

music of Sligo



Peter Horan



Fred Finn



comhaltas ceoltóirí Éireann



PETER HORAN and FRED FINN

The numerous recordings of traditional music in "The Sligo Style" published in the U.S.A. in the first half of the present century had a major impact on Irish traditional music-making at home and abroad. The names of Michael Coleman, Paddy Killoran and James Morrison came to be known and respected, and their respective styles, standards and virtuosity were accepted as ideals to be emulated wherever Irish music was cherished.

At home around Ballymote, Gurteen and Killavil during that period the music of the area was being played and propagated by local musicians too numerous to mention; whilst migrant Sligo musicians such as John Joe Gardiner and his sister Kathleen (Harrington) and flute players John Egan, John Brennan and Jakes Cawley were bringing their music to Dublin, Dundalk and other parts. (When we say Sligo music we are, in traditional terminology, referring to the area, sometimes known as the Coleman country, embracing South Co. Sligo and parts of Co. Leitrim and north Roscommon and extending to the borders of Mayo in the West and Cavan in the East).

Fiddle and concert flute are the key instruments in the Sligo tradition. Lore and memories of local pipers may linger and the area has seen more than a few worthy exponents of the box, but the decisive instruments in giving the style its particular nuances of verve, flexibility and rhythm are the flute and the fiddle, whether in solo or combined interpretation. These instruments, when handled with a mastery such as shown by Fred and Peter, combine ideally and with equal fluency in executing the traditional rolls, triplets and other forms of ornamentation.

In their playing the characteristic rhythm and 'lift' of the Sligo style is immediately established. Tunes are so treated that both fiddle and flute may, in turn or combined, contribute that extra something to enhance the tune and bring out its full potential. Those lovely nuances of phrasing which give the Sligo style its special patterns of accented stops and highlights are to be heard clearly in their recordings; that special sense of verve and sweeping exuberance is achieved without losing any of the precious details of a finely ornamented melodic line.

The delightful staccato bowed triplets on the fiddle - as in Fred Finn's reel - and on the flute the flamboyant variations - reminiscent of Coleman in full flight - in such tunes as "The Maid of Mt. Cisco", "The Shaskeen" and "The Boys of the Lough", are other features of the Sligo style which are here gloriously displayed.

"The issue of this collection of the recordings of Fred and Peter should be welcome news to all who follow traditional music. Listeners will feel they are being invited to share the atmosphere and intimacy of a quiet tune, round the fire in a friend's house, where every note can be heard and treasured and time is left suspended.

Those who have had the privilege of seeing these two musicians play together and observe their relaxed approach could be forgiven for thinking that it was all very easy and simple. Nothing can be further from the truth as can be easily discovered by seeking to reproduce their musical style on either fiddle or flute.

The recordings presented here provide interesting and direct links with the great Sligo musicians of the past. One has only to listen to "Farewell to Ireland" to hear the lonesome strains of Michael Coleman, or "The Tenpenny Bit" to detect the driving rhythm of Paddy Killoran's jig playing. Indeed all the tracks have very strong associations with their own locality not least being "The Killavil Jig". Congratulations to all concerned!"

C. Lennon

"Devotees of the art of Irish traditional music, and more specifically of the south Sligo region will be delighted, as I am, with the release of this fine record of fiddle and flute music. It's my favourite combination of instruments and over the years Fred and Peter have proved without doubt, in this player's mind, that they are masters of their art.

I first heard them play together in my parent's home in Ballaghaderreen in the early sixties. I listened and learned. On listening to these tracks a few times, I've discovered things long forgotten. That can't be bad!

Listen!"

Matt Molloy

MUSIC OF SLIGO CL33

SIDE A:

1. Duet - Reels: The Duke of Leinster
The London Lassies
2. Duet with bouzouki accomp. by Niall Ó Callanáin:
Reels: Farewell to Erin.
The Flying Column
3. Duet - Jigs: The Scotsman Over the Border
The Tenpenny Bit
4. Peter Horan - Solo - Reels:
The Maid of Mt. Cisco, The Shaskeen and
The Bag of Spuds
5. Fred Finn (with Frank Horan on spoons):
Reel: Fred Finn's Reel
6. Duet - Reels: The Ebb Tide
The Morning Dew
7. Peter Horan (accomp. by Niall Ó Callanáin)
Hornpipe: Kitty's Wedding
8. Duet - Reels: The Mullingar Races
The Boy on the Hilltop

SIDE B:

1. Duet - Reels: Martin Wynne's No. 1
Martin Wynne's No. 2
2. Duet - Reels: Michael Reilly's
The Navvy on the Shore
3. Duet - Jigs: The Killavil Jig
4. Peter - Solo: The Boys of the Lough
The Devils of Dublin
5. Fred - Solo: The Providence
The Boys of Ballinahinch
6. Duet - Polkas: The Shirt I Left Behind Me
The Ballymote Polka
7. Duet - Reel: The Humours of Ballyconnell
8. Duet - Reels: The Sunny Banks
The Mountain Top and The Laurel Bush



THE RECORDINGS:

When Fred and Peter came to Dublin in December '85 we decided to celebrate the occasion by tape-recording some items at the Culturlann. They were both in great form and we taped several selections. As we rushed to catch the train that evening we agreed that they would come to Dublin again in February to record some more items with a view to issuing an L.P. When Fred died so tragically in January '86, we undertook the task of making up the L.P. from recordings already to hand.

Two of these recordings date back to '59, "The Killavil Jig" and "The Humours of Ballyconnell" were recorded by Ciarán Mac Mathúna for his much-loved programme 'A Job of Journey Work' on Radio Eireann (later RTE).

A session in Dublin in 1976 yielded four tracks and that 1985 session gave us five more. The other selections were recorded at various locations around South Sligo in the '70's. At one of these Frank Horan (better known as an accordionist) was playing the spoons, these are heard on track 5, side A.