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COMHALTAS



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Winnipeg Comhaltas Newsletter

At the time of this writing, the warm summer breezes are starting to blow, summer birds are chirping, and warm air is luring us outside and into the parks. As for our Irish musical community, the tune players have been holding sessions in the parks and backyards, responsibly following health guidelines such as social distancing. We've also seen the recent "triumphant return" of the Shannon's session on Saturday evenings, hosted by Dale Brown. For many of us, the last few weeks have been a time of self isolation, either alone or with our families. This has been a difficult time for many people who have temporarily lost jobs and income, or have been forced to stay home from school. We are all looking forward to a time when we can freely venture forth into the world again!

Session in the yard. Nothing can stop the tune players!
Photo by Olivia Woytowich



Randy and Craig at the session in the park. Photos: Virginia Lockett



Member of the month

Ryan Spracklin



Ryan moved to Winnipeg with his family three years ago, so he's still a relative newcomer. Comhaltas would like to take this opportunity to introduce him to those of you who haven't met him yet. Ryan works for The Royal Winnipeg Ballet, as Head of Properties, and plays with the Dust Rhinos.

Ryan started taking violin lessons at the age of four. A few years later he found himself at his first traditional Irish session organized by the Saskatoon Comhaltas Branch and he was hooked. Learning and playing tunes became a part of life and was the influence for starting his first trad. band in high school while playing for an Irish dance class with friends he'd made at Comhaltas. This development set him up to pursue career in the performing arts which took him all over the country. Every city he moved to; the first thing he did was look up where the closest session was and brought his fiddle, this was always a great way to meet new people with common interests. After living in Edmonton and Halifax, Ryan moved back to Saskatoon and started up a new trad. band called Circling Over Shannon. During that time Ryan and his family moved north to Prince Albert SK where he ran the local performing arts centre and played fiddle with a number of other groups. *Welcome to Winnipeg, Ryan!*

Submitted by Virginia Lockett

“The slow session ,south branch, (MaryAnn, Lisa, Katy, Wayne, Randall, Linda, and I) have met a few times and the larger group is meeting every couple of Wednesday’s At Crescent Park. I’ve managed to learn a couple of new tunes and have kept my calluses during the quarantine”.

The slow session, “South Branch”
Photo by Olivia Woytowich



Wayne at the session in the park, playing his fine mandolin. Photo: Virginia Lockett



We’re all going to Ireland when this is over

Lahinch, Ireland



Submitted by Susan Hammer

CCE Winnipeg Irish Music School:

Message from Susan H.

Due to the pandemic, the Irish Music School had to cancel Term Two classes & sessions. Students will be contacted regarding this, and also regarding plans for the Fall. In the meantime, check out these

resources:

Most of the tunes played in Irish Sessions are dance tunes.

Understanding more about the dance helps Irish musicians to play the music in a style appropriate to the dance.

Here's a website with examples of and explanations for the various kinds of traditional Irish dances.

<https://www.danceus.org/irish-dance/#history>

Anyone interested in learning more about the Tradition of Irish Music check out this website:

<https://www.danceus.org/irish-dance/#history>

They have archived thousands of recordings, videos, manuscripts etc.

Until recently, you had to visit them in Dublin to use these resources, but now they are available FREE online!

Some thoughts during the pandemic

During this pandemic, many people have been isolated at home. This newsletter, hopefully, serves as a means of communication and connection. Now that some social restrictions are being lifted, it's great to see people playing music and enjoying each other's company. This reminds us that Irish music has a wonderful social component to it, as it tends to bring people together. We here at Comhaltas extend our warmest wishes and support to each of you.

Lahinch, Ireland

