

# IONA PRESS RELEASE

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L-R  
Martin Nolan,  
Joanne Hogg,  
Frank van  
Essen,  
Phil Barker,  
Dave  
Bainbridge

## A New Studio Album, A New Vision Another Realm

### Catching up with IONA

IONA in 2009. Twenty years on and still producing compelling music, but now with a renewed vision, enthusiasm and focus. IONA are back.

The story is familiar to many. Formed in 1989, IONA take their name from the small island off the west coast of Scotland.

From the beginning, their aim has been to write spiritual, atmospheric, yet uplifting music that would stir the emotions, weaving complex patterns that echo the intricate knot work of the great Celtic artists. Often inspired by the great figures of the Celtic Golden Age such as Columba, Aidan, Brendan and Patrick, IONA's music is as timeless as the message that reaches out to us across the centuries.

Uniquely combining rock / folk / progressive / ethnic and ambient elements with the crystalline voice of Joanne Hogg as their focus, IONA create 'a blaze of colours and textures...all the sounds fusing into a single, yearning, heartfelt beautiful cry.'

Currently assembling material for their 7th studio album, to be released in 2010, there is an urgency and vibe surrounding the band that perhaps has been missing for the past couple of years. In a recent interview with Dutch magazine iO Pages, Dave Bainbridge stated;

*"There is definitely a renewed vision and purpose within the band. A sense that we're back on the track that we first set out upon all those years ago. After about an 8 year period after the birth of her children in which she often*

*struggled to come up with inspiration for new songs, Joanne is currently having a real creative outpouring, with two recent solo albums and so far 7 great new songs written specifically for the new IONA album. We have a definite and very relevant concept we're working on, so things are looking very positive."*

Judging by the tremendous reactions the band have had to their recent run of gigs, which included two of the new songs 'The Ancient Wells' and 'Let Your Glory Fall', Dave has every reason to be optimistic.

If you have never heard IONA, or were unaware that they are still active, then now would be a great time to make your acquaintance with a truly unique band.

## Albums

With 6 studio albums, three live albums (two of them doubles and one with The All Soul's Orchestra), a four cd box set with 60 page booklet, two DVD releases (one double), a BBC TV soundtrack commission and numerous related solo / collaborative projects, IONA have built up an impressive body of work over the past 20 years. From the very first album, critics were united that here was a sound that was something different, with a contemporary message that spoke clearly through the voices of the saints of old;

*'IONA have arrived at a personal sound that finds them east of Clannad/ All about Eve and west of Genesis/ Moving Hearts.....Superb.'*  
**'Rock 'n Reel'**

With the band's second release 'The Book of Kells' (1992), IONA's popularity spread across the waters to the USA seeing them win several polls there; (Best Album - Billboard Magazine Critic's Choice, Best Import Album of the Year - Syndicate Magazine, International Artist of the Year - G.M.A. Awards)

*'Finally, the most evocative release of all....IONA's ethereal 'Book of Kells.'.....unbelievable.'* **Billboard (USA)**

Further albums saw guest appearances from admirers King Crimson guitarist Robert Fripp and 'the voice of Clannad' Moya Brennan as well as Celtic Harp master William Jackson and Mostly Autumn's Heather Findlay. More critical acclaim came from far and wide;

*'Anyone with a Celtic nerve in their ear will be enthralled with this music ... these songs exude the mystery of faith, hope and struggle ... still, as always, beauty hangs on every note, every syllable.'* **AFTS (USA)**

*'A rock band full of imagination...which continues to grow day by day.'* **Marquee (Japan)**

'Journey into the Morn' (recently re-released) was voted one of 'Q' MAGAZINE'S Top 50 Albums (\*\*\*\* excellent rating) and one of their Top 5 Folk Albums of 1996.

*'Journey' finds IONA making the killer album that was always within their grasp.'* **'Rock 'n Reel'**

IONA's most recent studio album 'The Circling Hour' (2006) also received many plaudits;

*'The Circling Hour is perhaps the finest statement yet from the band whose distinctive sound straddles genres as diverse as rock, pop, prog, Celtic and chillout.'* **www.thetrousers.co.uk**

With the band always ready to experiment in the studio, the live albums conversely capture the energy and emotion for which their stage performances are renowned.

*'The much awaited stunning live album from IONA..... The sound is immense, galactic, roof-blowing, soul-wrenching. It feels as though the whole recording has been touched by the hand of Heaven.'* **Cross Rhythms**

## The Band

### JOANNE HOGG

Voice / Keyboards / Acoustic Guitar

'The voice of Iona', Jo's first solo album 'Looking into Light' was released to critical acclaim and recent solo releases 'Rafael's Journey' and 'Personal' have similarly been lauded.

Three times voted 'Best Female Vocalist' by the 'Classic Rock Society', Joanne's voice has featured on numerous 'Celtic' inspired albums, including the 'New Irish Hymns' series, on which Jo has been featured vocalist alongside Clannad's Moya Brennan (who also guested on 'Rafael's Journey'). Jo's unique voice is also well known to millions for her contribution to several Sony Playstation Xenogears game soundtracks.

*'Joanne Hogg is possessed of a beautiful voice somewhere between Moya Brennan and Julianne Regan ... which sends shivers down*

*the spine.'* **Rock 'n Reel**

*'Joanne Hogg's voice in particular is spectacular.'* **Q Magazine**



*'The unique, angelic and crystal clear voice of Joanne Hogg....possibly without equal among contemporary rock vocalists.'*

**Metal Hammer (Poland)**

### DAVE BAINBRIDGE

Keyboards / Guitars / Bouzouki

Dave's multi-faceted career as a musician, composer, producer, arranger and more recently also as a mix engineer has led him to work in many genres of music with artists including Jack Bruce, Buddy Guy, Nick ('Kajagoogoo') Beggs, Gloria Gaynor, 'Snake' Davis, Paul Jones, Pete Brown, Phil Keaggy, The Emperor string Quartet, The St Edmundsbury Cathedral Choir, The Pete James Trio.

Recent projects have included 'Iberian Fantasy' a guitar concerto written with classical guitarist Nick Fletcher, 'Life Journey' a cd collaboration with David Fitzgerald, 'Momentarily' a new jazz cd from 'Fariclough & Youell' on which Dave plays, 'The Cry - Requiem for a Child' by Adrian Snell (keys and programming for the world premier of this work at St Paul's Cathedral),

# The Band



He is now established in Holland as a much in demand composer / producer / string arranger for a long list of well known Dutch chart artists, TV programmes and record labels (see [www.stringsattached.nl](http://www.stringsattached.nl)). He recently produced Joanne Hogg's latest solo release 'Rafael's Journey' and contributed drums, strings and percussion to Barbara Dixon's latest album. Frank also runs his own recording studio - 'Studio Frank Van Essen' and regularly plays live all over the world with the band 'Dew', with his wife, singer & dancer, Marlou.

**PHIL BARKER**  
Bass Guitar / Electric Double Bass



music written and mixed in 5.1 surround for 11 short commercial films for a major company.

Dave's first solo album 'Veil of Gossamer', released on the 'Open Sky' label in June 2004 has received much critical acclaim, as have his various collaborations with Troy Donockley and David Fitzgerald.

*"Dave Bainbridge is a stunning player with absolute control over feel and emotion."*  
**Classic Rock Society**

*"To my ears this is the most successful album of this type since Mike Oldfield's masterpiece Ommadawn. Stunning"*  
[www.progressiveears.com](http://www.progressiveears.com)

*"Sitting here stunned after my first full listen to Veil Of Gossamer, I've not the command of words to convey the true gratitude to Dave Bainbridge for what has instantly become one of my favorite recordings of all time."*  
**Progressive Soundscapes Radio**

**FRANK VAN ESSEN**  
Drums / Percussion / Violin / Vocals



Son of a Dutch classical composer, Frank commenced violin studies at the age of seven, taking up drums at 15. Within three years he was playing with several big name Dutch and US artists.

A member of Iona since 1996, Phil has played on the last 6 album recordings. As a session player he has worked with many other artists including: Grammy winning country singer Faith Hill, Matt Redman, Robin Mark, Sal Solo, Don Moen, Paul Wilbur and Terl Bryant, Eoghan Heaslip,, Tim Hughes, Chris Eaton, Andy Park, Brian Doerksen, Geraldine Latty, Paul Field, Noel Richards and many others.

*"Phil Barker's bass playing is also remarkable throughout."*  
[www.musicaldiscoveries.com](http://www.musicaldiscoveries.com), on Iona's 2004 DVD 'Live in London'

*"All the time, Phil and Frank's rhythm work dances beneath the melodies."*  
[www.progressor.com](http://www.progressor.com) on Iona's **The Circling Hour**

**MARTIN NOLAN**  
Uilleann Pipes / Low Whistles / Tin Whistles

The newest member of IONA, Martin's uilleann piping has taken him throughout Europe and the UK, India, Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada, from the Lincoln Center for the Arts in New York to the national theatres of Ireland and England and concert halls across the Indian subcontinent.

Respected in the Irish traditional scene, he has also played alongside jazz greats such as Dave Liebman, the late Michael Brecker, Ronan Guilfoyle, Conor Guilfoyle, Tommy Halferty, Michael Buckley and the Boclé Brothers. Other collaborative work includes virtuoso Hungarian violinist Zoltan Lantos and Japanese performance artist Keiji Heino.

Born in Dublin, Ireland, it was here Martin took his first lessons from John Keenan Sr, the father of well-known piper Paddy Keenan. Martin's playing is strongly influenced by the 'travelling style' of piping, which employs legato and staccato techniques, elements which are heard to great effect in his playing.

*'Martin Nolan's pipes... caught the eddies, ducking and diving alongside the jazz lines with nervy agility... The wedding of sax and pipes was particularly spectacular.'*  
**Irish Times (review of Michael Buckley's Translations)**

*'Martin Nolan is a noted piper and composer whose openness and receptiveness to new ideas has taken him and his pipes around the world.'*  
**The Sunday Tribune (Dublin)**

*'Well versed in the tradition of his instrument, Martin is constantly expanding its repertoire by playing in unusual contexts.'*  
**The Event Guide (Dublin)**

