

Irish Bands of the 60s & 70s | Sample answer

Ceoltóiri Cualann was an Irish group formed by Sean O'Riada in 1961. O'Riada had the idea of forming Ceoltóiri Cualann following the success of a group he had put together to perform music for the play "The Song of the Anvil" in 1960. Ceoltóiri Cualann would be a group to play Irish traditional songs with accompaniment and traditional dance tunes and slow airs.

All folk music recorded before that time had been highly orchestrated and done in a classical way. Another aim of O'Riada's was to revitalise the work of harpist and composer Turlough O'Carolan. Ceoltóiri Cualann was launched during a festival in Dublin in 1960 at an event called Recaireacht an Riadaigh and was an immediate success in Dublin.

The group mainly played the music of O'Carolan, sean nós style songs and Irish traditional tunes, and O'Riada introduced the bodhrán as a percussion instrument. Ceoltóiri Cualann had ceased playing with any regularity by 1969 but reunited to record "O'Riada" and "O'Riada Sa Gaiety" that year. "O'Riada Sa Gaiety" was not released until after O'Riada's death in 1971.

The members of Ceoltóiri Cualann, some of whom went on to form "The Chieftains" in 1963 were O'Riada (harpsichord and bodhrán), Martin Fay, John Kelly (both fiddle), Paddy Moloney (uilleann pipes), Michael Turbidity (flute), Sonny Brogan, Éamon de Buitléir (both accordion), Ronnie Mc Shane (bones), Peadar Mercer (bodhrán), Seán Ó Sé (tenor voice) and Darach Ó Cathain (sean nós singer). Some examples of their tunes are "O' Carolan's Concerto" and "Planxty Irwin".

The Chieftains were formed by Paddy Moloney in 1962 and got their name from the book "Death of a Chieftain" by the Irish writer John Montague. That year they recorded a supposedly one-off instrumental album but were reunited five years later with some new members. In 1975 the Chieftains began playing together full time. Their first official performance was in Albert Hall in London.

They have toured the world and performed in many locations, including The Great Wall of China, the capital building of Washington DC and New York. The band has also recorded

many albums of Irish folk music as well as multiple collaborations with popular musicians of many genres including country, galician traditional, cape Breton and Newfoundland and rock and roll.

The Chieftains have also performed with musicians of many genres, including Mick Jagger, Sting, James Galway and Sinéad Ó' Connor. The band's members have been changed many times but from 1979 when Matt Molloy replaced Michael Tubridy the members have been Paddy Moloney, who plays uilleann pipes, tin whistle, button accordion and bodhrán, Matt Molloy, who plays flute and tin whistle, Kevin Conneff, who plays bodhrán and vocals, and Sean Keane who plays fiddle and tin whistle. The group has won six grammy awards and been nominated eighteen times. Some examples of their songs are "Santiago de Cuba" and "China Full of Joy."

A band who incorporated both Irish and rock music in their sound during the 60s was "Horslips". The name is a combination of the hornpipe and the slip jig. Through their music they inspired an entirely new sub category - celtic rock. Horslips were committed in an Irish cultural dimension and eschewed the American and British rock clone models. They wanted a sound and material that would be clearly Irish but also successful popular music, and went about achieving this sound by incorporating elements of both.

Well known songs of Horslips' were "King of the Fairies" and "An Dearg Doom". The instruments they used included electric and acoustic guitars and fiddles, bodhran, keyboards, flute, mandolin and concertina. In their music they used Irish dance tunes, old harp music, airs and marches, songs in Irish and English and folk music of other countries. Their last gig was in 1980 but they left a lasting impression on the future of Irish music for many years to come.