

***For Immediate Release***

December 28, 2010

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**Public Information:** 972-943-4616

**2011 NORTH TEXAS IRISH FESTIVAL**

**"Ireland I Am Coming Home"**

**Theme for 29th Annual Festival**

**March 4-5-6 at Fair Park**

**Presented by the Southwest Celtic Music Association**

DALLAS –The 2011 North Texas Irish Festival, (NTIF), promises to be the best ever featuring an amazing array of Irish performers bringing to life this years theme, "Ireland, I Am Coming Home", March 4-5-6; Friday, Saturday and Sunday at Fair Park. Some of the very best musicians Ireland has to offer will be in Dallas. The NTIF will also continue to stress the need for a "Green" eco-friendly way of living by working with several corporate sponsors featuring products and services designed to protect and preserve the environment.

The annual North Texas Irish Festival, presented by the Southwest Celtic Music Association, (SCMA), is one of the largest Celtic cultural events in the nation. The NTIF will open its festival on Friday night, March 5th, at 6 PM with full festival activities, including performances by several headliners.

The festivities will continue throughout the weekend, and feature some of the very finest in Irish and other Celtic entertainment including world famous bands, award-winning dancers, enchanting storytellers, and educational workshops on ten stages thru out Fair Park. The festival will also offer a variety of delicious Irish and international food and drink, cultural crafts, and ethnic vendors. More details are posted on the website at [www.ntif.org](http://www.ntif.org).

**Performers**

The centerpiece of this year's lineup will be **Altan**, back in Dallas for the entire weekend so there will be multiple opportunities to soak in their music. Over 25 years of playing together, Altan have established themselves as one of the most important live acts to play traditional Irish music in Ireland and on the World stage. This year their music includes a mixture of songs recorded over the last 25 years and featured in their new album.

**Cathie Ryan**, one of the consistently favorite performers to ever grace the NTIF stages, whether it was with Cherish the Ladies, or her own solo performances will be featured. Cathie captures hearts with her gorgeous voice and ability to weave musical threads and create a story from them.

**Tommy Sands**. - County Down's singer, songwriter and social activist has achieved legendary status in his own lifetime as he has developed into one of the most powerful songwriters and enchanting solo performers in Ireland today.

In addition, **Dervish** comes back to the NTIF bringing their brand of upbeat, lively traditional Irish music with them. They have traveled from the Great Wall of China to packed auditoriums in the Holy Land and more recently being the first Irish band to perform at the greatest music festival in the world, "**Rock in Rio**", before an estimated audience of two hundred and forty thousand people. **McPeake** is a brand new band to NTIF featuring Francis McPeake, one of the foremost uilleann pipers in the world. Their music blends influences from Irish traditional, folk, acoustic and country genres to create a unique sound that is an experience for the ears and soul. **Brock McGuire Band** is another celebrated traditional quartet that contains some of the most accomplished musicians around.

Other real favorites that are returning to NTIF after a few years are **The Glengarry Boys**, world renowned Canadian alt-celt group; described as bold, unorthodox, vibrant, and evocative.

Closer to home are **The Elders**, Kansas City musicians with a passion for Celtic music. They deliver high octave, progressive, Irish tradition, unaffected by fads and trends. They are fronted by charismatic Irishman, Ian Byrne from County Wicklow, who loves all things American and Irish.

From Texas, the festival will have two of the finest singers and songwriters around, **Ed Miller** and **Jed Marum**, and they round out our headliner lineup for 2011. **Ed Miller** has been hailed as "one of the finest singers to come out of the Scottish Folksong Revival" and as "one of Scotland's best singing exports." **Jed Marum** is not only performing all over the country, his music is found on movie soundtracks, and his albums play regularly on Folk/Bluegrass and Celtic radio programs around the world.

The "Spirit of the Celtic Horse" and several other equestrian shows, blacksmithing, archery and other amazing demonstrations will be performed in the Marine Square and Fountain Plaza area of Fair Park. The NTIF will also hold its 2<sup>nd</sup> annual "Irish Fest" Parade, featuring something for the whole family; horses, pipers, clans, vendors, Irish American Society person of year, dogs, and more scheduled for Saturday, March 5 at approximately 4 pm

The North Texas Irish Festival has been a Dallas tradition since 1983. The three-day NTIF is now recognized as the largest single cultural event held in Fair Park and, with an attendance of over 70,000 people, is second only to that of the State Fair of Texas. The Festival has always highlighted the music, dance and culture of Ireland. The five large stages will showcase not only the top-flight Irish Headliners but several popular local and regional groups like **Behan., Beyond the Pale, The Trinity River Whalers, Irish Rogues, Jiggernaut, Drowsy Maggie, 5 Second Rule, Killavil, Sarah Dinan** and over a dozen more outstanding performers from our area.

### **Dance**

Full festival activities will kick off on a big Friday night of high-energy performances this year. Equally represented are the colorful traditional and modern Irish dancers with their hand-embroidered dresses and fast foot- tapping rhythms. Some of the finest dancers in the country are located in the Metroplex in our local schools, including the well-known Emerald School of Irish Dance, the Shandon School of Irish Dance, the McTeggart Irish Dancers and the Maguire Academy of Irish Dance and they will delight our audiences with continuous performances on our dance stage. In addition there will be dance workshops throughout the weekend and everyone is encouraged to get into the spirit of Ireland at the Saturday night Ceili, or Irish dance party.

### **Cultural**

The festival brings a wide variety of exhibitors, workshops, plays and demonstrations. The popular "**Scottish Village**" will return again this year where local Scottish clans will feature demonstrations and explanations as to the strong connection between the Irish and Scots in their music, ancestry and culture. "**Urchin Street**" will offer a special place where the younger Celts can find entertainment, education, play and fun, including music, dance, storytelling, theater, magic and mystery. Many special activities and giveaways will be part of expanded Urchin Street programs this year.

### **Hours, Admission and Location**

Gates open on Friday evening, March 4 and the hours are 6 p.m. til 11 p.m., Saturday, March 5 from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 6 from 11:30 a.m. til 7:30 p.m. Adult tickets are Free until 7 pm Friday night and \$10 after, \$15 for Saturday or Sunday, or \$30 for a 3-day weekend pass. *Children 11 and under* are admitted free. Members of the SCMA, Students (with ID) and Senior Citizens 65 and over receive a \$2 discount at the gate. **Discount one-day tickets will be available beginning February 8, 2011 at all Metroplex Tom Thumb stores.** The event will take place in Fair Park's Centennial, Automobile and Hall of State buildings as well as covered areas adjacent to these buildings. Parking is available in and around Fair Park and DART, the official transportation provider of the NTIF, **brings the DART Light Rail Line directly to Fair Park from many locations throughout the Metroplex.** **Detailed directions and parking tips are available on the home page of our website at [www.ntif.org](http://www.ntif.org).** The public can call **972-943-4616** or visit [www.ntif.org](http://www.ntif.org) for more information or to volunteer to work at the festival.

**About the Southwest Celtic Music Association**

The Southwest Celtic Music Association (SCMA) is the producing organization for the North Texas Irish Festival (NTIF). Over 600 volunteers will help in organization, promotion and execution of this year's festival. The first such festival was held on March 5, 1983 at the legendary Nick Farrelly's Lounge on Oak Lawn and was billed as the First Texas Céili. This event was so popular that it has continued every year since on the first weekend in March as the North Texas Irish Festival. Shortly after the first festival, the all-volunteer Southwest Celtic Music Association was formed to promote the study, performance and preservation of traditional Celtic music, dance and culture. In 1984, the event was moved to Fair Park and its name changed to the North Texas Irish Festival. The Southwest Celtic Music Association is a 501(c) 3 corporation headquartered in Dallas, Texas and serves a five-state regional area. The organization maintains a web site at [www.scmatax.org](http://www.scmatax.org).

**Sponsors**

The North Texas Irish Festival is produced and sponsored by the Southwest Celtic Music Association. Generous sponsors include, Time Warner Cable, Guinness, Coors Light, George Killian's Irish Red, Harp, Smithwick's, Coca Cola, Tom Thumb, the Radisson Hotel @ Mockingbird Station, Texas Lottery Commission and DART. Media support is provided by CBS Radio stations; KLUV, KLLI, KRLD, KVIL, KJJK and KOAI, NBC 5, and Quick,

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