

the quiet pint

Randal Bays

2014 Randal Bays
Foxglove Records FG0360
www.randalbays.com

1 Planxty Irwin / The South Wind - From "Out of the Woods" 1997

Randal Bays - guitar
Composed by Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738)

These are two of O'Carolan's best-known compositions, which I included as a guitar solo on "Out of the Woods".

2 The Lark in the Clear Air - From "Oyster Light" 2011 (trad.)

Randal Bays - guitar, fiddles, viola; Abby Newton - cello

This beautiful melody was the opening theme of one of Ireland's most beloved and long-running radio programs, Mo Cheol Thú, presented by Ciarán Mac Mathúna, who passed away in 2009. Many Irish homes tuned in every Sunday morning to hear Ciarán's 'unashamedly nostalgic and wistful' mix of poetry, instrumental music and song. In Oregon in the 1970's, a lot of us were discovering Irish traditional music for the first time, and tapes of Mo Cheol Thú brought back from Ireland were hungrily copied and passed around. My friends and I used to hang out on Sunday mornings, drinking coffee and listening to these tapes, imagining the world they represented.

3 The Signing of the Papers (Tá Na Paipéir Dhá Saighneáil) - From "Dig With It" 2009 (trad.)

Randal Bays - fiddle, guitar, harp

One of my favorite airs from the repertoire of one of my favorite singers anywhere, Áine Meenaghan. Áine is a native Irish speaker from the Camas area in the Connemara gaeltacht, where she learned this song and many others from friends and family. The song is about the sadness of a young man who is signing the papers to enlist in the English army, leaving his home, most likely forever. It's on Áine's CD of sean-nos songs, "Thug Me Gra Duit", which you can find on her website, ainemeenaghan.com By the way, that is some authentic Pacific Northwest rain you hear on this track. I was recording this late at night, everyone asleep, and I decided to stick a mic in the window to record the sound of the rain. The rain here causes some people to lose their minds, but it only lasts for 8 or 9 months a year.

4 The Green Stubble Fields of Autumn (Coinleach Ghlas an Fhomhair) - From "Oyster Light" 2011 (trad.)

Randal Bays - guitar, viola; Abby Newton - cello

This is Micheál O'Domhnaill's arrangement of a traditional song which he recorded with the group Clannad, and with fiddler Kevin Burke. I have a vivid memory of Micheál singing this song in my living room, just at dawn, for a handful of us who'd been up all night playing tunes. The title is in Irish and translates roughly to "The Green Stubble Field of Autumn"... dedicated to the memory of Micheál.

5 Manx Carol (Tra Va Ruggit Creest) / The Salmon's Leap - trad. / original

Randal Bays - fiddle, guitar, harp

A new recording for this collection. I originally learned the first tune, which translates as "When Christ Was Born", from a wonderful LP called "Avenging and Bright" (1977), by Manx harper Charles Guard. I composed "The Salmon's Leap" and recorded it in A minor on my CD by the same name in 2000. Later I took to playing it in B minor and it's recorded here in that key.

6 Molly St. George - with Suzanne Taylor, piano, recorded live at the Blue Heron Art Center, Vashon Island, Washington

Randal Bays - fiddle; Suzanne Taylor - piano

Composed by Tomás Connellan (c. 1640-1698). I recorded this beautiful air on "The Salmon's Leap", but when I heard Suzanne's amazing piano part on this live recording I knew I had to include it on an album.

7 The Sheep Under the Snow (Ny Kirree Fo Sniachtey) - From "Oyster Light" 2011 (trad.)

Randal Bays - guitar

Another great air from the Isle of Man, also learned from harper Charles Guard's 1977 LP, "Avenging and Bright". This recording is from "Oyster Light", and I recorded a slightly different version for the Shanachie Records compilation "Masters of the Irish Guitar".

8 Jamie's Boat / The Ship Sails Home - From "Out of the Woods" 1997

Randal Bays - guitar, fiddle

When my son Jamie was very small I used to noodle on the guitar as he was falling asleep at night, and the first tune in this set grew out of that so I called it "Jamie's Boat". The second is from the fiddling of a wonderful Dublin fiddler named Tommy Potts. I never met him but I feel I know him. Some of his music has been preserved on the recording "The Liffey Banks". He played traditional music in his very own way, varying it wildly at times but always extremely musical and emotional.

9 Miss Hamilton - From "Oyster Light" 2011

Randal Bays - guitar, fiddles, viola; Abby Newton - cello

Composed by Cornelius Lyons (c.1640-1740) - I first heard my friend John Williams playing this on the accordion and fell in love with it. When I recorded it for my guitar album "Oyster Light" a few years ago, I created a string quartet arrangement to accompany the guitar. Abby Newton provided the cello and I overdubbed both violins and the viola.

10 My Love in the Morning / Who'll Be King But Charlie? - From "Dig With It" 2009 (trad.)

Randal Bays - fiddle, guitar

One of my most treasured rare tapes is the one of fiddler Patrick Kelly of Cree, Co. Clare, made in his house in 1972 and given to me some years ago by Kevin Crehan. Patrick Kelly played with wonderful grace and style, beautiful tone and subtle shadings of intonation, but unfortunately never made a commercial recording. The music on this tape, which I don't believe has ever been made available to the public, is to me the pinnacle of Irish fiddling. I learned "My Love in the Morning" from it. The second tune goes under many names, but I like this, the title of a Scots song referring again to Charles Stuart. Great hopes were vested in this man, the "Blackbird".

11 Planxty Maurice O'Connor / O'Carolan's Welcome - From "The Salmon's Leap" 2000 Composed by Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738)

Randal Bays - guitar

12 The Dear Irish Boy (An Buachailín Bán) - From "Dig With It" 2009 (trad.)

Randal Bays - fiddle, guitar

Somehow the music of Co. Clare got into my soul many years ago, which is strange since I'm just a guy from Indiana. Due to a last minute change of tracks, this slow air appeared on "Dig With It", my CD with Dave Marshall, as "The Bold Trainer, O". It's a slow air associated with piper Willie Clancy and I learned this setting from a tape of that great musician.