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COMHALTAS



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Winnipeg Comhaltas Newsletter

Welcome to the August newsletter!

As we all know, one of the wonders of modern technology is the availability of educational and entertaining videos found on Utube, but it's easy to forget that just a few short years ago we needed to attend a live concert by our favorite artist, in order to hear them play. Nowadays we can find performances on Utube by a variety of artists, and watch their work under careful observation. During Covid we're seeing the rise of the virtual concert phenomenon. Watching these excellent virtual concerts, I have a feeling they will continue, long after Covid fades away. Covid is changing our world, in some ways. I love live concerts and I know they'll always continue, but the Covid lockdown has shown us that there's a place for virtual concerts. That's the thought of the day, but our overwhelming thought as that we wish you all a great August!

A session in the park starts to convene on a lovely July afternoon.

Canopy kindly provided by Andrew Galloway.

Photos submitted

by

Lynn McLean



Meet Our Members

Wayne Drewry

Wayne (with Mandolin) with musicians he often plays with: Randall, Johanna, Linda, Mary-Ann, (Katy and Lisa not shown).



I got involved with Irish music completely by accident. My friend Mary Louise Chown told me she was taking a "tunes by ear" class with Susan Hammer and asked if I would be interested. Since I had recently bought a mandolin and wanted to learn more about playing it, and since I don't read music, I said sure. Mary Louise probably said "Irish tunes by ear," and I didn't hear the Irish part (not the most promising start for learning by ear).

It wasn't until I showed up for the first class that I realized it was learning to play Irish tunes, and that Susan had started the class with the intention of creating a Ceili band. So I stuck with it for a couple of years, learned a couple of tunes, and went to Tea and Tunes a few times. And then as my children got older and grandchildren came along my focus shifted and I dropped out of the Irish music scene for about 10 years

Wayne's Bio



My focus shifted again in September 2018 when my wife Beda died and I was rehabbing from a broken femur. I had been concentrating on a couple of storytelling gigs with Mary Louise and some other storytellers. When that ended I was looking for other activities to structure my time.

I had seen a notice from Susan about a Colmhaltas open house at the Irish club in early 2019. At the open house, Erin Burns-Flett invited me to come to the Tuesday slow sessions. I didn't know many of the people in the sessions but I got to know some of them. That summer Randall Flower asked if I would be interested in playing at the Irish Folklorama pavilion with a few folks from the sessions.

I have been playing with them ever since. Randall Flower, Johanna Handford, Mary Ann Fast, Linda Little, Katy Woytowich, Lisa Enns and I get together once or twice a week, usually in a local park, sometimes at Shannons, sometimes in somebody's backyard, a few times at the Irish Club, and work on tunes together.

Now I know a little bit more about my mandolin, I know a few more tunes, and, most importantly, I have many new friends.

Irish Music School Update:

Hello folks,

The Comhaltas Winnipeg Irish Music School is closing and will no longer provide regular lessons and classes.

However, Susan will still be available to help anyone interested in learning Irish Traditional Music - email for details.

Here's some links you may find interesting:
The most reliable resource for learning about Irish Traditional Music.

A huge archive of historic and contemporary, videos, recordings, sheet music, articles and more.

<https://www.itma.ie/digital-library>

And one of my favourite musicians:

<https://www.itma.ie/blog/saothar/mick-mulcahy>

More links in the next newsletter! - Susan

Tune of the Month

Anthony Frawley's Jig

Played by Yvonne Casey

<https://youtu.be/UBVEBPDy2YM>

Yvonne Casey is one of Co. Clare's most distinctive fiddle players. She grew up surrounded by the richness of Clare music and plays in a unique soulful style. In the 1990's Yvonne recorded two albums with The Ceili Bandits. She has also recorded two solo albums titled "Yvonne Casey" in 2004, and "Croi" (Heart) in 2018.

Yvonne lives and teaches in Ennistymon, Co. Clare. Her teaching emphasizes beauty of tone and mindfulness of each note.



As for background on Anthony Frawley's Jig: the tune was popularized by a recording by fiddle player Patrick Kelly from Cree, Co. Clare. Patrick Kelly lived from 1905 to 1976.