

A Special Series of Music Concerts and Dances
devoted to
**MASTERS OF REGIONAL &
ETHNIC TRADITIONS**

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Concert and Dance

Conjunto Music of Texas and Mexico

ECOS DEL NORTE

American Legion Hall

FRIDAY, MARCH 1

Concert

Chinese Erhu and Missouri Fiddle Music

JI QIU MIN

VESTA JOHNSON

Studio Theatre

SATURDAY, MARCH 16

Concert and Dance

Music from the Tatra Mountains of Poland

POLISH HIGHLANDERS

American Legion Hall

FRIDAY, APRIL 5

Concert

Country and Urban Blues

YANK RACHELL

JOHN CAMPBELL

Studio Theatre

SATURDAY, APRIL 20

Concert and Dance

German-American Music

KARL AND THE COUNTRY

DUTCHMEN

American Legion Hall



FRIDAY, MAY 3

Concert

Music from Puerto Rico and Ireland

ANDANDO SOLO

JIMMY KEANE

Studio Theatre

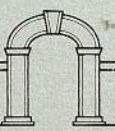
Concert-only programs will be held at the Libertyville High School Studio Theatre, 708 W. Park (Route 176), Libertyville, IL.

Concert/Dances will be held at the American Legion Hall, 715 N. Milwaukee (Route 21) in Libertyville. Concert/Dance programs will feature a concert followed by a participatory dance with demonstrations and basic instruction. All events will begin at 8:00 p.m.

For tickets or other information call:

(708) 367-0707.

This series is supported in part by grants from Baxter Healthcare Corporation, the National Endowment for the Arts and by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.


DAVID N. ADLER
CULTURAL CENTER

ANDANDO SOLO and JIMMY KEANE:

TRADITIONAL MUSIC IN A NEW GENERATION

The post-World War II generation-- those frequently hailed as the baby boomers-- grew up in a world that was proclaimed a global village. We were told that in a few important ways we were forging common bonds with our peers in other corners of the world, all the while becoming less like our elders here at home. But not all of us turned our backs on tradition, nor did we all slip into the role imagined for us by the mass-media-- that of homogeneous global consumers. Nevertheless, we baby boomers have left our mark on our inherited traditions by selectively adapting them to the machinery of modernism and by actively embracing cultural diversity.

The current state of traditional music illustrates well how the building of communal identities has become equal parts improvisation and cultural continuity. The performers featured on this program are as much harbingers of a new musical world order as they are guardians of a cherished past.

The ultimate roots of the music to be heard tonight reach deep into places far from the Upper Midwest. Traditional Irish music developed in the communal life of rural villages. Yet in spite of its peasant origins, Irish music persevered and was revitalized in the early years of this century in urban immigrant communities in North America, particularly in Chicago. Similarly rural in origin, Puerto Rican music is a compound of Native, African, and Spanish sounds, a mix that was forged in the crucible of European colonialism in Central and South America and the Caribbean. What is less well known is that certain North American cities have in later years provided the impetus and inspiration for new shapings of older Latin sounds. *Salsa*, for example, is a modern pan-Latin style, based on traditional styles, that was developed largely in New York's Puerto Rican community.

Jimmy Keane is one of the most celebrated Irish musicians to come out of Chicago. Like his frequent compatriot, Liz Carroll, he was one of the few of his generation to take an interest in traditional music; one of the few, that is, before the Irish music revival took off in the mid-1970s. By that time, Jimmy was already an accomplished performer and a recognized champion (he won All-Ireland five times before the seventies ran their course), though still quite young.

Born in London in 1958, he spent his very early years in Ireland before his family moved to Chicago in 1962. His father's family were all singers, and so he was well-steeped in traditions of music-making centered around the home. Being from Connemara in the West, where the Irish tongue has continued to thrive, his father James sang in the intricately embellished Gaelic singing style known as *sean nos*. Young Jimmy took an early interest in that other Connemara favorite, the

accordion, especially as it was played locally by Joe Cooley. However, Jimmy adopted as his own the piano accordion, rather than the two-row button box more commonly found in Connemara.

Although his talents were well-nourished in Chicago's lively Irish music community, Jimmy has in the last decade developed a musical identity that reaches far beyond the Midwest. He has recently been playing in a trio with Mick Moloney, an Irishman living in Philadelphia, and Robbie O'Connell, who lives near Boston. They occasionally join forces with a few other players and a step-dancer or two, as a way of continuing the acclaimed *Green Fields of America* tours organized by Mick Moloney in the '70s and early '80s. In fact, the trio chose that name for their ensemble and for the most recent of the three albums they've recorded for Green Linnet (a fourth is in the works).

Playing in an ensemble spread across a good part of the U.S. has expanded Jimmy Keane's world greatly, when compared to the home-based tradition represented by his father, or to the local sessions that are the heart of Irish music in Chicago. Although he has traveled far, Jimmy's playing largely remains close to the traditional aesthetic. He is, in fact, adding to the tradition by composing new tunes that retain "the source," the structure and flavor of traditional Irish music. Still, he admits that it is fun to stretch the boundaries and experiment a bit, for "any young musician, especially over here, is influenced by all sorts of other music, both consciously and unconsciously."

Accompanying Jimmy Keane are Bud Kelly, a *bodhran*-playing Scotsman, and Dennis Cahill, guitarist and founding member of Midnight Court, a Celtic rock band that leans heavily toward traditional Irish music.

Andando Solo, from Milwaukee, presents the music of Puerto Rico and of the wider Latin world. The group was started in 1978 to represent Latin music at a multi-cultural program organized by Milwaukee's Performing Arts Center. In the succeeding years, they have performed most often for Anglo audiences, and have developed a program that includes explanations in English of their songs, as well as of the instruments and styles that they use.

Filipe Rodriguez plays guitar and provides the lead vocals; Victor Manuel Narvaez, along with Angel Sanchez and Jose Negro, provide percussion on congas, bongos, claves, campanas, and a variety of other rhythm instruments. Puerto Rico is the homeland of the two remaining founders of the group, while the two younger members were born in Puerto Rican communities on the mainland. Felipe, for example, was born in Puerto Rico in 1950, and came to the States in 1957. Angel, on the other hand, began playing with the group in 1981 when he was only nine.

The traditional music of Puerto Rico is quite varied. Their program includes *jibaro* music, which is largely Spanish in origin, as well as the more African sounds of *la bomba* and *la plena*. *Jibaro* is the music of the highland farming district in the interior, while the heavily African-influenced styles flourished in the coastal regions. *Jibaro* traditionally made use of stringed instruments, like the

guitar and *cuatro*, and small percussion instruments, such as the *guiro* and maracas. *La bomba* and *la plena*, to the contrary, make heavy use of various types of drums.

Firmly rooted in the styles and instrumentations of their homeland, *Andando Solo* has developed an extensive, but selective, pan-Latin repertoire. They play songs from such writers as Victor Jara and Violetta Parra from Chile, Silvio Rodriguez from Cuba, and Ataulapa Yupanqui from Argentina. When doing a song from another Latin culture, they strive to remain as close as possible to the original style. Thus they stay away from styles that rely on flutes or accordions (as in Andean and Mexican music, respectively) and are attracted more toward songs that are complementary to Puerto Rican idioms. That they are able to play a Chilean or Cuban song as if it were one of their own is partly a testimony to the pervasive influence of both African and Spanish cultures throughout South and Central America and the Caribbean.

The group's pan-Latin repertoire also witnesses to a modern development in South American and Caribbean folk music. They represent the *Movimiento de la Nueva Cancion*, the New Song Movement that stresses songs with a message. This movement can be dated to 1967 when a festival held in Cuba brought together performers from a number of Latin cultures. What is new in the New Song Movement is not the music itself, but the fact that artists have tried to transcend narrow national boundaries while embracing the larger common symbols of being Latino in a hemisphere dominated by the political program and economic interests of the United States.

As exponents of both the multi-faceted traditions of their homeland and the consciousness-raising music of the activist New Song Movement, this quartet from Puerto Rico and Milwaukee finds itself somewhere between authentically traditional and the urbane hipness of *salsa*. As residents of a Spanish-speaking *barrio* in the global village, they seek to expand the boundaries that confine them while still remaining true to their source.

--by Paul L. Tyler

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