

B A C K W E S T



Heritage Hall

*"The heritage of the past
is the seed that brings forth
the heritage of the future"*

Wendell Phillips



Thanks and Acknowledgements

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Finally, we'd like to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to all of our supporters around the world. This album is for ye! xxxx

Track 1: The Crooked Road To Dublin (Reels)

The Crooked Road to Dublin/Fisherstreet Reel/The Bond Store (Trad. Arr. M&B Browne, Joyce, McGowan, Vickers)

The first reel is a very old and well-known traditional reel, which was recorded by many famous musicians such as Michael Coleman, and Willie Clancy. The second tune is one we learned from the legendary band Fisherstreet (thanks to our long term musical friend Declan Corey). The third reel, Brendan got while sifting through some old music manuscripts on his day out of the office!

Track 2: The O'Neill's Special (Jigs)

Young Tom Ennis/The Humours of Tralibane/The Old Woman Tossed Up in a Blanket (Trad. Arr. M&B Browne, Joyce, McGowan, Vickers)

The first tune came from the virtuoso fiddle player Martin Hayes from Co. Clare and the second and third tunes we found in the O'Neill's Music of Ireland Collection. It turns out that all three tunes are published in the O'Neill's Collection and as a result we called it "The O'Neill's Special": a great cocktail of jigs!

Track 3: The Early Morning Rain (Song)

(Arr. Joyce, M&B Browne)

Fabian heard this Gordon Lightfoot song sung by the iconic trio Peter, Paul and Mary. He was immediately captivated by it and promised himself that, when he learned to sing, he was "Going to learn that song... any day now".



Track 4: **"Its Own Wardrobe"** (*Reels*)

The Green Fields of Glen Town/The Mohill Reel/O'Rourke's (Trad. Arr. M&B Browne, Joyce, McGowan, Vickers)

The first tune was composed by the renowned Donegal fiddle maestro and composer Tommy Peoples (1948 - 2018) and the second and third tunes we picked up (as the term goes) at various trad sessions in Galway city many moons ago.

We decided to name the set "Its Own Wardrobe" in memory of Tommy Peoples' philosophy that, "If the music is played as it should, then it's got everything. It doesn't need to be dressed in rock clothes or jazz clothes or any other clothes. It's got its own wardrobe".

Track 5: **Flyin' and Dodgin'** (*Jaunty Air/Reel*)

Fly and Dodger/ Sailor on the Rock
(Trad. Arr. M&B Browne, Joyce, Vickers)

The opening tune is a stunning piece of music composed by the great Irish-American fiddler and composer, Liz Carroll from Chicago. This is followed by an old traditional tune called Sailor on the Rock, or another name we discovered it to be under is Johnny with the Queer Thing. We felt that the two tunes bonded beautifully together, pulsating from one colour to another.

We would like to dedicate this track to Liz, as a thank you for her wonderful music, which she has shared for so many years.

"Beatha teanga i a labhairt!"
"The life of a language is to speak it"

(Seanfhocal Ghaeilge)





Track 6: The Sliabh Luachra Set (*Polkas*)

The Glen Cottage Polka/Johnny O'Leary's Polka/ Daly's Mill Polka (Arr. M&B Browne, Joyce, McGowan, Vickers)

The first tune is one we learned from brother and sister duo Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford (heirs to the fiddle tradition of Sliabh Luachra - the mountainous area on the Cork/Kerry border), whose beautiful recording, *The Star above the Garter* dates back to the 1960's. The second tune was a tune we heard from the playing of the great Johnny O'Leary (Sliabh Luachra). The last tune, we learned from the great playing of button accordion maestro Dónal Murphy. The tune was written by John Walsh and is also known as John Walsh's No. 2. Although we proudly wear the Galway colours, we have to admit that, deep down, there's nothing quite like beltin' out a few polkas – "Galway shtyle!"

Track 7: Captain Captain (*Song*)

(Arr. M&B Browne, McGowan, Vickers)

Maureen learned this song from one of her favourite American Boston-based string bands, Crooked Still, who in turn got the song from Rebecca King Jones, a North Carolina folksinger from the mid-20th century. Maureen felt a particular connection with the song: Being reared beside the sea her whole life, and her grand-aunt having lost her son at sea as a sailor, this song struck her immensely of how precious life is.

*"Music is the art which is most
nigh to tears and memory"*

Oscar Wilde

Track 8: **The Big Squeeze** (*Jigs*)

The Yellow Wattle/The Millar's Maggot/The Big Squeeze (Arr. M&B Browne, Joyce, Vickers)

The first two jigs are two well-known tunes that were played in sessions around Galway back in the 1990's. The third jig is a gorgeous composition by the virtuoso piano accordion player from Chicago, Jimmy Keane, who we had the great pleasure of meeting at Gaelic Park Irish Festival in Chicago on BackWest's Maiden Voyage tour to the USA in 2017.

We'd like to dedicate this track to Jimmy, and to thank him for sharing his wonderful music and compositions.

Track 9: **Melodic Swoops** (*Breton/Reel*)

Gwriziad Difennet/Dunrobin Castle

(Arr. M&B Browne, Joyce, McGowan, Vickers)

The first piece is a song written by Alan Stivell (a renowned Breton and Celtic musician/vocalist). He recorded the song on his album 'Before Landing (Raok Dilestra)' which was released in 1977. The melody was later recorded by the traditional Breton band Kornog. "From the moment we heard the song, we were instantly drawn in by the melodic swoops that the melody takes" (Brendan Browne). The song is followed by a reel entitled Dunrobin Castle, which is a famous castle in the highlands of Northern Scotland. It was home to the Earls and later the Dukes of Sutherland. The tune is also known as Jimmy's Return.

Track 10: **Lazy John** (*Song*)

(Arr. M&B Browne, Joyce, McGowan, Vickers)

There are many versions of this old bluegrass song, however Maureen learned this version from the legendary multi-instrumentalist Bruce Molsky from New York, USA. When arranging this song, we felt we wanted to give the song a little bit of a modern twist, however, we also felt it very important to embrace the bluegrass style to which the song is associated with.

Track 11: **Heritage Hall** (*Air/Jig*)

Young Terrance McDonough/Maggie's Uber Mile (Arr. M&B Browne, Hession, McGowan)

The first piece is a beautiful composition by the great Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738). The tune dates back to the early 1700's. Maureen and Brendan felt that the style of the piece was quite in line with that of baroque music, hence they felt it only fitting to arrange it as they did with this in mind. Following this is a jig composed by Maureen. She was at home in her kitchen one day not long after her son Seán was born, when, out of nothing, she heard some chords in her head. She took out the fiddle and wrote the tune based around the chordal pattern. For a long time she couldn't find a name for the jig and appealed to audiences to help her to name it. Little did she realise that on the band's first tour of America she would be exposed to the new life experience of the 'Uber Taxi': Lo and behold, on a trip around Chicago on the Hop on Hop off bus, Peter came up with a name that was most fitting for her jig... Maggie's Uber Mile!

A key factor for us when arranging this set was to show how old repertoire matures, and how new repertoire can highlight its beauty.

Track 12: **Shufflin' About** (*Reels*)

The Malawi Shuffle/Peggy on the Settle/Tinker Hill (Trad. Arr. M&B Browne, Joyce, McGowan, Vickers)

The first tune is written by Fabian. Back in 2015, he had the good fortune of being involved in the building of a medical treatment centre in Malawi. For a time on that build, the only way to get from one side of the building to the other was across a 6-inch wide beam, 16 foot up in the air. He wrote the tune on the long hot evenings, watching the beautiful African sunsets at Lake Malawi. The name for the tune was inspired by his daily high-wire routine of 'shuffling' across the 6-inch beam! The second tune is a great Donegal tune which fell out of an old folder one day in the attic. It was hand written on an old piece of music manuscript – the best kind! The third tune we got from the playing of one of our favourite Irish bands from Co. Sligo, Dervish.

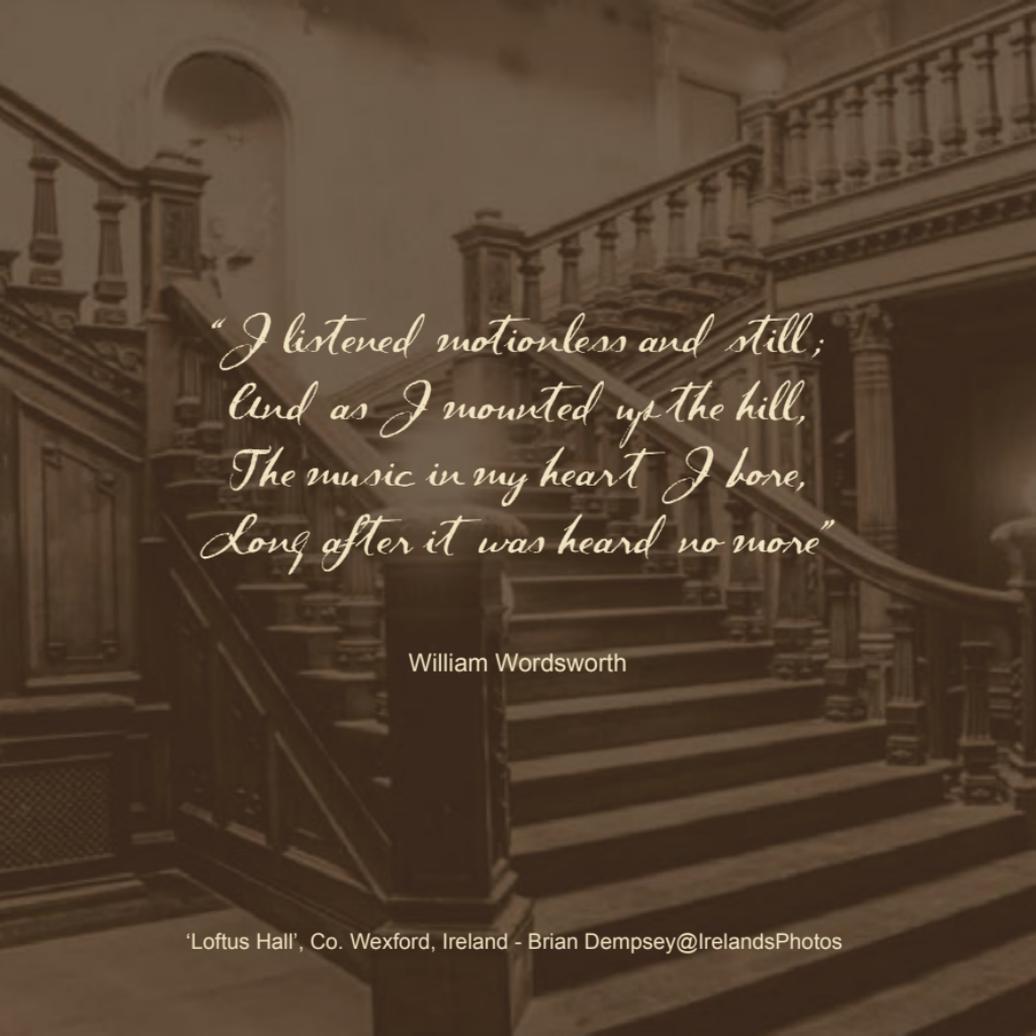
Track 13: **Theme for Green Lands** (*Retreat March*)

Green Lands (Arr. M&B Browne, Joyce, McGowan, Vickers)

This is a beautiful retreat march composed by the famous Breton guitarist, singer and composer Dan Ar Braz. The melody of this tune struck us so deeply when we first heard it. It brought feelings of pride, yet at the same time, made us reflect, bringing feelings of sadness. Irish traditional music saw much heartache in 2018, having lost some of its greatest musicians and composers. These artists dedicated their lives to the tradition, and their music has impacted enormously on the musicians of both present and future generations. At the end of the day, tradition is what grounds us as people. Our heritage is what informs us of who we are and where we are from. We remember in particular Liam Óg O'Flynn (1945-2018), Tommy Peoples (1948 - 2018), Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (1950-2018) and Alec Finn (1944-2018). This track is for them and their families.

*"A nation's culture resides in the hearts
and in the soul of its people"*

Mahatma Gandhi



*"I listened motionless and still;
And as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more"*

William Wordsworth

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