



With a Little Help from Their Friends

Matt Heaton and Flynn Cohen are assembling a grand finale for BCMFest 2012

As the culmination of the annual BCMFest, the festival's Saturday night finale concert is a venue for area Celtic performers to let their creativity shine and enjoy collaborations that, in some cases, are all too rare on the concert stage.

That's what BCMFest 2012 finale concert organizers Matt Heaton and Flynn Cohen have in mind. For the January 7 event, the two—who are among the Boston Celtic music scene's most eminent accompanists—have assembled a multifaceted cast of friends and colleagues, some of whom are seldom seen in this manner of performance.

“This is a chance to spotlight a number of musicians who, instead of playing in a sacrosanct concert setting, are more likely found at sessions in loud pubs with other melody players,” explains Cohen. “They're great players, and we enjoy sitting in with them; now, we'll be playing together in a context that allows people to hear what excellent musicians they are.”

The guest list includes Tina Lech (fiddle), Ted Davis (flute), Katie McNally (fiddle), Sean Clohessy (fiddle), James Hamilton (flute), Joey Abarta (Uilleann pipes), Kimberly Fraser (fiddle) and Maeve Gilchrist (harp, keyboards).

In addition to playing with the guest musicians and as a duo, Heaton and Cohen -- both of whom play guitar, bouzouki and mandolin -- will appear at the concert as part of their most well-known musical collaborations: Heaton with his wife, Shannon (Irish flute, whistle and vocals); Cohen with his “alt-trad” band Annalivia, which blends traditional Irish, American and English folk music with original material.

Heaton and Cohen also will gather some of their guest performers for a tribute to the Bothy Band, one of the seminal groups in the modern Irish folk music revival. Says Heaton, “We’re looking forward to sharing the stage with people we play music with regularly, but also some of the more underappreciated ‘tradition-bearers’ and ‘sessioneers.’ There will be a good sampling of the Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton and other music that makes Boston such a wonderful place to be a Celtic musician.”

The BCMFest finale concert takes place at 8 p.m. in First Parish Church in Cambridge (corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Church Street in Harvard Square). Tickets are \$15, \$13 for Passim members, and \$5 for age 15 and under; a combo pass for the Saturday BCMFest “Dayfest” and the finale concert is \$25, \$23 for Passim members.