CRAN are a unique group in the Irish folk-music world with their highly-individualistic approach and a bewildering array of styles and repertoire. Each member of the trio already had international reputations in their own fields before the band was formed. Desi Wilkinson had become a major force in the field of Irish flute-playing, both at home and abroad; Sean Corcoran was known internationally as one of the leading singers in the Hiberno-English and Gaelic traditions and also as a researcher and teacher; Ronan Browne had not only carved out a name for himself as one of the leading lights among the younger generation of uilleann pipers but he was already giving master-classes in Europe and the U.S.A.

CRAN's concert performances are a dazzling display of technical virtuosity combined with fun and humour, banter and stories. The core of their repertoire is their native Irish material - bubbling dance music or haunting slow airs on flute and pipes, and vocals ranging from the highly-ornamented sean-nós songs of Conamara to the rollicking port a’bhéil or mouth music of Donegal. Their Hiberno-English song repertoire (songs from Ireland in English) covers the entire gamut from the old story-telling "long ballads" to lively comic songs of "pure divilment and rascality". They also include material from the related Scots-Gaelic tradition and from the other Atlantic Celts, the Bretons.

**Discography:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Catalogue</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Black Black</td>
<td>Claddagh Records</td>
<td>CC63CD</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lover’s Ghost</td>
<td>Black Rose Records</td>
<td>BRRCD003</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music from the Edge of the World</td>
<td>Black Rose Records</td>
<td>BRRCD004</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Crooked Stair ('93 Re-release)</td>
<td>Black Rose Records</td>
<td>BRRCD001</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RONAN BROWNE  
(uilleann pipes, flutes, vocals)  
"One of the finest pipers of his generation. An innovator who has developed his own unique style." – Irish Times.  
Since Ronan took up the uilleann pipes in 1972, he has soaked up the music of the old Masters of Irish Music, Willie Clancy, Seamus Ennis, Johnny Doran, Tommy Potts and Denis Murphy. He straddles that difficult divide between pure traditional music and the modern world, ranging from solo work and writing for film & television, his celebrated duo with Peter O'Loughlin, through playing with CRAN, on to his work as the original piper with both the Afro Celt Sound System and Riverdance.

Discography:  
The South West Wind - Claddagh, 1988  
The Drones & the Chanters - Claddagh, 1994  
Riverdance - Celtic Heartbeat, 1994  
Afro Celt Sound System I - Real World, 1996  
Afro Celt Sound System II - Real World, 1999  
The Wynd you know - Claddagh, 2001  
Touch me if You dare - Claddagh, 2002  
www.ronanbrowne.com

SEÁN CORCORAN (bouzouki & lead vocals)  
‘His highly ornate vocal technique is the true voice of Irish folk’ – Washington Post  
Seán, is a vastly experienced performer who has appeared in major festivals and theatre circuits throughout Europe, North America and Japan. He is a song collector, bouzouki player, ethnomusicologist, a general wit and cultured man-about-town. Sean's extensive field work has drawn CRAN towards previously unrecorded songs and his deep interest in the great collectors has provided numerous songs from the pre-recording era. He recently re-formed his cult a capella group Pressgang and they are holding celebrated concerts.

Discography:  
The Press Gang - 1982  
Sailing through Walpole's Marsh - Green Linnet, 1978  
www.rollwave.com

DESI WILKINSON  
(flutes, whistle & vocals)  
‘Dazzling display of virtuosity and quirky genius’ – In Dublin  
Desi plays concert flute (fiddle, and 'sometimes' clarinet) and is a fine singer to boot. An experienced, well travelled and popular performer with eclectic musical interests, he also contributes articles to academic books and journals. He currently lectures at ICMUS at the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne. His wish is to be relatively healthy, try to do some good, have a good time and to be always able to enjoy music and to play and sing honestly and well – that’s about all.

Discography:  
Cosa gan bhroga - Gael Linn, 1986  
The Three Piece Flute - Spring, 1987  
Hent St Jakez - Shamrock, 1993  
Shady Woods - Deas01, 2001  
Sounds from the North - Liekedeler, 2001  
http://homepage.eircom.net/~shadywoods
The powerhouse trio CRAN emerged in the mid-1990s with a tremendous debut album, The Crooked Stair. Stunning vocal arrangements and immaculate musicianship established a formidable presence harnessing individual talents to generate sounds of astonishing depth and unstoppable force. The original line-up drew upon the strengths of celebrated singer, song collector and bouzouki player Seán Corcoran, the sublime flute of Desi Wilkinson (adept on clarinet, whistles, highland pipes as well as an expert lilter and singer) and uilleann piper, Neil Martin, known also for his cello and keyboards work.

The Crooked Stair established a successful blueprint which was reinforced by the subsequent Black Black Black, surprisingly produced by American rock legend Shel Talmy. By now piper Ronan Browne was on board for Neil Martin and this 1998 album also saw guest appearances by fiddler Kevin Glackin, the clarinet of Triona Ni Dhomhnaill and the massed vocals of Anuna. Black Black Black featured brilliant songs such as the infectious Staimpi, the meditative Coleraine Town (with remarkable descending flute and pipes motif from Desi and Ronan and a storming unaccompanied trio rendition of Willie Taylor, while tunes such as the closing set of jigs (kicked off by The Humours Ballyloughlin) were played with unstoppable vivacity.

It seemed impossible to top, but 2000 saw an even more remarkable album, Lover's Ghost. By this time CRAN had become renowned for their live performances (even becoming stars in the Netherlands). Lover's Ghost saw them assuming the production reins to deliver a classic album firmly rooted in the tradition. Seán's song selection spread its wings to encompass a magical Erin, Gra Mo Chroí, a ploughing song (Ho Bo), an awesome prison song (Se Oakum Mo Phriosuin) and, the crowning glory, a version of Stolen Bride containing harmonies so warm they could toast bread. Again, the standard of musicianship set new highs with the slow reel, The Killarney Boys of Pleasure, and the set dance, The Ace and Deuce of Pipering, show just what can be achieved when played with reverence and charm.

Music from the Edge of the World consists of fourteen tracks, including nine songs. Lyrics are provided and even translations together with brief, but pertinent notes on the sources. As ever, the instrumentals are sprightly and exquisite and, probably, none better than a fulsome rendition of that much recorded reel Toss the Feathers, which Desi and Ronan reinvigorate by playing on 'aged' Clarke's whistles. Elsewhere the pair combined to provide a resonant backdrop for Seán's passionate singing, either through instrumental prowess or the warmth of their supporting vocal harmonies. Corcoran is on fine form himself throughout, demonstrating the sheer breadth of his song repertoire through both familiar songs, a gorgeous solo rendition of The Banks of the Bann, and the resurrection of the tongue-twisting 'stage Irish' song, The Whistling Thief.