

Tradition
In Review



Bill Margeson



the group's name is NOT capitalized, so save the e-mails and phone calls—especially from my eighth grade grammar teacher, Miss Kathy Gramp. bo-

Well, it IS getting to be that time of year, and there is no denying it. Next month, we will be featuring our Top 10 Christmas List for the real Irish music lover in your gift planning. You know the bit, the albums we'd like to receive in the 'auld Christmas stocking. As opposed to the more normal and expected lump of coal. Say, with everything else going on, this may be the most important holiday to give some great music, smile, join together and give thanks for what we all still have. Far more important is the music, and not the \$400 iPod to play it on. Especially now, hey? Let's begin this month, however.

Look, we make no excuses, nor do we have to, for being hometown rooters for bohola. And, btw,

bohola is, of course, Jimmy Keane on piano accordion and Pat Broaders on "bouzar". Yup. "Bouzar." It was made for Pat by master instrument maker, Joe Foley, in Dublin. It has a bouzouki's neck and a guitar body. Great sound, and it is unique. Beautifully played. And, Jimmy? Well, let's just let it suffice that he is the best piano accordion player in the business, no debate. More importantly, he has a real musician's set of ears, and is very, very tasteful. Both of them have played so much trad for so long it is now an intuition, rather than an effort. They have also reached that point where they really don't have to worry about how they are going to "make the notes" in a technical sense, but they can rather just concentrate on the ambience and feeling they seek to convey. Only the best can do this. The new album is simply entitled, bohola Jimmy Keane and Pat Broaders. Hard to believe they have been together 10 years, already. Ain't it funny how time slips away?

This album follows the longer format the boys have been employing the last few years. While there are only nine selections, they cover an astounding 1:14! It takes a real sense of musicality to pull this off. So many try to play longer pieces of music, with lots of changes, dips and rills. Few succeed. We still think the best are the

old La Bottine Souriante, Hayes and Cahill—and bohola. We have written so many words about Pat and Jimmy over the years, we are somewhat stumped what to say. No one sounds like them. No one else plays like them. They are wonderful, and what the heck else is there? We DO think, and have for some time, that the real secret ingredient that just keeps getting better and better is Pat's vocals. We thought he was a decent singer when the group began. Not really exceptional. My, how THAT has changed! Pat is a terrific, terrific singer. The lads are joined by guest stars Larry Gray on

it out—so this album should be widely available. Rest assured it will be on our Christmas Top 10. Rating: Four Harps

Wait! Why wait? We are doubly lucky to have a SECOND bohola release. A Christmas album. Called, bo-Ho-Ho-hola, it is easily the best Christmas album of the year. Get it ordered. Wow! Everything we said above is also true here. Fab. Brill. The best. This is really, really fun. There are songs and tunes aplenty. And, magically, some really wonderful poetry, comedic bits, and lots of memories of real Irish Christmases

past. This one should get some close listening to get the full measure. Great love and care is in evidence here. This is no throw it together piece of Christmas commercialism. We think it joins the Chieftains' Bells of Dublin and Kathy Cowan's A Kiltartan Road Christmas as the best of this format. Great music and lots of laughs, tender recollections and a real, true sense of the season. As we stated at the top of this month's column—these are not the best of times. All the more important that this album is available. This album IS Christmas, well, from an Irish perspective, anyway. We have loved bohola from the first note 10



Piperlink held at the Irish American Heritage Center recently. photo courtesy of Cathy Curry, 4girlsphotography.com

bass, Sean Cleland on fiddle, Mary Broaders and one of our all-time faves, Kat Eggleston on vocals. Our favorite cut? "Gweneen," in memory of the great Gwen Sales. All true musicians and singers keep growing and getting better, even when that doesn't seem possible. So, here it is. bohola's newest, and it is magic. Rampant Lion, Paddy's on the Square, locally—and cdBaby on the net are sure to have it. Jimmy is very good at getting

years ago, but never more so than on this Holiday treat. You'll find it at the same places listed above for the other album. Get 'em both. Enjoy. Rating: Four Harps

Notes:

- Congrats to all—especially Kieran O'Hare, Pat Broaders and the man himself, Kevin Henry on the Piperlink event last month at the Irish American Heritage Center. Magic, and a great chance to see some old friends, such as Tommy Keane from Orranmore, Galway, who performed as part of it all. (Little known secret—Tommy is an avid Cubs fan.) Gay McKeown was fab with his playing, also. The only complaint? Muireann nic Amhlaoibh did not get to sing more piping tunes. She is a gift. (Also, finally, we got to meet the great Liz Knowles, one of the best Irish fiddlers in the world!)

- Are you tuning in? WDCB—Monday nights—7-9pm—90.9fm. www.wdcb.org—Blarney on the Air. I am joined by Shay Clarke as we continue to offer the best Irish music from across the sea and across the board. A wee bit of everything for the fan!

Ta!

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