

Tune of the Month

By Amy Shaw

In February, I spent ten days on the Dingle Peninsula. Some of the best music I heard there was at a CD release featuring the concertina duo, Jack Talty and Cormac Begley. Their excellent recording, *Na Fir Bolg*, is the source for this month's tunes. As the second son of accordion player Brendan Begley, Cormac has deep roots in West Kerry. Jack Talty hails from Lissycasey in West Clare. Both Cormac and Jack are in demand as performers and teachers. Cormac organizes concerts of traditional music in three churches in the west of Ireland, and this album was recorded in one of them, the acoustically wonderful St. Nicholas' Collegiate Church in Galway. There's no accompaniment, so it's all concertinas, all the time, and it's great. Cormac has quite a collection of concertinas, and the notes state, "...we wanted to present the music styles of west Clare and west Kerry using a number of concertinas ranging over five octaves... We have avoided the use of editing and studio manipulation; what you hear is what you get – warts and all!" I detect no warts, myself.

After eight years of writing this column, I have finally selected some set dances. A set dance is a type of tune which was composed or arranged to accompany a specially choreographed dance. Because they were made to fit a particular dance, these tunes often deviate from the usual structure of two 16-bar parts. An *Súisín Bán*, for example, has two parts, each 12 bars long. The *Galtee Hunt* has a longer second part of 24 bars. Cormac and Jack, having access to such a variety of concertinas, recorded these tunes in F; I have transcribed them in the more usual key of G. They credit an old recording of the famed Castle Ceili Band as their source for these tunes. In fact, that recording was made while our own Paddy O'Brien was a member of the band.

An Súisín Bán The White Blanket

Usual disclaimers: Any transcription errors are my own. The notation here is not meant to be a substitute for listening. It is simply an aid to learning the tune.

Musical notation for "An Súisín Bán" (The White Blanket). The piece is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 82 beats per minute. It consists of two 12-bar parts. The first part begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' above the notes) and repeat signs. The second part follows a similar structure with repeat signs and triplet markings.

The Galtee Hunt

Musical notation for "The Galtee Hunt". The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of two parts: a first part of 16 bars and a second part of 24 bars. The notation includes triplet markings (indicated by a '3' above the notes) and repeat signs. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Rhythm: Set dance

Source: Jack Talty and Cormac Begley, *Na Fir Bolg* (2011), track 5