

The Irish Bodhrán in Context: Celebrating the Evolutions of a Modern Tradition
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A Brief History of the Bodhrán Prior to 1960

1. 1300's to 1920's: Two theories: Migration vs. Local Development
2. 1920's to 1930's- use in U.S.-produced recordings
3. 1930's to 1960- Mainly in pubs, homes, dance halls

Aspects of Drum Construction and Styles of Accompaniment- 1960 to Today

1. 1960's to mid-1970's
 - A. Drums- large and shallow (18-20" x 4" deep), goat skin, cross bars, no tuning systems
 - Notable makers- Charlie Byrne
 - B. Straight time, little variation; minimal consideration given to the melody; early part-writing
 - C. Players: Sean Ó Riada (Ceoltóirí Chualann), Peadar Mercier/Kevin Conneff (The Chieftains)
2. Mid-1970's to mid-1980's
 - A. Drums- sizes about the same; introduction of Lambeg skins; no cross bars; external vs internal tuning systems
 - Notable makers- David Gormlie, Seamus O'Kane,
 - B. Introduction of tonal/pitch variation; broken rhythms; secondary sounds; introduction of other accomp. Instruments; little rhythmic cooperation between accomp. instruments
 - C. Players: Tommy Hayes (Stockton's Wing), Johnny McDonagh/Colm Murphy (De Dannan)
3. Mid-1980's to mid-1990's
 - A. Drums- Introduction of smaller sizes- 14-16", Better skin processing, Mostly internal tuning with tools, addition of tape to the skin to mute overtones
 - Notable makers: Darius Bartlett, Brendan White
 - B. Wider tonal variation in playing; additional implements; tonal runs; introduction of top-end playing, DD technique, more cooperation with the guitar/bouzouki
 - C. Players: Junior Davey, Mossie Griffin, Paul Phillips, Frank Torpey (Nomos)
4. Mid-1990's to today
 - A. Drums- smaller, deeper sizes- 12-14" in diameter, 6+" deep; flexible skins; other animals; alternate shell materials- composites, plied woods; tool-free internal tuning systems
 - Noteable makers: Albert Alfonso, Patrick Cooperman, Norbert Eckermann, Rob Forkner, Christian Hedwitschak, Ben March
 - B. Wide tonal range, use of rods/drumset-like patterns; odd-time signature playing; rhythmic expansion; fusion playing (combined single- and double-ended sticking ideas)
 - C. Notable Players: Cormac Byrne (Uiscedwr) John Joe Kelly (Flook), Eamon Murray (Beoga), Martin O'Neill, Colm Phelan (Goiste)
5. Other Applications of the Bodhran
 - A. Handstriking
Notable Players: Donal Lunny, Christy Moore
 - B. Bass Line Playing
Notable Players: Jim Higgins, Donal Lunny
 - C. Non-Traditional Use of Traditional Drums
 1. Cormac Byrne (with Uiscedwr and The Seth Lakeman Trio)
 2. Martin O'Neill (with Neil Yates and Aidan O'Rourke)
 3. Ronan O'Snodaigh (Kila)
 4. Jim Sutherland (The Easy Club)