

**M**oira Kerr comes from a family of talented Scottish singers. Her debut at age 10 led to countless performances until she was spotted by a Decca Records executive who soon signed her to her first recording contract. She later moved to the Moidart record label before forming her own company, Mayker Records.



Nine albums and countless performances later, she has successfully made the transition from her earlier folk emphasis to a current repertoire that includes unique blends of contemporary Scottish music with time-honoured traditional songs. A talented songwriter, her work has been recorded by other artists, most notably Kenneth McKeller, and she has created most of the soundtrack for BBC television's "Where Eagles Fly." Resident entertainer at Scotland's prestigious Loch Lomond Golf Club, Moira also continues to tour the UK and abroad.

**Maclain Of Glencoe** was inspired by the legendary 1692 massacre of the MacDonalds by the Campbells and English troops at Glencoe, a valley in Scotland's northern Argyll. The song reached the UK charts' top 100 soon after its release on the album *Celtic Soul*.

**E**lyra is a Canadian singer and songwriter of Irish/Scottish/French heritage whose unique vocal style reveals classical, jazz, eastern and, of course, Celtic music influences. A young recipient of Toronto Royal Conservatory of Music's silver medal for outstanding vocal performance, she later pursued further music studies at several respected institutions before turning to performing, recording and teaching. Elyra's eclectic repertoire includes hauntingly beautiful Irish ballads and airs as well as the joyous, upbeat Scottish/ Hebridean "port-a-beul" (mouth music). Equally at home with the Latin and standard jazz repertoire, she also pens innovative compositions for instrumental voice ("vocalese"), sometimes incorporating adventurous electronics and extended vocal techniques. She performs and teaches now in Vancouver.

**The Heather, She Grows** was inspired by Elyra's musings on the mystical beauty of the Scottish Highlands. She is joined by uilleann piper Tom Creegan of the Suffering Gaels.

**Island Spinning Song** is a traditional "port-a-beul" piece from her latest CD *Girl In A Tree* which features fiddler Jesse Zubot and keyboardist and percussionist Chris Gestrin.

**S**heila Ryan was born in Limerick, where she grew up in the very heartland of Irish traditional song. Now residing in Victoria, Canada, she continues this tradition through performance in concerts, festivals, conventions, on tours, TV and through her recordings. An accomplished harpist and guitarist as well as singer, she has appeared on stage with such artists as Will Millar of the Irish Rovers, Tommy Makem and Scottish supergroup Capercaillie. Sheila's style is expressive of the growing, ever-changing heritage that is Celtic music. Her two recordings, *Samrad Linn* and *Down By The Glenside*, produced by Will Millar, reflect a marvelous ability to interpret the characteristic hurts, joys, humour and sadness of Celtic music, as the selection chosen for this compilation illustrates so well.



**Danny Boy** was written in the 1800s as a farewell love song by a father to a son about to go to war and is based on an older tune from the Lough Foyle region of county Derry. This enduring song became a music hall standard in the 1930s and is considered by many as the unofficial National Anthem of Northern Ireland.

**L**aura Powers lived in Europe during her formative years where she studied music and painting. She had a hit single in France on the Carrere label before eventually relocating in the US, first to Los Angeles and finally to the song writing mecca of Nashville. Something magical is bound to happen for a gifted artist with a background in metaphysics, a knack for storytelling, a desire to know her Celtic roots and a fervent enthusiasm for song writing. In the case of Laura, that something was her debut album release *Legends Of The Goddess*. Though the current popularity of Celtic music has proved serendipitous for Laura, the album was a work-in-progress for quite some time, conceived partially as music to which she would choose to paint: "When I paint, I'm on a different level of awareness and I want to write songs that help take me and the listener to that place."

**Circle Of Stone**, from *Legends Of The Goddess*, was inspired by Stonehenge, which first captured Laura's imagination when she was a child visiting Salisbury Plain. It weaves together elements of mystical experience, a sense of belonging and a feeling of timelessness engendered by this fascinating prehistoric ruin.



**Maë McKenna**, whose roots are both Irish and Scottish, was the youngest of three children in a family of musicians and singers from Coatbridge, near Glasgow. Exposed to everything from jazz through folk, rock and classical music, she took readily to singing, song writing, violin, viola and piano. Her first big step into the music industry came in the early '70s when she became lead vocalist for the legendary folk-rock band Contraband. When they disbanded in 1975 she began a solo career that led to three recordings on the Transatlantic label and numerous radio and TV appearances. She soon came into great demand as a studio session singer and eventually joined tours of such top artists as Al Stewart and Genesis' Steve Hackett. She recorded two albums for Virgin before travelling to Nashville to produce the independent release *Shore To Shore*.



**On *Heaven's Shore*** was originally produced for the 1999 album release *Shore To Shore* and was co-written by the artist and her colleague, John O'Kane. This strikingly beautiful piece is fundamentally a romantic song, alluding as it does to a mystical as well as a physical union between two lovers.



**Anne Martin** has been performing and researching Gaelic song since childhood. Born and raised in Trotternish on the Isle of Skye, she is highly respected in local traditional music circles as a singer, having worked with such outstanding bands as Ossian, The Battlefield Band, Runrig and The Boys Of The Lough. Her 1998 debut album *Co..?*, which translates from the Gaelic as "Who..?", is the result of a lifetime of experience with Gaelic song and is a remarkable showcase for a voice that ranges in style from haunting to near childlike, at times expressive in a quality not unlike the Gaelic pipes. Married, with one young daughter, Anne still resides on the Isle of Sky and divides her time between family, a rising music career, community work, outdoor pursuits such as kayaking, and acting in TV and film.



**Oran Leannan Sithe** is the "fairy lover's" song, telling the intriguing story of a man's seduction by a fairy. It came to Anne in a roundabout way through her extended family, as it was "collected" in the 1930's by Katie Douglas from Angus Lamont, a cousin of Anne's grandfather in Bornaskitaig, North Skye.



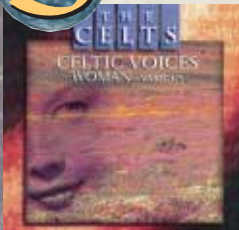
**Gabrielle Angelique**, being just 18 when *Celtic Mystique* was completed, is the youngest singer on this compilation. Raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota, she had surprisingly little professional training before releasing her impressive debut album *Echo* at the age of 17. Several months prior to *Celtic Mystique's* conception, Gabrielle came to the attention of its future producer through her mother, noted harpist Mary Kahmann, who had sent him *Echo* for his professional feedback. Recognising a remarkable undiscovered talent, he arranged for Gabrielle to train with Canada's Jan Cooper, one of North America's top pop vocal and talent development coaches. Gabrielle came upon *Ancient Souls* while studying with Mr. Cooper and instantly fell in love with the song, adopting it as her own. Future plans include another solo album and increased performing.



***Ancient Souls*** was originally written for another of Mr. Cooper's students. It is a powerful piece relating to the quest for completeness in love through the bonding of souls. The song, Gabrielle and *Celtic Mystique* seemed a natural threesome, inspiring the producer to hire Mr. Cooper's studio to record it for the album.



**Sharon Murphy** grew up in a very musical family and was encouraged to sing at a very young age. She gained valuable early experience in various folk groups that sang at Sunday mass in her local Dublin church parish, but her first real break came when another singer failed to show up for a recording session in a south Dublin studio and she was asked to fill in. Soon after, the recording engineer sought her out again to be the featured guest vocalist with the Irish ambient/trance group Dagda. Her first big success came as lead vocalist on their recording of the song *Home Again In Eireann*, a song track from their album *Hibernia* which has also been included on a number of other albums. She is also featured on the Owl Records' album *Celtic Voices — Woman*, for which Sharon's version of *Homes Of Donegal* was originally produced.



***Homes Of Donegal*** captures the Irish tradition of hospitality and friendliness, reflecting on the welcome received by travellers who in bygone days promulgated Irish culture through storytelling and song. Usually sung in standard waltz time, more recently it has been given a contemporary flavour by artists who perform it in 4/4 time.





## Jennifer Parsignault



Jennifer Parsignault began her career on the violin but, as happens with many artists, somewhere along the way her focus shifted. She came to embrace singing, song writing, piano, music production and recording engineering. Although originally from France, her formative years were spent in Boston. She studied at Massachusetts' Longy School of Music and Berklee College before moving to Los Angeles where she pursued recording and freelancing as both a studio vocalist and performer while also putting together her own band. Nameless Records released two commercially strong albums by Jennifer in 1996 and 1997, *Jennifer* and *Red*, which received significant radio play in many parts of the world. *Oh, My*, Jennifer's third album, runs the gamut of human emotions, comprising textured sounds and silken vocals in tender ballads as well as hypnotic up-tempo tracks.

*Prayer For St. Symin*, from *Oh, My*, is an artistic take on the standard lullaby. The artist comments: "It is an ode to sleep, with resonance of an approaching evening and it's gentle promise of repose. The idea came to me in one fell swoop, musically disguised as a nice, relaxing and self-indulgent yawn...."



## Jennifer White



Jennifer White grew up in the tiny Canadian village of Otterville, Ontario, exposed to dixieland jazz and "down east" folk music. After studying classical piano and clarinet she became inspired by the early music of Loreena McKennitt to take up the Celtic harp and learn all she could of Celtic history and folklore. She was soon busking, which led to performances at weddings, festivals and special events. Jennifer works in the long-standing bardic tradition of harping and storytelling, taking audiences on a musical journey into the magical realm of Celtic myth and legend. By the time the idea for her first recording project *Clarsach* surfaced, she was comfortable as a composer, arranger and instrumentalist but had never sung as a lead vocalist. She consented to adding voice only after much encouragement by her brother and musical mentor, Ben.

*Loch Lomond*, is a Scottish song inspired by the story of two imprisoned soldiers in Carlisle in 1745, one to be executed and to return home by the "low road" of the Otherworld, the other to be set free to return by the earthly high road. It reflects the Celts' beliefs in the immediacy of the spiritworld and hope for reunification after death.



## Darby De Von



Darby De Von was born in the US state of California but has lived most of her life in the rural highlands of New Mexico, near Santa Fe where she helps run the family's bookstore. Passionate about music since childhood, Darby felt in her heart even at an early age that somehow her path in life would lead to writing and recording her own songs. As it happened, a series of home-recorded demo tapes from this young singer and keyboardist captured the interest of the MTI record label which chose to include two of her songs on their *Santa Fe Sampler* album. They were well-received by radio programmers nationwide and MTI has prepared an album release of her self-penned Celtic-flavoured contemporary music on which *Highlands* is the title track.

Of *Highlands* and her music Darby says: "It is a dance of memory and vision, an exploration celebrating the magical inner landscapes and memories within. There is magic around music and the memories and mystic familiarities it triggers for me. I have ancestral roots in Scotland and Ireland, and the deep memories seem to create wonderful synchronicities in my everyday life."



## Pippa Marland



Pippa Marland is a co-founding member, along with guitarist/songwriter Rob King, of the British Celtic fusion band Carmina, a group of six stellar musicians based in Bristol. Pippa lived much of her childhood in Ghana, Malta and Wales. Her teenage years were spent in quiet rebellion, forming bands and gleaning inspiration from jazz greats as well as the premier folk-rock artists of the late 1960s. A brilliant student of English literature, she eventually put aside her pursuit of a PhD in favour of song writing and a music career, developing her talents not only as an insightful lyricist and fine vocalist, but as a saxophonist. She lives in England with her partner and daughter and tours regularly with the band throughout Europe. They have recorded one album, *Weather In The Heart*, on which *Bird Of Paradise* is featured.

*Bird Of Paradise* is dedicated to the late English painter/poet Jane Urquhart whose genius coupled with severe depression produced intense loneliness and isolation, a source of the song's images. In the song the tragedy of her suicidal end is balanced by a celebration of her immense capacity for inspiration, creativity, vision, love and faith.

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