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# ***MOHAWK VALLEY IRISH CULTURAL EVENTS NEWSLETTER***

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## **Old Blind Dogs at Earlville Opera House**

One of the original cutting edge folk outfits out of Scotland, Old Blind Dogs have evolved and grown into one of Scotland's favorite folk bands by applying original arrangements to traditional forms to create an infectious and irresistible energy. Founding member Jonny Hardie (fiddle, mandolin, guitar) is joined by Jim Malcom (guitar, harmonica, lead vocals); Aaron Jones (bass, bouzouki, backing vocals); Rory Campbell (border (reel) pipes, whistles and backing vocals); and Fraser Stone, (drums and percussion).



While utilizing modern grooves and combing elements from other musical cultures, the Old Blind Dogs repertoire is set very firmly in their native Scotland. The band continues to tour extensively and have been rewarded for their efforts with the "Band of the Year" Award at the Scots Trad Music Awards in the Queen's Hall, Edinburgh." Also, this is Jim Malcom's last tour with the band. Tickets for the 8 PM show range from \$17-22. The Earlville Opera House is located in a three-story brick building on East Main Street - just east of Route 12B at the stop light in the center of the village.

*Book Review:*

### **"The Wrong Kind of Blood"**

*Submitted by Mark Sisti*

The school of hard-boiled fiction has long been the sole province of the American novelist. When you think of classic pulp fiction detective novels, you think of Spillane or of Hammett, not of Joyce or Swift. But this perception may be changing. Recently, more and more Irish writers are delving into this field and, while it may seem an incongruous mix at first, it makes sense when you examine it. The best of the hard-boiled novels have a gritty, terse poetry unique to that literary style, as evidenced by the best passages of Raymond Chandler or Ross MacDonal and as currently practiced by such writers as Dennis Lehane, Robert Crais, James Lee Burke, or John Connolly (an Irish writer himself.) This combination of grittiness and poetry makes it uniquely suited for the idiomatic English spoken by the Irish, where the lyricism of the language lends a kind of poetic feel to the most mundane concepts. Nowhere is that more true than in Dublin, the setting of "The Wrong Kind of Blood," an impressive first effort by playwright-turned novelist Declan Hughes.

In "The Wrong Kind of Blood," private investigator Ed Loy returns from Los Angeles to Dublin for his mother's funeral following a long absence. Shortly after his arrival, he finds himself almost inexorably drawn into a labyrinthian tale of swindles, betrayal, and murder. It would be fruitless to try and outline the plot. Let's just say this is not Agatha Christie or Conan Doyle where the fun is in trying to solve the mystery before the detective. Don't even try to unravel the plot lines; you'd have a better chance understanding "Ulysses." As in much of the genre, readers need to leave a trail of breadcrumbs to remember where the path started. But despite the convoluted plot (which he does manage to tie together at the end), Hughes's theme comes though loud and clear, and it is one of the most prevalent in Irish literature: the unbreakable hold the past has on the present.

Loy has attempted to escape from his memories by moving to Los Angeles, a place with no real history of its own, and thinks he has succeeded in losing himself in the sprawling L.A. anonymity. But he learns that such escape is not possible. Just as he is drawn back to Dublin, so too is he drawn back into his past, whether it is in the form of old friends, family secrets, past loves or his own memories. He soon realizes that he will never be able to make sense of the events happening around him unless he can make sense of the events that happened before. In one scene, Loy returns to the neighborhood where his parents grew up and speaks with one of the elderly neighbors. When she answers the door, the television is loudly blaring an autopsy scene from one of the ubiquitous forensic crime shows. The implication is clear: in order to solve the mystery of a person's life, one must examine his death. Or, in simpler terms, to understand the present, it is necessary to examine the past. As Loy discovers, Thomas Wolfe was wrong. Not only can you go home again, sometimes the trip is inevitable.

The beauty in a story like this (not surprisingly, given Hughes's theater background) is in the dialogue. His characters stop in the middle of sentences, they use the wrong word, they interrupt themselves; in short they speak like real people instead of like characters in a novel. This gift for dialogue gives a depth to secondary characters that raises the novel above the norm. The best of the characters are not all good, the worst are not all bad. There are grey areas throughout that make it impossible to dismiss any of the characters, however minor.

Plot problems aside, "The Wrong Kind of Blood" (the title, like the characters and the plot, is multi-layered) is a remarkable debut that will leave you waiting for the inevitable second Ed Loy book.

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**So is it a coincidence** that September is the month we get rid of... we send our children to school AND it's the month with the most Irish Festivals? Yeah, probably... but no matter what, you've got to be impressed with the number of festivals and get-togethers being held throughout the area this month. Check these out:

- 🍷 **Irish 2000** (Sep 16) Billed as "...the largest, single-day Irish festival on the planet," the Irish 2000 Music and Arts Festival celebrates its 10th Anniversary, with a lineup of more than 20 great performers in Altamont, New York. The 10th anniversary edition of Irish 2000 features a roster of who's who in international, national and regional Celtic entertainment, with four stages to showcase the performances. This non-stop celebration takes over the Altamont Fairgrounds from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 16, for 13 hours of extraordinary entertainment; including such acts as Dougie McLean, Greenwich Meantime, Enter the Haggis, Seven Nations, Bad Haggis, The Glengarry Bhoys, Black 47, Old Blind Dogs, The Makem & Spain Brothers, The McKrells, Hair of the Dog and more. For more information, visit their web site at <http://www.irish2000fest.com/welcome.asp>.
- 🍷 **Guinness Irish Festival** (Sep 8-9) Throughout the second weekend of September, downtown Syracuse will be touched with a tint of green as the Guinness Irish Festival once again takes to the streets. In total, performances will take place on two separate stages in Clinton Square, by such Celtic and Irish bands as Eileen Ivers and Immigrant Soul, Greenwich Meantime, Donegal X-Press and others. For more info, check <http://www.syracuseirishfestival.com/>.
- 🍷 **Hooley on the Hudson V** (Sep 3) The 2006 "Hooley on the Hudson" will be held on Sunday, September 3rd, on the Strand Plaza in Kingston, NY. The event is free and features music, food, dancing, Celtic vendors, storytelling, and children's activities. Taking the stage will be the The Andy Cooney Band, The Cathie Ryan Band, Searson, MacTalla M'or, Cliudan, John Gilligan and more. For more information, visit <http://www.ulsteraoh.com/hooley.htm>.
- 🍷 **Elmira Irish Festival** (Sep 16) Held on the AOH grounds in Elmira (701 Kinyon St), this festival starts at 1 PM and runs until late in the evening, and features the TownPants, Cliudan, John Gilligan, and others. For more info call (607) 733-0063.

- 🍷 **12<sup>th</sup> Rochester Irish Festival** (Sep 8-10) Started in 1994, the Rochester Irish Festival is committed to the ideal of staging an event in an atmosphere conducive to families and children, with entertainment that is dynamic, vibrant and energetic; thereby presenting Rochester with its premier, authentic cultural celebration. This year's lineup includes the Dady Brothers, Seanache, the TownPants, Cliudan and the legendary Tommy Makem. For more information, check <http://www.rochesteririshfestival.org>.
- 🍷 **Leeds Irish Festival** (Sep 2-4) The 26<sup>th</sup> Leeds Irish Festival features musicians directly from Ireland, workshops, import stores, Irish food, beverage and more. This annual festival is located on Rte. 23B, Leeds, NY. For more information, call (518) 943-3736.
- 🍷 **Annual "Irish Day"** (Sept 4) On Monday, Sept. 4<sup>th</sup>, from 2 p.m. until dark, the annual "Irish Day" will be held at the Lock 20 Canal Park on Rte 49 in Marcy, as the last concert in 2006's "Betsy the Barge" series. Providing the Irish music will be Cliudan, Vince Colgan, John Gilligan, and the Trinkaus Manor Quartet. There will also be a dance demonstration by the Johnston School of Irish Dance, food, and a fireworks display at dusk; so be sure to bring a lawn chair.
- 🍷 **29<sup>th</sup> Annual Capital District Scottish Games** (Sept 3-4) It's a full Celtic festival of the arts at the Altamont Fair Grounds, with competition in piping, drumming, athletics, dance, massed bands and more. Featured performers at this year's Capital District Scottish Games are the Brigadoons, Colin Grant-Adams, the McKrells, Hunting McLeod, Mactella M'or, and more. For more information, check out [http://scotgames.com/cms/index.php?option=com\\_frontpage&Itemid=1](http://scotgames.com/cms/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1)

## RANDOM RAMBLINGS

- 🍀 **Mick Moloney** – legendary multi-instrumentalist, singer and storyteller – comes to Filene Recital hall at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs for a free concert on Thursday, September 21<sup>st</sup>. Moloney combines the careers of folklorist, arts presenter and advocate, professional musician, and radio and television personality. In 1999 he was awarded the National Heritage Award from the National Endowment for the Arts — the highest official honor a traditional artist can receive in the United States. An open session follows the 7:30 concert, so bring your instruments.
- 🍀 **Craobh Rua** (Red Branch) will be performing at the Kirkland Arts Center Coffee House in Clinton, on September 15<sup>th</sup>. The Belfast-based Craobh Rua (pronounced Crave Ru-ah) is traditional Celtic fare at its finest, mixing rousing jigs, reels and polkas with tender ballads and airs. Fronted by the powerful and captivating vocals of Jim Rainey on guitar, theirs is a music driven by the exciting banjo and mandolin playing of group founder Brian Connolly and the stunning fiddle playing of Michael Cassidy. They are joined on uilleann pipes and tin-whistles by the highly regarded Conor Lamb. Regarded around the globe as true ambassadors of Irish Music, they are impeccable musicians with arrangements that are all their own and have been likened to the first wave of the Irish folk revival of the sixties and seventies. Tickets are \$15, and \$12 for KAC members. Rattlin' Bog opens the 8:00 PM show.
- 🍀 If you were among the 20,000 or so close friends who gathered for the Great American Irish Festival, you may have seen the **Céilí Dance** workshops in the Cultural Center. Or you may have seen some people dancing with West 'O Clare, Andy Cooney or other bands on the Traditional stage. If you are interested in learning this type of dancing, you are invited to join in the fun on Friday evenings at 7:30 at the Seton Center, at the corner of Sunset and Barton Ave in Utica (behind Our Lady of Lourdes Church on Genesee St). No previous experience is needed, and you don't have to bring a partner. For info call Mary 724-6493, Jim 336-5966, or Tom 823-3593.

**Celtic Club Calendar** Finally, here's the Irish Musical and Cultural calendar for September:

Sep 1	Ciudan	<a href="#">Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub</a>	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
Sep 1	Gerry Dixon	<a href="#">Kitty Hoynes</a>	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Sep 2	Everheart	<a href="#">Kitty Hoynes</a>	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Sep 3	<a href="#">Hooley on the Hudson</a>	Strand Plaza	Kingston NY	11:30 AM - 9:00 PM	Free
Sep 2-4	Leeds Irish Festival	Rte 23B	Leeds, NY	1 – 8 PM	Free
Sep 3-4	<a href="#">Capital District Scottish Games</a>	Altamont Fair Grounds	Altamont NY	9:00 AM	\$15 (Sat), \$10 (Sun)
Sep 4	Irish Day	Lock 20 Canal Park	Marcy	2:00 PM	Free
Sep 8	Blarney Rebel Band	<a href="#">Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub</a>	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
Sep 8	Hair of the Dog	<a href="#">Parting Glass</a>	Saratoga Springs	9:30 PM	\$12 (reserv's)
Sep 8-9	Bill Craig	<a href="#">Kitty Hoynes</a>	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Sep 8-9	<a href="#">Guinness Irish Festival</a>	Clinton Square	Syracuse	6 PM (Fri) 11:30 AM (Sat)	Free
Sep 8-10	<a href="#">Rochester Irish Festival</a>	Camp Eastman	Irondequoit, NY	12 – 11 PM (Fri); 12 – 6 PM (Sat/Sun)	\$8/day; \$20 Weekend
Sep 15	Neil Emberg	<a href="#">Kitty Hoynes</a>	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Sep 15	Craobh Rua	KAC Coffee House	Clinton	8:00 PM	\$15 (\$12 for members)
Sep 15-16	McKrells	<a href="#">Parting Glass</a>	Saratoga Springs	9:30 PM	\$12 (reserv's)
Sep 16	<a href="#">Irish 2000</a>	Altamont Fairgrounds	Altamont NY	10 AM-11	\$13 - adv; \$18 - day of
Sep 16	Elmira Irish Festival	AOH Center	Elmira NY	Noon-11	Free
Sep 16	Trad Irish Session	<a href="#">Kitty Hoynes</a>	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
Sep 16	Poor Ould Goat	<a href="#">Kitty Hoynes</a>	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Sep 21	Mick Moloney	Skidmore College	Saratoga Springs	7:30-9:30 PM	Free
Sep 22	Blarney Rebel Band	<a href="#">Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub</a>	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
Sep 23	Old Friends	<a href="#">Kitty Hoynes</a>	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Sep 30	Seanache	<a href="#">Kitty Hoynes</a>	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Sep 30	Hair of the Dog	<a href="#">Parting Glass</a>	Saratoga Springs	9:30 PM	\$12 (reserv's)
Sep 30	Old Blind Dogs	<a href="#">Earlville Opera House</a>	Earlville NY	8 PM	\$17-22

That wraps it up for this month. In the coming months, look for features on Irish history (local, national and international), recommended reading and listening lists, recipes, links to some useful/interesting web sites, and much more. There's some great entertainment coming to the area in the next few months as well, so stay tuned. Of course, this is your newsletter too... so if you have anything you want to add, feel free to contact us at [sistia@rl.af.mil](mailto:sistia@rl.af.mil), [bloftis@adelphia.net](mailto:bloftis@adelphia.net) or [marksisti@adelphia.net](mailto:marksisti@adelphia.net).

*May there always be work for your hands to do  
 May your purse always hold a coin or two  
 May the sun always shine on your windowpane  
 May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain  
 May the hand of a friend always be near you  
 May God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you*