



# YOUNG IRISH MUSICIAN'S WEEKEND

*Tuning Up the Next Generation*

Saint Paul, Minnesota

June 18-20, 2009

*Featuring*

ELIOT GRASSO • LIZ KANE • YVONNE KANE • DAITHI SPROULE • CIM STAFF

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kate Dowling, Executive Director  
612-669-3013 irish.music@comcast.net  
www.centerforirishmusic.org

### 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL YOUNG IRISH MUSICIANS WEEKEND IN ST. PAUL

The Center for Irish Music is proud to announce the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Young Irish Musicians Weekend, June 18-20, 2008, at The Center's newly-opened home in The Celtic Junction, 836 Prior Avenue North in St. Paul. Classes are for of all ages, at all skill levels; adults musicians of other genres and absolute beginners are very welcome.

General tuition for the weekend is \$225. One-day adult tuition is \$130, and a two-day beginner program, grades 2-6, is \$100. The Friday night Hooley (party with a cd launch, open mic, trad disco, jam session and more) is open to the public for \$10 and the Saturday night Concert is \$15/\$45 per family. General financial aid and discounts for CIM members are available. Register and reserve tickets at <http://www.centerforirishmusic.org>

The Weekend is an introduction for beginners and a master-course in Irish traditional music and culture for players of all ages. Workshops will be led by world renowned musicians, including Daithi Sproule on guitar, Irish language and song, fiddlers Liz and Yvonne Kane, piper/flutist/whistler Eliot Grasso, and the Center's own accomplished staff instructors. Beginners, novices, and advanced players can all participate in sessions and discussions with the master artists. Evening events include a Friday night Reception and Hooley and a Saturday night Master Artist concert featuring Young Irish Musician players.

The Young Irish Musicians Weekend is especially for students under 25 years of age. It is a perfect event for meeting other young people who have a passion for Ireland's music and culture. Sean McCluskey, a 2007 YIM student from Chicago, had this to say: "I had a blast at the Young Irish Musicians Weekend! The best part about the YIM was interacting with the master artists... and hanging out with other young, interested musicians like

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## Dedicated to Handing Down the Tradition

The Center for Irish Music  
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myself.” The Weekend is also a chance for lovers of other genres to dive into the unique sounds and structures of traditional Irish music.

All events will take place at The Center for Irish Music’s brand-new facility at The Celtic Junction, at 836 Prior Avenue North, in St. Paul. Classes are from 12 noon-5pm on Thursday, June 18, 10am-5pm on Friday, June 19, with the Hooley at 7:30pm, and 10am-5pm on Saturday, June 20, with the Master Concert starting at 7:30pm.

Funding for this event is provided, in part, by the Irish Fair of Minnesota Legacy Fund. Thank you. The Young Irish Musicians Weekend is presented by The Center for Irish Music, a non-profit 501c3 organization teaching traditional Irish music to students of all ages on a variety of instruments. It is the Center’s vision to support the traditional Irish music community into the future. Contact the Center for Irish Music via email at [irish.music@comcast.net](mailto:irish.music@comcast.net) or via post at 836 Prior Ave North, St Paul MN 55104, or call 612-669-3013. For complete information visit our website: [www.centerforirishmusic.org](http://www.centerforirishmusic.org).

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**WHAT:** Young Irish Musicians Weekend; A fun, intensive weekend of exploring Irish music and culture for students of all ages and levels. Instrument workshops, sessions, social events and discussions with master Irish artists Eliot Grasso, Liz and Yvonne Kane, and Daithi Sproule. The Weekend is presented by The Center for Irish Music, a non-profit 501c3 organization dedicated to handing down the tradition.

**WHEN:** June 18-20, 2009

**WHERE:** The Center for Irish Music, located at The Celtic Junction, 836 Prior Avenue North, St. Paul, MN, 55104

**COST:** Friday night Hooley \$7/\$5 CIM member  
Saturday night Concert \$15/\$12 CIM member or \$45 per family  
Classes range from \$100 to \$225  
Member discounts and General Financial Aid available

**TO REGISTER:** See our website at [www.centerforirishmusic.org](http://www.centerforirishmusic.org)

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## About the Artists



**Liz & Yvonne Kane:** Together Liz and Yvonne Kane create a highly exciting and sound. These sisters come from Dawros on the outskirts of Letterfrack, a village in Connemara on the West coast of Ireland. With a musical tradition on both sides of the family, it was only natural for the girls to play music. Their grandfather, fiddle player Jimmy Mullen, has been a leading figure in the traditional music scene in Connemara for over 50 years and it was his enthusiasm that encouraged the sisters to learn to play the fiddle.

They began learning music from both their grandfather Jimmy Mullen and South Sligo musician and teacher, Mary Finn McCrudden. Along with the recordings of the Rainey brothers, their grandfather and Mary were an early influence on their music. The Rainey family were travelling fiddle players who visited Letterfrack and the surrounding areas in the 1950s.

Music very soon became an integral part of their everyday lives and holidays were spent attending summer schools in Tubbercurry and Drumshanbo. Liz was interested in competition unlike Yvonne who disliked the tense atmosphere. In 1992, Liz won the Fiddler of Dooney in Sligo and went on to win the All-Ireland senior fiddle and duet title as well as the Fiddler of Oriel in 1995. She returned to Monaghan the following year and regained the Fiddler of Oriel title.

Yvonne and Liz consider their style to be heavily influenced by South Sligo fiddle playing, the music of East Galway and in particular the fiddle playing and compositions of Paddy Fahey. In recent years, the sisters have been privileged to meet and play with Paddy whose music plays a central role in their repertoire. The recordings of Michael Coleman, Hughie Gillespie, Andy McGann and Kathleen Collins have also made an impact on their music.

Liz studied music at University College Cork and graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree and a Higher Diploma in Education. Yvonne moved to Galway and began playing music fulltime. After finishing in Cork, Liz returned to Galway and they both shared a house with musician, Sharon Shannon. The following year, they joined her band as part of 'Sharon and The Woodchoppers'. For the next three years, the band took them all over the world to promote the album 'The Diamond Mountain Sessions'

**Eliot Grasso:** Baltimore native and Oregon resident, Eliot Grasso, hails from a long line of familial musicians. He began playing Irish traditional music on the flute at age seven, tin whistle at age eight, and uilleann pipes at age eleven, his earliest exposure including the music of The Chieftains and The Bothy Band. In January of 1995, Eliot began studying rudimentary piping technique with Paul Levin and later that year, began studying advanced piping technique with *Na Piobairí Uilleann* instructor, Kieran O'Hare. Since 1996, Eliot has won regional and international first, second, and third place titles at the Mid-Atlantic *Fleadh Cheoil* and Ireland's International *Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann* in the uilleann pipes and tin whistle divisions.

Eliot has made appearances at the Kennedy Center with Liz Carroll, Constitution Hall with Ethnomusicologist Dr. Mick Moloney, the Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall with The Chieftains, the Library of Congress with Cherish the Ladies, the National Building Museum, the National Geographic Concert Hall, and the home of the Irish Ambassador. In addition, Eliot has performed for the National Heritage Awards, Island, the Washington Cathedral Art Symposium, The American Ireland Fund,



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the US-Ireland Business Summit, and has entertained President and Mrs. Clinton at the National Endowment for the Arts Awards. At the conclusion of the 1998 *Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann*, Eliot performed alongside other All-Ireland champions in a concert for Irish President, Mary Robinson.

Since 1999, he has performed as a soloist in Patrick Cassidy's orchestral work, *Famine Remembrance*, with members of the Washington Chamber Symphony under the direction of Elaine Rendler and Stephen Simon's *Mike Mulligan and the Steam Shovel* with the Harrisburg Symphony under the baton of the composer. He was also invited to perform with actor, Russell Crowe, for the unveiling of a memorial to fellow actor Richard Harris in Kilkee, County Clare. Most recently, Eliot has toured the British Isles with the Oregon Chorale directed by Bernd Kuehn and has recorded with the University College Dublin Choral Scholars in Dublin, Ireland.

In May 2004, Eliot was invited to perform on National Public Radio through "A Prairie Home Companion" with host Garrison Keillor where he was honored with the Ray Marklund Award for amiable stage presence. Additional live radio broadcasts include RTE's "The Rolling Wave," presented by Peter Browne, "The Edge On Folk," hosted by Steve Edge and broadcast from the University of British Columbia, "The Long Acre," hosted by Cindy Reich and broadcast from Ft. Collins, Colorado, and "Our Saturday Tradition," broadcast from Bellevue, Washington.

Eliot has been the recipient of the Rosenberg Scholarship for the Arts four times for piano performance and has been twice honored with the Frankie Kennedy Memorial Scholarship to fund music studies in Ireland. In January 2007, he was selected by the Royal Musical Association to present his thesis on Nineteenth-Century Bach Transcriptions before the RMA Student Research Conference in Bristol, England and delivered a paper on recording the uilleann pipes for the Fourth Annual Art of Record Production Conference in Boston.

Eliot holds a BA in music from Goucher College and a Masters Degree in Ethnomusicology from the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick. Since arriving in Ireland, Eliot was honored with a commission from *Na Píobairí Uilleann* to record and produce an album of solo piping for the club's catalogue which was released May 25, 2007. He is currently attending the University of Oregon where he is pursuing doctoral studies in musicology under the auspices of a Graduate Teaching Fellowship. Additionally, Eliot is on the music faculty at the John G. Shedd Institute for the Arts. He and his wife, Kate, reside in Springfield, Oregon.

Currently, Eliot is a contributing writer for *An Píobaire*, issued by *Na Píobairí Uilleann* and *Iris na bPíobairí*, the Interr Journal for Uilleann Pipers issued by *Cumann na bPíobairí*.



**Dáithí Sproule:** A native of Derry in the North of Ireland, is a singer and guitarist and one of the premier accompanists in the Irish tradition. When he played with Skara Brae in the late 60's and early 70's, he was the first person to use and develop the DADGAD tuning in Irish music, a style now widely used in Irish and Celtic music in general. Skara Brae recorded a ground-breaking album in 1971 involving intricate arrangements for guitars and keyboards of traditional songs in Irish -- the other members of the group were Bothy Band and Nightnoise. He had

Maighréad Ní Dhomhnaill and her sister and brother, Mícheál and Tríona, later of the met the ÓDomhnaills first in Rannafast in Donegal where he learnt the Irish language and many old Gaelic songs while spending every summer there of his teens.

After the breakup of Skara Brae, Dáithí, who by then lived in Dublin while pursuing academic studies and a career in book editing, became heavily involved with the traditional instrumental scene in Dublin, gaining a great grounding in a broad repertoire of Irish music and styles and playing sessions many nights a week with the legendary fiddler, John

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Kelly Senior, and his sons, John and James, at the Four Seasons in Capel Street. In that period he also played frequent gigs with other musicians as well as making solo appearances. At the end of the 70's James Kelly and Dáithí and their friend, Paddy Ó'Brien, came to the US to record an album with Shanachie Records and to tour for a few months. This led over the course of the next year or two to all three settling in the States. Minnesota was Dáithí's home for the next 20 years. The Twin Cities provided a good home for Dáithí (and Paddy too) since it had a very active Irish music and dance scene. In that period, Dáithí taught Old Irish, Celtic mythology and Irish music at various times at the University of Minnesota, the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul and University College Dublin. He also, of course, continued his music, playing locally in Minnesota with the Northern Star Ceili Band, touring and recording with Trian (Liz Carroll and Billy McComiskey), Peter Ostroushko (Ukrainian- American fiddle and mandolin virtuoso and long-time star of the "Prairie Home Companion" radio show), and with world-renowned Irish band, Altan.

With Altan, Dáithí has toured the US and Canada numerous times playing concert halls from coast to coast (last year they played the Hollywood Bowl), all the major folk festivals, such as Edmonton, Winnipeg, Philadelphia, Telluride and Milwaukee, and as far afield as Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand as well as many tours throughout Europe. Dáithí has appeared with Altan on a recent Chieftains album, on several Dolly Parton recordings and performed on stage with Ricky Skaggs and Bonnie Raitt. Among his many other recordings are albums with Tommy Peoples and Seamus and Manus McGuire, and a solo recording, "A Heart made of Glass". As well as his actual playing, Dáithí is a composer of songs and instrumentals, some of which have been recorded by Skara Brae, Altan, Paddy O'Brien, Laoise Kelly, Trian and Liz Carroll. He has also published a volume of short stories in Irish and several academic articles on early Irish poetry and legend.

Winner of the prestigious 2009 Bush Foundation Artist Fellowship Award, Dáithí now lives in West Saint Paul, Minnesota and tours regularly with Altan, Fingal and the HiBs.

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