



The Pure Drop

by
Tommy Fegan

ROUND UP OF
TRADITIONAL
IRISH MUSIC

Music And Musicians of South Armagh

Thirty of south Armagh's leading musicians, singers and dancers staged a spectacular show at the launch of this project in the Cobblestones, Dublin, last Thursday night.

Josephine Keegan, Tom Quinn and Seán O'Driscoll explained the objectives of producing a DVD, three CD's and a book reflective of the golden age of music from the 1930 to the 1960s. Dancers and musicians, in some cases three generations of the one family playing together, demonstrated to a packed house that the tradition is alive and well. Based on this performance, the Box Set will be well worth getting. A web site will be opened next week to keep those interested, informed of progress. I'll give you the address then.

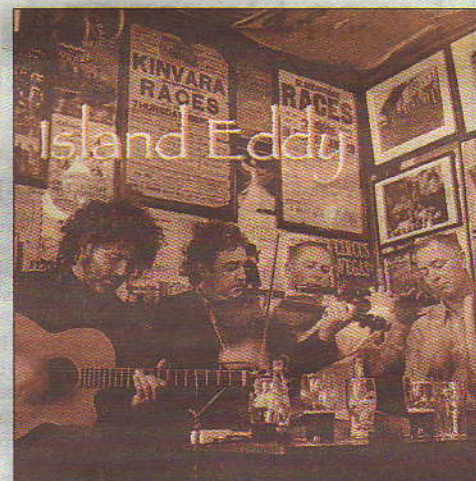
**Q. How many strings does a banjo have?
A. Four too many.**

American Wake for Ruairi

Unprecedented scenes of uncontrollable grief dominated the American Wake to mark the emmigration of local man Ruairi Kinnane. Friends, family and musicians gathered in O'Hanlon's last Saturday night to give the guitar maestro a big send off. Offers of farms and even daughters with decent dowry didn't deter our intrepid Wandering Minstrel from seeking his fame and fortune in foreign lands. The keening and wailing of tears interspersed with the growing crescendo of reels and jigs as the night of merry making wore on. Composers, poets and balladeers retreated to quieter corners to invoke the ancient bards of hedge schools in the race to commit the heartbreaking scenes of sorrow to verse, song or lament. O Doirnín and Mac Cumhaigh worked an extra shift that night!

A heartbroken Ruairi confided to me (in a rare, quieter moment) that these scenes will be indelibly ingrained in his memory for eternity, and in the lonely years of exile that lies ahead, he will draw comfort and support from these memories. South Armagh knows well how to give their migrating sons a send off befitting their esteem. Good luck in Belfast, Ruairi!

**Q: How do you amuse a guitar player for hours?
A: Write 'Please turn over' on both sides of a piece of paper**



Island Eddy

Brendan Larrisey's name has long been synonymous with traditional music of the top shelf in these parts for decades. He was one of the Young Turks who sat at Peter McArdle's side in Mark's Bar, Dundalk, soaking up his music. Brendan's fiddle playing fuses remarkably well with Roscommon man Brian Duke on flute, a gifted exponent of that same tradition. The instrumental tracks on this new release, "Island Eddy" CD are as good as you get in this very competitive market of fiddle and flute duet playing (Molly/ Carty, Wynne/McAvoy etc). I thoroughly enjoyed this well honed partnership, and the other members of the group, Jim McKee and Martin Gavin, supply tight and colorful support on guitar and bodhrán. I have to confess that the songs didn't do it for me, and I find myself skipping them to get me back to the melodious instrumental tracks. I sense the new world, cosmopolitan context of Galway bears influences not yet readily identifiable in places like Camlough or Culloville. Another great offering for Clo Iar Connacht. www.cic.ie

Fiddle and Pipes Master Classes

Cultúrlann, on the Falls Road in Belfast is the location for the next in a series of music workshops with acknowledged masters of their respective instruments,

On Saturday February 23 (2pm-3pm) the focus will be on fiddle and pipes and local man Dónal O'Connor (fiddle) and John McSherry (pipes) are in the hot seats. The classes will be followed by a Music Recital from 3.30pm-4.15pm. It's a great opportunity for picking the brains of two of the country's most exciting players. For further information contact Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich, 216 Bóthar na bhFál, Béal Feirste, BT12 6AH. 028 9096 4180. www.culturlann.ie

Email: tommyfegan@nsec.info if you would like to contribute in any way to the Pure Drop



Gerald Quinn in full flight. 08W7N126