

# The Gloaming

## International press and quotes



***The one album you should hear this week. Michael Hann recommends the Gloaming*** The Guardian (UK)

★★★★ ***Exquisite.*** The Guardian (UK)

★★★★★ ***Sumptuous debut by virtuoso supergroup.*** Mojo Magazine (UK)

★★★★★ ***Eliding Irish folk music with the contemporary New York art-music scene.***

Independent on Sunday (UK)

★★★★★ ***this debut album from The Gloaming is exceptional.*** The artsdesk.com (UK)

★★★★★ ***Brilliantly Innovative.*** Songlines (UK)

★★★★★ ***an astonishing debut.*** R2 - Rock 'n' Reel Magazine (UK)

★★★★★ ***The sound of five supremely talented musicians.*** musicomh.com (UK)

★★★★★ ***Sparse and spectral, The band has proved itself with rapturous receptions on tour.***

London Evening Standard (UK)

★★★★★ ***Debut recording by Irish supergroup sets peerless fiddle playing against aetherial sean nos singing.*** Financial Times (UK)

★★★★★ ***this quintet proves to be far more than the sum of their parts. A musical feast...mesmerizing.***

Morning Star (Live from Union Chapel, London) (UK)

★★★ ***Enormously rewarding if you hanker for some NY loft space in your croft house. Musical tendrils wrap around dark forests of atmosphere, more like a Celtic Sigur Ros than a ceilidh band.*** Q Magazine (UK)

***The most transporting music on Sunday came from The Gloaming.***

Financial Times (David Honigmann from Womad 2014) (UK)

***A remarkable set that sees the only standing ovation and the only encore of the weekend.***

The Guardian (Live from Other Voices Festival, Derry) (UK)

***The Gloaming spectacularly fulfilled, and surpassed, all expectations. Sublime.***

The Arts Desk Online (Live from The Union Chapel, London) (UK)

***Best of 2014 - Traditional Irish music with a fearless sense of experimentation.*** Songlines Magazine (UK)

***The Gloaming is quite unlike anything Ireland has ever experienced before.*** FRoots Magazine (UK)

***The 16-minute "Opening Set", running from slow beauty to joyful jog, is the standout of a magisterial set.*** UNCUT (UK)

***Irish folk music that is inexorably, beautifully modern.*** subba-cultcha.com (UK)

**★★★★★** ***Top 10 Album of 2014 - This is contemporary music making at its very best: un-self-conscious, freewheeling and yet deeply thoughtful.*** Irish Times (IE)

***The Gloaming No. 1 - Irish Times 30 Best Albums of 2014*** The Irish Times (IE)

***Breathtaking, groundbreaking, grandstanding.*** Irish Times (Live from The National Concert Hall, Dublin) (IE)

***Experimenting with tradition...Wondrous.*** Metro Herald (IE)

***A packed room exuding expectation and excitement, giddiness and wildness.*** Irish Times (IE)

***This is certain to become a landmark album of its kind.*** Hot Press (IE)

***Thoroughly polished.*** Sunday Times (Culture) (IE)

***This debut album lives up to the loftiest of expectations.*** Irish Independent (IE)

***The perfect union*** Irish Post (IE)

***It's contemporary music that insinuates itself deep within the subconscious.*** Irish Times (IE)

***Powerful example of Transatlantic showcasing and exchange.*** Golden Plec (IE)

***it's a truly dazzling show, where extraordinary musicianship meets with old Gaelic numbers.***  
The Irish Post (IE)

***It is a clever mixture of influences.*** Irish Post (IE)

***Haunting and emotionally charged... a refreshing but familiar sound.*** Irish World (IE)

***Traditional music that was often arrestingly new.*** The Irish Examiner (IE)

***Music of an entirely different hue.*** The Irish Times (IE)

***Their live performances so far have been revelatory... Future dates are likely to cement them as one of the great forces in Irish music.*** The Irish Times (IE)

***Imagine if Brian Eno or even Sigur Ros played traditional Irish music and you are coming close to the sound of The Gloaming*** Sydney Morning Herald (AUS)

**★★★★★** ***beautifully contrasting and subtle set. ...inherently innovative*** The Australian (AUS)

***...fusion of breathtaking originality and musicianship*** Rhythms Magazine (AUS)

**★★★★★** ***Here was a concert to blaze in the memory***  
Sydney Morning Herald, live from the Sydney Opera House (AUS)

***The Gloaming shine light on masterly craft*** Sydney Morning Herald, live from the Melbourne Festival (AUS)

***...when it's all over the audience doesn't hesitate to jump to its collective feet to give these amazing musicians the standing ovation they so richly deserve*** themusic.com.au (AUS)

***The Gloaming - eponymous debut from superb, surprising, mostly Irish quintet... sublime***  
ABC The Weekend Planet (AUS)

**★★★★** ***...gently enthralling debut...*** The Dominion Post (NZ)

***Een van de meest opvallende albums van dit jaar (One of the most outstanding albums of this year)***

Three page feature from Jazzism Magazine (NL)

***Fabuleus debuut 9+*** Heaven Magazine (NL)

★ ★ ★ ★<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> ***Subliem.*** Written in Music (NL)

***Adembenemende! (Breathtaking)*** Written in Music, Live review from Bimhuis Festival (NL)

***Kandidaat voor mijn jaarlijstje (candidate for album of the year)*** Real Roots Cafe (BE)

★ ★ ★ ★ de Volkskrant (BE)

***Deze plaat is simpelweg schitterend (This album is simply brilliant)*** Roots Time (BE)

***Een verbluffend debuut dat boeit van de eerste tot de laatste minuut (...a stunning debut that captivates from the first to the last minute)*** DA Music (BE)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ***Elegant knüpfen sie zarte Fäden zwischen Tradition, Minimal Music und Neuer Musik (Elegantly they make delicate threads between traditional and new music)*** Jazzthetik (DE)

★ ★ ★ ★ ***Eine Neujustierung irischer Musik (A rebalancing of Irish Music)*** Rolling Stone (DE)

★ ★ ★ ★<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> ***tief berührend und zeitlos (...deeply touching)*** Stereo Magazine (DE)

***Es ist eine Musik voller Geheimnisse, gleichsam voller Überraschungen auf höchstem musikalischen Niveau (Music full of secrets, surprises and at the highest musical level)*** Sudwind (AT)

★ ★ ★ ★<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> ***Ein Klangerlebnis ohnegleichen (A sound experience without equal)*** Concerto (AT)

***One of the Year's Best Albums*** NPR Music (USA)

***An astonishingly beautiful album*** NPR First Listen (USA)

***One of the Year's Best*** WNYC Soundcheck (USA)

***Top ten list for 2014*** WNYC New Sounds (USA)

***Powerhouse .... masterfully restrained, hypnotic and elemental*** Mother Jones (USA)

***The Gloaming is creating a category of their own*** No Depression (USA)

***Not only is The Gloaming's eponymous record my personal favorite release of the year, but it might also be the most creative and interesting.*** VICE Noisey (USA)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Le Journal de Montreal (CA)

***La musique de The Gloaming est superbement étonnante*** Info Culture (CA)

***heureuse et irrésistible découverte que l'on ne se lasse pas d'apprécier*** L' Eveil et La Concorde (CA)

***unlike any that you've heard before*** The Straight (CA)

***It's important for music to keep moving forward in time — crucial, even, for folk music especially — and also for those who make it to express their influences, as broad as they may be. The Gloaming does both in admirable ways.*** Shapenote (CA)

**theguardian**  
Winner of the Pulitzer prize

## Why The Gloaming is the one album you should hear this week - video



Michael Hann recommends the Gloaming's self-titled album, a five-man Irish-American supergroup who blend rich ancestral Celtic music with the sounds of the New York contemporary music scene. From the sombre tones of sean-nós songs to upbeat instrumental medleys, they make music that is both traditional and utterly new - the rich Irish folk tradition reformed and re-imagined

● Watch the Gloaming perform at the Other Voices festival

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## Album reviews: Warpaint, Mutual Benefit, The Gloaming, Mogwai

### The Gloaming "The Gloaming" (Real World)

The Gloaming are a five-piece ensemble eliding Irish folk music with the contemporary New York art-music scene. The upshot is a rather ECM-ish well of open space irrigated by a flow of motifs, textures, tempos and, more abstractly, romantic yearnings, as if an attempt were being made to elongate traditional form – the transatlantic folk impulse taken to unusual lengths ("Opening Set" lasts 16 minutes).

The group comprises fiddle (Martin Hayes), voice (Iarla O Lionaird), guitar (Dennis Cahill), Hardanger fiddle (Caoimhin O Raghallaigh) and piano (Thomas Bartlett, who also produces). They are awfully thoughtful, though the thoughtfulness does frequently give way – sometimes you feel with a sigh of relief – to the technical liberation of jig and reel.

\*\*\*\*

Nick Coleman

# The Gloaming: The Gloaming – review

(Real World)

★★★★★



Robin Denselow

The Guardian, Thursday 16 January 2014 21.45 GMT

[Jump to comments \(3\)](#)



Bravely contemporary ... the Gloaming

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The Gloaming  
The Gloaming  
REAL WORLD  
RECORDS  
2014

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album

Steeped in traditional Celtic influences but bravely contemporary, the Gloaming are a five-man Irish-American supergroup who have created a distinctive style of their own. The key musician here is Martin Hayes, one of the finest fiddle players on the planet, who is joined by his long-term accompanist, the guitarist Dennis Cahill, along with Caoimhin Ó Raghallaigh, an exponent of the Norwegian hardanger fiddle, who adds unexpected drone effects and textures, and the gently compelling and soulful singer Iarla Ó Lionáird, of Afro Celt Sound System fame. But the real surprise is Thomas "Doveman" Bartlett, who has worked with everyone from David Byrne and Laurie Anderson to Sam Amidon, and whose assured, decidedly non-folky piano work provides elegant backing for Lionáird on the gently charming The Necklace of Wrens, or suddenly cuts across and transforms a furious Hayes fiddle reel during the exhilarating 16-minute work-out, Opening Set. Exquisite.

# MOJO

## FOLK

BY COLIN IRWIN



### The Gloaming

★★★★★

The Gloaming

REAL WORLD CD/DL

Sumptuous debut by virtuoso supergroup featuring Afro Celt Iarla Ó Lionáird and fiddle maestro Martin Hayes.

THE GLOAMING'S Martin Hayes is Irish fiddle royalty; his regular guitar accompanist Dennis Cahill drives things along with percussive vigour; New York pianist Thomas Bartlett (aka Doveman) provides a broader landscape; Hardanger fiddle specialist Caoimhin Ó Raghallaigh is the tougher, maverick edge; and Iarla Ó Lionáird's ethereal vocals weave through it all like a friendly ghost. Blending traditional tunes with Irish poetry and abstract experimentation, they create a thrillingly original magic, which sounds warmly familiar. Stripping away all frilliness, they expose the raw soul of the music and when Ó Lionáird and Ó Raghallaigh duet during the album's epic centre-piece Opening Set you hold your breath, before the rest of the band pitch in and guide us to a humdinger climax over Bartlett's pounding piano. Historic poetry and ancient tunes... but this is a very organic, modern album. And it's brilliant.



## CD: The Gloaming - The Gloaming

A remarkable debut album from Irish music's latest supergroup

by Peter Quinn | Sunday, 12 January 2014

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“Cast in a beguilingly different harmonic light, tune sets such as ‘Allistruim’s March’ and ‘The Sailor’s Bonnet’ make you hear anew the inherent strength and melodic power of this music”

rating

★★★★★

Musically, lyrically, dramatically, on every count this debut album from The Gloaming is exceptional. Four-fifths of the group - Clare fiddle player Martin Hayes, Chicago guitarist Dennis Cahill, the Cúil Aodha sean nós singer Iarla Ó Lionaird and Dublin-born hardanger player Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh - are all well-known figures within traditional Irish music. It's The Gloaming's fifth member, New York-based pianist (and album producer) Thomas Bartlett, whose harmonic, rhythmic and textural effects serve to paint this music on a wider, more expansive canvas.

Bringing together a song and six tunes, the epic “Opening Set” lays all the elements bare: Ó Lionaird effortlessly opens up the musical space in “Cois an Ghaothaidh”, before the strings gently lead into a sublime slip jig (“Catherine Kelly’s”) and jig (“P. Joe’s Lullaby”, named after Martin’s father). Then, four reels to bring us home: “The Mill Stream” and “Rolling In The Barrel” - with the shift between tunes from A major to E minor one of many coup de théâtres - followed by “The Tap Room” and “Tom Doherty’s”. By the time we reach the final reel the band is in full flight with Cahill’s motoric, dancing guitar chords, Bartlett’s thunderous bass notes and syncopated right-hand commentaries, coupled with the increasingly impassioned repetitions of the tune by Hayes and Ó Raghallaigh. The results are magnificent.

Cast in a beguilingly different harmonic light, other tune sets such as “Allistruim’s March” and “The Sailor’s Bonnet” make you hear anew the inherent strength and melodic power of this music.

Singing with uncommon purity throughout his range, Ó Lionaird’s four songs - the transcendent and venerably ancient “Song 44”, the gently lilting “Necklace of Wrens”, the hymn-like “Freedom” (an adaptation of “Saoirse” by the twentieth century Co. Cork poet Seán Pádraig Ó Riordáin) and the hypnotic “Samhradh, Samhradh” - are all stand-outs. You will never hear these songs sung more beautifully.

Watch The Gloaming perform at Triskel Christchurch, Cork



# SONGLINES MAGAZINE



## The Gloaming The Gloaming

Real World Records (60 mins)

★★★★★

*Twilight's last gleaming*



Their live performances last summer positioned The Gloaming as one of the most exciting developments in Irish traditional music in a generation or more. Their eponymously titled debut album

confirms that impression with an astonishing marriage of the old and the new in music as modern as it is ancient, as epic as it is intimate. It's a powerhouse quintet of virtuoso soloists drawn from both sides of the Atlantic. The Irish contingent includes vocalist Iarla Ó Lionaírd and fiddlers Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh and Martin Hayes; the American comprises Hayes' sometime guitarist partner Dennis Cahill and pianist Thomas 'Doveman' Bartlett.

Seamlessly reciprocal, The Gloaming make chamber music of operatic intensity and symphonic scale; the

expansive, 17-minute 'Opening Set' is both a technical *tour de force* and hauntingly emotional.

Even allowing for perfectly pitched and polish contributions throughout the album, there's a compelling rawness to the end result, which is exquisitely caught in the hushed magic of 'Samradh Samradh', the noble hymnal 'Freedom', and the magnificently rich interplay between Hayes' regal fiddle and Bartlett's beautifully economic piano in 'The Sailor's Bonnet'. Ó Lionaírd's evocative vocals and Ó Raghallaigh's expressive Hardanger fiddle add their own inimitable contributions to a superbly framed recording that is brilliantly innovative and executed with masterly conviction.

MICHAEL QUINN

◀ TRACK TO TRY *The Sailor's Bonnet*



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## THE GLOAMING

★★★★★

### The Gloaming

(REAL WORLD) [www.realworldrecords/thegloaming](http://www.realworldrecords/thegloaming)



Peter Gabriel's eclectic Real World label has uncovered a real gem here. Traditional in flavour but decidedly modern in both feel and

aesthetic, transatlantic crossover-collective The Gloaming imbue windswept Irish folk passages with the resonance and emotive depth of contemporary bands like The National, to absolutely stunning effect.

With one foot planted firmly in the classical sphere and another inching slyly towards ethereal post-rock, this is as close to a complete work as an album can be. Beautiful, intertwining layers of piano and violin are complemented by drifting, spectral vocals pre-soaked in whispering atmosphere – quite what Iarla Ó Lionáird is singing about will elude non-Gaelic speakers, but in many ways the impenetrability simply adds to the enigma. Like Sigur Rós, it's more about the feeling that's being communicated than the actual language used.

An enthralling listen that kept me floating in eerie suspension throughout, *The Gloaming* is an astonishing debut which establishes this unlikely quintet as a major new force in world music. If you fell for the slithery, sorrowful charms of *Hymn* a few years back and are still pining for a follow-up, whack this straight to the top of your purchase list.

Chris Carter

## THE GLOAMING

### THE GLOAMING

REAL WORLD, OUT 20 JANUARY

**Experimental Irish/New York folk-art group. No, wait, come back!**



The Gloaming formed as a kind of experimental collective with their minds on making folk music not trapped within the formula of folk music. Afro Celt

Sound System vocalist Iarla Ó Lionáird, fiddler Martin Hayes and New York pianist Thomas Bartlett take all the facets of traditional Irish music but stretch them into brave new areas. Musical tendrils wrap around dark forests of atmosphere, more like a Celtic Sigur Rós than a céilidh band, although on the likes of *The Old Bush* you can hear the world's quietest jig played on what sounds like the proverbial tiny violin used when conveying sarcastic sympathy. Not for the casual listener, but enormously rewarding if you hanker for some NY loft space in your croft house. ★★★

ANDY FYFE

**Download: Song 44 | The Old Bush | Samradh Samradh**

Q - Feb 2014





## The Gloaming – The Gloaming

(Real World) UK release date: 20 January 2014

★★★★

There are reasons why folk supergroups are few and far

between, chief among them the fact that it's a genre that doesn't easily lend itself to the type of hype more commonly associated with boisterous rock 'n' rollers. Admittedly, the marquee names that make up the Monsters Of Folk spring to mind, but their monicker is tongue-in-cheek and their collaborations brief. Besides, they dabble in the lighter arts of folk; a fusion of pop-like hooks, hummable melodies and snazzy cardigans.

The Gloaming are another kettle of fish entirely. They arrive on the crest of a gentle wave of anticipation – not a crashing wave of furiously-fuelled expectation – and the “trad” in their trad-folk sound is as prominent as it is authentic. Yet their status as a supergroup is inescapable: fiddler Martin Hayes is an established name (and, indeed, authority) in traditional music; hardanger player Caoimhin Ó Raghallaigh has seven LPs to his name; Chicagoan guitarist Dennis Cahill is a critically-acclaimed producer; Iarla Ó Lionáird sings in Afro Celt Sound System and has collaborated with the likes of Peter Dinklage; pianist Thomas Bartlett is perhaps better known as Doveman.

Their supergroup status comes with a footnote: this quintet is not drawn together by the pursuit of further fame and fortune but rather by long-standing friendships, utter mastery over their respective instruments and a shared desire to explore the lesser-known themes of their Irish musical heritage. No curtain calls. No grandstanding. No showboating. Simply a fellowship of musicians delving into – and thereby reviving – a long-overlooked past.

It is one of these aspects of heritage, in fact, that gives this self-titled debut an inimitable uniqueness: sean-nós singing. Traditionally unaccompanied, this Irish-language style is otherworldly to Anglophone ears, seeming to imply mood and meaning with tone and melody as much as lyrical content. When one considers the historic origins of sean-nós – conjured to accompany toil, express love and lament loss – The Gloaming's sound takes on further life, bringing to the mind's-eye daily scenes of lives long-since lived. It's extraordinarily evocative; all the more so, perhaps, because of Ó Lionáird's relatively simple, unadorned style. The album sets forth with the sparse keys of Song 44, its bare soundscape gradually welcoming vocals and strings. As is the case for the subsequent 10 tracks, major chords are a rarity – and all the more striking for it. Allstrum's March remains resolutely instrumental, its unencumbered canvas allowing Ó Raghallaigh's hardanger fiddle – Norway's national instrument – the space it needs to breathe. For the uninitiated, the hardanger sounds like a fiddle with a mysterious past; imagine the Rohan theme from Howard Shore's Lord Of The Rings scores and you're halfway there.

Contemplation is the key here, but twilit passages (or gloaming passages, if you will) are alleviated by the occasional full-blooded stomp. Most notably, seventeen-minute spectacular Opening Set gradually blossoms into an irresistibly bawdy jig, and despite its lack of percussion – and its damp-eyed title – The Girl Who Broke My Heart's cascading, harmonious strings seem to spurn the chance to mourn and instead take cheerful aim at the smiling, rueful, better-to-have-loved-and-lost side of breakups.

The Gloaming make no attempt to modernise or reinvent their chosen style. They're not thrusting their hands into a relatively untapped resource of sounds, ideas and other perfectly preserved elements in order to reconstitute them for a quick fix. This is a revival, not a revision; a good-faith revival that keeps its substance intact and brings it wholesale into the present. This is the sound of five supremely talented musicians whose guiding principle is to leave unbroken things unfixed. To say it works well is an understatement.

Read more at <http://www.musicomh.com/reviews/albums/gloaming-gloaming#411lw9Am2eLQPChA.99>

WORLD

**THE GLOAMING**

The Gloaming

(Real World)

★★★★☆

Five (mostly) Irish musicians have gathered to reinvent traditional repertoire. Gaelic singer Iarla Ó Lionáird, fiddler Martin Hayes and American guitarist Denis Cahill are well-known in their own right and they're joined by Caoimhin Ó Raghallaigh on a Norwegian Hardanger fiddle and pianist Thomas Bartlett, who also produces. The opening Song 44, one of the highlights, is a sparse and spectral setting of an 800-year-old poem. The mood throughout is predominantly contemplative, with the Hardanger fiddle and guitar on Old Bush being a prime example.

By contrast, Opening Set is a long, foot-tapping medley of instrumental tunes, although the piano feels out of place here. The band has, however, proved itself with rapturous receptions on tour. They play the Union Chapel next Friday.

*Simon Broughton*



## The Gloaming: The Gloaming

By David Honigmann

Debut recording by Irish supergroup sets peerless fiddle playing against aetherial sean nos singing

**T**he debut recording by this Irish supergroup sets the peerless fiddle playing of Martin Hayes against the aetherial sean nos singing of Iarla Ó'Lionáird.

The most exciting moments come when Hayes's slow vamps lock into an ecstatic reel or jig, and either his usual foil Dennis Cahill on guitar or the pianist Thomas Bartlett reinforces the rhythm. On 'Opening Set' all the musical elements cohere on a blissful quarter-hour pilgrimage.

★★★★★

**The Gloaming**