



Newsletter of the Folklore Society

OF GREATER WASHINGTON
P. O. Box 19303 • 20th Street Station • Washington, D.C. 20036

VOL. 5, NO. 2

October, 1968

George A. Simpson, Editor

IRISH FOLKSINGER JOE HEANEY IN OCTOBER CONCERT

Joe Heaney from Connemara, Ireland, will sing Irish traditional songs in English and Gaelic in concert at the Society's October program.

With a repertory of over 300 Gaelic songs, Heaney in 1959 won first prize for traditional Gaelic song at the "All Ireland Festival" in Thurles, Ireland. He was born in Carna Parish, County Galway, in the westernmost regions of the Irish mainland, an entirely Gaelic speaking area, whose people live by fishing and farming, and, though learning English in the village school there, he never used it much till he left Carna for good.

Most of his songs, which he sings unaccompanied, he learned from his father, who died when he was young. He himself did not sing until he was nineteen when he entered a feis ceoil, won, and went on to win the first prize at the Oireachtas (National Music Festival) in Dublin. He appeared at the Oireachtas from 1946 until he moved to New York city, where he now lives working as a building laborer.

Heaney appeared here in July on an evening concert program with other British Isles singers at the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of American Folklife. He also has appeared at the Newport and Philadelphia folk festivals. He has recorded two LP's on English labels -- a twelve-inch Topic and a seven-inch Collector.

Since leaving Carna, he has learned many other songs, but, to quote A.L. Lloyd in his notes to the Topic record quoting the singer he "never got a song out of a book; it was all picked up on my way along." His songs are of "long-lined, ornamented, grave composition," again to quote Lloyd. They are well wedded to the rigorous living of the area, the spirit of which has been captured in writing by John Millington Synge, and on film by Robert F. Flaherty in his "Man of Aran."

The concert begins at 8:30 p.m., Friday, October 11, in the Washington Ethical Society auditorium, 7750 - 16th Street NW., Washington, D.C. Admission is one dollar for the general public. Society members will be admitted free of charge. Society memberships may be obtained at the door. There is plenty of free parking.

Of the Connacht district, which includes Connemara, the song "The West's Asleep" says: "And long a brave and haughty race honored and sentinelled the place." Joe Heaney and his songs are of that race and of that place.

Folklore Society of Greater Washington
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MEMBERSHIP FORM

Enclosed find my check or money order in the amount of (\$5.00 yearly individual membership) or (\$7.50 yearly family membership).

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ Zip _____

COLLECTANEA...

The Society's first Open Sing of the season will be held at 8:00 p.m., Saturday, October 25, at Union Methodist Church, 814 - 20th Street NW., Washington, D.C. Admission will be free. The general public is welcome, especially those who would like to perform.

Sacred Harp Sing and Potluck Supper, 4:00 p.m., Sunday, October 20, at the home of Darius Thieme in upper northwest Washington, D.C. Those interested call the Thieme's at 362-7536.

Dan Smith, Negro harpist and singer from Alabama via White Plains, New York, 8:30 p.m., Friday, November 8, Washington Ethical Society auditorium, 7750 - 16th Street NW., Washington, D.C. Members free, others one dollar.

At last the secret is out: The NEWSLETTER Supplement is a thirdly, planned to appear in February, June and October. The October issue, containing an article by Esther K. Birdsall of the University of Maryland on folklore materials in Maryland: A Guide to the Old Line State, which guide resulted from collecting done in the 1930's under the WPA Federal Writers' Project, will be sent free to Society members. The October Supplement also includes reviews of a number of this summer's festivals, book and record reviews, and the like.

Deadline for the NEWSLETTER is the 18th of the month preceding the month of publication. If you have items which may be of interest, contact the editor at (301) 530-0973.

"Railroad Songs and Ballads," (L 61), a selection from field recordings made by the Library of Congress from the 1930's on, with thorough notes by Archie Green, may be obtained by sending \$4.95 to the Recording Laboratory, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. Checks should be made payable to "Music Division, Library of Congress." The record is a 33 1/3 LP with very full sides.

WAMU-FM presents John R. Dildine with folk music at 9:00 p.m. Fridays and Richard K. Spottswood with bluegrass music at 10:00 p.m. Wednesdays on local radio.

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