

## ***For Immediate Release***

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### **2006 NORTH TEXAS IRISH FESTIVAL Celebrates Cultural Heritage - March 3, 4, and 5 at Fair Park Indoor Event Kicks Off Friday Night with Full Festival Activities**

**DALLAS** -The 24th annual North Texas Irish Festival (NTIF), one of the largest Celtic cultural events in the nation, will salute its cultural heritage with this years theme the "Heirs of Erin". Many of the featured musicians and dancers are well-known second and third generation Irish-Americans and a number of cultural presentations will focus on the ways in which the Irish integrated into American life. Again, in 2006 the NTIF will open its festival on Friday night, March 3, at 6 PM with full festival activities, including performances by national and regional Headliners.

The festivities will continue throughout the weekend, including Saturday, March 4 through Sunday, March 5, 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. As in the past, the festival will also offer a variety of delicious Irish and international food and drink, cultural crafts, and ethnic vendors.

#### **Performers**

Internationally known as a showcase for the best in Celtic entertainment, this year's festival will feature a rich blend of traditional and modern Celtic bands as well as solo artists from Europe, Canada and the US. The NTIF will kickoff its Irish heritage celebration with the best of Irish music from our popular regional bands and full festival activities. Friday night headliners will include **Beth Patterson** and her band, **Kalafka** and solo artist, **Jed Marum** among others. Highlighting the weekend are world-renowned Irish violinist, **Eileen Ivers** and headliner band, **The Makem Brothers**, with their powerhouse Irish vocal presentation.

Also headlining the weekend performances is **Aoife Clancy**, formerly with "Cherish the Ladies" bringing her unique traditional Irish songs and ballads to the NTIF. **Robbie O'Connell** and his band will present their repertoire of Irish hits. Also performing are celebrated concertina and flute player **John Willams** and master guitarist **Dean Magraw** in addition to the high-energy Australian band, **Brother**.

Regular NTIF top names like celebrated solo artist **Ed Miller** and **Brothers 3** will return for 2006. Several popular local and regional entertainers including; BEHAN, Beyond the Pale, Michael Harrison, Threadneedle Street, Jigsaw, Irish Rogues and the Trinity River Whalers will also be performing on the six stages throughout the weekend. New performers this year include; Boru's Ghost, Roger Drawdy and the Firestarters and Paisley Close. Performances by area dance groups will include the well-known Emerald School of Dance, the Shandon School of Irish Dance, The Iverin School of Irish Dance, and McTeggart Irish Dancers, and many more.

## **Cultural**

In addition to the musical and dance performances, 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. The "**Urchin Street Faire**" will again 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.

## **"Heirs of Erin" 2006 NTIF**

The 2006 NTIF entertainment will bring a lineup that reflects our theme of the "Heirs of Erin". Many of the invited bands are made up of either recent immigrants or second and third generation Irish-Americans who are carrying on the traditions handed down to them by their parents and grandparents. Several of the cultural presentations will focus on the ways in which the Irish integrated into American life yet continued to remember their rich heritage and who have now established deep roots in the United States. Each one of them carries on the traditions of their heritage in their music, which in many cases has been handed down through many generations.

## **Hours, Admission and Location**

Festival hours are Friday evening, March 3 from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m., Saturday, March 4 from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 5 from 11:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Adult ticket prices are \$10 for Friday night, \$15 for Saturday or Sunday, or \$30 for a 3-day weekend pass. Children 11 and under are admitted free. Students (with ID) and Senior Citizens receive a \$2 discount. **Discount tickets will be available until March 5 at all Metroplex Tom Thumb stores.** The event will take place at Fair Park's Centennial and Automobile Buildings as well as covered areas, between the Hall of State and the park's main gate on Parry Avenue. Parking is available in and around Fair Park and DART, the official transportation provider of the NTIF, is available from many locations throughout the Metroplex. The public can call **972-943-4624** or visit **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 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.scmatrix.org](http://www.scmatrix.org).

## **Sponsors**

The North Texas Irish Festival is produced and sponsored by the Southwest Celtic Music Association. Generous additional sponsorship is provided by Guinness, Coors Light, Killian's Irish Red, Harp, Smithwick's, Coca Cola, Tom Thumb, Medical City Heart, SBC Global, the Radisson Hotel @ Mockingbird Station, Sullivan-Perkins and DART, our official transportation provider. Media support is provided by Infinity Radio stations; KLUV, KLLI, KRLD, KVIL, KJKK and KOAI, NBC 5, Quick, and DCTV, (Dallas Community Television).

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