

Rising of the Moon . Trad., Arr. Blackwater

This song relates to the Rebellion of 1798. The air is an O'Carolan melody also known as "Wearing of the Green" and the lyrics were written by J. K. Casey (1846 - 1870) a Fenian from Mullingar.

Oh then tell me Sean O'Farrell, tell me why you hurry so
Hush a bhuachaill, hush and listen and his cheeks were all aglow
I bear orders from the captain, get you ready quick and soon
For the pikes must be together by the rising of the moon
'Tis the rising of the moon, 'tis the rising of the moon
For the pikes must be together at the rising of the moon

Oh then tell me Sean O'Farrell, where the gathering is to be
At the old spot by the river quite well known to you and me
One more word for signal token, whistle up the marching tune
With your pike upon your shoulder at the rising of the moon
At the rising of the moon, at the rising of the moon
With your pike upon your shoulder at the rising of the moon

Out from many a mud walled cabin eyes were watching through the night
Many a manly heart was throbbing for the coming morning's fight
Murmurs ran along the valley to the banshee's lonely croon
And a thousand pikes were flashing by the rising of the moon
By the rising of the moon, by the rising of the moon
And a thousand pikes were flashing by the rising of the moon

All along that singing river, that dark mass of men was seen
High above their shining weapons hung their own beloved green
Death to every foe and traitor, forward strike the marching tune
And hoorah me boys for freedom 'tis the rising of the moon
'Tis the rising of the moon, 'tis the rising of the moon
And hoorah me boys for freedom 'tis the rising of the moon

Scottish Tunes . Trad., Arr. Blackwater

(Braigh Loch Lall / Banks of Spey / Tail Toddle)

A traditional Scottish air from the 1700's followed by a strathspey composed by William Marshall (1748-1833). The Spey is the swiftest-flowing river in Scotland, famous for its fishing and salmon runs. We cap this all off with a rousing reel also known "Ghillie Callum" which is often associated with the Highland Sword Dance.

Continental Ceili . Christy Moore & Johnny Mulhearn, Arr. Blackwater

A favorite Christy Moore classic which playfully recounts the resurgence of traditional Irish music in the snugs, pubs and locals throughout Ireland in the 1970's. For years traditional music had been viewed as passé and old fashioned. Then, in the late sixties and early seventies there was a great resurgence spearheaded by local musicians adding new flavors and influences to the old classics and the popularity quickly spread around the globe thanks to the many tourists flocking through those very same pubs. We've taken a grand old reel, "Moving Cloud", to fully complete the festive nature.

Over in McCann's there's a grand type of dance band a'playin'
And they're spinning out the continental ceilidh
They're comin' in their cars from the bars
Over in Leister and Killane
Just to hear the famous Gunter Reynolds playing
Out the star of Munster with Hans O'Donahue
Neatly rappin' out a tango on the spoons
Such commotion will act like a lotion on the struttin'
At the continental ceilidh tonight.

Wolfgang's playin' on the comb someone shouts at him: "go home!"
Klaus is playin' a slow air on the bodran
Quinn from Corofin his fiddle tucked beneath his chin S-s-h-h
He's goin' to play the "Bogs of Oranmore" now
An old fashioned lady begins to sing a song
Ah, lads, a bit of order over there
Clarinbridge for the chowder keep your powder dry
At the continental ceilidh tonight.

Ciaran closes his eye's pretends he's in disguise
When he sees an old flame comin over
He's singing for the Swedes in their tweeds
Doin' all he can to please
The night's at such a delicate stage
Later on he'll give an audience to one of them or two
He'll sing the Dyin' Swan to touch their feelin's
Tonight's his night and tomorrow night will be just the same.

Ada let me out to the bar where the boys are goin' far
And they're spinnin' out the continental ceili
Never mind the liquor the music's in my soul
So long as I can hear the band a'playin'
The pipes and the flutes and the fiddles are in tune
Whoo, I'd love to meet a European girl
Ada now me head is goin' light and the band is playin' tight
At the continental ceilidh tonight.

All the publicans are there it's like a hirin' fair
Tryin' to figure out how much McCann is makin'
To keep their pubs outta stubs, they're lashin' out big subs
In a burst of fierce anticipation
Moguls from Mukhill are starin' at the till
Tryin' to get a low down on the line up
They'll be buyin' free porter for members of the band
At the continental ceilidh tonight.

The Ploughboy . Sean Hennessy, Arr. Blackwater

This song came to me in its entirety on a flight from Shannon to New York as I was returning from the funeral of my grandfather, John Wall. Famous for his singing and storytelling, he was the inspiration for my interest in Irish music. Raised in rural County Waterford, he attained only a third grade education and lived a hard life as a ploughboy and farmhand raising six children on his own after my grandmother died of tuberculosis. Despite the less than easy lot handed to him he was wisest, happiest and most content man I have ever met. I've tried as best I could to capture his story and his spirit in this song.

On a clam April $\text{\textcircled{c}}$ eve, I can still see him there
As he plowed the sweet earth in the fresh springtime air.
The black earth below him, the blue sky above
As he plowed his neat furrows and sang about love.

Chorus

For I $\text{\textcircled{d}}$ sing you a song and I $\text{\textcircled{d}}$ tell you a story
Let life flow around you without any worry
Show love to all people wherever you roam
I $\text{\textcircled{d}}$ plow one more acre then I $\text{\textcircled{a}}$ n going home.

There Bridget would meet him on a fine summer $\text{\textcircled{c}}$ day
And they $\text{\textcircled{d}}$ talk about life as he plowed away.
Their dreams just beginning when Bridget passed on,
Her lovely young ploughboy he just carried on.

He raised his six children and tended the land,
Made the most out of life with whatever was at hand.
Never looking back as he pushed on each day,
Straight ahead to the horizon in the true ploughboy $\text{\textcircled{c}}$ way.

By the time that I knew him, his labors were done,
And we $\text{\textcircled{d}}$ walk through the fields in the warm summer $\text{\textcircled{c}}$ sun.
His stories were magic, his songs $\text{\textcircled{c}}$ pure delight,
God I miss his warm smile and his bright shining light.

He $\text{\textcircled{c}}$ gone now the ploughboy, the last of his kind,
But his spirit lives on in my heart and my mind.
He gave me my song and I $\text{\textcircled{d}}$ sing it each day,
As I move straight to the horizon in the true ploughboy $\text{\textcircled{c}}$ way.

Feargal O'Gara / Buck of Oranmore . Trad., Arr. Blackwater

Two great reels which tie together nicely. The Bucks of Oranmore, also known as "The Hearty Bucks" is a celebrated testing piece for uilleann pipers and is believed to have been penned sometime in the early 1800's.

Arthur McBride . Trad., Music, Sean Hennessy, Arr. Blackwater

This is a great old song about the perils of forced conscription long ago suffered by many a young Irish lad out for a simple night on the town. The music and the basics of the arrangement came to me in a session at home in Dungarvan, quite by accident when I was asked to sing this song and I couldn't remember to tune. So... I faked it and came up with this!

I had a first cousin called Arthur McBride, he and I took a stroll down by the seaside,
a-seeking good fortune and what might be the tide, being just as the day was it was dawning.
After restin' we both took a tramp, and we met Sergeant Harper and Corporal Cramp
Besides the wee drummer who beat up the camp, with his row-dee-dow-dow in the morning.

He says my young fellows if you will enlist, a guinea you quickly will have in your fist
Besides a crown for to kick up the dust, and drink the King's health in the morning.
Had we been fools as to take the advance, with a wee bit of money we'd have no chance
and you have no scruples to send us to France Where we would be killed in the morning.

He says my young fellows, if I hear one word, I'll instantly now out with my sword
And into your bodies as strength will afford, So now my gay devils take warning
But Arthur and I we took in the odds, we gave them no chance to launch out their swords
Our whacking shillelaghs came over their heads, and bid them right smart in the morning.

And as for the drummer, we rifled his pouch, and made a football of his row-dee-dow-dow
Into the ocean to rock and to roll, and barring the day its returnin'
As for the rapier that hung by his side, We flung it as far as we could in the tide
To the Devil I bid you, says Arthur McBride, to temper your steel in the morning

Little Bridge Inches. Music & Arr. Blackwater

This is a true collaboration piece. I had the first part of the tune in my head for months but couldn't come up with anything to go with it. Thanks to Tom and the rest of the band we came up with this little bit of sweet music. In fact, this is what my little sister Fionna walked up the aisle to at her wedding. As for the name, Little Bridge Inches is the name of the estate of some very good family friends in Cappoquin, Co. Waterford. Many a lazy childhood summer day and evening was spent there wandering the fields, streams and woods in the company of good friends and family.

Streets of London . Ralph McTell, Arr. Blackwater

What started out as a last minute time filler on this album has turned into the perennial Blackwater song. This is a song that Fionna and I have been singing for years and Tom, Alison and Al wrapped Ralph McTell's touching words with their beautiful instrumentals.

Have you seen the old man in the closed-down market
Kicking up the paper, with his worn out shoes?
In his eyes you see no pride and held loosely at his side
Yesterday's paper telling yesterday's news

Chorus

So how can you tell me you're lonely, And say for you that the sun don't shine?
Let me take you by the hand and lead you through the streets of London
I'll show you something to make you change your mind

Have you seen the old gal who walks the streets of London
Dirt in her hair and her clothes in rags?
She's no time for talking, she just keeps right on walking
Carrying her home in two carrier bags.

In the all night café at a quarter past eleven,
Same old man is sitting there on his own
Looking at the world o'er the rim of his tea-cup,
Each tea last an hour then he goes home alone

Have you seen the old man, outside the seaman's mission
Memory fading with the medal ribbons that he wears.
In our winter city, the rain cries a little pity
For one more forgotten hero in a world that doesn't care

Tonroe's / Ciaran Tourish's / Kevin McGillian's .

Trad. / C. Tourish / K. McGillian, Arr. Blackwater

Three lovely little jigs all named after their composer. The first was composed in 1957 by Brendan Tonra from County Mayo. The second is penned by the virtuoso fiddler Ciaran Tourish from Donegal and the band Altan. The third in this trio was written by Kevin McGillian originally from County Tyrone and now living in the Philadelphia area.

Sweet Thames Flow Softly . Ewan MacCol, Arr. Blackwater

This is a bittersweet song about a friendship that didn't last very long. Written in 1968, by Ewan MacColl it is said he was partially inspired by a line from the classic Disney movie "Mary Poppins": "I shall stay until the wind changes." If you see Fiona and Al laughing at the middle of the third verse, ask them why.

I met my love at Woolwich Pier, beneath the big piers standing
And all the love I felt for her, it passed all understanding.
Took her sailing on the river, flow sweet river, flow
London town was mine to give her. Sweet Thames flow softly
Made the Thames into a crown, flow sweet river, flow
Made a brooch of Silver Town, Sweet Thames flow softly

From Putney Bridge to Nine Elms Reach, we cheek to cheek were dancing
Her necklace made of London Bridge, her beauty was enhancing.
Kissed her once again at Wapping, flow sweet river, flow
After that there was no stopping, Sweet Thames flow softly.
Gave her Hampton Court to twist, flow sweet river, flow
Into a bracelet for her wrist, Sweet Thames flow softly.

But now alas the tide has changed, my love she has gone from me
And winter's frost has touched my heart, And put a blight upon me
Creeping fog is on the river, flow sweet river, flow
Sun and moon and stars gone with her, Sweet Thames flow softly.
Swift the Thames runs to the sea, flow sweet river, flow
Bearing ships and part of me, Sweet Thames flow softly.

The Improbable Set . Ewan MacCol, Arr. Blackwater

(Belfast Hornpipe / Dick Gossip / Phaiden O'Rafferty's)

This is one of our favorite sets to play because of the vast differences between each individual piece. We start with a traditional Sligo hornpipe, transition into a great reel favored at contra dances and by the great fiddler Sean Maguire, and cap it all off with a great fast paced jig.

The Isle Au Haut

. Gordon Bok, Arr. Blackwater

Written by acclaimed Maine singer, songwriter, Gordon Bok, this is a great sea shanty about an island off the coast of Maine, called Isle au Haut. The island got its name from explorer Samuel de Champlain, who called it "Isle Haute," or "High Island."

Away and to the westward is a place a man should go
Where the fishing's always easy they've got no ice or snow.

Chorus

And I'll haul down the sail where the bays come together
Bide away my days on the hills of Isle au Haut.

Now the Plymouth girls are fine they put their hearts in your hand
And the Plymouth boys are able, first-class sailors every man.

Now, the trouble with old Martin you don't try her in a trawler
For those Bay of Biscay swells, they roll your head from off your shoulder.

Now the winters drive you crazy and the fishing's hard and slow
You're a damned fool if you stay, but there's no better place to go.

Away and to the westward is a place a man should go
Where the fishing's always easy, they've got no ice or snow.