

A man with short, blonde hair is shown from the chest up, playing a violin. He is wearing a dark, possibly black, jacket. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on his face and the violin, while the background is dark and indistinct. The overall mood is intimate and focused.

Johnny Henry

One Out of the Fort

Johnny Henry 1922-1996

On this historic recording of fiddle music by Johnny Henry the listener is brought back to an earlier time and Johnny's wonderful and unique playing reflects the kind of music that you only find at the core of the Irish tradition. His playing has a beautiful and lyrical quality that always supports the tune and his "lift" and "drive" reflects the sounds of the locality where he was born.

John Henry was born on the Sligo Mayo border just outside the village of Doocastle on August 16, 1922. Doocastle and the surrounding areas were rich in traditional music with the fiddle and flute being the instruments of choice for most musicians in the locality. Johnny was one of a family of eleven and there was music on both sides of his family.

In 1935 Johnny took his first fiddle lessons from Sarah Tuohy (nee Gallagher), the wife of traveling dancing master and fiddler, Peter Tuohy. Around the same time he also took lessons from another fiddler by the name of P.J. Giblin. Aside from helping Johnny learn to play the fiddle, Giblin also taught him to read and write music.

Aside from lessons, he also learned his music from other local musicians, from the radio, and from the 78 rpm records (of emigrant musicians) that were brought back from America. From a very early age it was obvious that Johnny had a gift for playing the fiddle and learning tunes.

Music and music-making was one of the central themes of life during the early days of Johnny's childhood and the local house dance was very popular particularly during the winter months. Many of the local musicians had their own way of playing, and often styles and approach could differ from neighbour to neighbour. People entertained themselves by music making, dancing and storytelling. As Johnny progressed on the fiddle, he often played for house dances, the local creamery dances, socials, weddings and wakes, and at Christmas time, he often went out on the "Wren".

Killavel, an area not too far away from Doocastle, was known for its great fiddling tradition. Some of the greatest players from that area included fiddlers Philip O' Beirne, his son James "Lad" O' Beirne, James "Jim" Coleman, and his brother, the legendary fiddler Michael Coleman. Jim Coleman, who many said was Michael's equal as a fiddler, traveled within the Sligo, Leitrim, Mayo area and would have visited Doocastle on occasion.

Although Johnny would have heard the 78 rpm records of Michael Coleman and other emigrant musicians including James Morrison and Paddy Killoran, Johnny's playing nevertheless was primarily influenced by players of the region around Doocastle which included fiddlers Pat Kellegher and John Michael Cawley. According to Johnny's brother Kevin, "*Johnny played with an up-bow style that Pat Kelleber got from Kippeen Scanlon*", (another legendary Sligo fiddler – no recordings in existence).

The music on this CD is crafted by a true master musician. We hear many rare and unique tunes: an unknown and very unusual twelve-part reel called *The Wise Maid*; the lovely *Owen Davey's* reel; *Henry's #1*, a double jig; *Gowlan Road* which seems to be a version of the well known reel, *The Flower of the Flock*; and a reel called *The Highlanders Kneebuckle* – just some of the rare and unusual tunes on this recording. He also plays several beautiful duets, one with his brother Kevin (flute and pipes), as well as a lovely fiddle duet with his sister Verona.

Throughout the CD Johnny's tunes always display great lift and heart. He understood the musical landscape of a tune and how to approach it. His ability to vary his tunes – add lift, ornamentation, trebling – gave his playing a wonderful and lyrical quality, sometimes with a note of sadness. This recording makes a powerful statement about Irish music – past, present and future. His playing pays homage to generations of musicians from the past, and keeps the unbroken tradition alive for the present generation. Johnny Henry's music has always represented the living tradition and through this recording his ageless music will influence players and lovers of Irish traditional music for many generations to come.

—*James Kelly*



Right to left: Johnny, Verona and Kevin Henry with their mother Mary and her sister Ann, at the wedding of Kevin and Pauline Henry, 1960.

Johnny Henry *One Out of the Fport*

1. Dinny O'Briens / Farewell to Connaught, reels 2:23
2. The Black Haired Lass, reel 1:03
3. The Wise Maid, reel 4:59
4. Old Man Dillon / The Whistling Banshee, jigs 2:10
5. The Stoney Steps / Langton's / The Stoney Steps, reels 3:01
6. A Fig for a Kiss, slip jig 1:31
7. The Five Mile Chase / The Hare's Paw, reels 2:30
8. The Five Crossroads, reel 1:45
9. The Mouse in the Cupboard / The Wandering Minstrel, jigs 2:47
10. Battle of Aghrim / Lord Mayo, marches 2:18
11. Owney Davey's / Boil the Breakfast Early, reels 1:57
12. The Liffey Banks / The Shaskeen, reels 2:16
13. Patsy Sean Nancy's, reel 1:00
14. Rose in the Heather / Thrush in the Bush, jigs 2:18
15. Jeremiah Martins, reel 1:08
16. The Highlander's Kneebuckle, reel 1:02
17. The Ewe Reel, schottische 0:59
18. The Old Killavil, jig 1:33
19. Reidy Johnson's / Gagan's / Reidy Johnson's, reels 3:03
20. Bimis ag Ol (Let Us be Drinking) jig 1:18
21. Achonry Lasses / The Crooked Road to Dublin, reels 2:14
22. The Wheels of the World / The Priests Leap, jigs 2:31
23. The Gowlan Road, reel 1:24
24. The Nova Scotia / Biddy the Bold Wife, jigs 2:03
25. Johnny Henry, interview 1:19
26. Henry's #1, double jig 1:31
27. Down the Broom / The Gatehouse Maid, reels 2:15



1. *Dinny O'Briens/Farewell to Connaught*, reels.
Interview with Alan Gahagan
2. *The Black Haired Lass*, reel. Johnny said he got this tune from Michael Gorman. Alternate tune name is *The Waves of Clew Bay*.
3. *The Wise Maid*, reel
4. *Old Man Dillon/The Whistling Banshee*, jigs. Johnny Henry, fiddle and Verona Ryan (nee Henry), fiddle
5. *The Stoney Steps/Langton's/The Stoney Steps*, reels.
Paddy MaGuire, piano
6. *A Fig for a Kiss*, slip jig
7. *The Five Mile Chase/The Hare's Paw*, reels. Johnny Henry, fiddle with Verona Ryan, fiddle and Kevin Henry, flute
8. *The Five Crossroads*, reel. Johnny said he got this tune from Batt Henry who was a first cousin of Johnny's father, Thomas Henry. Johnny remembered that Batt Henry was born in 1872 and died in September 1957. Batt Henry was born the same year as Johnny's father. Peter Horan was known to play this tune on the flute.
9. *The Mouse in the Cupboard/The Wandering Minstrel*, jigs.
Paddy MaGuire, piano. The first tune was also recorded by John McKenna.
10. *Battle of Augbrim/Lord Mayo*, marches. Johnny Henry, fiddle with Kevin Henry, uilleann pipes
11. *Owney Davey's/Boil the Breakfast Early*, reels
12. *The Liffey Banks/The Shaskeen*, reels. Background musicians unknown
13. *Patsy Sean Nancy's*, reel. Johnny said he had no name for this tune but got it from the playing of John Michael Cawley. Kevin Henry credits this tune to Patrick Hunt a flute player, who was better know as Patsy Sean Nancy or Patsy John Ann. He was called after his father and his grandmother. Patrick Hunt's father, Sean Nancy was a piper and a flute player. Alternate tune names are *An Ugly Customer*, *After the Hare*, *The Cassagh Reel*.
14. *Rose in the Heather/Thrush in the Bush*, jigs. Paddy MaGuire, piano
15. *Jeremiah Martins*, reel. Johnny said this was one of one of Batt Henry's tunes who got it from Jeremiah Martins, a traveling fiddler from Co. Waterford who came one year to the fair in Ballymote and Batt brought him back to the house. Alternate tune names are *Come Up in the Room I Want You*, *The Ballina Lassies*.
16. *The Higblander's Kneebuckle*, reel. Johnny said he got this tune from Patrick Hunt.
17. *The Ewe Reel*, schottische. Johnny demonstrates how he plays a reel as a schottische.
18. *The Old Killavil*, jig. A tune known to be played by the Hunt brothers, Micky and Tommy, and Lad O'Beime. Alternate tune name is *Pathway to the Well*.
19. *Reidy Johnson's/Gagan's/Reidy Johnson's*, reels. Paddy MaGuire, piano. Alternate tune names are *Hand Me Down the Tackle/Grogan's*.
20. *Bímis ag Ói (Let Us be Drinking)*, jig. Willie Clancy played and recorded this tune.
21. *Achonyr Lassies/The Crooked Road to Dublin*, reels. *Achonyr Lassies* was first recorded by Tom Gannon in New York and may have been written by him. Bertie Henry, brother of Batt Henry, played piano on that recording.
22. *The Wheels of the World/The Priest's Leap*, jigs
23. *The Gowlan Road*, reel. Gowlan is the name of the townland where Johnny's friends Patrick Hunt (Patsy Sean Nancy) and Mick Joe Ryan came from in Doocastle, Co Mayo. Alternate tune names are *Flower of the Flock*, *Patsy Sean Nancy's*.
24. *The Nova Scotia/Biddy the Bold Wife*, jigs
25. Johnny Henry, interview
26. *Henry's #1*, double jig. Composed by Johnny Henry and recorded by Peter Kennedy in Doocastle, Co Mayo, 1964.
27. *Down the Broom/The Gatehouse Maid*, reels. Johnny Henry, fiddle, Verona Ryan (nee Henry), fiddle, Maggie Healy (nee Henry), tin whistle and Kevin Henry, flute

THE RECORDINGS

Tracks 1, 20, 21, 22, 23 recorded by Alan Gahagan, Doocastle, Co Mayo, 1977-78

Tracks 13, 24 recorded by Alan Gahagan, Doocastle, Co Mayo, 1973-75

Tracks 8,11 recorded by Alan Gahagan, Doocastle, Co Mayo, May 1981

Tracks 2, 3, 16 recorded by Peter Kennedy, Doocastle, Co Mayo, 1964

Track 3 (interview); tracks 6, 18 recorded by Mícheál Mac Giolla Easbuic and Danny O'Donnell, Doocastle, Co Mayo, 1977

Tracks 4,7,10, 27 recorded at Central Recording Studio, Athlone, Co Westmeath, 1985

Tracks 5, 9, 14, 19 recorded in Ballymote, Co Sligo, 1962

Track 12 recorded by Carmel McHale in the 1960's

Tracks 15, 17 recorded by Finbar Boyle at the Western Hotel, Ballaghaderreen, Co Roscommon, 1981

Track 25 recorded by Harry Bradshaw, July 13, 1988



Johnny Henry, 1960s

'Every single week he'd play a couple of tunes that nobody had ever heard of. They always used to say, "Johnny, we want one out of the fort".'

—Carmel McHale

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—James Fraher

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