

Music from Limavady travelling the world



Dungiven composer Joe Kelly pictured with Dearbhla McTaggart, a harpist, also from Dungiven.



Isabel Neuenfeldt performing 'Danny Boy's Ghost' on stage at the Flax-Mill. Picture by Sven-Olaf Roessler.

Hermann Glaser - Baur

When Jane Ross sent the 'Limavady Air', the piece of music she had heard a blind fiddle-player performing on the street in the town at the river Roe, to the 'new world' - little did she think that it would come back as 'Danny Boy' and travel the world.

'Danny Boy' is now the second - most - sung song in history and worldwide, only 'Happy Birthday' ranges before it.

Well over 200 years after the birth of 'Danny Boy' another piece written in the Roe Valley went on a long journey. 'Danny Boy's Ghost' by Dungiven composer Joe Kelly, landed in Berlin at the doorstep of one of the city's most profiled artists.

Isabel Neuenfeldt loved

both melody and lyrics, put her own arrangement to it and brought it back to the homeland of Danny Boy. During the recent 25th Yard - Fest at Derrylane Flax Mill she performed the piece on stage joined by Dungiven harpist Dearbhla McTaggart and got a jubilant response by the capacity audience.

In a key-note interview just before the event, Isabel said: "Danny Boy, whose ghost Joe has dedicated the song to, makes his lover come back from her long sleep, called by the vibrations of the pipes. That's exactly how I would define the power of music. The wonderful piece is a tribute, a toast to the strength of songs, their ability to open doors beyond space and time. I will bring it back home to the Limavady area."

She did in great style and after the standing ovations during the concert, the composer decided to have the piece recorded there and then.

On Sunday, September 9 "Danny Boy's Ghost" was recorded at the Flax-Mill, just in time before Isabel Neuenfeldt's return to Germany.

Sound engineer Darrel Harkin who did the recording on his mobile equipment is equally fascinated with the piece of music and the owner of Flax-Mill, Marion Baur says: "The Yard Fest has brought several artists forward, helped them developing their career. To have a musician from Germany performing and recording a piece which has been written here is a new situation. I am sure the powerful song will go very far."

The Ghost of Danny Boy

Can I hear a piper playing out on the mountain side
Can I see a ghostly frame as on the clouds it rides
Could it be my own dear Danny Boy that left so long ago
Searching for the one he left the heart that loved him so

Chorus

I will arise from my long sleep and leave this cold wet clay
For I have waited all these years and dreamt about this day
We'll love each other like before and live where all ghosts go
For Danny Boy, oh Danny Boy I still do love you so

The pipes will cease their music because you are back with me
This spiritual world where we are living we will love eternally
From glen to glen we'll float on high where breezes gently blow
There'll be such joy oh Danny Boy because I still love you so

Chorus

I will arise from my long sleep and leave this cold wet clay
For I have waited all these years and dreamt about this day
We'll love each other like before and live where all ghosts go
For Danny Boy, oh Danny Boy I still do love you so

Joe Kelly

FAITH matters



In 1792 during the French Revolution September was the month of massacres of lay people, priests and nuns. Faith matters publishes an extract from an article in St Martin (the Dominican magazine) with reference to the execution of a Paris community of Carmelite nuns.

"There are some particularly harrowing descriptions of these massacres.

"During his short pontificate of thirty three days, Pope John Paul I referred to the martyrs of the French Revolution while addressing those gathered to recite the Angelus with him in St Peter's Square on September 24, 1978, four days before his own death.

"He mentioned in particular the sixteen Carmelite nuns who were guillotined because they had remained together as a community after their convent had been suppressed. During their trial on hearing that they were

'condemned to death for fanaticism' one sister asked what was meant by fanaticism. The judge told her: 'Your fanaticism is your foolish attachment to your religion.'

"The sister then said to her companions: 'Oh sister, you heard. We are being condemned for our attachment to the faith. What a happiness to die for Jesus Christ.'

"On their way to the scaffold the sisters sang hymns. When they arrived one after the other they renewed their vows before the Prioress. They began singing the hymn to the Holy Spirit, Veni Creator, which gradually faded away as each one was beheaded. The Prioress's last words were: 'Love is always victorious. Love can do all things.'

"Pope John Paul I finished with these words: 'Let us ask the Lord for the grace that a new wave of love for our neighbour may inundate this poor world.'