



## **This Tribute a Matter of Record**

### ***BCMFest to feature salute to classic Andy Irvine-Paul Brady album***

In its first four years, the Boston Celtic Music Fest has saluted notable musicians, composers, songs and tunes in the Celtic tradition. For its upcoming fifth edition, BCMFest offers another kind of kudos, paying homage to one of the most popular and influential recordings in the contemporary Irish music revival.

On Saturday, January 12, BCMFest will present Flynn Cohen and Matt Heaton playing "A Tribute to Andy Irvine and Paul Brady," their take on the eponymous 1977 album that included such classic songs as "Arthur McBride," "The Jolly Soldier" and "Mary and the Soldier" — all of which have become staples in the modern Irish folk song repertoire, and can be heard in pubs and parlors from Ballyvaughn to Boston, and beyond.

"The Paul and Andy Show" (the concert's unofficial name) will take place at 11:30 a.m. at Club Passim, one of the four BCMFest venues.

The collaboration is a natural fit for Cohen and Heaton, who are two of the foremost "Celtic-style" guitarists in the Greater Boston/New England area. Cohen, who has worked with the likes of John Whelan, Aoife Clancy, The Sevens and Halali, as well as

the alt-trad band Annalivia (their debut CD came out this fall), is a scholar of Paul Brady's guitar style and has transcribed many of Brady's arrangements for songs and tunes. He also can wield a mean mandolin.

Heaton, while best-known for his musical partnership with his wife Shannon (the two recently released an album of Celtic-influenced Christmas music), is continually in demand as an accompanist and has played with a number of performers, including Robbie O'Connell, the Boys of the Lough and Lissa Schneckenburger. In recent years, Heaton has expanded his considerable talents to bouzouki, a development which figured significantly into the Paul-Andy tribute concept.

"I was trying to learn some of Andy's material as a way of working on my bouzouki playing, and I knew Flynn was rather obsessed with Paul Brady's approach to traditional music," explains Heaton. "I got the idea for the collaboration on the last day before performer applications were due for BCMFest; Flynn and I had one e-mail exchange and decided to do it.

"Why BCMFest? Where else could we get away with it?"

Few albums in the past three to four decades of the Irish/Celtic folk revival have had the impact of Brady-Irvine, according to Cohen and Heaton, which is why the recording can be appreciated on its own merits as well as for its place in Irish music.

"Stylistic trends -- like the syncopated tunes and fiddle chop of today, or the square rhythm guitar playing of the early folk revival -- don't normally stand the test of time," says Cohen. "However, Brady and Irvine avoided many of the indulgences that end up leaving a record sounding dated after 10 or 20 years. These guys put so much work into their arrangements, which was a reflection of the music scene in the 1970s, especially

progressive rock. But it's a very authentic sound, one that is highly appropriate for the music.”

Cohen points to Brady's guitar playing on the album as one of its most important features. “Brady did so much to incorporate the guitar into Irish music, not only for singing but for backing and picking tunes. Every person who plays Irish guitar, whether they know it or not, draws on his influence – and this album really spotlights what he brought to the music.”

Adds Heaton, “They picked great songs, and did amazingly creative things with them. Nowadays, there are many albums where people pick great songs, and do rather dull things with them. Its significance to the traditional music revival is setting the bar really high.”

Heaton recalls listening to the album's adventurous opening track, “The Plains of Kildare” – with its shifting time signatures, including a Balkanesque 7/8 romp in the middle – while driving, which nearly proved to be a dangerous combination. “At the point when the last verse starts and they bring in the backing vocal, I almost got into an accident because I was so blown away.”

Regardless of whether the BCMFest Brady-Irvine tribute may similarly affect area traffic safety, Cohen and Heaton say they're working hard at what Heaton calls a “faithful recreation” of the album: “We won't obsess about having every overdub present, but try to figure out how best to do the music live.” There are also likely to be some special guests on hand to add to the fun, but the duo is mum as to whether they will faithfully recreate the 70s-era Brady-Irvine hairstyles and clothing fashions.

Heaton jokes that their idea has apparently been swiped: The Celtic Connections Festival taking place in Glasgow later in January also will feature a Brady-Irvine tribute.

“It’s being performed by a couple of guys named Brady and Irvine.”

Flynn Cohen – <http://www.myspace.com/flynncohen>

Matt Heaton – <http://www.eatsrecords.com/>

Boston Celtic Music Fest – <http://bcmfest.com/>