



the green house

GREY
LARSEN & PADDY
LEAGUE



I. **LADY ON THE ISLAND /
THE HUMOURS OF LISADEL /
THE MONAGHAN TWIG** 2:57

Reels: Flute, bodhrán, guitar, and
field organ

Three lovely old favorites. Michael Coleman was the first to record *Lady on the Island*. *The Humours of Lisadel*, named for a town in County Sligo, was first recorded by Sligo fiddler Paddy Killoran.

2. **THE THRUSH IN THE STRAW /
THE BANKS OF LOUGH GOWNA**
3:29

Jigs: Concertina, guitar, and harmonium

The Thrush in the Straw comes from the whistle playing of piper, singer, and storyteller Séamus Ennis (1919-1982), who hailed from Jamestown, Finglas, County Dublin. Ennis traveled the length and breadth of Ireland on a bicycle, collecting songs, tunes, and folklore from the people of the country. So prodigious were his efforts that he was known in Conamara as Séamus Mhíle Amhráin, or “Séamus of a Thousand Songs.”

Lough Gowna, which means “Lake of the Calves” in Irish, is located in County Cavan, and the tune that bears its name is from the repertoire of legendary Clare piper Willie Clancy (1918-1973).

3. THE CUCKOO'S NEST / FITZGERALD'S HORNPIPE / THE INDIAN ON THE ROCK 4:27

Hornpipes and reel: B-flat tin whistle, bodhrán, and field organ

The first and third tunes in this medley are from the unique melodeon repertoire of Michael J. Kennedy (1900-1978). Michael was born and raised on a farm near the village of Flaskagh, three miles northeast of Dunmore in North-East County Galway. Until emigrating to the U.S. he had never traveled beyond a ten mile radius of his home. At age 11, greatly inspired by the melodeon playing of two village girls, Maggie McGee and Winnie Dowd, Michael went to Dunmore and bought a melodeon for the equivalent of \$1.50. He always played a one-row, ten-button melodeon in the key of G. Michael used to say, "There was never anybody as crazy for a melodeon as I was."

In 1923, fed up with the hard labor of farming, he emigrated to Cincinnati, Ohio, working for 42 years for the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. He lived out the rest of his years there, and just across the Ohio River in Covington, Kentucky. Michael's repertoire was unchanged by his years in America, being entirely composed of tunes and settings he had learned in his native locality. Grey, who grew up in Cincinnati, met Michael in 1975, fell in love with his music, and played with him at every opportunity until Michael's death three years later.

Michael's version of *The Cuckoo's Nest* seems to be completely unrelated to other tunes by this title. Its unusual departures from regular hornpipe meter suggest that it is rooted in an early era that is rarely represented in Irish music as it is heard today. This tune was very special to Michael, and he loved to hold forth at length concerning the peculiar habits of its avian namesake. Michael knew lyrics to many tunes, and *The Cuckoo's Nest* was no exception. To hear Michael himself talk and play, listen to the bonus tracks, numbers 13 through 15.

Michael amassed a varied collection of 78 rpm recordings of traditional Irish musicians during his early years in America. It was from a recording in this collection, of Kerry fiddler Paddy Cronin, that Grey learned *Fitzgerald's Hornpipe*. *The Indian on the Rock* is Michael's version of a reel more commonly known as *The Hunter's Purse*.

4. THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY / DUSK AMONG THE WILLOWS 3:59

Slow reels: Flute, harmonium, and guitar

Dusk Among the Willows © 2001, Grey Larsen; BMI, *Sleepy Creek Music*

The first tune is a very well known reel first recorded by Sligo fiddler Michael Coleman. Grey plays it here in an unusual fashion, slowly and in the key of B-flat, using only the windy sounds of the flute and harmonium. The second tune is a composition of Grey's. He wrote it in the uncommon mode of F Dorian which lends it a haunting character and places it in a low, rich register on the instrument. Grey plays both tunes on a D flute.

5. LORD MAYO / AN CÚISÍN BÁN (THE WHITE CUSHION) 4:27

March and set dance: Flute and guitar

The eighteenth-century harper Dáithí Ó Murchadha composed *Lord Mayo* in honor of his wealthy patron. Ó Murchadha, a contemporary and rival of the more famous harper Turlough O'Carolan, was a fine player and is said to have performed for Louis XIV. Grey learned this tune from County Sligo flute player Tom Byrne and County Leitrim fiddler Tom McCaffrey. For more on Byrne and McCaffrey see the notes to Track 6.

Paddy learned the set dance *An Cúisín Bán* (also known as *An Súisín Bán*, or “The White Blanket”) from Clare concertina player and scholar Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, who tells us that it was a popular tune among an older generation of Clare musicians. The tune was first recorded by the Castle Céilí Band of County Clare.

6. COMB YOUR HAIR AND CURL IT / THE WHINNEY HILLS OF LEITRIM / A FIG FOR A KISS 2:33

Slip jigs: D Tin whistle and bodhrán

Grey learned these three slip jigs in Cleveland, Ohio from flute player Tom Byrne and fiddler Tom McCaffrey. Here Grey plays his own setting of *The Whinney Hills of Leitrim*, in the key of C instead of the usual key of D.

Since the mid-1950s, Byrne and McCaffrey have been pivotal members of the vibrant Cleveland Irish-American community, where they have taught, inspired and encouraged scores of young musicians. In 1974, while a student at the nearby Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Grey got to know them at music sessions in the homes of various Irish immigrants who were members of the Cleveland Irish Musicians' Club. “The Toms” welcomed Grey into their lives and their families, and so began lifelong friendships full of music and laughter.

Tom Byrne, born in 1920 in the parish of Geevagh in County Sligo, worked as a coal miner before emigrating to Canada in 1948. Soon he moved on to Cleveland, where he met Tom McCaffrey in 1956. Byrne had begun playing tin whistle at age seven, and flute soon thereafter. Grey received his first Irish flute as a gift from Tom Byrne. Tom McCaffrey was born in 1916 near Mohill, County Leitrim and worked the family farm until coming to the U.S. in 1955. At the age of 11, he began learning the fiddle from his father. A fine singer, a renowned jokester, and seemingly a committed bachelor, Tom surprised everyone when, at age 83, he married Alice Kelly. He says simply that he finally found the right woman. These two men, and Michael J. Kennedy, welcomed Grey into their lives and into the heart of Irish music and culture in a profound and joyful way. Byrne and McCaffrey can be heard on three releases on Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, produced by Richard Carlin between 1977 and 1979.

7. O'CAROLAN'S DRAUGHT 4:01

Concertina, guitar, and piano

One of our favorite of the compositions of the renowned harper Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738), who enjoyed a drink as much as the next man. O'Carolan was born in Nobber, County Meath, and at the age of four moved with his parents to Alderford, County Roscommon. At age 18 he was blinded by smallpox, and it was then that he took up the harp.

8. VERY KIND AND GRACIOUS 4:22

Schottische: Concertina, harmonium, piano, guitar, and bodhrán

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Another of Grey's compositions, this one a tribute to his dear friend Michael J. Kennedy. After performing a set of tunes, Michael would often acknowledge his audience's applause by saying, "Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. You're very kind and gracious." To those who knew Michael well, that phrase became inseparable from the man, an emblem that represented Michael's own welcoming attitude to life and to everyone he met.

The four words of this title suggest the rhythm of a schottische, a type of dance tune that Michael loved to play. The introduction to this arrangement features a schottische that Grey learned from Michael, Maggie McGee's *Schottische*. Michael learned it from Maggie McGee, the girl from his village who taught him how to play the melodeon.

9. THE WALLS OF LISCARROLL / MAGUIRE'S KICK / THE LARK ON THE STRAND 4:53

Jigs: Flute and guitar

The title of the first jig in this selection may refer to Liscarroll Castle, a 13th-century fortification in Mallow, County Cork. *Maguire's Kick* can be found in Captain Francis O'Neill's *The Dance Music of Ireland, 1001 Gems*, where it appears as #389 in the single jigs section. The great fiddler James Kelly learned it from his father John as *McGuire's March*. Grey learned it from another master fiddler, Kevin Burke, as *The Rolling Waves*. Still others refer to this tune as *The Lonesome Jig*. We play it here in the key of F instead of its usual key of D.

10. OLD TIPPERARY / GARRET BARRY'S / TOM GREYHAN'S JIG 2:47

Jigs: D Tin whistle and bodhrán

The first two of these jigs are well known. The second one is named for the great uilleann piper from County Clare, Garret Barry, who died in 1900. Michael J. Kennedy, born in 1900, was our source for the third tune, and we have never heard it played by anyone else.

II. SWEET INISCARA / THE MORNING STAR / SCOTCH MARY / MUSIC IN THE GLEN 5:32

Slow air and reels: Flute, harmonium, guitar, bodhrán, and field organ

Grey learned this slow air from the singing of Niamh Parsons, a wonderful singer from Dublin and a great friend of ours. It was written by John Fitzgerald (1825-1910), who was known as "the Bard of the Lee." Fitzgerald's lyrics describe the life of a native of Iniscara, an island off the coast of County Cork, who spends his working years in foreign travel and exotic adventure. Upon his return home late in life, finding his homestead in ruins and his friends and loved ones dead or gone, he realizes that he can't come home again.

Grey learned *The Morning Star* and *Music in the Glen* from Tom Byrne and Tom McCaffrey.

12. CABBAGE NIGHT 4:41

Flute, guitar, bodhrán, harmonium, field organ, and low D whistle

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This composition of Grey's is named for the night before Halloween when once, in some parts of the U.S., children would roam the streets performing anonymous acts of mischief and trickery, sometimes involving over-ripe vegetables. In this same furtive spirit, the piece ducks in and out of hiding places and changes mercurially between 6/8 and 9/8 time.

BONUS TRACKS:

13. MICHAEL J. KENNEDY TALKS ABOUT THE CUCKOO'S NEST 3:02

These three bonus tracks come from recordings of Michael J. Kennedy made by John McCutcheon on October 26, 1976 in Cincinnati, Ohio. These recordings resulted in the now long out of print LP, *Michael J. Kennedy: 65 Years of Irish Music*, issued in 1977 by June Appal Records of Whitesburg, Kentucky. The small but avid audience heard whooping it up in the background consists of Grey Larsen, Malcolm Dalglish, John McCutcheon, and John Herrod. For more information about Michael, see the notes to track 3, and our website. In the first of these three tracks, Michael tells of the endearing and odd habits of his beloved cuckoo, demonstrates its call, and performs a snatch of lyrics that go with the tune.

14. MICHAEL J. KENNEDY PLAYS THE CUCKOO'S NEST 1:38

15. MICHAEL J. KENNEDY TALKS ABOUT MUSIC, MEMORY, AND PLAYING FOR DANCES IN NORTH-EAST COUNTY GALWAY 2:24

Here Michael reminisces about his youth in Flaskagh before emigrating to the U.S. in 1923.

PRODUCED BY GREY LARSEN & PADDY LEAGUE

TRACKS 1-12 recorded and mixed by Grey Larsen at Sleepy Creek Recording & Mastering, Bloomington, Indiana, USA, September 2000–January 2001.

TRACKS 13-15 recorded by John McCutcheon at the studio of WAIF community radio, Cincinnati, Ohio on October 26, 1976; remastered and edited by Grey Larsen at Sleepy Creek Recording & Mastering, January 2001.

ENTIRE CD mastered by Mark Hood at Sleepy Creek Recording & Mastering, January 2001.

PHOTOGRAPHY of Grey and Paddy by Irene Young, www.ireneyoungfoto.com

GRAPHIC DESIGN by Barbara Mendelsohn, BMusical@aol.com

TO PURCHASE this and other recordings, and for information on Grey Larsen & Paddy League, go to:

www.larsenandleague.com

or write to Grey Larsen & Paddy League:

EMAIL: info@larsenandleague.com

POSTAL MAIL: c/o Sleepy Creek Music, PO Box 2652, Bloomington, IN 47402-2652, USA.

HEARTFELT THANKS TO: Helen Bommarito, Tom Byrne, Richard Carlin, Malcolm Dalglish, Maureen Harrigan, Martin Hayes, John Herrod, Autumn Hills, June Appal Records, Henry R. Kelly, James Kelly, Michael J. Kennedy, Michaux Lowry, Lulu's Grill, Tom McCaffrey, John McCutcheon, Barbara Mendelsohn, Dr. Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, Al Petteway, Nancy Lee Russell, Indra Lal Shrestha, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, Tom Sparks, Virginia Arts Recording, Amy White, Irene Young, and all of our friends in Bloomington, Indiana and Charlottesville, Virginia.

GREY LARSEN: Irish flute, tin whistles, anglo concertina, harmonium, field organ, and piano

PADDY LEAGUE: bodhrán and guitar

GREY LARSEN PLAYS a flute by Firth Pond & Co., New York City c. 1850, with a head joint by Chris Abell, Asheville, NC, 1998; tin whistles by Michael Copeland, Philadelphia, PA; a 40-button anglo concertina in D/A by Wheatstone, London, England, c. 1935; a harmonium by Bina, Delhi, India, c. 1993; and a field organ by Estey Organs, Brattleboro, VT, c. 1930.

PADDY LEAGUE PLAYS a bodhrán by Albert Alfonso, Dallas, TX, and a Martin D-35 guitar, 1970, Bethlehem, PA.

FOR INFORMATION ON Albert Alfonso bodhráns, contact www.celticmusic.com/alfonso_bodhrans; 8561 Arturo Drive, Dallas, TX 75228; 214.327.4733.

FOR INFORMATION ON Michael Copeland tin whistles contact www.copelandwoodwinds.com; Copeland Woodwinds Company, 915 Spring Garden Street, Studio 007, Philadelphia, PA 19123; 215.765.1769.

FOR INFORMATION ON Chris Abell flutes, flute headjoints, and whistles contact www.abellflute.com; abellflute@juno.com; Abell Flute Company, 111 Grovewood Road, Asheville, NC 28804; 828.254.1004.

This music is lovingly dedicated to Robin, Siri, and Teal Larsen.

GREY LARSEN began his musical career at age three when he reached above his head to play the piano and picked out the melody of his favorite song, *Home on the Range*. Steeped in his father's love of classical and folk music, he studied piano and cello, worked his way with fascination through much of the keyboard music of J. S. Bach, began composing at age 12, and as a teenager began delving into Irish and Appalachian music on guitar, flute, concertina, fiddle and other instruments. He graduated from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music with a degree in composition in 1976.

Grey's musical childhood also included stints in a grade school garage rock band comprised of classical guitar, snare drum, clarinet, and piano, and later in various folk and early music groups throughout high school and college. At Oberlin, Grey met fellow Cincinnati Malcolm Dalglish, who would become a longtime musical partner. While they did not focus exclusively on Irish music, Grey's and Malcolm's early recordings, such as **Banish Misfortune** and **Thunderhead**, which became classics in the U.S. folk scene, were deeply influenced by the elder Irish players they knew such as Michael Kennedy, Tom Byrne and Tom McCaffrey. After seven years as a duo Grey and Malcolm joined forces with Vermont songwriter and old-time fiddler Pete Sutherland to form the trio **Metamora**, which for seven more years reached deeply into American, French Canadian, Irish and other European traditions, both vocal and instrumental, and explored progressive composing inspired by those traditions.

Currently, Grey records, produces and masters recordings, scores films, and edits music for various books and for *Sing Out!* magazine. He is equally at home playing the fiddle music of Appalachia and his native Midwest as he is playing Irish music, and performs in a wide range of groups and venues. However, in recent years, Grey has chosen to focus foremost upon deepening his understanding of Irish traditional music, especially as represented in flute and tin whistle playing. His solo recording, **The Gathering**, and his recording with Québécois guitarist/vocalist/foot percussionist André Marchand, **The Orange Tree**, trace his increasing mastery of the subtleties of flute and whistle playing.

In recent years, Grey has become a much sought-after teacher of Irish flute and whistle. Mel Bay Publications will soon issue a comprehensive book series of Grey's writings on Irish flute and whistle traditions in which Grey explores both techniques and philosophies of playing and presents his own new notation system for flute and whistle ornamentation.

In meeting Paddy, Grey found an ideal partner both in a passion for Irish traditional music and in musical virtuosity. **The Green House** represents for Grey both the culmination of years of deep exploration of Irish music and the birth of a promising new collaboration.

PADDY LEAGUE'S first formative musical experience came at the age of three in the form of an encounter with the bass drum of a New Orleans brass band. While he didn't formally take up the drumsticks until a teenager, the myriad dents in his family's kitchenware attest to the influence of that early childhood event.

Paddy was born in 1979 into a family with a rich and varied musical history. His mother Asimoula and grandfather Henry Kelly were both accomplished musicians in the fields of orchestral and swing music, and his paternal great-grandfather Tom McAviney was a flute player who, along with his younger brother Mike, was active in the Philadelphia Irish music community of the early 20th century. The soundtrack of Paddy's childhood was further composed of the Greek dance music of his grandmother's culture, and the funk, rock, and rhythm and blues of his father's eclectic record collection. These seemingly disparate influences took a firm hold early on and have remained constant sources of inspiration and growth throughout his musical journey.

Growing up in the Washington, D.C. area, Paddy was exposed to even more music, and took up a serious study of jazz and Latin percussion while in high school. He was soon performing regularly in jazz and fusion groups in the D.C. area, mentored and encouraged by musicians such as saxophonist Tim Eyermann and percussionist Keith Killgo. He also spent several years studying Indian tabla and Nepalese folk percussion with the late Professor Indra Lal Shrestha of Kathmandu, and began incorporating all of these influences into his bodhrán playing.

Paddy's involvement in traditional Irish music initially came about through an interest, acquired from his grandfather, in the Irish language. In seeking out avenues of learning, he became involved in the D.C. area's flourishing traditional music community, and has since become one the most respected percussionists and bodhrán teachers on the North American acoustic and traditional music circuit.

Grey and Paddy met in 1996 while teaching at the Swannanoa Gathering at Warren-Wilson College near Asheville, North Carolina, and recognized a kindred spirit. They began performing together in the Spring of 2000, and **The Green House** is the result of their first full year of making music together.



GREY LARSEN & PADDY LEAGUE

PRODUCED BY GREY LARSEN & PADDY LEAGUE

GREY LARSEN: Irish flute, tin whistles, anglo concertina, harmonium, field organ, and piano

PADDY LEAGUE: bodhran and guitar

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"Their playing is both authentic and beautiful, the product of artistic humility and insight. Grey and Paddy have found the perfect balance between maintaining tradition and finding their own unique voice."—Martin Hayes

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 2. The Thrush in the Straw / The Banks of Lough Gowna 3:29
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 4. The Wind that Shakes the Barley / Dusk Among the Willows 3:59 (Grey Larsen; BMI, Sleepy Creek Music)
 5. Lord Mayo / An Cúisín Bán (The White Cushion) 4:27
 6. Comb Your Hair and Curl It / The Whinney Hills of Leitrim / A Fig for a Kiss 2:33
 7. O'Carolan's Draught (Turlough O'Carolan) 4:01
 8. Very Kind and Gracious 4:22 (Grey Larsen; BMI, Sleepy Creek Music)
 9. The Walls of Liscarroll / Maguire's Kick / The Lark on the Strand 4:53
 10. Old Tipperary / Garret Barry's / Tom Greyhan's Jig 2:47
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