Galician Bands

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Here you will find some bits of information about some Galician music bands. Any comments, questions, suggestions for additions, etc. are very welcome, and will be addressed here as time allows. Please, bear in mind that I do not know everything (who does?), and that my opinions and views may be biased — but I'll do my best to give impartial information.

For information about Galician traditional instruments and makers, very specially bagpipes, check out my pages on Galician Bagpipes.

I would appreciate very much every correction (specially those related to my rather peculiar use of English) and contribution to this document. I will give credit to the people who have contributed, unless they explicitly refuse to appear here. Please bear in mind that some mistakes cannot be directly attributed to me, but I am willing to correct them. If you spot any error or inconsistency, please let me know!.

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For pointers regarding information about other types of bagpipes, please refer to my hobbies[1] which can also be reached from my beloved home page[2].

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That's enough. Now, go to the real stuff.

[1]http://www.clip.dia.fi.upm.es/˜boris/hobb.html
[2]http://www.clip.dia.fi.upm.es/˜boris
[3]mailto:mcarro@fi.upm.es

Contents

1 Milladoiro

Although they are not a traditional band, in the strict sense, they are fully respectful with the tradition, and very proficient musicians in all senses. Milladoiro is, without any doubt, the best known Galician folk band.

"Milladoiro" is the Galician name for the heaps of stones built by shepherds. It is also the name of a Galician folk music band with some 15 years of history. Milladoiro plays traditional Galician tunes, arranged for different instruments. They play as well compositions of their own and tunes of Breton, Scottish and Irish origin.

At the time of writing this, Milladoiro is composed by:

- X. V. Ferreirós (Galician bagpipes, oboe, bouzouki, uilleann pipes, oboe, tin whistle, mandolin, Galician tambourine)
- Moncho García (Galician drums, bodhrán, Chinese box)
- Antón Seoane (keyboards, acoustic guitar, accordion, harpsichord, piano)
- Nando Casal (Galician bagpipes, clarinet, tin whistle, tambourine)
- X. Antón Méndez (flute, piccolo, recorder)
- Rodrigo Romaní (Celtic harp, concert harp, bouzouki, acoustic guitar, guimbard)
- Antón Seijo (violin)

The former violin player, Michel Canadá, left the band some years ago. Previously to him, Laura Quintillán was the first violin player of the band.

A Short History

Part of the musicians in Milladoiro (X. V. Ferreirós, F. Casal), together with R. García Rei (not in Milladoiro) used to play traditional Galician music in open air festivals, gathering experience and learning from other traditional bands: *os Campaneiros, os Irmáns Garceiras, os Areeiras, os Rosales...* and many more. On the other side, there was a couple of musicians (R. Romaní, A. Seoane) which were more interested in the sound and instruments of middle age music, in an eternal pilgrimage through Galicia, seeking for the craftsmen who still built the offsprings of these ancient instruments. Another musician, X. Méndez, used to spend his time at musical libraries in cathedrals and old archive buildings. They, together with the violin player Laura Quintillán, were the first Milladoiro formation. Laura Quintillán left some time ago, to be replaced by Michel Canada, and by Antón Seijo after Michel.

> "We belong here as long as we know and respect the time and space, rich and diverse we live in. We do not pretend to make any proclamation with our music. We only want to entertain and to have fun with a treasure: the melodies our country bequeathed us, a fruit of anonymous, traditional musicians."
>
> "We would like to give our country back all we received from it in the shape of beautiful, live music, in the hope that it will help us to exist under the unavoidable cover of the global village."

Milladoiro changed their style as time passed, and even in a single CD the play very different types of tunes. Their recordings range from plain traditional music to quite sophisticated renderings of symphonic music by Galician composers. As time passed, Milladoiro's melodies and arrangements become more complex.

Recordings

Milladoiro Their first recording, with only two members. Simple in the form, but deep in contents.

A Galicia de Maeloc (Galicia in the times of Maeloc — Ruada, 1979) The full band plays here.

O Berro Seco (Dry Shout — Ruada, 1980).

Milladoiro 3 (CBS, 1982).

Solfafria (not a Spanish or Galician word — CBS, 1984).

Galicia no Pais das Maravillas (Galicia in Wonderland — CBS, 1986).

Divinas Palabras (Divine Words — ION, 1987) Music for the Spanish film of the same title, based on a novel by the Spanish writer Valle–Inclán.

Castellum Honesti (Honest Castle? — Ariola/Green Linnet, 1989) This recording, for me, marks clearly a transition point in Milladoiro's style. Interesting for those who already know Galician music, because of the new treatment given to old melodies. Available in Green Linnet.

Galicia no Tempo (Galicia Through the Ages — Discmedi/Green Linnet, 1991) A suite composed for the exhibition "1000 years of Galicia". Available in Green Linnet.

A Vía Lactea (The Milky Way — Cormorán, 1993) I believe this is a soundtrack for some theater play.

A Xeometría da alma (The Soul's Geometry — Cormorán, 1993) Music for the exhibition of a Maruja Mallo, a Galician artist.

Iacobus Magnus (The Great James — Discmedi, 1994) St. James is one of the disciples of Jesus Christ. St. James is supposed to be buried in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela (Santiago comes from Saint James, Compostela from the Latin Campus Stellae, "the Field of the Star"). Quoting from a newspaper,

> The last musical adventure of Milladoiro is, without any doubt, the most ambitious one in their long career. The band faced a long orchestral suite built on the huge musical background of their homeland. New music, jointly written by all the components of the bane, which combines their usual folk sounds with beautiful symphonic moments, with the collaboration of The English Chamber Orchestra. Iacobus Magnus is a piece of work with lots of feelings and love for the past and present of Galician music.

Gallaecia Fulget (Galicia Brights — Cormorán, 1995) Music track for the commemoration of the 500 years of Santiago de Compostela University[4]

As fadas de estraño nome (Fairies with Strange Names — Discmedi, 1995) Recorded live; I love it very much, and I deeply recommend it, since it gives a thorough view of Milladoiro's music – perhaps forgetting a little bit their more Celtic–like side. Get this one if you can.

Other Works in Collaboration:

Celebration with The Chieftains.

Solstice Live with Paul Winter.

The Seville Suite – Kinsale to La Coruña with Davy Spillane, Mairtin O'Connor, Milladoiro and the RTE Concert Orchestra, composed by Bill Wheelan[5].

The Given Note with Liam O'Flynn.

Where Can I Get Milladoiro Recordings from?

Other than those carried by Green Linnet (and maybe by CBS?), I know of no international source of Milladoiro recordings. I'm sorry.

[4] http://www.usc.es
[5] http://www.dirtynelson.com/linen/feature/63whelan.html

More about Milladoiro

If you find this information interesting, drop me a mail telling me so; I'd be glad of knowing that. But don't ask me for more specific information, since there is little more I can say. Milladoiro can be reached at:

MILLADOIRO
Estudios Cormorán
Parque empresarial "A Picaraña"
15980 Padrón
A Coruña
Spain
Ph. +34-81-803490 — 597358
Fax +34-81-803490

Other Sources of Information

Check out this interview which I got from Roots World[6].

2 Durindaina

The traditional Galician music band Durindaina was founded in Santiago de Compostela in 1984, as a result of the shared interests of five musicians who agreed on which point of view should be taken both in teaching and fostering traditional Galician music.

Their joint work started as a bagpipe band, and their first guidelines were retrieving old tunes from the Santiago de Compostela area, which were almost forgotten, with the invaluable help of the later bagpiper Xoán Bello Mallóu. Since then, the band goes through several changes both in style and components, the most relevant being the addition of other instruments, such as accordion, clarinet, requinta, and the human voice. This makes their music to be a mixture of seriousness, and peaceful performance, which resembles old, uninhibited bagpipe bands, free from the pressure of the existence of modern electronic instruments. They pursue and defend that playing style, and love the sweetness and transparency characteristic of traditional Galician music.

Durindaina start now a new stage in their history, with the recording of their first CD **Durindaina** in *Cormorán* (see 1), Milladoiro's recording studio.

Durindaina is composed of:

- Luis Mouriño Couto: *gaita*, clarinet and drums
- Xoán Porto Becerra: *gaita*, accordion, drums and voice
- Rafael Moure Outeiral: drums, shell drums and voice
- Antonio Pérez Mosquera: bass drum, Galician tambourine and voice
- Camilo Regueiro López: *gaita*, requinta and drums

[6] http://www.rootsworld.com

Durindaina can be reached at:

Durindaina
Rúa A Muiña, nº 58, 2nº A
Santiago de Compostela
15073 A Coruña
Spain
Ph. +34-81-566232
Ph. and fax: +34-81-573275

and by e-mail, by writing to `camilor@arrakis.es`[7] who is a component of the group. They have also a WWW page in English[8] and in Galician[9].

3 Carlos Nuñez

Carlos Nuñez playing style and school is a landmark in Galicia's piping. Playing bagpipe since he was eight years old, he learned not only from Galician bagpipers, but also got interested in Scottish and Irish piping. He is also a superb recorder player whose skills can only be believed after hearing him.

Carlos Nuñez works include fruitful and frequent collaboration with artists like The Chieftains (whom with he recorded the sound track of *The Treasure Island* at the age of 18), Sinead O'Connor and many others in his last record.

I have not much information about the former Carlos Nuñez, *Matto Congrio*. After the disappearing of this band, he started his own project, in which he collaborated with musicians from Spain and abroad and recorded music from traditional Galician sources, and music composed for this work.

Carlos Nuñez last record, **A Irmandade das Estrelas** (*The Stars' Brotherhood)* is a must. It includes collaborations from international artists such as Nightnoise, The Chieftains, Ry Cooder and Dulce Pontes, and other collaborations from Spanish performers as Luz Casal (a rock singer), the guitar player Tino di Geraldo and Kepa Junquera (an outstanding player of *trikitixa*, the Basque diatonic accordion).

4 Os Cempés

Os Cempés (*The Centipedes*) is the name of a brand new band composed by:

- Oscar Fernández Sanjurjo (accordion)
- Antón Varela (Galician bagpipes)
- Beto Niebla (drums)
- Pablo Cés (bass drums)
- Serxo Cés (Galician tambourine, Galician whistle, clave, cowbell, vocals)

[7] mailto:camilor@arrakis.es
[8] http://www.arrakis.es/~camilor/INGLES.htm
[9] http://www.arrakis.es/~camilor/

His first CD, **¡¡Opa iii!!** (no translation) has been recorded live at several performances, and offers traditional pieces as well as compositions of their own, all of them dressed with a fine musical taste. A completely acoustic album, Os Cempés clearly show that a complete and well–defined musical atmosphere can be achieved without the need of neither complicated electronical apparatus nor lots of people hanging around.

5 Xosé Manuel Budiño

Oh, this had to appear sooner in my pages... it is here, now. A powerful band, full of outstanding musicians, which will make you jump, rock, clap, and grieve at times—well, not so, but only because the general ambient will prevent that. His (only, at the moment) record features outstanding Breton musicians Jacky Molard and Soïg Siberil, Basque *trikitilari* (diatonic accordeon player) Kepa Junkera, and the incredible voice of the Galician Mercedes Peón. The band, on stage, uses to host these and other musicians, such as bass clarinet player Pablo Pascual and the fine violin player José Climent, of La Musgaña[10] fame.

Many of the themes in Budiño's band first CD are composed by him, and the effect is a fresh and powerful sound, which, having roots in the deepest Galician tradition, takes off with a different conception of a Galician band, leaving behind the land-of-sorrow that view Galicia has exported (or, perhaps, that others have imported from it), to open the door to an experience of exposure to the wild.

The core musicians in his band are:

X. M. Budiño Galician pipes[11], low whistle, uilleann pipes.

Pedro Pascual bouzouki, octave mandolin.

Xavier Díaz button and piano accordion.

Leandro del Tell assorted percussions.

Xan Hernández Bass.

Pablo Alonso Bass clarinet.

July: **2** Badajoz
10 Carballo
11 Pontevedra
17 Festival do Sil (León)
28 Cambados

August: **1** Festival Folk da Carballeira de Zas
4 Vigo
7 Bértiz (Navarra)
18 Vilagarcía de Arousa

[10] http://www.dirtynelson.com/linen/feature/45lm.html
[11] http://www.clip.dia.fi.upm.es/~boris/gaita

	29 Festival Intercelta de a Coruña
September:	**19** Monforte de Lemos
	25 Valeira (lugo)
October:	**13** Zaragoza
	23 Villalba (Lugo)
November:	**20** Murcia (Teatro Romea)
December:	**2** Madrid (Sala "La Riviera"). Special guests: Jacky Molard, an outstanding Breton fiddler and musician, and Mercedes Peón, an incredible voice from Galicia.
	3 Barcelona (Sala Apolo). Gests: Jacky Molard and Mercedes Peón.
	22 Vigo (Centro Cultural Caixavigo) + Guests artists.

Additionally, Xosé Manuel Budiño will take part as a guest in the performances of Kepa Junkera at the following places and dates:

August:	**15** Pamplona
	28 Cáceres
September:	**5** Salamanca
October:	**16** Cartagena

Xosé Manuel Budiño can be reached at budino@mx3.redestb.es[12] .

6 Fia na Roca

They have their own web page, where it says it all. Just go to http://www.ctv.es/USERS/fianaroca/

[12] mailto:budino@mx3.redestb.es

7 Record Distributors

Looking for *gaita* records, or any other traditional music? Check out these labels, which are specialized in folk and traditional music.

Discos Bits is a music shop with Internet access which has (or can get hold of) most of the recordings of Galician groups — not only on the folk side. Its address is

http://www.angelfire.com/biz2/discosbits/.

Go and visit them!

Arpa Folk distributes records of folk music groups from Spain and other parts of the world. They can be reached at:

ARPA FOLK
San Isidro Labrador nº 19
E-28005 Madrid
Spain
Ph. +34–(9)1–366–5346
Fax.+34–(9)1–364–0036

SoniFolk have a WWW page with part of their catalog (they have a more complete one, which they send by mail), and they also sell by mail. I think you can also order by e-mail/WWW.

Sonifolk
Fernando el Católico 58
Sótano interior A
E-28015 Madrid
Spain
Ph. +34–(9)1–544–5955
Fax: +34–(9)1–544–9738

Do Fol is a record label specialized in Galician folk and traditional music. It is linked to the record distributor Boa Musica[13].

Do Fol Edicións[14]
Sierra de Algodonales 12
E-28018 Madrid
Spain
Ph. +34–(9)1–479–1763
Fax: +34–(9)1–478–3307

A note for newcomers: For those who want to have a first approach to a quite wide exposition of Galician music instruments, besides *gaita*, I would wholeheartedly recommend acquiring the double CD "Instrumentos Musicais Populares Galegos". A third-party comment says:

[13] http://www.putput.es/boa/
[14] http://www.putput.es/boa/dofol.html

> *"A bargain double album and a book, all dealing with the instruments and music of Galicia. It covers the music of the area pretty comprehensively, from demonstrations of the range and scales of the featured instruments, through traditional ensemble playing, to arrangements with parallels in the work of O'Riada or Shaun Davey in Ireland. A great shop-window for Galego music, instruments and musicianship, and I should think destined for classic status".* (Andrew Cronshaw, Folk Roots, nº 66). In time, this recording has proven to be a school for the most important galician musicicans of today. Here you will find the very first recordings of new celtic music wizard Carlos Nuñez, impresing everyone with his extraordinary talent when he was just a young boy. Also in this album you will find musicians such as Carlos Corral (Trisquel), Anxo Lois Pinto and Santiago Cribeiro (Matto Congrio & Berrogüeto) among others.

I know it is available through SoniFolk.

8 Other Useful Links

8.1 Paulo Vazquez Pointers

Not really focused on *gaita*, Paulo's pages[15] have a good account of Galician folk (traditional and renewed) groups. The only thing for the foreigner visitor is that they have been written in Galician, but if you speak either Spanish or Portuguese, you have chances of understanding most of their contents. In any case, they have links to english-written pages as well.

8.2 The *Xunta de Galicia* Database of Music in Galicia

The Autonomous Government of Galicia (Xunta de Galicia[16]) has a database with addresses and contact persons of Galician bands of all types, ranging from women traditional singers (pandeireteiras) to jazz bands. It is accessible through WWW[17].

9 Thanks

Thanks to:
Camilo Regueiro (`camilor@arrakis.es`)

Comments, suggestions? It's easy: address them to Manuel Carro[18]. Or send me a snail–mail letter:

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[15]http://www.arrakis.es/~pvazquez/
[16]http://www.xunta.es
[17]http://www.xunta.es/conselle/cultura/teatro/musica.html
[18]mailto:mcarro@fi.upm.es