

**Comhaltas Ceóltoiri Éireann
Tom Finucane Branch
Rochester, New York**



Newsletter

January/February 2017

**Samhain
agus
Nollaig
2016**

An organization dedicated to the advancement of traditional Irish music, language, dance and culture

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You don't have to dance to enjoy a ceili

cei·lidh (kā'lē) *n.*

"A social gathering with traditional Irish or Scottish music, dancing, and storytelling."

You are invited to attend, dance, listen to the live music, visit with friends, eat and enjoy the social gathering.



During 'intermission,' there will be a raffle and perhaps some step dancers will stop by to perform.



Branch website: www.irishrochester.com
Facebook: rochester irish musicians association

Ceili and fundraiser raffle: January 14, 2017



Please bring a basket or item for the raffle and, yes, and bring some cash so you can bid on unusual items.

Proceeds from the raffle will go to the Coffee Connection.

The **Coffee Connection** provides employment training and job creation for women in recovery from addiction and as a not-for-profit business sells fair trade, organic coffee to retail and wholesale customers. In partnership with Project Empower, we provide comprehensive, continuous support for women on their journey toward sustainable recovery. Joy and her crew at the **Greenhouse Café** have generously hosted the Second Friday night session for Comhaltas through 2016, and we'd like to provide the proceeds of our ceili's raffle back to such a good cause!



Begins at 8:00 pm

McGinnity's Restaurant and Party House, 534 West Ridge Road, Greece, NY



ROCHESTER BRANCH, COMHALTAS HALL OF FAME HONOREES

On November 5, 2016, seven local musicians and dancers were honored at the Northeast Regional Convention and Ceili for their contributions to the Irish music and culture community

Cuisle Mo Chroí



Cuisle Mo Chroí consists of Pat Carey, Mary Lester and Cathy McGrath and have been together as a group since 1989.

The name of the trio is taken from an old Irish air that translates as “Pulse of My Heart.” *Cuisle* is also a Gaelic word used to describe the flow of a river, the images of poetry, and the breath coursing through the flute,

which is played by all three women. In addition to the flute, the group’s instrumentation includes: Celtic wire-strung harp, tin whistles, bodhran (Irish drum), and guitars. They perform jigs, reels, planxties, hornpipes, polkas and slow airs as well as hauntingly touching laments and lively ballads.

Pat Carey

Vocals, flute, tin whistle, guitar

Pat is a native of Rochester. She is a founding member of the Tom Finucane Branch of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, and served as its treasurer (cisteoir) for its first 12 years. Pat also served for two years as secretary (runaí) of the Northeast US Regional Board of CCE. For over thirty years Pat has performed Irish and American folk music at museums, libraries, schools, historical societies and other venues in the Rochester area, both as a solo and in groups, including the trio Cuisle Mo Chroí with fellow honorees and good friends Mary Lester and Cathy McGrath. Pat has also examined the history of the Irish in Rochester, and has conducted extensive research on longtime Rochester resident Kate Coll de Valera Wheelwright, mother of Eamonn de Valera.



Pat is honored by this recognition, and she wishes to thank the Tom Finucane Branch and the Northeast Region of CCE for their support.



Mary Lester

My Aunt Harriet Farrell would sing the "Last Rose of Summer", accompanied by a firmly played piano. She was in her 90's, voice loud and less than beautiful. She was proud of her Irish name, bemoaned the loss of the "O", had a yellowed map of Ireland on which she'd point out the home County of Cavan.



Many chapters of my life later, in 1985 or so, I discovered the full force and magic of Irish music at The Friendship Tavern. I walked into the first room, a bar, and wondered if I'd the wrong address or time - for I saw no instrument, heard none. Then, through a further door, to another dimension, the Session. Here was my true introduction, and Ted McGraw was the kindness that invited my harp and me into the circle.

The circle has become an ever widening spiral upwards, of fine, beloved friends intertwined by the draóicht of music. And here I am, with 2 of those dear friends, known for 25 years and more, honored to be part of them, of Cuisle Mo Chroí.

Cathy McGrath

Cathy began learning flute as a child, then, falling love with Irish and folk musc, taught herself to play guitar while in high school. She first heard live traditional Irish music in the late 1960's at Rochester's Harps Club and then at sessions at The Friendship Tavern led by local masters like the O'Keefes, Walkers, Murphy, and McGraw.



As a member a several bands over the years, Cathy has played Irish music at many local Irish establishments, and the formation of the trio Cuisle Mo Chroí in 1989 allowed for many more opportunities. The friendships made while sharing Irish music at all hours of the day and night are treasured forever.

In 1986, Cathy was at the table when the Rochester Branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann was formed and has been playing for the club's dances ever since with the *Tom Finucane Ceili Band*. As a member in the Tom Finucane Branch, Cathy has organized CCE performances for many years at events such as the Rochester Irish Festival, the annual Irish Cultural Day at Nazareth College, Genesee Country Village Fiddlers' Fair, other festivals, libraries and schools. Cathy wishes to thank the generous and selfless members who have contributed to these performances.

Cathy also thanks the Tom Finucane Branch of CCE for the honor of this nomination to the *Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann* US Northeast Regional Hall of Fame.



Lynn Pilaroscia

Lynn Pilaroscia is a founding member of the Tom Finucane Branch and has contributed his fiddle to hundreds of sessions as well as playing in the almost every ceili.

**Jim Kimball**

Jim Kimball is a Professor of Music at the State University College at Geneseo and has been teaching and playing Irish Music for over 45 years. He has made significant impact in the preservation of Traditional Irish Music in the Rochester region.

**Arlene Miller**

Proud to say I was the first dance leader when the Tom Finucane branch was formed; other leaders since then but currently I have that position again.

I was a member of the Hibernian Céilí dance group formed by Pat Martin and we all competed for many years in Syracuse, Buffalo and of course Rochester. At a later date Pat taught us set dancing that he learned in Ireland. Buffalo dancers taught us more and we then became a set dance group since it's easier on older feet. I was one of the leaders of that group and now lead our group which is called the Rochester Irish Set Dancers.



Happily I attended several CCE conventions for dance workshops and participated in East Durham's Irish Arts Week for 12 years. I also attended workshops at the Willie Clancy week in Ireland.

My love of Irish traditional music, song, dance and language is due to CCE. Comhaltas is certainly inspirational in bringing fun and knowledge to our daily lives. The only sore point for me is that I cannot sing. Thank you CCE.

Harold Murphy

Harold Murphy has danced with the Tom Finucane Branch since the group was founded and has made almost every Céilí since the beginning.



Music club activities**January 7, 2017**

Box Club, 10:00 am – 12:00, meets at home of Scott Bellinger
(scottbellinger@hotmail.com)

Flute and Whistle Club, 10:00 am – 12:00
Pittsford Recreation Center, 35 Lincoln Avenue, Pittsford, NY

February 4, 2017

Box Club, 10:00 am – 12:00, meets at home of Scott Bellinger
(scottbellinger@hotmail.com)

Flute and Whistle Club, 10:00 am – 12:00
Pittsford Recreation Center, 35 Lincoln Avenue, Pittsford, NY

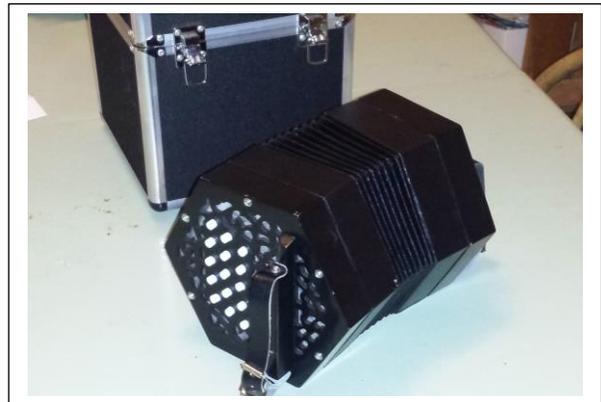
Instrument for sale

New concertina. It is a student model made and sold by Mcneela Music in Dublin- they are online at Mcneela Musical Instruments. The model is a "Wren". I am asking \$425.00, just what it cost me in July of 2016.

I bought the Wren to learn on. It is a much better quality instrument than the other cheap student models that I was able to locate, (mostly made in China and pretty shoddy). I had the intention of eventually getting a more expensive higher quality instrument when I found a good deal. That good deal showed up faster than I expected and a week later I bought and restored a nice older instrument. Now the Wren needs a new home.

Meg Grindrod 585 953-8419
megmidwife@gmail.com

Here is a photo of the actual instrument:

**Attention musicians**

Are you interested in volunteering your time to play out at local events with other musicians or dancers to raise money for the Tom Finucane Branch of Comhaltas? These performances would be at local nursing homes, libraries or recreation centers. The purpose of these performance opportunities would be to raise awareness in the community of the Comhaltas organization as well as generate some funds that would be used to support local activities (concerts, dances, etc.) organized by other branch volunteers. If you are interested, please contact Kate Ballard (katekballard@gmail.com).



A Short History of Music

Songs in any culture teach you about the history of that culture. Long before people in Ireland began writing ballads in English, there were thousands of songs and ballads in Irish. The history of Irish music has been influenced by the political fluctuation within the country. Periods of strife have destroyed all by the most fragmentary evidence of activity prior to the 16th Century.

Traditional music is the music of the community, transmitted orally and by ear and handed down from one generation to another. It originated more in the rural areas of Ireland, as opposed to the urban areas. Today it is a living tradition with variations and ornamentation of many musicians.

Irish Folk Music is the music and song in the national heritage. It includes older Irish songs and melodies, the Anglo-Irish songs and ballads of the countryside, and the rich vein of dance music. It relies on its melodic line for effect. In Gaelic speaking Ireland song entered into every aspect of life from birth to work to keening for the dead. The musical activity of the ruling class centered around Dublin. It was European music and very important at banquets and ceremonial occasions.

The most popular musical instrument in ancient Ireland was the Harp (cruit). It was featured in the earliest myths and legends. The Cromwellian period ended the musical life, which centered around the cathedrals. In the 17th and 18th Centuries the people expressed themselves in poetry, reflecting society at the time. In modern times, songwriters and musicians have joined old poems and new melodies, or they have taken old airs and wrote new lyrics to create a new song.

Prior to 1920, Traditional music was usually played in the home or at gatherings, seldom was it heard on the stage with two musicians or more. In the west of Ireland, on summer evenings, people gathered at the Crossroads, playing their music and dancing. In the 1930's house dances were no longer allowed in most rural areas. The Public Dance Hall Act of 1935 was introduced to control the Dance halls, which had emerged around the country, and was ultimately used to eradicate the House Dance.

Many Irish traditional musicians who had emigrated to America in the 1920's and 1930's were beginning to find full time employment as professional musicians and began recording on 78 Rpm's. Fiddlers such as Michael Coleman, Paddy Killoran and James Morrison, concertina player William J. Mullally and Uilleann Pipers, Patsy Touhy, and Tom Ennis. Their recordings would have a great impact on the future shape of traditional music in Ireland.

The 'Ceili Band' emerged in the late 1930's with instruments like the accordion, banjo, concertina, fiddle and flutes, later adding drums and piano. The influence of Jazz and more modern music had its impact mostly in the cities. In the 1950's Dennis Day and Bing Crosby were recording American Irish songs. In Ireland in 1951 Comhaltas Coeltoiri Eireann (CCE) was founded to promote Irish Traditional music. CCE established the Fleadh Ceoil Festival, which today, brings thousands of promising talent to Ireland for competition each year. The Showband developed in the mid 1950's with spectacular popularity.

Source: VisitIreland.com



*Irish American Cultural
Institute, Rochester, NY*
www.rochesteriaci.org

IACI Dinner & Movie for 2017
Jan. 8 (4-7 p.m.) [Michael Collins](#) (1996)

Feb. 5 (2 p.m.; earlier time because of Super Bowl) [The Crying Game](#) (1992)

March 19 (4-7 p.m.)
[Dancing at Lughnasa](#) (1998)
(not first Sunday because of venue availability)

April 2 (4-7 p.m.) [The General](#) (1998)

McGinnity's 534 West Ridge Road

Rince Na Saor

Rochester's Non-competitive
Irish Dance School since 1997

Classes for ages 7 to Adult

at Dance Biz
Longview Plaza--1742 Long Pond Road



www.rincenasaor.com
227-6614



2017 Annual Fin Wyn Seisiún Gathering

Sunday, February 12 at 3 PM
O'Lacy's Irish Pub, 5 School St., Batavia, NY 14020

Brennan Genealogical Research

Christopher Brennan, MA, MLS
Genealogical and Historical Researcher
116 Wildwood Drive, Rochester, NY 14616
585-319-3806 cristoir@twc.com

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Branch Officers - 2016

Cathoirleach (Chair)
Mark Ballard
Leas-Cathoirleach (Vice Chair)
John Ryan
Runai (Secretary)
Bill Hallahan
Cisteoir (Treasurer)
Lynn Pilaroscia
Míchoir (Auditor)
Shawn Casey
Youth Protection Officer
Ben Hockenberry

Programs

Music Events
Cathy McGrath
Ted McGraw
John Ryan
Ceili Dancing
Arlene Miller
Membership
Bill Hallahan
Singers' Session
Chris Brennan
Music Learner's Session
Mark Ballard
Website
Ben Hockenberry
Newsletter
Bill Hallahan
Music Instrument Library
Mark Gowman
Concerts & Festivals
Dave Halligan
John Ryan

Look for us on Facebook:

Rochester Irish Musician's Association

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann

MEMBERSHIP AND DUES for 2017

Dues:

First Adult	\$25.00
Second Adult	\$ 8.00
Family	\$40.00
Junior	\$ 4.00

Make check payable to: "CCE Rochester"

Mail to: Comhaltas
6658 North Avon Road
Honeoye Falls, NY 14472

Your donations are tax-deductible.**Irish music on the radio with Ted & John McGraw:****Ol' Fiddler Show**

WRUR 88.5 FM
Sundays 12:00-1pm

Irish Party House

WRUR 88.5 FM
Sundays 1pm-2pm

*Join Comhaltas and support Irish music and culture.**Check your membership card for expiration date.*

If you have ideas or articles or announcements or photos to include in this newsletter, please send them to Bill Hallahan at whallah3@naz.edu.



Comhaltas-Sponsored Music Sessions, Dancing, Singing**1st Sundays of every month:**

4:00 pm

The American Hotel

7304 E. Main Street, Lima, NY

2nd Friday of every month:

7:30 pm CCE music session

The Greenhouse Cafe

2271 E Main St., Rochester, NY 14609

Last Sunday of every month:**Johnny's Irish Pub**

1382 Culver Road, Rochester, NY

3:00 pm Music Learning Session with Mark Ballard

3:00-5:00 pm Singer Session with Chris Brennan

5:00 pm Regular session

Set Dancing Every Wednesday:

7:30 pm

McGinnity's Bar & Restaurant

534 West Ridge Road

No experience, no partner necessary.

Instructors: Arlene Miller (585) 663-4438. James Coughlin, caller.

OTHER TRADITIONAL IRISH & CELTIC MUSIC SESSIONS**Every Monday:**

Colie's Café, Nazareth College campus

Leader: Jane Sturmer

6:00-7:00 pm waltz session

7:00-9:00 pm: jigs, reels, etc. Beginners are especially welcome

Ben's website for the Monday session:

<https://sites.google.com/site/rocnyslowsession/>**Every Tuesday:**7:00 pm (study session) **Charlotte Tavern**, 2 River Road & Lake Ave.**Every Saturday:****Barry's Old School Irish**, Webster.

2:00-5:30 pm.

Leader: John Ryan

First Wednesdays:

7:00 pm

Scottish Sessions at 7:00-9:00 PM at the Pittsford Recreation Center (Spiegel Community Center), 35 Lincoln Avenue Pittsford, NY 14534**Thursdays**

Begins at 7:30 pm. Duffy's Irish Pub, [TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED]

100 West Main Street, Avon, NY (RR station at the tracks).

Leaders: Bill Henrie & Adrienne Maher

