

# GOITSE—A YEAR IN THE LIFE

John O'Regan files an end of year report on one of the busiest young bands around.



Goitse has been busy traversing far and wide since the release of their second album *Transformed* in May 2012. Since then the five—some of Conal O’Kane, James Harvey, Colm Phelan, Aine McGeeney and Tadhg O’Meachair have had few weekends to themselves.

“We have performed at Celtic Connections in Glasgow, a couple of different festivals in Germany, and have also performed at festivals in France and Italy. We really enjoy the experience of performing in Europe and are definitely looking forward to some more extensive tours there in 2014—bodhrán player Colm Phelan explained.”

“The reaction to our US shows has been amazing. We covered a lot of ground during both our spring and summer tours, and we are now preparing for a 3rd visit Stateside this November. This trip is going to be tied in with a Caribbean Cruise with Celtic Thunder where we will be taking in the Bahamas and Jamaica, but we will also spend a week touring in Florida. We love making the trip over and every visit is special for us”.

Tadhg O’Meachair elaborated on their 2013 summer tour, “we took in venues ranging from some nice theatre gigs to outdoor

the album start to take shape” says Colm. This new album promises to be a more collaborative effort on songs as well as tunes. “Áine sometimes gets a bit of a raw deal as the singer in the group because we almost expect her to have the songs chosen and arranged for us all! But I think we are all making a conscious effort to be as proactive as possible in sourcing some songs that we can see have potential for the group as a whole. I guess the tunes to songs ratio isn't really something that we worry too much about, it just seems to find a natural point”.

The group is full of praise for producer Dónal Lunny and sound engineer Sean Horseman. According to Colm “Dónal has been a great inspiration for us all. We learned so much from him”. “Seán Horsman, our sound engineer, has been amazing with ideas also and he really understands what we want from our music. He is someone who we work with regularly.”

Goitse has also toyed with the idea of expanding the line-up for an occasional big band, specifically for festivals. “As a band, we have always been open to experimenting when it comes to arrangements and sounds and so forth. One such experiment we

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venues, and from house concerts to the big Irish festivals. The two festivals were the La Crosse Irish Festival and Milwaukee Irish Fest. At Milwaukee we were honoured when the organisers, Barry Stapleton, Ed Ward and Patrick Boyle, asked us to lead the festival's finale, known as *The Scattering*. Taking the lead in lashing out some tunes with such a variety of amazing performers on this unique occasion was definitely among the most thrilling experiences we've had as a band. Add to all that our very own Colm Phelan rocking the crowd as MC, and you can see how special a night it was to us.”

Album number three is in the works and is almost ready for a 2014 release. “We have been spending some time now preparing material. It has definitely been fun getting back to the creative process. Sourcing tunes and then sitting down to arrange them is definitely a very satisfying part of our work, and it's great to see

have recently pursued involves collaboration with two great friends of ours Kieran Leonard and Kevin Jones who play drums and bass, both have traditional music backgrounds. The seven-piece is an idea that we are exploring and having fun with but it won't be a permanent part of Goitse. We are a five-piece band and have tours planned as a five-piece”.

“Our aim is to challenge ourselves musically with this idea and hopefully get to perform at some festivals in the States and abroad in 2014 and 2015. Even the practise we have had as a seven-piece has us buzzing and head banging. If that's the extra energy that Kevin and Kieran give us behind closed doors we can only dream of the excitement and adrenaline kick that we would get from performing to a crowd”.

2013 was exciting for Goitse and 2014 with more tours and a new album promises even greater success.