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Media Release

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Date: September 9, 10, 11, 2011

Place: Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Museum, Jackson, MS

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PERFORMERS AT RECORD HIGH FOR 20TH CELTICFEST

(Jackson, MS) CelticFest Mississippi will be hosting a record number of performing groups for the 20th anniversary the three-day festival. Headliners include two traditional bands from Ireland, **Téada** and **the Fuchsia Band**, singer/songwriter **Brian McNeill** from Scotland, sean nós singer **Brían Ó hAirt** from St. Louis, dancemaster **Éamonn de Cógáin** from Ireland, and his brother, storyteller **Máirtín de Cógáin**.

Featured Performers:

Téada is a working band at the forefront of traditional Irish music today. This quintet from Co. Sligo are true to their roots, thanks to fine individual musicianship and a lack of appetite for musical pyrotechnics. The boys let their tunes and musicianship do the talking! Special guests joining Téada include the infamous box-player **Séamus Begley** from Dingle; and cutting up the stage, sean nós dancer **Brian Cunningham** from Galway.

“Téada shook the rafters last year for us, and they must have liked Jackson, as not only are they coming back, but they’re bringing even more performers with them!,” says Don Penzien, CelticFest’s Performer Coordinator and festival founder. “Word is getting out around the country that Mississippi is a place for music. Téada had heard about the great vibe of CelticFest in Jackson, which runs 100% on volunteer labor and love of Irish and Scottish music.”

The Fuchsia Band have been lighting up Celtic festival stages across the United States every summer since 2005. These three-time CelticFest headliners are returning to the festival after a three year hiatus (due to vacation time issues with their respective employers). In their own words, they are “a group of four lads from Cork, Ireland who play, dance, sing and generally have a good time.” To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the festival, the Fuchsia Band are taking their missing guitarist from teaching class in Cork and flying him to Jackson. “Over the course of twenty years, there’s been no other band that gets a response like the Fuchsia Band,” says Penzien. “They are quite definitely CelticFest’s winners for ‘audience favorite.’”

A career spanning more than 40 years has established **Brian McNeill** as one of the most acclaimed forces in Scottish music. He has been described as ‘Scotland’s most meaningful contemporary songwriter’; add to that his work and influence as performer, composer, producer, and interpreter of Scotland’s past, present and future and you have a man who has never stood still. He has performed around the globe, both as a soloist and with some of the era’s most influential bands, including Battlefield Band, which he founded in 1969.



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Éamonn de Cógáin (pronounced AY-men de KOH- GON/) is widely regarded as Ireland's most energetic emcee. He comes from a family very active in Cork's old style dancing, and has called dances (céilís) far and wide across the Emerald Isle. Éamonn's smooth brogue and easy going nature allow people of all ages to believe that they can Céilí dance the night away without difficulty.

Éamonn's younger brother, **Máirtín** (MAR-teen), is no stranger to Mississippians for his frequent appearances in and around the state as the face of the Fuchsia Band, Captain Mackey's Goatskin & String Band, and the Máirtín de Cógáin Project. Máirtín sings, dances, plays the bodhrán (drum), and tells stories like a pro. In fact, Máirtín won the prestigious All-Ireland for storytelling. Twice (once in English and once in the Irish language). In addition to his stage performances with the Fuchsia Band, Máirtín will be featured for storytelling performances.

Lastly, **Brían Ó hAirt's** ability as a traditional singer has afforded him great acclaim at his age—the only American to become a champion All-Ireland singer. A voice Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh of Danú hails as "beautiful...sweet and full of sensitivity," his singing has been featured on radio programs across Ireland and North America. Brían's dedication to Irish Gaelic song and the sean-nós singing style has bonded him to the close-knit community of Conamara on Ireland's culturally rich west coast.

In addition to the featured performers, thirty-nine other local/regional Celtic musical and dance groups travel from west as Los Angeles, California, as far east as Providence, Rhode Island, and as far north as Saginaw, Michigan, and south as Orlando, Florida to fill the eight stages and three workshop venues; a Scottish highland games demonstration take place on the green; and the Society for Creative Anachronism will stage sword fights. All of these performances are by volunteering artists.

The children won't be left out! There will be a Children's Area and kid-oriented vendors during the day Saturday and Sunday. Crafts and activities are available for parents and kids to participate.

Admission is \$12 for an adult Weekend Pass, \$8 for seniors, students, and active military, \$5 for children ages 5-17, and \$1 for children under four. "A greater value of this quality can't be had in Jackson...." says Harvey Kimble, past president of the Celtic Heritage Society.

For more information, please visit the CelticFest web site: www.CelticFestMS.org. The Celtic Heritage Society is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with the mission of promoting and preserving the arts and culture of the Celtic nations. CelticFest is a family-oriented event, and all CHS events are open to the public.

Sponsored by: BankPlus, Fenian's Irish Pub, Wine & Spirits In the Quarter, Cabot Lodge Millsaps, Capital Cities Beverages and Guinness, Jackson Free Press, the Jackson Irish Dancers, Broadstreet Baking Co, Bravo, Sal&Mookie's, the Foundation for Public Broadcasting, and Cups. This project is also funded in part by a grant from the Mississippi Arts Commission, a state agency and by South Arts in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Mississippi Arts Commission.

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