

Tomáseen Foleys A Celtic Christmas

BIOGRAPHIES

TOMÁSEEN FOLEY: Director, Seanchaí

tomaseenfoley.com

Tomáseen Foley grew up on a small farm in the remote parish of Teampall an Ghleanntáin in the West of Ireland - where storytelling 'was as natural as breathing.' Each year from Thanksgiving through the Christmas season, his show, *Tomáseen Foley's A Celtic Christmas*, plays to critical acclaim and packed concert halls all over the US – from California to Maine. In conjunction with the Omaha Symphony and other orchestras, he performs in *Celtic Journey* - as well as occasional performances with Apollo's Fire (Cleveland's Grammy-winning baroque orchestra), and *An Irish Rambling House*, with many of the performers from *A Celtic Christmas*. He has released three CDs: *A Celtic Christmas: Parcel From America*, a live recording, *The Priest and the Acrobat*, and his latest, *Celtic Knots: An Irish Love Story*, Irish music woven around the poems and love story of William Butler Yeats. "He is a master of the Irish narrative and a keeper of the flame for a priceless piece of Irish culture." - Rego Irish Records

WILLIAM COULTER: Music Director, Guitar

williamcoulterguitar.com

Music director for *Tomáseen Foley's A Celtic Christmas* since 1998, William Coulter is an internationally acclaimed, Grammy-award winning master of the steel-string guitar. He has several Gourd Music label recordings, including his most recent, *The Rolling Waves*, a collection of original arrangements of folk and original music. Coulter has performed with the Santa Cruz Baroque Festival, Grammy-award winning Apollo's Fire and many other ensembles. In March of 2016, he debuted *Celtic Journey*, a full-length pops concert with the Omaha Symphony orchestra.

Collaborations have been a mainstay of his career including tours and recordings with Gourd Music artists Neal Hellman and Barry and Shelley Phillips; classical guitar virtuoso Benjamin Verdery, and Irish flute wizard Brian Finnegan. Tours have taken him around the states and to Ireland, Europe, Taiwan, New Zealand, Chile, and most recently Australia. Coulter teaches classical guitar at UC Santa Cruz and elsewhere. He has earned music degrees from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

BRIAN BIGLEY: Uilleann Pipes, Irish Flute, Whistles, Traditional Irish Dance

brianbigleymusic.com

Brian Bigley has studied the uilleann pipes for over thirty years as a player, as well as a sought-out maker, of the instrument. He has toured North America and Europe extensively as both a musician and a dancer, appearing in shows such as the Omaha Symphony's *Celtic Journey* and Grammy-winning Apollo's Fire production *Christmas on Sugarloaf Mountain* - the recording of which made it to number three on the Billboard Charts. Brian competed with great distinction at the World Irish Dance Championships and has placed second in the senior uilleann piping competition at the All Ireland Fleadh Cheoil. He has produced and is touring his show called *An Irish Rambling House* and has several recordings available on CD. Brian lives near Cleveland, Ohio, with his fiddler wife, Kristen, and their dancing children, James and Kathleen.

EIMEAR ARKINS: Multi-Instrumentalist, Singer, Irish Dance

eimeararkins.com

Eimear Arkins is a multi-instrumentalist, singer and dancer from Ruan, County Clare, in the west of Ireland. She holds eleven solo All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil titles and has competed in all Ireland, European and World Dance Championships. She has toured with *Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann* throughout Ireland, Britain, North America and Canada, and represented Ireland in France at Rennes Expo; in Spain in *La Noche Negra*, in Shanghai, China at World Expo 2010, and in Milan, Italy at World Expo 2015.

Eimear was selected to be part of the Comhaltas National Folk Orchestra of Ireland, and for over eight years has performed with the renowned show, *Brú Ború*. She has toured and performed with numerous groups, including *Cherish the Ladies*, *The Paul Brock Band*, *Trinity Irish Dance Ensemble* and *Téada*.

She teaches at St. Louis Irish Arts and has given many workshops in the US and Canada. Eimear was awarded *Newcomer of the Year 2019* by liveIreland, and her debut solo album is entitled *What's Next*. "She is a lovely singer, wonderful fiddle player and a truly accomplished step dancer. Triple threat time! Count us as major new fans of her and what will surely be a terrific career. Eimear Arkins—remember THAT name!" *Bill Margeson, liveIRELAND*.

MARCUS DONNELLY: Irish Dance

From Ireland to Luxembourg and from Moscow to Paris, Marcus Donnelly's leading performances with shows such as *Ragús*, *Rhythm of the Dance*, *Celtic Legends*, and most recently in the U.S. with *Celtic Crossroads*, have created one of the most exhilarating, truly creative Irish dancers performing anywhere today. He first started dancing at the age of ten, in second-hand dance shoes his father bought for fifteen shillings on a visit to Dublin, and went on to compete

with distinction in the All-Ireland and World Dance Championships before becoming a full-time professional dancer at the age of sixteen.

NATALIE WAGNER: Irish Dance

Natalie Wagner started Irish dancing at the age of twelve and immediately fell in love with the art. She competed with great distinction in Regional and North American Irish Dance Championships, including competitions in Canada and Ireland. Her passion for dance led to further education in ballet and modern dance. She has been delighted to dance in *Tomáseen Foley's A Celtic Christmas* since 2021.