

## **BIOGRAPHIES: Mairéid Sullivan and Ben Kettlewell**

**Mairéid Sullivan** was born on a farm in the township of Bantry Bay, West Cork, Ireland, the first of seven children. Her father was a master horseman and a fine Irish tenor. Her mother taught her traditional Irish songs. In her twelfth year, her family moved to California. At age twenty-one, she migrated to Australia with her father.

Mairéid is a lover of music and laughter, a singer/dancer/poet/songwriter, an ever enthusiastic filmmaker, and a life-long student of history with a special interest in Celtic heritage. Mairéid has been singing traditional Irish songs since early childhood, and many of her original songs reflect on humanity's heritage of joy –particularly as reflected in Irish Celtic culture.

Mairéid also has had an extensive background as an arts promoter. Before returning full-time to fulfilling her musical vocation in 1992, she supported her daughter and three step-children via her arts marketing and publicity consultancy. She was awarded a Victorian Government arts grant through the Victorian Women's Trust in 1988, presented by The Honorable Race Mathews, Victorian Minister of the Arts, for services to mainstream arts and government organizations, e.g. City of Melbourne and Victorian Tourism Commission joint Cultural Tourism initiatives, the Australian Ballet, Victoria State Opera, and for festivals, including over five years with the Spoleto Festival, through to the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts.

With her spouse Ben Kettlewell, multi-instrumentalist, composer, music journalist, computer wiz and co-producer of films, Mairéid works from their studio – Lyrebird Media – [www.lyrebirdmedia.com](http://www.lyrebirdmedia.com) – situated on the edge of the “green belt” in North Eastern Melbourne, Australia, where they compose and record music for live concerts and CDs and for film soundtracks. They also produce, direct and edit films. They frequently take breaks from the technology to work in their organic/BioDynamic veggie garden and bird sanctuary.

Mairéid is an **AbaF registered arts practitioner**, through the **Australia Cultural Fund**, a joint initiative of the Australia Business Arts Foundation (AbaF) and the Australia Council for the Arts, which allows sponsors to receive tax deductibility through funding her projects.

Mairéid travelled from Melbourne to Hollywood, California in 1995, to establish US distribution for her music, and stayed until 2002. During those seven years, she recorded vocals for film and documentary soundtracks, and best-selling music compilations in the Celtic music genre. (Three of her songs were featured on Billboard's World Music Top 10 charts for nine months in 1995/96.) Interleaf Press published Mairéid's first poetry collection ***Ancient Self – Memoirs*** in 1997. Quarry Music Press published her book, ***Celtic Women in Music*** in 1999. Her poems and essays have appeared in many publications, including ***Celtic Tides***, by Martin Melhuish, (1998) and Hugh Downs' ***My America*** (2002). In 2000, Mairéid traveled to Ireland to film interviews with fourteen of Ireland's leading women musicians, exploring sources of the wide variety of cultural styles in Irish music, (see film clips at [www.maireid.com](http://www.maireid.com) or [www.youtube.com/lyrebirdchannel](http://www.youtube.com/lyrebirdchannel)).

Mairéid's internationally acclaimed solo recordings include: ***Never Drift Apart*** (2003), ***For Love's Caress -a Celtic journey*** (1998), ***Dancer*** (1994), ***A Celtic Evening*** (1998), a live concert duet with Derek Bell (RIP), former Harper with the Chieftains, and the soundtrack for the award-winning film ***Time after Time*** (2006).

Over several years, Mairéid and Ben filmed and edited their first feature film ***Time after Time***, which won the Best Documentary Film Award at the 2005 International Panorama of Independent Filmmakers, held in Athens, Greece and was nominated for the HBO Audience Favorite Award at the 2005 Provincetown International Film Festival, Massachusetts, USA; and was selected for screening in many more international film festivals.

***Time after Time*** was screened in part at the opening and closing ceremonies for the **UN Conference on Climate Change** in Montreal, Canada, November 2005.  
(see film preview at [lyrebirdmedia.com](http://lyrebirdmedia.com))

**Ben Kettlewell**, of Scottish Cherokee descent, is a recognized composer in the field of electronic music and an accomplished guitarist/synthesist of many years standing.

Ben grew up with his grandparents, Wayland and Novella White, on the family farm in Belvidere, Perquimans County, in Eastern North Carolina, the traditional home of his Cherokee ancestors and home to his relatives today. Ben's Cherokee wakan, 'spiritual name' is "Running Brook". A running brook nourishes and supports life but water is also unstoppable and finds paths through it's journey regardless of what obstacle you put against it.

Ben lived for many years on Cape Cod, until he joined forces with Mairéid in 1997. He began his professional career in his teen years, paying his way through college, as lead guitarist in several well-known folk, rock, blues and jazz ensembles. He went on to compose music for television productions and multimedia projects. He has won awards for his original scores for theatre productions with the legendary Provincetown Theatre Company, founded by Eugene O'Neil and "Jig" Cook in 1916.

His compositions in the electronic and ambient music genre have been recorded and released on British and American labels. As well as being an accomplished acoustic and electronic musician, a celebrated painter and a graphic designer, Ben is also a webmaster, having trained in the early 90s with Emily Johnson, co-developer of html language at MIT.

Ben has been a music journalist for over twenty years and was a radio presenter for ten years. His book, ***Electronic Music Pioneers*** (2002, Pro Music Press / Thompson Publishing, distributed by Hal Leonard Corp.) is based on a radio series for which he was awarded a grant from the Massachusetts Council for the Arts and Humanities. He is editor of the online music magazine, ***Alternate Music Press*** ([www.alternatemusicpress.com](http://www.alternatemusicpress.com)) one of the first eclectic music publications on the Internet.

Ben is currently working on his novel, ***Perquimans - Land of Beautiful Women***, which begins in 1585 when his ancestors first migrated to North America. In 1585, John White, an artist and a cartographer, was commissioned to go with Sir Walter Raleigh's expedition to Roanoke Island to depict life in the New World on a voyage from England to the Outer Banks of North Carolina under Raleigh's plan to settle "Virginia." During this period he made a series of over seventy watercolor drawings of indigenous people, plants, and animals. Despite their extraordinary significance, the watercolors were not published until the twentieth century.

Ben's book traces the history of the first settlements in North America, and gives us a rare glimpse at over 400 years of life through the history of one of America's founding families. Ben's Scottish ancestor, Flora White emigrated from Scotland via England to North

Carolina aboard an English merchant's ship in 1663 one year after the territory was "opened up" for settlement. Flora White was a lawyer and a Quaker, and mother of seven sons, several of whom married Cherokee women. Their descendants were spared from the Trail of Tears evacuation of 1838/39. (Several of Ben's relatives were registered in the Dawes Roll of 1910.)

**E: [info@lyrebirdmedia.com](mailto:info@lyrebirdmedia.com) W: [lyrebirdmedia.com](http://lyrebirdmedia.com)**