

## ~ Pipes of 4 Nations ~

The “Return to Fingal” festival, held last October at the Séamus Ennis centre in Naul, co. Dublin, afforded lovers of piping the opportunity to enjoy the “Pipes of Four Nations”. This is a newly formed ensemble consisting of our own Mick O’Brien on uilleann pipes, Pauline Cato on Northumbrian pipes, François Lazarevitch on the French Baroque Musette, Barnaby Brown on the Scottish Smallpipes and Javier Sainz on the Baroque harp and old Irish wire-strung harp. The performance in Naul was their third – they had already performed in Nantes and in Glasgow – and, by the time you read this, they will also have played at the William Kennedy Piping Festival in Armagh.

They have devised an attractive way of presenting the music. The concert was divided into four sections, each one focussing on the music of one region or country, and each one led by the player whose speciality it was. The leader was then joined, one-by-one, by the



*From left: Barnaby Brown, Mick O'Brien, Pauline Cato, François Lazarevitch and Javier Sainz*

other musicians, until the section was brought to a finale with the full ensemble performing.

To give a flavour of the event, Pauline Cato led off the proceedings with a solo performance of “Sir Sidney Smith’s March” on the Northumbrian pipes, after which she was joined by François Lazarevitch on Musette for a couple of pieces. She then duetted with Javier Sainz, and finally the whole group performed “The Heights of Alma” and “Follow her over the Border”. Subsequent portions of the programme focussed on France & England, Scotland and Ireland.

This approach worked very well. The sounds and capabilities of the different instruments could be perceived and enjoyed in the solo performances, and the various different combinations that were created during the concert provided many wonderful blends of texture and timbre. The selection of material contributed strongly to this as well. With material chosen from many areas, contexts and periods, the result was a very varied, entertaining and satisfying evening of music.

Apart from the pipes, other musical highlights were provided by the rarely-heard and ravishing sounds of Barnaby Brown’s Triple Pipes and Javier Sainz’s wire-strung harp.

This is an inter-cultural project supported by the Meyer Foundation and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama. The musicians, and their sponsors, are to be congratulated for putting together an imaginative and enthralling show.

**Terry Moylan**