

Welcome to The Thin Place ~ my very first solo harp album! This album has been a long time in coming, and I am happy to say that its time has arrived.

The term the thin place came to me via a yoga teacher one summer day mid-yoga class in describing the challenge of finding balance between inner and outer awareness on the mat. She explained that the thin place derives from Irish folklore and literature, and refers to the hazy space separating the fairy world from this one. It is especially associated with Samhain (Halloween), when this border becomes very unstable and facilitates travel between the two worlds.

Inspired by this concept, I composed a tune of the same name from the musical perspective of being in the midst of the thin place ~ perhaps better known as being "in the groove." Around this time I had already contemplated the very beginnings of a solo harp album, and from this point on, everything came into place. During much of the time spent creating this album I was delighted to find myself in the heart of the thin place, and it is my hope that this music brings you ~ the listener ~ there as well.

~ Aislinn

1. The Other Gate (A. Gagliardi) Swinging on the Gate/Devanny's Goat

In the process of remembering the reel Swinging on the Gate, I inadvertently created a slip jig instead! The two reels that follow come from Chicago fiddlers Teresa and John Shine, who in turn learned this set from the late and legendary Sligo fiddler Phil Durkin.

2. Humors of Kilclogher/Julia Clifford's (The Cordal jig) Hawthorn Hedge (© Seán Ryan)

The first two jigs I learned from a visit to the Wed. night session at the Irish American Heritage Center when I was a teenager. Accordionist Jack Murray gave me the sheet music. I fell in love with them and have played them ever since. The Hawthorn Hedge was composed by the late Tipperary fiddler Seán Ryan and while it's been recorded by many, I first learned it from the playing of harper Fionnuala Rooney of Monaghan. It can be found in *The Hidden Ireland*, a book of his tunes.

3. The Thin Place (A. Gagliardi) Paddy Fahy's/Mason's Apron (Micho Russell) Arr. AG & Liz Carroll Liz Carroll, Fiddle

In the midst of a yoga class the teacher mentioned the thin place ~ that hazy place between the fairy world and this one, often surfacing in Celtic mythology. It got me thinking, and I went home and composed this tune. Paddy Fahy's I first heard on the Martin Hayes and Dennis Cahill album *The Lonesome Touch*, and Micho Russell's version of the Mason's Apron comes from Bua's album *Down the Green Fields*. With some input from Liz Carroll, we added a twist at the end (thanks, Liz!).

4. Paddy Fahy's/Banks of Lough Gowna/Dave Collin's

While often played in G major, I originally learned Paddy Fahy's in G minor from Dublin harpist Aibhlín McCrann. The second tune I learned from Mayo harper Grainne Hambly, and the third from the playing of Fionnuala Rooney. This last tune was composed by Dave Collins, a box player from New York. It was first recorded by fiddler Brian Conway on his album *Apple in Winter*.

5. For Teresa (A. Gagliardi)

For a dear friend from Sweden who lives from her heart.

**6. Chief O'Neill's/Road to Glountane (© Terence "Cuz" Teahan)/Lisnagun (© Brendan Ring/MCPS)
John Williams, Concertina**

The first tune I picked up at many the Chicago session and it's named for police captain Francis O'Neill from Co. Cork ~ the 20th c. musician and great collector of traditional Irish music in Chicago. The second tune was composed by the late Kerryman Terence "Cuz" Teahan, and is often played in G as a reel. In his book of tunes of the same name it appears in a different key and listed as a highland. As one of his preferred compositions, this tune is also known as "Cuz's Favorite." The last tune I learned many years ago and was composed by multi-instrumentalist Brendan Ring from Kent, England.

7. Carraroe/Cobbler's/Cuil Aodh

The first tune I learned from Martin Hayes & Dennis Cahill's album Live in Seattle. The second is a lovely tune that came from the repertoire of Sligo fiddler Johnny Henry (brother to Kevin Henry, now in Chicago) as listed in Bernard Flaherty's book Trip to Sligo. While his version keeps the C# in the 2nd part of the tune, some play it natural instead, as I do here. The third tune I first learned from the playing of accordionist Tom O'Malley of Co. Mayo.

**8. The Harp & Shamrock (Pat Crowley) The Stage (James Hill)
Teresa Shine, Fiddle**

This first hornpipe was a popular one with fellow students during my time spent at the University of Limerick back in college. It was written by multi-instrumentalist Pat Crowley, and is named after a pub in Kinsale, Co. Cork which his late mother ran (RIP). The second tune I learned long ago from Teresa Shine, who in turn learned it from fiddler Bernadette NicGabhann. Its original name is the "Omnibus", and was written by the 19th c. British fiddler and composer James Hill, who was known especially for his hornpipe compositions.

9. Bruach na Carraige Báine (The Edge of the White Rocks) The Banks

One of the many unrequited love songs in the Irish repertoire, I first heard this air from the playing of Waterford guitarist Alan Colfer, later Dennis Cahill, and finally from the singing of Kerryman Timmy O'Sullivan. The Banks I learned from John Shine. One of its most common versions is attributed to the late J. Scott Skinner, aka "The Strathspey King," although it is unclear if he composed the tune.

10. Crickets (A. Gagliardi) Bakerswell Polkas #1 (Jer O'Connell's) & #2 (Din Tarrant's)

I composed this first polka a while back and the task of naming it escaped me for some time until one evening at a very quiet session one could hear... The last two tunes I learned from concertina player Susanna Haslett. Both are associated with the Slaibh Luachra area of Kerry.

Featuring Aislinn Gagliardi, Liz Carroll, Teresa Shine & John Williams

Recorded and mastered by Victor Sanders at Lakeside Media, Chicago victormail@aol.com

Mixed by Victor Sanders, Dennis Cahill & Aislinn Gagliardi

Photography by Jennifer Dickson Katori

Cover Design by Victor Sanders & Aislinn Gagliardi

All tunes arranged by Aislinn Gagliardi except where noted. Tracks 1-3-5-10 © A. Gagliardi/BMI

www.aislinnmusic.com aislinn@aislinnmusic.com

Thanks to: Liz Carroll, Teresa Shine, John Williams, Dennis Cahill, Victor Sanders and Jennifer Dickson Katori for enhancing this album with your talent and expertise. I so appreciate your support and willingness to be a part of this album, and have learned so much from each of you.

Thanks to: Alison Attar, Ann Lobotzke, Michael & Fionnuala Rooney, Janet Harbison and Gráinne Hambly, Sarah Wilfong for endless feedback and moral support, the Shine family, Tom O'Malley & the Wednesday night session, Phil Durkin (RIP), John O'Grady, Dave Collins & Kathleen Collins Orth, Pat Crowley, Sheila O'Mahoney & Family, Brendan Ring, Kathleen Ryan & Brian Ryan, Jimmy Keane, Teresa Stovin, Jan Yuvan, Katie Grennan, Timmy O'Sullivan, Ben Munro at The Grafton, Larry Fisher, and all of my students past and present from whom I've learned so much.

Special thanks to: My parents Lorie & Frank Gagliardi who have wholeheartedly supported and encouraged my musical education, interest and growth from the very beginning, and my sister and brother-in-law Meghan & Nick Anzenc.

This album is dedicated to the memory of Bill Wasmund.

Aislinn plays a Larry Fisher Éireann harp on this recording.