



# Boys of the Lough

*Midwinter Night's Dream*  
A Celtic Christmas Concert

Recorded to video at ...  
Manchester Craftsmen's Guild  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
Tuesday, December 12, 2006

## **BOYS OF THE LOUGH, A SHORT BIO**

*"One of the finest bands in Celtic traditional music."* The New York Times

*"The most rhythmically bracing of the traditional music bands."* Time Magazine

*"Legends."* Boston Globe

With over thirty years experience in the world of traditional music, over 60 North American tours, 20 recordings and two Grammy nominations, **Boys of the Lough** has reached legendary status.

The Celtic supergroup features All-Ireland champion **Cathal McConnell** on flute, whistles and vocals; **Dave Richardson** on concertina, mandolin, button accordion and cittern; **Brendan Begley** on button accordion, melodeon, and vocals; **Malcolm Stitt** on guitar, bouzouki and Highland pipe; and Young Fiddler of the Year **Kevin Henderson** on fiddle.

The Boys have established a reputation for technical brilliance and integrity combined with a ready wit and sense of fun. The music ranges widely through traditional melodies of Ireland and encompasses fiddle music of Shetland, Scotland and North America. These range from compelling dance rhythms to evocative slow airs and beautifully-structured songs, some in the Irish language.

Dave Richardson's famed composition *"Calliope House,"* named in honor of George Balderose's Pittsburgh home and folk music venue, has sold over a million copies and

has been featured in the smash-hit stage production *Lord of the Dance* and television's *Sex in the City*.

## *MIDWINTER NIGHT'S DREAM*

### **A CELTIC CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

One of the best Christmas shows touring today, the acclaimed *Midwinter Night's Dream* is steeped in the personal memories of Celtic Christmas traditions by members of **Boys of the Lough**.

A Celtic Christmas with **Boys of the Lough** combines beautiful Christian and pagan winter holiday songs and instrumentals from throughout Ireland, Scotland and Northern England with fascinating stories of the history of this great musical tradition. Master storyteller and multi-instrumentalist Dave Richardson weaves sparkling wit and humor with encyclopedic knowledge of British traditions, evoking visions of snow-covered hills, icy gales, fires in the hearth, rosy-cheeked lasses and lads, drams of ale, and circle dances, and adding a bit of fantasy with anecdotes of fairies and trolls. **Boys of the Lough** founder Cathal McConnell adds a forty-year history of playing this music on stage through song, flute and whistle. Accordion and melodeon player Brendan Begley brings a beautiful tenor voice to the songs of the tradition, singing in Gaelic and English, including a haunting Gaelic version of *"Silent Night."* Guitarist Malcolm Stitt hails from the Highlands of Scotland, and Kevin

Henderson shares his rich fiddle tradition of the Shetland Islands.

The Boys' critically-acclaimed album **Midwinter Night's Dream** is based upon this concert.

*"Midwinter Night's Dream is one of the most satisfying, well-conceived and executed albums of Celtic music you'll find anywhere."*  
Irish Voice

## **THE BOYS AND CALLIOPE HOUSE**

A Short History by George Balderose

**Boys of the Lough** first came to Pittsburgh during April of 1980 at the invitation of Calliope House for a concert at Carnegie Music Hall in Oakland. I was the chairman of the Calliope board at the time, and had recently become the recipient of a Clan Donald Educational and Charitable Trust scholarship to pursue the study of bagpiping in Scotland, beginning in September, 1980.

**Boys of the Lough**, living in Edinburgh, while at a Calliope House party after their performance, invited me to visit them when I was in Scotland. While I was living in Aberlemno, Angus, Scotland and studying with Jimmy McIntosh in Brechin, I ended up visiting them often in Edinburgh and learning much about music from Cathal McConnell, Dave Richardson, and Aly Bain. I accompanied Cathal to Northern Ireland and spent some time with him at his family home in Fermanagh, visiting the older musicians who taught Cathal much of his music. Before

I returned to the US, we did a pilgrimage together at Lough Derg in Donegal.

The Boys were invited back to Pittsburgh by Calliope House for concerts on several occasions over the last 20 years. In 1984, they released **In the Tradition**, which included a tune that Dave composed and entitled "*Calliope House*." By that time, Dave had composed a number of other tunes and named them after houses, and this new jig in E-flat major was also so-named. Since then, the tune has been recorded by over ten artists, including Kevin Burke and Patrick Street, Alasdair Fraser, Hamish Moore, Alasdair Gillies, the Waterboys, as well as in commercials during the US Olympics in Atlanta and during the Lord of the Dance performances. Few of the subsequent recordings played it in E-flat major, most of them play it in the key of D. A great, bouncy tune in whatever key, "*Calliope House*" has become a session tune in Ireland and Scotland, and can be heard in many public music gatherings in both countries.

Cathal McConnell, one of the founders of **Boys of the Lough**, has a special relationship to Pittsburgh. He toured nationally several times in the late 90s with Mt. Lebanon Irish musician Richard Hughes, and has performed with Hooley at the Pittsburgh Irish Festival, as well as at other impromptu gatherings. Cathal has frequently visited Calliope House over the years, and enjoys a warm friendship with myself, my wife Nancy, and Leslie Clark.

## THE BOYS IN PITTSBURGH

Friday, April 11, 1980,  
Carnegie Music Hall

Saturday, February 26, 1983

Saturday, June 22, 1985,  
Three Rivers Arts Festival

Sunday, December 10, 1995,  
Carnegie Lecture Hall

Saturday, December 14, 2002,  
Carnegie Lecture Hall

Tuesday, December 12, 2006  
Manchester Craftsmen's Guild

## MANCHESTER CRAFTSMEN'S GUILD MUSIC HALL

*"MCG provides the intimacy of a living room with the acoustics of a great concert hall. I love performing there."* Nancy Wilson (Her Grammy-winning album **RSVP** was recorded at MCG)

*"Ideal acoustics."* All About Jazz

Home of Pittsburgh's critically-acclaimed MCG jazz series, this 4,000 square foot acoustically near-perfect hall has intimate, theater-style seating for 350.

Manchester Craftsmen's Guild is housed along with its sister organization, Bidwell Training Center, in a 62,000 square foot facility on Pittsburgh's North Shore.

Designed by architect Tasso Katsalas, a pupil of Frank Lloyd Wright, Manchester Craftsmen's Guild houses visual arts and

recording studios, classrooms, galleries, a cafeteria, concert hall and conference rooms designed to showcase the roles of creativity and craftsmanship in learning. Natural light pouring in through windows and skylights, terracotta-toned masonry framing archways and circular portals evoke stylistic influences of indigenous African architecture. The building's sense of warmth permeates the organizations' work with the arts and career education.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ESSENTIAL LINKS

[BoysOfTheLough.com](http://BoysOfTheLough.com) • [IxtlanArtists.com](http://IxtlanArtists.com)  
[WorldMusicSeries.com](http://WorldMusicSeries.com) • [MCGjazz.org](http://MCGjazz.org)

