

From Donegal to New York City

Angela Diver plays bass and fiddle with a band called the 'Screaming Orphans' which is made up of herself and her 3 sisters. She played classical violin and piano from an early age and was taught traditional Irish music by her uncle Ritchie Fitzgerald who with her mother Kathleen and another brother Barney had a successful Ceili band in Ireland. She now lives in the east village in New York City where the band is based out of.

The Screaming Orphans have carved a considerable reputation as a captivating live band both at home and abroad. Following the lead of their American-born mother the sisters were schooled on the international live circuit, and performed across Europe from an early age.

They fast came to international attention when Sinead O'Connor took them on as her support band and invited them to open for her on the Gospel Oak world tour in 1997.

In addition to these live shows, the four sisters gained invaluable TV experience with Sinead appearing on The David Letterman Show and Top The Pops on British TV.

As a result, the band secured a publishing deal and short-term label deal with WEA (Warner Music UK), and contributed vocals to world music star, Baaba Maal's album "Nomad Soul", Peter Gabriel's track with the Afro Celt Sound System, as well as contributing to the Joni Mitchell track "Magdalene Laundries" for the Chieftains "Tears of Stone" album.



A chance meeting with Mike Hedges (U2, Travis, Manic Street Preachers) blossomed into a close personal and professional relationship that saw the acclaimed producer work first on their early demos, and then reunite with them to record the album for WEA in Normandy, France.

The Orphans draw on a diverse set of influences ranging from Simon & Garfunkel to REM with a strong focus on melody-driven songs with both pop and rock strains.

"We have always admired the diversity of the American music scene, and that was instrumental in our decision to relocate to the States", says Gráinne Diver (vocals/guitars).

"Being here has inspired us to explore new and exciting song writing and performance concepts. It has been a great experience for us."

Over the past 18 months, the band, now based in New York, has been performing up and down the east coast and in some of the bigger Irish festivals in the U.S.

They've built a substantial following, especially in Florida, as well as attracting interest from all areas of the music business.

They recently recorded their second album "Circles" in Nashville, TN, which is on limited release at the moment.

Angela Mary Catherine Diver, where were you born? Born in Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal in the north-west of Ireland and now based in New York City, USA.

County Donegal in Ireland has produced some brilliant musicians and singers. Is there something in the air up there?! As with most rural areas in Ireland there is a great tradition of music to be found in peoples houses especially in the Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking) areas which produced the likes of Clannad, Enya and Mairead, Micheal and Triona Ni Dhomhnaill.

Did you perform onstage as a child? All the time, with my sisters we were our mother's backing band but early on I was a fiddle player before I took up the bass.

At what age did you first take a bass in your hands?

When I was about 14.

What attracted you to playing bass? None of the other sisters wanted to play the bass! Anyway bass players are usually the moody, mysterious, unsociable members which fits my personality perfectly.

You come from a very musical family Angela? Yes, Mam (Kathleen Fitzgerald) and her brothers had a very successful career as a ceili band (Irish dance-music) and they made many albums and toured the USA and England. Mam met and sang with Ella Fitzgerald on one US tour.

Can you remember the first piece you ever learned on bass? Debaser (The Pixies)

Are you self-taught or did you have a tutor/teacher? Bass (self-taught)

Your first band was the family band? Yes, Kathleen Fitzgerald and the Diver Sisters. I'm still in the same band but just lost Mam and changed the name!

Does the band-name have any history or significance? Yes, we went to school in an old Orphanage which was just demolished in August 2006. Also we like to think that because we lost our mother who was our lead singer and our dad who was our manager and sound man we became "orphans" and screaming is what you usually do when you're stuck with family all the time.

Have you been in any other bands not mentioned? Backing singer for Sinéad O Connor and Babba Maal.



What's your main bass? It's a Fender Precision early '70's, made in USA.

Have you a preference for active or passive electronics? Passive, I just prefer them.

Do you have a particular side of the stage that you prefer? Right hand side as you look at the stage.

What is your backline bass amp setup? When at home (Ireland) I use my Ampeg rig or Trace Elliott, small clubs in NYC I use a Roland DB 500 but I've got used to playing with what's available when backline is provided. 'Making do' has made me less hung up on sound.

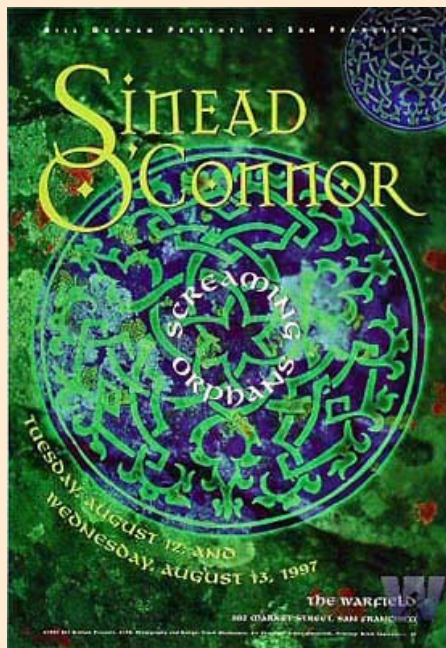
Do you use pedals/effects? No

Do you play with your fingers, plectrum or both? Mainly 98% fingers and if I use a plectrum it's anything rock hard.

What bands do you enjoy listening to? Pixies, Eric Clapton, Fleetwood Mac, REM, Live and Edie Brickell and the New Bohemians.

What's the last CD album that you bought? Cat Stevens

One CD album you can't live without? Fleetwood Mac 'Rumours'



Who did you listen to as a young teenager? My Mam singing, Dad's Hank Snow records, John Mc Cormack, Strauss and Def Leppard (a large moment of weakness).

Anything new on the recording front with your band? We just recorded our last album 'Circles' in Nashville and at the moment we're writing new material but we haven't a time set to record yet.

What was your best gig/venue ever? Dakar National Theatre, Senegal, West Africa. We were invited as guests to perform with Babba Maal.

What was your worst moment onstage? I passed out onstage in Rosstown, Co. Donegal after sitting in the sun for a couple of hours.

Has anything funny happened with a fan or fans? No, I usually have no fans as I have no personality and a deadly stare.

Do you own any other instruments? Yeah, violin (I have 4 of them) and a banjo.

What other instrument would you most like to play? Harmonica

What was the best concert you were ever at? Fleetwood Mac at Madison Square Garden.

Do you find singing while playing bass difficult? Sometimes, depends on the parts.

Do you write/compose? Yes, with my sisters.

If forming your ideal live band, what other instruments would you have with you onstage? Grand piano, guitars (electric and acoustic) I love guitars! Harmonica and Drums.

Do you see the bass as a lead instrument? No.

If you could be taken to a concert anywhere on earth tonight, who would you want to see live? Simon and Garfunkel (although there's no chance of that).



Kathleen Fitzgerald with her brother's Ceili Band



Do you have a day-job or do you play professionally? I just play music for a living.

What are your hobbies/interests outside of music? Reading, crosswords, walking and studying French and Hoovering. I love to Hoover, if there's a dirty carpet I'm so on to it. I won't let anyone touch my Hoover!

Give one piece of worthwhile advice to someone who has just bought their first bass? Buy a Pixies album.

Where would you most like your band to play? Madison Square Garden.

Is there a bassist whose sound/technique you really like? Joe Phair from a band called Celtic Stew.

What's your opinion on basses with more than 4 strings? Not very rock and roll.

If you had to part with all your possessions, except three, what would they be? My Humpty Dumpty (I've had him since I was a kid), my bass and I suppose one of my fiddles, that would be hard as I love them all.

What are your ambitions, musically and personally? To be able to make a living playing music for the rest of my life and to have as little contact with people as possible.



The Screaming Orphans website can be accessed through our Links page - Ed.