
MOHAWK VALLEY IRISH CULTURAL EVENTS NEWSLETTER

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Night Eagle Café Welcomes Solas

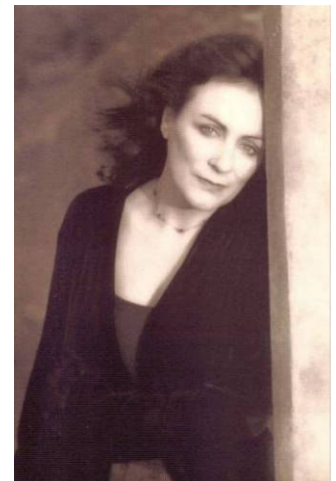
On Friday, October 26th, the Night Eagle Café continues its impressive run of bringing in Celtic acts of the highest caliber, as they welcome in “the first truly great Irish band to arise from America,” **Solas**. Since its birth in 1996, Solas has been loudly proclaimed as the most popular, influential, and exciting Celtic band to ever emerge from the United States. Even before the release of its first Shanachie CD, the Irish Echo ranked Solas among the “most exciting bands anywhere in the world.” Since then, the praise has only grown louder. The Philadelphia Inquirer said they make “mind-blowing Irish folk music, maybe the world's best.” The New York Times praised their “unbridled vitality,” the Washington Post dubbed them one of the “world's finest Celtic-folk ensembles” and the Austin American-Statesman called them “the standard by which contemporary Celtic groups are judged.”



Throughout its tenure and personnel changes, Solas has been widely heralded for its virtuosity and its fresh approach to Irish folk music. It maintains deep traditional roots while exploring new ideas and pushing the boundaries. Solas (Gaelic for “light”) showcases Seamus Egan’s skills on a variety of instruments. He is an All-Ireland champion on flute, tin whistle, mandolin, and tenor banjo and also demonstrates his virtuosity on low whistle, guitar, bodhrán, and uilleann pipes. Solas also features All-Ireland fiddler Winifred Horan, who, in addition to being a former member of Cherish the Ladies, is a nine-time Irish step-dancing champion. Button accordionist Mick McAuley, vocalist Deirdre Scanlon, and multi-instrumentalist Eamon McElholm round out the all-star Solas line-up. Tickets for the 8 PM show are \$30. The Night Eagle Café is located at 200 State Street Binghamton, NY. For more information, check out <http://www.nighteaglecafe.org/>, or phone (607) 217-7334.

Mary Black Headlines Show at the Egg

Mark the date of Wednesday, October 10, 7:30 PM – that’s when legendary songstress Mary Black fills the halls of the Hart Theater with the dulcet tones that have awed and moved listeners for nearly three decades. A legend in her homeland of Ireland, Mary Black has enjoyed a long a varied career, beginning with her early days in Dublin folk clubs, and through ever-escalating success with nine platinum solo albums. With a voice so pure it was used for years as an audiophile benchmark for comparing the sound quality of different high fidelity systems, it’s no wonder she has been named “Female Vocalist of the Year” no less than five times by the Irish Recorded Music Association. Chanteuse Maura O’Connell opens the show with her mix of traditional and contemporary Irish and American songs. The Egg is located in the Empire State Plaza in Albany. Tickets are \$28. For more information, contact the box office at (518) 473-1845.



Storied Irish Choral Ensemble Anúna Comes to Troy

If on September 10th you were one of the savvy TV watchers who skipped watching “Everyone Hates Chris,” “Deal or No Deal,” or “Everyone Hates Deal or No Deal,” chances are you were tuned into WCNY; and if you were, you got to hear some of the most ethereal, mystical and moving concerts ever aired. The artists were **Anúna** – an eclectic collection of sophisticated choral virtuosi – and the event was a broadcast of “Celtic Origins,” marking the U.S. television feature debut of the Irish group and 11 world-class musicians performing at the beautiful Gothic-style Trinity Cathedral in Cleveland, Ohio. This unique production was filmed over three nights before capacity crowds.



And now you can see them live, as they come to the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, on **October 20th**, at 8 PM. Anúna – their name describes the three ancient types of music, Suantraí (lullaby), Geantraí (happy song) & Goltraí (lament) -- have been credited with single-handedly creating the entire "Celtic Soprano" genre of singing, and the enormously successful show Celtic Woman is a direct descendant of the vocal sound that developed in the early stages of Anúna. Tickets for the show are \$29 and \$32. For more information, contact the Box Office at (518) 273-0038, or click on <http://www.troymusichall.org>. Oh, and to recap what you missed on Sept 10th, a greedy fat lady jumped up and down, and everyone still hates Chris.

Kevin McKrell and The Hard Road Céilidh Band Visits the Night Eagle Cafe

Rounding out the upper-tier Celtic lineup for October, Kevin McKrell brings his new band -- The Hard Road Céilidh Band – to the Night Eagle Café, on Oct. 13th at 8:00 PM. Kevin has been a founding member of some very popular bands, including the Celtic group Donnybrook Fair, and his namesake band, Celtic Bluegrass band The McKrells. With a band or solo, he’s played nearly every major Irish festival and pub in the Northeast. The Hard Road Céilidh Band “reads like a merging of the who's who of the New York music scene and Celtic music at large,” featuring Kevin and daughter Katie, fiddler Victor Gagnon, and any number of long-time musicians from across the state. Tickets for this show are \$25.00. The Night Eagle Café is located at 200 State Street Binghamton, NY. For more information, check out <http://www.nighteaglecafe.org/>, or phone (607) 217-7334.

Sr. Maureen Denn Named Agen/Durr Spirit of Irish Award Recipient

Sr. Maureen Denn, Chaplain for Faxton-St. Luke’s Healthcare, was awarded the “James Agen/Raymond Durr Spirit of Irish Award” at the 2007 Great American Irish Festival. This third annual award was presented to Sr. Denn for her many years of devotion to caring for those in our community and for her Irish spirit.



Sr. Denn recently celebrated her 50th Jubilee as a Sister of St. Joseph. She has provided spiritual and emotional support to the patients and families of Faxton-St. Luke’s Healthcare for 24 years. She comes from a large Irish family and is always proud to display her love for her Irish heritage. Her Irish smile gives comfort to all those she meets. Congratulations to Sr. Maureen Denn—recipient of the 2007 Agen/Durr Spirit of Irish Award.

Thistle & Shamrock Added to WAER Schedule

Some time ago on these very pages, we bemoaned the fact that there was no local radio source for Celtic Music and gave some advice on where to search the web for good Irish music.

Well, search and bemoan no longer. In July of 2007, WAER began running the nation's most popular Irish radio program, Thistle & Shamrock.



Now in its 18th year of national distribution, the one-hour weekly Celtic music series from National Public Radio features Celtic music performances captured on location and exclusive in-studio appearances by leading Celtic performers from both sides of the Atlantic. Hosted by the engaging Fiona Ritchie, Thistle comes to listeners from Edinburgh, Scotland, via NPR stations across the U.S. to present the established icons of Celtic music as well as the top performers of the next generation.

“WAER is pleased to add Thistle & Shamrock to our program schedule,” said Ron Ockert, Director of Programming & Operations for WAER. “We believe it will be a unique and comfortable addition to our Sunday morning lineup. We hope the listeners agree.”

The object of considerable critical acclaim and admiration from folk music communities, Thistle was conceived by Ritchie as a way to share the vibrant, joyful, and authentic sounds of Celtic music with public radio listeners. Ritchie says she selected the title to evoke the cozy pubs and lounges in which Celtic tunes are heard most often. Now, almost two decades later, it is the most listened-to Celtic music program in the world, as Thistle's voluminous collection of recordings allows the multi-award-winning Ritchie to showcase spirited reels, bouncy jigs, and haunting ballads performed by the top Celtic artists of today and yesterday.

Thistle & Shamrock can be heard Sundays at 11:00 AM to noon on WAER, which can be found at 88.3 on the FM dial (do they still make radios with dials?) Listed below is the Thistle and Shamrock program schedule for the month of October. For more information visit the station's Thistle & Shamrock page at www.waer.org/thistle.html.

October 7 - Hands On

Old songs provide a lens through which we can view lifestyles and ways of working now passed into history, when manual labours filled the day. Dick Gaughan, Christine Kydd, Ewan MacColl, Christy Moore, and others sing of horse drawn ploughs, handloom weavers, coalface workers, and fishing under sail.

October 14 - Words Verses Music

This program features songs and tunes inspired by poets' lives and works.

October 21 - Special Fundraiser Edition

Music from Old Blind Dogs, Eoin Dillon, Maggie Sansone, Lorraine Jordan, Sylvia Barnes and others.

October 28 - Mythography

This week, ballads and tunes of Celtic origin and inspiration make for an exploration of myth, legend, and mystery.

Salty Shamrock Welcomes Blarney Rebel on October 6th

Irish music fans in Herkimer County will no longer have to wait until the last month in July to get their Irish music fix. Now there's a cozy Irish pub right in their own backyard. Located at 320 South Washington Street right in the Village of Herkimer, the Salty Shamrock offers drink specials every night, karaoke on Wednesdays and live entertainment – including live Irish music – on selected Friday and Saturday nights. This Saturday, October 6, the Salty Shamrock will offer its first evening of live Irish music, as area favorites The Blarney Rebel Band will bring their pub tunes to the Herkimer nightspot from 9-1. We made the ultimate sacrifice for our readers of going down to check the place out recently. We had high hopes for the place as soon as we walked in and heard The Elders blasting on the sound system, and we weren't disappointed, as the friendly staff at the Shamrock made us feel right at home immediately, together with patrons carrying on a heated discussion about the proper term for a ship's wheel. "I wanted to bring some Irish culture to the valley," says owner Dave Wilkins. "I think this area needs it." The bar, with its combination nautical/Irish theme, has been open since June 30, offering a menu of pub grub and a good selection of beers, including excellently-poured Guinness. (I had several to make sure the first one wasn't a fluke.) They also have what may be the coolest beer chips I've ever seen in the few bars I've been to in my life. The drink specials change from night to night; for example, on Monday Nights until football season ends, customers can enjoy the Shamrock's Monday Night Football special featuring \$2.25 domestic beers and little neck clams (while they last) at just \$3.25 lb. Dave's also planning on running live music on selected Friday and Saturday nights, some of those nights to feature Irish music. Irish music fans are invited to support those efforts by coming out to greet Dave and his staff this Saturday night and enjoy a few pints and the music of the Blarney Rebel Band.



Butler-Sheehan Academy Of Irish Dance Announces First Annual Pub Night

Join **The Butler-Sheehan Academy of Irish Dance** in an evening of dancing, music, food and plenty of fun at the Academy's **First Annual Pub Night**. Pub Night is set for **Saturday, October 20th, 7:00 p.m.**, at the Elks Lodge, 126 W. Liberty Street in Rome. **The Blarney Rebel Band** will be playing all of your favorite Irish tunes while the students of the Academy will entertain with traditional Irish dances. Light food, beer & wine are included in the cost of admission, and there will be raffles and door prizes. Tickets are \$12 advance sale, \$15 day of the event, age 6 & under are free. They are available at the following locations: Gary's Music and Rome Art & Community Center in Rome; Valley Music, Utica; Accents of Ireland, New Hartford; Nola's Restaurant, Clinton, and New Attitude, Barneveld.



The Blarney Rebel Band is guaranteed to have everyone dancing, clapping and singing with their rousing renditions of all types of traditional Irish music. From their rollicking pub tunes, lively sea songs, moving ballads and stirring rebel songs, to hand-clapping jigs and reels, they are the perfect complement to the Butler-Sheehan dancers! The dancers are all students of Ms. Patty Sheehan, Director of North America's oldest continually-run Traditional Irish dance school, and herself a world champion dancer. They've performed throughout Central New York and many of the dancers have won honors Statewide. Bring your whole family to an evening that even the Leprechauns won't want to miss!

Book Review:
“Eureka Street – A Novel of Ireland Like No Other”
Submitted by Mark Sisti

It’s always dangerous to attach aggrandizing subtitles to your novel’s title – it may not actually be “The Greatest Story Ever Told” – but fortunately for Robert McLiam Wilson, he makes good on the subtitle’s promises. It is a safe bet you have never read a novel like “Eureka Street.”

The novel deals with two friends, Belfast natives Chuckie and Jake. Chuckie is Protestant and Jake a Catholic, but neither one is particularly adamant about it, and both avoid taking sides in the troubles going on around them. In fact, both are more concerned with searching for love (or lust) and drinking with their circle of friends at their favorite pub than joining in with either side of the sectarian divide.

Jake, for his part, has no use for the politics of either side and delivers blistering condemnations to the supercilious representatives for both viewpoints. A former bouncer and hard guy, Jake is actually a sensitive if cynical soul whose search for the ideal sabotages every chance at a relationship that comes his way. Chuckie, on the other hand, is more concerned with making money, and in ways that leave him baffled, manages to succeed beyond his wildest dreams, as he turns into a Gaelic Midas, turning everything he touches into gold. (While all of his get-rich schemes are amusing, the scam that starts him on his road to riches is hilarious.) In the same way that Jake hates the zealots on both sides with equal fervor, Chuckie is more than willing to exploit Catholics and Protestants equally, since, for the two friends, there is no discernable difference. As Jake puts it, Catholics and Protestants “resembled no one now as much as they resembled each other.... That was what I liked about Belfast hatred. It was a lumbering hatred that could survive completely on the memories of things that never existed in the first place.”

McLiam Wilson manages to differentiate between the two main characters by writing the Jake narratives in the first person and using the third person voice to tell Chuckie’s story. While initially jarring, it is a device that is skillfully used and effective, and the author tells their stories with acerbic humor and fierce sarcasm that at times rivals that of Swift. I will warn you, be careful about reading this in a room with other people, because you will, at some point, laugh out loud, leaving them staring at you as if you were crazy. It’s that funny.

Yet in the midst of the undeniably uproarious humor, McLiam Wilson makes an abrupt right-hand turn with a devastatingly beautiful chapter describing Belfast at night, a chapter more poetry than prose, and closer to Thomas Wolfe than any Irish writer, then makes another turn immediately after that to a heart-wrenching depiction of the aftermath of a bombing of a sandwich shop. While it is a book you will have difficulty putting down, it’s not a necessarily a book you will read quickly, if only because you are going to find yourself rereading passages just to drink in the pure beauty of the language. I will defy anyone who reads this book to not want to go back and reread either of these two chapters.

McLiam Wilson tells his story without bias, as extremists from both factions becomes targets for his savage wit. (It is certainly significant that the author’s name combines the Irish “McLiam,” or son of William, with the Anglicized version of the same name, Wilson.) Like Jake, the author seems to find those on both sides absurd. Jake, for example, has trouble figuring out how to deal with two bouncers at a local pub, afraid of being too Catholic with one and too Protestant to satisfy the other, while Chuckie, in his conquest of the U.S., speaks in what he claims to be Gaelic, until some Star Trek fan points out it sounds remarkably like Klingon for “phasers locked and ready, Captain.” There is also a continuous subplot dealing with the proliferation of acronymic graffiti covering everything from paramilitary groups to curses, which tries so hard to represent everything that it ends up representing nothing.

Eureka, of course, translates to “I have found it” and by the end of the book it is applicable to many characters, in many different ways. The book makes the point that “all stories are love stories,” but underlying the more conventional love stories of Jake and Chuckie is the one that will stay with you, the story of McLiam Wilson’s love for Belfast.

What's In A Name? (If You're Irish, A Lot!)

Ever wonder what people mean by the names they call you? No, not those names; we know what those mean! I'm talking about the name on your birth certificate, the one that follows Mr. or Mrs. If you're of Irish ancestry these names may tell a lot more about you than you realize. Ireland was one of the first countries to adopt hereditary surnames. Many of these names began as patronyms to define the male lineage, from father to son or grandfather to grandson; thus, the reason for the common prefixes found on Irish surnames: Mac, sometimes written Mc, is the Gaelic word for "son" and was attached to the father's name or trade. O, a word all by itself, signifies "grandson" when attached to a grandfather's name or trade. Other common prefixes serving the similar purposes are Gil, Kil or Fitz. These prefixes can also signify other attachments than familial, such as religious, in the case of Kilmartin, meaning "son of a follower of (St.) Martin," Fitzpatrick, meaning "devotee of St. Patrick," or, in the case of the family name of your favorite newsletter editors, McBride, meaning "servant of St. Bridgit" (and not "son of a" fill-in-the-blank!) Similarly, the prefix "mul" has religious connotations: the word translates to "bald" and applied to the monks because of their distinctive tonsure.

Some of the surname origins make sense when you break them down. Stewart ("one who oversees"), White ("having a fair-complexion"), or Cleary and the Anglicized Clark ("clergyman") are all names whose meanings can be readily deciphered. Likewise, names with historical connections are easy enough to trace. Every O'Brien, for example, will claim to be a direct descendant of Brian Boru, and every O'Neal will assert an unbroken line from Niall of the Nine Hostages.

But some of the most common Irish surnames are not so easily fathomable without some knowledge of the Irish language. Once you learn, for example, that "dubh" is Irish for "black", the meaning of a name like Duffy is easy enough to discern, but the word also serves as the basis for names like McDoughal, Doyle and O'Dwyer. "Donn", the Irish word for brown, becomes not only Dunne but also the extremely common Donovan. The Irish name Brown, on the other hand, has no relation to color but rather is "son of the brehon (judge)."

Hopelessly confused yet? If not, here's a list of common surnames and their original meanings. Incidentally, I would suggest taking these surname origin tales with a grain of salt, since some of them may be questionable. By way of example, the name O'Suilleabhain derives from the word "suil" which means "eye" and, as one such clan member in County Cork told me, means "the tribe of the one-eye", so named for a chief who lost an eye in battle. The "bh" letter combination is pronounced as the English "v"; therefore the name O'Suilleabhain becomes O'Sullivan or Sullivan. Now, we all know many Sullivans; could you picture any of them ever being in any sort of battle or confrontation? I thought not.

Murphy - sea-battler	Nolan - famous	Sheehan - peaceful
Kelly - bright-headed	Flynn - bright red	Ward - son of the bard
Ryan - king	O'Callaghan - bright headed	Whelan - wolf
O'Connor - patron of warriors	O'Donnell - world-mighty	Reid - red haired,
McCarthy - loving person	Boyle - vain pledge	MacKenna - fire-sprung
Gallagher - lover of foreigners	Healy - artistic, scientific	Hogan - young
Kennedy - helmet headed	Sweeney - pleasant	O'Keefe - gentle
Murray - lord, master	Hayes - fire	Magee - fire
Quinn - wisdom, chief	Kavanagh - comely, mild	MacNamara - hound of the sea
Moore - majestic	Moran - great	MacDonald - world-mighty
McLoughlin - viking	Brady - spirited	MacDermott - free from jealousy
O'Carroll - valorous in battle	Casey - vigilant in war	Buckley - cow herd
Connolly - fierce as a hound	Foley - a plunderer	Byrne - a raven
O'Connell - strong as a wolf	O'Leary - calf-herd	O'Doherty - hurtful
Brennan - sorrow	McDonnell - world-mighty	Lynch - seafarer, exile
Burke - from Richard de Burgh	MacMahon - bear-calf	Campbell - crooked mouth
Collins - young warrior	Regan - little king	O'Farrell - man of valor
Fitzgerald - spear rule	Flanagan - red, ruddy	Daly - assembles frequently
Maguire - dun-colored	Kane - battler	Hughes - fire

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

This month's recipe – "Evil Bart's Fire Smoked Beans

Just in time for the cool weather and tail-gate parties.....

INGREDIENTS:

4 pounds dried white beans, soaked overnight	¾ cup cider vinegar
4 ham hocks	2 Tablespoons Cookshack Spicy Rub, or equivalent (may I suggest a nice Butt Rub from Piggy Pat's?)
2 bottles Guinness Stout	2 Tablespoons red crushed chilies
2 large garlic cloves	2 Tablespoons toasted coriander
1 pound brown sugar	5 Granny Smith apples, diced
2½ cups molasses	10 bacon strips
2½ cups tomato puree	

Soak beans overnight (we'll wait). Boil with 1 bottle Guinness and 4 hocks. Watch the water level and add more if it falls below the level of the beans. Boil until some of beans are just starting to break up. Pour off liquid until it's at ¾ level of the beans.

Clean and dice hocks and add with remaining ingredients. Place bacon on top of beans. Bake at 250F for 5 hours and uncover (the pot, not yourself). Raise temperature to 350F and continue to bake, stirring every 10 minutes for 30 to 40 minutes.

Place in a hotel pan (large metal roasting pan) and smoke with hickory for 3 hours, stirring every 20 minutes. If beans are dry, add tomato juice to desired consistency.

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@verizon.net.

RANDOM RAMBLINGS

- ✠ **Academy of Music Presents Celtic Concert** To celebrate the opening of their new facility, the Academy of Music in Clinton is hosting a series of free Sunday afternoon concerts. On October 14, at 2 PM, it will feature Celtic Music. Dancers from the Butler-Sheehan Academy of Irish Dance, Rome, will perform, accompanied by fiddler Patrick Reynolds, and Jessica Voce on percussion. Everyone is invited to attend and enjoy this event. The Academy of Music is located at 13 Taylor Ave, in Clinton.
- ✠ **Patrick O'Connor**, former owner and proprietor of O'Connor's Alexander Hamilton Inn and O'Connor's in Oriskany has taken his talents to the Ramada Inn at the Oneida County Airport in Oriskany, NY. Long a supporter of Irish music and Irish culture, Patrick is starting to bring in entertainment; beginning with a show from local favorites, the Blarney Rebel Band, from 4 to 9 PM, on October 14th. Why not plan to come out and support a guy who's spent many years supporting local musicians and gourmands?
- ✠ Don't forget the **Traditional Irish Breakfast** at Betty's Diner (River Road, Marcy), which occurs on the third Saturday of each month as part of their "international specialty breakfasts." The Irish breakfast consists of Rasher, Banger, White and Black Pudding, Broiled Tomato with cheese, two eggs, Soda bread and coffee. The next Irish breakfast is October 20th.

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

Oct 5	Cassidy and McCale	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
Oct 5	Hair of the Dog	Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8 PM	\$12
Oct 6	Blarney Rebel Band	Salty Shamrock	Herkimer	9 PM – 1 AM	TBD
Oct 5-8	Banjo Burke Festival	Various locations	East Durham	Varies, check here	Check here
Oct 7	Syracuse Irish Session	HalfPenny Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Oct 10	Mary Black and Maura O'Connell	The Egg	Albany	7:30 PM	\$28
Oct 12	Blarney Rebel Band	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
Oct 12	Hair of the Dog	Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8 PM	\$12
Oct 13	Kevin McKrell & The Hard Road Céilidh Band	Night Eagle Café	Binghamton	8:00 PM	\$25 (\$5 less on-line)
Oct 13	Traditional Irish Session	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
Oct 14	Blarney Rebel Band	Ramada Inn	Oriskany	4-9 PM	TBD
Oct 14	Syracuse Irish Session	Johnston's Bally Bay Pub	Syracuse	4-7 PM	Free
Oct 19	2 Feet Short	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
Oct 20	Butler-Sheehan Pub Night w/Blarney Rebel Band	Elks Lodge	Rome	7 – 11 PM	\$15, \$12 adv.; 6 & under free
Oct 20	Anúna	Troy Savings Bank Music Hall	Troy	8 PM	\$29/\$32
Oct 26	Solas	Night Eagle Café	Binghamton	8:00 PM	\$30 (\$5 less on-line)
Oct 20	Irish Cultural Arts Day	Nazareth College Music Building	Pittsford NY	Noon – 5 PM	Free
Oct 26	Donal O'Shaughnessey	Piggy Pat's Pickled Pig Pub	Washington Mills	6-9 PM	Free
Oct 27	Traditional Irish Session	Kitty Hoynes	Syracuse	2-5 PM	Free
Oct 27	Hair of the Dog	Parting Glass	Saratoga Springs	8 PM	\$12

That wraps it up for this month. If you have anything you want to add to this newsletter, feel free to contact us at sistia@adelphia.net, bloftis@verizon.net or marksisti@adelphia.net.