

The Freebird

Volume IV

July 2009

The Freebird is the newsletter of the Irish Fair of Minnesota, August 7-9, 2009 Harriet Island in St. Paul. Its purpose is to keep us connected, provide updates, celebrate successes and share our stories, and to support the mission of the Irish Fair by promoting and cultivating Irish culture.



2009 Irish Fair of Minnesota Comin' Atcha!!!

Dropkick Murphys Debut at Irish Fair Friday Night

Also Performing: Young Dubliners, Solas, Salsa Celtica and Makem & Spain Bros.

Saint Paul, MN (June 19, 2009) Irish Fair of Minnesota, the largest FREE Irish celebration in the upper Midwest, will again be held at Saint Paul's Harriet Island Regional Park Friday through Sunday, August 7-9. The fair drew more than 125,000 visitors last year and organizers are expecting an even greater turnout in 2009. **The fair will open at 3 pm on Friday and run until 11 pm Friday and Saturday evenings.**

Dropkick Murphys, a raging Irish punk rock band will make its 1st appearance at Irish Fair on Friday night. This incredibly popular raucous band plays a unique blend of traditional Irish music spiked with punk rock. Other headliners include **Young Dubliners**, a Celtic rock band, **Solas** an Irish American Celtic Trad Band and **Salsa Celtica**, an exciting group playing a unique combo of Latino and Celtic music. Rounding out the entertainment on Sunday will be **Makem & Spain Brothers**, combining the talents of two of Ireland's legendary families of folk singers and songwriters.

"This year's Irish Fair entertainment lineup is the deepest and broadest ever," said Steve Cerkvenik, executive director of Irish Fair of Minnesota. "We've got top name recognition with Dropkick Murphys, a great blend of Celtic folk, rock and trad plus a unique new twist with Celtic-Latino music. There will truly be something for everyone."

Dropkick Murphys have been thrilling crowds around the world with their raucous blend of punk rock, Irish folk and hardcore rock. Their amazing connection with audiences encourages fans to let loose, sing along and have a good time. Since 1996 this band of Boston lads has released over 10 singles and four albums, the latest being *Meanest of Times*, a combination of full-throated working men's anthems and sentimental punk. www.dropkickmurphys.com.

IRISH FAIR IDOL CONTEST

The Irish Fair of Minnesota is always on the cutting edge of bringing the best and brightest of Irish culture and talent forward. Our Irish Idol contest is the real opener to the fair, held on Friday early evening, it is an exciting way to kick off the weekend!

Come on out and support those who get up on stage and give it all they've got!

Come on out and show off **your** talents!

When: Friday, August 7th.

Where: Irish Fair of MN on Harriet Island.

Time: 3:00 – 5:30 PM.

Open to any music or dance act that is not already booked for a set on the Jake O'Connors or Cara Irish Pubs Stages at this year's festival.

See you there!!



**Last Year's Winners:
The Dirty Hurlers from Morehead, MN**

Young Dubliners, a hard hitting Celtic rock band will play both Friday and Saturday nights. The Young Dubliners last played Irish Fair in 2007 and have just released a new album *Saints and Sinners*. www.youngdubs.com

Irish Fair welcomes two **new** bands Saturday and Sunday nights. **Solas** is considered one of the world's finest Celtic ensembles. Since its birth in 1996, this group has performed at all the world's major Celtic festivals and is proclaimed as the most popular, influential, and exciting Celtic band to ever emerge from the United States.

www.solasmusic.com. **Salsa Celtica's** combination of Latino and Celtic music was an immediate hit in Scottish nightclubs among the newly arrived Hispanic immigrants. The band's breakthrough single 'El Agua De La Vida' reached number 5 on the World Music Chart of Europe, number 24 in the end of year round-up 2003 World Music Chart for Europe and was also their first album released in the US on Compass Records. www.salsaceltica.com.

Featured Headliner: **THE MAKEM AND SPAIN BROTHERS**

Every generation has a few acts that define where a musical genre is going, performers so confident in their chosen field that they are able to completely embrace the genre and yet introduce something new to it. In Irish folk music today, that act is the Makem and Spain Brothers.

Not in the past 30 years has a group taken the international stage with such vocal power and stage presence, capturing the essence of their genre, while standing out as something truly unique. A host of various instruments and five male vocals, using precise three-part harmonies blend perfectly for what many have described as a wall of sound. The Makem and Spain Brothers are at their best onstage where their talent and enthusiasm draw in fans who have never experienced the joy of folk music.



The Makem Brothers, Shane, Conor and Rory, were born in Drogheda, County Louth, about an hour north of Dublin. They continue the lineage of one of Irish music's dynasties, begun by their grandmother Sarah Makem, who was sought after by song collectors for her store of traditional Irish songs. Their father is Tommy Makem, the modern day Bard of Armagh. Now considered an icon, he helped to bring Irish music out of the corner and into the international spotlight, where it has remained ever since.

The Spain Brothers, too, learned Irish songs at their father's knee. Mickey's rich, baritone voice and Liam's mastery of stringed instruments quickly found a home when the Makems met the Spains and the brothers realized the power of their combined talents. But folk songs are engrained in both families and their songwriting contains the timeless qualities of folk classics, songs of the worker, songs of the sea and Irish culture. They tell the tale of Ireland and its people - a culture that has undergone terrible strife, but remains strong.

Where is Irish music going? There are instrumental bands bringing it down uncharted roads, moving it forward and keeping it living. But there is only one band that is driving *Irish folk songs* into the 21st century internationally: the ***Makem and Spain Brothers***.

AN GHAELGE

Maireann croí éadrom a bhfad.
A light heart lives a long time.

Courtesy of Gaeltacht Minnesota, a volunteer organization that teaches the Irish language

WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON AT THE FAIR?

In addition to great music, Irish Fair will feature authentic Irish food, drink, dance, cultural workshops, sporting events and contests including the Irish Idol Contest, Run with the Celts 5-K race, Best Legs in a Kilt, Pub Quizzes and more. The Children's Area will feature mini-golf, crafts, Celtic myth and magic, Native Dogs of Ireland and a new Building Block area to build a giant walking map of Dublin. Details below:

WHAT'S NEW IN 2009

Irish Immigrant Cup – A soccer match pitting Irish Immigrants vs. METRO (from *Liga Mexicana*). METRO is a team comprised of recent Mexican immigrants including former professional player Jorge Rojas to be held Sunday at 5 pm. This match will bring attention to the Irish Legacy Fund, which provides grants for Irish Cultural Groups and non-Irish Immigrant groups across the Twin Cities and Minnesota.

Matchmaking - An IF Matchmaking session will be held Saturday from 6:30-9:30 pm in the Crossroads Tent. This new event includes an ice breaker, a “get to know each other” Pub Quiz, an Amazing Race throughout the fairgrounds and Irish Social Dance lessons led by world famous Irish dance instructor Ger Butler. There will be a \$25 fee. Participants must register in advance via the website: [IF matchmaking](#) by July 24.

Children's Block Map of Dublin – Kids can help build a “box city” depicting a giant walking map of Dublin in the Children's Area

Guinness & Harp will be sold for the first time at Irish Fair! Finnegan's Amber Ale will also be back. Watch for other interesting beverage options to be added to the options.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND:

Contests: To nurture that competitive Irish spirit, Irish Fair has more contests than ever. To view rules and to register for contests, visit www.irishfair.com

Irish Fair Idol Contest: Jake O'Connor's Public House Stage Friday from 3-5 pm. The winner will perform at the Fair on Saturday at 6 pm and will also receive \$250 cash.

Run with the Celts: 5-K Race and 1-K Family Run/Walk Saturday 9:30 am (proceeds benefit the Irish Fair Legacy Fund).

Best Legs in a Kilt: Gentlemen, flex those calves and don those kilts! Sunday, 3 pm

Pub Quiz of Irish Trivia: Crossroads Tent Fri-7 pm, Sat: 6:30 pm, Sun 3:00 pm

Irish Soda Bread Contest: Bring in your best version of this traditional Irish Treat

Irish Photo Contest: Submit your favorite Irish pictures.

Dance: Irish Dancing exhibitions will be held at the dance tent throughout the weekend. The Mississippi Riverdance, featuring dozens dancers from the area's top dance schools will be held Friday at 7:30 pm. Free step dance lessons ranging from céilí and reels, to set dances, will be held in the Crossroads Tent.

Sports: Gaelic football, rugby, hurling, and Tug of War matches will be held at Croagh Park sport field. Popular 1920s style boxing exhibitions will be held in the boxing tent.

Culture: The Irish culture and heritage area will include specific workshops on Gaelic language, genealogy, Irish instruments and more.

Kids: The *Irish Indeed Children's Area* is always a popular stop for young and old alike. Miniature golf, Native Dogs of Ireland, sheepherding demonstrations, songs, games, storytelling and children's dance lessons will keep kids entertained throughout the weekend.

Food, Drink, Merchandise: Over 50 vendors, 15 artisans and a dozen community organizations will exhibit at a huge Marketplace, featuring jewelry, fine porcelain, clothing, CDs, travel information, books and just about All Things Irish. Guests can also enjoy authentic trad or modern Irish fare from independents and from local Irish pubs and restaurants; also beer, ale, stout and wine in the O'Donovan's Pub Tent.

Sunday Mass will be celebrated at 9 am by Father Dan McCauley at the Cara Irish Pubs Stage which provides views of the river, the downtown skyline and Saint Paul Cathedral.

For a complete entertainment schedule or to view photos, visit www.irishfair.com

See ya at the Fair!