

A Performance of Irish Music and Dance supported by Culture Ireland

Havana Cuba –Teatro Martí, 17 February 2017

BRENDAN BEGLEY

Born into a famous musical family, the youngest of nine children, Brendan soaked up the music and song of West Kerry from an early age. He has four acclaimed solo albums to his name, as well as numerous recordings with the groups Boys of the Lough and Beginish. With the Boys of the Lough, he has toured extensively throughout the United States, and has been featured repeatedly on the Garrison Keillor Show. He has recorded with many of the most prestigious Irish musicians including The Chieftains, Stockton's Wing, Na Casadaigh, and Shaun Davey. With fiddler Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh, he released *A Moment of Madness* in 2010, which made the Irish Times' Top 10 Trad CDs of the year and garnered impressive critical acclaim at home and abroad.

CORMAC BEGLEY

Cormac Begley is a bass, baritone, treble and piccolo concertina player from a West-Kerry musical family. He plays in a number of projects including: duets including Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh (hardanger d'amore) and Liam Ó Maonlaí (singer and multi-instrumentalist); a trio entitled Concertina (Noel Hill and Jack Talty); and with the band Ré (featuring Liam Ó Maonlaí, Maitiu Ó Casaide, Eithne Ní Chatháin and Peter O'Toole). He is the founder of Airt and the award winning Tunes in the Church live concert series in Galway and Dublin. In 2014, he received the Seán Ó Riada Award for concertina playing and his playing has been described as 'a masterclass in timeless musicianship' by the Irish Times (*****). He has recently recorded his debut album due for release in April 2017.

GAY MCKEON & NA PIOBAIRÍ UILLEANN

Gay comes from a Dublin family noted for their involvement in Irish music – his father Tom was one of the activists who kept the Dublin Pipers' Club running in the mid-years of the last century. As a musician Gay has recorded and toured extensively including a solo album *Irish Piping Tradition*, and a trio CD with his two sons Conor and Seán entitled *The Dusty Miller*. Gay served on the Board of Na Píobairí Uilleann from 1987 to 2006, during that time he served in various roles including five years as Treasurer and then as Chairman from 2002 until 2006 when he was appointed CEO of the organisation.

Na Píobairí Uilleann has a long association with Cuba, creating opportunities for piping to be taught in the territory and providing exchanges with Cuban pipers travelling to Ireland for performance. For this evening's performance, the Irish musicians are joined by Cuban performers Alexander Suarez Mendez and Rosalia Acosta Corrales on uilleann pipes and singer Yadira Hernandez Barrera.

AOIFE NÍ BHRIAIN

Aoife began studying the violin at an early age with teacher Maria Kelemen. She has since studied with Maeve Broderick in Dublin and Constantin Serban in France where she was awarded the Prix D'Or for exceptional students. She has performed as soloist with many orchestras and ensembles and is also the leader of the newly formed Irish Memory Orchestra. Aoife has won competitions for both classical and traditional Irish music including seven All Ireland Titles at the Fleadh Cheoil, Bonn Oir Sheáin Uí Riada 2010, various prizes at the ESB Feis Ceoil, Camerata Ireland Young Musician of the Year Award and a TG4 Gradam Ceoil 2014, the most prestigious honour for Irish musicians for her input on the CD Tunes from the Goodman Manuscripts that she recorded with her father Mick O' Brien and flautist Emer Mayock. In recent years Aoife has worked with many new composers in Ireland and as a result has performed World Premieres in Ireland and abroad as well as performing alongside musicians such as Martin Hayes & Dennis Cahill and Finghin Collins.

LIAM Ó MAONLAÍ

Liam Ó Maonlaí started singing under his father's tutelage as he was learning to speak. With song came the indigenous language of his ancestors. The traditional roots of his native land have been and continue to be the foundation of all of his work to this day. He co-created *Rian* with Michael Keegan Dolan, playing festivals in Paris, Hong Kong, Singapore, Lyon, Dublin, Cork, New York and London. He continues to work with The Hothouse Flowers and in 2010 he paid his first visit to Havana – 'our roots are what connect us across the world'.

SEOSAMH Ó NEACHTAIN

Performer Seosamh Ó Neachtain is a proponent of the Gaeltacht tradition of *sean-nós* dancing, introducing the athleticism and sophistication of a dynamic but neglected art form to national and international audiences. He has performed on concert stages throughout the world with some of the finest exponents of traditional music, including Altan, Dé Danann, Máirtín O Connor and Róisín Elsafty. In 2000, Seosamh was awarded a bursary from the Arts Council of Ireland to study aspects of tap dance in New York City. His contribution to the TG4 series *Ceolchuairt* explored the influence of Irish dance on American tap dancing and has just won the entertainment category in the Celtic Film Festival 2009. Seosamh has also performed at festivals such as Tonder Festival, Denmark, Celtic Connections, Glasgow and the International Dance Festival of Ireland.