

Press Release:

The Joseph Browne Spring School of Traditional Music

Feb 22nd to 25th, 2007

The South Galway and North Clare region is an area that has long been renowned for the quality of its traditional music. Names like Jack Mulkere, the highly regarded music teacher, come to mind, as do those of Joe Cooley, the great accordion player, and Kieran Collins, the exceptional tin whistle player. Ceili Bands were also very much part of this tradition, such as the Kilfenora in North Clare and the Tulla in East Clare. These musicians and many more left an indelible mark on the traditional music of this part of Ireland.

This area lost one of its most talented musicians when Joseph Browne died tragically in February 2006. Joseph, the son of Riona and Michael Browne, grew up in Knockmeal, between Crusheen and Gort, on the border of North Clare and South Galway and, in his short nineteen years, he too had begun to leave his mark on the music of the area. Joseph loved life and his first love was music. He was a remarkably gifted musician who played the fiddle, traditional and classical piano and the concertina. He delighted in arranging and composing music and was also a talented Irish dancer. Joseph was in his first year of a degree in medicine at NUIG at the time of his death at the early age of nineteen.

Joseph Browne had a keen interest in passing on what he had learnt and in the months before he died he had taken on teaching the fiddle to a large number of students in the Moycullen branch of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann. He is remembered with great warmth and affection by all of the students with whom he came into contact and his impact on those same students can be seen and heard today. He motivated them and evoked their interest in all aspects of traditional music. They speak now of how he taught them to play by ear and they recall the stories he told them about the tunes and how they didn't just learn tunes 'gan ainm'!

Joseph himself enjoyed this teaching experience which he undertook with great enthusiasm and, had he lived, would surely have continued teaching traditional music and passing on the stories and the tunes. **The Joseph Browne Spring School of Traditional Music** was initiated in response to Joseph's tragic death and, as well as celebrating Joseph's memory, also seeks to carry on his teaching and his strong belief in passing on what he himself had learned.

The school will take place in Gort over a four-day period from **Thursday, February 22nd to Sunday February 25th**, a weekend that coincides with the Spring mid-term break for primary and post-primary schools. Classes will take place in Gort Community School from 10am to 1pm, Thursday to Saturday, as well as workshops each afternoon with such luminaries of the traditional music world as Chris Droney, Joe Ryan and Charlie Lennon. Some of the finest teachers of traditional Irish music are lined up for the classes. These include Nicky McAuliffe, Oisín Mac Diarmada and Johnny Kelly, (fiddle), Tommy Keane (tin whistle), Eamonn Cotter (concert flute), Anne McAuliffe (concertina), Danny Mahoney (accordion) and Mary Shannon (banjo). The number of participants in each class will be limited so it is advisable to book in advance. Booking forms are available from 087 0674335 or can be downloaded and printed from the website www.josephbrowne.org

The official opening of the school will take place in the Lady Gregory Hotel, Gort on Thursday 22nd of February at 8pm where **The Joseph Browne Memorial Lecture** will be presented by the renowned musician, Geraldine Cotter. This will be followed by the launch of a CD of Joseph's music titled **Light Touch Dancing Bow: The Music of Joseph Browne**. On Friday night, in Gort Community Centre, set-dancers will get a chance to twinkle their toes when the legendary Kilfenora Ceili Band take the stage. The Kilfenora have been over ninety six years in the business of playing for dancing. On the brink of celebrating their centenary, they have witnessed and experienced all levels of Irish music, from the village parties of the early 1900s to the bigger dance halls established after the controversial dance hall act of the early 1930s. They were involved in the historic radio broadcasts, as well as being one of the earliest bands to make commercial recordings in Ireland. Now they will be part of the first **Joseph Browne Spring School of Music** when they take the stage in Gort Community Centre on Friday the 23rd of February 2007 with dancing starting at 10pm.

One of the major highlights of the weekend is Saturday night's concert, which promises the very best of traditional music, song and dance. Gort Community Centre is the venue and the stunning line up includes Manus McGuire and Garry O'Briain, Kate Purcell, Planxty Uí Ruairc and Sliabh Notes.

Garry O Briain and Manus McGuire are both members of one of the most respected groups in Irish traditional music - Buttons and Bows, but they are also well-known for both their solo and duet playing. Manus has released two highly acclaimed solo albums, the most recent being 'Fiddle Wings' which was launched at the 2006 Fleadh na gCuach in Kinvara. Garry, as well as being acknowledged as one of the foremost accompanists, arrangers and producers in Irish traditional music, has also released a number of solo albums including 'Carolans Dream' featuring the compositions of the blind harper Turlough O Carolan.

Singer, Kate Purcell is a native of Feakle in East Clare. Her distinctive voice makes a strong impact on all who hear her and she has enthralled audiences on both sides of the Atlantic. Her songs span a number of genres including Blues and American Country as well as Irish folk music, which was one of her earliest influences.

Sliabh Notes are Matt Cranitch, from Cork, on fiddle, Donal Murphy, from Abbeyfeale, on accordion and Tommy O'Sullivan from Dingle. Formed in 1995, they have established an enviable reputation for the high quality of their music, which ranges from the dynamic polka and slide rhythms of Sliabh Luachra to electrifying jigs, reels and hornpipes, all beautifully complemented by the singing and guitar playing of Tommy O'Sullivan. With three albums to their name they have appeared at all the major international traditional music festivals.

On Sunday 25th February, Joseph's anniversary mass will take place in Crusheen Church at 1pm. This will be followed by a visit to Joseph's grave where a musical tribute will be played. The first **Joseph Browne Spring School of Traditional Music** will close with a farewell session in the Lady Gregory Hotel in Gort, on Sunday afternoon.

As part of the **Joseph Browne Spring School of Music** it is intended to establish a number of traditional music bursaries in Joseph's name. These would allow students from the Galway / Clare area to attend other traditional music schools. Details of these bursaries and how to apply for them will be announced during the Spring school.

Details of **The Joseph Browne Spring school of Music** at a glance:

Thursday to Sunday, February 22nd to 25th

Classes in fiddle, tin whistle, concert flute, accordion, concertina, banjo. 10am to 1pm

Workshops with 'Bearers of the Tradition' 2pm to 4pm

Thursday 22nd Feb, 8 pm

Official Opening with The Joseph Browne Memorial Lecture

presented by **Geraldine Cotter**

Followed by launch of CD **Light Touch Dancing Bow: The Music of Joseph Browne**

Friday 23rd Feb

Ceili with Kilfenora Ceili Band

Gort Community Centre 10pm

Saturday 24th Feb

Concert with Kate Purcell, Manus McGuire and Garry O Briain, Planxty Uí Ruairc and Sliabh Notes

Gort Community Centre 8.30pm

Sunday 25th Feb

Anniversary Mass for Joseph Browne

Crusheen Church 1pm

*All enquiries to **087 0674335** or **www.josephbrowne.org***