

Orla Fallon - Biography

“I have been privileged in the places that music has brought me,” says Orla Fallon. Given the places she’s been these past years, it would be difficult to disagree. His Holiness the Pope, US Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush and Irish President Mary McAleese, have all been a part of Orla's audiences throughout the years, both as a solo artist and with the phenomenally successful group Celtic Woman. “Playing in such places as the White House or the Vatican, you never realize when you're growing up that you'll ever see inside these places, let alone sing and play. I think that’s the wonder of the whole thing. It’s amazing the doors that music can open up for you!”

Orla Fallon is a singer / harpist who comes from the village of Knockananna in Co.Wicklow, Ireland. She credits her late grandmother for instilling an abiding love of Irish music and traditional culture. Orla had carved out a very successful solo career for herself prior to being approached by composer David Downes to form the group Celtic Woman.

A winner of The International Feis Ceoil and International Pan Celtic Competition on two occasions, Orla has recorded with legendary Irish group Clannad as well as the choral group Anuna. Her debut album *The Water Is Wide* debuted in the Billboard World Music Top Ten upon its release in the United States. She toured extensively in Europe, Africa and North America, where her renditions of traditional Irish airs and her self-penned compositions were described as “haunting and deeply moving.” It was this haunting quality in her performances that aroused the interest of musical director David Downes, who asked Orla to join Celtic Woman for the inaugural show at The Helix, Dublin, in September of 2004.

Orla understood enough about the music business to know Celtic Woman wasn't an opportunity she should allow to pass by. She has not looked back since, if for no other reason than that she hasn't had time! “It's been a total whirlwind these past few years,” she says.

The Celtic Woman story has been, from the beginning, one of overwhelming success. Between their self-titled debut album, a Christmas album titled A Christmas Celebration, as well as their New Journey CD, Celtic Woman has held the Number One position on the Billboard World Music Charts for a record-breaking 95 consecutive weeks. Their CDs and DVDs have gone platinum in the United States and South Africa as well as topping the charts, having gone gold in places as far away as Australia and Japan.

Orla, during her time with Celtic Woman, has completed several triumphantly successful USA tours, selling out such exalted venues as New York's Radio City Music Hall, Carnegie Hall, Boston's Opera House, The Los Angeles Greek Theatre and Colorado's Red Rocks Amphitheatre. Tours to Japan, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, South Africa and Canada have all been hugely successful.

Orla and Celtic Woman have also dazzled network TV audiences with appearances on NBC's Today Show, Live with Regis and Kelly, The Martha Stewart Show, The Megan Mullally Show, The Bonnie Hunt Show, Mrs. Dash's Skate For The Heart on NBC and The Brian Boitano Skating Spectacular, which NBC aired on New Year's Day, 2007.

Orla and Celtic Woman also appeared on Anne Murray's hugely successful Duets album, which featured some of music's all time greatest voices: Emmylou Harris, Martina Mc Bride, Carole King and Celine Dion, to name a few.

Orla's forthcoming solo album, Distant Shore, has benefited from the experience she gained and the people she came in contact with in her time in Celtic Woman. Produced by Eoghan O'Neill of the seminal Irish folk band Moving Hearts (and who also plays bass for Celtic Woman), the new record builds on Orla's previous work and boasts a more intimate, live sound which she says "pushes the boundaries out a bit." She also recorded with some of her Irish musical heroes. "People like Davy Spillane, Donal Lunny and Mairtin O'Connor are playing on it. I did three original songs of

my own, and to hear these guys playing those songs was fabulous. I am really excited about it!”

The crucial thing in her life, says Orla, is her willingness to try new things, to always push herself and to never become complacent. It is by following her dreams that she has ended up in some of the most prestigious places. Now, after four wonderful, exciting years of touring and recording with Celtic Woman, Orla feels the time has come to embark on a different journey, touring and promoting her new solo album.

Given the extraordinary journey she has been on to date, she looks forward to what is yet to come.