Kathleen Loughnane summary cv (2025_10)

- Kathleen was born in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. Early musical recollections are of her father's playing and singing at the piano, the magical *seán-nós* singing of Nioclás Tóibín at Sunday Mass at *Coláiste na Rinne* in Waterford, where she spent her final year of primary school, and the wonderfully gifted nun who taught music at her Limerick secondary school.
- Kathleen studied Social Science at UCD and at LSE, afterwards combining social work in inner London with occasional forays into performance - perhaps most notably to play for Edna O'Brien at her 50th birthday party in 1980!
- Moving to Galway in 1982, with children now about her feet, she began to focus on developing her skills in playing and arranging for harp. She was inspired by Gráinne Yeats, who had awarded her the Mc Carthy Cup in *Féile Luimní* as a teenager (and later taught her), and whose scholarship, encountered initially in Gráinne's seminal double-LP in 1980 - *Féile na gCruitirí, Béal Feirste 1792* – had drawn universal attention to the music of the early harpers. Their tradition had almost fully declined by the time of the Belfast Harp festival of 1792, but elements were preserved for posterity by the young organist Edmund Bunting.
- Kathleen brought some of her own harping repertoire and arrangements with her into *Dordán*, the group she co-founded in 1990 with Mary Bergin and Dearbhaill Standún. Together they recorded 4 CDs, and their mix of Irish and Baroque music resulted in their being awarded RTÉ's National Entertainment Award for Traditional Music in 1993.
- Since then, Kathleen has recorded 6 CDs in her own name - with the collaboration of friends and family - publishing her harp arrangements for each. The most recent have featured the music of the Connellans, harper brothers from Co. Sligo (c.1640-1720), who pre-dated Carolan by 50 years and whose music had – after the demise of the harping tradition - been preserved by fiddlers and pipers, and which she helped restore to the harping repertoire, and that of Patrick O'Neill (1765-1832), a Kilkenny miller, piper and music collector whose fascinatingly eclectic musical notebooks were purchased in 2008 by the National Library of Ireland.
- Kathleen has taught and performed at major festivals throughout Europe, Japan and the US, and has for many years been closely involved with the work of *Cáirde na Cruite*, *Cruit Éireann* and *Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy*, whose teaching initiatives and concerts have contributed immensely to the burgeoning interest in harp playing among younger musicians. She was greatly honoured to be invited to launch the *Scoil Samhraidh* in Miltown Malbay this year. (429 words)