

Tribute to Cherish the Ladies

Parker Gambino March 12, 2025

"Cherish the Ladies" is the title of a traditional Irish jig. In 1985, the immigrant Mick Moloney, an Irish-born American musician, scholar, and producer of musical events put together a festival in New York City titled "Cherish the Ladies" to highlight female musicians in the area of Irish traditional music. A featured ensemble adopted that name, and has now been going strong for 40 years! They have become **the** foremost purveyors of Irish music in the world.

Joanie Madden, born in the Bronx (an automatic cred-bump in my eyes), is the ringleader of the crew. She is a virtuoso of the flute and tin-whistle, both mainstays of Irish-trad music. Joanie is just about the ultimate MC, with a breezy manner of sneaking in praise for accomplishments in introducing her colleagues, and an engaging sense of humor. In her collection of instruments, there seem to be as many whistles and flutes as there are strings on a piano.

The constellation includes players of a variety of instruments, all renowned performers in their own right. It is not surprising that music runs keen within their family backgrounds, where the embrace of varied expressions of deep cultural roots provided early exposure, rendering music a way to be rather than a thing to do. Likewise not surprising is that they are also teachers rising to the call of duty, keeping the traditional arts and culture alive. Especially gratifying are the strong trans-Atlantic connections, binding tight the scions of the diaspora to those who never left the homeland; two members were born in New York, two in Ireland, and one in Scotland. Collaborations outside the context of the band abound, with links to stars in rock/pop, trad, and genre-fusing world music.

A Cherish the Ladies concert mixes instrumentals and lyrical songs, and presents both strictly traditional and more contemporary takes and original compositions. For every deeply touching rendition there is a strong pulse of rambunctious commotion in double-time. Across varied cultures, music at the origin served as dance-accompaniment. Thus, Irish step-dancers (only the cream of the crop, naturally) are part of the performing ensemble. Also, at some concerts, local or up-and-coming singers working in the canon are given a solo shot, with to-die-for nonpareil instrumental backing.

With four decades of enduring excellence, there is no end to the awards, distinctions, and hosannas; too numerous to list here, they can be found at the band's website link below.

[Cherish the Ladies website](#)

[Cherish the Ladies Wikipedia](#)

[Just Us Folk](#)

[Concert review for poster art](#)

Performance links:

[Portumna Workhouse/Hurling Boys of Portumna](#)

[Farewell to the Catskills](#)

[A Mother's Love's A Blessing](#)

[Shadow of a Singer and His Song](#)