

BOSTON IRISH REPORTER

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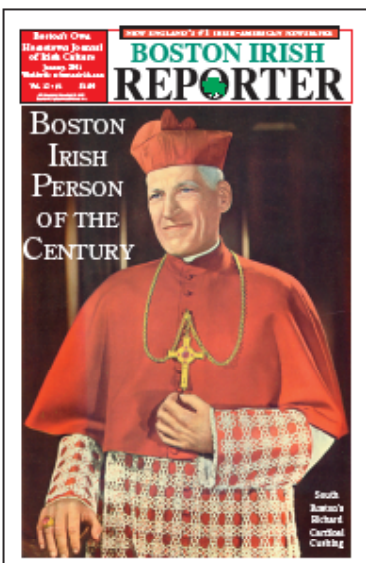
We're Turning 20!

Join us as we celebrate two decades of telling the 'Stories of Boston's Irish.'

We will observe this occasion with a Celebratory Luncheon on Thursday, October 7, 2010 at Boston's Seaport Hotel/World Trade Center, with several honored Boston Irish business and civic leaders.

The Boston Irish Reporter is one of the region's few remaining family-owned and operated publications and, in keeping with our own heritage, that day we will debut a new special anniversary, the Boston Irish Honorees, recognizing two Boston Irish individuals for their special achievements in public service and business, and three exemplary Irish families who share our common roots in Boston and Ireland. The inaugural honorees are: U.S. Congressman Edward J. Markey, John Donohue, CEO, Arbella Insurance, and three exemplary families: the Brett family, the Grogan family and the Hyatt family.

Your pledge of support helps to sustain a strong, vibrant and independent journal of Irish-American culture for Boston and New England.



The 2010 Boston Irish Honorees

U.S. Congressman
Edward J. Markey

John Donohue, CEO
Arbella Insurance

The Brett Family

The Grogan Family

The Hyatt Family

BIR 20th Anniversary Luncheon
Thursday, October 7, 2010

Boston's Seaport Hotel/World Trade Center

'The Real Thing from Day One'

Sean Patrick O'Malley as Priest

BY GREG O'BRIEN
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

When Sean Patrick O'Malley was ten, growing up in rural Pennsylvania, he embraced the road less traveled. He drove with his father to a Franciscan retreat house to gather his older brother after a weekend stay. They came upon an old friar working the rocky fields. "We talked to him for a long time," the son recalls. "When I was back in the car, my dad turned to me and said: 'That's the happiest man in the world!' This man didn't

BIR Profile

have a beautiful wife, he didn't have a fancy car, he was hoeing the field under the hot sun, but somehow I knew my father was right. The feeling never left me."

That passion prevails today as Cardinal Archbishop of Boston Sean Patrick O'Malley prepares for yet another pilgrimage—a mixed blessing of sorts: a return to Ireland, where he spent blissful visits as a boy, but a country today paralyzed by a shameful sex abuse scandal in the heart of the Irish church. Sadly, it's an all-too-familiar pastoral landscape for a man who found bound-

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Cardinal Sean O'Malley greeted young people in the newly renovated St. Peter's Teen Center during a ceremony held there in February of 2009.

Photo courtesy Catholic Charities.

ICCNE's Festival Offers Fine Tastes of Irish Culture

September 17-19
at Canton Campus

BY SEAN SMITH
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

One of Greater Boston's most enduringly popular Irish music and cultural events will pass a significant milestone this month when the Irish Cultural Centre of New England (ICCNE) hosts the 20th annual Irish Festival at its campus in Canton Sept. 17-19.

Highlights of the festival will include performances by the internationally renowned ballad group The High Kings; the band McPeake, which carries on the tradition of one of Ireland's most famous music families; acclaimed Irish-American singer Andy Cooney, whose repertoire ranges from classic Irish ballads to more contemporary sounds; Canadian Celtic rock band Glengarry Boys; and contemporary singer-songwriter Padraig Allen and The Whole Shabang.

In addition to music — the line-up also includes local performers Erin's Melody, The Gobshites, the Andy Healy Band, Curragh's Fancy and Erin Og as well as Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, and Ceol Tradisiunta na hEireann — the festival will feature dancing, films, cultural exhibits and children's activities.

The ICC Festival began at Stonehill College in Easton,



Families and children will find plenty of enjoyment at the Irish Cultural Centre festival in Canton this month.

then moved to its present-day location in 2004, when it took on a more international and musically diverse character as the Irish Connections Festival and later the ICONS Festival. Last year, the festival was organized on a smaller scale and with more of a local and regional focus.

"The ICC's festival is a wonderful family event and it draws

people from all over North America," says Festival Chairman Seamus Mulligan. "It's affordable, easy to get to, offers free parking, is handicapped accessible and gives people a real taste of greater Boston's rich Irish cultural heritage."

This year, the festival's local-regional flavor will be supplemented by the five headline

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From a Dream to Reality, Making Our Irish Music CD

(Three Days in the Dream
... Ten Months in the Doing)

BY SUSAN GEDUTIS LINDSAY
SPECIAL TO THE BIR

We do things differently at the Lindsay household. Last October, when most respectable couples were booking leaf-peeping vacations in Vermont, my husband Steve and I booked three days at Sounds Interesting Studios, a professional recording facility in Middleborough, Mass., to record an Irish music CD. We thought that would be plenty of time to get most of it done. Oh, sure. ... Now, it's ten months later and we're just about finished! Following is an account of the making of our first studio CD, "From the Green to the Blue," a world-music-influenced take on Irish traditional and contemporary music.

The Planning Stage

We began planning for this recording last year, at the release of our first CD. That one was a live recording, but now we yearned for more: the truly creative challenge that only a professional studio presents. So we called our friend, recording engineer Rob Pemberton, who has been at this for 24 years, and in that time has recorded more albums than he can count,

in genres ranging from classical, jazz, top-40, to heavy metal. If you are a fan of Celtic Fiddle Festival's groundbreaking *Rendezvous* album (Johnny Cunningham, Kevin Burke, Christian LeMaitre), then you know Rob's work. He's really good.

The Recording

There are many ways to record a CD. Some folks do it live, meaning the musicians play all at the same time, in the same room. Usually, they'll play the same song numerous times, and keep only the best takes. We tried this approach first, but quickly abandoned ship. "Listening back, you and Steve would find flaws that you couldn't live with," Engineer Rob said. "You were actually looking for more perfection than I was — and it made more sense to record you individually so that we could isolate each person's sound and punch in fixes [correct errors]."

I had expected that since we were going for a natural and edgy sound, we wouldn't need to be so persnickety about details, but I was wrong. When Rob said "We're rolling..." it felt like we were positioned precisely be-



Susan and Steve Lindsay hard at work on their CD.

tween a magnifying glass and the sun's hot rays: Suddenly, all that heat was focused on us and we were the proverbial leaf, ready to burst into flames. Ouch! Live, one can get away with a few wrong notes, an out-of-tune instrument, a mixed up vocal line. But a recording must stand up to repeated listening, and those little mix-ups can really burn you up over time.

Rob has recorded several Celtic records and he says that recording Irish music is no different than any other style; his

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From a Dream to Reality, Making Our Irish Music CD

(Continued from page 1) job remains to capture the sound that the artist wants. "I like to get the instruments sounding as natural as possible," he said. "Whether it's Celtic Fiddle Fest, the Irish rock band The Prodigals, or more recently, Cape Cod-based duo Stanley and Grimm, I determine what the musicians want and like and then bring out the best of what they do. Every record ends up sounding different as a result."

Sounds Interesting Studios is set up like most professional recording operations: The engineer sits at a large mixing console in the control room, amid a wall of musical equipment. The musicians record in the adjacent "tracking room," and can see the engineer through a double-paned plate glass window. They wear headphones to hear the track and themselves while recording, and communicate to the engineer through their microphones. The engineer gives instruction through a "talkback microphone" that feeds directly into their headphones. Each musician on the track listens through headphones while playing, and adds his or her part to the mix. This is called "overdubbing."

The recording happens in layers. Because the bedrock of this recording is Steve's guitar sound, that was done first. This phase included getting a good sound, finalizing the arrangement and song tempos, tuning between every take, and then lining up with a click track to get the rhythm rock solid... and then, of course, the requisite take and retake and retake... because it's not so easy to play perfectly when you *have to*.

Once we had solid guitar tracks, we recorded "scratch tracks" of vocals and sax/flute. Scratch tracks are placeholders for all other instrumentalists while they overdub their parts. The idea is that these parts will be re-recorded once the full band is present so that the vocalist and soloists can respond to the final "feel" of the piece.

After guitar tracks, we brought in our friends—eleven of them, to be exact. Most tracks have percussion, and that meant studio time with four different drummers: Salil Sachdev on African water drums, dumbek, Pakistani frame drum, and cajon; Brian Haley on conga and djembe; Peter Smith on bodhran; Rob Rudin on bones and washboard. We also added Sean Farias on acoustic upright bass on most tracks, then we added a range of color: Tom Rohde on lead guitar for some gorgeous background lines on one song, Evan Harlan on accordion on four tracks (including a soprano sax/accordion reel set reminiscent of the Dudley Street Irish dance hall sound of the 1950s), Nikki Engstrom on fiddle on some traditional reels and jigs, and Ian Hudson with some elegant grand piano on O'Carolan's "Si Bheag Si Mhor," and finally, Chris Barrett, an



Susan and Stephen Lindsay's unique approach to Irish music will be in the spotlight at this month's BCMFest Celtic Music Monday concert.

unexpected guest on one track: trumpet. Chris's partner Kate Connell added harmony vocals in places where my own voice just didn't work.

Then, it was our turn. Recording meaningful and musical parts on Irish flute, whistle, and soprano and alto saxophones was frosting on the cake, and believe me, I felt every minute of it.

Finally, it was time for vocals. Steve's approach to singing is impassioned and real, so it took time just to get the mood right. How can one sing a sultry, peaceful "John of Dreams" at 10 a.m., and then transition coolly into the aggressive, caterwauling "Sixteen Jolly Ravers," a salty song about sixteen Spanish fisherman who land on Dublin's shores and hit the nightclubs?

After Steve's vocals were finished, it was my turn to do the harmony vocals (didn't realize I sang out of tune 'til I heard it in the headphones!), and then, ten months later, we were done. But it wasn't over.

The Mixing

Then Rob started mixing. That means listening to each track, carefully adjusting the balance between the instruments, adding effects, compression, and doing other technical things that sound very Greek to me. It can take hours to mix a song; multiply that by 13.

Rob says that people don't listen like they used to. "Most people don't have a stereo system where they can sit down and devote the time to *listen* to the music. Now they'll throw a bunch of songs on an iPod and listen to whatever comes up. But iPod earbuds while jogging is no way to listen to music."

Despite Rob's lament, we conceived of this album as more than as a collection of singles. "We wanted this to stand as something bigger than just the duo," Rob said. "When a band wants to make a record that sounds just like they sound live, to me that's called a demo. Live, you're entertaining them because you're there—the entertainment is in your presence and the interaction between the two of you... There needs to be a lot more in the record, and that's where the production element comes in. When we put in a variety of instruments and tweak the sound of the record—that's what makes it entertaining." That meant that Rob took special care to ensure variety between each track while also maintaining

a consistency of sound across the whole.

On this CD, for example, Rob recorded every instrument with two mics, one placed close to the instrument and one placed farther away to also capture some of the "room" sound. He then worked with the two signals on the same performance to create a sense of physical space around the instruments. To oversimplify: When

he wants an instrument to appear on the left in the mind's eye, he will put more of the sound in the left speaker. To adjust front to back spacing, also referred to as depth of field, he'll bring down the volume of the close mic and bring up the volume of the room mic. Then, he adjusts the frequency of the vocal signal to add a lot of "air" so that the vocals soar over everything else. One of the problems for an engineer who takes such care to create both depth and breadth in his recordings is that most people listen to music as MP3s, smaller files that get that way because some elements of the original sound have been removed. Still, Rob's passion for recorded sound means that he'll cut no corners.

And that's where we are at this writing. All the songs are mixed, as of 8 p.m. on Mon. Aug. 23.

The Mastering

We'll listen to all of the tracks one more time, and decide on the order of the

songs. Once everything is just as we want it, the recording gets sent away for mastering. The mastering engineer listens to each track and ensures consistency in volume and sound between each track so that the overall record sounds like a connected whole. Like the final proofreader on a book, he also notes anything that the engineer might have missed.

The Physical Production

In the meantime, we're working on writing the liner notes for the CD, having photo shoots, and creating a cover design, as well as securing permissions for songs we perform. (Oh, and, by the way, tending to our daughter, working our day jobs, and occasionally sweeping the kitchen floor. Occasionally.) Soon, we'll listen to a copy of a master and approve it. Then, we'll send the graphic files and the mastering engineer will send the final master directly to a duplication house. The CD

duplication house will put it all together and press 1,000 CDs while we fidget nervously with our credit card. And all of this will happen within the next two weeks, Lord willing and the creek don't rise.

We feel so grateful to Rob Pemberton and the musicians who appear on the record for helping to make this recording even better than we dreamed. Buying a paintbrush doesn't make you an artist; an expensive canvas doesn't make for a better painting. Still, for artists who want a great painting—and great materials that they hope will stand the test of time—some expenses are just worth it.

We hope you'll agree when you hear the result, "From the Green to the Blue," from The Lindsays. Coming this September... or so... Visit our website irishmusic.us to find out more. For more information on Sounds Interesting Studios, visit soundsinterestingstudio.com.



Annual Banquet & Celebration

Saturday, October 2nd, 2010

Florian Hall

55 Hallett St., Dorchester, MA

2010 Banquet Honorees



**Boston /
Northeast
GAA
Minor
Board**



Guest
Speaker:
Mayor of
Boston,
Thomas M.
Menino



Music by:
DEVRI

Special
Performance
by:

**BRADY ACADEMY
OF IRISH DANCE**

Cocktail Hour: 7 pm - 8 pm
Four Course Dinner
& Dancing to follow

Tickets:
\$100*
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