

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.

The debut album, entitled 'The Gloaming', was released on Brassland / Real World Records in January 2014. The reviews have been unanimous in their praise for The Gloaming's unique approach to Irish music: their respect for the traditions whilst bringing an unconventional energy into the mix. At sell-out shows in prestigious venues internationally, audiences have been blown away by The Gloaming's breathtaking virtuosity and spirited set.

The album featured in The Guardian's "the one album you should hear this week"; was described as "a sumptuous debut" by Mojo Magazine; "brilliantly innovative" by Songlines Magazine; "contemporary music making at its very best" by The Irish Times; "thoroughly polished" by The Sunday Times. It'll come as no surprise that 'The Gloaming' featured on many Best Albums of 2014 lists, including: The Guardian, NPR, Mojo, The Irish Times & Songlines -- and won the coveted Meteor Choice Music Prize representing The Best Irish Album of The Year. The group also recently scooped Best Traditional Track at the 2015 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards.

'One of the best albums of 2014'

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **Mojo**

'One of the best albums of 2014'

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **NPR**

'Steeped in traditional Celtic influences but bravely contemporary'

★ ★ ★ ★ **Guardian**

"It's rare to come across a band with as sublime an album and as life-affirming a live show as The Gloaming produced in 2014, so it's fantastic to see an acknowledgement of this."

Irish Times (No. 1 Best Album of 2014)

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

The Gloaming. Fiddle master **Martin Hayes**, guitarist **Dennis Cahill**, sean-nós singer **Iarla Ó Lionáird**, hardanger innovator **Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh** and New York pianist **Thomas Bartlett** (aka Doveman). These five master musicians, each with highly successful individual careers, 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**, **Sufjan Stevens** 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 sell-out hints at the excitement surrounding their formation, as does the fact that Ireland's President was in attendance that night. Summer 2013 saw their return with more packed concerts in London, Amsterdam, Paris & at Lincoln Center in New York.

Supporting the release of their debut album, 2014 saw The Gloaming play more shows in the UK, Ireland, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Canada, America --and notably a performance at London's Royal Albert Hall as part of Ireland's first official state visit to Britain. They also made their Australian debut with shows at The Melbourne Festival and Sydney Opera House.

The Gloaming returned to the National Concert Hall in Dublin for three sold out dates in 2015 (Feb 28, March 1 and March 2); as well as a sell out of the beautiful main hall of the Barbican in London. The band topped this with a return to Australia and headline appearances at Port Fairy Folk Festival and WOMADelaide before making their New Zealand debut at Auckland Arts Festival and WOMAD New Zealand. The group ended the tour with a special concert in Mexico City at the historic Teatro de la Ciudad to celebrate 40 years of diplomatic relations between Ireland and Mexico.

Live, The Gloaming delivers "a remarkable set ... one can only marvel at the intuitive understanding between the five. But it's not just jigs and reels that make them remarkable: the opening Song 44, with Bartlett holding down his piano strings to mute them, and violins scraping ominously, has more in common with post-rock than with Christy Moore. It's a staggering display of both emotion and virtuosity." (The Guardian)

“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, Caoimhin 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. *“Caoimhin 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.”*

Guitarist Dennis Cahill’s playing is minimal and percussive, punctuating, lifting and amplifying 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.”*

‘The Gloaming’ is produced by Thomas Bartlett & The Gloaming and mixed by Patrick Dillett.

A documentary film, **‘Moment To Moment’**, directed by Philip King and produced by South Wind Blows, beautifully captures the spirit of the The Gloaming.

Watch clips on The Gloaming’s YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/TheGloamingOfficial>

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