

Grosse Isle BIO 2022

The traditional music trio Grosse Isle was born out of the “absolutely magical” collaboration between three exceptional musicians from Quebec and Ireland (The Irish Music Magazine). Together, Sophie Lavoie du Lac-St-Jean (fiddle, piano, vocal), André Marchand the legendary (guitar, vocal), and Fiachra O’Regan, Irish champion (Irish bagpipes, whistle, banjo) shine with their rich and enveloping music. These musicians all have a national and international reputation as a duo mainly in the case of Sophie & Fiachra and within several groups for 40 years as far as André Marchand is concerned (La Bottine Souriante, Les Charbonniers de l’Enfer and others).

In 2016, the first album of the duo Sophie & Fiachra with André Marchand, entitled Un Canadien errant, was hailed as “a striking musical experience” (Le Devoir). In 2018, the group dazzles with Portraits, “a work of art in itself” (Roots Music Canada), “a real treasure” (Folkword) unanimously applauded by critics. This album received a nomination at the ADISQ 2019 in the category “Album of the Year-Traditional”. A new album will be launched in 2021 by this three-artist group, which will henceforth bear the new name Grosse Isle.

Grosse Isle refers to the story of the massive arrival of the Irish in the 19th century, on Grosse Île in the St. Lawrence River, as they fled the Great Famine. It is a striking encounter between two peoples and two cultures.

Fusing Irish and Québécois repertoire with original compositions, Grosse Isle presents the pieces from the album Portraits as well as many surprises on stage! The harmonious blend of the two cultures, the authenticity and the immense talent of the artists give a sublime result! From laments to more rhythmic songs, the concert is varied and displays the 1001 colors of the band.

In addition to performing at several traditional music festivals in Quebec, the musicians have also performed in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, France and Ireland, of course!

SOPHIE LAVOIE

Sophie Lavoie is a fiddler, pianist, singer and composer from Lac-St-Jean in Québec. She has played in various Quebecois bands including L’attisée and Tu m’en diras tant. Since 2008, she has been touring with Irish piper Fiachra O’Regan. The duo Sophie & Fiachra has recorded three albums: Sophie & Fiachra (2010), Rewind (2014) and Un Canadien errant (2016), the latter was nominated for Best album of the year at both ADISQ and Canadian Folk Music Award in 2016. “One of the rising stars of Québécois music” (fRoots Magazine), Sophie has recently been awarded a scholarship for a Masters in ethnomusicology at University of Montreal. Her research involves the fiddle style and repertoire of her native region, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean.

"One of the rising stars of Québécois music" - fRoots magazine

"Sophie Lavoie is also a sublime composer on Celtic/French terrain" - folkworld.de

"lovely voice and expert fiddling" - Songlines magazine, UK

"Her tune compositions are lithe and masterful" - The Irish Times

FIACHRA O'REGAN

Fiachra O'Regan, from Connemara, on the West Coast of Ireland, plays Irish music on the Uilleann Pipes and Whistle, He is a senior All Ireland Champion on both these instruments. Fiachra has performed throughout the world, touring in his own group as well as with many other artists and groups. He is also sought after as a teacher in private lessons and at festivals. In 2008, Fiachra recorded Aisling Gheal, his first solo album, and has since recorded three albums with Quebecoise fiddler Sophie Lavoie, as well as appearing as a guest on many other albums. More info can be found on his website: www.fiachrapipes.com.

"Fiachra's piping is particularly impressive, sometimes wild like Paddy Keenan, sometimes more delicately restrained like Liam O'Flynn could be, and always spot on" - fRoots Magazine

"Fiachra's pipes shine on the modern irish jig Sport"- folkworld.de

"...O'Regan's piping is characteristically subtle, unfussily anchoring the trio..." - The Irish Times

ANDRÉ MARCHAND

A leading figure in Quebec's Trad scene, André's career is punctuated by artistic projects that have marked the history of traditional music over the past 40 years. Guitarist, singer and composer, he began as co-founder of La Bottine Souriante. From 1976 to 1990, he traveled throughout Quebec, Acadia, Canada, the United States and several European countries and participated in the recording of the first six discs of La Bottine Souriante.

From 1990 to 2009, he was a sound engineer and director. He contributed to the birth of nearly 200 projects, thus giving voice to several emerging artists and other well-known productions, actively contributing to the emergence of the traditional music community. During this period, he collaborated with the Marchand-Miron-Ornstein trio that recorded *Le Bruit Court dans la Ville* in 1996, which attracted praise from the community. He also teamed up with multi-instrumentalist Gray Larsen, with whom he traveled extensively throughout the United States. Together, they recorded *The Orange Tree* in 1993 and *Les Marionnettes* in 2004.

In 1993, *Les Charbonniers de l'Enfer* was born, an a capella vocal quintet that produced a firestorm on the Quebec scene. The band produced six albums, three of which won Félix Awards in Quebec. They toured extensively and recorded *La sacrée rencontre* with the great national poet Gilles Vigneault.

Possessing a deep voice, warm and recognizable, André is an endearing character with a lively mind and boisterous humor. His unique style of guitar accompaniment—nuanced and finessed—influences several generations of guitarists evolving today in the Quebec Trad scene.

"...légendaire André Marchand, qui caresse la guitare avec une grâce divine" - Le Devoir
("Legendary André Marchand who plays the guitar with a divine grace")

"...always stellar Marchand's deft acoustic guitar playing" - Songlines Magazine

"André is quite a musical celebrity" - Irish Music Magazine