
Bray Arts Journal

Issue 4

December 2010

Volume 16





The cover for this edition of the Bray Arts Journal is an illuminated initial letter 'h' of the antiphon for Vespers on Christmas day: **'Hodie Christus Natus Est'** (Today Christ is born). It was painted by **Francesco Di Giorgio Martini** in the year 1460. Francesco was a visionary Architect, Military Engineer, talented Painter and Sculptor. He worked in the courts of Naples and Milan where he was strongly influenced by Leonardo Da Vinci.

It is interesting to note that Francesco painted this beautiful illumination when he was only 21, the same age as **John Milton** when he, in 1629, wrote his magnificent Ode **'On the Morning of Christ's Nativity'** which opens with the line:-

This is the month, and this the happy morn

Some of the greatest works of art in Painting, Sculptor, Music and Literature have been inspired by the story of the Nativity of Christ.

The words of **'Hodie Christus natus Est'** are from the gospel of St Luke and the sung antiphon dates as far back as the period of Pope Gregory (Gregorian Chant): 590 - 604. It has inspired countless musical settings from Palestrina and Byrd to Francis Poulenc. The words of the antiphon are :

Today Christ is born.
 Today the Savior appeared.
 Today on earth the angels sing,
 archangels rejoice:
 Today the righteous rejoice, saying:
 Glory to God in the highest,
 and on earth peace to people
 of good will.
 Allelui

Preview of Dec Bray Arts Evening

Dec 6th , 8:00 pm

Upstairs at The Martello, Seafront, Bray
 Everyone is welcome: Admission €5 / €4

The Bray Arts committee, as always, has worked hard to ensure that the Christmas Arts Evening will be a memorable one.

Bray Youth Choir

Bray Youth Choir (BYC) was founded in 2004 by **Frank Kelly** to encourage young people in the Bray, South Dublin and North



Frank Kelly

Wicklow areas to get involved in amateur choral singing and to derive the enjoyment, both musically and socially, from working with their peers. They have had tremendous success since and finished runner-up in the RTE TV national Choirs competition 'An Cór' in which choirs put their own arrangements & style on traditional Irish songs. They will be conducted by Frank Kelly.

Lorraine O'Brien

In October 2006 **Lorraine O'Brien** delighted the Bray Arts audience with a rendition of her own composition, a monologue called 'Two Trout on a Draining Board.' For this upcoming Arts Evening Lorraine has come up with another tantalising title of another monologue called **'The Seven Ages of a Shocking Holy Saint'**. Can't wait to hear it.



Eamonn Sweeney * Redmond O'Toole

Demonstrating once again the embarrassment of riches we have



Redmond O'Toole

Eamonn Sweeney

in Bray when it comes to the Arts, two widely acclaimed local musicians **Redmond O'Toole** and **Eamonn Sweeney** have generously offered to play for the Christmas Bray Arts Evening. It is impossible in this brief preview to convey how significant it is to have musicians of this calibre in our midst. It is hard to envisage a better musical treat for this Christmas at Bray Arts.

Aoife Hester

During the Christmas raffle and break the photographs of Aoife will be displayed on video projector. Aoife is currently completing her final year in Visual Communication Design at IADT.

Joe Bollard

Talent! There's no end to it. One of Bray's best loved Musicians, Writer and Broadcaster Joe Bollard will round off the evening with a medley of Christmas songs.



Joe Bollard

Raffle

Apart from the terrific line-up, Bray Arts will also have its usual Christmas Raffle.

If for any reason you can't come to our Arts Evening, the committee take this opportunity to wish you a very happy Christmas and a great New Year despite the difficulties facing us all.

Review of November Bray Arts Evening

With the glow of success from the Halloween cake sale and workshops the previous day, Bray arts looked forward to a full evening of entertainment and interest.

The evening opened with a youth contribution from jazz guitarists **Max Zaska** and **Tim Doyle** who have recently emerged on the music scene and took turns to take the lead or to play rhythm.



Their first piece, "I fall in love too easy", featured a flowing lead ending on a lively note. Changing to a slower theme called "Melancholy" the music became lyrical with a lifting sound that was at the same

time thoughtful and gentle with a strong rhythm. The final piece was a brilliant performance with lovely detail in lyrical passages giving relief to the strong base pattern of the music. Both players were well matched and blended perfectly.

Dublin novelist, playwright, poet and screenwriter, Oran Ryan introduced the next guest, **Alma Brayden**, poet and artist, whose work is being published by Seven Towers Agency. Oran paid tribute to the lyrical beauty of Alma's work, praising her economy of style and profound intuition channelled into poetry.



Alma began with "Celtic Animals", dedicated to Sylvia Platt and "Sweet Nothings" which she described as featuring a cat that Carravaggio might have known.

Next, Alma moved her audience to the terrible scene of Bazra in 1991. She was haunted by the image of the bodies of victims covered up and bulldozed into a pit. She was deeply moved by the sight of a charred hand protruding from the pit which prompted her to believe that someone might remember its owner. She was appalled at such destruction resulting from the clinical process of modern warfare delivered from within "clean wars" from "heaven's height" as "easy as Nintendo".

Her next poem, "Children in war" brought her closer to everywoman, hearing her anguished cry. Despite feeling an urge to ease her pain, Alma finds that all she can do is "sit blank as a new canvas".

Moving on, Alma displayed her tremendous skill with a poignant description of her mother as somebody she loved very much wearing dark colours that "cloak a daffodil", hiding the inner brightness that Alma sought to celebrate.

On birth, her poem "First Born" is about the profound experience of childbirth and the child "possessing the power of all helpless things". She reflects the inevitability of growing up as she observes that "each day you moved slightly away"

Her final piece was a beautiful experience of movement raising the eye of the imagination following the skylark rising ever higher to fly in the sky "playing lost and found above cathedral clouds". Like the skylark, Alma "rises into bright light" with her rich collection of the heights of poetry.

After the break, **William Gibb Forsyth**, sculptor, known simply as "Gibb", introduced his work in life casting. He remarked on the presence of a Gothic, mediaeval feel around the town of Bray to which he would like to contribute. He described the technique of body casting and how he has cast many stages of human life including pregnant bellies, children's hands and even a dog's paw! These are all items of importance to individuals who like to keep a record of a transient experience that occurred at one important moment in time.



Gibb described how his latest project grew from the experiment of casting his own ear ala Van Gogh. This led him to create a copy of his own living head. He has found an opportunity to display these pieces in random locations in Temple Bar and in 48 unexpected sites in Bray.

Gibb won the enthusiastic interest of all who heard him and were intrigued with the idea of the artist promoting his art by creating a wonderful journey for all of us.

The evening closed with a musical performance from the Lennon Family Project. Led by Colm Lennon on guitar and vocals with Bryan Courtney on Dulcimer, Percussion and vocals and with



Mandy Gorman on vocals providing supporting harmony to Colm's soft, light tenor voice. The accompaniment of the hammer dulcimer enriched Colm's singing of 'The Steel String Railway Blues' and other songs.

Mandy has an intriguing solo voice which she used to good effect on the last item.

By way of encore, the Lennon Family Project played and sang 'Want someone to explain to me what to do with me'; and sang of the "Whisper of love lost and the wish to notice the knock without fear," to the haunting sounds of the dulcimer.

Cearbhall e. O'Meadhra

LAMPSHADE

by Oliver Marshall

Lampshade
Falling
From the ceiling.

Connected
By flex
To that square whiteness

I can see it
From all sides
Of the room.

A cone with patterns,
Making me think
Of a woman's dress

The hat
On a mandarin,
Content inside

His own wisdom
A dunce's hat
On some child

Standing outside
A door.
The light

My mother turned on
At Christmas,
Falling over the card-table.

Queen
And Knave
And Ace of Hearts

The cross
My father put up
On the lamp at Halloween.

Candle
And bar of soap,
And apple.

My mouth
Careful
As the wood turned

Like a roulette-wheel,
Hoping to get
The sweet apple
Of life.

TOMAHAWK

By Oliver Marshall

This plastic razor,
Yellow and white,
The cover fitting tightly
To protect the blade.

My fingers remove it
Carefully
I brush
The shaving-brush

Over soap,
To make the foam.
I try to forget everything
Except the present moment,

This search for self
That is a new me.
The day is still
With Summer.

My father used
A steel razor
And Gillette blades,
Which he slotted in

Carefully. They could
Be used again.
Then he got the Philishave.
It murmured

Against his face.
He moved it around
In circles,
Until he was happy.

I try not to let anything
Distract me,
As I shave upwards,
Finding the skin.

I am like a child
Dipping a pen
Into ink,
Or a man in a boat

Rowing carefully,
First one oar,
Then another,
Bringing both together

Skillfully,
As the boat
Moves slowly
Over water.



THE SAVIOUR MUST HAVE BEEN A DOCILE MAM

By Emily Dickinson

The Savior must have been
A docile Gentleman—
To come so far so cold a Day
For little Fellowmen—

The Road to Bethlehem
Since He and I were Boys
Was leveled, but for that 'twould be
A rugged Billion Miles—

FROM THE OTHER SIDE.

By Carmen Cullen

Let's say Marian had been living in her love-grave for a long time before she was ready to write her story. Sometimes as she busied herself in the other world she thought she was ready to come back and explain all that had happened and other times she raged against Conn. He had brought her down. Towards the end she realised there had been no escape from the drowning river of love however much she'd harboured hopes for the pair of them.



As a young woman Marian's thick tresses, pale complexion and lips like a peach drew admiring glances. She admitted afterwards everybody praised her so much it went to her head. The Raven Conn wasn't one of those fans. He was called that because his piercing black eyes could see into the murky depths of nightclubs and pick out an attractive girl at a glance, ready to be snapped up with hands that apparently fumbled but really flexed to pounce on an unsuspecting victim.

Marion might not have been aware of Conn at the time, but he had his followers. He was a skilful hurler for the county team. Some enthusiasts had seen him balance a ball on his stick and run with it from one end of the sports-field to the other to puc it over the bar.

It was his artistic side, when she caught sight of a deer he was carving in his pocket during a computer course session, that brought him to Marian's attention. Unfortunately she sensed an indifference to her presence too. He needed to be brought down a peg or two, he was too cocky, she decided when he strolled out the classroom door she'd opened without even bothering to say thanks. There were further displays of indifference, when he walked past her at the coffee break to sit at a table on his own and often turned the light out in the classroom when they had finished without even noticing her sitting there. She'd make him pay attention to her the next time, she vowed. Afterwards she would say that was the first time she noticed a cold quality to his light blue eyes. Later too Marian would talk about the journey love set her on at that time and how it turned her inside out. It took away her powers of enchantment and gave her compassion. She was always ready to admit that the force that created her change was more like hate.

An opportunity has arisen in the story Marian would like to say now, to introduce herself. She got her name because she was born in The Marian Year. In recognition of that she attended the pope's visit in Limerick. Later on she began to look on all churches as medieval in ritual and sensation. Once though, when her love was trampled and too much an object of ridicule, she crept into a church to eradicate hurt, leaning gratefully on her old childhood faith.

Shortly after that disastrous computer class the love story of Conn and Marian began. He was married to Jackie. She was married to Henry. Their passion carried them high on a wave. She wrote him poetry. Their love was as certain as a brilliant moon creating a world without shadows, she decided. If Marian had set out to tame Conn in the end her heart was the one that thrummed to his presence and she was the slave. That didn't matter because the intensity of her ardent emotion carried her

forward. Her sincerity and honesty of affection was a mirror to reflect what he felt too, she decided. It didn't matter that they both were separately married, until the bubble burst.

In less time than it takes to say snap, Marian's marriage was broken. Conn wouldn't leave his wife and stayed put at home. Marian no longer loved her husband, she had never loved him properly anyway and had to leave him. The children suffered and each time one of them cried from the devastation of it; all she felt a knife twist in her gut.

Since passing over, Marian has found out she isn't the only one with her story. She has gained consolation from that fact. The most important thing is to accept your own humanity and believe you did the best, she tries to say now. The only real certainty she has though, is that on that occasion at least love defeated her. She has a new lover since but however much he applies the kiss of life, the past has done its job. But those resuscitating kisses are warm and there are plenty of them, making her tingle all over, she knows. They have bestowed new life she is ready to say, speaking from the other side.

THE END

I'll Live 'til I Die
Show by Carmen Cullen

Carmen Cullen is the niece of Delia Murphy. Head of English in a large Dublin second-level school for more than twenty years Carmen is now a fulltime writer. She has published four collections of poetry and her book *Class Acts*, plays and workshop material for schools is currently on the Applied Leaving Cert' course. She completed her MA in Creative Writing in Trinity College in 2008 and is working on her novel 'Two Sisters Singing' from which she uses extracts for her show '**I'll Live 'til I die'**.

The show, commemorates the life and songs of Delia Murphy in story, music and song has been playing in halls and theatres here and in London. It features **Carmen**, singer and actress **Mairin O'Donovan** and the excellent musician **Gerry Anderson**.

If you're in New York on December 4th you might like to catch '**I'll Live 'til I Die'** in The Irish Centre in Queens. There is another American appearance in The Irish Embassy in Washington where Delia's husband Thomas Kiernan was ambassador at the time of JFK's visit to Ireland. Well done to the trio and we hope to hear all about their adventure when they come back.



Gerry Anderson, Carmen Cullen & Máirín O'Donovan

THROUGH GLASS
by Denis Holt

Through Glass the wind doth howl and the tree's do speak,
Everquite, evergreen,
Watching, waiting.
It was through glass that I saw the stars light flashing amber red,
Winking to the moon and back.

And as I see all that I can see,
Through the eyes that were given to me,
I realize my folly,
For through glass I cannot see beyond me.
And it is through glass,
That the stars shine their ceaseless glowing beauty.

And so I question now;
As my skin grows old and is covered with the filth left by me.
If it is not for I the stars shine,
Maybe it is for thee

BRAY ARTS NOTICE BOARD

Bray Comedy Club

9th Dec. Martello, Seafront, Bray

Colin Murphy - support - Colm O'Regan

Colin has played sell out shows throughout Ireland and at the biggest and best comedy festivals around the world including Edinburgh, Melbourne, Montreal, and of course Kilkenny Cat Laughs.



He has been an almost permanent fixture on Irish television for the last decade. From a long list of credits his highlights have included the five years he was the writer and presenter of, the highly regarded and critically acclaimed, *Blizzard of Odd* followed by a six year stint on the hugely successful *The Panel* for RTE.

On the BBC he is back as a regular panellist on topical news show *The Blame Game* and his own *Great Unanswered Questions*, which airs on television, BBC Radio Ulster and BBC Radio 4.

Get your tickets in advance for this one. You can book online at <http://www.eventelephant.com/braycomedyclubthursdaydec9>

Yanny Petters

Dear friends, please see below details of my calendar for 2011. Please let me know as soon as possible if you would like to order one.

You can phone me on 01 276 5721 or email yannypetters@gmail.com. The calendars are still €20 each including postage and I can give you a discount if you order 3 or more.

See my web site: <http://www.yannypetters.net/>

Bray Singers Circle

The special guest for Saturday, December 18 is Kevin Conneff "the voice and rhythmic heartbeat of of the legendary Irish folk group *The Chieftains*". Strand Hotel, 9.30. FREE.

Boland Press

&

'Scaling the Heights' by Rosy Wilson

Wednesday 1st December, 2010

7pm – 9pm

Signal Arts Centre, 1 Albert Ave, Bray
(2 mins Bray Dart Station)

Guest Speaker: **Joe Woods** - Director of Poetry Ireland

Bray Arts Halloween Cake Sale and Party

Thanks to everyone who came along to the cake sale and Halloween party for children. In particular Bray Arts wants to thank those who gave of their their time so generously and the many good friends of Bray Arts who supplied some beautiful cakes and biscuits. It turned out to be a brilliant day of fun and games. Over €600 was raised to help fund our ongoing activities and this free monthly Journal.



Cearbhall O'Meadhra & Una McCabe

BARA ART GROUP

Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by Bray Active Retirement Association

From Tuesday 7th December to Sunday 19th December 2010



One of the most committed groups established in the Bray Active Retired Association is without doubt the BARA Art Group. Operating for several years now under the tutelage of Signal Society member James Morrison, the group has explored new ways of seeing the world around us through the media of painting and drawing. In 2009 BARA member Mrs Phil Dowling won first prize for her work at the national Active

Retired Ireland Art Competition and later in the year Mr Colm McCormack won first prize for a boating scene at the Golden Year Festival in Waterford, with second place being awarded to another member. At the core of the Art Group is the idea of enjoyment. Enjoy looking, enjoy painting, enjoy life and enjoy our exhibition.

Bray Active Retired would like to thank Bray Partnership for their financial support towards the mounting of this exhibition and also of course to Signal Arts Centre for providing us with the opportunity to showcase our work to the whole community.

Opening Reception: Friday 10th December 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.



The Alex Mathias Quartet

Below we publish **Linley Hamilton's** critique of The Alex Mathias Quartet.

Awardees of 'Best Young Band' at Cork Jazz Festival 2010, The Alex Mathias Quartet have been making a significant impact on the Irish jazz scene since forming in 2009 as an outlet for the saxophonist's compositions. Through playing at their weekly residency in the International Bar in Dublin as well as performing at some of Ireland's notable jazz festivals and venues around the country the Quartet have developed a unique 'band sound' which can be hard to come by among jazz groups. They released their Debut Album *Goin' Roamin'*, recorded by renowned Irish saxophonist Michael Buckley, in June 2010 on Livenote Records and were since featured on the Aer Lingus in-flight entertainment as part Donald Helme's 'Jazz Alley' (Lyric FM) for the period of August 2010 – September 2010.

The leader boasts an impressive CV having studied as a scholarship



student for three years at the prestigious Berklee College Of Music under tuition from some of the world's top musicians including saxophonists such as George Garzone and Joe Lovano. Since graduating at 21 with a Degree in 'Professional Music' he has built himself a short but extensive career thus far, taking him to over a dozen countries worldwide. These include performances with the Dublin City Jazz Orchestra, The Commitments, The RTE Concert Orchestra and performances with many other notable Irish artists such as Shane MacGowan, Mary Coughlin, Glen Hansard and The Republic of

Loose. He has recently been commissioned by The Arts Council of Ireland to write for the Dublin City Jazz Orchestra as part of a national showcase of Irish composers and arrangers including Brian Byrne and David O'Rourke. Mathias has been described as having a "style of writing based on an ethos where melody is triumphant, where everyone is welcome to sample the musical fare" —

Linley Hamilton,
Presenter of "After Midnight",
BBC Radio Ulster,
June 2010

Mathias is joined by some of Ireland's most versatile and in-demand jazz musicians on the Irish music scene, Johnny Taylor (piano), Dominic Mullan (Drums) and Dan Bodwell (Double Bass). Their versatility allows them to play with ease the leader's often complex but lyrical music, which he draws from a variety of styles including swing, funk, groove and world music. Listen to the debut album at www.alexmathias.com.

"If his dynamic young group ... are any barometer of the future shape of Irish jazz then the music on these shores is in rude health indeed"- Bray Jazz Festival on the 'Alex Mathias Quartet', May 2010

"The playing is considered and engaging, groovy and sentimental as required"-JJ Smyth's on the 'Alex Mathias Quartet', July 2010

Free parking for Christmas

The Cathaoirleach and elected members of Bray Town Council agreed to provide free parking after 10.00am, in the Florence Road and Herbert Road car-parks on Saturdays and Sundays in December.

Dental Care Ltd (Mr. Joseph Coleman Adv. Orth.)
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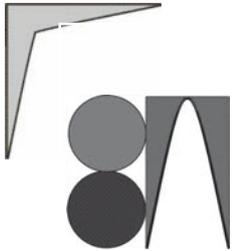
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Bray Arts Evening Monday 6th Dec 2010

Upstairs at The Martello on the Seafront
€5/€4 conc. Absolutely everyone is welcome.
Doors open 8:00pm

Bray Youth Choir : Conducted by Frank Kelly

Lorraine O'Brien: "The Seven Ages of a Shocking Holy Saint"

Redmond O'Toole : Eamonn Sweeney - (Guitarists)

Joe Bollard - Christmas Songs : Aoife Hester - Photography

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