

Jennifer Mylod

and the Boys of County O'Ceán

By Steve Le Vine

“I write, not so much because I like to, but because I must. I draw inspiration from life, things I sense around me and people. Inspiration is everywhere.”

That is Jersey Shore musician Jennifer Mylod's method for creating the timeless and beautiful contemporary Celtic Folk-Rock she and her band, the Boys of County O'Ceán, are known for.

Although her family is originally from Holland, Mylod's husband's family emigrated from Ireland, which “accounts for the Celtic leanings towards that wonderful music.”

Between Mylod and her band, close to 20 different instruments are played, including everything from Uilleann Pipes, Irish whistles, bodhran, mountain dulcimer and bouzouki to octave mandolin, harmonica, flute, banjo and various guitars and percussion. The Boys of County O'Ceán consist of Jennifer's husband, Philip, as well as John Wilson, Bob Higgins, Lyn Higgins, Frank Curran and Rich Brautigam.

“It's not just the melody, but more importantly how it's played that casts the feel onto the song and its lyrics,” she says. “It's the feeling you put in that makes it shine as your own. For example, my original song, “Old Kitchen Table,” is not really about a table, but rather the life within a home, that ebbs and flows around the simple, every day fixture.”

Currently, the band has two original albums out, including 1999's *At This Moment* and 2006's *Myloodic Isle*, inspired when the group was asked to create the soundtrack for a History Channel documentary entitled “Paddy Whacked – The History of the Irish Mob.”

Jennifer Mylod and the Boys of County O'Ceán are currently putting the finishing touches on their next album, *Shadow of a Crow*, which is planned to be released before the end of the year.

“In my original music, Simon & Garfunkel are my greatest influence with their amazing lyrics and feel of their thoughts, as well as their harmonies and melodies,” she explains. “As well as Judy Collins and Anne Murray.” As far as Irish music goes, my inspiration comes from bands like Planxty, Arcady, Silly Wizards, DeDannan, Danu & William Coulter, Muireann Nic Amhlaoihb and Niamh Parsons.”

For contemporary artists, Mylod says her iPod is “an eclectic jumble,” of which reflects her love for all types of music and genres, including everyone from Leo Kottke, Natalie Merchant, Johnny Cash, Loreena McKennitt, Tom Petty, The

Beatles, The Eagles and Fleetwood Mac, among countless others.

“At St. Stephen's Green Pub, we lean more towards extemporaneous expression of music, playing oft times, more to the patrons at the pub, rather than what we'd planned to do...just rolling with the mood or atmosphere that's presenting itself!”

Mylod details her songwriting process as two-fold. Sometimes she creates from a space of hearing a riff on the dulcimer or guitar that inspires a certain mood or vision. Like a slideshow of random images and concepts, she then lets her mind grow around it. “Then I let it vine and grow free like ivy. When it's finally spent, I begin to shape and trim it down, taking only what I want and placing it into the garden bed of a new song where it's nurtured and tended to until I feel like it's done.”

The other process she says involves being inspired by something she hears or sees, or by a person she encounters. She then writes everything down that she imagines about it, until a song appears. “But then I must create a melody that compliments the feel of the words I've written, when is much harder for me and probably why I have about 70 songs on my computer that just need the right music. But that will come when the time is right.”

“Everything moves me and I often find that my song lyrics reflect my feelings at the time, but I'm not always quite aware of the deeper level I'm writing at, when I'm writing, but rather, I see afterwards, in hindsight, which is always 20/20, that I am much more sensitive and intuitive than I generally let on, and my passion about music, and everything I do, runs hot. I think that shines through in my traditional Irish fiddling and singing the traditional Irish songs that I love so well, as well.”

Mylod states that her original lyrics reflect “a genuine connection to nature and life,” and that it's been said to have “soothed many a soul.”

“My songs have been acknowledged as well, for having a broad, interpretive spectrum. As far as traditional Irish music, not so much unique but definitely rare, is that we have managed to grab hold of that genuine Celtic Swing that breathes real life into the ancient music, once again.”

“When people come to hear us play, they get a touch of Ireland in the colorful melodies we create. People simply enjoy our music, and that is what makes Irish eyes smile.”

She concludes, “Music is what feelings sound like.”

For more information on Jennifer Mylod and the Boys of County O'Ceán, visit their official Web site at www.jennifermylod.com.

MARCH 2 –
St. Stephen's Green,
Spring Lake 7-10 p.m.
MARCH 9 –
St. Stephen's Green,
Spring Lake, 7-10 p.m.
MARCH 16 –
St. Stephen's Green,
Spring Lake, 7-10 p.m.
MARCH 23 –
St. Stephen's Green,
Spring Lake, 7-10 p.m.
MARCH 25 –
Fitzgerald's 1928,
Glen Ridge, 8-11 p.m.
MARCH 30 –
St. Stephen's Green,
Spring Lake, 7-10 p.m.

