



A Celtic Youth Movement

BCMFest 2009 features emerging generation of musicians

There's never any generation gap where the Boston Celtic Music Fest (BCMFest) is concerned.

Since its 2004 debut, the festival has featured plenty of seasoned musicians, including some well into their 80s. But BCMFest has always believed that young performers have much to offer, and this year is no exception. High school and college-age musicians form a large part of the line-up for the sixth annual BCMFest, which takes place Jan. 9-10, 2009, at venues in Harvard Square and Medford.

"BCMFest is a community festival, and the Boston area community is blessed with so many active, talented young musicians," says festival co-founder and board member Shannon Heaton. "Some have been active on stage and in Boston sessions since they were little kids; others are more recent arrivals, such as students who've come here to attend college. Their enthusiasm and respect for traditional music, and the energy and creativity they bring with them, are inspiring."

Adds Laura Cortese, also a BCMFest co-founder and board member: "Many of these young people already are assuming leadership roles in the Celtic and folk music community. They're not just playing the music, they're leading sessions, or organizing concerts and other events that help promote and sustain the music. This generation is going to make valuable contributions to traditional music for years to come, and BCMFest is proud to have an opportunity to present them."

Among the performers from this new generation appearing at BCMFest 2009:

- **Amanda Cavanaugh**, one of the most prominent and active fiddlers in the Boston area, a regular at sessions in The Burren and The Green Briar Pub who also has appeared at events such as the St. Patrick's Day "Celtic Sojourn" show and the ICONS Festival, as well as BCMFest.

- **Dan Gurney**, an accordionist whose resume includes three All-Ireland Fleadh Cheoil bronze medals and performances with the likes of Matt and Shannon Heaton, John Whelan and Cherish the Ladies. He also is a member of The Hay Brigade, a quartet fusing Irish/Celtic, bluegrass and jazz musical influences.

- **Hannah Read**, an Edinburgh native studying at Berklee College of Music who, in addition to her skills as a fiddler, is a superb vocalist with pop and jazz, as well as folk, influences. Read, a member of the Folk Arts Quartet [see below], also will appear in the festival's finale concert, "BCMFest Dance Spotlight."

- Cellist, vocalist and banjo player **Emma Beaton**, another Berklee student and winner of the 2008 Canadian Folk Music Award for Young Performer of the Year; she will appear with **Nic Gareiss**, one of the country's most exciting and innovative percussive dance performers.

- **Katie McNally**, a former runner-up National Scottish Fiddling Champion who duets with **Jonathan Fagan**, a talented pianist who also plays with the contra dance band Apple Crisp.

- **Catherine Joyce**, a performer at the 2008 BCMFest finale concert, ICONS Festival and the Blackstone Valley Celtic Festival, as well as the champion lilter in last year's Mid-Atlantic Fleadh Ceol, this year she'll be playing as part of the band Seioige, whose members include accordionist **Chris Stevens**, a young Maine native who has become an integral part of the local Irish scene.

- **Tess Ruderman** and **Paddy Bowling**, among the top performers in last year's Mid-Atlantic

Fleadh Ceol and members of the Burren Youth session, along with Catherine Joyce [see above]. The two will be part of the finale concert.

The local youth movement in Irish and Celtic music will be further represented at BCMFest by:

- **Blue Moose and the Unbuttoned Zippers**, whose mesmerizing, inventive mix of Celtic, Appalachian, Scandinavian and original “groove-band” musical styles has made them an audience favorite.
- Celtic funk and folk-rock ensemble **The Bridgebuilders**.
- The **Folk Arts Quartet**, which brings a string quartet dynamic to Celtic and American music;
- **Matching Orange**, a trio featuring inventive and enthralling contra dance music.
- **Fireside**, a quartet who draws on the Appalachian and old-timey styles that grew out of Celtic music.

For more information about the 2009 Boston Celtic Music Fest, see bcmfest.com