

## BIOGRAPHY

Two renowned duos. Two gifted sisters. Two extraordinary guitarists. A multi-faceted, unique quartet...

Some of the most important names in Irish music, legendary guitarist Arty McGlynn, virtuoso fiddler Nollaig Casey and brilliant harper Máire Ní Chathasaigh, came together last summer to record with Britain's finest flat-picking guitarist Chris Newman. *Heartstring Sessions*, the inspired new CD from this Irish supergroup with soul, crosses boundaries in a tour-de-force of world-class guitar-playing, sensuous singing, fiddle-playing of heart-melting lyricism and harping of power and passion: "*Inspired... a contender for album of the year*" **FROOTS** "*Traditional music at its very best*" **THE IRISH TIMES** "*An amazingly eclectic mix... Astounding*" **THE ULSTER HERALD** "*Magnificent... Virtuosoic... Outstanding*" **THE SCOTSMAN** "*World-class*" **IRISH MUSIC MAGAZINE** "*Two of the mightiest pairings in current folk combine to give a tour-de-force of breathtaking order. Classic.*" **THE LIVING TRADITION** "*Exceptionnel... brillant...*" **LE PEUPLE BRETON** "*Attention - chef d'œuvre! Bravo!!!*" **TRAD MAGAZINE** (France) "*A dream quartet - the sweetest and most exciting music to emerge from the British Isles for a long time. Matching virtuosity with sheer good taste, this album of traditional and original music pours joyfully from the speakers... amazing, majestic, delightful*" **DIRTY LINEN** (USA)

The quartet toured the UK and Ireland with the CD in October. **THE GLASGOW HERALD** said of their performance in the Queen's Hall, Edinburgh: "*A marvellous combination: tremendous breadth and depth... entertaining introductions... consummate playing, brilliantly articulated... breathtaking*"

**MÁIRE** is Ireland's most influential harper. As a teenager in Co Cork in the early 1970s she invented an entirely new style that quickly became the norm amongst both her contemporaries and the younger generation of harpers. A multiple All-Ireland and Pan-Celtic winner, in 1985 she recorded the very first harp album to concentrate on traditional Irish dance music, *The New-Strung Harp* - "*a mile-stone in Irish harp music*" (The Irish Examiner). In 2001 she received Irish music's most prestigious award, that of Traditional Musician of the Year - Gradam Cheoil TG4 - "*for the excellence and pioneering force of her music, the remarkable growth she has brought to the music of the harp and for the positive influence she has had on the young generation of harpers*".

**CHRIS**'s virtuosity and creativity are "*dazzling*" (Acoustic Guitar) and "*revered*" (Taplas). Having played folk music since childhood, he explored the jazz scene in his late teens, playing with and learning from people like Stephane Grappelli and Diz Disley and honing his skills as a gifted improviser. After a brief foray into the commercial world that resulted in a silver disc for producing the Top Ten hit *The Oldest Swinger in Town*, he resolved to concentrate on his first love - the acoustic guitar. His solo CD *Fretwork* was "*a stunning and stylistically-varied album, heaving with good tunes, from one of the UK's most staggering and influential acoustic guitarists*" (Folk Roots). An ex-member of Boys of the Lough, he's produced many successful albums for other artists and has been principal guitar tutor for Newcastle University's Folk B.Mus. course since its inception in 2001.

He and Máire have toured together worldwide since 1988. They released their sixth CD, *FireWire*, in 2007: "*An eclecticism and spirit of adventure that is quite thrilling... Virtuoso playing... bewitching string fantasies and a wonderfully clear and expressive voice*" **THE TIMES** "*Maire... is in a class of her own*" **THE GUARDIAN** "*Takes one of the most effete instruments in traditional music by the scruff of the neck and breathes a fire into its belly*" **THE IRISH TIMES** "*Brilliant, innovative harping and guitar-playing of astonishing virtuosity and versatility*" **SONGLINES** "*Dazzling virtuosity... Newman's guitar-playing is to be marvelled at... exquisitely delivered... delightful*" **THE DAILY TELEGRAPH** "*A gorgeously complex mix of the lovely and lyrical and the positively jubilant by two top-notch players. A real treasure*" **DIRTY LINEN** (USA) It was Chicago-based **LIVE IRELAND's Album of the Year.**



Máire's sister **NOLLAIG** is one of Ireland's most eminent musicians, with her own unique way of playing traditional Irish music on the fiddle. Her utterly distinctive and inimitable sound and style has held such appeal for other musicians that there hardly exists any major Irish artist of the last 20 years with whom she has not worked. Her powerful presence has graced two of Ireland's most influential bands, the legendary Planxty and the ground-breaking Coolfin.

A former member of the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra, her rare ability to play both classical and traditional music with equal proficiency, coupled with her exceptional expressive gifts has inspired a number of composers to write orchestral pieces for her. She's been star soloist for the first performances of major works by Shaun Davey and Dónal Lunny and in 2006 made her Carnegie Hall début as soloist in a double concerto for classical violin and traditional fiddle by Evan Chambers. On the world stage she has performed at the 2003 Special Olympics Opening Ceremony, Hanover's Expo 2000 and has toured throughout the world as featured fiddle player with the international hit show Riverdance. Nollaig is herself a prolific composer, and a number of her compositions for fiddle and string orchestra were premiered by her at a special gala St Patrick's Day concert in The Athenaeum, Bucharest in 2005.

She's been a featured soloist in over 20 feature films, including *Dancing at Lughnasa* and *Waking Ned*. Nollaig has also worked and recorded with Enya, Van Morrison, Sinéad O'Connor, Nanci Griffith, Ricky Skaggs, Rod Stewart, Emmy Lou Harris, Steve Earle, Mary Black, Carlos Nuñez, Jim Rooney, Andy Irvine, Moving Hearts, The Indigo Girls, Spandau Ballet, Elvis Costello, Christy Moore, Liam O'Flynn, Dan ar Braz and Sharon Shannon, among many others.

Her solo album *The Music of What Happened* garnered universal critical acclaim and she's recorded two duo albums with Arty.

*"The highlight of the Festival was the exquisite and dignified playing of Nollaig Ní Chathasaigh... Strong and elegant on stage, her instrument appears almost to be an extension of her own body"*

**THE IRISH TIMES**

*"I would happily sit all night in a cold theatre to listen to Nollaig Casey..."* **FORTNIGHT** (Belfast)

*"Beautifully poised and expressive fiddle playing"* **THE SCOTSMAN**

*"Exquisite fiddle-playing and superb vocals"* **THE IRISH TIMES**

*"Nollaig Casey played wondrous fiddle before singing unaccompanied with such feeling it brought tears to the eyes..."* **THE SUBIACO POST** (Western Australia)

*"Nollaig's performance was stunning for its sheer musical artistry, seducing some into quiet amazement and inducing others to insist on encore after encore..."* **THE IRISH TIMES**

**ARTY** is one of the best-known and most influential musicians in Ireland, with a unique understanding of music he performs. Born in Omagh, Co. Tyrone, his family was steeped in traditional music and when he was eleven his mother bought him his first guitar. Touring professionally with showbands and rock bands throughout Ireland, the UK and the USA from the age of fifteen, his playing soon came under the influence of Wes Montgomery and Thelonius Monk. He later revived his interest in Irish traditional music and in 1979 recorded *McGlynn's Fancy*, the first recording of the guitar played in an authentic traditional style and a classic of the traditional music world.

He subsequently became one of the most sought after musicians in the country, playing and recording with Christy Moore, Paul Brady, John Prine, Tim O'Brien, Jim Rooney, Jerry Douglas, Donal Lunny, Liam O'Flynn, The Chieftains and countless others. He also played as a member of Planxty, Patrick Street, De Danann and was for a number of years lead guitarist with the Van Morrison Band. Arty is equally in demand as a live performer, recording artist and producer. The album *Barking Mad* by Four Men & A Dog, which Arty produced, was voted Folk Album of the Year by Folk Roots magazine. Other production credits include Christy Hennessy's *The Rehearsal*, an album that remained in the Irish charts continuously for eighteen months. He collaborated with Frances Black on her first two albums, *Talk to Me* and *The Sky Road*, both of which topped the charts in Ireland.

*Arty invented a role for the guitar in the Irish tradition and continues to dominate his field"*

**THE ULSTER HERALD**

*"Arty is one of today's major figures on the Irish music scene"* **THE BELFAST TELEGRAPH**

*"Nollaig and Arty have been at the cutting edge of modern Irish music for the last 30 years"*

**THE IRISH TIMES**