

## Press Release

September 10th, 2008

### *The Tempest* : Robbie Hannan, uilleann pipes



*The Tempest* is the wonderful new solo recording by renowned uilleann piper Robbie Hannan, and the third publication in Na Píobairí Uilleann's *Ace and Deuce of Piping* series.

Hannan is acknowledged as a modern day master of uilleann piping, an internationally renowned traditional musician of extraordinary ability who has helped take the art of piping to a new level.

This much anticipated CD captures all the traits unique to Hannan's playing: his total command of the instrument and his incredible gift of innovative, melodic variation. It also reflects the piper's depth of knowledge for source and interpretation, and reveals a true understanding of the integrity of each tune, of each individual version.

*The Tempest* casts an eye back to Hannan's early influences which can be traced through Willie Clancy's version of 'The West Wind', 'Seán Reid's Fancy', 'Old Hag You Have Killed Me' and Tommy Reck's 'Corney is Coming'.

Though he possesses a prolific repertoire, Hannan revels in the classic piping canon and this is reflected in *The Tempest*. But it is not a retrospective. His trademark has always been broadening the parameters of his piping through invention and masterful technique while remaining discerningly loyal to source, structure and the closed-fingered, staccato style of his musical heroes.

From the first few bars of the joyous 'Flax in Bloom', Hannan's unique voice is expressed with passion, precision and rhythmical majesty. Yet at no point is the link with Séamus Ennis broken.

Two beautiful slow airs associated with Clancy – 'The Bold Trainer O' and 'The Rocks of Bawn' – punctuate the 11 tracks on *The Tempest*. Contemporary influences can be detected in 'The Broken Pledge' and the eponymous 'Tempest' – two stunning reels where Hannan's virtuosity is revealed in all its glory. In contrast, the melodic simplicity of 'Seán Buí' and 'The Langstern Pony' display the piper's range and sensitivity.

On *The Tempest* Hannan performs on a 19<sup>th</sup> century set of pipes made by Kenna, pitched in B, with a chanter made by contemporary pipemaker Andreas Rogge from Germany.

### **About Robbie Hannan**

Originally from Holywood just outside Belfast where he was born in 1961, Robbie Hannan has had a profound influence on contemporary piping, and scores of today's young exponents have passed through his generous hands at Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy and at various piping Tionóls. A Celtic scholar of repute, he works as the musical curator at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and is chairman of Na Píobairí Uilleann. He lives in Belfast and is married with five children.

### **About Na Píobairí Uilleann**

By the 1960s very few people in Ireland were playing the pipes, and far fewer, perhaps only five, were engaged in the making of the instrument – just two of them full-time makers. It was a matter of grave concern that the art would decline further and so, in 1968, the Society of Uilleann Pipers known as Na Píobairí Uilleann (*The Uilleann Pipers*) was founded at grassroots level by pipers themselves. The aims of the society are to perpetuate the spirit of the music – in particular the playing of the pipes and the production and maintenance of the instrument itself. To achieve these aims the single most important facet of the Society's activities is the teaching of the Uilleann pipes, especially to young students, as it is through this that the playing of the instrument will increase, prosper and develop. The degree to which the work of the Society has borne fruit is reflected in the number of pipemakers, many professional, now producing pipes – about forty throughout the world

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