

THE GLOAMING

Iarla O'Lionaird, Caoimhin O'Raghallaigh, Dennis Cahill, Martin Hayes, Thomas Bartlett



The Gloaming carves new paths connecting the rich Irish folk tradition and the New York contemporary music scene. From haunting sean-nós songs to rousing instrumental medleys, they create a new musical alchemy between ancient traditions, experimentation and modernity.

Debut album 'The Gloaming' due for release on Real World Records 20th January 2014

UK/Ireland tour dates:

22 January - Glasgow City Hall (Celtic Connections) 'THE GLOAMING' ALBUM LAUNCH

<http://www.celticconnections.com/Events/Pages/Event.aspx?ev=738&ty=Traditional>

23 January - The Sage Gateshead

<http://www.sagegateshead.com/event/the-gloaming/>

24 January - London Union Chapel

<http://www.musicglue.com/thelocaltickets/eventdetails/24-jan-14-the-gloaming-union-chapel/>

26 January - Dublin National Concert Hall

<https://www.nch.ie>

"Their live performances so far have been revelatory... Future dates are likely to cement them as one of the great forces in Irish music." **The Irish Times**

"The Gloaming is a wonderful mix of soulful and passionate talents who have created their own genre." **Peter Gabriel**

Fiddle master **Martin Hayes**, guitarist **Dennis Cahill**, sean-nós singer **Iarla Ó Lionáird**, hardanger innovator **Caoimhin Ó Raghallaigh** and New York pianist **Thomas Bartlett** (aka Doveman) – **The Gloaming** are five master musicians, each with highly successful individual careers, who have come together to create new music which pairs memorable, yearning melodies with a progressive style.

Although charged by the traditions of Ireland, what The Gloaming do with the structures of Irish music is anything but simple nostalgia. They introduce deep wells of personality and experience. Lyrics are drawn from the history of Irish literature, old and new. The music is played with the authority of virtuosos. The result is unclouded by sheen or sentimentality. Instead, it's haunting and emotionally charged. It sounds ancient without being a mere reproduction.

Martin, Caoimhín and Dennis have been recognized for extending the Irish and Celtic music traditions, balancing traditional rigor with an energy that seems entirely new. Thomas has been identified with the independent rock scene for his work with artists as diverse as **The National**, **Glen Hansard**, and **Antony and the Johnsons**. Iarla has made many ground breaking recordings with the **Afro Celt Sound System**, his distinctive voice venturing far beyond the boundaries of any one genre.

In early 2011, the five musicians first met to explore their collaboration at Grouse Lodge Studios in Ireland's County Westmeath, an hour northwest of Dublin. They discovered a shared musical aesthetic that transcended the genres for which they'd become known. Later that year - newly christened The Gloaming - they went on their first Irish tour, including a sold out debut show at The National Concert Hall, Dublin. The sellout hints at the excitement surrounding their formation, as does the fact that Ireland's prime minister, Edna Kenny, was in attendance that night. Summer 2013 saw their welcome return with more packed concerts in London, Amsterdam, Paris & New York.

The debut album, entitled simply 'The Gloaming', is produced by Thomas Bartlett and mixed by Patrick Dillett (David Byrne & St. Vincent). Set for release in January 2014, 'The Gloaming' has already been heavily touted by the Irish Times, NPR and The New Yorker Magazine, who recognized that The Gloaming *"moves the music of Ireland in captivating new directions."*

"Vocals, two fiddles, a guitar and a piano – it doesn't sound like a traditional band really," says fiddler Martin Hayes. *"It doesn't sound like it should sound."* Hayes is the musical centre of The Gloaming – the player sat centre stage at their concerts, while the ethereal voice of the great sean nos singer Iarla Ó Lionáird envelops it.

"I remember the first time I heard Martin play," says US pianist Thomas Bartlett, *"and there was something that happened to my body that I hadn't experienced before, where I felt like my heart would expand and contract with the way he was playing."* It's a good summation of how many listeners respond to the master fiddler from County Clare.

With Hayes in the string section, Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh's hardanger fiddle is the music's expressive underworld, probing the depths with drones and abstract textures, setting the reels and airs in a musical chiaroscuro. *"Caoimhín was part of a new generation of musicians, young and thoughtful,"* says Hayes. *"It's not so easy in a traditional music form to find your voice; it's a tricky thing, and he did, he found a unique voice and a very unique way of playing."*

US guitarist Dennis Cahill's is minimal, percussive, punctuating playing that lifts and amplifies specific spots, like musical acupuncture. *"It's the mark of a great piece of music,"* he says, *"when it's bendable, and it doesn't lose its integrity, and I think the tunes are spectacular like that, they can be played in a lot of ways."*

Thomas Bartlett's piano is perhaps at the furthest remove from the folk tradition that Iarla, Martin and Caoimhin share. "Maybe why this band is working well," he says, "is that I don't recognize the lines that the rest of this band sees. They're very happy to go outside of those boundaries, but the fact that I don't even know the tradition helps make them disappear."

SONG BY SONG

Cover photo 'PASSAGE' © Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison

#1. Song 44: Adapted from an 800-year-old Irish poem about a man who sees the woman he loves in his dreams. It begins spare and spooky with spectral, beautiful Gaelic singing. A fiddle is introduced which soon draws itself over the song until it climaxes with soaring strings.

#2. Allistrum's March: An instrumental based around an old Irish march, it is built around a series of lyrical, tightly structured fiddle lines.

#3. Freedom: This song is equal parts Iarla & Thomas, built around the inchworm, earworm-like piano melody which was originally heard in a brief interlude on Doveman's first record for Brassland. The lyrics are adapted from Irish poet Seán ó Riordáin's "Saoirse," and speak to the struggle between individuality and serving a tribal code, between creative freedom and containment.

#4 Old Bush: This song offers a break in the action -- as guitar and hardanger fiddle spend more time scraping along than they do building momentum, until the last two minutes when they begin to breath in unison, growing into a propulsive reel.

#5 Hunting the Squirrel: An old jig, played far more slowly than it would be traditionally, a hallmark of Hayes' style.

#6. Necklace of Wrens: A vocal number with words by Limerick poet Michael Hartnett

#7. The Girl Who Broke My Heart: A short fiddle and hardanger instrumental which borrows equally from reels and notions of contemporary classical music.

#8. The Sailor's Bonnet: A well known, almost irritatingly ubiquitous reel, here broken down by Hayes into its most basic building blocks, demonstrating the simple elegance of the composition. After a few more reels, played at a more traditional tempo, the band returns to the Sailors Bonnet, now played at full blast.

#9. Opening Set: This 16-minute instrumental is the centre piece of the album. Each musician in the ensemble takes their turn to shine. The longing voice of Iarla is answered by the hardanger



and paced by minimalist piano lines, then the guitar and fiddle work the song into a storm. Brooding, sweet and slow then rhythmic and cathartic, it's an epic built up layer by layer -- like the canvas of an old master painting.

#10: Samradh Samradh: First documented around Dublin in the 1730s, this is a song written for the Gaelic festival known as Bealtaine which marks the beginning of summer, and is celebrated April 30 to May 1 -- sunset to sunset -- with the lighting of bonfires and the decoration with flowers. An appropriate way to mark the blooming of a new musical force.

THE BAND

Martin Hayes (fiddle, violin): He sits center, a master fiddler from County Clare, and one of the most renowned contemporary practitioners of Irish music.

Iarla Ó Lionaird (vocals): Raised in County Cork, Iarla is the most renowned living vocalist working in the Irish music tradition. Though trained in the sean-nós tradition, he's made a career working in contexts far afield. His ethereal voice is best known from his work on Real World, both solo and with the multi-platinum selling electronic group Afro Celt Sound System, and has appeared on soundtracks to acclaimed films like Hotel Rwanda and **Scorsese's** Gangs of New York. He recently recorded "Grá agus Bás" on classical composer Donnacha Dennehy's debut, and "Foxlight" is his latest solo album on Real World Records. He lives in County Kilkenny.

Thomas Bartlett (piano, producer): At the furthest remove from the folk tradition, he is a producer and sideman from New York City.

Dennis Cahill (guitar): An American based in Chicago, he contributes minimal, percussive playing that lifts and amplifies specific elements of the music in a way that has been compared to musical acupuncture.

Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh (hardanger fiddle): Born and based in Dublin, and the youngest member of the group, Caoimhín (pronounced *kwa-veen*) contributes much to the uncommon atmosphere of the Gloaming's music, filling it with drones and abstract textures.

More information about The Gloaming
www.realworldrecord.com/thegloaming
www.thegloaming.net

PRESS QUOTES:

“Via their mastery of traditional playing, they sensitively reinterpreted the wealth of songs at their disposal as well as newly composed melodies. The result was traditional music that was often arrestingly new.” The Irish Examiner

“Their live performances so far have been revelatory... Future dates are likely to cement them as one of the great forces in Irish music.” The Irish Times

“The post-rock, post-minimalist (post-everything?) piano of Thomas Bartlett (Doveman, Nico Muhly, The National) undergirding the dramatic crescendos of Irish supergroup The Gloaming...” Bill Bragin

“The music of the Emerald Isle may have spread far and wide, but there is little that will be performed that sounds like The Gloaming, a group so new it hasn’t even released an album yet. The Gloaming unites musicians who come at Irish music from different perspectives. The master fiddler Martin Hayes, who grew up in County Clare, and the guitarist Dennis Cahill, his longtime partner, ground the group in the traditional. So does Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh, who was born in Dublin and plays the fiddle, five-string viola, and hardanger fiddle, which is the national instrument of Norway. The vocalist Iarla Ó Lionáird shares their approach—he’s a master of the sean-nós (“in the old way”) a-cappella song style—but like the hardanger fiddle, his background suggests something else might be afoot—he recorded a number of albums with Afro Celt Sound System in the nineties. But The Gloaming doesn’t have a world-music sound. What it does have is Thomas Bartlett, a young piano player and songwriter who has worked with Yoko Ono, Bebel Gilberto, David Byrne, Antony, Grizzly Bear, Justin Bond, Nico Muhly, and the National, as well as recorded a series of quiet, intense albums as Doveman. Bartlett’s sparse, subtle piano playing is laced through the Gloaming’s music, moving it, and the music of Ireland, in captivating new directions.” The New Yorker

“Martin Hayes and his newly convened compadres took an audacious leap of faith into the unknown – and in that leap, drew their audience into a magnetic underworld where light and dark, old and new coalesced to compelling effect.... The Gloaming fully exploited the rich sonic possibilities which Thomas Bartlett’s piano, Dennis Cahill’s guitar and Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh’s fiddles brought to the party.... The warmth of Ó Lionáird’s voice was immediately evident, as were the show-stopping impact of Vermont-born Bartlett’s lines on the piano... The Gloaming’s newly forged songs were a revelation. A rendering of Michael Hartnett’s Muince An Dreoilín/A Necklace of Wrens soared on the back of Ó Lionáird’s beautiful Munster Irish, as did the deliciously rough-edged Samhradh... Hayes and Ó Raghallaigh are two immensely differing fiddlers but both are fearless in their pursuit of mood music. This was music of an entirely different hue: neither slavishly traditional nor wilfully contemporary, it sought out uncharted terrain (some of which was undoubtedly familiar) and, most impressively, welcomed their audience as essential passengers on that journey.” -Siobhan Long, The Irish Times

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