

FEATURES

Gaelic Storm blows into town



Courtesy photo

■ The high-energy music performance should please dancers and listeners alike

By Jen West
Oregon Daily Emerald

Fans of the lively Celtic dance music the 1998 blockbuster "Titanic" are in for a special treat when Gaelic Storm comes to Eugene.

Gaelic Storm, the band that helped spur the Oscar-winning movie's second soundtrack release, "Back to Titanic," will perform Jan. 28 at the Wild Duck Music Hall.

"It's shit you can't not move to," concert promoter Dan Steinberg said. Steinberg said although he had never seen Gaelic Storm live, he had seen some videos of their concerts. He said the band performed fast-paced, high-energy concerts that had audiences dancing to their Celtic/Gaelic rhythms.

He added that Eugene is off the band's beaten path, and though the band usually performs at art centers, he chose the Wild Duck to better entice University students to come check out the concert.

Brendan Relaford, general manager for Big Green Music Events at the Wild Duck, predicted that Monday's performance would draw more of a "listening audience" than a dance crowd.

"The crowd will be there out of curiosity," he said, because the show is "all based on publicity and hype."

Relaford added he thought the

band would draw an older crowd that would be more interested in "music appreciation."

Band members for Gaelic Storm include Steve Wehmeyer on vocals and the bodhran (an Irish drum), Patrick Murphy on vocals, spoons, harmonica and accordion, Steve Twigger on guitar, mandolin and vocals, Shep Lonsdale on the djembe (a West African drum) and Kathleen Keane on fiddle, tin whistle and button accordion.

In the mid-1990s, the band members met over pints at a seaside pub in Santa Monica, Calif., according to Gaelic Storm's Web site, and they soon began performing together. They released their first self-titled CD in 1998 and then released their following albums "Herding Cats" in 1999 and "Tree" in 2001.

Local folk singer/songwriter Elise Coakley will open the show. Though she has not yet produced a CD, Steinberg said she has performed in Eugene, Portland and Seattle, opening

for bands such as Crash Test Dummies and Trisha Yearwood.

"She's got a great voice," Steinberg said. "If Ani DiFranco and Sheryl Crow had an offspring, it would be (Coakley)."

Coakley, who is also a University student, described her music as mellow and laid back.

"Most of my songs are pretty personal songs," she said.

Though her music is a different style than that of Gaelic Storm, she said their music will mesh well.

"I'm a big fan of Celtic music," she said.

Coakley said she enjoys playing in Eugene and is excited to hear Gaelic Storm as well.

The concert begins at 8 p.m. and is open to all ages.

Tickets are available for \$14 the day of the show and \$12 in advance at the Wild Duck and www.fastix.com.

E-mail reporter Jen West
at jenwest@dailyemerald.com.

Community cinema attracts crowds

■ The McDonald Theatre presents shows with a mix of live acts, speakers and films

By Mark Brennan
for the Emerald

The Beatles, Gene Kelly, "Stone Soup" cartoonist Jan Eliot, Groucho Marx and Eugene opera artistic director Robert Ashens finally have something in common.

They are all performing, in a manner of speaking, on Sunday afternoons in Eugene.

Impact! Theatre, and its directors, Randy Lord and Katina Paxino, have developed an ongoing series of afternoon shows entitled the Family Fun Film Festival. The shows are a combination of live performances, guest speakers, old-time comedy shorts, cartoons and classic feature films presented at the recently renovated McDonald Theatre.

According to Lord, who is also the founder of the Lord Leebrick Theatre, the idea is a return to a fuller, more satisfying experience for moviegoers.

"This is a lot more than a movie. At

our first show, we started out with a live performance by vaudeville performer Whistling Mitch Hider, Mayor (Jim) Torrey spoke, we showed a Buster Keaton short, which many people have never seen, a cartoon and then the feature," Lord said.

Lord and Paxino are also happy that their project has added to the revitalization of the downtown area.

"That corner has come alive since the McDonald reopened," Paxino said. "Kit Kesey, when he decided to take over the McDonald, had the vision of having families in there. Now there is."

Kesey is the nephew of Eugene author Ken Kesey, who died in November.

"What's neat is kids are singing along, and people that don't know each other are talking and having fun," Paxino said.

Lord added that the renovations to the McDonald have included improvements to both the projection system and the sound system.

"These films are all classics. People may have seen them on TV or on VHS, but it's a whole new experience seeing them on a big screen," Lord said.

Shannon Murphy, a mother of two, agreed.

"This is a fun and inexpensive way to take the whole family to the movies, and the movie looked great on the big screen," she said. "I think this is a great idea, and the live music really adds to the overall experience."

To further foster this sense of community, Impact! also donates a block of tickets for each performance to different social service agencies and is happy to see others contributing as well.

"LTD is also offering a day pass to those families that receive free tickets so they can get to and from the show," Paxino said.

This Sunday's film will be "Singing in the Rain." The special guest will be Marc Siegel, artistic director of the Dance Theatre of Oregon, and the Musical Feet Tap Dance Company will provide live entertainment.

General admission is \$6; admission for children 3 and under is free. The show starts at 1:30 p.m.

Mark Brennan is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

The recipients are: Anita Weiss, international studies professor; Wendy Mitchell, business school academic programs assistant dean; Michael Jefferis, student records specialist; and Carla Gary, multi-cultural affairs office director.

— Eric Martin

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News brief

UO staff members to receive MLK awards

The University will present four employees with this year's Martin Luther King Jr. awards at noon in the Gerlinger Lounge. The awards are

given for promoting cultural diversity and striving for racial justice.

Given each year, the awards are certificates that resemble high school diplomas and are issued by University President Dave Frohnmayer.

Hors d'oeuvres will precede the ceremony at 11:30 a.m.

The recipients are: Anita Weiss, international studies professor; Wendy Mitchell, business school academic programs assistant dean; Michael Jefferis, student records specialist; and Carla Gary, multi-cultural affairs office director.

— Eric Martin

Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. Box 3159, Eugene OR 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices in Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

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