

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



## **Newsletter**

November/December 2020

**Samhain**  
agus  
**Nollaig**  
2020

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

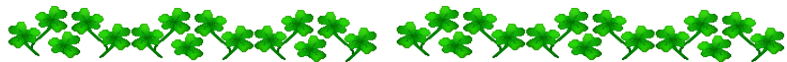
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Due to the COVID19 pandemic, until further notice, there will be no regularly scheduled in-person workshops or ceili dances.

For specific music events, check the calendar on the website: <http://irishrochester.weebly.com/calendar.html>

Some recurring calendar events have been cancelled or modified so it is best to check with the host before attending.



Branch website: [www.irishrochester.com](http://www.irishrochester.com)  
Facebook: rochester irish musicians association



**Watch your email for announcements of Irish music and cultural events.**

**Sunday Johnny's LIVE Learners' Session with Mark Ballard**

Tentatively, November 29 and December 27 at **3:30 pm**

A playlist of videos with the sheet music for this month's (and previous months') tunes is available on Facebook and [www.irishrochester.com](http://www.irishrochester.com). Watch your email for an invitation.

If you are not on the email list, contact Mark at [mark55ballard@gmail.com](mailto:mark55ballard@gmail.com)

**The monthly sessions** on Sundays at Johnny's Irish Pub are now LIVE

Attendance is by invitation and you must sign up so that participants can maintain correct social distance between the musicians and you must wear a mask to protect everyone. This session begins at 5 pm.

**Neither virtual session at Johnny's is active.**



LIVE session at Johnny's in September:



## Virtual Annual General Meeting of **Comhaltas Ceóltoiri Éireann**

Hello, Rochester's Tom Finucane Branch of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann! It's time for the annual meeting of the membership. This has been an unusual, and in many ways, difficult year for the Irish music community, but we have seen opportunities arise as well.

Want to get involved in the branch? Join us on Thursday November 12 at 7:00, via Zoom, to vote on officers and plan for the coming year. Your involvement makes our community stronger!

**TOPIC:** Comhaltas Rochester Annual General Meeting of the Membership

**DATE:** Nov 12, 2020

**TIME:** 7:00 PM EST

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://sjfc.zoom.us/j/96707147091>

Or join by phone: +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 967 0714 7091

Rochester CCE



Banshee

see page 10



# VIRTUAL IRISH TUNES BY EAR • FREE WORKSHOP

SECOND SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH

All melody instruments welcome! Learn Tunes! 2:00-4:00pm



Photos: Cathy McGrath & Bill Hallahan

via Zoom

November 8 and December 13

2-4 pm

**WHERE:** via Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting:

For details: Facebook and [www.irishrochester.org](http://www.irishrochester.org).

**WHO IS WELCOME?**

All acoustic melody instruments

The only prerequisite is that you can play the D and G scales on your instrument.

**GOAL:** That everyone will learn at least one tune by ear, modeling the method used in most traditional music camps.

**WHAT DO YOU NEED?**

- Your instrument
- A recording device (smartphone will do!)

**WHEN:** Second Sunday of the month, 2:00-4:00 pm

**COST:** Free

- Link to the workshop: <https://sjfc.zoom.us/j/99727402031>



**CALENDAR of all events** <http://irishrochester.weebly.com/calendar.html>

**Facebook Event Links:**

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/RochesterIrishMusiciansAssociation/events>



**Halloween originated in Ireland as the Celtic festival of Samhain around a thousand years ago, which is why so many of Halloween traditions – regardless of where you are in the world – are Irish!**

**Irish Central.com**

<https://www.irishcentral.com/roots/irish-traditions-halloween>

Check out this link to learn about the origins of jack-o-lanterns, trick-or-treating and more



Fall session moves indoors with masks and social distancing.

Photo: Betsy Simmons



## Irish Studies Program at St. John Fisher College presents lecture via Zoom

**\*\*Rescheduled event\*\***

### Ireland Welcomes Frederick Douglass: The 'Happiest Times' of his Life

A special presentation by Dr. Christine Kinealy



The St. John Fisher College Irish Studies Program is pleased to announce that Dr. Christine Kinealy, internationally respected expert on Frederick Douglass' connections with Ireland, will present on the great abolitionist's visit there in the early days of the Famine. This event is a fit way to commemorate the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Douglass' four-month sojourn in Ireland, a time he himself called "transformative."

In addition to being the Director of Quinnipiac University's Great Hunger Institute, Dr. Kinealy is an award-winning author of numerous authoritative books on the Famine. She earned her Ph.D. from Trinity College, Dublin. Dr. Kinealy has written widely on Irish abolitionists, including her recent book, *Frederick Douglass and Ireland: In His Own Words*, a two-volume collection of speeches, letters, and newspaper accounts of Douglass' activities in Ireland. Her latest book, *Black Abolitionists in Ireland*, which traces 10 pre-American Civil War abolitionists, will be launched this month.

**Presented by the St. John Fisher College Irish Studies Program**

**NEW DATE: Tuesday, 17 November from 9:40-11:00 AM, Eastern Time.**

**Zoom meeting id: 939 8734 7091 Passcode: Celtic**

**Zoom link: <https://sjfc.zoom.us/j/93987347091?pwd=dIN0V2tDUU5kS1RyVE51UTM2QlY1Zz09>**

For further information, please contact Fionnuala Regan at [fregan@sjfc.edu](mailto:fregan@sjfc.edu).

Zoom link: <https://sjfc.zoom.us/j/93987347091>



# It's time to renew your membership

Dear Friends and Supporters of Irish Culture,

We appreciate your support and participation in the activities hosted by the local Tom Finucane Branch of Ceoltas Ceoltoiri Eireann throughout the years. Our mission has always been to bring the finest in the traditional Irish arts to a local audience. Unfortunately, we are all living through trying times as we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. This is especially true for arts organizations like ours that thrive on the live experience to present and share our music, song and dance. The Zoom format helps but of course, it is just not the same. Please be aware that we appreciate your continued support and membership more than ever. Without you we don't exist. We will see better times ahead and with your help we will be successful here in the Rochester area for years to come. The membership year runs from November 1st and we thank you so very much for sticking with us. Don't forget to check in from time to time with our web site ([irishrochester.com](http://irishrochester.com)) and newsletters. Our Facebook page is also alive and well and can be found at **Rochester Irish Musicians**.

Thank you from the CCE Board

## MEMBERSHIP AND DUES INFORMATION 2020-2021

<u>Dues:</u>		<u>Enter amount enclosed:</u>
First Adult	\$25.00	_____
Second Adult	\$ 8.00	_____
Family	\$40.00	_____
Junior (under 18, 1/1/2019)	\$ 4.00	_____
Gift		_____

Your gift is greatly appreciated and is fully tax-deductable and supports branch-sponsored concerts and workshops and special events.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone# \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ (please print clearly)

Please make your check payable to: CCE Rochester

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



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Rochester's Non-competitive Irish Dance School since 1997!

Irish Stepdancing, Ceili, Sean Nós, and Country Sets

Classes for ages 7 to Adult  
at Dance Biz  
Longview Plaza--1742 Long Pond Road

 [www.rns.dance](http://www.rns.dance)   
227-6614

Comhaltas Rochester T-Shirts are only \$15.  
To purchase a t-shirt,  
Contact Kate Ballard at  
[katekballard@gmail.com](mailto:katekballard@gmail.com)



**This space available, paid advertisements and classifieds.**

Only \$100 per year (six issues of the newsletter) – goes out to 200+ people  
For information, please contact Bill Hallahan ([whallah3@naz.edu](mailto:whallah3@naz.edu))

**PILAROSCIA AGENCY**

General Insurance

Property, Casualty, Personal, Commercial

Phone: 585-381-2605

2509 Browncroft Blvd., Rochester, NY 14625



**Branch Officers - 2020**

Cathoirleach (Chair)  
Dave Halligan  
Leas-Cathoirleach (Vice Chair)  
Mark Ballard  
Runai (Secretary)  
Bill Hallahan  
Cisteoir (Treasurer)  
Lynn Pilaroscia  
Míchoir (Auditor)  
Peg Halligan  
Youth Officer  
Lydia Fanara  
Youth Protection Officer  
Gavin Barry  
Public Relations Officer  
Jess Kamens

**Programs**

Music Events  
Dave Halligan  
Kate Ballard  
Ceili Dancing  
Arlene Miller  
Membership  
Bill Hallahan  
Singers' Session  
Chris Brennan  
Music Learner's Session  
Mark Ballard  
Website & Facebook  
Ben Hockenberry  
Newsletter  
Bill Hallahan  
Music Instrument Library  
Mark Gowman

Look for us on Facebook:

**Rochester Irish Musician's Association**

## Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann

### MEMBERSHIP AND DUES for 2021

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 Rochester CDs are still available.**

This classic, 2-CD set, produced by John McGraw contains many of the traditional tunes you will hear at sessions as well as local musicians from the Rochester area. **Only \$20.**

To purchase a CD, contact Lynn Pilaroscia:  
pilarins@frontiernet.net

**Irish music on the internet:**

<http://www.clare.fm/listen-live/>

**JOIN COMHALTAS AND SUPPORT IRISH MUSIC, AND CULTURE.**  
**NEW MEMBERSHIP YEAR: NOVEMBER 1 (2020) TO OCTOBER 31 (2021). YOU CAN STILL JOIN OR RENEW ANY TIME.**

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.





*Bunworth Banshee, Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, by Thomas Crofton Croker, 1825

A **banshee** from Old Irish: *ben síde*, pronounced [bʲen ˈʃiːðʲe], "woman of the fairy mound" or "fairy woman") is a female spirit in Irish folklore who heralds the death of a family member, usually by wailing, shrieking, or **keening**. Her name is connected to the mythologically important tumuli or "mounds" that dot the Irish countryside, which are known as *síde* (singular *síd*) in Old Irish.

Sometimes she has long streaming hair and wears a gray cloak over a green dress, and her eyes are red from continual weeping. She may be dressed in white with red hair and a ghastly complexion, according to a firsthand account by Ann, Lady Fanshawe in her *Memoirs*. Lady Wilde in *Ancient Legends of Ireland* provides another:

Sometimes the banshee assumes the form of some sweet singing virgin of the family who died young, and has been given the mission by the invisible powers to become the harbinger of coming doom to her mortal kindred. Or she may be seen at night as a shrouded woman, crouched beneath the trees, lamenting with veiled face, or flying past in the moonlight, crying bitterly. The cry of this spirit is mournful beyond all other sounds on earth, and betokens certain death to some member of the family whenever it is heard in the silence of the night.

### Keening

In Ireland and parts of Scotland, a traditional part of mourning is the keening woman (*bean chaointe*), who wails a lament—in Irish: *Caoineadh*, Irish pronunciation: [ˈkʷiːnʲi] (Munster dialect), [ˈkʷiːnʲə] (Connaught dialect) or [ˈkiːniːuː] (Ulster dialect), *caoin* meaning "to weep, to wail". This keening woman may in some cases be a professional, and the best keeners would be in high demand.

### Origin

Most, though not all, surnames associated with banshees have the *Ó* or *Mc/Mac* prefix - that is, surnames of Goidelic origin, indicating a family native to the Insular Celtic lands rather than those of the Norse, English, or Norman. Accounts reach as far back as 1380 to the publication of the *Cathreim Thoirdhealbhaigh* (*Triumphs of Torlough*) by Sean mac Craith. Mentions of banshees can also be found in Norman literature of that time.

In some parts of Leinster, she is referred to as the *bean chaointe* (keening woman) whose wail can be so piercing that it shatters glass. In Scottish folklore, a similar creature is known as the *bean nighe* or *ban nigheachain* (little washerwoman) or *nigheag na h-àth* (little washer at the ford) and is seen washing the bloodstained clothes or armour of those who are about to die. In Welsh folklore, a similar creature is known as the *cyhyraeth*

Source: mostly Wikipedia

