

MÍCHEÁL Ó CATHÁIN

www.michealocathain.com



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Mícheál Ó Catháin grew up in a musical family in Kildare, immersed in Irish language, singing and music. Performing for decades as a traditional fiddle player and singer, in recent years he has built on these foundations to develop a comprehensive command of the early Irish harp or *cláirseach*.

Faithful to historical practices, Mícheál sings with the harp on his left shoulder and employs specialised fingernail techniques to shape the resonance of these metal-strung instruments. His arrangements of manuscript pieces, guided by the rhythms of his *sean-nós* singing, breathe fresh life into Ireland's ancient harp music for contemporary audiences.

Mícheál has performed around Ireland in such beautiful venues as the Mussenden Temple in Derry, the Fumbally Stables in Dublin and Naas Arts & Culture Centre in Kildare. A soloist in his own right, he has also shared the stage with Cormac Begley, Fiachna Ó Mongáin, Ultan O'Brien, Siobhán Armstrong and Javier Sáinz, as well as with his long-time mentor and collaborator Ann Heymann.

Currently he is working on a debut solo recording, on harp & voice, of pieces collected from Denis O'Hampsey, the eldest of the harpers to grace the 1792 Belfast Harp Meeting. This recording project features an accurate copy of O'Hampsey's *Downhill* harp, and shares the fruits of Mícheál's 2017/18 Arts Council Traditional Arts Bursary.

As an open process-forum sharing insights from artists he admires and who influence his musical journey, including some of the leading lights of the early Irish harp, Mícheál regularly posts multimedia interviews to his website at michealocathain.com/interviews.

“De bhunadh Chill Dara é Mícheál Ó Catháin agus clú bainte amach aige mar dhuine den ghlúin nua a chasann cláirseach.”

“From Kildare, Mícheál Ó Catháin has achieved recognition as one of the new generation playing cláirseach”

-The Irish Times

Video links:

<https://vimeo.com/michealocathain/michealatfumballyaug2018>