



Winnipeg Comhaltas Newsletter

Welcome to the May newsletter!

It's time to celebrate the festival of Beltaine, held on the first day of May in Ireland, marking the start of Spring/Summer! Beltane is first mentioned in a glossary attributed to Cormac, Bishop of Cashel, who died in the year 908. Beltaine festivities included maypole dancing, cutting of flowers and protecting cattle by driving them safely between two bonfires. In addition to Beltaine, let's celebrate the fact that we've survived three Colorado-Low weather systems during the last three weeks! So happy Beltaine, and here's wishing you all a wonderful May, filled with good music, and good weather!

Check out these great videos below
submitted by an anonymous donor!

Chocolate Cello anyone?

<https://youtu.be/v785eoZW5G8>

Wonderful music and dance

<https://youtu.be/J3y1GDndIKo>

Great Concert

<https://youtu.be/HsyY99mRSdQ>

For lover of Irish women pipers

<https://youtu.be/wZGAyMON6uY>

Upcoming Events

Jane and Kyle: Fiddle Duo

Album release concert: Shannon's Pub

May 13, 7pm (doors 6:30)

janeandkyle.ca/winnipeg



The Duhks - 20th Anniversary Concert

West End Cultural Center

Saturday, May 14, 8pm (doors 7pm)

[The Duhks - 20th Anniversary](#)



The Irish Fiddle Bow

In simplest terms, the fiddle bow is a stick with strands of horse hair stretched over it. The fiddler drags the bow across the strings, thus scratching the strings with the hair, creating sound. Depending on who is playing, this sound can resemble the interesting squawk of a crow, or it can resemble the beautiful tones of a song bird.

The price of a bow can range from inexpensive (50 dollars or less), to expensive (hundreds of thousands of dollars). An inexpensive bow is made of plastic, and is perfect for beginners who do not require nuances of response. These bows are specifically designed not to break when hurled down while the beginner is learning to play; a behavior known as “hurling.”

In contrast to an inexpensive bow, an expensive bow is specially designed to respond to an advanced performer’s subtle touch of hand pressure. There are differences in bow holds, depending on the style of music that is played. Classical players learn their detailed technique of precision bowing while studying at a conservatory. Irish fiddlers learn they’re bow technique in pubs, while drinking Guinness for supper. Fiddlers are choosy about what type of bow they use, because the tone of the fiddle is highly effected by the type of bow (wood, carbon fiber, etc). A bow that is gaining in popularity is an Incredibow. An Incredibow is made in a convex shape, much like the old Baroque style bows. These bows are manufactured by a small, family-owned company in Arkansas, and use synthetic horse hair, which rarely breaks; a definite advantage over natural horse hair.

So we can see that when choosing a bow, fiddlers have a huge range of options to choose from. There are so many bows that fiddler’s often panic at the prospect of upgrading their bow. Terrified, they walk into the local music store with trembling hands as they try out all the various bows, playing the same jig repeatedly, attempting to discern their favorite bow. After sampling them all they prepare to make a fateful, final decision. What will it be, an inexpensive student bow for \$50.00, or an expensive bow made by the famous French bow maker, François Tourte (1747-1835) for \$600,00.00.... or perhaps something in between.

Slow session at The Irish Club

Lynn McLean: coordinator

Where and when do we meet?

We meet every Thursday: 5:40 - 7 PM at the Irish Association of Manitoba

What is the Winnipeg Slow Session?

This is an open group for folks interested in learning traditional Irish and Celtic tunes.

What instruments do people play? Most tunes are instrumental and composed for dancers. Instruments include tin whistle, flute, recorder, guitar, mandolin, bouzouki’s, banjo, fiddle, accordions, and bodhran.

How does the session work?

Every second or third week, a new learning tune is taught by one of our players. The music PDF and audio clips emailed to everyone ahead of time so we can practice the tune at home before learning it together as a group. For the first 20 minutes of the session, the new tune is taught at a slow pace so everyone becomes more comfortable playing it. Following the “learning tune” we play some other tunes we have covered before. A suggested list is also sent out via the group email for the Winnipeg Slow Session.

How do I get involved

The Slow Session is free to join. We encourage people to consider purchasing an annual membership in the Irish Association of Manitoba as they kindly provide us the space and regular time for us to have our sessions. Just show up any Thursday at 5:45 PM

Important information re: COVID

For all people entering the Irish Association of Manitoba, your proof of vaccination and photo ID are required. Masks must be worn accept when seated. We are spacing out when seated in our session.

Services at the Irish Association

Drinks are available at the bar, and meals may be offered in the future

Tune of the Month

Submitted by Virginia Lockett

The Rose Tree: Polka

Played by The Good Tune

Kevin Lees (fiddle), Sebastian Bloch (guitar)

<https://youtu.be/v785eoZW5G8>



Due to good behavior you get a bonus video: The Monaghan Jig/Kilfenora, beautifully played by Kevin Lees and Sebastian Bloch.

<https://youtu.be/e1-80u--A1o>

“It was only a matter of time before The Monaghan Jig and Kilfenora were featured on our channel. We like to play these classic Irish Jigs a little slower to bring out their full elegance. “—Kevin, Sebastian