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Cultural Ambassadors



Vincent Crotty and Kieran Jordan on the porch of their Savin Hill home. The paintings surrounding them are Crotty's depictions of rural scenes from Ireland. (Ed Forry photo)



Kieran Jordan has established herself internationally as a professional Irish dancer and choreographer in a niche that most would consider unlikely - most, that is, except her

husband, Vincent Crotty, an Irish native from the small Cork town of Kanturk, who chose an equally challenging but viable career as a visual artist. Together, these Dorchester-based

artists make a formidable team whose strength lies in their natural talent and their unflinching dedication to their creative visions. Susan Gedutis Lindsay writes, Page 13.

History Unfolds

New Deal for North Set for May 8; Fingers are Crossed



Ian Paisley, left, and Sinn Féin's Gerry Adams announcing agreement on March 26. (AP photo)

In the end, Ian Paisley surprised many by traveling to the Stormont parliament building in east Belfast on Monday, March 26, and agreeing to terms with Sinn Féin's Gerry Adams, a man he had never spoken to or shaken hands with, and a reviled figure for many unionists in the north. Paisley would have to do it on his terms, insisting on a six-week delay, but a new Northern Ireland government, it was agreed, would come into power on May 8, with the odd-couple pairing of Paisley and Martin McGuinness at the helm.

So now the focus turns to next month. Will this deal truly hold? Will Paisley and McGuinness link arms on that date and, in almost unthinkable fashion, become the co-leaders of a true government of reconciliation?

Or, as has happened so many times in the past, will a Northern Ireland agreement come undone, clouds sweeping in to obscure the dawn?

Robert Connolly writes, Page 4. See Joe Leary commentary, Page 5.

Mrs. President



Boston City Council President Maureen Feeney learned early on to become involved in public affairs. Of her mother she says: "When we were kids, she would wake us early on vacation mornings to take us on walking history lessons of the city."

Profile, Page 9.

Jordan, Crotty Team Up Family Style to Make Art of Their Creative Visions

BY SUSAN GEDUTIS
LINDSAY

SPECIAL TO THE REPORTER

It all started at the Philadelphia St. Patrick's Day parade, 1979. That's the day Savin Hill resident Kieran Jordan, then just five years old, discovered Irish dance, and she's been dancing ever since.

Today, she has established herself internationally as a professional Irish dancer and choreographer in a niche that most would consider unlikely - most, that is, except her husband, Vincent Crotty, an Irish native who chose an equally challenging but viable career as a visual artist. They are remarkably humble about their talents, but don't be fooled. Together, these Dorchester-based artists make a formidable team whose strength lies in their natural talent and their unflinching dedication to their creative visions.

Needless to say, St. Patrick's Day season was a busy time for this couple.

Kieran performed three times on the 17th, at some of the most high-profile events in Boston. In the morning she was at the JFK Library in Dorchester, where she presented a free public performance with the Kieran Jordan Dancers and a new music and dance collaboration called Triptych, a trio that includes Laura Risk on fiddle, Paddy League on guitar, and Jordan's own feet as percussion. After that concert, she and Triptych headed off to Boston's Back Bay for matinee and evening performances of the St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn with Brian O'Donovan, who hosts a popular weekly Celtic music radio program on WGBH. They performed alongside Irish singer Sean Keane and guitar dynamo Tony McManus, as well as Beoga, a new, energetic traditional band from Northern Ireland.

Meanwhile, her husband was featured at two simultaneous art openings on March 16 (most artists are fortunate to get

just one). In Andover, his work is part of a group art exhibition of Irish landscape paintings titled, "A Shade Apart," at the Lorica Artworks, 90 Main Street. South of Boston, his work was shown in Hingham at the opening reception of "The Dark Light Show," in conjunction with the Hingham Symphony Orchestra and the North River Arts Association.

Crotty, 41, immigrated to Dorchester in 1990, from the small Cork town of Kanturk. Since then, he has continued his studies avidly, not in a school or university, but rather over long hours at the easel, painting figures and landscapes from life and in the studio. Given his immense talent and quiet focus, his career has grown steadily -- so much so that he is able to make his entire living as a professional artist. In addition to painting, he has recently expanded into teaching workshops and classes from his studio in Rockland. His work spans a wide range, from the back streets of his hometown in Ireland to the back porches of his Dorchester three-decker neighborhood. He is currently working on a series of paintings of rural people in Ireland, as well as a series of portraits of the parishioners at Dorchester's St. Mark's parish. This summer, he'll be teaching an urban landscape painting course at the Fort Point Studio School and serving on the faculty at the 2007 Catskills Irish Arts Week in upstate New York. (See related story in this issue.)

Crotty attends most of Jordan's performances and even occasionally joins her for a spin around the floor at a traditional ceili dance. That's just one reflection of the mutual support that makes it possible for the couple to remain self-employed creative artists in one of the most expensive cities in the US.

"The dancing, the choreography, and the painting is creative work -- but crafting the career is the creative act, too," Jordan said. "We don't have work colleagues to go to meetings with and have strategic planning sessions with, so we do that for each other, even though our actual fields are pretty



Vincent Crotty adding the final touches to a painting.

separate.

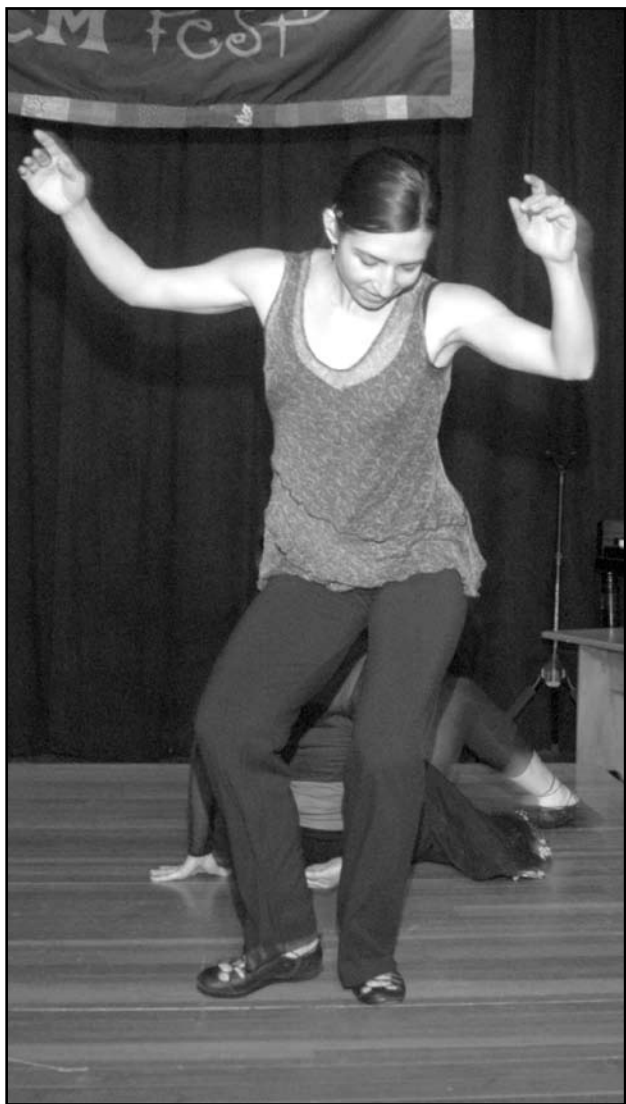
"If he's having an art show that he's producing himself, I'm very much involved in helping with the planning, advertising, getting a venue, and publicizing it. And if I'm working on a big project, he's cooking dinner for my dancers -- we're being the

staff assistant that the other person needs."

While most of their collaboration has been behind the scenes, they've talked about doing creative projects together. Perhaps Crotty will do set design for a theatrical dance project or perform music for her dancing.

"It hasn't happened yet, but I feel very much that it'll come," Jordan said. "Teamwork is critical to running this life as two artists."

(To see Vincent Crotty's work, visit his web site at vincencrotty.com. Kieran also has a web site, kieranjordan.com.)



Kieran Jordan strutting her stuff.

Crotty to Teach at Irish Arts Week in the Catskills

Held in the unique Irish-American enclave of East Durham, N.Y., the Catskills Irish Arts Week -- July 15-July 21 -- offers excellent arts tuition in traditional Irish music, dance, and many other arts, including painting, Celtic jewelry making, stone carving, Celtic lettering and engraving, and more. Spend days painting landscape and figure paintings, and nights listening or dancing to Irish music from the best traditional musicians from Ireland and the US.

Vincent Crotty's workshop will guide novice as well as experienced artists

through the process of painting from life, which requires skill, efficiency, and even adrenaline to create a spontaneous "here-and-now" look on canvas. This course will strengthen students' understanding of design, color, and especially light, as they pertain to painting from life.

This course is best suited to adult and teen-age students, who must provide their own materials. More information is at east-durham.org/iris-hartsweek.

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