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Irish Music festival 2013

By **Alexandra Kocik**
The Daily World

Traditional songs with new beats, old ballads from before historians began writing events down and a lot of Irish jig dancers are coming to Grays Harbor. The 10th annual Irish Music Festival will be held in Hoquiam and Ocean Shores starting today and ending Sunday.

The first year Bill Gibbons put on an Irish festival, in 2003, it was restricted to the stage available in Galway Bay Pub in Ocean Shores. Ten years and post-fire renovations later, he has bands filling up four stages at the Ocean Shores Convention Center, four at his pub and the stage available at the 8th Street Ale House in Hoquiam.

The four stages at the convention center correlate with different music styles. There is the main stage for the most popular acts and battles of the bands.

“It’s a really neat thing where we have two stages that are kind of facing each other with the crowd in the middle,” Gibbons said. “The bands always have a lot of fun with it, going back and forth in a fun, friendly competition.”



David Safian

From left; Chas Waltz, Brendan Holmes, Dave Ingraham, Keith Roberts and Bob Boulding of The Young Dubliners.

1 2 3 4

A rock stage is for the more energized bands, such as Heavy Hammer and Sons of Malarkey.

Then the session and ballad stages hold up bands playing a bit more mellow or traditional sounds.

Kids activities will also be available throughout the four days at the Ocean Shores Convention Center. Activities include face painting, Irish crafts and watching Irish step dance. There will also be workshops for adults throughout Saturday (schedule available online). Galway Bay’s four stages — the main, banquet, tasting room and beer garden — will have an eclectic selection of bands also playing at the other venues.

The 8th Street Ale House will also have a mix, with high-energy Raybone Experience and the Whiskey Dicks appearing on Saturday. Sunday, however, is more of the more mellow, traditional songs. “Those old people don’t want to listen to that rock stuff. The different stages

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let people stick to what they like or go back and forth throughout the day and venues,” Gibbons said. “I like it all myself.”

The Daily World was able to speak with several representatives for a selection of the bands over the phone or via email.

To check out the event schedule and for more info, visit www.GalwayBayIrishPub.com and click on “Irish Music Festival” at the top of the page.

Young Dubliners

Keith Roberts is the singer and acoustic guitar player for a band focused on balance.

When they get up on stage, a lot of traditional Celtic and Irish lyrics from songs written 200 years ago collide with modern guitar and drums. There are also some originals, with the same sound vibe, thrown in. Although Roberts says “the Young Dubs” have become much better at recording new albums and working on songs together, they will always feel the most at home on the road.

“We’ve been on the road since 1993, so obviously something was doing it for me. We’re very much a live band ...” Roberts said. “You’ll see a lot of fun going on upstage whenever we’re playing. When you travel 8 to 9 hours, you’ve got to enjoy that 90 minutes or so you’re up on stage or you wouldn’t put up with that travel crap, ya know. That’s what has kept us going all this time.”

Without their fans, the band wouldn’t have enjoyed the success they have today, Roberts said.

The Young Dubs’ ninth album, cleverly titled “Nine” according to a sarcastic Roberts, was recorded and produced by the band with funds from fans.

To say thanks, the album was given to contributors, passed out at gigs and is available on their website until the tracks are put up officially on iTunes in March.

Although they have played in Seattle many times before, this is the Young Dubs first time on Grays Harbor. Roberts was especially taken with the name of the pub Gibbons owns in Ocean Shores.

“I love that it’s called Galway Bay because I’ve been to the real Galway Bay many times,” he said. “I know it’s not really comparing the same thing, but the weather is rather similar.”

The band was scheduled to play at last year’s Irish and Celtic festival but ended up having to cancel due to extra shows on their European tour. Gibbons extended another offer this year and they gladly accepted, Roberts said.

“It’ll be fun because we do a lot of really big fests all over and they’re great to do,” he said. “But smaller ones are a little more intimate or whatever you’d like to call it. We’re looking forward to it, ya know?”

After the festival, the Young Dubs will be playing at the Tractor House in Seattle with the Bog Hoppers, who will also be in attendance in Ocean Shores.

For more info visit, www.YoungDubliners.com.

Derek Warfield and the Young Wolfe Tones

For the second year in a row, Derek Warfield and the Young Wolfe Tones are making the long trip from Ireland to play in Ocean Shores. This year they are the other headlining band for the festival.

Warfield, who grew up singing traditional Irish songs, also has an appreciation for the history behind the songs.

He researched and gathered many songs sung by Irish soldiers during the American Civil War.

Always on the go and working on at least one project, he said he wouldn’t have it any other way.

“I love to be busy and even when I’m not on the go I’m still on the go and I think that’s what keeps me ‘young’ with my Young Wolfe Tones and I would like to think that it gives me same passion for singing as I had 50 years ago,” Warfield wrote in an email.

The whole band enjoys the audience’s energy during live shows and Warfield’s love of history carries into this as well.

"I also love the fact that we're telling a story when we're performing live and that story in music has been taken with pride all over the world," he wrote.

They plan to play both old and new favorites, including "The Piper," an upbeat tune that is often requested, Warfield wrote. Warfield and the band recently released their newest album "Let Ye All Be Irish Tonight" and will be working on new projects, including another volume of the revolutionary war collection, after the festival.

For more info visit, www.TheYoungWolfetones.com.

Ockham's Razor

For the first time in two years, Ockham's Razor from Seattle will be playing together at the Irish Music Fest. The band has been reinvented, with singer, whistle and accordion player, Kris Clements being the only original member to return.

During Ockham's Razor's two-year hiatus, Clements still attended Galway Bay's festival as special guests of Peter Yates and others. After the original band fell apart, it was the first time in 20 years that Clements found himself without a band.

He visited home, southeastern Scotland's "Debatable Lands," before returning to Seattle. With a horrible case of writer's block, he had no inclination of starting up anything new until his friend Daniel McManus, Ockham's new bassist, called about putting up a Craigslist ad for a Celtic band. After a long drive to gather his thoughts, Clements suggested they put Ockham's Razor back together.

"It was lucky for me because I don't think I could've found a better caliber of musicians on my own," Clements said. "I often feel out of place because I don't feel that I am quite as good as they are."

Original members were invited back, but chose to remain on their new projects, according to their website. And Clements is excited to be at the festival again with his own band, he said.

"It's amazing that this little town in Washington can get all these bands together. It's a true testament to the community and the openness that they greet musicians with," he said

For more info visit, www.SeattleRazors.com.

Heavy Hammer

A band with "heavy" in its name may conjure up images of long-haired rockers from the suburbs adorned in spikes and maybe just a bit of makeup. However, when Heavy Hammer gets up on stage, it's all about the pipes, the drums and the kilts.

Jon Crain is an EMT during the day who plays the pipes for the Buckley-based band on his off time. He said the band's name has nothing to do with their music genre.

"Me and another guy in the band, Eric Steward, used to be heavy athletes at Highland Games in Puyallup. We did the caber toss, stone throw and hammer throwing," he said. "There are two types of hammers, a light and a heavy. The heavier one weighs about 22 pounds. That's where the name comes from."

Heavy also goes along with how they sound. The band plays traditional Irish and Scottish songs with an overlay of very modern percussion beats.

"You won't hear that marching band snare over it, you'll hear some very heavy drum beats," he said. "In 'Amazing Grace,' we start traditional, all nice and slow, and then we rock out and do it our own way."

Once Crain couldn't "throw heavy things," as he put it, the Irish music lover turned to the pipes. While on bed-rest for a knee injury, he taught himself "Amazing Grace," decided he liked it and began taking private lessons.

The band was put together on a whim when three out of four members working for the Buckley Fire Department decided to start playing. The fourth member teaches music, especially percussion, at the local elementary school.

This will be Heavy Hammer's second year at Galway Bay's Irish Music Festival. It will also be the final performance with one of the founding members, Steward, who is leaving their hometown of Buckley.

For more info visit, www.Facebook.com/HEAVYHAMMERBAND.

Stout Pounders

Seattle-based band Stout Pounders was born on the most well-know Irish holiday here in the states.

In 2006, Marc Wallace — who plays the guitar, mandolin, bass and sings along — and three friends were celebrating St. Patrick's Day at a pub that failed to get live entertainment.

"We knew some choruses for traditional songs and started drunkenly singing along to a few. Then people started singing along," Wallace said. "We looked at each other and said, 'You play, you play, I play, let's do this next year.'"

They began to pull together traditional sheet music and that same time next year, found themselves singing in front of a crowd. Their sound takes traditional music and gives it a contemporary feel, in a kind of The Young Dubliners meets the Dropkick Murphys way, he said

"That's what's great about Irish music; it's timeless, happy music," Wallace said. "Our audience range is all over the place, from the young to 60-year-olds, and it's music people can get into while they're there."

This is not their full-time job. Wallace is a Web designer, and the band also includes a teacher, civil engineer and an IT professional. Playing in the band is a sort of hobby, one they all enjoy, Wallace said.

"We love interacting with and feeding off the crowd and having fun," he said. "We've all been in different bands, some trying to be more serious than others. But with the effort-to-fun ratio, this is the best band we've ever been in. ... As soon as this stops being fun, you won't see me up there anymore."

The Stoutpounders also have a new album on the way, hopefully released before March, Wallace said. Several of the new songs will be played this weekend.

For more info visit, www.StoutPounders.com.

Burren Boys

A guitar, bass, fiddle, whistles, bouzouki, banjo and djembe will make an appearance when Olympia-based Burren Boys take the stage.

Riley McLaughlin takes over the whistles for the band and said its sound is a take on traditional music people have danced to for many years, and still do.

"Our band has a bass player, which, we like to tell people, adds a little bit of rock n' roll to our music," McLaughlin said. "Our music is all based on traditional tunes that have been livened up with how we treat them. This mix adds to the fun of it all."

The band plays at several bars in Olympia and Galway Bay regularly. They have been asked to play at this Irish festival for the last 7 years. Although they have played at large venues, such as the Washington Center, pubs provide a much more intimate atmosphere, he said.

However, playing live is something the entire band always enjoys, regardless of the venue.

"There are often surprises up on stage," he said. "The bassist will do an extra lick in a song or we'll do something else fun. We're often grinning at each other when we're having fun up there and playing live."

The Burren Boys will be at Galway Bay's main and beer garden stage along with 8th Street Alehouse on Sunday.

For more info visit, www.BurrenBoys.com.

Sons of Malarkey

Portland-based Sons of Malarkey are attending the festival for the fourth time this year. Gibbons has been a big support of the band from the beginning, Josh Currell, banjo and electric and acoustic guitar player for the band, stated in an email.

"It's always an honor to be part of this, always," he wrote. "This year is no exception."

The Sons is another band that plays with a mix of traditional Irish songs and Celtic Rock vibes. Phil Weber, who plays bass guitar, said in an email that there will be a few song debuts at the festival. Amber Scott, bodhran, and Tatijanna Bourke, violin, have been working together on a song.

“And we’ll be playing a few others at the festival for the first time: ‘A Health to the Company ’ and ‘Oh, Journey’, an original by Josh,” he wrote. Both Weber and Curll love to play live. For Weber it’s all about interacting with the audience and seeing their reactions. But for Curll, it’s about everyone involved.

“Since day one, I have loved playing in a live setting. I love the feel of playing an instrument with a group of people and the multiple parts forming a whole,” he wrote. “I love that people love us, but it means I’m doing my job as a performer.”

After the festival, Curll says he hopes they can continue recording and learning new songs.

For more info visit, www.SonsOfMalarkey.com.

Pre-order prices:

A \$70 “All Venue Pass” gives ticket holders unlimited access to the all venues every day.

Passes for access to the Convention Center only are \$40 and open to all ages.

For those 21 and over, it costs \$10 to get into 8th Street Alehouse.

Day passes for each venue will also be available, though price and availability may change depending on the day.

Workshops for various instruments will be open all day on Saturday, Oct. 26 at the Convention Center.

Festival Workshops

All day Oct. 26, 2013 at the Ocean Shores Convention Center

Noon — Accordion Workshop at the Celtic Rock Stage

Noon — Irish Dance for beginners at the Session Stage

2 p.m. — Bodhran Workshop at the Celtic Rock Stage

2 p.m. — Irish Dance Workshop for all levels at the Session Stage

2 p.m. — Voice Lessons Workshop By Hank Cramer at the Ballad Stage

4 p.m. — Irish Dance Workshop for all levels at the Celtic Rock Stage

4 p.m. — DADGAD Irish Guitar Workshop at the Session Stage

6 p.m. — Fiddle Workshop at the Celtic Rock Stage

6 p.m. — Guitar Workshop at the session stage

6 p.m. — Tin Whistle Workshop at the Ballad Stage

Full list of bands and performers:

- Bog Hoppers
- Bowi Band
- Burren Boys
- Crooked Jacks
- Erin McNamee
- Grafton Street
- Loch Dhu
- Hank Cramer
- Heavy Hammer

- Jacob Jones
- Loch Dhu
- Maggie's Fury
- Mingus O'Bannon
- Molly Malone Irish Dancers
- Molly's Revenge
- New Shilling with Peter Yates
- Ockham's Razor
- Oliver Mulholland
- Raybone Experience with Ray Carney
- Seattle Irish Dancers
- Sons of Malarkey
- Stout Pounders
- Tallymore
- Tillers Folly
- Whiskey Dicks
- Young Dubliners
- Derek Warfield and the Young Wolfe Tones
- A Ting of Beauty
- Catholic Men's Choir of Grays Harbor

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