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# The Center for Irish Music

November 2006

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## Class Notes:

### Happy New Year! ..... ? In November ?

*Samhain* (pronounced: sowan) is what some people refer to as "The Celtic New Year" - and it begins today.

*Samhain* is the word for November in the Irish language. The Scottish Gaelic spelling is *Samhain* (for the feast), or *an t-Samhain* (for the month). The same word was used for a month in the Celtic calendar, in particular the first three nights of this month, with the festival marking the end of the summer season and the end of the harvest. A modernized version of this festival continues today in some of the traditions of the Catholic All Souls' Day, the secular Halloween, and in folk practices of *Samhain* itself in the Celtic Nations and the Irish and Scottish diasporas. The *Samhain* celebrations have survived in several guises as a festival dedicated to the harvest and the dead.

In Ireland and Scotland, the *Féile na Marbh*, the "festival of the dead" took place on *Samhain*. *Samhain Eve*, in Irish, *Oíche Shamhna* and Scots Gaelic, *Oidhche Shamhna*, is one of the principal festivals of the Celtic calendar, and is thought to fall on or around the 31st of October. It represents the final harvest. In modern Ireland and Scotland, the name by which Halloween is known in the Gaelic language is still "*Oíche/Oidhche Shamhna*". It is still the custom in some areas to set a place for the dead at the *Samhain* feast, and to tell tales of the ancestors on that night. Traditionally, *Samhain* was time to take stock of the herds and grain supplies, and decide which animals would need to be slaughtered in order for the people and livestock to survive the winter. This custom is still observed by many who farm and raise livestock.

Bonfires played a large part in the festivities celebrated down through the last several centuries, and up through the present day in some rural areas of the Celtic nations. Villagers were said to have cast the bones of the slaughtered cattle upon the flames, cattle having a prominent place in the pre-Christian Gaelic world. The word 'bonfire', or *bonafire* is a direct translation of the Gaelic '*tine cnámh*'. With the bonfire ablaze, the villagers extinguished all other fires. Each family then solemnly lit its hearth from the common flame, thus bonding the families of the village together. In parts of western Brittany, *Samhain* is still heralded by the baking of *kornigou*, cakes baked in the shape of antlers to commemorate the god of winter shedding his "cuckold" horns as he returns to his kingdom in the Otherworld. With Christianization, the festival in November became All Hallows' Day on November 1st followed by All Souls' Day, on November 2nd. Over time, the night of October 31 came to be called All Hallows' Eve, and the remnants festival dedicated to the dead eventually morphed into the secular holiday known as Halloween.

## Happy Celtic New Year!

### Fintan Vallely - Concert, Song Workshop, and Flute and Tin Whistle Masterclass



- Flute / Whistle Masterclass, Nov 1, 6:30pm, \$30  
@ St Paul Conservatory of Music

Fintan performed a fine song concert on October 29 – a full hall as I have heard told. And his singing workshop was also a big success. You are the lucky chosen few who got to hear and meet this performer in such a rare US appearance. He's a major world scholar and musician and it is an honor to have him here teaching with us. Fintan's final contribution for this year (he'll be back for our Young Irish Musician's Weekend in June!) is a flute and whistle masterclass on November 1.

### Celtic Shopping Day @ The Dubliner Pub, November 5

Want to get your Holiday shopping started? Check out Celtic Shopping Day at the Dubliner Pub in St Paul, November 5 from 1-6 pm. The Center for Irish Music Student Ensemble will be entertaining shoppers from 3:30-4:30pm followed by an open music session. Local vendors and artists are featured at this event – jewelry, clothing, pottery, photography, etc... Call Bernadette Galaba for information at 651-488-6840.

**The Center for Irish Music at The Saint Paul Conservatory of Music**  
29 East Exchange Street, St Paul, MN 55102 651-224-2205  
Kate Dowling, Center for Irish Music Director 651-493-2022  
Web: [www.centerforirishmusic.org](http://www.centerforirishmusic.org) email: [irish.music@comcast.net](mailto:irish.music@comcast.net)

## NEW! Community Ceilis with the Doon Ceili Band – Nov 12 & Dec 10 – Ceili AND Sets

Want to dance to a live, world-class ceili band? Try out some set dancing? Bring your whole family to enjoy a tradition that's been carried on in the Twin Cities for decades. The Doon is putting a new twist on the event by having it as a band-lead ceili. There will always be a band! Maybe not the full Doon, but even a little Doon will do! And they are trying at a new venue: The Eagles Club in Minneapolis. Here are the details:

### **Doon Ceili Band Community Ceili AND Set Dancing**

Sundays, Nov 12 & Dec 10 (starting a "2nd Sunday" tradition!)

7:30pm -- \$5 suggested donation

Eagles Club

2507 E. 25 St. (corner of 25th and 25th)

Minneapolis, MN 55406

for more information: 651-489-7044



## Failte Minnesota Green Tie Fundraiser Event – November 18

Failte (*fall-tcha*) means "welcome" in Irish. Failte Minnesota is a non-profit organization that is committed to establishing an Irish Community Center in Minnesota. The Green Tie Event, which is co-hosted by the Irish Music and Dance Association, will help raise funds to build a home for our local Irish heritage. Doon Ceili Band will be performing as well as The Center for Irish Music Student Ensemble. Saturday, November 18 from 6:30-11pm at St Paul College. Cost is \$100 per person. For more information visit: [www.failteminnesota.org](http://www.failteminnesota.org)

## Masterclasses with John Williams, November 30

John Williams, world champion musician and performer will be in town again performing at the Cedar Cultural Center with local, internationally renowned guitarist Dean Magraw. John will be giving TWO master classes at the Center for Irish Music on the evening of November 30: one for accordion students (all levels except rank beginners) and a separate (NEW!) class based on repertoire that is open to students of ALL instruments at intermediate to advanced levels. More information coming, but mark your calendar! These two classes will be at the Center for Irish Music.

Repertoire Class with John Williams: 6 - 7:45pm Cost \$30

Accordion with John Williams: 8 – 9:30pm Cost \$30

## Celtic Tenors Christmas Concert at the Fitzgerald, December 5 – CIM Ensemble Performing!

This concert is a benefit for the Irish Fair of Minnesota. The Center for Irish Music student ensemble will be performing on the mainstage (wow!) at 7pm. For more information visit [www.irishfair.com](http://www.irishfair.com)

## Charladies Christmas Concert, December 11 – Lowry Theater

Irish Holiday Music and Dance hosted and performed by CIM instructor Laura MacKenzie and dancers Biddies Galore. "A unique holiday experience - and evening of Irish music and dance (with a bit of schtick!), celebrating the season with traditional carols, songs and tunes" The Lowry Theater, 16 West Fifth St., St. Paul (between Wabasha St. and St. Peter). Doors Open 7 PM, the Show is at 7:30 PM. Festive beverages available. Come early and enjoy! (ramp parking available across the street) Tickets \$10 at the door, or in advance from Irish on Grand, 124 Grand Ave, St. Paul (651-222-5151). [www.lauramackenzie.com](http://www.lauramackenzie.com). Come support Laura and her crew at this family holiday event.

## NOTE! December Family Session Date Change – December 19!

Due to the Celtic Tenor's Concert and the CIM's involvement in that event (see above), we need to change our December family session to Tuesday, December 19 from 6:30-8pm. We will have regular classes on Tuesday December 5. Thanks!

## We need your expertise for the Young Irish Musicians Weekend, June 22–24, 2007

Plans are moving along quickly for the Young Irish Musicians Weekend. Much of the program is planned, locations chosen, etc., but now we need your HELP to get it all done! If you have any expertise or just a desire to help out a non-profit, please give Kate a call or send an email. We need people to help on the following committees: Finance, Hospitality, Marketing/Advertising, Programming, Facilities. We are very honored that international artists James Kelly, Paddy O'Brien, Daithi Sproule and Fintan Vallely will be making such a meaningful impact on our first attempt at the Young Irish Musicians Weekend in 2007. We heartily thank the *Irish Fair of Minnesota* for their generous grant that is enabling us to go forward and make this dream a reality. The Center for Irish Music intends to make this an annual event in St. Paul.

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## Family Sessions

Our November Family Session will be on Tuesday, November 7, 6:30-8pm in the recital hall. Flute player and grad-student Nora (from Vancouver via Limerick) will be our guest musician. The next session is scheduled for (NOTE CHANGE!) December 19.

## Holiday Teaching Schedules

Check with your individual instructors as to what your lesson schedule will be during the upcoming holidays in November and December.

## Webpage

Don't forget – we have a new website! Keep yourself up-to-date at [www.centerforirishmusic.org](http://www.centerforirishmusic.org)

## As always ....

Please contact us if you have any questions about anything! Kate & Jode Dowling 651-493-2022 and [irish.music@comcast.net](mailto:irish.music@comcast.net)