

KIAULL MANNINAGH JIU MANX MUSIC TODAY

August
2009



mee luanistyn

THE MOST MAGICAL OF GATHERINGS

With packed houses and stunning visiting and Manx performers, Yn Chruinnaght Inter-Celtic Festival 2009 was perhaps the best yet! The new-look 9 day festival included a dance weekend and a Celtic Film Festival, as well as photographic art by the festival's official photographer, Dimitar Pentchev. Using St German's Cathedral for the first time in a number of years, a special free concert featuring gorgeously talented Scottish harp player Rachel Hair was packed out, people arriving almost an hour before the start to ensure a seat. And they were not to be disappointed - concert-goers were treated to a mix of solo and trio work from Rachel, Adam Rhodes and Russell Cowin, unaccompanied Gaelic singing from Caarjyn Coidjagh and sensitive arrangements of Manx tunes and songs by David Kilgallon on the organ. The bells of the Cathedral rang out across Peel to announce the festival's presence.

Friday saw the first of three nights sponsored by Manx Telecom. Manx performers Tom Callister, Luke Melvin and Paul Rogers gave a high octane drive through some new tunes before the audience was delighted by the hammered dulcimer of Kerensa Wright from Cornish band, Leski. The trio performed a mix of tunes and songs, all wonderfully arranged for dulcimer, fiddle, guitar and voices. Alongside fellow band member Richard Tretheway (fiddle), Leski were joined by Manx-born Steve Hunt on guitar, bodhran and vocals. The night



concluded with a virtuoso performance from The Nuala Kennedy Quartet, who showed off Nuala's own material together with traditional tunes and songs, moving through moods and genres with breathtaking ease. In a performance which oozed musical generosity, Nuala mesmerised the audience with her fluid musicality, interacting seamlessly with Donald Hay on percussion, former Shooglenifty man Iain McLeod on mandolin and reputedly Ireland's best guitarist, the most innovative Mike Galvin. And so the Centenary Centre was firmly established as the festival's musical home in Peel.

Needing room for dancing, the festival moved to the Corrin Hall for a fest-noz on Saturday, a night of Breton dancing with young and dynamic band, Esquise. Bringing a healthy dose of innovation to Breton dance music, they feature clarinet, saxophone, accordion and drums. They shared the night with Manx band King Chiallee, which meant that the dance floor was never empty, the infectious vibrancy of their music challenging people not to have a go! Meanwhile, a Celtic film festival back in the Centenary Centre and run by Paul Rogers and Eric Glithero provided a varied programme of Welsh, Irish, Manx and Scottish films.

The festival also included free workshops in both music and language. Visiting delegates from Ireland and Cornwall, Clare Walsh and Rob Reynolds, were joined by Steve Jackson, a Scottish Gaelic teacher



now resident on the Island to teach their respective Celtic languages – this was the first time that many people had had the opportunity to learn Cornish in particular.

Earlier in the week, the festival had organised a dance weekend with visiting sean-nos dancer Sibeal Davitt, with events in Port Erin and Douglas. Ramsey also saw a special tribute to the late Colin Jerry, a teacher and musician who had contributed so much to Manx music and language over the years. Nine different bands including the whistle group from Ballacottier School led by Katie Lawrence each played a short set of new material – some of it heard for the first time that night – and Greg Joughin and Fiona McArdle sang songs written and translated by Colin himself, which proved very moving indeed. Dr Brian Stowell spoke on behalf of the Manx Heritage Foundation to mark the launch of *Kiaull yn Theay 3*, a book of newly composed tunes and songs dedicated to Colin's memory, and to the work which he and his wife Cristl put in over the years.

Young people were at the heart of two other events on the second Saturday – a sandcastle competition on Peel shore and busking around the town by Bree youth traditional music movement. Hoping to collect enough money to buy a mandolin for children in Romania on behalf of Hands of Hope charity, they raised in excess of £170. Tutors Katie Lawrence, Clare Kilgallon and Beccy Hurst were joined by parents to support the three-stop tour on a very sunny afternoon.

Yn Chruinnaght likes to have a mix of music – Wednesday night saw the launch of a new CD by Manx group Staa at the Mitre Hotel in Ramsey and Yn Chruinnaght Rocks featuring Savage Tim, Christy D and Tate! Tate's Mark Cleator gave a special performance of a song specially translated into Manx – all from memory – very impressive!

2009 is a special year for more than the Gaelic part of Scotland – the 250th anniversary of Burns. To mark that anniversary, Ian Prentice gave a wonderful lecture in Ramsey Town Hall, with readings from his wife, Wilma, and songs from Marlene Hendy. The audience was welcomed with a special performance from Ellan Vannin Pipes and Drums.

The festival concluded with a magical Sunday – an afternoon of Breton music for families in Peel, a return to the Mooragh Park displays in Ramsey with Rachel Hair, Calan, Ny Fennee and The Reeling Stones and then the most exciting of gigs in the evening featuring young Welsh band, Calan, and The Chris Stout trio. Calan feature



fiddles, whistles, pipes, harp, accordion and guitar, with the multi-talented Bethan Williams-Jones also performing some outstanding clog-dancing and beautiful singing. The very final act of the festival was a trio from Shetland and Scotland put together specially for Yn Chruinnaght. Chris Stout has to be seen to be believed – a fiddler whose performance is as physical as it can get for someone sitting down! Watching him play is to wonder where the instrument ends and the man begins. Aply joined by Malcolm Stitt (guitar) and Finlay MacDonald (pipes), the friendship between the three men was crystal clear, as they moved through lightning fast jigs and reels and sensitive slower numbers from Shetland, Scotland, Norway and beyond. At times it was hard to know where to look – fingers were flying, feet were up in the air, and all of the time the music pulsed – it is this generosity and openness which makes a good performance great and that makes Yn Chruinnaght such a wonderful gathering of people.

The festival committee would like to pay tribute to Bob Carswell, who was sadly involved in a serious collision at Quarry Bends on the Monday evening of the festival. Having worked so hard over the past months to organise the festival, it was a terrible shock for the whole community to hear of his injuries – we all wish him a speedy recovery and promise to get some of the bands back again so that he can enjoy them live! Wonderful sound at the festival was provided by sound professional Dave Rowles, who has recently married and settled on the Island, and who helped out at the last minute when another Centenary Centre stalwart, Dave McLean, had to take time off to recover from his own leg injuries.

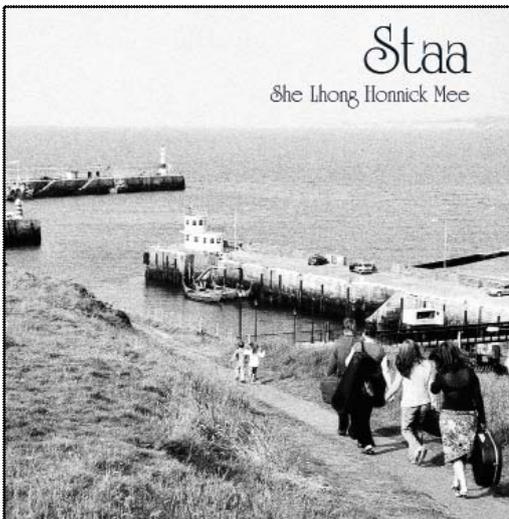
The festival is organised by volunteers with the support of the Isle of Man Arts Council, Manx Heritage Foundation, Manx Telecom and Ramsey Commissioners. If you're interested in helping out with future festivals – maybe just during the week itself – get in touch: ychnruinnaght@manx.net Full details of this year's festival are still online at: www.ychnruinnaght.com

King Chiaullee family holiday to Italy :)

At the beginning of July, King Chiaullee took themselves to Aosta and Courmayeur (North West tip of Italy) where they performed at the prestigious Celtica Festival, which has seen artist like Flook, Finlay MacDonald Band, Hoogie and Carlos Nunez perform in the past. This year KC were the warm up act to the Chair (Scotland), and their own music chums, Mabon (Wales). The concert itself was held on the main stage "in the woods" or "halfway up the Alps" as we prefer to describe it. Whilst the view was spectacular, the freezing conditions enticed us to jump around a little more than usual - oh and wear about three shirts too! The gig was well received and hope we left lasting impressions to be invited back next year...

The lads then headed down towards Milan to play at the Folkermesse festival, a festival with links to Lorient Interceltic Festival, the invitation forming part of the prize for winning the Trophie de Musique celtique Cidrerie des Terroirs in Brittany last year. After running a dance workshop on the first day, the next two evenings followed the same kind of concert format. They were both held on stages in village squares, the first at Cusano Milanino and the second in Casale Monferatto and complete with millions of mosquitos! King Chiaullee played for one and a half hours each night just after sunset and both concerts were well received. Aside from the gigs, lots of coffee was drunk and a healthy attempt at covering the Italian Menu!

For more information about the band, visit: www.kciom.com



Staa's CD launch at this year's Yn Chruinnaght was just lovely - with fabulous cakes made by the band, beautiful music and singing, in fact a thoroughly relaxed evening all round.

With artwork by Grainne Joughin, the CD itself actually arrived on time and looks very stylish indeed. Unfortunately, the CD manufacturing company had sent the wrong kind of disc, which the band found out soon afterwards...if you did buy a CD on the night, keep it safe and Staa will happily exchange it for a proper one when they arrive...watch this space.

The CD includes a new song by Cesar Joughin which would be a definite winner for Nos Ur competition (get the track sent in!)

She Lhong Honnick Mee will be in the shops as soon as possible.

~ SESSIONS ~

THURS 9pm Singing session at The Brit, Ramsey

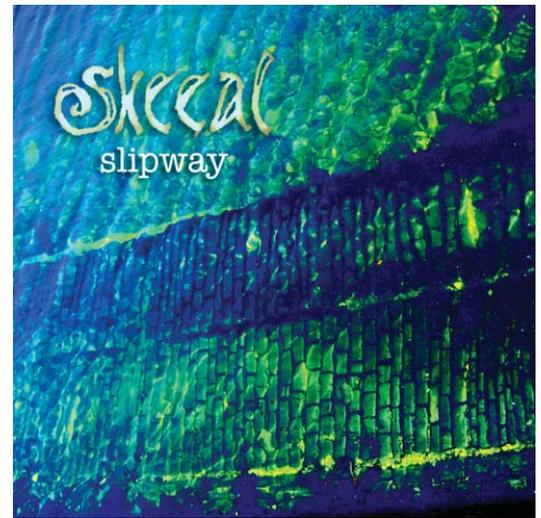
FRI 8pm Tynwald Inn, St. Johns

FRI 9pm Irish at The Mitre, Ramsey

Last FRI of month 9pm, Kiaull as Gaelg, Albert, Port St Mary

SAT 10pm Manx at The White House, Peel

Skeal's first album, *Long Story*, was released in 2005. *Long Story* was a lively mix of traditional and original tunes and songs from the Manx and Scottish Gaelic traditions which confirmed Skeal as an exciting exponent of Manx music. Their new album, *Slipway*, continues and expands this vibrant approach but with a greater emphasis on vocal tracks. The distinctive voices of Sophia Dale and Phil Gawne are complemented by talented instrumentalists Breasha Maddrell and Simone Renshaw (both playing flutes and whistles and on backing vocals) and Paul Rogers (guitars and mandolin). The songs and tunes are, once again, from traditional and original sources, ranging from uplifting, joyful and humorous to tender and heart-moving. Skeal's unique sensitivity to arrangement honours the source of the material at the same time as presenting a fresh, new, engaging approach.



Skeal launched their CD at Peel Masonic Hall on Friday 24th July with a ceili called by Clare Kilgallon in order to raise money for the IOM Hospice. In total, over £530 was raised through ticket sales and CD purchases. The band would like to thank Matt Kelly for adding extra sparkle on the mandolin, Annie Kissack for being the queen of the raffle and Clare Kilgallon for calling dances so well, in spite of the by then addled musicians! Guests of honour included Mark Cleator, who recorded, mixed and produced the album, as well as composers whose original material features on the CD - thanks to Sharon Christian and Ian Allen for turning up.

The CD will be in the shops very shortly - in the meantime, the band is preparing for a 10-day stint in Lorient at Europe's largest inter-Celtic festival.

BREE BUSKING FOR HANDS OF HOPE CHARITY



Bree youth traditional music group was out and about during Yn Chruinnaght to raise money for Romanian charity, Hands of Hope. They busked around the town with the aid of Bree tutors Clare Kilgallon, Beccy Hurst and Katie Lawrence, and the wonderful Callister-Wafer family, who helped collect a grand total of £190 which will go towards musical activities including instrument purchases.



Manx Music CDs are available online at:
www.manxheritage.org/CDs
and in good bookshops, MNH and good gift shops

Transcription of the month see www.manxheritagemusic.org for more printable pieces of Manx music

This wonderful tune features in the new *Kiaull yn Theay 3* book and was written by fiddler and pianist, Katie Lawrence. It's a particularly good tune for this time of year when jellyfish line our shores!

Jellyfish Mile

Katie Lawrence

The musical score for 'Jellyfish Mile' is presented in six staves of music. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 3/4. The chords are handwritten above the notes:

- Staff 1: Gm, Dm, Bb, Dm, Gm
- Staff 2: Am, Bb, C, Dm, Gm, Dm
- Staff 3: Bb, Gm, Dm, Am, Dm
- Staff 4: Am(1st), Am, Dm, Bb
- Staff 5: C, Am, Gm, Am, Bb
- Staff 6: C, Dm, Am, C, Dm



Skeel and Ny Fennee are off to Festival Interceltique de Lorient for Europe's largest Celtic festival this month. With an Isle of Man pavilion staffed by volunteers and organised by Cinzia Yates, who is also acting as official delegate to the festival, there will be another strong Manx contingent to follow up on last year's success. It's great to have both Manx music and dance represented at the festival, so thanks must go to Cinzia for organising everyone so patiently - we all know from experience that sorting these things out is a little like herding cats! More news of the festival (with lots of photos) in next month's issue.

RESEARCH

Contributions should be no more than 400 words and should be sent to the usual address. It may be that you have some comments about a particular song or tune - all musings are welcome, however short. This month, Christa McCartney shares some of her research from her Masters dissertation.

Analysing Manx Folk Music for Classroom Use: Arrane Ben Vlieaun (Cur Dty Vainney)



We can see at a glance that the rhythm is 'iso' rhythmic, or the same throughout. This makes it very useful as an ostinato. Using the rhythm of this song underneath a different melody is a fabulous way of enabling pupils to develop the simultaneous hearing of different musical layers (polyphonic hearing). This rhythmic ostinato is great to introduce upbeats too.

Written out in 4 bar phrases as above, the large form is clear to see, 16 bars: A, Av, B, Av (of course for older learners you can analyse it further into 2 bar motifs where it becomes clear that the B section is not really different material at all but very coherently and organically developed from the opening motif (A(a+b), A (a+bv), B (av+av), A (a+bv)). For classroom use the 4x4 bar 'question and answer' phrases are excellent teaching material, the repeated variation in the third line is also great for teaching about motivic composition, this line could even be recomposed in class! Using the same material for the second and fourth line is a widely found pattern in classical music. The whole piece uses a perfect classical form and is a straightforward way for a secondary school music teacher to introduce this compositional idea .

The melodic range is plagal i.e the tonic note is sandwiched in the centre not at the outsides of the tone set, and the melodic line is made up of waves undulating around the key note, this is all very typical of Manx music, a useful thing for a budding folk group to spot!

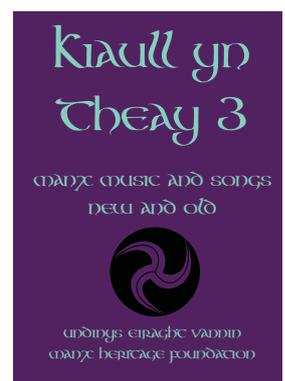
Next the melody itself, it is pentatonic which is extremely useful in the classroom because all the notes fit harmoniously with each other (there are no semitones). The combination of pentatony and isorhythm create a perfect framework for improvisation and a solid starting place for composition. It's not just for young children either. Many 20th century composers such as Debussy and Bartók made frequent use of pentatony. I have put together a quodlibet using this tune, a motif from Debussy's Pagodes and a Japanese nursery song. Pentatony allows you to be eclectic and explore a lot of diverse music.

What have we taught using this one song: form, phrase, motivic variation, plagal melodies, anacrusis, ostinato, singing, improvisation, classical composition, folk composition, polyphonic hearing, polyphonic singing, and the Manx language. We have also been able to connect with classical and 20th century Art music and music from other cultures. As Kodály said,

'Do not let us steal other peoples' songs, we have plenty of our own'

Christa McCartney

We've run out of space and time to talk about the new Kiaull yn Theay 3 book - that'll keep until next month's issue. Once we're back from our travels, we'll make sure that they are in the shops for you all to buy.



Manx musicians and dancers were everywhere on Tynwald Fair Day...here are some photos kindly sent in by Valerie Caine



CALENDAR

August

31st July - 9th August - Skeeal and Ny Fennee at Festival Interceltique de Lorient, Brittany

6th The Mollag Band and Perree Bane at the Villa Marina Arcade, Douglas, 7.30pm FREE

13th Ny Fennee, The Reeling Stones, Katie Lawrence and friends at the Villa Marina Arcade, Douglas, 7.30pm FREE

20th King Chialulle and Ellan Vannin Pipes & Drums at the Villa Marina Arcade, Douglas, 7.30pm FREE

27th Ellan Vannin Pipes & Drums, The Bugganes and Strengyn at the Villa Marina Arcade, Douglas, 7.30pm FREE

There are lots of extra gigs around the Island during the summer, so keep your eyes on the newspapers and online events guides. Please send in any dates for the months ahead so that we can publicise events here & online.

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For info on Manx music & dance contact:

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www.manxheritage.org

www.manxheritagemusic.org

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More dates online...www.myspace.com/manxmusicanddance