

Grey Larsen - Long Bio

Grey Larsen is a versatile and accomplished musician and an author of books on Irish music. Though he has explored many musical paths since the 1970s, he now focuses mainly on three:

- *Irish Flute and Tin Whistle*: Larsen is a highly accomplished player and an acclaimed author. Four of his [new books](#) came out in 2013.
- *Concert Performances with Cindy Kallet*: Intimate traditional and contemporary folk music and song.
- [Mastering](#): With a specialty in acoustic-based music.

Larsen was born in 1955 in New York City. His family moved to Cincinnati, Ohio the following year. Beginning piano lessons at the age of four, he enjoyed a childhood and youth full of musical exploration, his inner world filled with the keyboard music of Bach and Mozart, as well as the early rock, R&B, and Motown sounds on the radio, the songs of contemporary folk music interpreters and traditional Appalachian and Irish music.

From 1970 to 1972 he studied at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music before moving on, in 1973, to continue at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Oberlin, Ohio. While pursuing early music and composition on the one hand, he came ever more deeply under the spell of traditional music on the other, and for several years he followed these parallel streams with equal energy and dedication. In these and later years, he spent a great deal of time (in Cincinnati and Cleveland, Ohio) learning traditional Irish music from elder Irish immigrant musicians, most notably Co. Galway melodeon player Michael J. Kennedy (1900–1978), Co. Sligo flute player Tom Byrne (1920–2001) and Co. Leitrim fiddler Tom McCaffrey (1916-2006).

Upon completing a Bachelor of Music degree at Oberlin in 1976, he bid farewell to his academic path and set a course following his love of traditional music.

He leads a varied and rich musical life in Bloomington, Indiana (USA) as a performer, teacher, author, recording artist, record producer and mastering engineer. Since 1989 he has been the music editor of *Sing Out!* Magazine. Since the early 1970s he has also devoted himself to the traditional fiddle music of his native Midwest and Appalachia, in particular the music of southern Indiana fiddler Joe Dawson (1928-2012).

Larsen's books on traditional Irish music, published by Mel Bay Publications, have been highly successful. In 2003 he published [The Essential Guide to Irish Flute and Tin Whistle](#) which has sold well over 10,000 copies to date. At 480 pages, and with two CDs, it is the most comprehensive and innovative work of its kind. 2004 saw the publication of [The Essential Tin Whistle Toolbox](#). In 2013 he published [150 Gems of Irish Music for Tin Whistle](#), [150 Gems of Irish Music for Flute](#), [300 Gems of Irish Music for All Instruments](#), and [Down the Back Lane: Variation in Traditional Irish Dance Music](#).

Larsen currently performs and records with the guitarist and singer [Cindy Kallet](#). In 2007 they released their debut CD, *Cross the Water*, and in 2010 the CD single and video *Back When We Were All Machines*. For more information on this duo, see www.kalletlarsen.com.

Past Duos and Bands

Back In 1976, at age 21, he embarked upon a collaboration with hammer dulcimer player and singer [Malcolm Dalglish](#) which lasted 14 years. The duo released the landmark *Banish Misfortune* in 1977 on the eastern Kentucky label, June Appal Recordings. It was one of the first albums by American musicians that was devoted to traditional Celtic music and it became something of an underground hit, and still a desert island pick for many people. The popularity of this album launched Dalglish and Larsen's touring career which took them throughout the US, Canada and parts of Europe. The duo released *The First of Autumn* in 1978 and *Thunderhead* in 1982. *Thunderhead* was produced by Mícheál Ó Domhnaill and featured guest musicians such as Ó Domhnaill, Kevin Burke, Triona Ní Dhomhnaill and Claudia Schmidt.

In 1982 Vermont fiddler, singer and guitarist Pete Sutherland joined forces with Dalglish and Larsen to form the acclaimed trio [Metamora](#). They toured extensively throughout North America for seven years and released three albums: *Metamora* (1985, Sugar Hill Records), *The Great Road* (1987, Sugar Hill Records) and *Morning Walk* (1987, Windham Hill Records). They also contributed tracks to two Windham Hill samplers, *Windham Hill Sampler '89* and *A Winter's Solstice II*.

In 1990 Dalglish left Metamora. For a brief time British guitarist and singer Martin Simpson joined Larsen and Sutherland to continue performing under the Metamora name.

When Metamora finally disbanded, Larsen focused primarily on his already-established career as a recording engineer and producer, as well as composing and recording scores for several documentary films. In the coming years he produced recordings extensively among the community of francophone musicians in the Acadian region of Prince Edward Island, Canada. He produced and recorded all three albums by the group *Barachois* and also worked with *Vishten* and *Gadelle*. Many of these projects were winners in Canada's East Coast Music Awards.

In 1996 he expanded into mastering. Currently his studio work is comprised almost completely of mastering projects.

One of the highlights of his studio and film scoring career was his work as composer, musician and recording engineer on the scores to two short animated films by Timothy Hittle, *The Potato Hunter* (1991) and *Canhead* (1996). The latter was an Academy Award nominee for Best Animated Short in 1997.

In 1991 Larsen began a duo with Québécois guitarist and singer [André Marchand](#), one of the founders of the legendary band *La Bottine Souriante* and a current member of *Les Charbonniers de l'Enfer*. Longtime friends and fans of each others' music, Larsen and Marchand decided to explore an integration of Irish and Québécois music. They toured for several years through the US and Canada and in 1993 recorded the landmark album *The Orange Tree*, considered a classic by many. Though their performing activities slowed considerably, due to long distances and cross-border complexities, they couldn't resist continuing to explore, in the studio, the rich vein of music they had unearthed, and in 2004 they released *Les Marionnettes*, a sequel to *The Orange Tree*.

Through his teaching at many summer music camps such as *The Swannanoa Gathering*, Larsen met [Paddy League](#), an Irish-Greek-American player of guitar, bodhrán and concertina, in the late 1990s. Larsen and League toured the US for several years, appearing also in Utrecht, the Netherlands, in 2006. They produced two CDs, *The Green House* (2001) and *Dark of the Moon* (2003).

The next recording from Cindy Kallet and Grey Larsen will include new Kallet songs such as *The Shores of Lake Monroe and A Moment's Time*, a Kallet and Larsen composition for concertina, guitar and harmonium with the working title *Opus 53: Thing 1 and Thing 2*, more rare Indiana traditional fiddle tunes from the repertoire of Joe Dawson and more traditional Irish music.

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