

CHAMPION **of** **CHAMPIONS**

SEAN McGUIRE
(fiddle)

&

JOSEPHINE KEEGAN
(piano)

SIDE 1

1. CRONIN'S REELS
2. KAY WEST (HORNPIPE)
3. POPPY LEAF & McCORMICK'S (HORNPIPE)
4. THE COULIN (SLOW AIR)
5. CARLIN'S CONCERTO (SET PIECE)
6. MAIDS OF TULLA (REEL)
7. HARVEST TIME & HIGH LEVEL (HORNPIPE)

SIDE 2

1. STRIKE THE GAY HARP & ROSE WOOD (JIG)
2. NED OF THE HILL (SLOW AIR)
3. JENNY'S WELCOME TO CHARLIE (REEL)
4. O'ROURKES REEL & WILD IRISHMAN
5. DEAR IRISH BOY (SLOW AIR)
6. PLANXTY McGUIRE
7. MARCHES CENTENARY, TRIUMPHAL, & O'NEIL'S

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SEAN MCGUIRE
(fiddle)
&
JOSEPHINE KEEGAN
(piano)

The sensitivity of the piano accompaniment of Josephine Keegan plays a large part in the quality of the music. This derives from her understanding and knowledge of the techniques of the fiddle, which she herself also plays, and her all round musical sympathy. Like Sean, she was brought up in a background of Irish Traditional Music.

Sean McGuire is uniquely endowed to interpret the Traditional Music of Ireland. His understanding and knowledge of it stem from a background of music and playing which has been in the family for many generations. There is a family tradition that an ancestor played for and was honoured by an English Monarch.

His father, John McGuire, is a piccolo and tin-whistle player of renown. With this musical inheritance goes an immaculate technique and a touch both vigorous and sensitive. The melody line is fluent, the tone warm and vibrant.

Great musicians in fostering the tradition have enriched it with the stamp of their own peculiar genius and Sean's arrangements serve to sharpen the focus of familiar pieces and reveal fresh delights. The tenderness he brings to the playing of the slow airs is matched by the viscosity and humour of the reels and jigs.

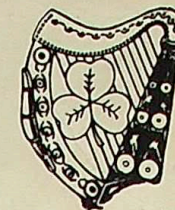
These qualities of understanding and technique combine to make this record an outstanding statement of the continuing richness of Irish music.

Notes by David Evans.

SIDE 1

1. **Cronin's Reels.**
Tunes associated with Paddy Cronin, who adopted them and made them his masterpieces. Cronin, a fiddler from Kerry, is now living in America. Sean first heard them in Boston and plays them as a salute from the Old Country.
2. **Key West (Hornpipe)**
This was taught to Sean by a Nova Scotian fiddle player called Winston (Scottie) Fitzgerald. It is of Scottish origin and a variation of it is to be found in Kerr's collection.
3. **Poppy Leaf and McCormacks (Hornpipes)**
The first of these is in the O'Neill collection and this version of it is derived from Terry Lane the Dublin accordionist. McCormacks is Scottish or Northumbrian—"one of the good hornpipes" according to Sean.
4. **The Coulin**—a meltingly lovely air, a lovesong, a lament or a patriotic tune; the title suggests the "colleen" or her locks of hair and the first of these alternatives.
5. **Carolan's Concerto**—an impromptu composition by the blind harpist. Sheridan, the playwright, records that Carolan composed this piece when challenged to write a concerto by the Italian musician Geminiani. Carolan had just listened to the Italian visitor to Dublin play a Violin concerto and had played it back to him, note perfect, on hearing it for the first time. The first is a curious blend with the classical Italian flavour of its opening figure and the Irish character of its development. Sean in his playing of it, acknowledges its original instrumentation with the use of plucked strings.
6. **Maids of Tulla (Reel).** "A nice whipping reel" remarks Sean, though of some complexity and difficulty, it is well suited to the fiddle.
7. **Harvest Home and The High Level (Hornpipes)**
The first a lilting hornpipe to celebrate the safe return of the last harvest load and the second has become a test piece of traditional fiddlers, with its unusual key—it commemorates the High Level Bridge in Newcastle-on-Tyne.

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SIDE 2

1. **Strike the Gay Harp (Jig)**
A West of Ireland tune, probably Co. Galway in origin.
2. **Ned of the Hill**
A patriotic air concerning a legendary Irish tragic hero.
3. **Jenny's Welcome to Charlie (Reel)**
A tune normally associated with the uilleann pipes (Irish Bagpipes), or concert flute, here featured in a spectacular arrangement for fiddle.
4. **O'Rourke's and the Wild Irishman (Reels)**
Two of Michael Coleman's specialities, who did so much to further the cause of Irish Music in the United States of America.
5. **Dear Irish Boy (slow air)**
A haunting lament to the departing son of Erin.
6. **Planxty McGuire**
A composition by Carolan. A planxty is the name of a piece written in honour of someone, a musical offering or "thank you".
7. **Marches (Centenary, Triumphal and O'Neills)**
Patriotic music of Irish risings, martial and moving in their associations.

Photo — Child Stella McGuire

(Son) Irish Wolfhound - standing dog (Brindle);
CONNAUGHT OF RATHCLINE

(Mother) Irish Wolfhound - lying (Murtagh);
GALLYKELLY MURTAGH.

Gentle when stroked, fierce when provoked.

Photo by kind permission of owner Mr. Barry Quin,
76, Bawnmore Road, Belfast 9, Ireland.

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Engineer; Cel Fay

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