Martin Hayes plays fiddle. Dennis Cahill plays acoustic guitar. Singly, each is remarkable. As a duo, they are sublime. — ABC Radio, Perth, Australia

Martin Hayes and Dennis Cahill, Irish fiddle and guitar, are one of the world’s great musical duets.

Together they have toured throughout North America, Europe, Australia and Japan bringing their sublime interpretations of Irish traditional music to venues as vast as the Sydney Opera House as serene as Buddhist temples and to university performing arts centers and community auditoriums everywhere.

Martin Hayes and Dennis Cahill dig deep into the melodies of the Irish canon, making poetry out of tunes and finding treasure within the notes. Guided by the inherent and irresistible rhythm of Irish dance music, they build slowly into fiery reels and take audiences on an ecstatic musical odyssey.

Read individual bios...

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Martin Hayes & Dennis Cahill

Tour Schedule

"ravishing...entrancing...inventive...eloquent...elegant...essential...astonishing virtuosity...soulful expressionism..."

Read full reviews...

Read album notes from “Welcome Here Again” by Martin Hayes...
Martin Hayes | Martin Hayes’ unique sound, his mastery of the fiddle, his acknowledgement of the past and his ability to place the tradition within a wider contemporary context, combine to create a unique and insightful interpretation of Irish music. He has drawn inspiration from many musical genres, but remains grounded in the music he grew up with in East County Clare where the tradition he inherited from his late father, P. Joe Hayes, was the formative influence on his musical accent and ideas. He has recorded two acclaimed solo albums, “Martin Hayes” and “Under the Moon” on the Green Linnet label and three duet albums with Dennis Cahill: “The Lonesome Touch”, “Live in Seattle”, and “Welcome Here Again”. Martin is the Artistic Director of the Masters of Tradition Festival in Bantry, West Cork and the touring show of the same name. A co-founder of the new band, The Gloaming, he also tours and records with Peadar Ó Riada and Caoimhin Ó Raghallaigh in the traditional Irish trio, Triúr. He has collaborated with the Irish Chamber Orchestra, the innovative string quartet, Brooklyn Rider, the viola da gamba player, Jordi Savall and jazz guitarist, Bill Frisell as well as projects in theatre, contemporary dance, television and film.

Dennis Cahill | A master guitarist born and raised in Chicago, Dennis is the son of Irish-speaking parents from the Dingle Peninsula in County Kerry. Trained at Chicago Music College, Dennis began his career playing in rock bands and country bands in Chicago before immersing himself in Irish music with Martin Hayes. His innovative and spare accompaniment to Martin’s fiddle is acknowledged as a major breakthrough for guitar in the Irish tradition. Dennis is a member of the Gloaming with whom he tours internationally. He is also a record producer in Chicago and a talented photographer.

Album Notes from Welcome Here Again by Martin Hayes | There are as many ways to play Irish music as there are people to play it. One of its greatest strengths is in its flexibility of interpretation: everyone has the opportunity to put their personal stamp on it. We try to avoid an overly technical or cerebral approach. Instead, it is all about inhabiting the world of musical intangibles—the place that is governed by heart, soul, feeling and instinct. The humility necessary to play this music meaningfully arises from a continuous struggle to enter that place. It is there that the melodies are shaped by gut responses to the feelings they evoke. These feelings are the goal and the litmus test for the musical decisions we make. Each choice of tempo, phrasing, ornamentation, chording and arrangement originates from the wish to express that central feeling of the tune. The result may be a simple and uncomplicated piece of music but hopefully something that speaks from the heart.
MIX Magazine | Their first album of duets in eight years, Welcome Here Again is a quietly inspiring beauty that chiefly spotlights the Irish all-fiddle champion’s sensitive, sweet style. Cahill’s guitar work adds rhythm and harp-like embellishment to 18 soulful, traditional tunes. Almost as impressive as the flawless playing is the fact that the album is almost entirely handmade by the musicians; the music was all arranged, produced, and engineered by Hayes and Cahill. — Barbara Schultz, MIX Magazine

Metro | Martin Hayes’ ravishing fiddle style is marked by the graceful lyricism long associated with County Clare. [He has] an extraordinary acoustic duo with guitarist Dennis Cahill. Hayes and Cahill celebrate the release of their ravishing new album, Welcome Here Again. To listen to Welcome Here Again is to hear two artists communicating at the highest musical level. There’s a quiet intensity to their collaboration that makes the music feel complete, although part of its beauty is the sense of spaciousness. With a repertoire of traditional Irish tunes, they’ve honed a sublimely balanced chamber music sound in which their instruments often seem to breathe together. The result is a loose but finely calibrated approach that transforms dance music into concert hall fare, retaining the original terpsichorean impulse while lavishing attention on melodic lines that evoke life's sweetness and inevitable sorrow. — Andrew Gilbert, Metro, Santa Cruz, CA

Slipcue.com | The Irish duo of Martin Hayes and Dennis Cahill returns with another set of subtle, elegaic fiddle-guitar instrumentals. It’s moody, mournful and utterly entrancing. They find the soulful, melodic core of the music and linger there, in the hurricane’s calm eye, just drinking it all in.

The Irish violinist Martin Hayes and the American acoustic guitarist Dennis Cahill’s 1999 collaboration, Live in Seattle, is regarded as the Celtic Kind of Blue, but here is Hayes’s best work since that high-water mark. The Co Clare musician imbues the traditional tunes of his native land...with vast emotional depths and breadths, and dares a sparse, measured improvisatory approach. The high point is a slow air called The Dear Irish Boy, a frozen five minutes of superbly controlled tension. — Stewart Lee, The Sunday Times, London

Georgia Straight | On Welcome Here Again, their first release in nine years, fiddler Martin Hayes and guitarist Dennis Cahill brilliantly demonstrate their skill at drawing out the emotional essence of Irish instrumental music. Haye’s light and lyrical style is complemented by the spare and delicate accompaniment of Cahill, the master of a range of techniques from fingerpicking to harmonics. They lean on notes, contract or extend phrases, and add traditional ornamentation with flair and imagination. — Tony Montague, Georgia Straight, Vancouver BC, Canada
The Sunday Times, London | The Irish violinist Martin Hayes and the American acoustic guitarist Dennis Cahill’s 1999 collaboration, Live in Seattle, is regarded as the Celtic Kind of Blue, but here is Hayes’s best work since that high-water mark. The Co Clare musician imbues... the traditional tunes of his native land...with vast emotional depths and breadths, and dares a sparse, measured improvisatory approach. The high point is a slow air called The Dear Irish Boy, a frozen five minutes of superbly controlled tension. — Stewart Lee, The Sunday Times, London

ABC Radio | Martin Hayes plays fiddle. Dennis Cahill plays acoustic guitar. Singly, each is remarkable. As a duo they are sublime. If you love Irish music you will surely love their sensitive, quietly inventive approach. If you generally don’t much care for Irish music, you may well love this duo all the more! Welcome Here Again is their first new duo CD in eight years. — Doug Spencer, The Weekend Planet, ABC Radio, Perth, Australia

LiveIreland.com | Welcome Here Again is a magic piece of business. They are perfectly tuned into each other. The lads emphasized that they wanted to really, really showcase the beautiful melodies themselves that grace traditional music, and they have succeeded brilliantly. This is the real essence of the music, interpreted and offered by two masters of the form. The tunes, presented this way, remind you of what drew you to this music in the first place—and what holds you. This is a great album, played by international masters of their art. Rating: Four Harps — Bill Margeson, LiveIreland.com

The Record | It’s been eight years since Irish fiddle virtuoso Martin Hayes and his subtle guitar accompanist Dennis Cahill released Live in Seattle, the duo’s sophomore album after 1997’s The Lonesome Touch. The aptly titled Welcome Here Again features 18 tunes and sets encompassing reels, jigs and airs performed by this incomparable duo. Hayes carries with him the traditional fiddle music of his birthplace...defined by slow lyricism and gentle contemplation with strains of sweet melancholy. And no one plays it better. Cahill is a master guitarist versed in rock, classical and blues, but you would think he has been playing the traditional music of County Clare for as long as Hayes.

Welcome Home Again is the perfect anodyne to the hustle and the bustle, the noise and the agitation that dominates so much of contemporary life. It’s as though the duo transports listeners back in time and place to rural County Clare on an evening in mid-winter when family and neighbours gather to share the music of their ancestors. — Robert Reid, The Record, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada

the Irish Examiner | Ceaselessly stretching boundaries and cajoling melodies into uncharted waters, Hayes and Cahill produce a radical, yet rooted resonance. — Gerry Quinn, the Irish Examiner
The Irish Times | **If your live music rations were limited to a single concert in the entire year, then you’d be either crazy or foolish if you didn’t pass that precious time in the company of Martin Hayes and Dennis Cahill.** — Siobhan Long, The Irish Times, Dublin

Seattle Times | **The remarkable duo, which performs Tuesday at the Triple Door, has honed a ravishing repertoire by distilling the melodic essence of traditional tunes.** The two can play a reel that sets feet stomping, but they’ve distinguished themselves by bringing chamber music’s intensity and dynamic control to folk tunes created for community celebrations. — Andrew Gilbert, Seattle Times

Time Out NY | **...this is no New Age chill-out zone— it’s pure, simple, spare and intense.** — Gwen Orel, Time Out NY

Wall Street Journal | **The strength of his musical staying power stems from an unwavering devotion to melody.** — Earl Hitchner, Wall Street Journal

The Chicago Irish-American News | **Martin Hayes and Dennis Cahill Male Musician of the Year, 2008.**
The Irish Times
Saturday, June 14, 2008
Reviews

Martin Hayes and Dennis Cahill

National Concert Hall, Dublin

If your live music rations were limited to a single concert in the entire year, then you’d be either crazy or foolish if you didn’t pass that precious time in the company of Martin Hayes and Dennis Cahill. This Earlsfort Terrace performance puts everything else in the traditional music firmament (and much else besides) in the ha’penny place.

This was not only a masterclass in musical virtuosity, but a breathtaking lesson in the fine art of lateral thinking, seamless segues and spellbinding introductions.

Hayes and Cahill’s long-awaited CD release (after a nine-year hiatus) has resulted in the sublimely minimalist Welcome Here Again, a collection of gorgeously wrought tunes laid bare in all their fine-boned glory. In a live setting, a handful of these tunes metamorphose into something else, with Hayes playing the pied piper (or fiddling fiddler) and Cahill hand-weaving crucial chords that somehow catch the fiddle lines on the deepest arc of their curve.

It’s his tone that sets Hayes apart: a ravishing filigree built on the firmest of foundations - that lonesome, melancholic east Clare style. Marrying tunes from across their albums on the set headlined by his, by now, trademark reading of the jig Tell Her I Am. Hayes and Cahill measured their momentum in minuscule increments, so the shift from the sublimely funereal to the celebratory was imperceptible - but visceral.

A last-minute foray into jazz improvisation, ably led by Cahill, simply underlined the redundancy of boundaries when two musicians of such brilliance are in charge.

Matchless and magic: a timely reminder of what genius really tastes like.

SioBHÁN LONG
**Gerry Quinn talks to fiddle virtuoso Martin Hayes about his long-awaited reunion album with guitarist Dennis Cahill**

ELCOME Here from America, Cahill recently is the cape Breton-based, fiddle/guitar duo, Martin Hayes and Dennis Cahill. It is the first studio release from the American-based fiddle/traditional musicians in 10 years, since The Lunasa Touch. The pair’s most recent offering was the much-feted Live in Seattle, released in 1999. On a flying visit last week to his native Co Clare, fiddler Martin Hayes frankly dis- covered the basis for such a long delay: “There’s no very good reason, to tell you the truth. The record company was going through a lot of tur- mult for a while, so that gave me an excuse to procrastinate. Sometimes you have to give me a deadline or I can’t make it happen,” says the recently crowned traditional musician of the year.

A hectic international tour schedule has kept the duo busy on the interiors and Croatian fiddle band he’s let to record just for recording sake alone. “We didn’t really want to make a record that was just like The Lunasa Touch and the live album. It’s always easy to go back and make an album like the one you’ve just made and it’s also easy to make a totally different one. But it’s very tricky to create one that’s in the same lane. I don’t want it to just sound good for this summer. I want it to last a long time as well. We gave it a long hard time to get this right.”

The two fiddle maestros have re-unioned to make it happen in this year. “It was a fun thing.”

“Could I have thought that this year, 2004 would be the year of the reunion?” This is an interesting question. “It’s a sort of a wonderful moment, a little bit of music being played by two people who have been working together for a long time.”

Hayes and Cahill are a powerhouse of Irish traditional music and Cahill is on fire with something that didn’t exist at the time of The Lunasa Touch and has a slightly different wrinkle on it. One might hope to this album and easily think that it should have taken as much a month to record, but I expect an awful lot of stuff before I make a record,” he adds.

Did it become a close one at any stage? “It suppose it kind of did, no reply.” “We’ll choose if we decided to build a house in your backyard and you complete everything except for getting around the windows and doors and doors of it, but promise to get back to it later.”

Other esteemizing circumstances led to further delays along the way and, at times, fans probably de- served of being given an opportunity to experience the new recording. “For one thing, Dublin lives in Chicago and I’m now living in Connecticut after being in Seattle for years,” remarks Hayes. “So, apart from touring together, we were away almost every week away from each other. There were other factors too. I remember that we had one sec- tion of the album set up when Dennis’s wife died, so we stopped everything and put it to one side. That when you put a project aside for a year, it can be very hard to come back to it.”

“I also had difficulty imagining this record. I wasn’t able to live together: They were all stored away on the hard drive and I didn’t listen to it in my en- tertainment until a month before I sent it to the record company Al- leghany. I changed fiddles in the middle of it and recording microphones. I also changed computers, etc. for a time. I was wondering if there was any cohesion at all on this.

IT’S certainly been worth the wait. After eight years since Live in Seattle and 10 since The Lunasa Touch, Welcome Home Again heralds Hayes and Cahill’s dedication to creating a soundtrack for orchestral and pianistic musi- cians.

Here, they demonstrate master- fully that Irish traditional music can, in the right hands, be both, condensed and expanded imaginatively. The pieces, featuring boundaries and caressing melodies into un- charted waters, Hayes and Cahill produce a radical, yet rooted re- sonance. The opening track, The Clare River, with its hard-back tempo, measured features and little fiddle-thing. Oddly enough, there was through,” proclaims the viruoso. Over the past decade, Hayes and Cahill have garnered zero reviews and special mention for their unique interpretations of traditional music, — mining the melodic, with flaw and dashing perfor- mances, peppered with elements of classical and jazz music, prompting The New York Times to describe them as “aCollar compliment to Steve Reich’s quirk or Miles Davies’ Sketches of Spom.” How does this comparison sit on your collective shoulders, I en- quire? “We don’t think about it too much, he honest,” comes the reply. “Through I suppose it at the New York Times wrote that about us it is obviously very good on that top, they urged that in that highly Maybe it should be understood, more like Simon and Garfunkel or Abbott and Costello,” he laughs.

Despite living in the USA for half his life and spending an inter- national tourists, the book. Hayes Hayes has a strong affinity for East Clare, where he was brought up and, in particular, the beautiful lively music of the region. Healy played with his father. If so, in the famed Tell Tales CD on a month ago. Hayes admires to still being strongly influenced by her brother’s place and it’s distinctive character. How important is East Clare to you right now? “In retrospect of how important it would think it is, the fact is it’s just woven into me at this stage. Life, love, you can have so many experiences and so many different things that you encounter as you travel the world, but the formative experiences of your childhood and teenage life are just enormous. All the other happenings in life can never balance it out. It’s like your accent, the way you talk — you’re impruned from an early age I’ve spent more than half my life away from here, but still I talk like I come from Kelly or Killarney.”

As regards the music of his na- tive region, Hayes pays forward some interesting observations on its durability and how it has impacted on his own stage performance. “What I play on stage isn’t necessarily what you are going to hear in a pub in East Clare,” he says.

“Indeed, in any way, there’s a big chunk of it involved in both. Obviously everything is done on stage not East Clare music, but a lot of the qualities of what we do. There’s some sort of overpopulation up for people and allowing them to maybe look into the music there,” says Hayes.

Martin Hayes and Dennis Cahill

**Welcome Home Again**

**With Cahill’s double-picked mandolin, subtly enrich the listener into a world of unwavering sweetness and soulful expressiveness. As close to a spiritual experience as in musical recording can be, this magnificent production is food for the soul.**

Elegant and at times spare, Hayes’ fiddle dances, swings, songs and saunter, array fascinating and come not too well-known tunes, under- mined by Cahill’s understated but musical and elegant guitar- shenings. The Wind Swept Hill of Tulway, an arr from Hayes’ native East Clare is played on fiddle in a simple, and complex manner at the same time, with minimalist guitarist, giving the track a truly elegant feel.

With recognizable tunes in un- common here and lesser known, melodies sitting comfortably to- gether, the album fashions a world of exquisite tone and accompani- ments. Equally及nous and hort- able, music negotiates yet another landscape on an en- evolving exploration for the unmasking of a musical truth. Hayes and Cahill’s open main- tains an enthusiastic commitment to investigating and magnificent innovations, but at times remains true to the core beauty and time- less essence of Irish traditional music. Beauty and subtle artistry predominate. **Gerry Quinn**