
MOHAWK VALLEY IRISH CULTURAL EVENTS NEWSLETTER

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Maura O'Connell, Paul Brady Together at The Egg

On Saturday, October 23rd, two of Ireland's most revered singers – Maura O'Connell and Paul Brady -- will join forces for a very special concert at The Egg in Albany. From her first recorded appearance as a lead vocalist with the celebrated traditional Celtic group DeDanaan in 1981, to her Grammy-nominated 2009 CD, "Naked With Friends," Maura O'Connell has captured the hearts of audiences around the world with her unmistakable deep, rich voice and her bold and insightful interpretations. Fresh off a four-date stint as the featured vocalist with Cherish the Ladies, O'Connell returns to the site of her triumphant Christmas show last December. Paul Brady is one of Ireland's most enduringly popular singers/songwriters, having honed his Irish chops in the 60s and 70s with such outfits as The Johnstons and later, Planxty. His songs have been covered by everyone from Maura O'Connell and Mary Black, to Garth Brooks and Bonnie Raitt. In 2009, Brady received the degree of Doctor of Letters from the University of Ulster in recognition of his "...services to traditional Irish music and songwriting." Tickets for this special 7:30 PM show are \$29, and can be purchased online at the Egg's [web site](#), in person at the Box Office, or by calling 518-473-1845. The Egg is located at the Center for the Performing Arts in the Empire State Plaza in Albany.



Eileen Ivers, One More Time...

Admit it, we got spoiled. We saw Eileen Ivers and Immigrant Soul at the Great American Irish Festival in July, at the Sterling Celtic Rock Festival weeks later, and at the Smith Opera House and Homer's Center for the Arts... well, it must have seemed that we could catch her anytime we wanted to. Ah, if life was only that



easy. No, the truth is we were lucky (and she likes upstate New York), because there is only one more upstate show left until 2011. On Friday, October 1st, Eileen and her fabulous band will be playing an 8 PM show at the Hunt Union Ballroom at Oneonta State College. Eileen Ivers has been called a "sensation" by Billboard magazine and "the Jimi Hendrix of the violin" by The New York Times. Nine Time All-Ireland Fiddle Champion, London Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony at The Kennedy Center, Boston Pops, musical star of Riverdance, The Chieftains, Hall and Oates, Afrocelts, Patti Smith, Paula Cole, Al Di Meola, Steve Gadd, founding member of Cherish the Ladies, performed for Presidents and Royalty worldwide -- this is a short list of accomplishments, headliners, tours and

affiliations that have established her as the pre-eminent exponent of the Irish fiddle in the world today. The daughter of Irish immigrants, Eileen Ivers grew up in the culturally diverse neighborhood of the Bronx, New York. Rooted in Irish traditional music since the age of eight, Eileen proceeded to win nine All-Ireland fiddle championships, a tenth on tenor banjo and over 30 championship medals, making her one of the most awarded persons ever to compete in these prestigious competitions. Her virtuosity is matched nearly note for note by her phenomenal band (Greg Anderson on guitar, bouzouki and backing vocals, Leo Traversa on bass guitar, Tommy McDonnell on percussion and vocals, and Buddy Connolly on accordion, whistles and keyboards); making for a truly memorable night of outstanding music. Tickets for the show are \$25 or \$6 for students, and can be purchased via by calling (607) 433-7252, or via email; Oneonta_concert_association@yahoo.com. The Hunt Union Ballroom is located on Ravine Parkway in Oneonta.

Caffè Lena Welcomes John Doyle

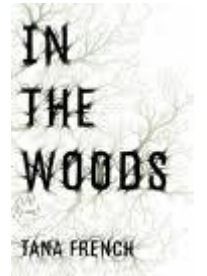
On Friday, October 8th, multi-talented Irish musician, singer and songwriter John Doyle will be coming to the oldest continuously operating coffeehouse in the United States, Caffè Lena, in Saratoga Springs. A highly accomplished guitarist with a trademark style of accompaniment, Doyle spent four years with the Irish/American band Solas, toured extensively with Liz Carroll, and is now an active solo artist. His skill as a guitarist, songwriter, vocalist, and producer make him one of the most in-demand artists in folk and traditional Irish music today. This year, he received a Grammy nomination for his album “Double Play” (also featuring musical partner Liz Carroll), and he was selected to entertain President Barack Obama at the annual St. Patrick's Day luncheon at the Capital Building. Tickets for the 8 PM show are \$20 in advance, or \$22 at the door. The door and the rest of the building can be found at 47 Phila St. in Saratoga Springs.



Book Review
“In The Woods”
By Mark Sisti

OK, let's get this out of the way immediately: Tana French can flat-out write:

“Picture a summer stolen whole from some coming-of-age film set in small-town 1950s. This is none of Ireland's subtle seasons mixed for a connoisseur's palate, watercolor nuances within a pinch-sized range of cloud and soft rain; this is summer full-throated and extravagant in a hot pure silkscreen blue. This summer explodes on your tongue tasting of chewed blades of long grass, your own clean sweat, Marie biscuits with butter squirting through the holes and shaken bottles of red lemonade picnicked in tree houses. It tingles on your skin with BMX wind in your face, ladybug feet up your arm; it packs every breath full of mown grass and billowing wash lines; it chimes and fountains with birdcalls, bees, leaves and football-bounces and skipping-chants, One! two! three! This summer will never end. It starts every day with a shower of Mr. Whippy notes and your best friend's knock at the door, finishes it with long slow twilight and mothers silhouetted in doorways calling you to come in, through the bats shrilling among the black lace trees. This is Everysummer decked in all its best glory.



That passage – one of the most evocative portraits of childhood summer I've read – is in the prologue, and the excellence of the writing never lets up from there. So the quality of the writing will not be your problem with Ms. French's debut novel, “In The Woods.” That's not to say, however, that you won't have a problem with it. You know how the customer reviews on the Amazon homepage give you a breakdown of the ratings each book gets? Last time I looked, “In The Woods” had 115 five star ratings and 96 one star. To say there is no consensus is a marvel of understatement. Me, I liked it, and liked it a lot. But if you don't, don't say you weren't warned.

As is often the case with mysteries, it's difficult to discuss it without ruining the surprises that give mysteries their charm, but I'll try to summarize as much as possible. Twenty years previous, three children entered the woods just outside Dublin. Two never returned and the third was found clinging to a tree trunk, his sneakers filled with blood, unable to tell police anything about what happened to his friends. Now a police detective with a new name and his past hidden, that survivor is assigned to investigate the murder of a 12-year-old girl in those same woods. Convinced it must have something to do with the earlier tragedy, Rob persuades his partner Cassie, who knows his secret, not to reveal his connection to their superiors.

From there we follow their investigation as they try to solve not one mystery but two. While I'm not a fan of police procedural novels, I found this to be much more engaging than most, with a great deal of humor and humanity that I generally find missing in that genre. The brain-storming scenes between Rob and Cassie (and later their new partner Sam) have a likeable charm, while the suspense builds throughout to the point where it becomes a very difficult book to put down. Events are filtered through Rob's perception so the reader shares his feelings of dread and his gradual loss of self-control. Many of his actions may infuriate you with their sheer stupidity, but it must be remembered at all times that he is slowly losing his grip. Put in its simplest form, don't expect rational actions from someone who is thinking irrationally.

I did have a few problems with the book, and not the same ones other readers have had. For one thing, the writing, while it used all the right phrases, never seemed "Irish" enough. Similarly, the musings of the main male character sometimes came off as the way female authors believe men think. It's a hard thing to explain; it's like hearing someone speak perfect English, but with a slight accent you can't quite put your finger on.

Whatever its flaws, it's remarkably well written, with a precision that's almost surgical, and the characters are vivid and believable. "In the Woods" works equally well as a police procedural drama, as a psychological study, as an exploration of character and relationships, or as a novel of gripping suspense. While it's a long book, Ms. French manages to keep the tension high throughout. And it gives you a clever little mystery to solve at the same time. (I solved it halfway through. I was also 100% wrong, which is either a testament to Ms. French's powers of deceptive misdirection or my abject stupidity. Your choice; I know what I'm going with.)

(Special thanks to marilyn@stny.rr.com, who recommended this book. For your further edification, a second part, with spoilers, follows.)

SPOILER ALERT – *While there are no true spoilers in here, there are a few things that could give the more perspicacious of you (go ahead, look it up; I'll wait) a hint that might send you in a direction you wouldn't have gone otherwise. If you've already read the book, or after your finish it, check out these observations and let me know if you think I was extraordinarily perceptive or full of crap. Your choice; I know what I'm going with.*

Still don't get it? Try this quote: "I had learned early to assume something dark and lethal hidden at the heart of anything I loved. When I couldn't find it, I responded, bewildered and wary, in the only way I knew how: by planting it there myself." I would also mention that there are two separate groups of a trio of friends in the book. In both cases, two grow closer while the third is left behind. Let's just say I'm not holding out great hope for a long life for Sam.

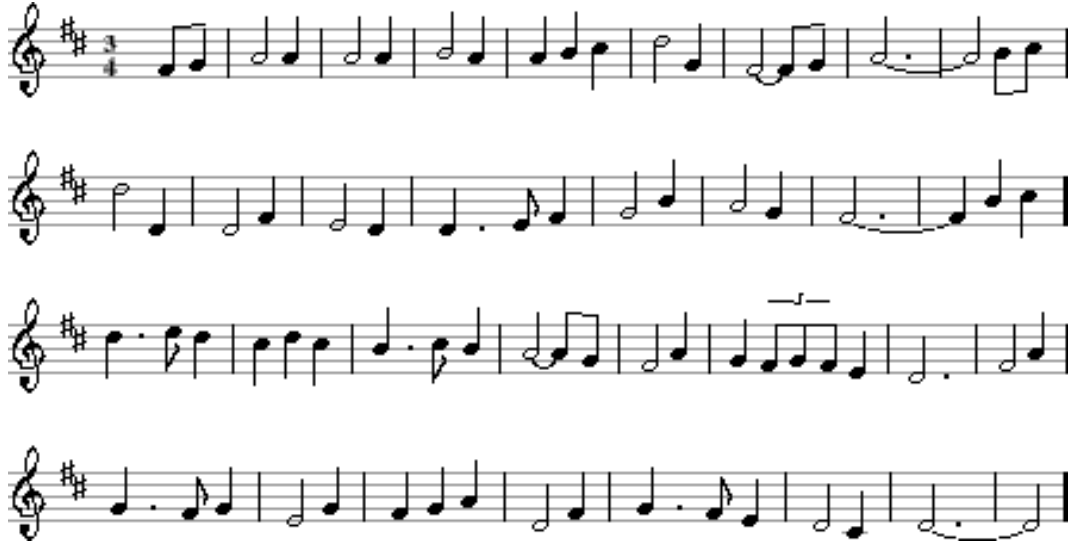
While I'm not going to come right out and tell you what I think (As you know, I'm shy about giving my opinion and would never consider doing that) I would suggest that you re-read the passage where Cassie describes the psychopathic personality and see if it applies to anyone you've encountered in the book. Then re-read the first chapter. I think you will get an inkling of what happened in the woods all those years ago.

For and away the most vociferous complaints about this book concern the author's inability or unwillingness to tie up loose ends, with one of the mysteries at the core of the story going unsolved. I don't agree; I believe that scattered throughout the book are enough clues to allow you to come to your own conclusions. She may not have tied everything up for you in a nice pretty bow, but I think she's scattered enough ribbons for you to do it yourself. Or to put it another way, she may not have served it on a silver platter, but she put all of the courses out on the buffet.

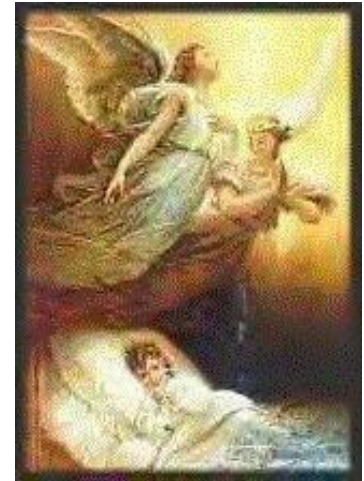
"In The Woods" Part II (w/spoilers)

Craobh Dugan “Tune of the Month” – The Castle of Dromore

“Castle of Dromore,” or “October Winds” as it is sometimes called, is a beautiful waltz; a child’s lullaby with a prayer for safety against the wild weather and “Clan Eoin’s wild Banshee” (which I’m sure set the child totally at ease; in much the same reassuring manner as did the first prayer you were ever taught: “...if I should die before I wake...”). While much academic discourse has ensued as to exactly where this castle is or was... we find it more preferable to imagine it wherever and whenever we want it to be.



The October winds lament
Around the Castle of Dromore,
Yet peace is in its lofty halls,
My loving treasure store.
Though autumn leaves may droop and die
A bud of spring are you.
Sing hush-a-bye loo, la loo, lo lan,
Sing hush-a-bye loo, la lo.



Bring no ill winds to hinder us,
My helpless babe and me,
Dread spirit of Blackwater banks,
Clan Owen's wild banshee.
And Holy Mary pitying us
In heav'n for grace doth sue.
Sing hush-a-bye loo, la loo, lo lan,
Sing hush-a-bye loo, la lo.



Take time to thrive, my rose of hope,
In the garden of Dromore.
Take heed, young eagle, till your wings
Are feathered fit to soar.
A little rest and then the world
Is full of work to do
Sing hush-a-bye loo, la loo, lo lan,
Sing hush-a-bye loo, la lo.

From the Irish Kitchen (*recipes suitable for clipping*)

This month's recipe – "Hot Bloody Mary Soup"

Hey, I can steal recipes as well as Beth can! This one comes from the website of Coleman's in Syracuse.

INGREDIENTS:

2 ripe tomatoes, halved	2 teaspoons horseradish sauce
2 red chilies, halved and seeded	2 tablespoons dry sherry
2 tsp. confectionary sugar	4 tablespoons vodka
2 tbsp. olive oil	4 small celery stalks with leaves
1 pint vegetable stock	celery, salt, pepper
1 tbsp. tomato puree	4 thin lemon slices

Pre-heat oven to 400F. Place the tomatoes cut-side up in a large roasting tin with chilies and sprinkle over the sugar and some salt and pepper. Drizzle over the oil and roast for 30 minutes until softened and nicely browned. Puree the roasted tomatoes in a blender with a little stock until smooth. For a really smooth soup, pass the puree through a sieve into a large pan, otherwise, transfer straight to the pan. Stir in the remaining stock and the tomato puree and heat gently through, without boiling. Stir in the horseradish, sherry and vodka and check the seasoning. Place a celery stalk in each of the four bowls and ladle over the soup. Grind over black pepper, float a slice of lemon on each and serve.

If you try this recipe, feel free to share your experience with all of us; and of course, if you have a recipe you'd like to share, please contact Beth Loftis at bloftis@ymail.com.

RANDOM RAMBLINGS

- ✚ **Traditional Irish Music Session Kicks off in Rome** As someone (Maxwell Smart, I'll bet) once said, "As one door closes, another door opens." And so it was that in the same month that Mike Carroll had to make the sad announcement that the monthly session at the Albany Street Cafe was ending, Craobh Dugan, the local branch of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, successfully tested out its first Traditional Irish Music Session at the Mill, on the corner of East Dominick St and Fifth St. in Rome. This is a traditional Irish session, with traditional instruments (fiddle, flute, guitar, banjo, accordion, etc.), and all are welcome to come and play or learn the music of our Irish heritage. For more information, including a tunebook of tunes commonly played at such sessions, check out their website, www.uticairish.org.
- ✚ **"Nuacht as Craobh Dugan"---news from the Dugan Branch** Chris Hoke of Craobh Dugan reports that they hosted a brand new music session in Rome on September 22, at The Mill on E. Dominick St. "We were very pleased with the turnout!" says Chris. "There were 13 musicians, including a concertina player from Oneida plus a fiddler and two guitar players from Vernon. Just as important, there was a nice crowd there who really enjoyed the traditional music. So...we will be going back to The Mill on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. We are hoping to draw in some musicians from the western part of Oneida County, and it looks like we are off to a great start! Thanks to Bill Fahy and Mike Hoke who worked together to set this up in Rome." She also wanted to remind us all that their Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Friday October 15 at 6:00 PM at the Seton Center of Our Lady of Lourdes Church on Genesee St in Utica, and that it is open to all members and anyone else interested in Comhaltas. Dates of interest this month are: Oct 5, Open Session at the Nail Creek Pub on Varick St. in Utica, 7:30 PM; Oct 15, Annual General Meeting, Seton Center at 6 PM; Oct 20, Open Session at The Mill on E. Dominick St Rome, 7:30 PM.

Celtic Club Calendar Finally, here's the Irish Musical and Cultural calendar for October:

Oct 1	Eileen Ivers	SUNY College at Oneonta	Oneonta, NY	8 PM	\$25; \$6 students
Oct 1	Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
Oct 1	"Mostly Irish" Monthly Jam	Irish American Club	Amsterdam NY	7:30 PM	Free
Oct 1,2	Neil Emberg	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9 PM	Free
Oct 3	Donal O'Shaughnessey & Bryan Hyland	Coleman's Irish Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Oct 4	Trad Irish Music Session	The Susquehanna Café	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Oct 5	"Nail Creek Sessions"	Nail Creek Pub	Utica	7:30-10 PM	Free
Oct 7	Traditional Irish Session	Marcellus Legion Hall	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Oct 8	Hair of the Dog	Oneonta Theater	Oneonta	Happy Hour, 5-7; show at 8	\$5
Oct 8	John Doyle	Caffè Lena	Saratoga Springs	8 PM	\$20 adv, \$22 door
Oct 9	Trad Irish Music Session	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
Oct 9	Hair of the Dog	The Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8 PM	\$13, res. req'd
Oct 10	Freeborn Men	Coleman's Irish Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Oct 11	Trad Irish Music Session	The Susquehanna Café	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Oct 14	Traditional Irish Session	Marcellus Legion Hall	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Oct 15	Screaming Orphans	The Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	9 PM	\$10, res. req'd
Oct 17	Syracuse Irish Session	Johnston's Bally Bay Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Oct 17	Blarney Rebel Band	Coleman's Irish Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Oct 18	Trad Irish Music Session	The Susquehanna Café	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Oct 20	Traditional Irish Session	The Mill	Rome, NY	7:30 PM	Free
Oct 20	Traditional Irish Session	Marcellus Legion Hall	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Oct 22	Donal O'Shaughnessy	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
Oct 22	St. James Gate	The Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	9 PM	\$5
Oct 23	Trad Irish Music Session	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
Oct 23	Maura O'Connell & Paul Brady	The Egg	Albany, NY	7:30 PM	\$29.50
Oct 23	Donal O'Shaughnessy	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9 PM	Free
Oct 24	Flyin' Column	Coleman's Irish Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Oct 25	Trad Irish Music Session	The Susquehanna Café	Bainbridge NY	5:30-8:30 PM	Free
Oct 28	Traditional Irish Session	Marcellus Legion Hall	Marcellus, NY	4-7 PM	Free
Oct 30	Train of Fools	The Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	9 PM	\$5

If you have anything you want to share with us, feel free to send it to us (sistia@roadrunner.com, bloftis@ymail.com or marksisti@roadrunner.com), and we'll be happy to include it. As always, while we try to get things – prices, places, genders, etc. -- as accurate as we can, sometimes we make mistakes. It always makes sense to call ahead to confirm some of these further-out trips.