

Joanna Clare, who hails from Central New York, is a well-respected Irish fiddler and violinist and is set to release her debut album, *To Keep the Candle Burning* on February 25th. The album features NEA National Heritage Fellow Billy McComiskey, and All-Ireland champions Brian Conway and Josh Dukes, along with Myron Bretholz, Sean McComiskey, Matt Mulqueen, Catherine O’Kelly, and Liam Presser. *To Keep the Candle Burning* is dedicated to the many traditional Irish musicians who inspired her throughout her childhood. While the album includes some original tunes, it is primarily comprised of tunes she learned either directly from these musicians or from their recordings.

At the age of three, Joanna began learning classical violin through the Suzuki method at The Hochstein School in Rochester, New York, and she later studied with Maggie Mercer, Harumi Rhodes, and Peter Rovit. When she was eleven, she began studying with Sligo fiddle master Brian Conway who was highly instrumental in her musical development. Joanna has won many awards in the annual Mid-Atlantic Fleadh Ceoil (Irish music competitions) which are run by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (the Irish Traditional Musicians’ Association). In August 2021, she was awarded runner-up for the senior fiddle slow airs competition at the FleadhFest in Sligo, Ireland. She has performed at numerous festivals, including the Syracuse Irish Festival, the Rochester Irish Festival, the Maryland Irish Festival, the New York Trad Fest, and the Philadelphia Folk Festival.

Joanna is certified to teach violin with the Suzuki Association of the Americas and teaches Suzuki violin and Irish fiddle lessons. She also assists in teaching The Great Groove Band, a children’s pick-up band, at the Philadelphia Folk Festival. Joanna currently attends Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, where she is pursuing a degree in materials science and engineering with a minor in music.