



Tradition In Review

Bill Margeson



This is one of those months where we start off with great ideas for a column, and nothing happens. This is always the slowest month of the year when it comes to new CD releases. Understandable. The pre-Christmas rush is over and the January doldrums hit.

There are some great concerts coming up at Old Town School of Folk Music. Several people will turn out for Eileen Ivers and Immigrant Soul on March 9th. For us Bluegrass fans, Larry Sparks and the Lonesome Ramblers are in on March 30th. Celtic Fiddle Festival

featuring Kevin Burke, Christian Lemaire and Andre Brunet will be there on April 24th. The fabulous Martin Hayes and Dennis Cahill will be in on May 17 followed the next night by the stunning Claire Lynch Band, a multi-award-winning dream of a bluegrass band. Old Town remains one of the best concert venues in America. Excellent seating design joins with their Bose sound system for great nights of music.

Speaking of that, April is going to see the launch at Chief O'Neill's of our own Paddy Homan's brand new and wonderful CD, *The Hard Way Home*. Details are still being worked out, as Paddy continues to try to get together with his pal and record producer, Dennis Cahill. As you know, Dennis is on the road almost constantly with Martin Hayes. This will, however, remain a special night to plan for, and of course you'll be made well aware of the how's where's and when's in plenty of time.

One of the greatest innovations brought to us on the Internet is Concert Window. One of the movers and shakers in it is Dan Guerny of the New York-based trad band, The Yanks. If you're not already hip to it, here's how it works: You can pay in advance if you want to, and everyone has to pay something, I think the minimum is \$5 but that seems too cheap, and maybe the best bargain of the decade. What happens is at a pre-set time, you go into the Concert Window site, and there you are in a very intimate, live visual and audio setting with a master musician or singer. We went in and saw about 45-minutes to an hour with Jimmy Keane, our local Male Musician of the Decade. Out came his accordion, and on came the tunes. During the show at any time, you can contribute some money for it. There were a

good number of people in Jimmy's show and there is a wonderful addition. There is a side chat room going on in the same screen. You can post to chat with everybody who's in there, watching the show with you, literally from all over the world. Oh, it is mighty! Another wonderful box player, John Whelan, was in the chat room—yes, that John Whelan from Boston. You really do feel as if you are sit-



Jimmy Keane

house concerts offer, when properly run, the exact same experience as Concert Window—truly up close and personal enjoyment of Celtic Music. God's music. Believe me, Kathy's are well run. How do you know who is coming and when, to Kathy's? Good question. Read on. Her concerts have become so popular that bands are calling her and asking to play there. House concerts and revo-

lutionary media opportunities such as Concert Windows are offering a much-needed income opportunity to these artists. Nobody ever got rich in Irish music. Well, maybe the Chieftains. But no one else. For so many of these singers and musicians, it is a real financial struggle to be able to perform the music we all love. So God bless Kathy Brown and her ilk, and God bless Concert Window.

The best way to find out about Kathy and Concert Windows is by listening to *Ireland Tonight*, every Monday evening at 8 o'clock. The show airs in Chicago on WDCB, 90.9 fm, or on computer at wdcb.org. We also want you to join us on Liveireland.com out of Dublin, Ireland. Every Sunday we

are on for two hours, beginning at noon Chicago time. You'll hear and learn about all the latest and greatest on both shows, *Ireland Tonight* and the *Bill and Imelda Show*. We are told that we now have more listeners for the Sunday show than any Irish music program on the RTE. We find that hard to believe, but we sure hope it's true! (I still don't think it is.)

That's it. Next month, we'll get back to the business of reviewing CD's and telling you what is worth the money. We have had several people come up to us and tell us that they gave or received Laura Smith's incredible *Everything Is Moving* cd at Christmas. Without exception, everyone is raving about it and you will, too. We had better not go down that road. Once we start naming names we can't stop. *Ta!

AS SEEN ON  PBS



Celtic Woman

**SUNDAY
MARCH 16**

THE CHICAGO THEATRE
Presented by CHASE

ON SALE NOW

TICKETS MAY BE PURCHASED AT THE CHICAGO THEATRE BOX OFFICE, [ticketmaster](http://ticketmaster.com) OR CHARGE BY PHONE AT 800-745-3000.

THECHICAGOTHEATRE.COM