

Samara O’Gorman

Actress, writer, singer, best-selling poet, and proud Irish Canadian Samara O’Gorman is passionate about her family’s roots.

“My father’s family came from County Clare before the Famine years,” shares the 25-year-old from her home in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, a quaint and quiet community on the western edge of Montreal, Canada.

“My mother’s side hails from County Monaghan. They came to Canada and were farmers near Mirabel Airport (north of Montreal). That said, I identify with my Canadian roots just as much as my Irish heritage - my roots are who I am.”

O’Gorman’s connection with Irish culture is something she sensed immediately upon her first visit to the Emerald Isle - a pilgrimage to Galway where “the wind whispered welcome home to me...”

It was a sense of belonging that had first come alive in her own home as a youngster, with her mother’s Irish melodies hovering around the house. Admittedly, her passion for all things Eire waned in the years immediately following high school when she “lost touch with my identity” and often got caught up “in modern trends and aesthetics.” However, she soon rekindled her childhood love of Irish lore, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Irish Studies from Montreal’s Concordia University, where she took classes in Irish literature, history, music, and the native language.

“I developed a much better understanding of the stories and their lessons. Language is the foundation of storytelling, and by getting in touch with my ancestral language - and thus my ancestors - I was able to find myself again.”

Some of those studies took place during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Adapting to online learning, O’Gorman undertook a year-long Irish language course and was rewarded for her efforts when the Government of Ireland gave her an Irish Language Scholarship, inviting her to study in Eire. She was the first of her family line since the 1800s to pilgrimage back to Irish soil while speaking the Irish language.

Inspired by the old language - “the

elaborate words that carry so much imagery and metaphor” - she has since made several trips back ‘home,’ studying the master poets, including Seamus Heaney, Oscar Wilde, and WB Yeats - voices that were vital in better understanding the island’s issues of identity, especially as they pertained to forced immigration caused by the Great Famine (1845-1852) and the Troubles (Northern Ireland, 1968-1998).

Today, as an active member of Montreal’s Irish community, she continues to carry that torch of identity to others in the region. Recently, she became the city’s first-ever ‘Trinity Queen’ - so named for her roles in all three of the area’s Irish parades; Hudson (2019), Chateauguay (2024), and North America’s largest St. Patrick’s Day festivities (Montreal, 2023).

As with so many within the Irish diaspora, she carved a new home and niche for herself over time through her music, literature, art, and more - all with the aim of preserving and promoting Irish culture.

“All our Irish communities have warm hearts, and I want to play my part in passing along those traditions and customs...”

Her first poetry collection - “What If the Sun Died” - focused on femininity, grief and healing. It served “as a coping mechanism during a turbulent time in my life,” she notes, adding that “the poems were stream of consciousness.”

That cultural reach now extends to music as well; she is starting a band in which she will sing and play the bodhrán, perhaps inspired after appearing at an event honouring Sinead O’Connor - another voice that was passionate about preserving and promoting the language.

O’Gorman has also been a featured speaker at schools in-and-around the Montreal area, covering topics such as compassionate leadership and self-love with elementary school children. She often shares her poetry with the pupils.

“Children absorb kindness like sponges, and there is no judgement at that age. I ad-



vocate that children pursue what they love, don’t lose that magic. Also, they need to know that they can always go back to their passions later in life, as it is a part of who they are.”

She believes that young people today are still quite interested in their Irish roots.

“One hundred percent,” she says. “The element of social interaction is essential, whether in-person or online through social media.”

Currently, she is working on a book of folk stories about her hometown of Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue. And, in a similar literary vein, she underscores that if people have an interest in reconnecting with their Irish roots, the old poets are a wide-open window into times gone by.

“They were inspired by the landscapes around them and conveyed Ireland through her many stages of history.”

And while she now takes a more spiritual approach to studies in Irish folklore and mythology, O’Gorman describes walking Irish soil as ‘magical’ and says that there is simply no substitute for experiencing the rich tapestry of the island’s culture than being there.

“The Irish have such a way and a curiosity about the world beyond the Veil - like the lore of fairies - something that we can easily lose touch with. Each time I am there, I return to a childlike sense of wonder, of no longer seeing the world in black and white, but with a newfound curiosity. I am happier, and life is far more fun this way.”

@samaraitan