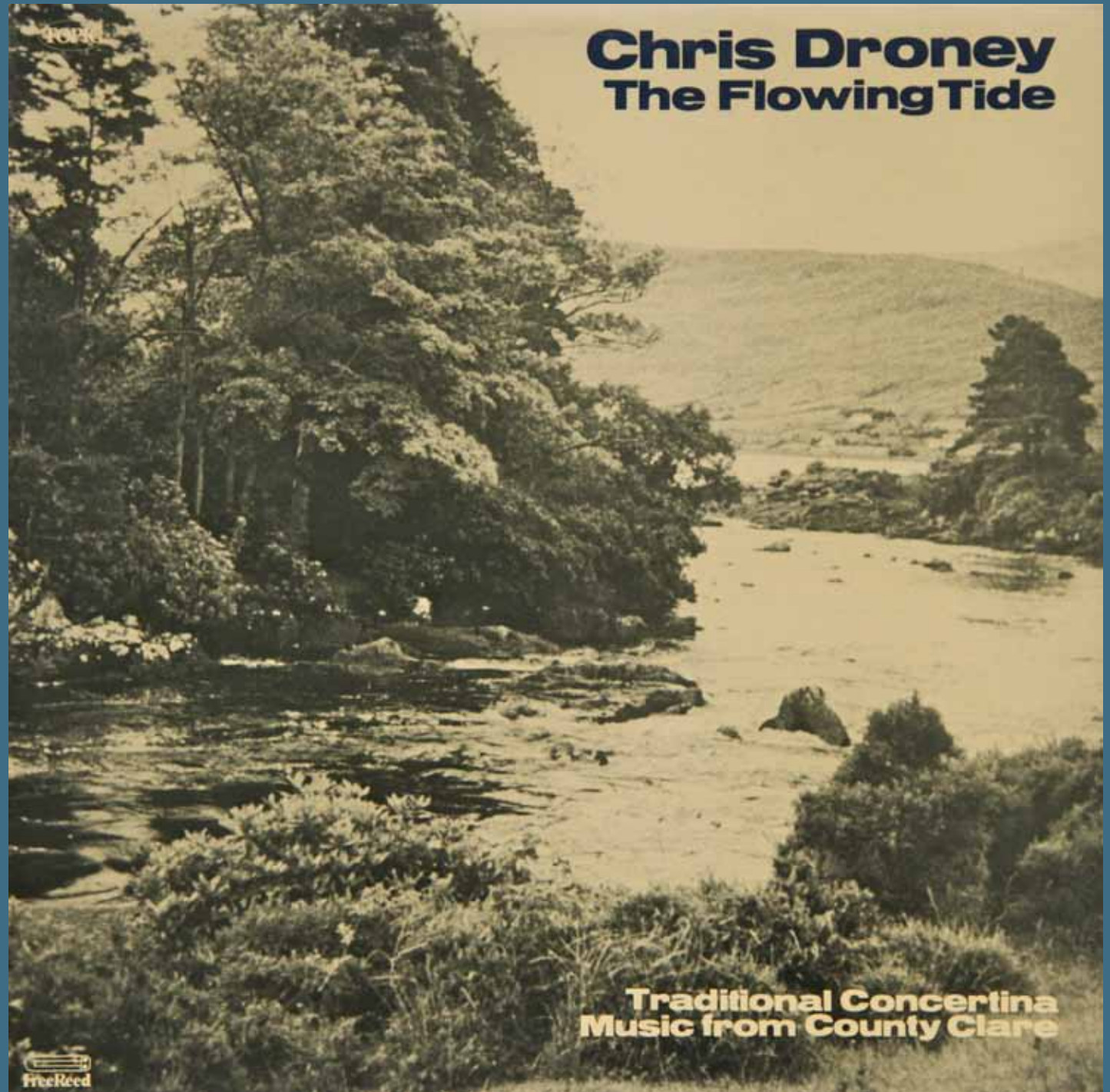


TSDL1503

Chris Droney
The Flowing Tide
Irish Traditional Concertina
Music from County Clare



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- 1 Bellharbour Reel/Tim Maloney's Reel
- 2 The Cuckoo Hornpipe
- 3 Three Little Drummers/The Eagles Nest - *jigs*
- 4 Burren No.1/Chris Droney's favourite - *reels*
- 5 Sliam na Gapall/The Lakes of Sligo - *polkas*
- 6 The Blue Gentian Waltz
- 7 Roddy McCorley's March
- 8 The Treble Jig/The Battering Ram
- 9 The Union Reel/The Kilfenora Reel
- 10 The Three Part Jig/The Moate Hunt - *jigs*
- 11 The Templehouse Reel/Matt Molloy's Reel
- 12 The Killy Hornpipe/The Flowing Tide (Ann's favourite) - *hornpipes*
- 13 The Sailor's Polka/The Old Time (Rakes of Mallow) - *polka*
- 14 Untitled Slow Air
- 15 Down the Broom Reel/Sheehy's Reel

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Chris Droney farms in Bellharbour, near the wild Burren country of northern County Clare. Born and raised there, he was taught the concertina by his father, also a noted player, from whom Chris has much of his fine repertoire of the music of Clare. His first concertina, a Lachenal 20 key Anglo, was bought by his father for £4.10.0, direct from London – concertinas never got into the shops in those days – and he now plays a 39 key Wheatstone Anglo-Chromatic bought on a journey to London in the early sixties. Chris says that the main source of instruments for the players of Clare has always been from Clare men working in London who posted them home!

Though his father was never a competitive player, Chris Droney initiated a unique series of competition victories in 1956, when he won the Fleadh Ceoil all Ireland Championship at Ennis. Further All-Ireland concertina championships came in 1959, 1960, and so on until 1967 when he retired from competing ‘to give a chance to some of the younger musicians.’ But his fame had spread to the USA, and he played a series of concerts in Boston and New York, to audiences of over 3000 expatriate Irish. Chris remembers being in demand as a musician for local house dances and ceilidhs from his earliest days as a concertina player – indeed many of his settings are those for the Caledonian and Clare dance sets. His experience in playing for dance, combined with the discipline of a

background of competitive playing has made Droney’s style remarkably clean and precise, with a restrained and tasteful use of decoration as in **Three Little Drummers**. Chris Droney’s playing shows none of the fiddle and Uilleann pipe-derived embellishments of other Clare concertina players, and his music is uninfluenced by the highly decorated button accordion style of playing currently growing in favour amongst younger anglo players. Nevertheless, it can be an intense, driving style – notably on reels like **The Bellharbour** (his father’s favourite) and **Burren No.1/Droney’s Favourite** – where excitement is given to the music by his pure concertina style, and not by an overlay of decoration.

The style of Chris Droney’s concertina playing is distinct, then, from the mainstream of the current Clare tradition in some respects – he largely has his father’s style and repertoire, and has acquired few tunes from other musicians. The excellent polka **Sliam Na Gapall**, which Chris had from his father as **Bellharbour Polka**, is now in the repertoire of Bernard O’Sullivan and Tommy McMahon (Topic/Free Reed 12TFRS502), while he has the **Killy** and **Flowing Tide** from musicians in Galway, just to the north of Clare. Even in widely-known tunes – **Rakes of Mallow**, **Matt Molloy’s Reel** – the style is unmistakably that of the Clare concertina, the years of traditional use of the instrument actually re-shaping

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the music. **Roddy McCorley's March** – ‘just as I had it from my father’, says Chris – features the use of well-chosen lefthand chords, rarely used by Clare players, while in **The Cuckoo Hornpipe** he completely overcomes the inherent limitations of the Anglo concertina, with excellent use of octave playing and double noting.

His repertoire, unlike that of many musicians, is not dominated by the reel and the jig; Chris Droney's playing is well leavened with the set dances, marches, polkas, hornpipes and slow airs of Clare, music that epitomizes the true traditional repertoire of one of the finer concertina players of County Clare.

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05



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