

Anú Pictures  
Presents

# Ó CHÚIL AODHA GO hOILEÁN Í

*(FROM COOLEA TO IONA)*



Made for



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Údarás Craolacháin na hÉireann  
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## DOCUMENTARY PRESS PACKAGE

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**Ó CHÚIL AODHA GO HOILEÁN Í**  
**(FROM COOLEA TO IONA)**

**Table of Contents:**

|    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | Synopsis   | 2 |
| 2. | Summary  | 2 |
| 3. | About The Choir  | 3 |
| 4. | Music & The Songs of the Choir                           | 4 |
| 5. | The Significance of Iona                                 | 5 |
| 6. | An Ath-ghlaoch / The Recall<br>The Commemoration on Iona | 6 |
| 7. | Director's Statement                                     | 7 |
| 8. | Director's Bio & Filmography                             | 8 |
| 9. | Credits  | 9 |

***Ó Chúil Aodha go hOileán Í***  
***(From Coolea to Iona)***

**52 mins | Ireland | 2014 | 16:9**

**Executive Producer RTÉ: Kevin Cummins**  
**Director & Producer: Dónal Ó Céilleachair**

## Ó CHÚIL AODHA GO HOILEÁN Í (FROM COOLEA TO IONA)

### 1. Synopsis

This intimate film follows the legendary Cork-based Coolea Men's choir; charting its weekly trials & culminating in a historical celebration on the renowned island of Iona with President Michael D. Higgins in the year of the choir's 50th anniversary.



### 2. Summary

A local farmer and his 3-year old son walk the well-worn hills overlooking the legendary village of Cúil Aodha in the West Cork Gaeltacht. We follow them as they descend into the village and head to Sunday morning mass. There they join other local farmers, carpenters, teachers, civil servants and business men – as they do every single Sunday throughout the year - to sing the liturgical and sacred hymns of Cór Chúil Aodha (The Coolea Men's Choir).

Founded by legendary Irish composer Seán Ó Riada in 1963 - and continued after his death in 1971 to this day by his son Peadar - Cór Chúil Aodha occupies a legendary place in Irish music and embodies the spirit of an area that is historically rich in both poetry and music.

With current members that include fathers, sons and grandchildren now scattered across the globe, the choir represents a vibrant cross-section of the community and a diversity of authentic contemporary voices.

This intimate film follows the life of the choir over an 8-week period; charting its weekly trials and tribulations - under Peadar's watchful direction - culminating in a historical visit to the renowned island of Iona with President Michael D. Higgins in the year of the choir's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

'From Coolea to Iona' represents the third film in Dónal Ó Céilleachair's 'Irish Music Trilogy' that includes:

- 3-TRIÚR Ag Cuardach Crot Ceoil (*In Search of Musical Form*) 2012 and
- Aisling Gheal (*Bright Vision*), 2013.

## Ó CHÚIL AODHA GO HOILEÁN Í (FROM COOLEA TO IONA)



### 3. *About the Choir*

Founded by legendary Irish composer Seán Ó Riada in 1964, and continued after his death in 1971 to this day by his son Peadar, Cór Chúil Aodha achieved cult status in traditional circles and embodies the spirit of an area that is historically rich in both poetry and music.

The Choir sing every Sunday of the year at 10 O'clock Sunday mass in Cúil Aodha and practice every Monday at 8pm, generally at the Ó Riada home and will travel around the country singing at festivals, commemorations and funerals. There are over 50 living members of the choir. Many are currently scattered across the globe and will join in with the choir whenever they find themselves home in Cúil Aodha for festivals, holidays or funerals. Among its members the choir has included farmers, teachers, business men, engineers, poets and writers, soldiers, sailors, journalists, composers, musicians, drivers, cameramen, school inspectors and priests.

As Peadar writes in the introduction to their latest album 'Naomh Gobnait':  
'The lads arrive young as babies in their fathers arms, they grow up and leave for the life and the world in their late teens, and often return and settle down and start their own families, when in turn, hopefully one day they arrive into Sunday Mass with their own son, and the wheel of life gives another turn.'

With over 50 living members that include many fathers and sons, the choir represents a vibrant cross-section of the community and a diversity of authentic contemporary voices. What the regular members of Cór Cúil Aodha manage to achieve in their weekly dedication to the choir is to maintain a living connection with a longstanding cultural tradition and to assimilate that experience with the realities of contemporary life.

## Ó CHÚIL AODHA GO HOILEÁN Í (FROM COOLEA TO IONA)

### 4. *Music & The Songs of the Choir*

Cór Chúil Aodha was founded around a time when there was much discussion and consideration of the Second Vatican Council's decision that Catholic Mass need no longer be said in Latin, but in the vernacular language. Seán Ó Riada's original decision to move to the Gaeltacht and immerse himself in the language and culture was strongly linked to his enduring friendship with an t-Athair Donnachadha Ó Concubhair and their friendship naturally enough lead to discussions of the traditional prayers of the area, local spirituality and the liturgical music of the time and blossomed into the idea of composing for the newly restored mass in the Irish language.

Around this time the members of the choir would meet weekly in An Draighean (The Ó Riada family home) and started out with traditional hymns for use at communion time. These included such songs as “Mo Ghrádhasa mo Dhia” and “Gile mo Chroí”.

Since then the Choir's repertoire has expanded under Peadar Ó Riada's direction to include over 100 songs in a process that sees one or two new pieces added to the repertoire every year and in addition to the hymns, lay songs from the surrounding area are now also included.

The choir have performed in their own distinct style to audiences both nationally and internationally over the past five decades. Their enduring appeal is rooted in their unique style, so closely linked with the towering legacy of Seán Ó Riada and deeply connected to the landscape, the dialect and the customs of the Muskerry Gaeltacht.



## Ó CHÚIL AODHA GO HOILEÁN Í (FROM COOLEA TO IONA)



### 5. *The Significance of Iona*

In 563, St. Colm Cille (also known as Columba) sailed to Iona from Ireland with twelve companions, and founded a monastery that was to become one of the oldest and most important Christian religious centres in Western Europe. Kings were crowned, and also buried, on Iona. The Book of Kells is believed to have been produced by the monks of Iona and The Chronicle of Ireland was also produced there.

Of special significance to our documentary is the fact that Iona Abbey was established when Iona was part of a Gaelic Kingdom that joined Ireland and Scotland and was named: Dál Riata. Coincidentally Dál Riata is derived from Old Irish. Dál means "portion" or "share" (as in "a portion of land") and Riata or Riada is believed to be a personal name. Thus, Riada's portion.

Described by Peadar as ‘An Droichead don Náisiún Gaelach’ (The Bridge of the Gaelic Nations of Ireland and Scotland) Iona has always had a deep spiritual and cultural significance for Gaels from both Ireland and Scotland and occupies a legendary, almost mystical position in the Gaelic psyche.



## Ó CHÚIL AODHA GO HOILEÁN Í (FROM COOLEA TO IONA)



### 6. *An Ath-ghlaoch (The Recall) - The Commemoration on Iona*

2013 marked the 1,450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Iona Abbey as well as the (young in comparison) 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Cór Cúil Aodha and this synchronicity was commemorated during a day-long celebration called 'An Ath-ghlaoch/The Recall' featuring Cór Cúil Aodha and host of Gaels from Ireland and Scotland

The event includes presentations, performances and spiritual talks in Irish (Gaeilge), Scottish Gaelic (Gaidhlig) and English commemorating and exploring the rich cultural, historical, spiritual and creative connections between Ireland and Scotland, with special emphasis on the role of Colmcille with contributions from:

President Michael D. Higgins,  
Robert McDonagh, Irish Ambassador to the U.K.  
Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop  
Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning; Mike Russell MSP  
Singers; Flora Mac Néil, & Josie Sheáin Jack Mac Donnchadha  
Coolea Historian: Dónal Ó hÉalaithe  
Poets: Aonghuis Phádrag Caimbeul, Aonghus Mac Niocail & Ciaran Carson  
& Na Críonnaigh Chúil Aodha (The Coolea Elders)

And an Ecumenical service featuring:  
Rev. Peter McDonald (Iona Community Spiritual Director)  
Bishop of Limerick; Brendan Leahy,  
Archdeacon; Gary Hastings (Church of Ireland),  
Canon James McNeil (Oban)  
Rev. Dr Gilleasbuig Macmillan (Scottish Chaplain to the Queen of UK)  
Prior Christopher Clarke (Carmelite Order, Clarendon Street Dublin)  
Rev. Joanna Anderson  
The Gaelic Long Psalm Singers from the Island of Lewis  
& Cór Cúil Aodha

The event is well documented on the website: <http://droicheadnangael.ie>

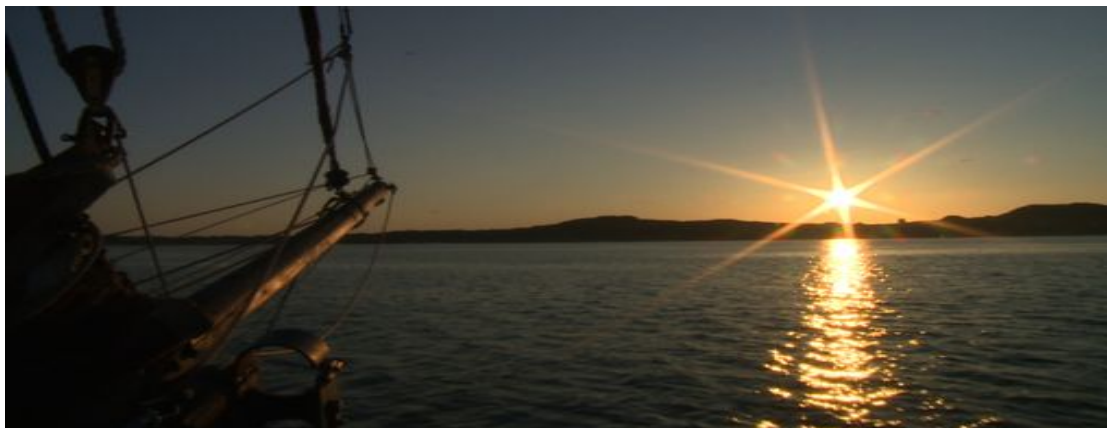
## Ó CHÚIL AODHA GO HOILEÁN Í (FROM COOLEA TO IONA)

### 7. *Director's Statement*

This observational documentary was shot mostly in a hand-held style to allow articulation of the stories of the men in their own voices; through singing and conversation.

The documentary follows a number of members of the choir as they go about their weekly choir duties; navigating the paths between their regular lives and the creative and often sacred space that they inhabit while fulfilling their roles with the choir; be it through practice or performance.

In my time in Cúil Aodha, no matter which of the international visitors I would bring to hear the choir - regardless of their cultural or spiritual background - they would all remark on the powerful experience of hearing the singing live and how they felt transported to 'another time, another place'. Capturing and conveying some of the magic and power of this experience was central to my aim in this documentary.





## Ó CHÚIL AODHA GO HOILEÁN Í (FROM COOLEA TO IONA)

### 8. Director's Bio

#### Dónal Ó Céilleachair - Producer & Director

Dónal is an Irish Filmmaker who lives between New York & Ireland. He is a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin [B.Sc. (1990), MA (1994)] and has studied film at NYU, School of Visual Arts and Film/Video Arts in NY. Dónal's experience spans across the independent film landscape having worked on over 50 film projects over the past 20 years. Dónal's films have shown at festivals and in museums across the world.

In 2008, Dónal was invited home from New York to be Filmmaker-in-Residence at Ionad Cultúrtha in the Muskerry Gaeltacht, Co. Cork. An exhibition of the work created as part of this residency took place in September, 2008 and the 35mm print of *Peidhleacán Solais* (Butterfly Light) had its world premiere at the renowned Rotterdam International Film Festival. Since returning to be based mainly in Ireland in 2008 Dónal continues to work as on independent productions while pursuing his own work.

In 2011 Dónal collaborated with Lithuanian/NY filmmaker Julius Ziz to make a film inspired by the work of Irish writer John Moriarity entitled *Dreamtime, Revisited* which premiered at the Jameson Dublin International Film Festival in February, 2012 and was released to great acclaim at the IFI in Dublin in October, 2012

'*From Coolea to Iona*' represents the third film in Dónal's 'Irish Music Trilogy' which includes *Aisling Gheal* (*Bright Vision*), 2013 & *3-TRIÚR Ag Cuardach Crot Ceoil* (*In Search of Musical Form*) 2012.

#### Filmography:

Ealaíontóirí Mhuscraí / Muskerry Artists (Currently in Production)  
Camino na Sáile/Camino by sea (Currently in Production)  
Tadhg McSweeney Painter, A Portrait (2014)  
Ó Chúil Aodha go hOileán Í / From Coolea to Iona (2014)  
Aisling Gheal (Bright Vision), 2013  
Dreamtime Revisited (with Julius Ziz) 2012  
3-TRIÚR Ag Cuardach Crot Ceoil (In Search of Musical Form) 2012  
Scéalta Mhúscaí (Muskerry Stories) 2011  
i, of k (Imitation of Kiss) 2009  
Peidhleacán Solais (Butterfly Light), 2009  
Prelude, 2008  
WITH YOU, 2008  
With Wind & White Clouds, 2007  
Un Peu Moins (A Little Less) with Konstantin Bojanov, 2006  
Vernissage, 2005  
Empire 2, 2004  
CUZCO 1999 – Chronicle of a City at the End of the Century, 2003  
War of the Worlds (Co-Director), 2001  
Remnants of Forgotten Memories, 1995  
The Empty Space, 1993

## Ó CHÚIL AODHA GO HOILEÁN Í (FROM COOLEA TO IONA)

### 9. Credits

Le (in ord reatha)

Featuring (in order of appearance)

CÓR CHÚIL AODHA (The Coolea Men's Choir)

SÉAMAS, SIOBHÁN & BERTÍ DE RÓISTE  
AN tATHAIR DÓMHNALL Ó BRIAIN  
PEADAR Ó RIADA, SÉAMUS Ó RIADA, CATHAL Ó RIADA  
DYLAN DE FAOITE, MAIRÍN MAC an tSAOÍ  
DÓMHNALÍN JOHN Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN  
DANNY MAIDHCÍ Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN  
RIELEN, SEÁN ÓG Ó DUINNÍN AGUS CLANN  
AN tATHAIR DAMIAN Ó LOINSIGH  
SEOSAMH Ó CRÍODÁIN, SEÁN Ó LUASA  
BILLY Ó hÉALAITHE, MARTÍN MAC CARTHAIGH  
SÍLE UÍ CHRÓINÍN, GOBNAIT NÍ CHRUALAOÍ  
EOINÍ MAIDHCÍ Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN  
MAIDHCÍ Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN  
SÉAMUS Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN

Agus ag Scoil Samraidh Willie Clancy

SÉAMUS Ó RÓCHÁIN, MARTIN HAYES,

PAT Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN, ALLAN MC DONALD

Agus ar Oileán Í (And on Iona)

FIONA HYSLOP, Scottish Cabinet for Culture & External Affairs,

MIKE RUSSELL. MSP

ROBERT McDONAGH, Irish Ambassador to the U.K.

DÓMHNALL Ó hÉALAITHE, AONGHAS PHÁDRAIG CAIMBEUL,

FLORA MacNEIL, CIARAN CARSON

JOSIE SHEÁIN JEAIC MAC DONNCHA

AONGHAS MacNEACAIL, REV. PETER MC DONALD

BISHOP BRENDAN LEAHY

REV. DR. GILLEASBUIG MACMILLAN

REV. GARY HASTINGS, CANON JAMES MC NEIL

PRIOR CHRISTOPHER CLARKE, , REV. JOANNA ANDERSON

THE GAELIC LONG PSALM SINGERS

Agus Uachtarán na hÉireann

MICHAEL D. HIGGINS

**Ó CHÚIL AODHA GO HOILEÁN Í**  
**(FROM COOLEA TO IONA)**

**AN CRIÚ / THE CREW**

Léiritheoir Comhlach/ Associate Producer  
LAURA NÍ CHEALLAIGH

Ceamara / Camera  
SÉAMUS Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN, DÓNAL Ó CÉILLEACHAIR

Ceamara Breise / Additional Camera  
BOB KELLY, ROBB BRADSTOCK, PIARIS MAC CIONNAITH

Fuaim / Sound  
NEIL HURLEY

Cúntóir Léiriúcháin / Production Assistant  
CAOIMHÍN Ó LAOGHAIRE

Eagarthóirí / Editors  
DÓNAL Ó CÉILLEACHAIR, SEÁN KEELEY

Dathadóir / Colourist  
MARC Ó GLEASÁIN

Meascadh Fuaime / Sound Mix  
DECLAN LONERGAN, BLUEBIRD STUDIOS

Dearadh Fuaime / Sound Design  
Ó CÉILLEACHAIR

Áis Críoch-Léiriúcháin / Final Post Production Facility  
EARTH HORIZON PRODUCTIONS

Máistirchoipeáil Dhigiteach/ Digital Mastering  
SPECIALIST AV, DUBLIN

Inteirn Críoch-Léiriúcháin / Post Production Intern  
ARRAN BRADSTOCK

Aistriúcháin / Translations  
MÁIRE Ó GRUAGÁIN, ENDA Ó CATHÁIN  
PEADAR Ó RIADA, AONGHAS MacNEACAIL,  
ALLAN MacDONALD

Grianghraif le Caoineadh ó / Photos Courtesy of  
PEADAR Ó RIADA, SEÁN MAC SUIBHNE,  
DÓMNHALÍN JOHN Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN

Ceamara Breise Ceolchoirm Seoladh Dlíúdhiosca  
'Naomh Gobnait' Caoineadh ó / Courtesy of  
NEMETON TV

Árachas / Insurance  
AON AFFINITY

## Ó CHÚIL AODHA GO HOILEÁN Í (FROM COOLEA TO IONA)

AN CEOL / THE MUSIC

Cór Chúil Aodha:

AG CRÍOST AN SÍOL Cumtha agus cóirithe ag Seán Ó Riada

AG AN bPÓSADH 'BHÍ I gCÁNA, CÉAD GLÓIRE LEIS AN ATHAIR  
Tradisiúnta cóirithe ag Seán Ó Riada

TIOMNA CHOLM CILLE, GO mBEANNAÍTEAR DUIT  
SALM 139, NAOMH GOBNAIT, MO GHILE MEAR  
IS É AN TIARNA M'AOIRE  
THUG AN TIARNA DÓIBH ARÁN Ó NEAMH (Le Iarla Ó Lionáird)  
Ceol cumtha agus cóirithe ag Peadar Ó Riada ó na Dhlúthdhioscaí:  
'NAOMH GOBNAIT' (2012) agus 'GO mBEANNAÍTEAR DUIT' (2008)  
© Peadar Ó Riada

SAMHRADH, SAMHRADH Cóirithe ag Peadar Ó Riada  
Cór Chúil Aodha leis Ceolfhoireann RTÉ (1987), © Peadar Ó Riada

HUMOURS OF TULLYCRINE, SEÁN Ó RIADA'S WALTZ  
THE CLIFFS OF MOHER, TOSS THE FEATHERS, BROADWAY  
Ón Dhlúthdhiosca 'The Drole' (2013)  
Éamon McGivney, John Kelly, Peadar Ó Riada, © Peadar Ó Riada

MAITH THÚ, A MHUIRIS Ón Dhlúthdhiosca 'Triúr Arís' (2012)  
Peadar Ó Riada, Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh, Martin Hayes,  
© Peadar Ó Riada  
Published by Real World Music

TÁIM INA CHODLADH le/by Cór Chúil Aodha & Ciaran Carson  
ABHA AN tSULÁIN le/by Seán Ó Luasa  
MURT NA CEAPACH le/by Allan MacDonald  
SCOTTISH BAGPIPE TRADITIONAL PIECE le/by Allan MacDonald  
A BHEAN IADACH le/by Flora MacNeil  
SAIL ÓG RUA le/by Joise Sheáin Jeaic Mac Donnachadha  
Tradisiúnta cóirithe / Traditional Arrangements

## **Ó CHÚIL AODHA GO HOILEÁN Í (FROM COOLEA TO IONA)**

Míle Buíochas le / Very Special Thanks to

Oifig Uachtarán na hÉireann Agus Áras an Uachtaráin  
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Riaghaltas na h-Alba/The Scottish Government  
FIONA HYSLOP, MSP, MICHAEL RUSSELL, MSP

The Iona Community, REV. PETER MAC DONALD, MARGARET CAMPBELL  
REV. JOANNA ANDERSON & All the staff of Iona Abbey

National Trust for Scotland, Historic Scotland  
ANNA PREUSS, JANE MARTIN

ÚDARÁS CRAOLACHÁIN NA hÉIREANN  
BAI (Broadcasting Authority of Ireland)  
PHILIP COOPER, DIARMAID BREATHNACH, BRIAN FUREY

COLMCILLE – ÉIRINN IS ALBA/FORAS NA GAEILGE  
Noeleen Ní Cholla

IONTAOIBHEAS FÓDHLA

Foireann Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy  
ÉAMON MC GIVNEY, SÉAMAS Ó RÓCHÁIN,  
HARRY HUGHES, NIAMH MC GIVNEY

ÚNA Ó RÓCHÁIN  
Milltown Mallbay Church,  
CANON SÉAMUS MULLIN, ANNE COMERFORD  
Earth Horizon Productions, MARCUS STEWART, DUNCAN STEWART  
Cork Film Centre, CHRIS HURLEY, MAX LE CAIN  
Cork County Council Arts Office, IAN MC DONAGH  
EILEEN & JERRY KEOHANE, KATHY O'LEARY, BILLY Ó hÉALAITHE  
MUINTIR Ó RÍORDÁIN, CÚIL AODHA  
(MAIRTÍN, MAIRÍN, TADHG, AILBHE, SEÁN AGUS ROISÍN)  
RIELEN & SEÁN ÓG DINEEN AND FAMILY  
ISLA, MAIRÉAD AGUS MAIRÍN DE FAOITE  
JOHN LUCEY, HANNIE CORKERY,  
FRANKIE UÍ CHEALLAIGH, JOAN MC CARTHY  
Nemeton TV, IRIAL MAC MURCHÚ  
O'Driscoll Travel, Macroom, PÁDRAIG O'DRISCOLL, KAREN O'LEARY  
Linn Snámha Chúil Aodha, GER Ó hÉALAITHE agus foireann  
Iona Hostel, JOHN MACLEAN

Ionad Cultúrtha, Baile Mhúirne, Co. Chorcaí,  
BRÍD CRANITCH, SÍLE UÍ CHRÓINÍN

An fhoireann múinteoirí agus daltaí  
(The teachers, staff and students of):  
SCOIL CHÚIL AODHA - CATHAL Ó RIADA, Príomhoide

Séipéal Chúil Aodha,  
AN tATHAIR DÓMHNAL Ó BRIAIN,  
SIOBHÁN UÍ DUINNÍN

GERALDINE UÍ RIADA & THE Ó RIADA FAMILY

**Ó CHÚIL AODHA GO HOILEÁN Í**  
**(FROM COOLEA TO IONA)**

PEADAR Ó RIADA Agus CÓR CHÚIL AODHA

Uachtarán na hÉireann MICHAEL D. HIGGINS  
& SABINA HIGGINS

Agus Muintir DANNY Ó RÍORDÁIN  
(Beannacht Dé Leis)

\*\*\*\*\*

Léiritheoir Feidhmiúcháin / Executive Producer RTÉ  
KEVIN CUMMINS

Léiritheoir agus Stiúrthóir / Producer & Director  
DÓNAL Ó CÉILLEACHAIR

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