Galway, the Ark Cultural Centre for children, Dublin and the Glór center in Ennis. He has also taught at numerous third level institutions including University Limerick, University Washington, Seattle, Evergreen State College, Olympia and the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.
www.ronanregan.com

Micheál Ó Cuaig, Sean-nós Singing

Micheál Ó Cuaig is a native of Cill Chiaráin in Connemara. Having spent much of his professional life as a primary school teacher and later, a principal, at Scoil Naomh Ciarán, he retired in 2006 and was appointed as Sean-Nós Singer in Residence at the Centre for Irish Studies at the National University of Ireland in Galway. He has fostered local and regional appreciation of sean-nós singing throughout his life, having been deeply influenced by the singing of Seosamh Ó hÉinniú (Joe Heaney), also from the area. Each year he runs a festival in Carna -- the Féile Joe Éinniú -- that draws participants from all over Ireland and abroad as well. In addition to being a fine singer, Micheál is an accomplished poet. His two collections, Uchtóga (1985) and Clocha Reatha (1986) have drawn warm acclaim for their "emotional delicacy and scrupulous use of language." Clips of his singing and poetry readings can be readily found on youtube, though nothing compares to the moment of hearing him sing these rich, complicated songs in person.

Traolach Ó Riordáin, Irish Language

Traolach Ó Riordáin is a native of County Cork, and currently works as a lecturer in Modern Irish language and literature and the Director of Irish Studies at the University of Montana. He received his Ph.D. in Modern Irish Literature from the National University of Ireland, and has lived in Missoula since 2001. He was first invited to Missoula to teach Irish by the Montana Gaelic Cultural Society, then taught at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana before returning to Montana to help establish the first program of Irish Studies there. Traolach's Irish Studies program includes an exchange relationship with University College, Cork, and draws students from both within and outside Montana. At the University of Montana he teaches courses in Elementary Irish, Irish Gaelic Literature, and Literature of Pre-Norman Ireland; the university also offers a minor in Irish Studies.

Sean McComiskey, Button Accordion

Sean McComiskey is among the most innovative young performers on the button accordion, with a unique harmonic style that has earned him a spot in the pantheon of Irish accordionists far beyond his native Baltimore. As the son of legendary button accordion player Billy McComiskey, Sean has been surrounded by Irish Traditional music his entire life and has developed a deep appreciation for the rich tradition of which he is a part. This has helped Sean establish a reputation as a highly regarded teacher and promulgator of Irish music and earned him teaching positions with the Catskills Irish Arts Week, the Augusta Heritage Center's Irish Arts Week, the Chris Langan Weekend in Toronto, the CCE Musical Arts and Dance Week in Washington, DC, and the Baltimore Irish Arts Center.

In addition, Sean's music has been recognized in various prestigious venues throughout his musical career -- among them, the Washington Irish Festival, the Baltimore Irish Festival, the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, the Mansion at Strathmore, the Glucksman Ireland House at New York University, the Hippodrome Theatre in Baltimore, the National Press Club in Washington, DC, the White House St. Patrick's Day Celebration, the Ennis Trad Festival, and the Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann.

Currently he is collaborating with fiddler Cleek Schrey and Sean Nós dancers Shannon Dunne and Kieran Jordan on a traditional Irish music and dance performance group called the Kitchen Quartet. In addition, Sean released the debut album "Home Away From Home" with the new transatlantic musical quartet called NicGaviskey, in July 2010 featuring musicians Sean Gavin from Detroit, MI, and Bernadette and Caitlin Nic Gabhann from Co. Meath, Ireland.

Sean Williams, Sean-nós Singing

Sean has been studying the Irish language and sean-nós singing since the 1970s. She worked closely with the great sean-nós singer Joe Heaney in the final years of his life, and has recently co-written with Lillis Ó Laoire a critical biography of Heaney's life and works ("Bright Star of the West: Joe Heaney, Irish Song-Man" -- Oxford University Press). She teaches Irish Studies and ethnomusicology at The Evergreen State College. <http://academic.evergreen.edu/w/williams/>

Maldon Meehan, Sean-nós Dancing

Maldon is a performer, teacher and scholar of Irish Sean-nós and set dance. Maldon holds a BA from The Evergreen State College and a MA in Ethnochoreology from the University of Limerick, Ireland. She is a 2008 Regional Arts and Cultures grant recipient. As a sean-nós dancer Maldon has appeared on the nationally televised 2005 Oireachtas at the Cork Opera House in Cork City (TG4) as well as on Connemara Community Radio and Raidió na Gaeltachta (RTÉ). In 2005 Maldon and Ronan Regan released an instructional DVD of Sean-nós dance. Maldon has studied sean-nós dance with Róisín Ní Mhainín, Pádraig Ó hOibicín, Mulkerrin, Mairéad Casey, Pádraig and Gearóid Ó Dubhain. Maldon currently lives in Portland, Oregon where she teaches weekly classes, performs and tours nationally. www.maldonmeehan.com

Bob Burke, Irish Language

Bob learned Irish as a second language as an adult. He has an interest in the ways in which adults learn a second language and is committed to teaching in a friendly non-threatening atmosphere using the communicative approach to language learning. He has taught at immersion week-ends and week-long immersion programs in both the USA and Canada. Bob has attended various Irish language courses in Ireland and has a certificate, earned in Ireland, in teaching adult learners. He has had articles published in ‘Comhar’ and in the on-line magazine ‘Beo.’ He has previously taught at Clark College, Vancouver, WA and at Portland Community College. Since 2003 he has taught both Beginning and Intermediate Irish at Marylhurst U., just south of Portland, OR.

David Ingerson, Sean-nós Singing

David has been singing traditional Irish songs for over 30 years. He has visited Ireland seven times attending music and singing festivals, collecting and research the backgrounds of songs. During his visits he has studied traditional singing under dozens of Irish singers, including Paddy Tunney, Roisin White, and Séamus MacMathuna. He has performed on the stages of folk clubs throughout the Northwest, including the Northwest Folklife Festival in Seattle, and presented workshops at folk singing camps and festivals.

Kimberly Goetz, Poetry

Kimberly has extensive experience in both public speaking and performance. She founded and taught the Thurston County TeenWorks Shakespeare Program and was a guest instructor for the inaugural session of the Capital Theater’s “Shakespeare Experience.” She was recognized for her public speaking skills at the 1991 National Speech Tournament where she won a Gold Award in Impromptu Speaking.

Kimberly is a frequent lecturer on topics related to public policy, business, and the environment and recently published her first book. Her undergraduate degree is from Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma and her graduate degree is from the Evergreen State College in Olympia. In her spare time, Kimberly enjoys sean-nós dancing and traditional Irish music.