

Sing us Another Story **New Songs ~ Old Style ~ Living Community**

A Per Cent for Art Scheme Residency in Traditional Music & Song by artist John Tunney
Photography by Christy McNamara

Singing Session ~ Kilmaley Inn, Kilmaley, Co. Clare ~ 23rd May 2009

Over the past year Clare County Council's Public Art Programme has worked in close collaboration with Kilmaley Voluntary Housing Association in the development of a unique public art residency. This residency was awarded to Traditional Musician and Songwriter John Tunney who has worked directly with the 90 clients in attendance at the Kilmaley Daycare Centre in the development of three new songs written in and about the people of Kilmaley.

John has written the three new songs in the traditional styles of

- _ *Goltraí* – a sad song or lament – titled 'In the Shadow of Slievecallan'
- _ *Geantraí* – a lively song – titled 'The Boys and The Girls of Kilmaley'
- _ *Suantraí* – a soothing song, in this case a lullaby – called 'O Ghlúin go Glúin'

Please see over for extracts of the lyrics of these songs. [Copyright for all lyrics lies with artist John Tunney.]

In order to celebrate the residency a free event and Singing Session will take place on Saturday 23rd May 09 and members of the public are welcome to attend. This session will feature the artist showcasing the three new songs along with the clients singing songs that have informed the song writing process.

Well-known photographer and accordion player Christy McNamara was also commissioned to work with staff and clients of the Kilmaley Daycare Centre to capture this unique process in photographic images, which will also feature at the session.

This project is funded through the Per Cent for Art Scheme which specifically focuses on the commissioning of new contemporary art projects in connection with the development of Capital Construction Projects, in this case the building of Kilmaley Daycare Centre in 2003. The Per Cent for Art Scheme gives the Irish public the opportunity to experience a vast range of contemporary art in their everyday life.

Funding for the project has been sourced through the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Kilmaley Voluntary Housing Association has developed the residency in close partnership with Clare County Council's Public Art Programme and Arts Office. The project has received a great response from the staff and clients of Daycare Centre as well being inspired by the people and place of Kilmaley.

According to Annette Moloney, Artistic Director of the Public Art Programme "*Memory can be a particularly important force in all our lives. Clare County Council's Public Art Programme has been in a very privileged position over the last year to be able witness a particularly skilled artist – John Tunney – in his process of building trusting and creative relationships with the clients of Kilmaley Daycare Centre. In doing so he has been able to capture some of the many memories of the clients which have gone on to inspire three contemporary songs in a Traditional Irish style.*"

Etain McCooey, Acting Clare Arts Officer points out that *“This is one of the first Per Cent for Art projects in Ireland to use the traditional arts – traditional song in this case – as the primary artform. Per Cent for Art projects in the past have traditionally yielded Sculptures but the Kilmaley Voluntary Housing Association Committee were very creative and forward thinking and now we have a beautiful project which is a prototype for other projects and artists in Ireland. We are immensely proud to be partners in this project, a project which reiterates Clare’s standing as one of the most creative and progressive cultural counties in the country.”*

Carmel O’Brien, a member of the Daycare Centre Committee who has been working intensively on the project and a talented singer herself is delighted with how the project has developed. “The housing scheme and Daycare Centre have become a central aspect of the Parish life of Kilmaley. This project has built on the community spirit among the residents and Daycare Centre clients which we now want to share with the wider Kilmaley community as well as the rest of County Clare through our Singing Session on the 23rd of May”, says Carmel.

The Singing Session will take place on Saturday 23rd May 09 in the Kilmaley Inn, Kilmaley, Co. Clare. Doors open at 7.30pm for an 8pm start. Entry is free and all are welcome to attend – especially friends and family of Daycare Centre clients as well as residents of the Kilmaley area. After the recital, everyone is welcome to participate in a singing and music session at 10pm.

Sample Lyrics of John Tunney’s songs – © Copyright for all lyrics lies with the artist

In the Shadow of Slievecallan

In the parish of Kilmaley stands a house I still call home,
And in my boyhood days from there, I never thought to roam.
My parents they worked long and hard; they owned a farm of land
In the shadow of Slievecallan quite adjacent to The Hand.

My father was a brawny man with a head of flaxen hair.
At saving hay or in the bog, none with him could compare.
He loved the fiddle and the flute, even joined a ceili band.
He used sometimes play in Gleeson’s not too distant from The Hand.

The Boys and the Girls of Kilmaley

(Melody: ‘The Humours of Ennistymon’)

When I was a girl, sure I loved for to dance.
After tea of a Sunday, we’d all get our chance.
My mother she loved to see crowds gather in
Then she’d wind up the gramophone and we’d begin.
To Gillespie, and Coleman and Morrison too,
We’d be flaking it out as young people they do.
Two full sets of teenagers dancing till late
To the magical charm of those seventy-eights.

Chorus

We are the boys and the girls of Kilmaley
We’ve rarely been bested with hurl and shillelagh.
For singing, for dancing, for fun and for spree
There’s none can enjoy themselves better than we.

....

Now we live in Kilmaley, near where the church stands
In our cosy, safe homes, plenty neighbours to hand.
Mary Ita and Carmel and the whole centre staff,
Such love and attention, it's no wonder we laugh.
For now we're retired and put out to grass
We play cards and tell stories the hours to pass.
With Tai Chi and Yoga, computers and art,
We're always at something that fills us with heart.
Chorus

O Ghlúin go Glúin
(or 'The Grandparents Lullaby)

O Ghlúin go Glúin our story goes
Our hopes and all our dreams.
You'll have your share of cares a stór
But I pray love reigns supreme.

Chorus:
Singing Hushabba loo alannah,
hush a bababa lay.
That love and joy will be your lot
For this I fondly pray.

John Tunney

John Tunney has been living in Ennis for the last eight years but hails from Co. Donegal where his family were steeped in traditional song, music and storytelling. His father Paddy Tunney was a much loved and well respected singer throughout the country who composed a significant repertoire of songs, most of which can be heard sung at sessions and Fleadhs around the country. In this project, John has been working as Artist-in-Residence, or in this case Songwriter-in-Residence, at the Daycare Centre since September 2008. During this time he and the clients have been singing songs and learning songs from each other's repertoire.

Christy McNamara

Christy McNamara's photography is known far and wide. The Spencil Hill photographer has photographed many musicians, including U2, The Pogues and a range of traditional musicians. Christy has been visually documenting the project since January 2009 and will showcase some of the new photographs at the singing recital.

Summary Information:

Date: Saturday 23rd May 09
Time: Singing Session from 8 –10 pm. Doors open at 7:30pm
Venue: Kilmaley Inn, Kilmaley, Co. Clare
Tickets: Free – All are Welcome

Acknowledgements

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