



Compánach is a fast-moving, cross-media concert of traditional Irish music, song and dance. A unique concept, it links the narrative power and subtle judgment of the the photographer's eye to the genre-specific tapestry and aesthetic precision of musicianship. Following a theme of music and place, it uses photography and historic imagery to tell the music's story and indicate its roots, regions, topography and topicality.

A "live documentary", it has solo, duet and group music representing all Irish counties and Diaspora regions and both early and modern tunesmiths. This soundscape is warmed by song in Irish and English and accented by sean-nós, percussive step-dance.

Compánach is performed by leading musicians – fiddler Gerry O'Connor, uilleann piper Tiarnán Ó Duinnchín, flute-player Fintan Vallely, sean-nós step dancer and flute-player Sibéal Davitt, and sean-nós singer and fiddler Roisín Chambers. Its course is directed by Fintan Vallely, editor of its mentor book, the encyclopedia *Companion to Irish Traditional Music*, the text of which is turned back into music, a melodic adjunct to a key resource of modern-day Traditional music. The narrative is expanded subtly, by rear-projection and slow changes on a large-scale, backdrop screen: music is presented, as it were, "in" the images. A flow of 800 of these has historical and music tableaux which set off and are shaped by the predominance of superb scenic and event photography by the award-winning Belgian-Irish Jacques Nutan.

This show might be dubbed "ph-usic" – a collaboration of photography and live music. Each enhances the other – an interplay of sound, sight and imagination which effortlessly conveys a large amount of contextual and stylistic information on Irish-Traditional music from the 1700s up to modern time.

The playing is seamless, but rapidly-changing, 90 tunes running without commentary in 25 sets. The narrative is subliminal, generated by photos and historical images supported by indicative sub-titles. While Nutan's images of landscapes and personalities have independent dramatic power, they also greatly expand the music experience, and they side-step the linguistic barriers which can often curtail comprehension among the diverse nationalities who listen to and perform Irish Traditional music.

Structure and requirements: The full show is in two parts with an interval, and with sub-titling in Irish and English – or the host-venue's main language. It can also be of shorter duration where required in festivals. Convenient for all sizes of venues and occasions, it can be done acoustically or with a host's PA, and can either use in-house projection and screens or, where resources are limited, can use its own equipment. A printed programme is provided for each performance.

Compánach is versatile, and is as much suited to a free-standing concert night or music festival headline as it is for "edu-tainment" in Irish-Studies, College or School events. But it is primarily a music performance, an alliance of the auditory, the visual, the aesthetic and the cultural, designed as a satisfying, multidimensional artistic experience.

Booking enquires welcome for 2016/17. Web: www.companach.ie
Further information on [Compánach's performers](#)
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