



This week listening in wonderment to the delightful Irish Gaelic charm of Lasairhíona Ní Chonaola; the pop-rock brilliance of Frightened Rabbit; and the remarkable talents of Fiona Apple

Lasairhíona Ní Chonaola – An Raicín Álainn (2002)

Wandering the oft forgotten streets and alleyways of the folk world, an occasional finding may happen – a rare original folk-music talent of undeniable musical quality that you ask yourself the question, ‘Why do I not know about this girl?’. In this, her first of two released albums, you have a chance to get to know musical brilliance. The album is entirely sung in Gaelic by a singer as unique as any ever heard - able to sing before she could speak.

Lasairhíona (pronounced Lah-sah-reena), an Irish singer/songwriter ‘deeply rooted in the sean-nós singing style of her home on Inis Oírr, one of the Aran Islands’, a graduate of Celtic Studies from Trinity College Dublin, brings us from her family tradition – traditional melodies, previously unknown songs, and her own original Gaelic compositions.

She’s different – quite simply unique.

Lasairhíona brings a natural feel to the music you don’t hear and won’t hear from anyone that doesn’t speak Gaelic as a mother tongue. Her voice and singing are unlike any other in the world of recorded Gaelic music, a naturalness, a timeless quality, simply produced – guitar, fiddle, bodhrán – yet contemporary sounding and fresh.

If you love one song, you’ll love them all. From the delightfully tuneful, opening track giving the album its title ‘An Raicín Álainn [The Beautiful Comb]’ to the cool spoken Gaelic voice-over Oileán Na Teiscinne [Island of the Teiscinn], ending with the gentle choral song, ‘Ceol Na Gaoithe [Song of the Gale] – truly original sounding music. Some people have talent and make the most of it, some are born with undeniable natural gifts – Lasairhíona is of the latter. No excuse now for asking the question, ‘Why do I not know about this girl?’. Now you know – her CDs are available for listening on spotify – go give your ears and spirit a well-deserved treat,

buy the CD, and spread the word.

Some ['An Raicín Álainn' tracks can be heard on myspace](#)

Tracks: 1) [An Raicín Álainn](#) /The Beautiful Comb (*a short Youtube extract*) 2) [Bean Pháidín](#) /Páidín's Wife 3) Caisleán Gearr/Castlegar 4) Casadh an tSúgáin/The Twisting of The Rope 5) [Oileán na Teiscinne](#) /The Isle of Teicinn 6) Banríon Loch na Naomh/The Queen of Loch na Naomh 7) Bímse Féin Ag Iascaireacht/I Myself Go Fishing 8) Tonnta Chonmara/Connemara Waves 9) Amhrán an Phúca/Song of The Pooka 10) [De Thaisme](#) /Coincidence 11) Ar Bhruacha Na Laoi/On The Banks Of The Lee 12) Úna Bhán/Fair Úna 13) [Inis Oírr In Inis Oírr](#) /Inishere On Inishere 14) [Ceol na Gaoithe](#) /Song of The Gale

Casadh an tSúgáin/The Twisting of The Rope (2002)
{youtube}hgEX_ZWYWGs|300|200{/youtube}

Bonus: Lasairfhiona singing [Tearmainn Chaoimhin](#) - St Kevin's Sanctuary from the DVD, "Aran Islands ""A Journey Through Changing Times""

Frightened Rabbit – The Winter of Mixed Drinks (2010)

Early on in their careers, the band would give out their email address for those interested in receiving a free demo - when few demos were demanded, Scott said he would send out biscuits with the music, which led to a marked rise in requests for the demo – leaving a lasting impression with the recipients.

Scott Hutchison: "I'd send them to the U.S. and stuff, and they'd turn up as bags of crumbs, but I think it's still something that people will remember. I don't know, I suppose it was just one of those little things that people will remember, rather than making it disposable and forgettable".

Rarely, does Scotland produce such a world class group – rarer still does a Scottish group produce an album this great. It's quite simply the best pop-rock to come out of Scotland for many years – combining energy, great lyrics, catchy melodies, hooks – rich radio-pop – undeniably hummable. It demands repeated plays and it gets better each time. An agreeably

more polished offering than their previous albums but ‘the band’s scruffy-hearted charm still lies just below the surface’.

Any great album has its jewels, this one has the crown jewels – sparkling among them is the gloriously anthemic single ‘Swim Until You Can’t See Land’; a song that seems buoyed not so much by optimism as a dogged desire not to drown: “Are you a man?” he gulps. “Are you bag of sand?”. The jewels continue shimmering with the second single ‘Nothing Like You’ and the folky strains of ‘Living in Colour’; the more intricate tracks creep up on you.

When singer Scott Hutchison first spoke about the new material, around the time of recording ‘The Winter of Mixed Drinks’, he said, “The theme is going to be about pushing yourself to the edge of things and being alone”. Frightened Rabbit are not alone – their fans won’t let them be and that’s without the free bickies.

Tracks : 1) [Things](#) 2) Swim Until You Can't See Land 3) [The Loneliness and the Scream](#) 4) [The Wrestle](#)
5) [Skip the Youth](#)
6) [Nothing Like You](#)
7) [Man/Bag of Sand](#)
8) [Foot Shooter](#)
9) [Not Miserable](#)
10) [Living In Colour](#)
11) [Yes, I Would](#)

Frightened Rabbit’s innovative video: Swim Until You Can't See Land (2010)
{youtube}SzjERZU3wbY|300|200{/youtube}

Bonus: [An interview with Scott and Grant Hutchison in Canada](#)

Fiona Apple – Tidal (1996)

An old soul is the only way to describe Fiona Apple. It’s hard to believe when she wrote and recorded these songs she was 19 – the girl who wrote and recorded these songs has insight beyond the norm – some people are born with old souls.

She wrote and recorded 3 albums then stopped – saying (somewhat akin to French poet Arthur Rimbaud) that she had said all she wanted to say and that was that – one may hope she'll find a new muse in the coming years.

This, her first album, lays bare, no bars, the interior emotional life of someone right before us - the sensitivity of 'Sullen Girl', the raucous guilt trip of 'Criminal' and the erotic sensibility of 'Slow like Honey' are there – an honesty that shocks at times. Shocks because, one imagines a young person shouldn't really know such things and older folk don't really ever talk about such secrets out in the open.

The songs are, clever, true and formidably produced for Fiona's vocals and piano playing - launching this album into the firmament of that much claimed title but only ever exceptionally realized strata of 'a work of genius'. Take a bite of this Apple – the sin would be yours not to.

Tracks : 1) [Sleep to Dream](#) 2) [Sullen Girl](#) 3) [Shadowboxer](#) 4) [Criminal](#) 5) Slow Like Honey
6) [The First Taste](#) 7) [N](#)

[ever Is a Promise](#)

8)

[The Child Is Gone](#)

9)

[Pale September](#)

10)

[Carrion](#)

Cool fan video - Sullen Girl (1996)

{youtube}Woeleg_JvoA|300|200{/youtube}

Bonus: [Shadowboxer live \(1997\)](#)) and [Fiona Apple - speaking to fans](#)