



Smithsonian Folkways

Irish Pirate Ballads

and Other
SONGS
OF
THE SEA



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OF
THE SEA

SUNG BY DAN MILNER WITH GUEST ARTISTS: MICK MOLONEY,
JOANIE MADDEN, JOHN DOYLE, TIM COLLINS, GABRIEL DONOHUE,
SUSAN MCKEOWN, ROBBIE O'CONNELL, BRIAN CONWAY,
THE JOHNSON GIRLS, AND BOB CONROY



Smithsonian Folkways

SFW CD 40553

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Cover: "Pirates' ruse luring a merchantman in the olden days," Amlico Publishing Co., Feb. 1, 1896

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|----|--|-------------|
| 1 | TEN THOUSAND MILES AWAY
(words: adapted Dan Milner) | 3:36 |
| 2 | THE BALLAD OF Ó BRUADAIR /
OUT ON THE OCEAN
(F.R. Higgins - Arthur Duff) | 3:53 |
| 3 | SAUCY WARD | 4:12 |
| 4 | CAPTAIN COULSTON | 5:36 |
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(Edward Harrigan)
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(<i>THE CITY OF BALTIMORE</i>) | 4:39 |
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(tune: Gina Dunlap) | 5:34 |



Introduction

MICK MOLONEY

I've known Dan Milner for thirty years. A most prolific fellow, he always seems to be working on an interesting new project and occasionally a new career! The man never stands still. He's organized hundreds of concerts, written who knows how many reviews and articles, and published a great collection of traditional songs. Mostly, I know Dan as a fellow singer and lover of songs and the stories behind them. He has a prodigious, highly eclectic repertoire gathered from all manner of written and recorded sources and, of course, from other singers.

By any standards, Dan is an outstanding singer. He has what Frank Harte would describe as a "good hard voice," and he's got really good pitch. But that's only part of it. Excellent phrasing is always what makes fine singers stand out, and phrasing is Dan's forte. He really gets inside a song and brings it alive. "The *Flying Cloud*" is a particularly good example on this recording. When he sang the ballad during a visit to one of my music classes at New York University, it was a huge hit among the students. They had never heard anything like it before. He followed it

< Mick Moloney and Dan Milner (photo by Dan Milner)



with an arcane version of “Johnny Doyle,” one of the great epic ballads in the Anglo Celtic song tradition. The students knew virtually nothing about unaccompanied traditional singing, yet they sat spellbound at the power of these magnificent old narrative songs with their tantalizing traces of ancient mystery. Most of all, they were captivated by the passion Dan brings to his singing. They could sense instantly that he loves the songs deeply and has devoted a lifetime to his art.

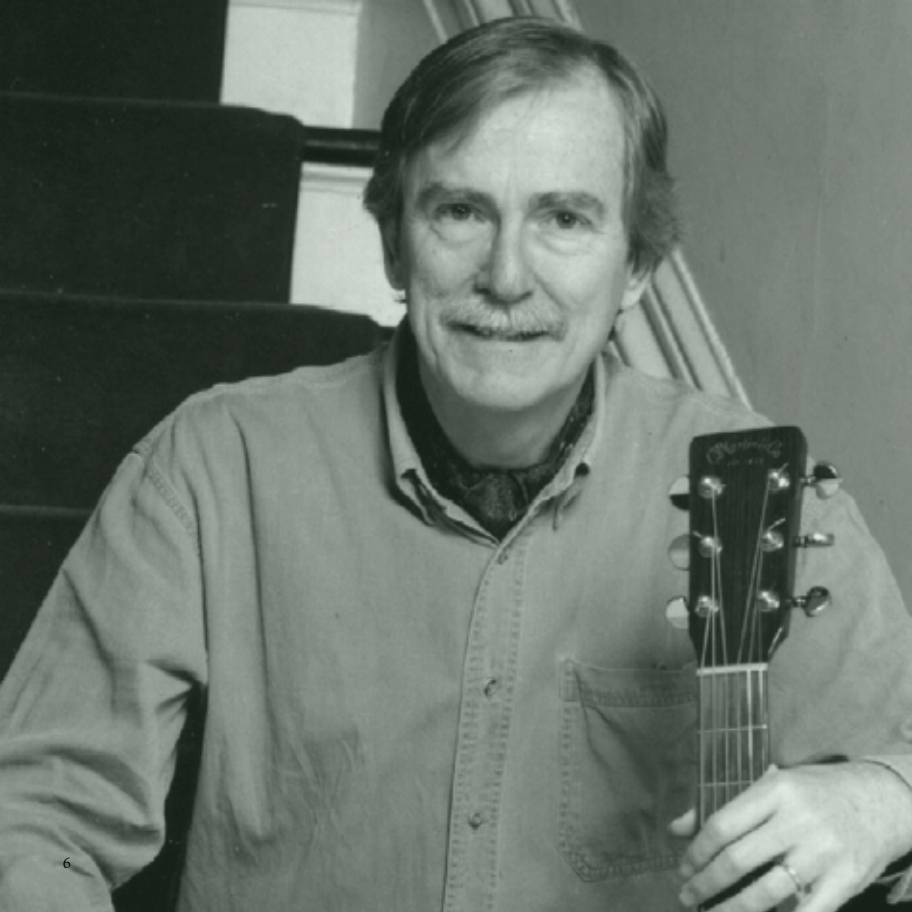
<Dan Milner in Dingle Town, circa 1971 (photographer unknown)

It’s not easy being a traditional Irish singer in an urban setting like New York City. Apart from the odd concert with a “sit-down,” attentive audience, there are few venues to perform other than bars. Traditional Irish musicians don’t mind too much if they are playing at an informal session in a noisy pub as long as the music is enjoyable and there are a few people in the bar interested in the tunes, but it’s an entirely different matter for singers who would like their songs to be heard and appreciated. As solo artists, they often have to fight their ground and literally demand to be heard. It’s a tough number, but Dan always seems to be able to pull it off.

He is the best of company. A widely traveled man who has kept his eyes wide open along life’s journey, Dan is always full of yarns. He has a particular fascination with songs of the sea. I played and sang with him on a recording of Irish maritime songs issued in 1997. It was a great experience, and I was delighted last year when he asked me to join him on this latest collection. It’s impossible not to be drawn in by the imagery of these songs and the absorbing stories they tell of memorable rakes, adventurers, and scoundrels.

There are few outings more enjoyable than a stroll with Dan along the Hudson on the Lower West Side, looking at the parade of ships passing up and down the river, each with its own story. It seems light-years removed from the babel of Midtown Manhattan, and it’s not hard to imagine oneself transported back to the days of the square-riggers with their billowing sails and the bustling world of the colorful port towns where the wonderful songs he presents on this recording were sung and enjoyed.

New York City / September 2008



✦ I grew up in a singing family, ✦

DAN MILNER

at first in Birmingham and Ballybunion, then in Toronto and Brooklyn. My mother was from Brosna, County Kerry, in the Sliabh Luchara, close to the place where Counties Cork, Kerry, and Limerick meet. Her townland was Laughalla, a few houses built around a crossroad so far into the countryside that every star in the firmament is visible once the daylight turns to darkness. I stood waxing poetic on the Milky Way late one cold November night in the early 1970s outside the house in which she was born, when she gave me a hard shot to the left shin. “I looked at that sky half my life. Open up the car door and let’s get out of here!”

In actuality, it wasn’t quite that way. Mother had left Ireland at 16. The year before, she had hid her concertina in a haystack, believing it to be beyond harm’s reach—specifically the grasp of her baby brother, Bill—but it had rained all night. Now, she packed up a small case and headed off to the English Midlands, where a priest from Brosna had a parish and a job for her in the rectory. That was 1930.

<Dan Milner (photo by Larry Barns)

Ten years later, she met my father. As I heard the story, he was walking through Sutton Park one Sunday afternoon when a stranger called out to him from a playing field. A group of Irish immigrants was about to start a game of football. One side was a player short. Would he mind joining in? Dad must have tackled her on the field that day. They got married not long afterwards. My brother, Liam, was born early in World War II when things looked pretty grim. I came on the scene just as the Fuhrer was about to head down into the bunker for the last time.

By war's end, Mother had had enough of England, and Dad was ready to leave too. I asked him why we emigrated. "Son, I was a boy soldier in the First War. Then came the Depression. They bombed the factory where your mother worked during the Second War, and after it was over they kept up the rationing. We just had to get out of the place!"

A year before we set sail for Canada, we tried to settle in Ireland. Dad wanted to buy the house we rented on Sandhill Road just across from the famous Old Course golf links in Ballybunion. But something went wrong or, at least, did not go right. Perhaps he was five or fifty pounds short and the deal was broken because of it.

All that remains of that misadventure are a few tiny pictures of our family with Liam and me on the strand at Ballybunion in our wool suits with short trousers, ties tightly set in place, wearing sturdy leather shoes and standing in wet sand, peering at the camera. They were only two inches square, printed from long-lost negatives in plain tones of black and white and gray. But they etched memories and carved questions in our minds for years to come. We often wondered what life would have been like had we stayed on there.

I saw that beach again 30 years later, spread golden-sugar brown beneath cliffs of sand tufted here and there with big clumps of long green grass. Jellyfish lay flat and still upon the sand. Heavy, broken clouds hung above the Atlantic, and rods of light shone down brightly in certain places in blinding contrast to the darkness of the sky above and the sea below.

The golf course that was just beyond our sitting room window in 1948 is now one of the most famous in the world. Founded in 1893, its start was hardly propitious. The first Ballybunion Golf Club went bust in just five years. Some undoubtedly decided a course with only 12 holes was not worth a swing. Others found it unnecessarily tough. In 1897, The Irish Times reported it as "a rabbit warren below the village, where a golfer requires limitless patience and an inexhaustible supply of golf balls."

Golf and beach are not all there is to Ballybunion. An outgrowth of the town spreading down towards the Atlantic is the preserve not of duffers and dunkers but punters and lovers, a place where young and old alike tired of mucking and milking, baking bread and driving buses, breaking down old buildings and throwing up new ones escape to a little Coney Island, a mini Blackpool of bright lights and bumper cars, of beer and ice cream and anonymity, of cheeky words and maybe risky love. What would The Irish Times of 1897 have thought of that carry-on?

Dad loved the space and the air of Ireland. He was an inner-city kid from the sooty center of industrial England. His own father died of tuberculosis when he was three, and Dad was raised by his mother and maternal grandfather, a man named Patrick McKay from Ennis, County Clare. Dad picked up some of



Great-grandfather's songs, like "Skibbereen" and "The Wild Rover," and he learned traditional ballads like "Barbara Allen," as well as Fenian and Republican pieces like "McCaffery" and "Kevin Barry." Liam and I learned these in turn, plus Thomas Moore songs like "The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls" and "The Minstrel Boy," and Tin Pan Alley pieces like "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen" and "Galway Bay." Though they came from different places and time periods, I link them together as Irish national songs in the sense that, individual taste aside, Irish people would admit they all were part of the country's national heritage and consciousness.

Mom loved Ireland too, but she had gotten used to the anonymity she found in England, well away from the still countryside where everyone seemed to know what everyone else was thinking even before they spoke. Canada seemed a good compromise. We sailed to Halifax on one of the grand old ladies of the steamship era, the Cunard liner *Aquitania*, then boarded a train that rode on and on through what was surely the longest night of my life. My parents bought a house on Logan Avenue in Toronto and rented a couple of rooms to other immigrants they had met on the boat. We had a hooley one night, and I drained the swill from a case of beer bottles, got tipsy, and fell down the cellar stairs. Beyond that, I mostly remember Toronto as being both very cold and very hot. Someone later told me that it was in the Temperate Zone.

Mother had four brothers and two sisters in the United States. She visited them one spring, and soon after we sold the house and headed down to New York. The train station in Buffalo was my Ellis Island. Mom's brother, Jack Cremin, met us at Grand Central Terminal, and we took the elevated train over to Brooklyn. Jack and Mary had two sons and a record player. There were stacks of jigs-and-reels and

John McCormack records, and there was another one, cherry red in color. On the label, it said “Billy Boy—Folk Song.” I asked Dad what that meant—“Folk Song.”

One day, Mother took Liam and me to the Steeplechase amusement park in Coney Island. I got lost. A big Irish cop brought me back to the station house. Somehow, it came out that I sang. Within a few minutes, half the beat cops in Coney Island were making a beeline back to the precinct house. Mother arrived three-quarters of an hour later. I was perched atop the sergeant’s desk belting out “Kathleen Mavourneen,” with hardly a dry eye in the house. She cried tears of joy as she entered the room, but there was blood in her orbs as well. When we got outside, I ran for my life all the way down the block and nearly got lost again.



Over time, we began to Americanize a bit. We’d come to the United States during a golden age of baseball epitomized for us by a great working-class team, the Brooklyn Dodgers. Mother and I would sometimes stay up half the night glued to the television when a tied score forced a game into extra innings. Snider, Reese, Campanella, Hodges, Newcombe, Erskine, Labine, Podres, Furillo, Amaros, Gilliam—the heroes’ names were like poetry to our ears. Oddly, the team villain was its Irish-American owner, Walter O’Malley. In 1957, he conveyed the Dodgers to Southern California in exchange for a significant portion of downtown Los Angeles, and he left Brooklyn spiritually destitute.

Baseball was one catalyst; rock and roll was another. One Saturday morning, Liam and I were listening to the radio while we did our chores. The announcer said the next singer was named Elvis Presley. We had never heard a name like that before. *Presley* was strange enough, but *Elvis* was beyond strange—it was weird! Then the radio became possessed and let out a demonic bellow from a deep dungeon where schoolboys were probably having their toenails ripped off while long-tailed devils danced and roared in glee. The song was called “Heart-break Hotel,” and it changed my life forever. Mostly because, shortly afterwards, the Irish Christian Brothers and I had a falling out. My penance was deportation to a boarding school in a tiny Roman town in rural England. Four years later, I returned triumphantly to New York. I had survived. At 16, I sailed back by myself on the *Queen Elizabeth*. It was quite a voyage. Understand, of course, that there was crew on board too. I didn’t actually sail the *Queen Elizabeth*.

In the meantime, Liam had done unimaginable things. He had gone to hootenannies, bought a Seamus Ennis record, and met The Clancy Brothers. We began to sing sea shanties together. It made perfect sense; after all, I’d just sailed

across the Atlantic. Some friends and I piled in a car and drove to the Newport Folk Festival. I saw Dominic Behan at Gerde's Folk City, and Mississippi John Hurt at The Gaslight. I learned a stack of Child ballads and bought a banjo. Then, just when life was really becoming fun, I got drafted.

After I was discharged, I got a job answering a telephone at an airline company and began swapping my days off so I could spend part of every month in Ireland or Britain. I thought nothing of flying over for a night at The Tradition Club in Dublin, where Paul Brady introduced me to Frank Harte, or to The Singers Club in London, where I met Ewan MacColl. At one point, I took a break and sang professionally. It was at a transitional point in the history of music in Ireland, when ballad groups like The Clancy Brothers and The Dubliners were gradually ceding ground to neo-traditional bands like The Chieftains and Planxty. But the next wave from Ireland had not yet crashed upon the American shore when Brian Brooks and I formed The Flying Cloud in 1975 along with Paddy Reynolds, a Sligo-style fiddler from County Longford. We made an LP and sang for a few thousand people at the Philadelphia Folk Festival, but five fiddle players went through the group within two years, and coping with those changes while trying to carve out a new artistic niche made life in the airline business seem like heaven on earth.

At the same time and for the best part of 10 years with the help of a number of dedicated people, I ran a folk club at Malachy McCourt's Bells of Hell and Jimmy Noone's Eagle Tavern. Very simply, "everyone" played there, from The Battlefield Band to members of The Chieftains, Planxty, DeDannan, and The Bothy Band. Mick Moloney, Robbie O'Connell, and James Keane did their first concert together at the Eagle, and Joanie Madden and Eileen Ivers played their first real gigs as teenagers in ceili bands formed by their teachers—Maureen Glynn and



>Dan, Bill, and Liam Milner, circa 1951 (photo by Nora Cremin Milner)

Martin Mulvihill. The Irish Tradition (Billy McComiskey, Brendan Mulvihill, and Andy O'Brien) were there regularly. Joe Heaney, Margaret Barry, Ray Fisher, Frank Harte, Tony McMahon, Martin Carthy, Joe Burke, Peter Bellamy, Sean Keane, Andy McGann, Johnny Cronin, Brian Conway, Stan Rogers, Vin Garbutt, Triona Ní Dhomhnaill, Andy Irvine, Cyril Tawney, Liz Carroll, Johnny Cunningham, Louis Killen, Dolores Keane & John Faulkner, Matt Cranitch, Alec Finn, Frankie Gavin, the entire Black Family, and Liam O'Flynn all performed at the Eagle. It was a great club and an important part of New York's musical history. Thankfully, it continues to this day at New York University's Glucksman Ireland House under the guidance of Don Meade.

I returned to the friendly skies in 1982, just as my book of traditional songs, *The Bonnie Bunch of Roses*, was about to be published. Going back to a steady job meant that I had to give up singing as I began to "elevate," to borrow Ned Harrigan's word, in my career. One upshot of success was that I could no longer keep gig commitments, another was that I had to stop staying up all night. But it was not an entirely sad set of circumstances. I traveled around the world a couple of times and saw some very cool and hot places like Greenland and Beirut. I caught a magnificent salmon in Iceland and got a bad case of strep throat in Calcutta. Fifteen years later, I saw the handwriting on the wall, and it told me it was time to put my suit back in the closet. Brian Conway and my wife, Bonnie, in particular encouraged me to start singing again. In 1997, Sandy & Caroline Paton gave me the opportunity to make a CD for Folk-Legacy Records. Louis Killen, Mick Moloney, The Irish Tradition, and other fine musicians and singers, including Liam, took part. It became something of a maritime song classic, *Irish Ballads & Songs of the Sea*.

Shortly afterwards, Bob Conroy and I started touring together. We worked out a traditional Irish and Irish-American song repertoire that resulted in the CD, *Irish in America*. During the ensuing decade, we sang twice at Lincoln Center, the Cobh Maritime Song Festival, the Sidmouth International Festival, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, and at a host of other venues in Ireland, Britain, France, Denmark, and Germany, including a couple of really tough bars in Liverpool. We played at many festivals and museums around the USA too. By then, my day job was as a National Park Ranger at the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

In 2000, Lisa Null, the founder of Green Linnet Records, introduced me to Nancy-Jean Ballard, a granddaughter of Helen Hartness Flanders, one of America's greatest folk song collectors. Nancy-Jean gave me a catalogue of the Flanders Ballad Collection. I was astonished to find that many of the songs therein were of Irish origin or Irish-American making. The result was a third Folk-Legacy CD, *Irish Songs from Old New England*, which brought together the talents of fine singers from both sides of the Atlantic: Gordon Bok, Martin Carthy, Bob Conroy, Len Graham, Frank Harte, Louis Killen, Jim McFarland, Bonnie Milner, Deirdre Murtha, Robbie O'Connell, Sandy & Caroline Paton, and Ian Robb.

A few years ago, I returned to university to complete a graduate degree in cultural geography. I still look for exceptional traditional songs, teach and write, fish whenever possible, and usually sing wherever I'm invited, often with my friends in The New York Packet and The Washington Square Harp & Shamrock Orchestra.

Along the way, the parents I loved so dearly died, and Liam succumbed tragically to a lung ailment just as we were beginning to put the finishing touches on this recording. I miss the three of them very much, but I believe that with the grace of God we might all meet again one day back in Ballybunion.

Dan Milner, New York City, September 2008

🎵 Song Notes 🎵

DAN MILNER

This is an album of maritime songs from Ireland and its diaspora in which most of the central characters stand uneasy next to the law. Some are pure reprobates: pirates, slavers, shanghaiers, and criminals. Others are ardent patriots, dispossessed tenant farmers, out-of-work laborers adrift upon the Atlantic, or broken-down sailors sheltering in the taverns of the seven seas. All are midway between some dicey spot in life and an uncertain future. Rather than being anomalies, their stories are important because they tell us what can happen when ordinary people meet with extraordinary circumstances and normal societal conventions are dispensed with in the interest of survival.

1. TEN THOUSAND MILES AWAY

Dan Milner, vocals; John Doyle, guitar, bouzouki, and vocals; Robbie O'Connell, vocals

James Cook captained three expeditions to the Pacific and led the first party of Europeans to explore Botany Bay on the eastern coast of Australia. An entry in his journal in 1770 described it as “capacious safe and commodious” and its banks as being full of unknown plants and beautiful birds. Soon afterwards, Cook came abreast of another safe anchorage nine miles to the north, which he called Port Jackson. The name Botany Bay lives on as a synonym for infamy, but it was actually Port Jackson (present-day Sydney Harbor) where Australia’s history as a penal colony began. The first transportation fleet, numbering 11 ships, landed there on 26 January 1788. Irish were on board both as prisoners and guards. About one-quarter of the 160,000 prisoners brought out during the penal transportation era were Irish. Stan Hugill wrote that street singers in Ireland sang the tragic-comic “Ten Thousand Miles Away” in the early 19th century, long before it found great popularity in English music halls, and this version restores it to its native locale. The song was also popular on sailing ships, sung both heaving at the capstan and for off-duty entertainment. The Quarter Day was any of the four days in the year on which ground rents were due, typically 25 March, 24 June, 29 September, and 25 December. (Roud 1778)

2. THE BALLAD OF Ó BRUADAIR / OUT ON THE OCEAN

Dan Milner, vocals; Gabriel Donohue, bouzouki; Joanie Madden, flute and whistle; John Doyle, guitar and vocals; Mick Moloney, vocals; Robbie O'Connell, vocals; Susan McKeown, vocals; Tim Collins, concertina

Mícheál Ó Bruadair was a 17th-century pirate and smuggler from Cong, County Mayo. True to the old adage “Crime does not pay!” he found his final reward at the end of a rope. The song was given to me by Barry Gleeson of Dublin’s Góilín Traditional Singers’ Club. It appears on his fine album, *I Heard a Bird at Dawn* (Gleeman CD02). The lyricist was F.R. Higgins of the Abbey Theatre; and Arthur Duff of Radio Éireann adapted the tune from a traditional source. “Ó Bruadair” was published by the Cuala Press in their 1935 collections of broadsides. Mick Moloney tells me Delia Murphy recorded it in the 1940s. The jig, “Out on the Ocean,” is a well-loved session standard.

3. SAUCY WARD

Dan Milner, vocals; Gabriel Donohue, bouzouki

These words were taken down from a singer named Tom Maddock by Father Joseph Ranson and published without tune in his *Songs of the Wexford Coast*. The melody I use here comes from “The Urris Drowning Tragedy” as sung by my friend Dan McGonagle of Clonmany, County Donegal. Harvard University ballad scholar Francis James Child printed only one text of “Captain Ward and the Rainbow” in *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* with the note that John Ward became a “rover” in 1604 by inducing the crew of a naval vessel to take up piracy. But piracy is a high-risk business, and Ward did not survive the decade. (Child 287 / Roud 224)

4. CAPTAIN COULSTON

Dan Milner, vocals; Gabriel Donohue, accordion and guitar; Joanie Madden, flutes and whistles

More likely entertainment than history, “Captain Coulston” appeared on broadsides printed in Ireland and Britain during the mid-19th century, usually under the title of “Captain Colston.” This rendition stems mainly from the singing of O.J. Abbot (Folkways FM4051), who emigrated to Canada from Enfield, England, about 1884. Oliver John Abbot worked much of his life in lumber camps, paper mills, and farms along the valley of the Ottawa River, where he learned a large number of Irish songs from his workmates and from the wife of a farmer for whom he worked, a Mrs. O’Malley. The great Ulster singer, Paddy Tunney, knew this one. (Roud 1695)

5. GRANUAILE

Dan Milner, vocals; Gabriel Donohue, guitar and mandolin; Susan McKeown, vocals

Grace O’Malley, called “Granuaile,” was a real 16th-century figure whose life spawned legends as well as a recent Broadway musical, *The Pirate Queen*. She was a formidable County Mayo tribal leader and sea captain who lived in an Ireland where English law was replacing Gaelic supremacy. After being released from prison in Ireland and having lost her lands and fleet, Grace O’Malley traveled to London in 1593 and successfully petitioned Queen Elizabeth I for her rights. Poetically, the name Granuaile has long been synonymous with the Irish nation, as in this text. This song is adapted from “Granu-weal,” a political broadside popular during the time when the Duke of Dorset served as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1731–1737 and 1750–1755). It was reprinted in the autobiographical *Memoirs of the Life and Times of the Rt. Hon. Henry Grattan* (1846). No tune was indicated, so I used the melody of “Master McGrath.”

6. GET UP JACK, JOHN, SIT DOWN / MISS THORNTON'S

Dan Milner, vocals; Gabriel Donohue, piano; Joanie Madden, whistle; The Johnson Girls, vocals; Mick Moloney, tenor banjo and vocals; Robbie O'Connell, vocals; Susan McKeown, vocals; Tim Collins, concertina

I first heard "Get Up Jack" in the mid-1960s sung by American folk song collector Frank Warner. Frank was a robust character, a wonderfully encouraging, really unforgettable person. He and his wife, Anne, collected "Get Up Jack, John, Sit Down" in 1940 from Lena Bourne Fish of East Jaffrey, New Hampshire, as "The Jolly Roving Tar" (as did Helen Hartness Flanders). Neither the collectors nor Mrs. Fish were aware that the famous New York actor, playwright, and lyricist Edward Harrigan had composed the words in 1885 for his musical play, *Old Lavender*. I came across the original sheet music in 1999 while researching songs for *Irish in America* (Folk-Legacy CD-129). Harrigan came from a family long attached to the sea. He grew up on "Cork Row," at Corlear's Hook, close to New York's East River shipyards, and he was a caulker and deepwater sailor in his youth. Maritime themes appear frequently in his work. Some other Harrigan songs that passed into tradition are "The [Bucketful of] Mountain Dew," "Muldoon, the Solid Man," "Haul [or Roll] the Woodpile Down," and "McNally's Row of Flats." Mick Moloney sang David Braham's original melody when he recorded "Get Up, Jack" recently (Compass 744262). This rendition favors Granny Fish's melody but holds closely to Ned Harrigan's original lyric. "Miss Thornton's" is associated with the East Galway fiddler, Aggie White of Ballinakill. (Roud 2807)

7. THE FLYING CLOUD

Dan Milner, vocals

This classic was a favorite amongst North American sailors and lumbermen. Bill Doerflinger and Horace Beck both wrote that the ability to sing "The *Flying Cloud*" well conferred high status in the logging camps along the U.S.–Canada border. I first heard this ballad sung by Ewan MacColl over forty years ago (Stinson SLP 80), and I have listened to many other versions since then, pulling together my own setting. Though "The *Flying Cloud*" appears to be a quintessential broadside ballad, no printed sheet has yet been found, and, curiously, no record exists of a slave or pirate ship by this name. (Laws K28 / Roud 1802)

8. LARRY MAHER'S BIG FIVE-GALLON JAR

Dan Milner, vocals; Bob Conroy, 5-string banjo; Mick Moloney, mandolin and vocals; Robbie O'Connell, vocals; Tim Collins, concertina

Larry Maher was an innkeeper who sidelined as a personnel recruiter and travel agent. Maher operated his treacherous grog shop in lower Manhattan in the 1850s. His antics were recounted on a New York broadside published by Henry DeMarsan during the American Civil War. Stan Hugill cautioned in *Sailortown* that Larry Maher has often been confused with another shanghaier, Larry Marr of San Francisco's Barbary Coast. Chain lightning is an optical illusion that occurs when a sky-to-earth strike is partially obscured by cloud cover and appears to be broken into fragments. "Darbies" was slang for fetters (handcuffs, in this case), and The Tombs was and is the principal holding facility for prisoners awaiting trial in Manhattan. I composed the melody. (Roud 9412)

9. BOLD MCCARTHY (THE CITY OF BALTIMORE)

Dan Milner, vocals; Gabriel Donohue, guitar; Mick Moloney, mandolin; Tim Collins, concertina

In 1839, 19-year-old Herman Melville shipped from New York to Liverpool. He later wrote about his adventures in the autobiographical novel, *Redburn*, where he gave graphic descriptions of Liverpool's poor, including the hordes of young men who, like McCarthy, came to that port city short of cash and anxious to emigrate. The *City of Baltimore* was a ship of Liverpool's Inman Line from 1856 to 1874. "Bold McCarthy" was well known in Canada's Maritime Provinces, and Helen Creighton, Nova Scotia's foremost collector of traditional songs, believed it to have been composed in North America. It appears in many of the great maritime collections, including *Songs of the Wexford Coast*. Bruce Scott sings a Liverpool-Irish version on *My Colleen by the Shore* (Veteran VT149CD), and Martin Carthy sings one from New Hampshire on *Irish Songs from Old New England* (Folk-Legacy CD-132). (Laws K26/Roud 1800)

10. ALL FOR ME GROG / PARNELL'S MARCH

Dan Milner, vocals; Gabriel Donohue, mandolin; Mick Moloney, vocals; Robbie O'Connell, vocals; Tim Collins, concertina

Known traditionally in Australia, Britain, and Canada, "All for Me Grog" may have been introduced into Irish music as late as the mid-1960s, when it was recorded by Liam Clancy (Vanguard VRS-9169). It continues in great popularity. Charles Stewart Parnell was a member of the Anglo-Irish gentry and the leader of the Irish Party. Called the "Uncrowned King of Ireland," Parnell pushed British Prime Minister Gladstone to introduce the first Home Rule Bill in 1886. (Roud 475)

11. CASTLE GARDENS (SIXTY YEARS AGO)

Dan Milner, vocals; Gabriel Donohue, bouzouki; Joanie Madden, whistle

In 1997, at the repeated urging of the late Frank Harte, I began attending the yearly ballad seminars organized by Jimmy McBride on behalf of the Inishowen Traditional Singers' Circle. "Castle Gardens" is a particular favorite amongst the hundreds of songs I've heard there. It comes from Charlie McGonigle, of the James Eoghain McGonigle clan, one of the great singing families of Ulster. Charlie calls it "Sixty Years Ago," and it's also known as "Where the Green Shamrock Grow." I thank Charlie, Jimmy, and Frank, the Inishowen singers, and their many friends for the all the good times and fine songs. "Castle Gardens" probably dates from between 1855 and 1889. That was a transitional period during which both steam and sail powered many deepwater ships, and it also coincides with the working life of the Castle Garden Emigrant Landing Depot, the predecessor of Ellis Island. When I was a National Park Ranger, I had a locker with my name on it at the Castle. That proud memory continues to bring a smile to my face. "Castle Gardens" has also been found in tradition in Canada, England, and the United States. (Roud 9744)

12. THE LOWLANDS LOW

Dan Milner, vocals; Brian Conway, fiddle; Gabriel Donohue, bouzouki; Joanie Madden, whistle and contraflute; John Doyle, guitar; Mick Moloney, vocals; Robbie O'Connell, vocals; Tim Collins, concertina

“The Lowlands Low” was composed by P.J. McCall and appeared in *Irish Fireside Songs*. The air was cited as no. 182 in P.W. Joyce’s *Old Irish Folk Music and Songs* (1909). A romantic nationalist lyric, the poem is written on two levels: outwardly, it’s a smuggling song set in the early 18th-century, but, more importantly, it’s a rallying cry published just five years before the Easter Uprising. The Wild Geese were Irish military men who, having despaired of reaching their goals at home, hired their services to European monarchs. The term is most notably linked to the departure of 14,000 Irish soldiers following the dishonored Treaty of Limerick (1691). By way of explanation, Algerines (Algerians) and Salees (Moroccans) were the North African pirates who once plied the English Channel. Lewey was probably Louis XIV of France. A galiot is a type of low-draft Dutch merchant vessel. Genever (Dutch gin, also popularly called “Geneva”), sack (Spanish sherry), and Rhenish wine (white wine from the Rhineland) were codes for foreign military aid. I heard “The Lowlands Low” a long time ago, but I only decided to learn it after listening to it sung by the Canniffe Family of Cork City.

13. THE RIVER LEA

Dan Milner, vocals; Gabriel Donohue, guitar; Joanie Madden, flute; Mick Moloney, vocals; Robbie O'Connell, vocals

“The *River Lea*” was first published in Joanna Colcord’s *Songs of American Sailormen*, and later reprinted in Stan Hugill’s masterwork, *Shanties from the Seven Seas*. Miss Colcord attributed it as the composition of a “contemporary shanty-man” named Sam Peck. But the very last song in the Hugill book, called “*The Anglesey*,” is essentially the same piece. It was sent to Stan by a Belgian captain who learned it in 1906 aboard a Norwegian sailing ship, the *Ingrid of Larvik* (formerly the *Angelsey*). Authorship, or how a song supposedly written circa 1930 could have been known many years earlier, is the first curiosity about “*The River Lea*.” The second has to do with the title. Neither the Lea, a tributary of the Thames, nor the Lee in County Cork is a mighty river, but the Lee estuary (site of Cobh, formerly Queenstown) was a major emigrant and naval port for many years. Because traditional songs are inherently oral rather than written (and Lea and Lee being sounded similarly), I suspect the river in the ship’s name may have been the Lee. Regardless, Gina Dunlap, an old friend from many New York Irish music sessions, crafted this beautiful melody to match a lovely set of words. (Roud 351)

**N.B. Child, Laws, and Roud reference numbers are used above to connect the reader with entries in F.J. Child’s *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, G. Malcom Laws’ *American Ballads from British Broadides*, and Steve Roud’s *Roud Folksong Index*.

GUEST MUSICIANS AND SINGERS

Tim Collins is a member of the renowned Kilfenora Ceili Band and an All-Ireland concertina champion. Tim was on a Fulbright research grant at New York University when he and Mick Moloney braved blizzard snow and a brow-furrowing drive to bring their talents to this disc.

Bob Conroy, a New York native, and I toured together from Copenhagen to California for 10 years, weathering many squalls and a full-blown typhoon in San Francisco. Bob, a student of the late Erik Darling, is a member of the band Stout.

Brian Conway is an All-Ireland champion fiddler, an Assistant District Attorney, the dean of the New York school of Sligo fiddling, and the gifted teacher of numerous champions. His Smithsonian Folkways compact disc is *First Through the Gate* (SWF CD 40481).

Gabriel Donohue toured for three years with The Chieftains. A gifted multi-instrumentalist and singer, Gabriel was a musical guest at the Clintons' White House and has recorded with the Boston Pops and performed with Michael Flatley. He also recorded this CD.

John Doyle and I met at the 1997 Mystic Sea Music Festival while he was playing and singing with Solas, and we became fast friends. He now performs solo, with Liz Carroll, and with The Green Fields of America. John is also Joan Baez's musical director.

The Johnson Girls (Deirdre Murtha, Joy Bennett, and Bonnie Milner) were founded in 1997. They are acknowledged as the world's finest and foremost all-woman maritime song group. We sing together regularly at South Street Seaport Museum as members of The New York Packet.

Joanie Madden is the leader of Cherish the Ladies, one of the world's most famous flute players, and an All-Ireland champion whistle player. Joanie is also the Irish Week coordinator at the prestigious Augusta Heritage Center summer music school in West Virginia.

Susan McKeown of Dublin, my cross-town neighbor in New York, has a beautifully mature and full voice. Susan has numerous solo recordings to her credit, and she sang with the Klezmatics on the 2007 Grammy-winning CD, *WonderWheel*.

Mick Moloney, a friend for over three decades, is a National Heritage Fellowship recipient and Distinguished Global Professor of Music and Irish Studies at New York University. He has produced and starred on scores of recordings and has appeared in numerous documentary films.

Robbie O'Connell, Irish-America's foremost balladeer, has written both beautiful and hilarious songs. He is also well known for the many years he spent singing with his uncles, The Clancy Brothers, Moloney–O'Connell–Keane, The Greenfields of America, and The Clancy Legacy.

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Dan Milner also appears on:

The Starboard List: Cruising Round Yarmouth. 1977. Adelphi Records AD 1027.

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The Johnson Girls: Fire Down Below. 2008. Folk-Legacy CD-138.

Brian Conway: Consider the Source. 2008. Cló Iar-Chonnachta CICD 173.

DEDICATION

This album is dedicated to departed friends and family members: William Main Doerflinger (1910–2000), one of North America's most esteemed folklorists and a true gentleman; Frank Harte (1933–2005), the dean of Dublin singers and a great character; Bill Milner (1901–1972), a loving father and the man who started me singing; Liam Milner (1941–2008), my brother and the best natural singer I have ever heard; Nora Cremin Milner (1914–2006), as good an Irish mother as a boy could have; and Tom Munnely (1944–2007), Ireland's foremost folk song collector and a friend who was always quick to help.

CREDITS

Conceived and produced by Dan Milner

Mixed by Dan Milner and Gabriel Donohue

Recorded, edited, and mastered by Gabriel Donohue at Cove Island Productions, Hawthorne, NJ

Annotated by Mick Moloney and Dan Milner

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THANKS

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James Marra

Our treatment at this isle was such as had induced one of our gunners mates to form a Plan to remain at it, he knew he could not execute it with success while we lay in the Bay, therefore took the opportunity as soon as we were out and our Sails set to slip over board (he being a good swimmer) but he was discovered before he had got clear of the Ship, we presently Brought to, hoisted out a boat and sent and took him up: a Canoe was observed about half way between us and the Shore seemingly coming after us, she was intended to take him in, but seeing our boat, kept at a distance, this was a preconcerted plan between the Man and the Natives... I kept the Man in confinement till we were clear of the isles then dismiss'd without any other punishment, for when I considered the situation of the Man in life I did not think him so culpable as it may at first appear, he was an Irishman by birth, a good Seaman and had Sailed both in the English and Dutch Service. I pick'd him up at Batavi in my return home from my last Voyage and he had remained with me ever sence. I never learnt that he had either friends or connection to confine him in any particular part of the world, all Nations were alike to him, where than can Such a Man spend his days better than at one of these isles where he can enjoy all the necessaries and some of the luxuries of life in ease and Plenty.

Entry in the journal of Captain James Cook on the attempted desertion of gunner's mate James Marra from HMS Resolution, Tahiti, 14 May 1774.



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