



**ANNENBERG CENTER**  
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

**12/13 Season** SEPT-JAN



# Cherish the Ladies Celtic Christmas

**Joanie Madden** flute, whistle, vocals

**Mary Coogan** guitar, mandolin, banjo

**Mirella Murray** piano, accordion

**Grainne Murphy** fiddle

**Kathleen Boyle** piano

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Sunday, December 16 @ 7 PM

Zellerbach Theatre

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## Program

Orchestra Plays 3-4 Numbers

The Wexford Carol / Fir And Far

The First Noel

Henry Mcdermott Roe / The Holly And The Berry

All On A Christmas Morning

On Christmas Night / Charles O'Connor

*-Intermission-*

Distressed Soldier / Angels We Have Heard / Fairy Reel

The Homesteaders First Christmas

Ballad Of The Foxhunter

Dan Stacey Solo (Orchestra Tacit)

Castle Of Dromore

Ding Dong Merrily On High / The Cat's Meow

Oh Holy Night / Killkosh

Hark The Herald Angels Sing / Travellers Set

A Christmas Childhood

Hornpipe (Orchestra Tacit)

Christ Child's Lullaby

What Child Is This? / Bonkers In Yonkers Medley

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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## **Cherish the Ladies**

When describing Cherish the Ladies, the critics say it best—"It is simply impossible to imagine an audience that wouldn't enjoy what they do" (*Boston Globe*), "an astonishing array of virtuosity" (*Washington Post*), "expands the annals of Irish music in America...the music is passionate, tender and rambunctious" (*New York Times*). For the past 27 years, Cherish the Ladies have proven themselves worthy to live up to these accolades and in doing so have become one of the most engaging ensembles in the history of Irish music.

They have grown from a one-time concert concept to an Irish traditional music sensation, literally the most successful and sought-after Irish-American group in Celtic music. Organized by UPenn folklorist/musician Dr. Mick Moloney and sponsored by the Ethnic Folk Arts Center and the National Endowment for the Arts, they began as a concert series featuring the brightest lights in Irish traditional music. Taking their name from the name of a traditional Irish jig, the group initially won recognition as the first and only all-women traditional Irish band. In a relatively short time, they soon established themselves as musicians and performers without peer and have won many thousands of listeners and fans of their music. With their unique spectacular blend of virtuosic instrumental talents, beautiful vocals, captivating arrangements and stunning step dancing, this powerhouse group combines all the facets of Irish traditional culture and puts it forth in an immensely humorous and entertaining package.

The past years have seen the group traveling all over North and South America, the United Kingdom and Europe, Australia and New Zealand performing in the finest concert halls and international festivals. They are equally at home in front of a symphony orchestra, a performing arts center, a folk festival or even the White House.

They have been named Best Musical Group of the Year by the BBC, Entertainment Group of the Year by the *Irish Voice*, the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall's International Group of the Year Award at the Celtic Connections Festival in Scotland and voted the Top North American Celtic act by NPR Radio's *Thistle and Shamrock*. They have shared the stage with such noted entertainers as James Taylor, Joan Baez, Emmy Lou Harris, The Clancy Brothers, Tommy Makem, The Chieftains and dozens of symphony orchestras. *The Celtic Album*, their collaboration with the Boston Pops Symphony, led to a 1999 Grammy® nomination.

The Ladies have recorded 10 highly acclaimed albums. Their quintessential holiday album *On Christmas Night*, was released to rave reviews and was chosen as one of the top Christmas Albums of the Year by the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *The Village Voice* and many other nationally syndicated newspapers.

Cherish the Ladies have appeared on CBS *This Morning*, *Good Morning America*, *Evening at Pops*, C-Span, PBS and National Public Radio in the United States and on BBC and RTE radio and television overseas. At the Summer Olympics in Atlanta, they were chosen to represent Irish music and culture at the Official Cultural Olympiad.

## **Joanie Madden**

Joanie Madden is the award-winning whistle and flute player who has been the leader of Cherish the Ladies since its inception. Born in New York of Irish parents, she is the second oldest of seven children raised in a musical household; her mother Helen, a dancer of traditional sets, hails from Miltown Malbay, County Clare and her father Joe, an All-Ireland Champion on the accordion, comes from Portumna in East Galway.

Madden received her musical training early in life, listening to her father and his friends play music at family gatherings and social events. She began taking lessons from Jack Coen, and within a few short years, she had won the World Championship on both the concert flute and whistle. During that time, she also became the first American to win the coveted Senior All-Ireland Championship on the whistle.

She has amassed a plethora of awards and citations to her credit including the youngest member inducted into both the Irish-American Musicians Hall of Fame and the Comhaltas

Ceoltoiri Hall of Fame, recipient of the Wild Geese Award, voted twice as one of the Top 100 Irish-Americans in the United States and named Traditional Musician of the Year, all for her contributions to promoting and preserving Irish culture in America. In 2010, Madden was forever immortalized on the streets of her native Bronx when she had a street named after her on the Grand Concourse, and in 2011, she was bestowed one of the nation's highest awards as she was chosen for the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, where she joins an illustrious list of distinguished American citizens including six United State Presidents, ambassadors, senators, congressman and Supreme Court judges, all singled out for their exemplary service to the United States.

Madden is in constant demand as a studio musician and has performed on over 100 albums running the gamut from Pete Seeger to Sinead O'Connor. She has played on three Grammy® award-winning albums and her involvement on the Hearts of Space labels' *Celtic Twilight* CD led to a platinum album with over 1,000,000 sales. In the past year, she has toured with the Eagles' Don Henley and was also a featured soloist on the final Lord of the Rings soundtrack.

In addition to her musical virtuosity, she is a gifted composer. Many of her compositions are basic session tunes known throughout the world in traditional music circles and have been recorded by some of Ireland's leading musicians.

Madden is equally loved for her outgoing personality and her stage persona and has been heralded by critics around the globe for her role as front woman for Cherish the Ladies. Noted folklorist, musician and scholar Dr. Mick Moloney calls Madden "a character—one of the greatest you could meet in a long days travel" and presented her with the title the "First Lady of Irish Music."

She is the top selling Irish whistle player in history having sold over 500,000 solo albums. In addition to the 15 albums she has recorded, arranged and produced for Cherish the Ladies, she has also released collaborative acclaimed albums with the group Pride of New York, a duet album with her father Joe Madden and three highly successful solo albums—*A Whistle on the Wind*, *Song of the Irish Whistle* and *Song of the Irish Whistle 2*.

### **Mary Coogan**

Mary Coogan was born in New York and raised in a musical household. Her mother is from County Roscommon and her father is a first generation Irish-American accordion player. Coogan is a self-taught guitar, mandolin and banjo player. She began playing at an early age, listening to various types of acoustic music and is a highly sought after accompanist. She has just finished a recording with her father Jim titled *Passing Time*, featuring renditions of tunes both old and new. Her first solo recording, *Christmas*, has received rave reviews from fans and critics alike. In addition to her musical talents, she also holds her Master's degree in Education and is named in Who's Who Among American Teachers.

### **Mirella Murray**

Mirella Murray grew up in Claddaghduff, near Clifden, on the north west coast of Connemara. Her father John Joe, a notable sean nós dancer, comes from Inishark Island and has a deep understanding of, and love for, traditional music. Mirella learned the piano accordion from Mary Finn, a great player from the musical Finn family of Ballymote, Co. Sligo. She met up with fiddler Liz Kane from Letterfrack, and they played and learned a lot of their music together, going through the Fleadh Cheoil competitions. They won the All-Ireland duet in 1995, while Mirella gained the title on the piano accordion that same year. The pair performed together for years and toured in France and in North America with Comhaltas. They formed the Hyldedoodles, a short-lived band which was featured at the Fiddle and Accordion festival in Shetland and returned to the Folk Festival there the following year.

Later, Murray teamed up with the great fiddle player, Tola Custy, from Co. Clare, since the pair have played all over Ireland and Europe on various tours and festivals. After many years of being coaxed by people, they went on to make an album, *Three Sunsets*, which has received rave reviews and was voted in the top five albums of 2002 by *Irish Times*.

Murray has also toured Austria with the Bumblebees, performed with harpist Laoise Kelly at the International Women's Day Festival in Moscow, played in the Galway Arts Festival 2001-2003 with Laoise and young fiddler Michelle O'Brien, toured with various line-ups in

Scandinavia, Switzerland, Spain and France and also recorded with Laoise on the Geantraí Christmas Special 2001, TG4. From September to November 2002, Murray joined up with the late Johnny Cunningham to perform in the theatrical production, *Peter & Wendy*.

She also has a flair for teaching, and it is a credit to her musicianship that two of her pupils have gained All-Ireland titles. She has accumulated a vast store of tunes from her travels, and musicians such as Sharon Shannon, Lunasa and the Bumblebees credit her as a source for many uncommon melodies.

### **Grainne Murphy**

Grainne Murphy was born in Boston at a time when its Irish music scene was thriving. Her father, played the tin whistle and bodhrán and together with her mother, Joan, passed down a love of Irish music to Murphy and her two brothers. For several years, Murphy took fiddle lessons from 10-time All-Ireland champion, Séamus Connolly, the great fiddle player from Killaloe, County Clare.

At age 15, after earning All-Ireland honors, Murphy recorded an album with her brothers and piano player Peter Barnes and subsequently toured around New England. Following a hiatus from performing music in order to pursue studies in law and literature and, later, a legal career, Murphy moved to New York City where she has since delighted in performing with the some of the finest musicians around. In 2010, she released her debut solo fiddle album, *Short Stories*, to great acclaim from the Irish music press.

Murphy also performs regularly with many of the guest artists on her new album, including Marta Cook, Alan Murray, Anna Colliton, Isaac Alderson and John Redmond.

### **Kathleen Boyle**

From Glasgow, Scotland, Kathleen Boyle comes from a family steeped in the traditional music of Donegal. Her father Hughie is a talented musician and handed down his love of music. Boyle is a talented pianist and accordion player and has won All-Scotland and All-Britain titles on both instruments.

In 1999, Boyle made history as the first graduate gaining a degree in traditional music from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. She is in great demand as a teacher and lecturer on both accordion and piano at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, the National Centre of Excellence in Traditional Music and The Irish Academy of World Music in Limerick University.

Kathleen has performed at Holyrood Palace for His Royal Highness Prince Charles and for Irish President Mary McAleese. She is also a member of the band Dòchas and has toured the UK, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Denmark, Austria, Germany, Sweden, the U.S., Canada and China. Dochas, which has released two albums to much critical acclaim, was voted best new comer at the 2004 Scots Traditional Music Awards and nominated as best folk band in 2006. Kathleen's first solo album, *An Cailín Rua*, or "The Red Haired Girl" was released to rave reviews in 2008. Her latest recording, *Back to Donegal*, is an album she recorded with her father and family members.

### **Dancers**

Cherish the Ladies accesses a roster of regional, national and world champion step dancers who join them in every performance. Their artistry has captivated audiences worldwide.

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