

Entertainment

Keely Wygonik editor/953-2105



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Jig is up Concert echoes musical heritage, dance of Ireland

By M.B. Dillon
staff writer

TWENTY OF Ireland's most acclaimed traditional singers, musicians, dancers and storytellers ranging in age from 18 to 60 are coming to Detroit on an 18-city tour through the United States and Canada.

Jigs, hornpipes, polkas and reels, as well as the sounds of harp, fiddle, tin whistles, banjos, flutes and uilleann pipes, await Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann concert-goers. The show is set for 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 5, at Mercy College's McCauley Auditorium, 8200 W. Outer Drive in Detroit.

The concert will offer a glimpse of the real Ireland "and the authentic traditions of the Irish, as practiced in their homes for centuries," said event co-chair Dan O'Kennedy of Livonia. "They perform with panache, vitality and professionalism."

Comhaltas 'tis inviting people back to their roots," he said. "Their traditions are there. The music, dance and song that came from the Irish and the Scots really and truly brought about old Kentucky bluegrass."

Gaelic for Irish Musicians Association, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann

"was founded in 1951 in Ireland to revive traditional Irish music, song and dance with emphasis on language, recitation and lilt," said O'Kennedy, a native of Clare.

"We have 400 branches in Ireland, England, the U.S., Canada, Australia and Europe, with competitions set up in every country. There are 11 branches in the Midwest, including our Detroit-Windsor-Toledo branch."

Among the show's headliners will be All-Ireland fiddler Anne O'Connor of Limerick, renowned for her interpretation of Irish airs as well as for her traditional playing of reels and jigs. "She has to be tops in Ireland," said O'Kennedy.

FIDDLER BRIAN Lavery of Derry currently holds the All-Ireland Senior Fiddle title, one of the most coveted awards in the world of traditional music.

"It's also a first class dancer. He's great," said O'Kennedy. Dancer Carol Leavy, who hails from Louth, last year was named Senior Ladies World Champion in Irish dancing.

Other performers include flutist Deirdre Havelin of Antrim; Dublin piper Ivan Goff, concertina player Michael O'Hagalligh of Meath; flutist Thomas Doolley of Dublin; and singer Gerard McQuaid of Monaghan.



A group of Ireland's most talented performers of traditional music and dance will entertain at the Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann concert at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 5, at Mercy College's Mac-

Cauley Auditorium, 8200 W. Outer Drive. The entertainers were photographed before leaving on their 18-city North American tour outside their headquarters in Monkstown, Co. Dublin.

Also on the marquis will be accordionist Liam Webster of Tipperary; dancer Conrad McCauley of Derry, Dublin dancers Ciara D'Arcy and Rogan Ronan; harpist Louise Ni Cheallaigh of Mayo; and singer Lena Bn. Uí She from Cork.

ON TAP are anthems, a two-hand jig, harp solo, and "A Script to the 1970s" entitled "Mulling Races & Five Mile Chase." There'll also be fiddle solos, humorous poems, concertina solos and an Easter Rising commemoration.

The show's finale "will bring the

house down," O'Kennedy said. "Comhaltas literally means the Irish Musicians Association, but it's much more than an association of musicians," said Don Devine of Westland, longtime Comhaltas member and host of WCAR radio's Irish hour on Sunday nights.

"It incorporates a national and international movement of Irish people and lovers of Irish culture to preserve and promote traditional Irish culture in all its forms — music, song, dance, language and art. It was founded by a group of farsighted

people, who recognized that the traditional expressions of Irish culture were falling into disuse and were being replaced by more modern forms of entertainment," added the Irish-born Devine. "Our objective is to ensure that this rich heritage is passed from one generation to the next."

COMHALTAS WELCOMES visitors to its headquarters in Monkstown, County Dublin, where they're extended a true "Cead Mile Fáilte" — one hundred thousand welcomes. The Detroit branch, which claims

over 100 members, offers musical and meets regularly for lessons "sessions" and events including the Dec. 25 "Wren Dance."

Admission is \$12 per person and \$10 for children and retirees. Parking in a lot, guarded lot is free. Tickets are available at Donovan's Country Store and Irish Imports in Farmington, at Irish Imports in Dearborn and at the door. For more information, call 464-4119 or 288-3575.

For more information, call Comhaltas president Breege Kelly at 288-3575, or O'Kennedy, at 464-4119.

Small roles expand actor's talent

Performances of the Meadow Brook Theatre production of "Inherit the Wind" continue through Oct. 27 on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills. For ticket information call the box office at 377-3300.

By Keely Wygonik
staff writer

With 30 people in the cast, an actor could start to feel a little anonymous in "Inherit the Wind," the Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee dramatization of the 1925 Scopes "monkey trial" in Tennessee.

"Every time you do a role it expands you," said Birmingham Seaholm grad Richard Schrot, 32, who portrays a reporter for Reuters, an international news agency based in Britain, and radio announcer, Harry Y. Esterbrook.

"THIS is a study in concentration, you're like a reflector shield of the main characters."

The courtroom drama pits Booth Colman, as Clarence Darrow (renamed Henry Drummond in the play) against the Bible-chanting prosecuting attorney, William Jennings Bryan (renamed Matthew Harrison Brady) portrayed by Arthur Beer.

While the two battle over a teacher's right to teach Darwin's theory of evolution, Schrot embellishes the scene — frantically taking notes as a reporter, and after a quick 3 1/2 minute change, bringing radio in the courtroom for the first time.



Richard Schrot, a graduate of Birmingham Seaholm High School, portrays a reporter and radio announcer in "Inherit the Wind" at Meadow Brook Theatre.

"An actor has to know when it's time to draw attention to himself, and when it's time to step back. In the play, I don't say very much, but you see me observing the courtroom scene, meticulously taking notes — this is going to be on the front page."

"YOU SEE me in a street scene hounding Brady to get information on my story. I talk in a British accent. It's a huge event, this is something serious, the world is watching. I have to look like I'm a part of it."

To prepare for the role, Schrot

said he watched reporters covering presidential press conferences on CNN news.

He talked to older actors to get a feel for radio announcing in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

"This is the first time a public event has ever been broadcast on the radio," said Schrot.

"There's a tremendous amount of excitement in the courtroom. I come on stage carrying a microphone. You hear me talking to my assistant, asking if the volume is high enough, if the microphone is positioned correctly, but you don't see him, he's off stage. I talk in a deep voice, and cup my hand over my ear."

TRAINED IN the classics, Schrot said he has had some experience as an announcer. "I was the announcer at our soccer and basketball games in high school."

The son of John and Eileen Schrot of West Bloomfield, Richard is one of 11 children. All but two live in the area. He earned his bachelor of fine arts degree at Wayne State University and received a scholarship to study acting at Illinois State University.

After earning a master's degree he went to work in Chicago and performed with the Victory Garden Theatre, Raven Theatre, Absolute Theatre and Illinois Shakespeare Festival.

A year ago, he and his wife, Patty, who grew up in Walled Lake and has a career in restaurant management, decided to move back to Michigan to

be closer to their families. They bought a house in White Lake.

"My wife is very supportive of my career," said Schrot. "There's only one time she got upset with me. I was auditioning for a part in England, all-day, I lost track of time and didn't think to call her. Finally, I got the part, I was so excited and called her. 'You can't take that part,' she said. Why? Because it's our wedding day of course she had a right to be upset, but that was the only time."

SINCE MOVING back to the area, Schrot has not been without work. "The pickings are slimmer in the Detroit area. I'm not ruling out modeling, industrial films or commercials. I have an agent and I've been getting calls," he said.

"Inherit the Wind" is his first production as an Actor's Equity card holder. (Actor's Equity is the professional actor's union.) Schrot has appeared in other productions at the Meadow Brook Theatre including "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "A Christmas Carol," and "Barefoot in the Park."

"I'M AT a point in my career where I can choose where I want to live and work in the market I want to work in. I also think you should expand into other markets," said Schrot. "I have a lot of work to do in this market."

When asked if he aspired to be in films or on television, Schrot laughed and said no.

"I want to get up every morning, have a cup of coffee, grab a newspaper and go to the theater."



Opera offering

Karlusud Productions of New York City will perform a version of Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro" in English as one of the events in the Cranbrook Music Guild's 40th season. The performance will take place at 4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 12, in the Kingswood School auditorium, and will be followed by a strolling champagne buffet supper at 7 p.m. Supper tickets are \$35 each. For information, call 751-2435.

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