

To Keep the Candle Burning

By Joanna Clare

(On)Liner Notes

“To Keep the Candle Burning is dedicated to the many traditional Irish musicians who inspired me throughout my childhood. While the album includes some original tunes, it is primarily comprised of tunes I learned either directly from these musicians or from their recordings. The abundance of dedicatees demonstrates how the interwoven contributions of each musician keep the tradition alive. These musicians have paved a path for the next generation to embrace creativity within the framework of a living tradition. My goal is to be a part of the movement that keeps the tradition alive and that keeps the candle burning for generations to come.”

—Joanna Clare, 2022

Dedicatees

Eugene O’Donnell, Mick Moloney, Seamus Egan, Cherish the Ladies, The Chieftains, Eileen Ivers, Donna Hébert, Séamus Connolly, Liz Hirshorn, Liz Carroll, Brian Conway, Michael Coleman, Andy McGann, Joe Burke, Felix Dolan, Geraldine O’Callaghan, Nickie McAuliffe, Oisín Mac Diarmada, MacDara Ó Raghallaigh, Matt Cranitch, and Billy McComiskey.

Setlist

1. Annie on the Frontlines / Maggie Lynn’s / The Shoemaker’s Daughter (Reels)
2. Paddy Fahey’s / The Mist Covered Mountain (Jigs)
3. Planxty Hugh O’Donnell (Set Dance)
4. Strawberry in the Field / The Music Teacher / The Painter and the Chef (Slip Jigs)
5. The Reel with the Birl / The Highest Hill in Sligo / Frank’s (Reels)
6. The Rambles of Mike / Connie Scanlon (Jigs)
7. An Buachaill Caol Dubh (Air)
8. Erin Grá Mo Chróí (Song)
9. The Brown Coffin / Brigid of Knock (Hornpipes)
10. The Luck Penny / The Pipe on the Hob (Jigs)
11. The Cat’s Perch / Insomnia / Ormond Sound (Reels)

The Players

Myron Bretholz ~ Bodhrán
Brian Conway ~ Fiddle
Josh Dukes ~ Guitar, Flute(*)
Billy McComiskey ~ Accordion
Sean McComiskey ~ Accordion
Matt Mulqueen ~ Piano
Catherine O’Kelly ~ Vocals
Liam Presser ~ Dance

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Liner notes by Myron Bretholz, Joanna Clare and Brian Conway

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1. Annie on the Frontlines / Maggie Lynn's / The Shoemaker's Daughter (Reels)

By Joanna Clare, Billy McComiskey, and Ed Reavy

Joanna wrote the first reel in 2020 as a birthday present for Annie McComiskey, Billy's wife. Annie is an Executive Assistant at Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland. The title "Annie on the Frontlines" refers to Annie being an essential worker during the Covid-19 pandemic. "Maggie Lynn's" was written in 1981 by dedicatee Billy McComiskey for the birth of Dr. Frank and Heidi Claudy's daughter, Maggie Lynn Claudy. Joanna learned "Maggie Lynn's" from Billy's acclaimed album *Outside the Box*. "The Shoemaker's Daughter" is dedicated to Joanna's fiddle teacher of nine years, Brian Conway, who taught it to her in 2014. (Featuring Myron Bretholz, Billy McComiskey, and Matt Mulqueen)

2. Paddy Fahey's / The Mist Covered Mountain (Jigs)

By Paddy Fahey and Junior Crehan

The first tune is dedicated to Nickie McAuliffe, who taught it to Joanna at Scoil Éigse at the 2014 Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Sligo, Ireland. Joanna feels very privileged to have been instructed by Nickie, who famously knows about as much as one could know about Irish music. When starting in The Great Groove Band at the Philadelphia Folk Festival, Joanna learned "The Mist Covered Mountain" from dedicatee Donna Hébert. As Joanna was still quite young, she first learned a basic setting that Donna arranged, consisting solely of dotted quarter notes. (Featuring Josh Dukes)

3. Planxty Hugh O'Donnell (Set Dance)

By Turlough O'Carolan

Recorded by dedicatees Mick Moloney, Eugene O'Donnell, and Seamus Egan, the album *3 Way Street* heavily influenced Joanna's love for Irish music. On the album, Eugene O'Donnell performed "Planxty Hugh O'Donnell" with the utmost sensitivity, and Joanna spent years studying the track. Besides Eugene's fiddling, Joanna was inspired by the dancing of Regan Wick, who also appears on *3 Way Street*. As a toddler, Joanna would point to the speakers and exclaim, "Tapping, tapping!"; thus, this track influenced Joanna to take up Irish dancing. (Featuring Josh Dukes)

4. Strawberry in the Field / The Music Teacher / The Painter and the Chef (Slip Jigs)

By Joanna Clare, Billy McComiskey, and Joanna Clare

Joanna wrote the first and last tune in 2019, but they went unnamed for some time. In 2020, Joanna was hiking and saw a lone wild strawberry in a field of green. While simple yet beautiful and intriguing, the strawberry reminded Joanna of the first tune. That summer, Joanna and Liam Presser spent a week painting a house. When they weren't painting, they were cooking, and sometimes one cooked while the other painted. Thus, "The Painter and the Chef" became the name

of the third tune. Billy McComiskey wrote “The Music Teacher” while mourning for the late Maureen Glynn. Joanna learned it from the album *Green Fields of America*. Even though Joanna loves the tune for its own sake, she also chose to include it since music teachers are such a central component of this project. (Featuring Josh Dukes and Sean McComiskey)

5. Reel with the Birl / The Highest Hill in Sligo / Frank’s (Reels)

Traditional and by Ed Reavy and John McCusker

At Scoil Éigse at the 2018 Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Drogheda, Ireland, Oisín MacDiarmada taught “The Reel with the Birl,” which quickly became a favorite of Joanna’s. Along with Oisín, “The Reel with the Birl” is also dedicated to The Chieftains, who recorded it under the spelling “The Reel with the Beryle” on their album *The Chieftains 8*. Joanna also frequently listened to *The Long Black Veil*, *Further Down the Old Plank Road*, *An Irish Evening*, and *The Bells of Dublin*, which never get old. “The Highest Hill in Sligo” is dedicated to Séamus Connolly, who recorded the tune on his album, *Notes From My Mind*. Dedicatee Liz Hirshorn taught Joanna “Frank’s Reel.” Although Joanna was an only child, she was very social, and Liz’s group lessons turned fiddling into one of Joanna’s favorite social activities. (Featuring Matt Mulqueen and Liam Presser)

6. The Rambles of Mike / Connie Scanlon (Jigs)

By Carl Hession and Liz Carroll

Dedicatee Geraldine O’Callaghan taught Joanna “The Rambles of Mike” at her first Scoil Éigse at the 2012 Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Cavan, Ireland. The next year, Joanna was tasked by her beloved eighth-grade English teacher, Erin Eshenour-Lesser, to memorize “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus. To memorize it, Joanna set the poem to the melody of “The Rambles of Mike”, which henceforth added significance to the tune. The second jig is a tribute to its composer, Liz Carroll, who played it along with Billy McComiskey and others on Billy’s album *Outside the Box*. Joanna was first inspired by Liz’s first solo album, *A Friend Indeed*. (Featuring Myron Bretholz, Josh Dukes, Billy McComiskey, and Matt Mulqueen)

7. An Buachaill Caol Dubh (Air)

Traditional

Joanna originally learned “An Buachaill Caol Dubh” from the album *Éistigh Seal*, by dedicatee Matt Cranitch, while under the instruction of Brian Conway. This air was one of many that she learned from that recording. Joanna also thoroughly enjoyed Matt’s workshop at Catskills Irish Arts Week where he introduced her to the magnificent Sliabh Luachra style. More recently, Joanna learned the rendition heard on this album from the playing of Willie Clancy on his posthumous compilation album, *The Gold Ring*.

8. Erin Grá Mo Chroí (Song), sung by Catherine O’Kelly

Traditional

Joanna does not know a life without listening to Cherish the Ladies. Her favorite childhood songs on the albums *One and All: The Best of Cherish the Ladies*, and *The Girls Won’t Leave the Boys Alone* led her to ask her mother questions in order to understand more about Irish history and culture. These informative songs include “The Back Door”, “Three Weeks We Were Wed”, “Broken Wings”, and of course, “Erin Grá Mo Chroí”. Although Joanna has always sung in choirs,

she rarely practiced folk songs. Throughout her teens, she'd go home from school, turn on these albums and sing along, and then turn them off and systematically practice "Erin Grá Mo Chroí". (Featuring Joanna Clare and Matt Mulqueen)

9. The Brown Coffin / Brigid of Knock (Hornpipes)

Traditional and by Ed Reavy

MacDara Ó Raghallaigh was one of Joanna's tutors at Scoil Éigse at the 2016 Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Ennis, Ireland, and taught her "The Brown Coffin", which she is dedicating to him. Out of respect, Joanna refrained from putting any slides (a short glissando) in this tune, as MacDara once mentioned his dislike for them in a class. The second hornpipe Joanna first heard on the album *3 Way Street* by dedicatees Mick Moloney, Eugene O'Donnell, and Seamus Egan. (Featuring Josh Dukes)

10. The Luck Penny / The Pipe on the Hob (Jigs)

Traditional

The iconic set "The Luck Penny" and "The Pipe on the Hob" appeared on *A Tribute to Michael Coleman* (by Andy McGann, Joe Burke, and Felix Dolan) and *A Tribute to Andy McGann* (by Joe Burke, Brian Conway, and Felix Dolan)—both albums that Joanna listened to once becoming a student of Brian Conway. Thus, this set is dedicated to Michael Coleman, Andy McGann, Joe Burke, Felix Dolan, and Brian Conway. These tunes were among the first Brian taught her. Although Joanna never met Michael Coleman, Andy McGann, or Joe Burke, she treasures their playing and the stories she has heard about them. Joanna had the pleasure of performing with Felix and Brian at library gigs. Joanna fondly remembers Felix as having the steadiest of beats and as encouraging her to dance at these performances. (Featuring Brian Conway, Billy McComiskey, and Matt Mulqueen)

11. The Cat's Perch / Insomnia / Ormond Sound (Reels)

By Joanna Clare and Paddy O'Brien

This last set of reels starts with two tunes that Joanna wrote. "The Cat's Perch" was written in 2019 but acquired its name in 2020, when Joanna and accordionist Patty Furlong were both visiting Annie and Billy McComiskey. Patty happened to notice the McComiskeys' cat Molly lounging on one of her favorite spots, the living room recliner, and suggested the name then and there. Joanna penned the second reel in 2021 in the wee hours of the morning. She often played at that time as a reward for getting her homework done. The last tune on the track, "Ormond Sound" is dedicated to the extraordinary Eileen Ivers, and the tune appears on *So Far: The Eileen Ivers Collection* with the name "Paddy O'Brien's". (Featuring Myron Bretholz, Josh Dukes*, Sean McComiskey, and Matt Mulqueen)

A Dedication to the Many Musicians who Inspired Joanna

"The Irish traditions are steeped in important history that tells the story of a people through disastrous and hopeful times. I believe that it's the next generation's job to remember the musicians who came before us and understand the circumstances that made the culture and the music what it is. I think another reason to keep the candle burning is to celebrate the individuality of each player; and, while so much individuality exists, it all intertwines to become the art form that collectively defines Irish music. If you listen to each of the dedicatees, they each have their distinctive sound. Each contributes their own magic, whether it's their own compositions or stylistic wonders.

Traditional Irish music isn't like rock or pop, where each artist has his or her hit songs. There is really a creativity in Irish music that belongs to the players just as the players belong to the music. It's quite phenomenal to think about."

— Joanna Clare, 2022

Joanna grew up listening to Irish music. Since she was an infant, her mother would play CDs of Mick Moloney, Eugene O'Donnell, Seamus Egan, Eileen Ivers, The Chieftains, Cherish the Ladies, Liz Carroll, and Séamus Connolly. At the age of three, Joanna started playing the violin. When she was five years old, she begged to take fiddle lessons and was briefly taught by Rochester fiddler Dick Bolt. She then joined The Great Groove Band at Old Songs Festival, under the instruction of Donna Hébert among others, and from then on, she was a loyal member of the Great Groove Band at the annual Philadelphia Folk Festival. Donna Hébert, The Great Groove Band, and The Philadelphia Folksong Society were critical for the love Joanna developed for folk music and her development as a fiddler.

In early elementary school, Joanna had no fiddle teacher but would often plop down in front of the CD player and learn tunes such as "The Highest Hill in Sligo," the first tune on Séamus Connolly's album *Notes From My Mind* and "Planxty Hugh O'Donnell," played by Eugene O'Donnell on the album *3 Way Street*. Later, she began group fiddle lessons taught by Liz Hirshorn at the Kanack School of Musical Artistry in Rochester, New York. Inspired by dancers on *3 Way Street* and *One and All: The Best of Cherish the Ladies*. Joanna started Irish dancing with The Drumcliffe School of Irish Arts in Rochester, New York, and continued through high school.

In 2011, the accomplished fiddler, Maeve Flanagan, recommended her uncle, Brian Conway, to teach Joanna. The two began lessons soon after meeting at a concert of his in Rochester, New York. Brian was a fabulous teacher and mentor to Joanna, with his intense focus on phrasing, bowing, and precise ornamentation. He introduced her to the timeless recordings of Michael Coleman, Andy McGann, Joe Burke, and Felix Dolan, which she listened to on repeat. Besides lessons, Brian encouraged Joanna to attend festivals and workshops, including the Banjo Burke Festival, The Northeast Tionól, and Catskills Irish Arts Week, all held in East Durham, New York, as well as the Scoil Éigse workshops held during the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Ireland. At Catskills Irish Arts Week, Joanna attended workshops led by Oisín MacDiarmada and Matt Cranitch, and at Scoil Éigse, Joanna attended workshops led by Geraldine O'Callaghan, Nickie McAuliffe, Oisín MacDiarmada, and MacDara Ó Raghallaigh. These tutors, with their unique playing and teaching styles and eclectic tunes, influenced Joanna's playing, the types of tunes she likes, and recordings she listens to.

In 2018, Joanna moved to Baltimore and was welcomed with open arms by Myron Bretholz and Billy McComiskey who became tremendous friends and mentors. As an esteemed composer (or tunesmith, as he prefers to call himself), Billy was very instrumental in Joanna's development as an Irish tunesmith. She'd send him her tunes, and he'd comment on them and instruct her on the limitations of instruments typically used in Irish music. Under his mentorship, she developed an understanding of what makes a tune characteristically a fiddle tune versus a tune that could be accessible on other instruments.

In addition to the musicians who inspired Joanna to love Irish music, countless others also contributed to her musical education. Joanna's classical training from a young age enabled her to learn the traditional Irish style without stalling due to the technical difficulties of the violin. She honors her notable violin and orchestra teachers, including Galina Conrad, Betty Ellsworth, Beth Remming, Sarah Almatius, Joanne Low, Ruth Marie Ballance, Marcos Kreutzer, John Fetter, Tracy

Berner, Maggie Mercer, Bill Mercer, Casey Springstead, Harumi Rhodes, Peter Rovit, and Ahrum Kim. Accompanists, including multi-instrumentalist and folk historian David Deacon and pianists Sar-Shalom Strong and Ida Tili-Trebicka, coached her as well.

Of course, Joanna's greatest mentor of all is her mother, Cynthia, who dedicated countless hours and resources to Joanna's musical training. From driving her to lessons to practicing with her and encouraging her to reach her own goals, Cynthia deserves the utmost credit.

Inspired by her teachers and mentors, Joanna established her own violin and fiddle studio in 2020. Like so many musicians who invested their time and resources in her training, she feels compelled to give back and be one of many to train the next generation.

About the Featured Musicians

Myron Bretholz, a native of Baltimore, Maryland, is widely recognized for his talents as a bodhrán and rhythm bones player, and he has been highly sought after to emcee at concerts and contribute to album liner notes. Over the past three decades, Myron has taught at many workshops, including Boston College's Gaelic Roots, Gaelic College in Cape Breton, and Catskills Irish Arts Week. Myron has appeared on nearly 60 albums by a range of musicians, including fiddlers Brian Conway and Jim Eagan; singers Aoife Clancy, Danny Doyle, Lisa Moscatiello, and Grace Griffith; Uilleann piper Jerry O'Sullivan; accordionists Billy McComiskey and Patty Furlong; flutists Jimmy Noonan and Laura Byrne; the groups Brave Combo, the Irish Tradition, Ensemble Galilei, and many other albums of Irish, Scottish, and other folk music.

Brian Conway, from The Bronx, New York, is a leading exponent of the Sligo fiddling style made famous by Michael Coleman. While he first studied with his father, Jim Conway and Martin Mulvihill, Brian learned the true secrets of the Sligo style from fiddler and composer Martin Wynne. He was also influenced by Andy McGann, a student of Michael Coleman. Brian won the senior All-Ireland fiddle competition at the 1986 Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann. He ranks among the most outstanding teachers of traditional Irish music, having mentored many fiddle players, including several All-Ireland champions. Brian has led workshops at Catskills Irish Arts Week, O'Flaherty Irish Music Retreat, Swannanoa Gathering Celtic Week, and Scoil Éigse. He has performed across North America and Europe and is a member of the bands Pride of New York and Gailfean. His solo albums include *Irish Echo's* 2008 Album of the Year, *First Through the Gates*, and his follow-up album *Consider the Source*. He was also prominently featured on *The Apple in Winter*, *A Tribute to Andy McGann*, *Pride of New York*, and *Won't You Come Out Tonight*.

Josh Dukes is a highly sought-after multi-instrumentalist based in the Baltimore/Washington D.C. area, whose talents embrace ceili drums, guitar, bouzouki, bodhrán, flute, and tin whistle. In 1997, Josh enlisted in the Army. He rose to the rank of Master Sergeant and served as a Drum Major for the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment's Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps, the only Fife and Drum Corps in the U.S. Armed Forces. Josh won the All-Ireland senior accompanist championship at the 2009 Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann. He has taught many workshops and has shared the stage with renowned musicians, including John Doyle, Paddy Keenan, Billy and Sean McComiskey, Brendan Mulvihill, Kevin Crawford, Zan McLeod, and Myron Bretholz. Josh also played ceili drums with The Old Bay Ceili Band. He recorded a solo album, *The Long Trip Home*, and collaborated with Dylan Foley on *The New York Connection*. He also appears on Kieran Jordan's *Cover the Buckle*, Dennis Botzer's *The House*, and Dylan Foley's *Deliriously Happy*.

Billy McComiskey, originally from Brooklyn, New York, is known by overwhelming critical and popular consensus as America's greatest B/C button accordion player. Billy was taught by the great Sean McGlynn, a master of the stately East Galway style. Billy won the 1986 senior All-Ireland button accordion championships at the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann. In 2016, he was a recipient of the National Heritage Fellowship, which is considered America's highest honor in the folk and traditional arts. He has trained many great accordionists and has led workshops at Catskills Irish Arts Week, and CCE Musical Arts and Dance (MAD) Week in Washington D.C., among many others. Billy has also played an integral role in building the thriving community of traditional Irish musicians in Maryland. He is well-known for his talents as a tune composer, having penned many tunes including "The Controversial Reel", and "The Diamond". Billy currently performs as a member of The Green Fields of America, Triam, and Pride of New York. He has two solo recordings, *Making the Rounds* and *Irish Echo's* 2011 Album of the Year, *Outside the Box*. Besides the albums he recorded with his groups, he is featured on many other recordings, including Cherish the Ladies' *The Girls Won't Leave The Boys Alone*, Sue Richards' *Morning Aire*, and Mark Walbridge's *Safe Harbour*.

Sean McComiskey, who hails from Baltimore, Maryland, is among the most innovative performers on the button accordion and is the son of Billy McComiskey. Sean is a highly regarded accordion teacher and has taught at many workshops, including Catskills Irish Arts Week, the Augusta Heritage Center's Irish Arts Week, the CCE Musical Arts and Dance (MAD) Week in Washington D.C., and the Baltimore Irish Arts Center. Sean has performed throughout North America and Europe and has recorded numerous albums with NicGaviskey, the Old Bay Ceili Band, and O'Malley's March. Sean also co-founded the Baltimore-based acoustic roots group Charm City Junction. The band performs frequently and has recorded multiple albums, including their self-titled debut album which was nominated for the International Bluegrass Music Association's Band Momentum Award in 2016. Many albums feature Sean's accordion playing, including NicGaviskey's *Home away from Home*, Kieran Jordan's *Cover the Buckle*, Old Bay Ceili Band's *Crabs in the Skillet*, Josh Dukes' and Dylan Foley's *The New York Connection*, and his father's *Outside the Box*.

Matt Mulqueen is a phenomenal pianist born into a musical family, and he grew up in Baltimore, Maryland. At the age of nine, Matt asked his parents if he could learn to play the piano. He began with group piano lessons at a local community college. From there, he progressed to private lessons in Irish and classical music with former Cherish the Ladies member Donna Long, who has been the greatest influence on Matt's playing. Listening to traditional musicians in Irish pubs in Baltimore, Washington D.C., and New York as well as to innumerable recordings, allowed Matt to forge his own compelling style of accompanying Irish music. Matt frequently plays with Maryland musicians Jim Eagan, Sean McComiskey, and Peter Brice. He recorded the album *At Home* with Rosie Shipley and is featured on The Old Bay Ceili Band's *Crabs in the Skillet*, Josh Dukes' and Dylan Foley's *The New York Connection*, Kieran Jordan's *Cover the Buckle*, and Dylan Foley's *Deliriously Happy*.

Catherine O'Kelly is a breathtaking traditional singer and fiddle player from Tappan, New York. From the influence of her grandparents, she's been surrounded by traditional Irish music since she was young. Catherine learned to play fiddle and sing from Rose Flanagan, Margie Mulvihill, and

Patty Furlong at the Pearl River School of Irish Music, as well as from former Cherish the Ladies member, Deirdre Connolly. She has also attended workshops and has had great craic at Catskills Irish Arts Week in East Durham, New York. Catherine has traveled to Ireland for the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann and has competed in the ceili band, Grúpa Cheoil, and solo competitions. In 2019, she placed third in Ladies Traditional English Singing. Catherine is currently a student at Loyola University in Baltimore, Maryland, where she is studying speech pathology.

Liam Presser is a brilliant Irish step-dancer from Cambridge, New York. He began Irish dancing at Hubbard Hall Center for the Arts and Education and later studied at The Boland School of Irish Dance, Broesler School of Irish Dance, and The Irish Dance Company. Liam qualified for the World Irish Dancing Championships twice and was awarded 15th place in 2019 (the competition was canceled in 2020), as well as seventh place at the North American Irish Dance Championships. He is currently studying architecture with a minor in sustainable design at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

A Note by Brian Conway

A debut album from a talented young fiddler is always a cause for celebration. All the more so when it involves one of your star students! I was thrilled when Joanna told me she was planning her first album. This wonderful news caused me to reflect on our journey together, and when she later asked me to join her on a set of tunes, I was absolutely delighted! As her album neared completion Joanna asked me to share some thoughts about my experience as her teacher as well as the role models who influenced my playing and teaching. I was very blessed to have two wonderful teachers, Martin Mulvihill and Martin Wynne, as well as my father who was my daily music coach. Each mentor imbued in me an abiding respect for this music and a keen awareness of the thread that would later connect me to those who came before. That deep respect was shared by others who influenced my playing through their words and musicality. Andy McGann, Paddy Reynolds, Joe Burke, and Lad O'Beirne all come to mind, although there were many others who encouraged me to grow. Their example helped shape me as a player in the very rich traditional Irish music scene of New York City in the 1970s and 80s. I have always viewed their music as a gift that comes with a degree of responsibility to treasure and uplift, as they had done.

Although you already know of Joanna's classical music background, it may come as a surprise to some that my own teaching style was also greatly influenced by my classical music studies. I first took classical lessons at the Bronx House when I was 12 and then again when I attended New York University (NYU). Both instructors were kind but demanding. I vividly recall my NYU instructor chastising me for settling for my fiddle being slightly out of tune. As I grew older, I found myself approaching my students with that same rigor and refusing to allow students to "settle" when I knew they could do better. However, with a student as bright and talented as Joanna, there was never any question that she would allow herself to settle for anything less than her best. I vividly recall the first time I heard her play. She was only 11 years old and played an Ed Reavy tune called "The Highest Hill in Sligo". I knew immediately that she was immensely talented. She began studying with me shortly thereafter in 2011. Though her lessons were primarily over Skype, her dedicated mom would often drive Joanna four hours to have in-person lessons. With the grace and skill Joanna demonstrates on this recording, one could easily assume that it came easy for her and, while it surely did come easier to her than it did for many others, her playing today is nonetheless a product of her hard work and determination. That Joanna has continued to

play this music with such incredible skill and taste brings me so much joy. And it is a measure of Joanna's maturity and of the high-level respect she enjoys from musicians in the Baltimore area, that she has assembled such a wonderful supporting cast. She is truly one of my best students and one of my favorite people. I look forward to seeing where Joanna's journey takes her, confident knowing she understands her place in that musical thread that connects her to the past as she lays down her own marker for those who will follow.