

# Extended Liner Notes

From *The Ivy Leaf*. Release date March 2012

Written by Daniel Accardi

The spirit behind the Ivy Leaf has always been one of curiosity and exploration in the older traditions of Irish music. As a student at Berklee College of Music whose experience of Irish music was mingled with bits of folk, bluegrass, old-time, and jazz, it was Lindsay who thought of starting a band as a way to engage with the incredible diversity of styles and sounds within the Irish and Irish-American cultural traditions. The other three members of the band welcomed the opportunity: for Caroline, the chance to share the music and songs she'd been hearing since she was young; for Armand and Dan, the chance to share the music and songs they'd found on old LPs or archival recordings. If we're lucky, this album will make you just as enthusiastic about the songs of Dolores Keane and Luke Kelly as it will about the tunes of Lucy Farr and Bobby Casey, and you'll find the same joy there as we have.

## About the tunes and songs:

### 1. Humours of Glynn/Jackie Small's/The Rolling Wave:

*The Humours of Glynn* is an old piping tune, known to have a few jig settings – Patsy Touhey's three-part setting among them – as well as Willie Clancy's noteworthy setting as a large piping 'piece.' It seems to lurk around Munster under the name *Cuilinn o'Caomh* and some people connect it to Padraig O'Keeffe. *Jackie Small's* has a much tighter provenance; it was composed, along with a second jig, by the father of accordion player and piper Jackie Small. Like several other tunes, we have it by Patrick Hutchinson. The last tune is one rambling member of the somewhat ubiquitous *Rolling Wave* family, and goes by *McGuire's Kick* for some and *The Lonesome Jig* for others. All versions of the tune are essentially beholden to the original air of *Mairseal Alasdruim*, the march of Alasdair Mac Allisdruim killed at the battle of Cnoc na nDos in 1647. The tune family is prolific in Munster, Cnoc nan Dos being in Cork.

*Instrumentation:*

Armand: fiddle

Lindsay: bouzouki

Caroline: flute

Dan: concertina

## 2. The Coachman's Whip/Monaghan Twig/Torn Jacket:

*The Coachman's Whip* is a composition of Galway flute player Vincent Broderick. Broderick produced numerous tunes in his lifetime, many of them sweetly melodic fluting tunes which remain in popular currency – *The Rookery* and *The Whistler at the Wake* being two such examples. *The Monaghan Twig* is a tune generally associated with the Dohertys of Donegal, but with kin throughout the country; John Kelly played a variant known as *Tom Keane's Reel* all the way down in west Clare. *The Torn Jacket* is another tune recently composed, this one of fiddler Connie o'Connell of Cill na Martra, Cork. Connie preserves an old Cork fiddle style and continues to teach it at University College Cork.

*Instrumentation:*

Armand: fiddle

Caroline: flute

Dan: concertina on *Coachman's Whip*, fiddle on *Torn Jacket*

Lindsay: bouzouki

## 3. The Night Visiting Song:

It might be a bit of a misnomer to describe this as “the” night visiting song. In the Scottish tradition, night visits constitute a widespread genre of related songs – Lindsay sings a related piece called *Here's a Health to All True Lovers*. The one we've chosen was popularized by Luke Kelly, but his own setting comes from

Ray and Archie Fisher; it's a composite of verses taken from field recordings by Hamish Henderson. Caroline, a long-time Luke Kelly aficionado, introduced it to Lindsay and thus to the Ivy Leaf repertoire.

*Instrumentation:*

Caroline: lead vocal, Bb whistle

Lindsay: bouzouki, backing vocal

Armand: pizzicato fiddle

Dan: fiddle

#### 4. Tuamgrainy Castle/The Home Ruler/O'Mahoney's:

*Tuamgrainy Castle* is a castle in Clare, dating from the 1500s; it looks about as lonesome as the tune sounds. *The Home Ruler* has been the source of some amicable confusion for years. Long thought to be a political reference to the independence and autonomy of the Republic's government, it was in fact written by fiddler Frank McCollum of Antrim – and called after his wife. *O'Mahoney's* is a hornpipe from Sliabh Luachra which we snagged from that eminent repository of music, *The Star Above the Garter*. The tune's range makes it perfect for playing in octaves on the fiddle, as Julia Clifford does on the recording.

*Instrumentation:*

Caroline: flute

Dan: concertina

Armand: fiddle

Lindsay: bouzouki

#### 5. The Lumpy Custard/The Cucanandy/the Jolly Merchant:

All of these tunes were gems mined by piper Patrick Hutchinson of Liverpool, currently a recordings librarian at Brown University in Rhode Island. The first was

originally a French gavotte, thus adapted as a mazurka; it was once quite common for Irish musicians to freely adapt continental music to their own needs for dancing. *The Cucanandy* hop jig comes from the air of a song which has both Irish and English versions collected by Seamus Ennis from Elizabeth Cronin of Cork (the English song has the alternate line-title "Pat came over the hill"). The final tune was found by trawling through *O'Neill's 1001*, where tunes seem to go on the lam before sharp-eyed musicians like Patrick herd them back into popularity.

*Instrumentation:*

Caroline: flute

Lindsay: bouzouki

Armand: fiddle

Dan: fiddle

## 6. Burke Street/Ella Mae O'Dwyer's:

Burke Street comes to us by way of Neilidh Boyle, the celebrated fiddler of Donegal who claimed to have learned his music from the fairies. The air is actually from a song about making poitin - Téada has recently recorded it as "The Poitin March" - which Neilidh sings. He then remarks that old song airs often make lovely marches, and proves it by playing the tune in his beautifully inimitable style. Ella-Mae O'Dwyer's, on the other hand, comes from the West Limerick concertina player, one of the spectacular examples of women who played the German-made double-reeded concertinas once prolific in Ireland. She was the only female player recorded for the celebrated "Clare Concertina" album series, which surely suggests the impression which her heavily rhythmic and thickly chorded music had on the collectors.

*Instrumentation:*

Dan: concertina

Armand: fiddle

## 7. On Raglan Road:

Like many songs in the Irish tradition, *On Raglan Road* was composed in pieces – the air first, and the words later, with the actual setting of the one to the other only recently by Luke Kelly. The air is the old marching-song, *The Dawning of the Day*, which is bewilderingly known to any schoolchild who took up a tin whistle in primary school; the words were penned by the noted poet Patrick Kavanagh. Originally called “Dark Haired Miriam Ran Away,” the poem’s title refers to a street in Ballsbridge, Dublin.

### *Instrumentation:*

Lindsay: guitar, bouzouki, lead and backing vocals

Armand: fiddle

Caroline: Bb whistle

Dan: fiddle

## 8. Chief O’Neill’s Favorite/From Galway to Dublin/The Four Shoves:

*Chief O’Neill’s Favorite* was evidently collected by Chief Francis O’Neill, the Chicago policeman who lent his name to several books of Irish tunes which remain some of the primary sources for traditional Irish tunes, as well as a worthy sampling of music for ethnomusicological study. O’Neill was noted, however, to favor the pipes, flute and fiddle over other instruments, and seems not to have collected at all from concertina or melodeon players despite their huge popularity at the turn of the 20th century, when O’Neill was active. *From Galway to Dublin* is a fairly popular hornpipe; we took this particular setting from Lucy Farr again. *The Four Shoves* comes off an old Jackie Daly and Seamus Creagh album, part of a longer piece which was likely used for a specific dance. It is not uncommon to find strangely structured or tightly associated tunes and to discover that they were kept for very particular sets.

### *Instrumentation:*

Dan: fiddle

Armand: fiddle

Caroline: flute

Lindsay: bouzouki

## 9. Dún na Séad/Anthony Frawley's/Walls of Liscarroll:

This air was nameless for a while; Caroline had an old cassette tape she'd recorded of a singer from Donegal, and from that she learned the tune. It was by listening to Brian McNamara's album that she discovered the title of the song. *Anthony Frawley's* is a lively jig from west Clare, one of numerous tunes preserved by the highly localized repertoire of fiddler Patrick Kelly of Cree. The final tune is an old one from Ireland; woe to him who takes it, as some have done, for "the waltz of Liz Carroll"!

*Instrumentation:*

Caroline: flute

Lindsay: bouzouki

Dan: concertina

Armand: fiddle

## 10. The Month of January/Silver Slipper:

*The Month of January*, or somewhat more Victorianly *The Forsaken Mother and Child*, is a traditional song of the type once more popular in Ireland than is perhaps expected – piano-accompanied parlor songs were a strong mainstay of the musical currency in much of the country before the turn of the twentieth century. Lindsay's version, however, has been greatly filtered through more rural singers like Dolores Keane and Paddy Tunney. This particular setting is generally accorded to Armagh singer Sarah Makem, mother of Tommy Makem. *The Silver Slipper* is a slippery old tune from the playing of John Doherty. Despite being melodically simple, various collectors can't even seem to decide in what time signature it should be notated.

*Instrumentation:*

Lindsay: bouzouki, vocals

Caroline: whistle

Armand: fiddle on *Month of January*, whistle on *The Silver Slipper*

Dan: fiddle

## 11. Kennedy's/Return to Camden Town/Ragged Hank of Yarn:

The first tune is a local Kerry version of *the Hare's Paw*. Pdraig O'Keeffe was noted not only for commanding a repertoire of tunes from abroad, but also for producing lovely and unique settings which he passed on to his students; you can hear Pdraig playing this one on *The Sliabh Luachra Fiddle Master*, and hear Denis Murphy playing it on *Music from Sliabh Luachra* – and if you're lucky, Paddy Cronin having a go at it on an old private recording. The latter two tunes are associated with Bobby Casey, the west Clare fiddler who, like several others, lived for a while in London (and played music in Camden, a hotbed for Irish settlers). Like O'Keeffe, he produced personal settings of tunes which were related to other musicians – the final tune, for example, comes from Lucy Farr's playing of Bobby's version of *Farewell to Connacht*.

*Instrumentation:*

Armand: fiddle

Dan: fiddle

Caroline: flute

Lindsay: bouzouki

*Bonus track available to BandCamp customers:*

### Cuz Teahan's/Lucy Farr's:

These two polkas came off the wonderful album *Heart and Home*, recorded by the lovely Galway fiddler play and London émigré Lucy Farr. If the names are right, we can trace a likely provenance for them. Lucy was close with Sliabh Luachra fiddler Julia Clifford while they both lived in London, and Julia (with her husband John and son Billy) likely accounts for the influx of polkas and slides to the English scene. Julia would have gotten them from Terry "Cuz" Teahan himself. Cuz was a concertina and melodeon player who composed a few tunes still in currency at home and abroad; he left Ireland himself and lived out his days in Chicago.

#### *Instrumentation:*

Dan: concertina

Armand: fiddle

**If you have contact information for or represent Vincent Broderick or Frank McCollum's estates, please email us at [ivyleafmusic@gmail.com](mailto:ivyleafmusic@gmail.com).**