
MOHAWK VALLEY IRISH CULTURAL EVENTS NEWSLETTER

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Saw Doctors Coming to Upstate New York



While Buffalo may be a bit out of our usual coverage area, when one of the biggest Celtic acts in the world comes to upstate New York, we think you'd want to know. The Saw Doctors will be playing 13 shows across America in October to promote the recent CD release, *The Cure*. Defying conventional description, the Saw Doctors moved one critic to write "So high-spirited is the party vibe, so

up-for-it the crowd, repeatedly taking over the vocals in a succession of rafter-shaking, word-perfect choruses, that the songs can almost seem a mere pretext for the mass exchange of goodwill." The good news for upstate Irish music fans is that one of those shows will be in Buffalo, New York on October 12 at the Icon. If you find yourself traveling during October, here's the full list of October shows that The Saw Doctors will play in the USA: 10/5 - Philadelphia, PA; 10/6 - Pittsburgh, PA; 10/7 - Providence, RI; 10/9 - Boston, MA; 10/10 - Annapolis, MD; 10/12 - Buffalo, NY; 10/13 - Bethlehem, PA; 10/14 - New York, NY; 10/17 - Denver, CO; 10/19 - Los Angeles, CA; 10/21 - San Francisco, CA; 10/22 - Portland, OR; 10/24 - Chicago, IL. Tickets for the Buffalo show are \$23 in advance, \$25 the day of the show. The Buffalo Icon is located at 391 Ellicott Street, Buffalo, NY 14203. For more information you can call the Icon at (716) 842-0167 or email them at local@thebuffaloicon.com.

Great Big Sea Rolls Into the Egg

On Wednesday, October 11, Hart Theatre at The Egg in Albany welcomes one of Canada's best-loved treasures, the legendary Great Big Sea. Great Big Sea is best known for performing energetic rock interpretations of traditional Newfoundland folk songs including sea shanties, which draw from the Island's 500-year-old Irish, English, and French heritage. The band, with founding band members Alan Doyle (vocals, guitar, bouzouki, mandolin), Séan McCann (vocals, bodhrán, guitar, tin whistle), Darrell Power (vocals, bass, guitar, bones), and Bob Hallett (vocals, fiddle, accordion, mandolin, concertina, bouzouki, whistles, bagpipes), played its first official gig on March 11, 1993, opening for the Irish Descendants. They toured nearly constantly for the band's first several years, sometimes traveling as many as 300 days a year. The band won the *Entertainer of the Year* award at the East Coast Music Awards for every year between 1996 and 2000. (In 2001, they decided not to submit their name for nomination in order to allow other bands to compete.) They have also been nominated for several Juno Awards, including Group of the Year in 1998 and 2005. Tickets for the 7:30 show are \$24, and are available now at The Egg box office, by phoning (518) 473-1845, or by faxing your ticket order to (518) 473-1848.



BUTLER ACADEMY UNDERGOES CHANGES – Submitted by Ellen Roczen

Big News!! As of September 2006, Butler Academy of Irish Dance has become Butler-Sheehan Academy of Traditional Irish Dance. Pattie Sheehan Malinowski, a former student, then assistant to Patrick Butler, is now his full partner. In addition, Mr. Butler has moved to New Jersey, to be closer to family members and will be commuting to classes. These changes will bring the school full circle- Mr. Butler started the Syracuse school while living in Toronto, Canada, and commuted there every week up until about 9 years ago when he moved to Syracuse. And while Mr. Butler will still be overseeing the schools, and making major decisions concerning them, Pattie will be shouldering more responsibility and teaching more of the classes herself.

Butler Academy has a rich history. It was started in Dublin, Ireland, over sixty years ago, by Mae Butler. She brought it to Toronto, Canada, and is recognized by fellow teachers for being the first lady to bring Irish Dancing to Canada. Her son Patrick brought Butler Academy to Central New York with the main academy in Syracuse, and 'satellite schools' in several other cities, including our school in Rome. He has much to his accomplishments- he is the retired undefeated Canadian Champion Dancer, and is the undefeated North American Champion Dancer. He once danced before President John F. Kennedy and the queen of England. He has taught numerous champion dancers ranging in ages from ten years and up. Many of his former students have become very successful Irish Dance teachers in Central New York.

Pattie is a champion in her own right. She started as a student in Butler Academy at the age of 4. She rose through the competition ranks, ultimately qualifying to compete in the All World Championships, held in Ireland, four times. She's been Patrick Butler's assistant for several years. With her skill, energy and enthusiasm, she has been a great asset to the classes, and is a natural to become his partner. Pattie is now the main instructor in the Rome school.

Students at the Rome school have participated in many events, such as: Festival of the Trees, held at Hart's Hill Inn in Whitesboro, Rome's Taste of the Arts, Festival on the Erie, Celtic Evening at Rome's Capitol Theater, many IPPCH fundraisers, and several big and small St. Patrick's Day parties. They also dance for area nursing home residents. Classes in Rome are held throughout the school year at the BOCES Consortium Gym in the old St. Mary's school, 214 W. Liberty St. Students range in age from 5 through adult. New students are always welcome. For more information, call Ellen at 896-6883, Mary at 865-4997, or email eroczen@juno.com.



The Legend of Stingy Jack

As you know from the October '05 issue of this newsletter – I'll wait while you get out your copy from your bound archives – Halloween's origins date back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (pronounced sow-in), when it was believed that the ghosts of the dead returned to earth. But did you know that when you carve your jack-o-lantern, you are perpetuating another old Celtic tradition? In Ireland of old, on the evening of October 31, travelers carried lanterns consisting of big turnips with faces carved in them, the lights believed to keep the evil spirits away. These carved turnips were called "jack-o-lanterns." When the Irish emigrated to America, they found the large pumpkins much easier to carve, and the jack-o-lantern as we know it was born.

The Jack O'Lantern legend goes back hundreds of years in Irish History. As the story goes, Stingy Jack was a miserable, cantankerous old drunk who liked to play tricks on everyone, even the Devil himself. One day, he tricked the Devil into climbing up an apple tree. Once the Devil climbed up the tree, Stingy Jack hurriedly placed crosses around the trunk of the tree, preventing the Devil from getting down. Stingy Jack would not remove the crosses until the Devil promised not to take his soul when he died.

Many years later, when, to everyone's pleasure, Jack finally died, he was told by Saint Peter at the gates of Heaven that he had led a miserable and worthless life on earth and would not be allowed entrance. But when he went down to Hell, the Devil kept his promise and would not allow him to enter Hell. Now Jack was sorely frightened and, with nowhere to go but to wander about for all eternity in the darkness between Heaven and Hell, pleaded with the Devil to at least provide him with a light to help find his way. The Devil tossed him a glowing ember from the very flames of Hell, which Jack placed in a hollowed out turnip. From that day onward, Stingy Jack roamed the earth without a resting place, with his turnip lantern lighting the way. Those who saw him on his endless wandering began to refer to this ghostly figure as "Jack of the Lantern," and then, simply "Jack O'Lantern."

From the Irish Kitchen (*recipes suitable for clipping*)

This month, we're revisiting a feature on tried and true recipes for meals, soups, breads, desserts and maybe even a potent potable or two. Our featured recipe this month is from Beth Loftis, who no doubt did some quick thinking when the priest popped over to her house and saw her Jamesons collection. "Honest, Father," said she, "It's for me recipe for **IRISH WHISKEY CAKE!**"

INGREDIENTS

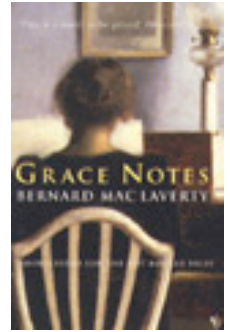
2 cups sifted all-purpose flour	1 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp mace	1/4 tsp salt
Grated rind of 2 lemons	1 Tbsp + 1 tsp lemon juice
5 oz (1 1/4 sticks) unsalted butter	1 tsp vanilla extract
1 cup packed light brown sugar	2 eggs, separated (but getting counseling)
1/2 cup Irish whiskey	1/2 cup diced candied orange peel
1/2 cup light raisins	1 Tbsp caraway seeds
3/4 cup pecans, chopped	about 1 Tbsp extra butter

Butter a 6-cup loaf pan. Dust it with fine, dry bread crumbs, then tap out excess crumbs. Sift together the flour, baking powder, mace, and salt. Set aside. Mix lemon rind and juice, and set aside. In a large mixer bowl, cream the butter. Add vanilla and sugar, beating well. Beat in the egg yolks. On low speed, add the sifted dry ingredients alternately with the whiskey, beating after each addition only until incorporated. Stir in lemon rind and juice, candied orange peel, raisins, caraway seeds, and pecans. In a small bowl, beat the egg whites until they hold a shape but are not stiff and dry. Fold them into the batter. Turn batter into prepared pan and smooth the top. Then use spatula or spoon to form a shallow trench lengthwise down the middle of the cake. (This makes top of cake more level when baked.) Bake at 350, on a rack 1/3 up from bottom of oven, for 1 1/4 hours or until cake tests done. Be careful not to under-bake. While baking, if the cake begins to darken too much, cover it loosely with foil. As soon as cake is done, remove from oven and spread softened butter over the top. Let the cake stand in the pan on a rack for about 20 minutes. Then invert onto another rack, then back onto first, so that cake cools upright without the pan. Wrap and refrigerate or freeze before slicing.

If you try this recipe, feel free to share your experience with all of us; and of course, if you have a recipe you'd like to share, please contact Beth Loftis at bloftis@adelphia.net.

Book Review:
“Grace Notes”
Submitted by Mark Sisti

The difficulty inherent in writing about art is that, short of releasing a novel with a CD or painting attached, the art itself can't be experienced. In order to enable the reader to fully appreciate the work being written about, it isn't enough, for example, to describe a painting simply as “beautiful,” or to express the subject matter in words. The problem is even more pronounced when the art involved is music, for the author must make the reader hear – and feel – music that has not been written. If the work of art is not rendered in such a fashion that a reader can appreciate what makes it so special, the novel will fail. This is the problem facing Bernard MacLaverty in his novel, *Grace Notes*. Fortunately, MacLaverty is more than up to the task, and his success in making music audible through the written word is just one of the things that make this book so remarkable.



Grace Notes, shortlisted for the 1997 Booker prize, (I know, I know, don't worry, these reviews will eventually get more current!) is the story of a female composer, Catherine McKenna, who is struggling with bookend traumas, the death of her father and her post natal depression following the birth of her illegitimate daughter. While it may not be politically correct to refer to a composer by gender, in this case it is necessary, since the story is about Catherine's struggle to accept herself as a daughter, as a mother, and as an artist. Catherine's complex and fascinating personality is presented through snatches of conversations, through brief observations, and through flashbacks of various incidents from her life. MacLaverty writes in short sentences, even, at times, in fragments, which prevents it from being a smooth, flowing read. This is not accidental. Catherine's journey is, after all, a journey of small steps, and the structure of the narrative reflects this perfectly.

The story is largely about Catherine's need to reconcile contrasting and opposing forces. She returns to her home in Belfast, a city at war with itself. A female in a male-dominated field, she seeks to incorporate the huge Protestant drum, the Lambeg, into her newest composition, a Catholic mass. And while the birth of her daughter triggers her overwhelming dark depression, at the same time she worships the child and recognizes her as a miracle “there was no form of music to celebrate or mark.” These dichotomous factors, together with her ambivalent feelings towards her family, her home, her church, create much of the tension Catherine must deal with. The creation of art has often been analogized to giving birth, so it is significant that it is the concomitant acts of creation – the birth of her daughter and the composition of her musical opus – that allow her to survive and, ultimately, triumph.

In his typical deceptive understated fashion, MacLaverty describes grace notes simply as “the notes between the notes.” They are, of course, much more than that. In musical terms they are ornamental devices that give life and depth to otherwise ordinary music. As such, it's an apt title for this book. Musically speaking, there is no Wagnerian fanfare of trumpets here. Rather it is the “notes between the notes” that make this book a masterpiece, not a masterpiece like a Mona Lisa, but more like DaVinci's notebooks, giving us a rare insight into the heart, mind and soul of an artist.

RANDOM RAMBLINGS

Irish Breakfast The only good thing that can be said about the end of summer is that it marks the official beginning of the Riverside Diner's famous Traditional Irish Breakfast. On the first Sunday of every month from 8:00 to noon, Charlie Thomas serves up a hearty breakfast of two eggs, Irish bacon, Irish Sausage, Black and White Pudding, two kinds of Irish Soda bread, a Broiled Tomato, toast, and coffee or tea, all for the low price of \$5.95. The next one is on **October 1st** (although my sleuthing being what it is, you might want to call 797-7709). The Riverside Diner is located at 9663 Route 49 in Marcy.

Looking Ahead Although these events are a little further out on the horizon, we think they're worth mentioning now; especially if you want to purchase tickets for your loved ones or editors of your favorite Irish local events newsletter. Anyway, some of the particular appearances of note are:

- ✚ The amazing family band **Leahy** will be making a couple of appearances within traveling distance in Early November, including dates at University of Buffalo's Center for the Arts (Nov 3rd), Staller Center for the Arts in Stony Brook, NY (Nov 5th) and at the Clemens Performing Arts Center in Elmira (Nov 8th). If you've never seen these outstanding musicians, it is a definite must.
- ✚ On November 30th, the fabulous **Cherish the Ladies** are coming home after a lengthy tour across the pond, and one of their first shows upon their return will be at the Morris Central School Auditorium, in Morris, NY. Check back next month for more details.
- ✚ On Saturday, December 2, one of New York City's most compelling live acts, **Black 47**, brings its powerful and passionate Celtic rock to Munson-Williams-Proctor-Institute. Songs penned by frontman Larry Kirwan, a noted Irish author, playwright, and songwriter, cover topics from the Northern Ireland conflict to civil rights and urban unrest in contemporary New York.
- ✚ Reprising their very successful concert last year, the Earlville Opera House presents "Irish Christmas in America," with **Teada**, special guest **Cathie Ryan**, and more! This very special offsite concert will be held at 4:00 PM on Sunday, December 10th and at 7:00 PM on Sunday, December 10th at the Cazenovia College Theater. Last year's concert sold out, so you might want to consider ordering early!
- ✚ Looking even further ahead, we find **Eileen Ivers and Immigrant Soul** also at Munson Williams (Jan 11th), Authors **Frank McCourt** (*Angela's Ashes*), and his brother, actor and author **Malachy McCourt** (*A Monk Swimming*) as "A Couple of Blagards" at Munson Williams (Mar 23-25), the **Irish Rovers** at the Turning Stone (March 17th)... and, oh yeah, an outfit calling themselves **The Chieftains** will be coming to Proctor Theater in Schenectady, on March 14th.

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

Oct 6	Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
Oct 6	Donal O'Shaughnessey	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Oct 7	Pat Kane	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Oct 11	Great Big Sea	The Egg	Albany	7:30 PM	\$24
Oct 12	The Saw Doctors	The Icon	Buffalo	7:0 PM	\$25, \$23 adv.
Oct 13	Donal O'Shaughnessey	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
Oct 13-14	Jack McGuire	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Oct 20	Donal O'Shaughnessey	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
Oct 20	Old Friends	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Oct 21	Greenwich Meantime	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	9:00 PM	Free
Oct 27	Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	5-8:30 PM	Free
Oct 27-28	Neil Emberg	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free

That wraps it up for this month. In the coming months, look for features on Irish history, recommended reading and listening lists, recipes, links to some useful/interesting web sites, and much more; including details on those great upcoming shows. 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, bloftis@adelphia.net or marksisti@adelphia.net.