

Jackie Daly & Matt Cranitch



For many years, **Jackie Daly** (accordion) and **Matt Cranitch** (fiddle) have been among the foremost interpreters of the rich Sliabh Luachra tradition of instrumental music. The unique cultural area on the borders of northwest Cork and east Kerry provides a special repertoire of tunes as well as a very distinctive style of playing, and has long been a source of inspiration for both Jackie and Matt. Through their respective performances over many years, they have established enviable individual reputations in the world of Irish traditional music. Together however, the vibrant music that they create displays an additional collaborative dimension. They have toured extensively in many countries, performing individually, with various groups, and together. In 2011, they featured on two tours in the US as part of *Imagine Ireland*, the year-long celebration of Irish arts in the US.

Their CD, ***The Living Stream***, issued in 2010, draws very much from the Sliabh Luachra tradition, and features fourteen tracks, mostly unaccompanied. However, on a number of selections, accompaniment is provided by Paul De Grae (guitar) and Bríd Cranitch (piano). This recording, which is considered by Irish Music Magazine to be “a treasure”, attests in a very comprehensive manner to the continuing relevance of the ‘living stream’ of traditional music in Ireland today. In the booklet accompanying the album, Jackie Small, of the Irish Traditional Music Archive, states the following:

On this CD, two of the most prestigious performers of Irish traditional music, Matt Cranitch and Jackie Daly, join together to celebrate their common musical heritage – the Sliabh Luachra tradition. Each in his own right has had a long and distinguished career in Irish music; each has left a lasting influence on that tradition.”

We hear sparkling dance tunes in all the favourite rhythms of Sliabh Luachra – polkas, jigs, slides, hornpipes and reels. An integral part of the Sliabh Luachra tradition was a wonderfully rich culture of playing slow airs, and both the musicians on this CD are acknowledged masters of the slow air. This CD contains a superb example of slow-air playing from each of them.

Jackie Daly (accordion)

The words 'Button Accordion' and 'Jackie Daly' are synonymous in the world of Irish traditional music. Described in the New York Times as "probably the best accordionist in Ireland", Jackie was born in Kanturk, Co. Cork, where he grew up surrounded by the rich music tradition of Sliabh Luachra. One of the greatest influences on his early musical development was Ballydesmond fiddle-player, Jim Keefe, a pupil of the renowned Sliabh Luachra fiddle-master, Pádraig O'Keefe. Over the years, Jackie's lifelong affinity with fiddle-music has resulted in highly-acclaimed albums featuring fiddle and accordion – with the late Cork-based musician Séamus Creagh, with Kevin Burke, and now with Matt Cranitch. Jackie was a central figure in some of the most dominant groups playing Irish music in recent times. His performances with bands such as De Danann, Patrick Street, Buttons and Bows, Arcady, Reel Union and Kinvara all attest to his wonderful music and versatility. However, it is the style and repertoire of the Sliabh Luachra tradition that has made the most significant impression on his accordion-playing, a fact well exemplified through his performances and recordings. He has toured extensively and has also taught. In 2005, he received the TG4 Gradam Ceoil (National Music Award), and, in 2009, the Kanturk Arts Festival Award.

Matt Cranitch (fiddle)

Matt Cranitch is renowned as a fiddle-player and teacher, both at home in Ireland and abroad. He has performed extensively at concerts and festivals, on radio and television, and has presented lectures, master-classes and workshops on various aspects of Irish music. He has won All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil titles, as well as *The Fiddler of Dooney* and *Oireachtas Crotty Cup*. Author of *The Irish Fiddle Book*, first published in 1988 and now in its fourth edition, he has also contributed to other books on Irish traditional music. He has made various albums including three with *Sliabh Notes*, in addition to *Éistigh Seal* which consists entirely of slow airs. His most recent recording is *The Living Stream* with Jackie Daly. He is an authority on the music of Sliabh Luachra, and received a PhD from the University of Limerick for his study on the fiddle-playing tradition of this region. A long-time consultant for the *Geantraí* series on TG4, he is also an advisor to the Arts Council *Deis* scheme for the traditional arts, and has served on the board of the Irish Traditional Music Archive (2007–2010). In 2003, he received the Hall of Fame Award from University College Cork where he currently teaches a number of courses in Irish traditional music.