



The Pure Drop

by
Tommy Fegan

UP AGAINST THE FLATRIONS

Elliot Grasso is an exciting young piper from Baltimore, Maryland, who is already a master of technique and precision in this demanding instrument. All the influences that he has absorbed from Séamus Ennis, Robbie Hannon and the great Donegal fiddling tradition can be heard.

However, Elliot has immersed these in his own persona to produce a uniquely moulded style of his own. An equally accomplished classic pianist, Elliot is currently studying Ethnomusicology at Limerick University.

As well as some of his own very fine compositions, he includes great classics such as 'Jenny Picking Cocksles' on this riveting CD. Excellent sleeve notes on the tunes complement the immense listening pleasure. For a completely different take on Uilleann Pipe playing, treat yourself to this. Available from na Piopaie Uilleann. Email: info@pipers.ie

ETIQUETTE

A friend of mine positioned himself opposite a musician who had just started a very plaintive slow air. He proceeded to engage in a conversation with someone as the musician strained to concentrate on his playing and block out the rising crescendo of the nearby conversation. My friend took great umbrage at being asked to remain quiet for the duration of the tune.

Sessions operate on a form of etiquette which is a trade-off between the musicians who come to play tunes, have spent hours, weeks and years learning and practicing tunes and listeners who enjoy the music and 'the Craic'. Many forms of etiquette exist to maintain the happy medium. The universally accepted form is that order is usually afforded to a singer, a recitation or a slow air. Most people are happy to postpone conversation for the few minutes of such solo performances. Many people deliberately seat themselves at a respectable distance from the musicians if they want to have a chat. Most people observe this form of etiquette. Now, here comes the twist; my friend is himself a musician who should have known better.

BANJOS

The Johnny Keenan Banjo Festival is a celebration of Irish traditional and American Bluegrass Music. It takes place in Longford from September 13-17 and is a haven for music lovers and banjo players in particular.

Johnny was a banjo player with a unique style. Like his more famous brother, Paddy, he absorbed the unique travellers' traditional approach to Irish Music, and the line-up of great banjo players from around the world is testimony to the status and esteem he achieved in his short life: Four Men and a Dog, Dervish, the Nashville Bluegrass Band, Guy Clarke, Damaris Woods...the list goes on and on. Full details on <http://www.johnnykeenan.com/Banjo%20Festival.htm>

The All Ireland fleadh heralds the end of the Summer season on the Trad music calendar. It has been a bumper year with the number of summer schools on the increase. Thankfully there is no let up on the local scene with plenty of sessions for musicians and listeners alike. I've had a few emails requesting the list of local sessions, so here it is:

WEEKLY SESSIONS

ROSTREVOR

Corner House - Tuesday and Friday nights
Kilbroney Inn - Wednesday nights

WARRENPOINT

First & Last - Monday nights
St Peter's GAA Clubrooms, Mary Street -
Monthly CCE session on the last Friday of every month

NEWRY

Railway Bar - Thursday nights
Newry Shamrocks - Tuesday nights (irregular)

MAYOBRIDGE

Gorman's - Friday night

HILLTOWN

Peter Doran's - Saturday nights

MULLAGHBAWN

O'Hanlon's - Friday and Sunday nights
Forkhill
Welcome Inn - Tuesday nights

MEIGH

Teach Mallon - Friday nights

DUNDALK

Malt House - Tuesday nights
Spirit Store - Sunday afternoons

There's probably more and if your session has been left out, let us know and we'll flag it up. Promote your session, or classes, concerts, workshops etc through this weekly column, by emailing tommyfegan@nsec.info

