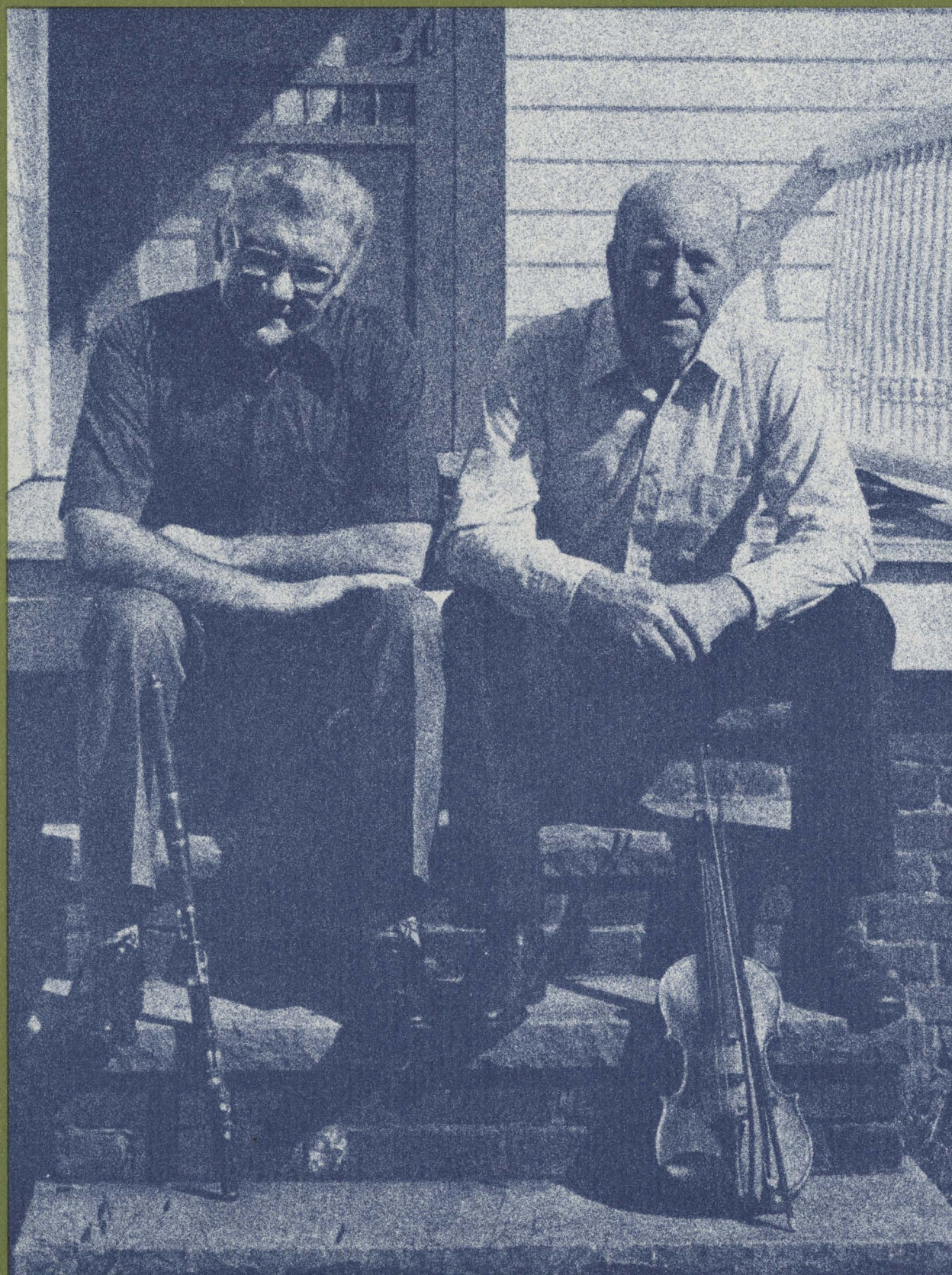


PRODUCED AND ANNOTATED BY RICHARD CARLIN

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FS 3517

# Irish Music from Cleveland with Tom Byrne & Tom McGaffrey



FOLKWAYS RECORDS FS 3517

Archival Property  
Smithsonian Institution  
Office of the Assistant Secretary  
for Public Service

**SIDE ONE**

1. Donegal/The Silver Spear (Reels)
2. Jackie Coleman's (Reel)
3. The Frost is All Over (Double jig)
4. The Galway Rambler (Reel) — Tom Byrne, flute solo
5. Riley the Moonshiner (Song) — Tom McCaffrey, vocal
6. New Rigged Ship/Off She Goes (Single Jig) — with Grey Larsen (flute) and Evan Stein (mandolin)
7. A Fig for a Kiss (Slip Jig)
8. Swallow's Tail (Reel)

**SIDE TWO**

1. Haste to the Wedding (Double jig)
2. My Father Told Me (Recitation) — Tom McCaffrey, vocal
3. The Foxhunter (Slip jig)
4. Rags and Tatters (Reel) — Tom Byrne (flute) and Evan Stein (mandolin)
5. Boys of Bluehill/The Plains of Boyle (Hornpipes)
6. The Farewell (Reel) — Tom Byrne (flute solo)
7. Leg of a Duck (Jig)
8. Phil the Fluter's Ball (Highland Fling)/Chicken Reel Tom McCaffrey (fiddle solo)
9. Bird in a Tree/Cooley's (Reels) — with Grey Larsen (flute), Evan Stein (mandolin) and Richard Carlin (concertina)

**Recording Information:**

Side One, Nos. 1, 2, 7 and Side Two Nos. 4, 8, 9 recorded by Mike Comer, Cleveland. Session organized by Gus Boland. Recorded April 25, 1977.

Side One, Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and Side Two Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 recorded by Richard Carlin, assisted by Pam Hardman. Recorded live at Oberlin College on April 29, 1977.

**WARNING:** UNAUTHORIZED REPRODUCTION OF THIS RECORDING IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW AND SUBJECT TO CRIMINAL PROSECUTION.

©1977 FOLKWAYS RECORDS AND SERVICE CORP.  
43 W. 61st ST., N.Y.C., U.S.A.

# Irish Music from Cleveland with Tom Byrne & Tom McCaffrey

PRODUCED AND ANNOTATED BY  
RICHARD CARLIN

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

COVER PHOTO BY PAM HARDMAN

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FS 3517

# IRISH MUSIC from CLEVELAND

with Tom Byrne and Tom McCaffrey

Produced and Annotated by Richard Carlin

## A Brief Introduction to Irish Music

Irish dance music has gained great popularity over the last few years, thanks to the reissue of older recordings (Irish Dance Music (Folkways FW 8821) is a good collection; Shanachie records of the Bronx has also issued both contemporary recordings and reissues of old 78s) and the work of young revivalists. This music has been gaining popularity in Ireland and the U.S. since the early nineteenth century, when earlier forms of music in Ireland began to die out and were replaced by the flourishing dance tune tradition. Ireland was, up until very recently, a country strictly divided by a wealthy landed aristocracy and a poor landed gentry. The music of the aristocracy consisted of marches and slow airs, mostly performed on the Irish harp. Harpers were often the sons of aristocrats, who were forced by blindness to become wandering musicians. The most famous harpers were O'Carolan (1670-1738) and Denis O'Hampsy or Hempson (1695-1807) who lived to be 112 years old. Of the two, O'Carolan was the most revolutionary. He composed many tunes in a style that soon gained wide popularity, although it was quite different than the earlier harp style. Irish harp music had its last great flowering at a festival held in Belfast in 1792. More can be read about the harpers in Charlotte Fox's Annals of the Irish Harpers.

Although many collections were made through the nineteenth century of traditional harp airs, dance music was neglected by scholars until Francis O'Neill made his great collection in the early years of this century. It is difficult then to date the beginnings of the growth of Irish dance music. Irish dance tunes are found in John Playford's Compleat Dancing Master (1652-1728) and Irish dance music undoubtedly dates back to the early 1600's. However, it seems clear that as the fiddle, wooden flute and Uilleann pipes became popular, they absorbed much of the harper's repertory. By the mid-nineteenth century, few harpers were alive and the aristocratic system that had supported the harp music was in decay. Several new forms of tunes gained popularity, including jigs (in 6/8), hop or slip jigs (in 9/8), and hornpipes and reels (in 4/4). Reels have come to be by far the most popular with traditional musicians, as well as other forms, such as polkas, schottisches, marches and more recently slides (in 12/8).

Francis O'Neill was the first to seriously study and collect Irish dance music. He was superintendent of the Chicago police force at the turn of the century and a great champion of traditional music. He discovered in Chicago an excellent group of musicians who became his close friends and collaborators on many collections of Irish dance music. Among these musicians were Patrick J. Tuohy, a master of the Irish or Uilleann pipes, Tom Ennis, Edward Cronin, James Early, and many others. O'Neill himself was a talented flutist. His collections feature music from many regions of Ireland. The

Dance Music of Ireland, featuring 1850 tunes (well over 1,000 dance tunes) remains to this day "The Bible" of Irish dance music for scholar and musician alike. Only Brendan Brethnach's recent Ceol Rince na hEireann (1963, 1976) comes close in scope to O'Neill's works, published in 1903 and 1907 (O'Neill's second volume, 1001 Gems, contains only dance music).

Irish music has gone through many changes since the time of O'Neill. The recording industry has enlarged the repertory of most Irish musicians. Cheap records of good Irish music have been widely available in both this country and Ireland since the early years of the recording industry. Michael Coleman, a fiddler from County Sligo, was one of the most influential of all traditional musicians who recorded 78 rpm records in the twenties and thirties. His "Sligo Style" of fiddling has been emulated by all. His choice of tunes for medleys is still preserved by many traditional players. (Coleman recorded a pair of reels on a seventy-eight record which he called "Crowley's Reels." Tom McCaffrey says, "You can't play Crowley's number 1 without Crowley's number two." Reels that Coleman recorded have often gained names like "Crowley's number one" or "number two" because individual names weren't given for each reel on the record labels.) The effect of easily available recordings of traditional music was great: musicians whose repertory's were often limited to a particular group of locally popular tunes (played in a local style) now began to play tunes from all over Ireland. Local styles gave way to a more general style. Records of comedy sketches and songs were also influential on the traditional musician's repertory. Radio and television have in turn had their effect on musicians who are happy to learn new tunes, whatever their sources.

Tom McCaffrey and Tom Byrne play together both for their own enjoyment and at community functions, particularly dances. They have been influenced by the music from their home counties of Leitrim and Sligo, respectively. They are also voracious fans of Irish music, and have heard and emulated the playing of Roger Sherlock and Sean McGuire, Seamus Tansey, Paddy Carty, and many others. However, they have a style uniquely their own, a little rougher and more earthy than these professional performers.

## Irish Music in the U. S.

Irish fiddle music has had a great impact on the music of the Southern Appalachians. Frank George commented to a friend of mine that the old-time musicians in the South listened to seventy-eighths of the great Irish fiddlers, as well as recordings of Southern music. Irish and Scottish settlers in the South influenced both fiddle repertory and technique. The Irish helped to open up the West and were among the first settlers in several important cities, including Cleveland.

Both Cleveland and Cincinnati had very large Irish populations in the nineteenth century. The Irish were second in population only to the Germans in Cleveland. (Eastern Europeans, immigrating in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to Cleveland, now far outnumber the Irish). The Irish have successfully maintained their cultural traditions, in spite of the pressures to conform in American social life. Irish dancing schools are run in Cleveland, and many of the younger members of the Irish families are taught to play flute or fiddle. Cultural traditions, particularly music, are part of their lives, and are greatly cherished even by those who are spectators rather than participants in this tradition.

#### A Note on the Music on this Record

Irish flute and fiddle duets have been popular since long before the days of recordings. The Irish prefer the older unkeyed six-holed wooden flute to the modern concert flute. Tom Byrne's flute is a six-hole flute with keys but he does not use the keys. The fingering of the wooden flute is identical to the fingering of the penny whistle, which is very convenient for the flute player. Fiddle and lute date back at least to the early nineteenth century in Irish folk music. Although often ornamentation is different on these two instruments, when they are played together they are played in unison. The excitement of these duets consists in the total sympathy between the two musicians and the slight variations that each is able to perform without destroying the unity between the two instruments.

#### Biographical Notes

Tom Byrne was born in Gevagh, Co. Sligo Ireland. He bought a tin whistle when he was seven at a local fair for three pennies. Soon after he had learned some of the popular marches, jigs and reels from Sligo. Tom particularly remembers playing the "Swallow's Tail" reel and "Miss McCleod's" reel. Soon after buying the whistle, Tom was given an Irish wooden flute by an older player. He patched it up and started playing flute and has been playing ever since, mostly at dances and parties and also at home for his own amusement. Tom emigrated to Canada in 1948 and then came to Cleveland where he has lived ever since. He is the father of eleven children.

Tom's flute playing is marked by a wealth of ornamentation, particularly rolls (a cluster of notes played in a rapid fashion to ornament a key note in the musical phrase). He also uses his breath to accent notes and give variety to the tunes. On this record he masterfully performs two traditional reels "The Galway Rambler" and "The Farewell." These solos illustrate his imaginative style of playing.

Tom McCaffrey comes from Mohill in Co. Leitrim, a neighboring county to Sligo in Ireland. His father, also named Tom, was a master fiddler and, as Tom says, "the pet of the family." Tom recalls that his father would often be absent from home for upwards of a week to play at weddings and local functions. Tom's father taught fiddle by the "alphabetic method;" students didn't read music but rather learned tunes by ear. Tom's father was a hard task master and it was from him that Tom learned to fiddle at about the age of eleven or twelve. Tom says it took him many years

to master the fiddle. After he learned to play, he was always in demand to play at weddings and other functions. Tom is a warm and friendly man, who is not only an excellent fiddler but a talented singer, and joke teller, as can be heard on this record. His warm personality comes through on every tune that he plays, and his solo "Phil the Fluter's Ball" is really a great show-piece. Tom's fiddling is characterized by short bow strokes; while watching him play, I've been amazed to see how little effort he puts into each movement. His playing bears repeated listening, as it is ornamented like much of the traditional fiddling from the Sligo/Leitrim area of Ireland.

Tom and Tom didn't know each other in Ireland but first met each other in Cleveland in 1956 or 1957. They've been playing together ever since, and they've developed great sympathy for each other's music. Their fiddle-flute duets are characteristic of the beauty and vitality of Irish music as it exists both in Ireland and the U.S. today.

On this record you will also hear on three selections a group of young musicians who have befriended Tom and Tom and share with them their love for Irish music. Grey Larsen is a talented flute player, and plays on this record a wooden flute given to him by Tom Byrne. He can be heard with Malcolm Dalglish on an excellent record of Irish Music, Banish Misfortune on the June Appal label (JA 16). Evan Stein is a talented mandolin player, and along with Richard Carlin, can be heard on the Folkways album In Come a Bumblebee (FW 8846).

#### The Tunes

No single LP record could reflect the rich repertory of Tom Byrne and Tom McCaffrey. I have tried to give a good cross-section of their music, representing both well-known and unusual tunes and songs. Hopefully a second album can be produced in the future with another selection of their music.

#### Side One

- 1) Donegal/The Silver Spear (reels) — Tom Byrne (flute), Tom McCaffrey (fiddle)

These are two very popular reels from Ireland. Tom McCaffrey sometimes jokingly calls the second "The Silver Spoon."

Reference: "Silver Spear" Breathnach: no. 141.

- 2) Jackie Coleman's (Reel) — Tom Byrne (flute), Tom McCaffrey (fiddle)

Another popular Irish reel that was recorded by Michael Coleman, the legendary Sligo fiddler. His rendition of it has been reissued on Shanachie 33002. Sean McGuire and Roger Sherlock perform it on their "Irish Traditional Fiddling" album, Outlet SOLP 1002. This tune is also known as "Lucy Campbell."

- 3) The Frost is All Over — Byrne (flute), McCaffrey (fiddle)

This is a popular jig, found in O'Neill's collection, 1001 Gems (No. 313). It's a fairly common tune.

Reference: O'Neill/b: No. 313.

4) The Galway Rambler — Tom Byrne (flute)

This reel is known under a variety of titles, including "The Fairy Hurlers," "Walsh's Favorite," and "Tiarna Wellington." Tom gives a real virtuosic performance of it here, alternating legato and staccatto passages.  
Reference: Breathnach: No. 199.

5) Riley the Moonshiner — Tom McCaffrey (vocal)

This song is probably of fairly recent date, perhaps originating in the Music Halls. The Irish were favorite characters on the Halls, although they were often cruelly caricatured in song and sketches. Many of the songs entered into the repertory of traditional singers. This is one of them, and a great favorite of Tom McCaffrey. Moonshining is not limited to the Southern Appalachians, but is a favorite activity in any rural area.

6) New Rigged Ship/Off She Goes (Single jigs) —

Tom McCaffrey (fiddle) joined on "Off She Goes" by Tom Byrne (flute), Grey Larsen (flute) and Evan Stein (mandolin).

These are two single jigs, the first fairly uncommon while the second has gained popularity in North England and elsewhere. Tom McCaffrey recalls that his father played "The New Rigged Ship," although he's not sure if that's the title that his father had for it. The Scotch jig "Teviot Bridge" is nearly identical to it. Tom says that it's often played as the second jig in a medley of tunes for dancing. This medley would feature two jigs followed by an Irish polka. "Off She Goes" is almost universally known.

Reference: "Off She Goes": O'Neill/b: No. 385.

"Teviot Bridge" played by Alf Edwards,  
Prestige-International Records 13060.

7) A Fig For a Kiss (Slip jig) — Byrne (flute), McCaffrey (fiddle)

One of the less well-known of the slip jigs. Note the roll that Tom Byrne plays on the first note of the A part. This is a characteristic flute ornament. Tom Byrne is tapping his foot on this one.

References: O'Neill/a: No. 1174, O'Neill/b: No. 443,  
KRASSEN: p. 88.

8) Swallow's Tail (Reel) — Byrne (flute), McCaffrey (fiddle)

Tom Byrne says that this is one of the first tunes that he learned on the tin whistle. It is a well-known reel and has been recorded by Michael Coleman, reissued on Shanachie 33002.

References: O'Neill/a: No. 1268, O'Neill/b: No. 536,  
KRASSEN: p. 108.

Side Two

1) Haste to the Wedding — Byrne (flute), McCaffrey (fiddle)

A favorite jig, known in England, Ireland and America. Tom and Tom often play this one for dances.

References: O'Neill/a: No. 987, O'Neill/b: no. 203.

2) My Father Said (Rhyme) — Tom McCaffrey (vocal)

Tom McCaffrey knows many limericks, rhymes, recitations and jokes. This is just one of them, probably originally in the Music Hall repertory.

3) The Foxhunter (Slip jig) — Byrne (flute), McCaffrey (fiddle)

Another very popular piece, known in North England and Ireland, usually called "The Foxhunter's Jig."

Reference: O'Neill/b: no. 422.

4) Rags and Tatters — Tom Byrne (flute), Evan Stein (mandolin)

"Rags and Tatters" is Evan's name for this piece. Tom Byrne recognized it when Evan played it, although he didn't have a title for it. Tom does not exactly follow Evan's melody line. This piece has been recorded by Dave Swarbrick, on his Rags, Reels and Airs record (Polydor UK).

5) Boys of Bluehill/The Plains of Boyle (hornpipes) — Byrne (flute), McCaffrey (fiddle)

These two hornpipes are played at real hornpipe tempo for dancing, which is quite slow compared to the rate hornpipes are played when musicians are playing simply for their own amusement. The first was introduced to Chief O'Neill of the Chicago police around the turn of the century. At the time it was barely known, although today it is one of the most popular of all Irish hornpipes. Tom and Tom play it in a way reminiscent of Strathespy rhythm (Strathespeys are Scottish dances that are easily distinguished by their clipped rhythm. "The Plains of Boyle" is a less known hornpipe which deserves to be more popular. Tom Byrne says some other titles that he's heard for it are "Crossing the Shannon" and "The Hills of Cloher."

Reference: "Boys of Bluehill": O'Neill/a: No. 1700,  
O'Neill/b: no. 898, O'Neill/c: p. 41,  
KRASSEN: p. 197.

6) The Farewell (Reel) — Tom Byrne (flute).

Tom Byrne got this reel from an old flute player named Pat Waters. When an Irishman decided to emigrate to America a large party was held in his honor, just before the horse and cart came to take him to the train station. Tom says that "The Farewell" was always the last piece played at one of these parties, and that's where he learned it.

7) Leg of a Duck (Jig) — Byrne (flute), McCaffrey (fiddle)

A popular jig with somewhat suggestive words. Tom McCaffrey sings one verse:

I gave it to Molly because she was jolly,  
The leg of the duck, the leg of the duck.

He also sings some others.

8) Phil the Fluter's Ball (Highland Fling)/Chicken Reel — Tom McCaffrey (fiddle).

"Phil the Fluter's Ball" is the tune for a popular Music Hall song. Tom Byrne recalled the first verse:

Have you heard of Phil the fluter from the tune of  
Ballinamore,  
Things were going hard on him of course the man was  
broke,  
So he sent an invitation to his neighbor's one and all  
To how they'd like the gaiety at Phil the fluter's ball.

Tom McCaffrey recalled the chorus:

With the toot of the flute and the twiddle of the fiddle-o,  
Hopping in the middle like a herring on the griddle-o  
Up down, hands around, across and to the wall  
O hadn't we the gaiety at Phil the fluter's ball.

Tom McCaffrey plays it as a highland fling, a dance from Scotland that gained popularity in Ireland. The second tune is "Chicken Reel," a well-known show-piece for bluegrass fiddlers. Tom says he learned it off an old seventy-eight in the early forties and that it was known as "The Back of the Haggard." He originally played it as a highland fling but later heard fiddlers in the U.S. playing it in what he calls "hillbilly" style. He plays it here in a cross between Irish and Appalachian styles.

- 9) Bird in a Tree/Cooley's (Reels) — Tom Byrne (flute, clogging) joined on Cooley's reel by Tom McCaffrey (fiddle), Grey Larsen (flute), Evan Stein (mandolin) and Richard Carlin (English concertina).

These two popular reels are both associated with Michael Coleman. Tom Byrne kicks it off, with some spirited playing and clogging. He clogs while sitting down and playing the flute, wearing regular hard shoes, tapping the beat with one foot while tapping twice as fast with the other. "Cooley's" is one of our favorites that we often play together when we get to Cleveland to visit Tom and Tom. It is a fitting ending for this album.

Reference: Breathnach: No. 87 ("Bird on a Tree") and No. 200 ("Ril na Tulai" or "Cooley's Reel").

#### Reference Key

- Breathnach — Breathnach, Breandan, Ceol Rince na hEireann, Dublin: Govnt. Printing Office, 1963.
- Krassen — Krassen, Miles ed., O'Neill's Music of Ireland, N.Y.: Oak Publications, 1976, revised edition.
- O'Neill/a — O'Neill, F. J., Music of Ireland, Chicago: F. J. O'Neill, 1903 (Reprint: Bronx, N.Y.: D. M. Collins, no date).
- O'Neill/b — O'Neill, F. J., The Dance Music of Ireland — 1001 Gems, Chicago: F. J. O'Neill, 1907 (Reprint: Dublin: Walton Musical Galleries, 1965).
- O'Neill/c — O'Neill, F. J., Irish Folk Music — A Fascinating Hobby, Chicago: F. J. O'Neill, 1910 (Reprint: Darby, Pa.: Norwood Editions, 1973).

Annotated and edited by Richard Carlin

Tom Byrne — Irish flute

Tom McCaffrey — fiddle

#### Side One

- 1) Donegal/The Silver Spear (Reels)
- 2) Jackie Coleman's (Reel)
- 3) The Frost is All Over (Double jig)
- 4) The Galway Rambler (Reel) — Tom Byrne, flue solo
- 5) Riley the Moonshiner (Song) — Tom McCaffrey, vocal
- 6) New Rigged Ship/Off She Goes (Single Jig) — with Grey Larsen (flute) and Evan Stein (mandolin)
- 7) A Fig for a Kiss (Slip Jig)
- 8) Swallow's Tail (Reel)

#### Side Two

- 1) Haste to the Wedding (Double jig)
- 2) My Father Told Me (Recitation) — Tom McCaffrey, vocal
- 3) The Foxhunter (Slip jig)
- 4) Rags and Tatters (Reel) — Tom Byrne (flute) and Evan Stein (mandolin)
- 5) Boys of Bluehill/The Plains of Boyle (Hornpipes)
- 6) The Farewell (Reel) — Tom Byrne (flute solo)
- 7) Leg of a Duck (Jig)
- 8) Phil the Fluter's Ball (Highland Fling)/Chicken Reel Tom McCaffrey (fiddle solo)
- 9) Bird in a Tree/Cooley's (Reels) — with Grey Larsen (flute), Evan Stein (mandolin) and Richard Carlin (concertina)

#### Acknowledgements

##### Recording Information:

Side One, Nos. 1, 2, 7 and Side Two Nos. 4, 8, 9 recorded by Mike Comer, Cleveland. Session organized by Gus Boland. Recorded April 25, 1977.

Side One, Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and Side Two Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 recorded by Richard Carlin, assisted by Pam Hardman. Recorded live at Oberlin College on April 29, 1977.

Edited and Annotated by Richard Carlin. Thanks to Grey Larsen, Evan Stein and Rod Knight.

Final Mix and Dub by Geoff Thomas and Richard Carlin at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

Produced in conjunction with the Oberlin Folk Music Club.

All tracks feature Tom Byrne (flute) and Tom McCaffrey (fiddle), unless otherwise indicated.

Cleveland is a city rich in Irish music. Thanks are extended to Alan O'Leary (who first directed us to Tom and Tom), Gus Boland (for his hospitality and for organizing the first session) and to Tom Scott (a fine old fiddler, who first introduced Tom Byrne to Tom McCaffrey).