

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Champion Fiddler, Celtic bands among performers for 2011 McPherson (KS) Scottish Festival

Festival features regional and national performers in outdoor performances and an indoor concert at the restored McPherson Opera House

(McPherson, KS) Headline performers are announced for the 18th annual McPherson (KS) Scottish Festival Sept. 24 & 25, 2011. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Lakeside Park, US 56 Hwy, McPherson, KS

The list of performers includes Elke Baker and Ken Kolodner, Runa, Ellis Island, and Navan.

Elke Baker and Ken Kolodner

(Fiddle and hammered dulcimer). Elke and Ken's repertoire includes a rich variety of Scottish and Irish music, original compositions, and refreshing, foot-stomping Old Time twin fiddling that just brings the house down.

Elke Baker, 1995 U.S. National Scottish Fiddle Champion, combines lyrical melodies with driving dance rhythms in her energetic fiddling. Elke plays Scottish, Celtic, and American fiddle music across America and in places as far-flung as Japan, West Africa, and Scotland. Elke is a faculty member at the Washington Conservatory of Music, where she teaches history and performance of Celtic music. She brings a scholar's depth of knowledge and an engaging manner to her performances, as well as an intimate knowledge of just what makes people want to dance.

Ken Kolodner

Performing traditional world music on hammer dulcimer and fiddle, Ken has been featured in nationally broadcast concerts on NPR, German National Radio, CBC, and the Voice of America. Without any formal music background, Ken began learning to play the fiddle at age 23 by listening to recordings of bluegrass and American Old-time or Appalachian music. A few years after picking up the fiddle, Ken discovered the hammered dulcimer while in graduate school. Ken's interest in the two instruments developed into an ever-expanding musical appetite beginning with Celtic music and eventually into music spanning many cultures ranging from South American music to Chinese music. Elke and Ken will perform at each of McPherson's public elementary schools on Friday, Sept. 23.

Runa

Philadelphia-based Celtic trio Runa draws on the diverse musical backgrounds of its band members to bring a contemporary and refreshing experience to traditional and more recently composed Celtic material. Through their repertoire of both highly energetic and graceful, acoustic melodies, along with their fusion of music from Ireland, Scotland, the Shetland Islands, Canada, and the United States, this vocal and instrumental ensemble gives its arrangements of traditional songs and tunes a fresh sound. RUNA consists of vocalist, Shannon Lambert-Ryan of Philadelphia, Dublin-born guitarist, Fionán de Barra, and Cheryl Prashker of Canada on percussion.

Ellis Island

What happens when a former two time World Kickboxing Champion from Dublin, Ireland meets a

Mental Health Professional from Denton, Nebraska to play and perform Irish music? You get a tough, yet sensitive, frenzied yet polished, sometimes boisterous yet often gentle delivery of modern and traditional Irish music from the pub to the concert stage.

With well over a dozen instruments played on stage this very talented duo have the gift of bringing the Irish Pub experience to everyone. From Mick Doyle's powerful and emotional lead vocals to Dave Marsh's mastery of his menagerie of instruments, they are sure to delight and sound much bigger than just a duo.

Navan

Traditional, unaccompanied Celtic singing, on four voices, in the languages of Ireland, Scotland and Cornwall singing a variety of Gaelic folk songs from multiple traditions. The Madison, Wisconsin based band consists of Amy Curl, Paul Gorman, Sheila Shigley and Elizabeth Simcock. Here's how they describe themselves: We are friends who have come together to share our love of Celtic music among ourselves, and with others. We sing in the languages of Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Brittany, Cornwall and the Isle of Man. We have a special feeling for those beautifully worded songs and poems whose tunes have been lost—there are so many. We also enjoy songs which have been carried on in traditional form to the present day.

Each group will perform five sets in Lakeside Park over the two-day Festival. In addition they will appear on the stage at the McPherson Opera House for a concert Saturday evening, Sept. 24, 2011. Tickets for the Festival are available online at macfestival.org, at the gates in Lakeside Park, or at the door for the Saturday evening concert.

The McPherson Scottish Festival features sixteen venues of family-centered activities reflecting the traditions and heritage of Scotland, Ireland and the other Celtic lands.

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Additional festival information is available from:

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McPherson visitor information is available from:

Anne Hassler, McPherson Convention & Visitors Bureau

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