

# THE CELTIC JUNCTION

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## Trasna an Ghabhail

### Across the Junction



Welcome to the latest edition our newsletter!  
We hope you find it a lively resource  
that complements the activities and intentions  
of the Celtic Junction arts community.

## Imbolc 2014

### Fertile Minds *by Siobhán Dugan*

*This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Center for Irish Music (CIM), that most precious gem in our cultural community. With the intent of celebrating CIM through the traditional Celtic seasonal festivals, we start with Imbolc, aka Brighid's Day. Among her many attributes, Brighid is associated with new beginnings of the body and spirit; the hidden signs of the coming spring and the inspiration from which springs the arts. Here we honor both by presenting original creations by members of the CIM community.*

#### Norah's Jig 'The Milk Market'

[Norah Rendell](#) is the Executive Director of the Center for Irish Music where she is known as a beloved teacher and able leader. She is well-known to the wider world as a fine musician: Live Ireland Awards named Norah Rendell Best Vocalist of the Year two years in a row and she was nominated as Traditional Singer of the Year for the Canadian Folk Music Awards 2008. In addition to her [singing](#), the talented Norah has also garnered notice as a [flute player](#), plays tin whistle and she often arranges traditional tunes and creates harmonies for



songs. Composing is something she does less frequently, but well.

While working on her Masters in Irish Traditional Music Performance from the University of Limerick, Norah began to noodle on the idea for an

original tune, one that perhaps now-husband Brian Miller might record with her. Click [here](#) to listen to Norah's tune, 'The Milk Market' and [here](#) to hear her describe the process of creating the tune--- and be sure to come to Norah's long-awaited solo [concert at the Celtic Junction January 24<sup>th</sup> 2014](#)

**-this Friday!**

#### In This Issue:

- **Featured Artists: Fertile Minds**-CIM musicians Norah Rendell, Todd Menton and Chad McAnally on the Creative Process
- **What's in a Name?** Dáithí Sproule muses on origins of words used for Irish festivals & events
- **Written Word:** Where Shall We Walk? Poem by Seán Ó Tuama
- **Celtic Cuisine:** Casey's Multi-Grain Onion-Nut Bread

#### Events at the Junction:

- [Norah Rendell in Concert, January 24](#)  
*A wonderful night of rare and moving traditional songs. Advance tickets are available without a service charge from Irish on Grand. Center for Irish Music students ages 19 and under are eligible for a \$5 discount at the door.*
- **Robert Burns' Night Ceilidh**, January 25 7pm. \$20 advance tickets, \$25 at the door. 12yrs and under \$10, 5yrs and under Free. \$50 family max. [BUY TICKETS from Scottish Fair & Highland Games](#)
- [Sacred Harp Winter Singing](#), February 8
- [Garnet Rogers in Concert](#), February 14
- [The Sweet Colleens](#), February 15
- [Éigse - Center for Irish Music, A Gaela Event](#), February 22. Not to be missed! A festive evening of celebrating successes and of fund-raising for the future of traditional Irish music and culture in the Twin Cities. Music, dinner, libations, raffle, silent auction.

We welcome your comments &  
suggestions for this newsletter!  
*Siobhán Dugan, Editor*

## Todd's Song 'Rosie'

Todd Menton is the lead singer in Boiled in Lead, the well-known Twin Cities-based punk/folk/world-music band, and also performs solo focusing on traditional music from Ireland and England. He is a multi-instrumentalist, playing and teaching bodhrán, mandolin, guitar, harmonica, tin whistle, bouzouki [I'm sure I forgot something!] and also has a lovely, lovely voice. We are lucky that he is part of the team handing down the tradition at CIM.



Composing original music has long been a focus for Todd and he has delighted us with beautiful songs in the trad genre like 'Damsel'fly', and in the hilarious, off-kilter vein as with '[Silver Carp](#)', a cautionary tale about exotic species and with '[Sure of Me](#)', a song with a gorgeous, lyrical melody that tells the tale of a would-be lounge lizard whose woman doesn't seem to notice—or perhaps care about—his various strayings.

Todd is currently working on a CD to come out later this year under the New Folk Records label and previews it here with 'Rosie', which he chose to write with a nod to the pop song genre. Of the compositions described by their composers in this article, the roots of this one are perhaps most like the popular idea of creation, with dreams and layers of memory interweaving to form the core of the inspiration. But here, too, concrete, specific ideas about where he wants to go with the piece and honing it and reshaping it according to his knowledge of the craft are critical to the end product. [Here](#) is

Todd's performance of the piece and [here](#) he talks about the writing of it.

## Chad's 'Tom Dahill's Reel'

Chad, too, is a multi-instrumentalist who plays uilleann pipes, wooden flute, tin whistle and dulcimer. But Chad's life-long **passion** is for the Gaelic wire-strung harp, as evident in his many roles as performer, teacher, harp-maker and composer of new music for the instrument.

Composing is particularly important in the revival of the Gaelic wire-strung harp, an instrument that had disappeared except for silent museum pieces until a few hardy souls such as Ann Heymann pulled it into life again, reintroducing it to the Scottish and Irish music scene. While reconnecting with the past of the instrument is essential, so too is the creation of new music for it to be fully a part of a *living* tradition. Here Chad plays an original composition he wrote to honor Tom Dahill, an important figure in the Irish music community. Chad wrote it after a particularly rousing, tune-filled meeting of the local piper's club some years ago where Tom's abilities were on display. Chad refined it to perform as part of a recent event sponsored by the [Irish Music and Dance Association](#) held to honor Tom. Here is the [tune](#) and here is [the story behind the tune](#).



# Irish Words for Festivals and Celebrations

by Dáithí Sproule

*I have been intrigued for some time by the wide array of Irish-language terms in use these days for various music, dance and arts events, almost all of which are very old words, and none of which are being used with their old meanings. They each have various specialized uses nowadays, and one or two are very recent coinages indeed.*

**Féile:** this is a very old borrowing from Latin *vigilia* and originally referred to a saint's feast day in the calendar — *féilire* in Irish is the word for calendar in modern language. The most famous traditional *féilte* are of course *Lá Fhéile Pádraig* and *Lá Fhéile Bríde* — St. Patrick's and St. Bridget's Days. The word is often used nowadays for a local celebration and is not associated in any particular way with music or dance or the arts, but may include them.

**Feis:** in modern times this has been used for an event featuring dance and music competitions — this use started with the movement to revive Gaelic culture in the late 1800s and early 1900s. But this is very far from the original associations of this ancient term. The oldest and most famous association of this word is with *Feis Temro*, translated as "The Feast of Tara", though there is no connection between the words 'feast' and *feis*. *Feis Temro* referred to the inauguration of the king of Tara, which was the most prestigious and mythically and spiritually charged kingship of ancient Ireland. The word *feis* is the verbal noun of the verb *foaid*, which meant 'sleeps' in all meanings of that word, and *Feis Temro* was the ritual marriage of the king to the land.

**Fleadh:** this is another old word adopted in the 20th century for celebrations of Irish traditional music through concerts and competitions, usually run by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. Its normal meaning has always been 'a feast' — with eating, drinking — and, under the old Gaelic lords and kings, poetry too.

**Éigse:** this is an old word meaning 'poetry' or 'learning', from the word *éigeas*, 'poet'. My first association of the word outside its old meaning was *Éigse na Tríonóide*, back in the 1970s, an Irish-language festival, including traditional music concerts, in Trinity College Dublin. We now use the term for our special Center for Irish Music February festival.

**Tionól:** this is perhaps the most recent term of them all. The word means 'a gathering or assembly'. Now it is used particularly of pipers' gatherings — I wonder when the first use of it in that sense occurred?

**Oireachtas:** here we have an ancient word with a really varied history in modern times! It comes from the old Irish word *aire*, meaning 'a noble'. *Airecht*, modern form *oireacht*, means 'an assembly of nobility', particularly for deciding legal matters. So it is natural to find that the two assemblies of the Irish parliament are called collectively the Oireachtas. It is less expected to find that, seizing on the part of the meaning referring to a gathering, the term has been used since the 1890s for an arts competition in Ireland, involving music, dance, writing and other creative arts, and in North America is used almost exclusively for Irish dance competitions. I can't help visualizing a group of sixth century Irish nobility, a few dozen children in Irish dance costumes and wigs, and distinguished members of the Irish senate magically transported to a room where they had to work out what in heavens had brought them all together in the one place!

**Session/seisiún:** an odd coincidence here — this word, which began to be used in the 60s, as far as I know, and now refers to a gathering of Irish traditional musicians playing informally together for their own entertainment, was and still is used for a gathering of people deciding on legal matters, as was the case with *Oireachtas*. Of course, this word is an exception in my list, since it is really an English word.



**Éigse CIM**  
[eg-shuh] A Gaelic Event

February 22, 2014  
5:00 - 10:30 p.m.  
at The Celtic Junction

Dinner and concert tickets sold out last year so reserve your places early. [Purchase tickets](#)



# The Written Word

by Siobhán Dugan

*Seán Ó Tuama was born into an Irish speaking family in West Cork. A professor of modern Irish at University College Cork, he was well-known as a poet, dramatist and champion of the Irish language. I first came across him as the editor of a **must-have** volume of Irish verse An Duanair 1600-1900: Poems of the Dispossessed. His poem 'Cá Siúlfam?' struck me to the core of my cold bones this winter.*

## Cá Siúlfam?

by Seán Ó Tuama

Cá Siúlfam?

Cá siúlfam? Tá na cosáin reoite,  
carnáin chalcaithe de shneachta cruaithe  
ar bhlaicéadaí an bhóthair mar a mbíodh ár siúl.  
'S tá an ghaoth ag aimsiú ioscada na nglún  
chomh géar chomh glic le fuip....  
Ní shiúlfad leat. Tá an corp ina chloch.

Tiomáinfeam? Racham ar an aifreann déanach  
ag éisteacht le Hosanna in Excelsis  
á ghreadadh amach go buach caithréimeach,  
is bainfeam sásamh as an at gan éifeacht  
a thagann ar an gcroí....  
Chauffeur mé, lá seaca, ar dheabhóidí.

Ar deireadh: ní chorródsá amach inniu,  
Tá fuil i gcúl mo bhéil le mí ón sioc,  
is ó inchinn go talamh síos  
tá bánú déanta ar gach artaire  
a dhéanann duine den daonnaí....  
Fanfam féach an bhfillfidh teas arís.



Cushendell County Antrim Photo by Cathal McNaughton

## Where Shall We Walk?

Where shall we walk? The paths are all iced over,  
On the grassy blankets of the roads we've known  
Calcified mounds of slush and snow,  
The wind stings the hollows of the knees  
As slyly and as sharply as a whip....  
I shall not walk with you. The flesh is stone.

We shall drive then, go to Mass,  
Listen to Hosanna in Excelsis  
Being ground out triumphally,  
And feed upon the silly satisfaction  
Of music swelling up the heart....  
On a frosty day I act as chauffeur to the mysteries.

No, just no: I will not move today;  
The chill has bloodied up my throat this long month  
And every artery that makes a human burn  
From brain down to the ground  
Has been whitened to debility....  
We'll wait and see if heat returns.

# Celtic Cuisine: Casey's Multi-Grain Onion-Nut Bread

*Longtime Irish community supporter, musician, actor and baker Mike Casey shares an original recipe with us this month. Mike retired a while back following a 10-plus-year stint as a part time baker at Trotter's Cafe and Bakery. Says Mike, "OK, I don't know if this is particularly Irish, but it's what the Irish call a 'makie-up'. I just tried it New Year's Eve!"*

## Ingredients:

- 2 Cups White Flour
- 2 Cups Whole Wheat Flour
- 2 Cups Rye Flour
- 2 Packets of Yeast
- 2 Cups warm water
- 2 T. of Oil
- 1 T. of Salt
- 1 T. of Sugar
- 1/2 Cup chopped fresh Onion
- 2/3 Cup chopped Walnuts

**Process:** Add yeast to warm water and pour in sugar. Let stand for about 10 minutes, until the "yeasties" start to work. Meanwhile, mix the flours together. Add the oil, salt, onion and 3 cups of flour and stir. Slowly add and mix flour til it becomes stiff (it might not take all the flour). Knead by hand a few minutes, form into ball, cover and let sit for an hour in a warm place (inside of an unlit oven works well).

Punch down dough and shape into 2 loaves.

Place each in a greased loaf pan, cover and let rise another hour.

Bake at 350 degrees for approx. 35 minutes. Dump loaves onto cooling rack.

This bread should work well toasted, with a slice of Dubliner cheddar.

