



Boston Celtic Music Fest is a partner of the Folk Arts Center of New England

**2008 Finale Concert: "Celtic Roots, American Branches"
*BCMFest to mark fifth birthday with onstage celebration***

(December 2007) The Boston Celtic Music Fest (BCMFest) has every reason to celebrate its 2008 edition — and that's just what will happen at the festival's Jan. 12 finale concert.

This will be the fifth year for BCMFest, the grassroots, community-oriented festival that spotlights Boston's rich resources of Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton and other Celtic music. Some two-dozen of the Greater Boston area's finest performers of Celtic-oriented music, song and dance will appear at BCMFest 2008, which takes place Jan. 11 and 12.

Commemorating this special milestone in BCMFest's short but eventful history, the festival's evening finale concert "Celtic Roots, American Branches" will celebrate the Boston area Celtic music scene and its many friends and supporters. The concert will feature an assortment of tunes, songs and dances drawing on Celtic and American influences, with a succession of special guests as well as a "house band," and conclude with the premiere of a song written especially for BCMFest.

"Celtic Roots, American Branches" takes place Jan. 12 at 8 p.m. in the First Parish of Cambridge Church in Harvard Square, 3 Church Street. Admission is \$15.

Appropriately enough, the finale concert's producers are none other than BCMFest's co-founders, fiddler Laura Cortese and flutist Shannon Heaton.

Cortese and Heaton also will be part of the concert's house band, whose members include Catherine Joyce, Abbie MacQuarrie, Armand Aromin and Julie Metcalf. Among the guests slated for cameo appearances are The Boston Kiltics, Helena Delaney, Lissa Schneckeburger, Flynn Cohen and Matt Heaton, Debra Cowan and Kyte MacKillop ("Plus some others who don't know yet that they're performing," quips Cortese).

"This is a special year for BCMFest, so we wanted to do something different for the finale concert," says Cortese. "We're examining all aspects of the Celtic tradition as personified by the wonderful musicians, singers and dancers here in the Boston area. They include 'tradition-bearers' — the people who grew up in the tradition and have kept it going for years — as well as the younger generation, who have brought other kinds of musical influences, such as old-timey or bluegrass, to Celtic traditions."

Adds Heaton, "It's going to be a lot of fun. We will have some new faces at the event, and that's very important, because BCMFest is constantly trying to reach out and get more people from our community involved. But the concert also will bring up a lot of people who have been mainstays of BCMFest, and the local music scene. It's a way of celebrating the past but also looking toward the future."

That sentiment also is expressed in "Before We Sleep," a Cortese-Heaton composition that will make its debut as the concert's closing song. "Laura and I wrote it earlier this

year when we were at a music festival," says Heaton. "We just wanted to say something about the joy this music gives us, especially in the way it brings us together, whether it's for BCMFest, or a pub session, or a gathering at a friend's house. When we share tunes and songs, we're also sharing one another's company, and that's a big reason why this tradition has been around so long."

Not surprisingly, "Before We Sleep" has a chorus on which the audience will be encouraged to join, adds Heaton. "We hope everyone will sing away and give the festival a rocking good ending."

For more information on BCMFest, see bcmfest.com.