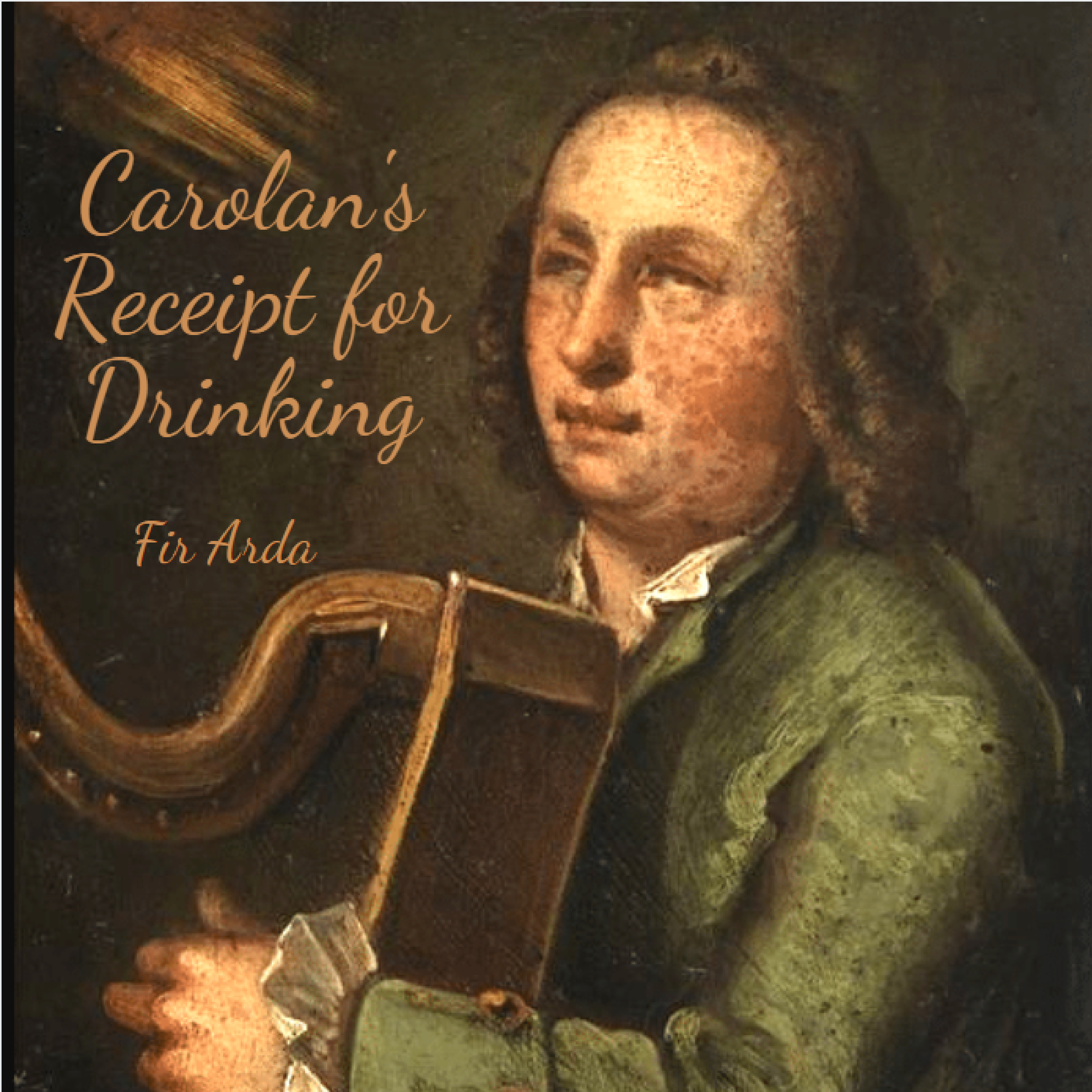
Carolan's Receipt for Drinking

Fir Arda



Carolan’s Receipt for Drinking
Music associated with Turlough O’Carolan played by Fir Arda

Turlough O’Carolan (1670 – 1738) was a blind Celtic harper, composer and singer in Ireland. He was an itinerant musician and wrote more than 200 pieces of music that are popular today in Ireland and abroad.

Most of Carolan's compositions were not published or even written down in his lifetime. They survived in the repertoires of fiddlers, pipers, and the last of the old Irish harper/singers. They were collected and published during the late 18th century and beyond,
The exact number of tunes and which titles are his is still debated.

Many of his songs are designated as "planxties", a word that Carolan apparently invented or popularized to signify a tribute to a host. In return for writing songs in honour of wealthy patrons, Carolan was often welcomed as an honoured guest to stay on their estates. It is said that weddings and funerals were sometimes delayed until he could arrive to perform. (from Wikipedia.Org)

Fir Arda is a group of musicians stationed in Halden, Norway.
We mainly play traditional folk music from Ireland and Scotland.
The players are:

Ketil Simonsen-Liland - Tinwhistle, Low Whistle, Lapsteel and Uilleann Pipes

Espen Olsen - Fiddle

Juha Rossi - Irish Bouzouki, Mandolin, Tenor Banjo, Guitar and Bodhran

The Tunes:

1 Young Catherine
Some people say this tune is composed by Turlough O'Carolan and some say it is not. It is definitely old and very beautiful. The instruments we play here are fiddle, low whistle, tinwhistle, Irish bouzouki and guitar.

2 Lord Inchiquin
Carolan wrote this tune to the 4th Earl of Inchiquin at Dromoland Castle. The tune starts with tinwhistle and drum, joined by fiddle, mandolin, and guitar.

3 Carolan's Receipt for Drinking
Also known as 'Dr. John Stafford' and 'Stafford's Receipt for Whisky'.
Receipt is an old word supposedly meaning prescription.
Juha plays this tune with bouzouki and guitar.

4 Eleanor Plunkett
Written to Eleanor Plunkett, of Robertstown, Co Meath.
In addition to the fiddle/whistles/bouzouki combination we play Weissenborn acoustic lapsteel guitar and mandolin.

5 Carolan's Welcome

This tune was originally referred to by the number 171. When the Chieftains played the tune in honor of Pope John Paul II's visit to Dublin in 1979 it became known by the name Welcome.
Ketil introduces the Uilleann pipes in the tune.

6 Carolan's Concerto

The composition shows Turlough's contemporary influences, in places it sounds a bit like an Italian baroque concerto by Vivaldi.
Espen plays this as a solo on violin.

7 Lady St John

We know very little about this nice little melody, exept that it is associated with Carolan.
Ketil plays low whistle accompanied by Juha on guitars and bouzoukies.

8 Kean O'Hara

3rd of the three Kean O'Hara airs. It starts with a solo fiddle which is joined by the rest of the band later.

9 Eleanor Plunket revisited

Ketil plays this tune as a slow air on low whistle while Juha tries to emulate the sound of Irish harp on guitar.

10 Captain O'Kane

The tune is about a lonely soldier wandering home after another meaningless war. Ketil starts with lapsteel guitar and Juha with a large drum. Espen joins afterwards with fiddle.

11 Sheebeg and Sheemore

(Sí Beag, Sí Mór - Small Fairy Mound, Big Fairy Mound)
Traditionally assigned to Turlough O'Carolan as the first tune he composed. It is based on an earlier children's song, 'The Cuckoo'. Here we play the standard Fir Arda set-up of whistles, fiddle and bouzoukies.

12 Young Catherine revisited

We close the album with a solo version of Young Catherine, played by Juha on guitar. This reflects the popular trend of playing the Carolan tunes on acoustic guitar.

Full moon over the Fredriksten fortress in Halden, Norway.

The fortress was built during the 17th century as a fortification of the border between Norway under Danish rule and Sweden.
The Swedish king Carl XII attacked Halden in 1718 and was killed at the fortress ending the hostilities for a while.

The fortress, lies beautifully near to the Halden town center and gives a broad view of the surroundings and the nearby hills of Sweden.

For us in Fir Arda the fortress has a special meaning as it was constructed before and during Carolan's lifetime. The site gives us inspiration to play our music in the correct atmosphere.

Fir Arda contact info:

Website:	www.firarda.no
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