



Irish Album Signs to Major American Distributor

Spiritual Irish Chant and Sean Nos Attracts American Audience

The debut album of Ireland's foremost spiritual singer Nóirín Ní Riain and her two sons Eoin and Mícheál, titled 'Celtic Joy', has signed to music distribution giant, Sounds True, the largest distributor of spiritual and lifestyle media in the US. 'Celtic Joy' features the unique harmonies of mother and her sons on a variety of carols, Gregorian chant and sean nós.

'Celtic Joy', has been well received in both the domestic and international markets. Gaining increasing recognition in the US Nóirín and her two sons, collectively called AMEN, have also been approached by noted American agent Vincent Mitchell of CMI Entertainment who is currently organising their US tour for 2009. CMI Entertainment also promotes established Irish acts such as Phil Coulter and The Three Tenors.

'Celtic Joy' was recorded in the spiritual setting of St. Mary's Abbey, Co. Waterford, the home of the Cistercian nuns of Glencairn who also feature on this sacred album. 'Celtic Joy' presents an uplifting collection of spiritual songs, chants and sean nós style hymns, offering a nostalgic journey for those who have grown up in Ireland. The album, sung in the unique and striking harmonic blend of the family trio's voices, includes the well-known hymn, Lead Kindly Light, the festive carol, The Holly and the Ivy, a wonderful version of The Beatitudes and a moving performance of Ave Verum, which Ní Riain describes as where "Mozart meets sean nós."

"To ensure the pure drop of live sound, we sang every song just once; there is no technical doctoring or studio effects on Celtic Joy as there are with most contemporary recordings", says Nóirín. "Every track promises the sound of us singing our hearts out in the little monastic chapel of Glencairn where we found ourselves in another sound-space. Although mostly from the Christian tradition, for us each song is an echo above and beyond the sounds of the universe. It is 'theosony', our word for the sound of God."

A native of Limerick, Nóirín resides in Glenstal Abbey and has lived immersed in music, chant and spirituality since her first recordings with the Glenstal Monks in the 1970's. She coined the term 'theosony' meaning the study of vocal sounds as a means of religious experience as part of her PhD studies for which she was awarded the first doctorate in theology from the University of Limerick.

Continuing the family tradition, her son Mícheál (24) holds Ireland's first Masters in rap performance and is famed for his Snoop Dogg impression. While Eoin (28), previously orchestral manager of the World Youth Orchestra, graduated with a Masters in Peace and Development Studies, which has brought the family performing at troubled sites all over the world including Bosnia and Croatia in association with international peace efforts.

Nóirín has performed world-wide since the 1970's and between her experiences and those of Eoin and Mícheál the family have performed with The Chieftains, Brian Kennedy, Bill Whelan, Nigel Kennedy and Russell Crowe. Noirin has also performed for Anjelica Huston, Bill Clinton and at the Eurovision Song Contest.

The live performances of Nóirín and her two sons were documented last year by RTE for a feature on Noirin's life's work. The acclaimed documentary included AMEN performing in Bangalore, India and they continue to perform tracks from Celtic Joy throughout Ireland and beyond.

"Something happens in the space between the three of us that humbly and truthfully leads both the singers and the listener high up into the realms of the divine", says Ní Riain.

Nóirín's sons, Eoin and Mícheál, both singers and musicians, are involved in individual projects outside of Celtic Joy. Together they make up 'size2shoes' and are currently recording their first Irish acoustic rock album.

"Performing with Nóirín, my mother, who is so highly regarded in performance circles, has been a huge privilege and a massive learning experience for me and my brother", says Eoin. "Recording Celtic Joy and performing live is probably the coolest thing I could have ever wished for."

Eoin and Mícheál's father, the prolific Mícheál O' Suilleabháin, one of Ireland's best-known musicians, played the organ on two tracks of Celtic Joy. Mícheál, musician and composer, has performed all over the world and is Professor of Music at the University of Limerick.

Celtic Joy, priced €12.95 is available now from all good music stores, including Eason's, HMV and Celtic Note. See www.daisydiscs.com for further information.

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