

# THE ALAN KELLY QUARTET

(Alan Kelly – piano accordion, Tola Custy - fiddle, Steph Geremia – flute/whistle/vocals, Donogh Hennessy – guitar)



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## Biography

One of Ireland's most accomplished musicians in any genre, Alan Kelly is piano accordionist, composer and arranger utterly at home in his own skin.

Born into the rich musical landscape of Roscommon in 1972, Alan began playing whistle at the age of 5, before moving onto fiddle, piano and accordion 4 years later. Determined to become a full time musician Alan moved to Galway, where he quickly became part of the thriving traditional music scene, forging an excellent reputation for himself.

His critically acclaimed 1997 debut album 'Out of the Blue' exploded onto the traditional scene with such impact that he is generally credited with 'making the piano accordion hip again'. During this time he also recorded and toured with Mancunian Michael McGoldrick on his groundbreaking albums 'Morning Rory' 1996 and 'Fused' 1999. Also in 1999 Alan toured with Music Network's 'Best of Irish' nationwide tour performing alongside such heavyweights as Cathal Hayden, Karan Casey and Michael McGoldrick.

July 2000 saw the release of Kelly's second solo album 'Mosaic'. Produced by Arty McGlynn, 'Mosaic's' South American rhythms and cinematic jazz feel brought Alan's music to a whole new audience. It showed not just what a good writer he is, but the breadth of his musical imagination. Mosaic' was voted one of the **top ten trad' albums by both the Irish Times and Hot Press Magazine**. Irish Music Magazine also nominated Mosaic for '**Best Crossover album**' of the year alongside **Solas, Afro-Celts, and Sharon Shannon**. Alan Kelly and the **Mosaic Band** quickly established itself as one of the hottest live acts on the Irish scene with its exciting blend of traditional, salsa and jazz rhythms, and propelled Alan onto the World Music stage.

By now, Kelly had firmly established himself as one of Ireland's top musicians touring with artists such as De Dannan, Arty McGlynn and Eddi Reader. He guested with **Lúnasa** on their Irish tour promoting their album 'Otherworld' and also collaborated with **Alison Brown, the Grammy award winning banjo player** on her Irish tour in 2001.

A genuine musician, Alan's playful, experimental approach to music has been described as magical, joyous and uplifting ... always performed with flair and taste. His live show has been described by the Irish Times as "a brilliantly talented, effortless and exuberant performance". Alan doesn't just play the accordion, he celebrates it in a way that draws you into the passion he puts into the music he plays.

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## New Album

*After The Morning* - Black Box BBM004

**Release date:** August 2009 Ireland/February 2010 UK

For his 3<sup>rd</sup> solo, self-produced album, Kelly has brought together a diverse group of superb musicians, most of whom he has worked with, in various combinations over the past decade. The result is a stunning album, both fresh and mature. It features the talents of **Jim Murray** on guitar, **Jim Higgins** on percussion, **Tola Custy** on fiddle and **Ian Carr** on guitar, with guest vocals from Scotland's **Eddi Reader** and **Kris Drever (BBC Horizon award winner 2007)**. *After The Morning* is fuelled by a rake of self-composed tunes, from the eponymous opener to the meditative 'Eolann' and the languid waltz, 'Siena'. Siobhan Long (Irish Times) sums it up ... "*Kelly seamlessly knits contemporary and traditional tunes, proof that a traditional music willing to embrace new influences will not only survive, but thrive. At its heart, the album is an intimate musical conversation between Kelly's piano accordion and Tola Custy's fiddle. Both instruments revel in one another's company, etching and stencilling their melodies with precision and care, and never succumbing to the temptation to dominate.*"

Variety in repertoire is an Alan Kelly hallmark, and his new album reflects it, drawing on musical influences from Brittany to Asturias, to Louisiana.

*" a pristine, polished gem "* ★★★★★  
**Irish Times**

*"After the Morning" is an unqualified triumph...superb"* Earle Hitchner,  
**Irish Echo, NY**

*" Each of the dozen tracks here is a work of art "*  
**Irish Music Magazine**

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## Band Members

Joining Alan on stage are three of the finest musicians to emerge from Ireland in recent times ...

### TOLA CUSTY

*fiddle*

Tola Custy hails from Co. Clare, from a family renowned in the world of traditional music. He became widely known with the release of his solo album *Setting Free* in 1994. He was a founding member of the band **Calico** (winner of the Irish Music Magazine **Best Newcomers Award** in 1998) and a member of the Bowhouse Quintet. He tours with many groups including Lúnasa, Grada and Guidewires.

### DONOGH HENNESSY

*guitar*

Originally from Dublin, one of the founding members of the super-group **Lúnasa**, he has also performed and recorded with many of Ireland's finest exponents including John Spillane, Pauline Scanlon, Gerry O Connor, **Sharon Shannon** and Frankie Gavin. His last album with Lúnasa was nominated for **Folk album of the year 2004** in the BBC Radio 2 Awards.

### STEPH GEREMIA

*flute / whistle / vocals*

Though being a long-time Irish resident, Steph hails originally from New York. She is recognized as a vibrant, versatile, young emerging face on the traditional music scene.

Steph has been described by **Irish Music Magazine** as “one of the most promising young flute players around”. She has performed and toured extensively with critically acclaimed artists such as: **The Chieftains**, Gaelforce Dance, and Lúadan.

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## Key Quotes

*"Alan Kelly is the man who made the piano accordion hip in Ireland again."*

**Folk Roots**

*"Box playing with balls ... Kelly can do no wrong."*

**Hot Press**

*"Currently Trad's hottest ticket"*

**Arts West**

*"... in league with the best piano accordionists in the world."*

**The Irish Voice, NY**

*"... brilliantly talented, effortless and exuberant."*

**The Irish Times**

*"... truly an album on the cutting edge of the new tradition."*

**The Vancouver Courier**

*"... a pristine, polished gem" ★★★★★*

**Irish Times**

*"After the Morning" is an unqualified triumph ... superb"*

**Irish Echo, NY**

*"Each of the dozen tracks here is a work of art"*

**Irish Music Magazine**

*"If Sharon Shannon pushed the outside of the envelope with her infectious zest for the accordion, then Kelly must surely be the one to put the air mail stamp on it."*

**Hot Press**