



A WEEKLY ROUND UP OF TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC

The ^{2014/15} Pure Drop

by Tommy Fegan

RETURN OF THE FULL SET

The Full Set returned for a second series of superb Irish traditional music last Friday night on RTE 1. This year the series of musical conversations is presented by acclaimed singer and fiddler player, Mairead Ní Mhaonaigh.



Pictured are John Rooney, originally from Crossmaglen, with his son Larry in session at the Doran Weekend, Spanish Point, Co Clare 08W21N136

The series features some of the finest duet combinations playing Irish music today and was filmed in the unique setting of St James Church, Dingle, County Kerry.

From new young virtuosos, Ciarán Ó Maonaigh and Aidan O'Donnell, to masters of traditional music, Martin Hayes and Dennis Cahill, from harps to concertinas, from Dingle to Donegal, The Full Set celebrates documents and archives performances through informal chats with presenter Mairead Ní Mhaonaigh.

Last Friday's episode included duets and solo performances from De Dannan engine room, Frankie Gavin (fiddle) and Máirtín O'Connor (accordion), the award winning Ciarán Ó Maonaigh (fiddle) and Aidan O'Donnell (fiddle), husband and wife Michael Rooney (harp) and June Nic Chorrnaic (flute). Clare master Martin Hayes (fiddle) and Dennis Cahill (guitar) also joined in while West Kerry's own Seamus Begley (accordion) and his son Eoin (concertina), the playful and innovative Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh (fiddle) and Roman Browne (uilleann pipes) added to the entertaining line

Q: A bodhrán player is going to London on a plane; how can you steal his window seat?
A: Tell him the seats that are going to London are all in the middle row.

The High Kings

June 7 at the Waterfront in Belfast is the earliest and nearest date to catch the new folk phenomenon coming your way this summer – The High Kings.

Finbar Clancy, Brian Dunphy, Martin Furey, Darren Holden - renowned vocalists and musicians, have come together to create one of the most exciting Irish ballad groups to emerge since The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem electrified the worldwide folk revival of the 1960s. Carrying on the tradition of great Irish music, creating exciting modern songs in the folk idiom The High Kings incorporate some of the classic ballad repertoire from the past. The highly acclaimed musical Director David Downes,

(musical director of Celtic Woman) brings intricate harmonies and driving rhythms to The High Kings songbook, giving them freshness and sparkle that is modern and exciting, without ever sacrificing the traditional melodies and lyrics, which made them so attractive in the first instance. The songs themselves reflect a wide range of moods, the rousing "Rocky Road to Dublin," the haunting strains of "The Parting Glass," the irresistible "The Wild Rover" and the stunning "Fields of Glory".

The outstanding four-part vocal harmonies are backed by a band which includes world-class musicians: Martin O'Connor on accordion, Nollaig Casey on fiddle, Dave Keery on guitar, Paul Moore on double bass, Ewan Cowley on guitars and master percussionist Robbie Harris. Go to <http://www.thehighkings.com/> for details.

Q: How do you confuse a fiddle player?
A: You don't. They're born that way.

Email: tommyfegan@nsecinfo if you would like to contribute in any way to the Pure Drop. Visit www.coolcamlloch for details of local sessions, events, and past issues of The Pure Drop.