



Traditional Irish Music at its best. Fánaí is Irish for "traveler" an appropriate name for this Irish traditional music trio made up of a Dubliner, a London Irish man and a Pennsylvanian. Ireland, England and the US is just where they started; among them, they have clocked up many miles and many experiences.



The group features the singing and playing of the three widely traveled musicians. John Walsh plays banjo and mandolin and sings. His journey has led from his home in Malahide, Co. Dublin to Palmer, Alaska. Jamie O'Brien (vocals, guitar) left England for Pennsylvania, by way of France and Germany, and currently is in the process of moving to Arizona. Button accordion and melodeon player Dan Possumato has spent most of his adult life traveling across the globe - from Pittsburgh and the Mid-Atlantic to Germany before settling in Eagle River, Alaska, 8 years ago.

Performing melodies which revolve around the driving sound of banjo, enriched with the fullness of accordion and accompanied by the inventive rhythm of guitar, the band has won the hearts of many wherever they've played. Fánaí creates a sound steeped in tradition while still appealing to modern

listeners. Their repertoire features many lesser-heard tunes inherited by the players on their long musical journeys. The same is true of the songs sung by Walsh and O'Brien, songs which reach deeply into the rich cultures of both the Irish at home and abroad.

The band originally teamed up in 1999 when Walsh and Possumato toured the Mid-Atlantic with their Alaskan-based group, Last Night's Fun; O'Brien, a noted accompanist, filled in for their absent guitarist at some performances. Since then, the three have continued to play together at every opportunity.

They have performed across the Mid-Atlantic region, for such diverse organizations as the Greater Washington Ceili Club and the CCE; they've appeared at venues such as J.Patrick's in Baltimore, the Purple Fiddle in West Virginia and at 'house concerts' in Pennsylvania; they have been joined by such luminaries of Irish music as accordionist Billy McComiskey, piano player Matt Mulqueen and fiddler Matt Shortridge. But no matter where they play, the result is always the same: an enthralled audience, inspired by the tunes and moved by the songs.

This fall, they will be traveling once more, with appearances scheduled in Pennsylvania, the DC area, Maryland and more.



Daniel Patrick Possumato left his home in Pittsburgh in 1969 and he has

wandered far and wide ever since. He spent 15 years living in Germany, where he joined up with four musicians from Cork in the band "Rannoch." He is in actual fact a melodeon player (one row diatonic button accordion), who plays in the old "push and pull" style.



Dan has spent much time visiting the west of Ireland, which has enabled him to learn many esoteric traditional tunes, especially ones often associated with the melodeon. He plays a two-row D/G box made in France by Bertrand Gaillard, as well as a one-row melodeon in the key of C made in Italy by Castagnari. Last year he took early retirement after 25 years with the U.S. Army, and he is now deciding if he wants to remain in Anchorage, Alaska, or move elsewhere. He recently spent time in Ireland where he recorded a CD of traditional music called "Land of Sunshine."



Dublin native, John Walsh was a late-comer to the music as he says himself. Although he grew up in a musical family, he didn't start playing banjo until around 1981. After leaving school in the seventies, John turned to fishing for full-time employment, and it's from this community that he got, and still gets, his extensive repertoire of tunes and songs. John's playing style would have many influences, but his major influence would have to be Barney McKenna: "The man who put the banjo on the

map in Irish Music".

Nowadays, John can be found at the forefront of the Irish music scene in Alaska, where he plays with the Anchorage-based band LAST NIGHT'S FUN ("The hottest act in town," Anchorage Daily News) formerly, GAEL FORCE, which has been described by The Anchorage Daily News as "Anchorage's Premier Irish Band."

John has toured the West Coast extensively with Paddy O'Brien and Aidan Brennan, where they were also joined by Martin Hayes on the tour. He has also appeared on stage with numerous well-known Irish musicians who have toured in Alaska.



In 2001, John toured Virginia & New York with Patrick Ourceau & Eamon O'Leary. He also went on to play with Laurence Nugent & Patrick McManus in Missouri. For the years 2000, 2001 & 2003, 2004 & 2005 John was on the staff for "The Irish Week", as assistant banjo tutor, in Elkins, West Virginia.

John has also performed in Baltimore and New York with various musicians, including Billy McComiskey, Tony DeMarco, Patrick Ourceau, Pat Egan, Eamon O'Leary and many others.

He was on the Speakers Bureau of the Alaska Humanities Forum and is considered to be the "state's foremost authority on traditional Irish Music & culture". Over the years John has performed at various schools and libraries around the State. More recently, John has lectured at the University of Missouri, St. Louis on Irish Banjo Music.

"John is held in the highest regard by his musical peers in the Irish music scene in the Northwestern United States"Dr. Mick Moloney, NYU Professor of Irish Folklore Studies and

Musician.

"John Walsh is both an accomplished banjo player and an astute historian of his instrument. His knowledge of its unique journey from the African sub continent into the realms of Irish traditional music is compelling and inspiring. His performances offer a rare glimpse into the creative world of the music maker at ease with his art and at home with its folk history."...Dr. Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, MBA, Ph.D. Smurfit-Stone Corporation Professor of Irish Studies University of Missouri-St. Louis, MO 63017

For 2002 & 2003, 2004 John was also on the staff of the Alaska Fiddle camp and he will also be returning to Elkins to join the staff at Irish Week for 2006.



Jamie O'Brien comes from a London-Irish family. His earliest recollections are of family gatherings at which songs were sung, dances danced and stories told. Although he has performed in a number of styles over the years, he has always enjoyed returning to his Irish and Londoner roots.

He performed solo and with bands throughout the British Isles and Europe and, since arriving in the US, has played across the Mid-Atlantic region and at top venues from Chicago to Washington, DC, to the Hawaiian Islands, appearing at festivals large and small, concerts, house concerts, clubs, pubs and dances. He has established a reputation as a fine singer and inventive guitarist.



For many years, he has been a highly sought after accompanist among Irish and Celtic musicians – he has played with such performers as John Brennan (fiddle, guitar), Aoife Clancy (vocals, guitar), Jim Eagan (fiddle), Ken Kolodner (hammered dulcimer, fiddle) Sean McComiskey (accordion) and Mary Staunton (accordion, vocals) among others – and has sat in with such bands as the Brennans, Last Night's Fun, Fieldstone and more.

Along with Irish music, Jamie has developed an affinity to Hawaiian music, especially slack key guitar. He performs the Celtic half annually with Hawaiian musicians on the Celtic Aloha tour. He has played with the legendary George Kahumoku Jr, Grammy winner Keoki Kahumoku and Daniel Ho among others.

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More about Fánaí on the web at :
<http://akirishtrad.net/Fanai.html>



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