



Seven Springs

UCD Traditional Music Practices

Dr. Peter Moran, Director

with Dónal Lunny & Paddy Glackin

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CD Booklet

Foreword

This CD celebrates the first flowering of a new initiative supported by the Creative Futures Academy and the UCD School of Music—the development of new modules in Traditional Music Practices. Expertly directed by Dr Peter Moran, these modules have been hugely successful in recruiting talented students from the School of Music and from other schools across the university.

A unique feature of these modules is that they have been co-taught by our distinguished Artist-in-Residence, Dónal Lunny, widely recognised as one of the most influential Irish musicians of his generation. His track record as the major driving force behind many key innovations in the evolution of Irish traditional music is indisputable. As well as being inspired by the richness of the Irish tradition, Dónal has always looked to the future possibilities of our music. In the tracks to follow, you will hear how he brings his prowess as a musician, composer, arranger and producer, and his relentless passion for new creative possibilities, into the classroom to inspire a new generation.

The music captured here is also, in many ways, an homage to the role UCD played in the Irish folk music revival of the 1960s and 70s. UCD alumni Paul Brady, Tríona Ní Dhomhaill and Paddy Glackin were to the forefront of that great moment of reconnection with our musical heritage. The vital work of UCD Folklorists in recording the disappearing richness of our musical traditions inspired a new generation. The new Belfield campus also provided venues and generated audiences for many memorable gigs and concerts, including a number of legendary performances by *Planxty*.

Recorded in the new Trapdoor theatre, this CD marks a new phase in UCD's engagement with Irish traditional music. It is another great demonstration of the wisdom that tradition is strengthened when it is renewed by the innovation and energy of coming generation.

Prof P.J. Mathews
Director, UCD Creative Futures Academy

Introduction

The Traditional Music Practices module was created as part of Dónal Lunny's Artistic Residency with UCD and the Creative Futures Academy in 2022-2023. The initial programme proved so successful it was renewed for a second, and then a third year. This album presents a varied selection of the students' work from across the module's first few years.

The students in this class explore a broad range of activities within the world of traditional music. This includes performing tunes from Ireland and from related traditions, such as for example, *Suleimanovo Oro* from Macedonia (Track 04), or the Balkan-inspired *Seven Springs* (Track 12).

The students also undertake individual projects, such as composing, arranging, and independent research. Every term culminates in a trad session in Dublin's Cobblestone Pub and a concert performance in UCD. And in 2024, the students had the added experience of working with a professional producer to record their debut album. In this way, the module offers students a broad view of the diversity of activities and creative outlets in the music world.

This multi-faceted approach has led to many fascinating and exciting outcomes. We have seen experienced trad players composing their own tunes for the very first time (many of which can be heard on this album). And as they perform their own tunes in a trad session, they can be heard weaving them together into sets with older Irish tunes, seamlessly integrating their new melodies into the Irish tradition.

It has been our great honour to work with such great musicians as Dónal Lunny and Paddy Glackin. These artists are living legends of traditional Irish music and true national treasures.

Dónal's approach to arranging traditional Irish music, as demonstrated here with *The Dusty Miller* and *Top It Off* (Track 02), has been the model for the students' own arrangements, as in *The Rights of Man* (Track 11). And presented here on this album for the very first time is a brand new composition of Dónal's, the title track, *Seven Springs* (Track 12), which was written in 2023 especially for our students.

Dónal's close friend and long-time collaborator Paddy Glackin has been a regular visitor to our classroom where he has inspired the students with his deep knowledge of the history and the culture of Irish traditional music, and with his love of the great performers of the past. This is represented here by the set of three reels (Track 03), which draws on the rich heritage of the Irish fiddle tradition, and the three slip jigs (Track 08), which includes a tune from the Goodman Collection of the 1860s, alongside one of Paddy's own compositions *The Half Century*.

It has been a joy to work alongside Dónal and Paddy on this project, and to give this opportunity to our UCD students. Huge thanks to the Creative Futures Academy and the UCD School of Music for supporting this project, and to Dónal and Paddy for generously sharing their time and their talent.

Dr. Peter Moran

Track Listing

01. Le Chéile sna Flaithis (Emer Ní Scolaí)
02. The Dusty Miller - Top It Off (arr. Dónal Lunny)
03. Elizabeth Kelly's - The Merry Sisters - The Silver Spear (Traditional)
04. Suleimanovo Oro (Traditional Macedonian)
05. The Sisters Waltz (Méin Níc Craith)
06. Muckross Head (Conor Mac Gamhna)
07. The Second Spring (Dáire Ó Maoildeirg)
08. Cosa Buidhe Árda Dearga - The Half Century - The Kid on the Mountain (Paddy Glackin & Traditional)
09. Tune for Aidan - The Padjo Parade - Damhsa Deirbhile (Alan Burke)
10. All Too Real (Rimmele Wood)
11. The Rights of Man (Traditional arr. Dónal Lunny and Lara van den Dolder)
12. Seven Springs (Dónal Lunny)

Liner Notes

01. Le Chéile sna Flaithis (Emer Ní Scolaí)

This tune, *Le Chéile sna Flaithis* is a two-part reel inspired by the themes of death and resurrection. The Irish-language title, meaning “together in paradise” encapsulates the motivation behind the piece. I wrote this in light of a Facebook post that was circulating around the time of my granduncle Paddy’s passing in the summer of 2023, as he was the final brother of my grandmother’s to pass away. The picture showed the four brothers, all of whom died unexpectedly, in their youth, to which the caption read ‘Today they are finally reunited in heaven’. This tune is dedicated to their memory and the hope that they are indeed all together in happiness again. (ENS)

02. The Dusty Miller - Top It Off (Traditional arr. Dónal Lunny)

It was in the first year of Dónal's residency in UCD when he taught the students this set. One day, without any planning or discussion, he stopped the class and spontaneously began singing a new harmony line to accompany *The Dusty Miller*. He played this newly-created line on the bouzouki and asked the fiddle players to pick it up by ear. Note by note, they memorised the part until they could play it in time with the main melody. That done, he turned his attention to *Top It Off*. He created another new harmony line and asked the concertina players to memorise that part. Putting it all together, he added one last flourish on the flutes for the finale. It was fascinating for all of us to observe this whole process, and it became the very template by which other students would learn to create their own arrangements of traditional Irish melodies in the future. (PM)

03. Elizabeth Kelly's - The Merry Sisters - The Silver Spear (Traditional)

The first tune is an old concertina reel that comes from the playing of the great West Clare fiddler John Kelly. John learned this tune from his mother Elizabeth who was a formidable concertina player with a large repertoire of old tunes. The second tune was recorded by the Meath fiddler Frank O Higgins, but this version comes from the playing of Ted Furey. Finally, *The Silver Spear* is one of the most played tunes in the tradition and this setting is based on the playing of Sligo fiddler Lad O Beirne. (PG)

04. Suleimanovo Oro (Traditional Macedonian)

The music of the Balkan region has been a major influence on Dónal Lunny and his life-long friend and collaborator Andy Irvine. Irvine first recorded this Macedonian tune, known as “Dance of Suleiman”, on his 1992 album *East Wind*. Dónal and Andy were performing this tune in their live concerts as a duo around the time that Dónal taught it to our class. (PM)

05. The Sister Waltz (Méin Nic Craith)

This waltz started as a few chords my sister and I were playing together on guitar and concertina and the tune sort of just emerged from there. I think the happy, simplistic melody reflects for me those evenings at home playing music with family. (MNC)

06. Muckross Head (Conor Mac Gamhna)

This was the first tune I composed, back in 2023. I'm a fan of adding variations and accidental notes in the melody of tunes. This led to some slight changes throughout the tune, such as the climb from the low notes to the high notes on the final repeat. (CMG)

07. The Second Spring (Dáire Ó Maoildeirg)

I composed this tune on a breezy autumn day. When choosing a name for it, I remembered reading a quote by Albert Camus, "Autumn is a second spring, where every leaf is a flower", and so I decided the name *The Second Spring* would be fitting. The first part emerged from playing around with a few simple, repetitive phrases on the fiddle and combining them together. It is quite similar to many tunes and was likely inspired by my own listening and playing of trad. The second part features a descending series of arpeggios at the beginning, which takes inspiration from classical music. I found this melody came naturally after the first part, even though it is quite different. Many tunes are like that. (DOM)

08. Cosa Buidhe Árda Dearga - The Half Century - The Kid on the Mountain (Paddy Glackin & Traditional)

The first slip jig comes from the Goodman Collection No. 340 and is followed by a recent composition written as a tribute to a friend on reaching his fiftieth birthday. The final slip jig is associated with the playing of the great Sligo fiddle maestro Michael Coleman. (PG)

09. Tune for Aidan - The Padjo Parade - Damhsa Deirbhile (Alan Burke)

The first tune was written for my grandson Aidan. The following jig was composed to accompany my Springer Spaniel chasing around the house. The third tune, a slip jig, evolved whilst playing around on a bouzouki, and is named after my wife. (AB)

10. All Too Real (Rimmele Wood)

As an American student spending just a semester in Dublin, *All Too Real* was my best attempt at distilling some of the trad music I was hearing, in sessions and in class, and blending it with my own musical experience and tendencies. Plenty of what I was hearing sailed right over my head, but hopefully this cheekily named jig comes across as a blending of musical styles and not simply as a shoddy imitation. Either way, I quite enjoyed the process of writing it, and playing it with Alan's accompaniment was a true joy. (RW)

11. The Rights of Man (Traditional arr. Dónal Lunny and Lara van den Dolder)

In the model of *The Dusty Miller* and *Top It Off*, Dónal began this arrangement of *The Rights of Man* by adding a striking harmony line, which notably borrows some notes from outside the scale of the main melody. For her class project, Lara chose to complete this arrangement by adding a third harmony line and assigning the instrumental parts. (PM)

12. Seven Springs (Dónal Lunny)

When Dónal and I first considered introducing Balkan music to the Traditional Music Practices class, he decided he would like to begin by composing an original melody in the style. He would later teach us the 11-beat Macedonian tune *Suleimanovo Oro*, but first he created this new composition especially for us, in seven beats and named after an area in his native Newbridge, Co. Kildare. It became the title track of our debut album and we are greatly honoured to present it here for the very first time. (PM)

Credits

Recorded in the Trapdoor Theatre, University College Dublin.

All recording, mixing and mastering by Adrian Hart (Nov 2024 – Feb 2025)
Except Tracks 04, 09, 10 and 11: Recorded by Dunk Murphy (May 2024)

Produced by Adrian Hart & Peter Moran (Nov 2024 – Feb 2025)

Photography and Album Design by Dunk Murphy

Performed by Dónal Lunny, Paddy Glackin, Peter Moran, and the UCD Traditional Music Practices students: Aidan Quigney, Alan Burke, Alexandra Wynne, Aoife Vaughan, Caitlin Mathews Markey, Caomhan Mannion, Conchur Mac Carthaigh, Conor Mac Gamhna, Dáire Ó Maoildeirg, Darragh Geraghty, Emer Ní Scolaí, Emily Bardon, Eoin O Connor, Isobel Ramsay, Jack Costelloe, James Hayden, Kate Lawlor, Lara van den Dolder, Méin Nic Craith, Muinay Gleeson, Naoise Smith O Carroll, Paige Gullifer, Rimmele Wood, Rory Kavanagh, Samuel Hoffheinz, Tegan Sutherland, Thomas Woulfe.

Liner Notes by Emer Ní Scolaí, Peter Moran, Paddy Glackin, Conor Mac Gamhna, Alan Burke, Dáire Ó Maoildeirg, Rimmele Wood.

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