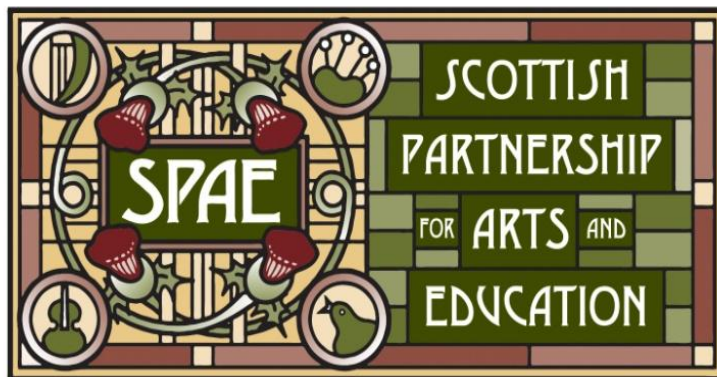


QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

of



Good fortune, good future through arts and education

MISSION STATEMENT

In the belief that music and the arts are key to connecting cultures and understanding our roots, Scottish Partnership for Arts and Education is dedicated to supporting Scottish Traditional arts and artists and to providing cultural experiences and educational opportunities in Scottish Traditional arts in St. Louis area schools.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Fall 2009

Welcome to our first newsletter! Special thanks go out to Rebecca Warren, our new Vice-President, for putting this together.

We are working hard to prepare for our 3rd season of workshops and concerts. Our artists will begin working in the school on September 28th. They will spend 2 weeks working in over 10 schools and culminating in a free concert at Logan College on Friday, October 9th. They will also perform concerts at the Focal Point and teach classes at the Folk School (please see our calendar for more information).

Finally, I invite you to visit the calendar page of our website (go to www.stlspae.org and click on calendar) and take a look at the Scottish Cultural Community calendar. This calendar provides a listing of ALL Scottish events in the St. Louis area, not just SPAE events.

I look forward to seeing all of you at our October events.

Michael Herron

President & Treasurer, SPAE

Message from SPAE's Artistic Director

This message is being written with a heavy heart; as Robbie Burns noted, "the best laid plans of mice and men" ...

Our plans for this year's *SPAE Artists in Residence Workshops* and concerts, were put in place to present our most exciting and varied program to date. Last Tuesday, many months of work and anticipation were dealt a dreadful blow when the Department of Homeland Security USCIS decided to delay Caroline Pugh's visa and to deny visas for Findlay Napier and Sara Ann Cull.

We cannot pretend that this development is anything other than devastating. Board member Jacob Sawyer took on the detailed and time consuming task of submitting all requested and required documentation necessary to complete our artist's visa applications. We are tremendously grateful for the many hours of work he dedicated to this complicated assignment.

Although the loss of Findlay and Sara Ann means a vital plank of the Scots Song and Fiddle content has been badly undermined, we are proud that:

- this years extended program will reach approximately 680 local students in 17 school groups
- Brian McNeill's live broadcasts on HEC-TV's *Live in the Artist's Studio* programs will reach international school groups
- our scheduled concerts will reach even more audiences

We hope Caroline will join us by Wednesday. She will lead the Scots Song program with assistance from SPAE's Artistic Director (who will fill in until she arrives). We are delighted to welcome back Brian McNeill; his inspirational fiddle teaching and performances have become central to our program. Though Sara Ann Cull's invaluable input shall be missed, Brian will build on the successes of the past two years and shall continue to provide the highest caliber of training to students.

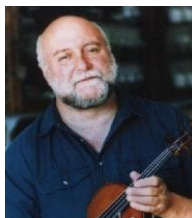
SPAE will make an inquiry into the issues involving the application denials. We will explain our program, what we offer students **and** the importance of understanding our cultural roots, in hopes that officials will take a different view next year. The 2009 program will maintain the high standards we have built upon over the past three years and students will receive inspiration and a quality education from Brian McNeill and Caroline Pugh.

"Bloodied but unbowed", we will take this experience on board as we prepare next year's schedule.

Thank you all for your continued interest, understanding and support.

Diane McCullough

CALENDAR



Brian McNeill October 3, 2009 8:00 p.m. at Focal Point, 2720 S. Sutton, Maplewood, MO 63143. Tickets at door or call 314-781-4200. The great songwriter, Brian McNeill will feature his latest CD "**The Baltic Tae Byzantium**". Visit www.brianmcneill.co.uk for more about Brian.



Student Culminating Concert October 9, 2009 7:00 p.m. at Logan Chiropractic College, Purser Auditorium, 1851 Schoettler Rd., Chesterfield, MO 63006. Free admission. Orchestra and choir students from local schools will perform Scottish Traditional music learned in Artists in Residence workshops organized by Scottish Partnership for Arts and Education and taught by Brian McNeill and Caroline Pugh. Visit www.stlspae.org for more info.



Caroline Pugh October 10, 2009 8:00 p.m. at Focal Point, 2720 S. Sutton, Maplewood, MO 63143. Tickets at door or call 314-781-4200. Caroline Pugh, Scots singer, represents the young Scottish Trad music scene. Ms. Pugh graduated from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Scottish Music Program. Please join us for a program of traditional and original Scottish music. To hear her music visit www.myspace.com/carolinepugh.

NEWS: SPAE and HEC-TV Collaborate

Brian McNeill will be the featured artist on HEC-TV Live Inside the Artist's Studio. This live broadcast will take place at Cross Keys Middle School in the Ferguson-Florissant School District on October 14, 2009 at 10:00 am and 1:00 pm. Brian will teach by working with students from all over the United States through HEC-TV's live internet web stream at www.hectv.org. He will be working with 8th grade orchestra students at Cross Keys and also interacting with participating classes from across the country. Study Materials are available to download on the SPAE website www.stlspae.org.

There are three viewing options available to serve students needs. They are:

1. Face to face videoconference interaction
2. Viewing on HEC-TV Cable Channel 26
3. Watching the internet web stream on www.hectv.org

Television or internet classes may interact by emailing or phoning in questions.

If you cannot join the program live, you have two options:

1. View Video On Demand programs archived on www.hectv.org.
2. Request a DVD of archived programs sent directly to your school. Call 314-531-4455 or send an email to live@hectv.org.



SCOTTISH/CELTIC CULTURAL EVENTS CALENDAR

Battlefield Band - traditional and contemporary Scottish music

Fri. Oct. 23, 7:30 pm

Lincoln University, Richardson Auditorium

820 Chestnut Street

Jefferson City, MO 65101 (P) 573-681-5000

For additional information contact yuko.y@gmail.com or visit the band's website:

www.battlefieldband.co.uk

Folk School of St. Louis

Sat. Oct. 3

Workshops with top folk musicians from Scotland:

Brian McNeill (fiddle), and Caroline Pugh (Scots song)

Sat. Oct. 10, 10 a.m. - Noon

Folk School Jam Session at Kirkwood Harvest Festival

Wed. Oct. 14, 7 p.m.

Folk School Student Showcase at the Schlafly Tap Room

Sat. Oct. 24-25

Workshops and Concert with Kim and Jim Lansford

-Early Country Music Repertoire Singing Workshop

-Midwestern Fiddling Workshop

-Kim and Jim Lansford in Concert

Mitzi MacDonald and Keltic Reign

Tues. Dec. 2nd at The Sheldon Concert Hall

Showtime: 7pm, doors open at 6:30

The 4th Annual

Christmas in the Kitchen!!!

Mitzi MacDonald and Keltic Reign

Tickets are general admission, \$10 adults, and \$5 children.

For additional information: mitzimakdonald.com

Missouri Tartan Day

April 9-11, 2010 in Frontier Park, St. Charles, Missouri

Seven Rivers Highland Society

December

5th: A Scotch Tasting IV, 7:00 at Moxy Bistro Lounge (4584 Laclede). Tickets are \$35 a person (\$10 for non-scotch drinkers). This price includes a sampling of six whiskies, a commemorative glass and

appetizers. Seven Rivers members **only** will be able to purchase any of the whiskies at wholesale cost. Tickets can be bought at Moxy Bistro, or over the phone (314)361-4854.

Scottish St. Andrew Society of Great St. Louis

November

21st: St. Andrews Dinner. Time and venue: to be announced. For additional information:

www.slssas.org

January

23rd: Annual Burns Dinner at the Hyatt Regency in downtown St. Louis.

OLD PATTERNS, NEW SONGS

By Brian McNeill

The business of writing songs is a complicated one, not least in terms of motivation. Ask the question: “Why do it?” and you’ll come up with a different answer from every songwriter you ask. But once you rule out the motive of money – and that’s not a negligible factor, there are a lot of commercial songwriters out there – sooner or later the question of conscience will arise. It can’t all be moon, croon and June; most songwriters are eventually driven to use their craft in order to explore something that disturbs them, be that an injustice, a social problem, or simply a challenge to the accepted order of things.


It’s not difficult to write a song about something that gets to you, but it’s difficult to write a good song about that something. You can’t just sound off – songs that do that usually don’t last, whereas songs that sound off and make a point at the same time make people think, and by and large, if they’re well crafted, they do last.

And that’s where the tradition comes in! For those of us who are lucky enough to have an affinity with and a knowledge of traditional music, we can look and see the vast number of songs of conscience and social comment the tradition has. And once we’ve done that, we begin to realize that what the tradition has done is give those of us who are modern songwriters the best of tools; a series of templates.

My tradition is the tradition of Scotland, and it has always been one of the most articulate.

Take a song like “Parcel Of Rogues In A Nation” – a song about political corruption, about Scotland’s leaders being bribed to sell out their own people by voting their own parliament out of existence in the early seventeen hundreds. That song’s still being sung today, sometimes with the words updated. Why? Because bribery and corruption haven’t gone away – and that means that the original writer (we don’t know who he or she was) touched some kind of universal truth. Or take a song like “The Twa Corbies” – one of the best anti-war songs ever written, although not a line of it ever mentions war. The song gives us a savage, simple conversation between two crows who are about to eat the body of a dead knight. The moral of the story is simple; go to war and this is a pretty good chance of the way you’ll end up. Once again, as relevant today as the day it was written. In both of these songs, the single most impressive thing is that they never pull their punches; they are stark, direct and merciless.

So this is the background that’s informed much of my own songwriting. When I wanted to write a song about the hypocrisy of the armistice celebrations in Britain called “Two Minutes Silence”, I went to traditional models. I did what many previous, anonymous writers did before me, and made death into a



person with a role to play – in this case she’s a glamorous woman, dressed very fashionably in black. I call her the Widowmaker. She’s always at the graveside when a soldier’s being buried. She’s excited by new weapons. She loves battlefields and slaughter. When the armaments contracts are being signed, she’s laughing with the politicians. In other words, she thrives on the hypocrisy of a culture that mourns its young, brave, dead soldiers but refuses to do anything to stop war happening in the future.

If we look at the song’s technique for a minute, one thing’s obvious – it’s much more effective to have a person that an audience’s feelings can fasten on to than just to have a bare statement of fact. No matter how horrific the fact, an audience prefers a face, so the one has to embody the other.

Another technique I’ve used often (and usually for much gentler, but still social comment themes) is to take an event which personifies my theme, then illustrate it with characters, usually over three or four verses, then tie the whole thing up with a last verse which makes the whole thing relevant. It’s a technique I used in the first song I ever wrote. It’s called “The Lads O’ the Fair” and it’s about my home town of Falkirk in the Scottish lowlands.

The song’s about the annual cattle market in Falkirk, which was once the biggest market in Scotland. Instead of just telling the story in a dry factual way, I use the first three verses to talk about three of the people who have travelled to the fair and let them tell the listener why they’ve come. The first is a weaver, who wants to sell his cloth to the farmers’ wives he know will be there. The second is a cattle drover, who wants to sell the cows he’s just driven from the highlands to the buyers from England, and the third is a ploughboy who wants a job on a new farm and who knows that the farmers will be looking round the fair for employees.

It’s the last verse which, as far as I’m concerned, is the important one. It talks about the fact that the three jobs just described have either gone forever, or they’ve changed beyond recognition. But then it says that Falkirk is still a place where ordinary people work for their living, and that the people who live there now still remember their connection with the past. And let me point out that I unashamedly took the template of the song – rhyme schemes and meter – from a Scottish/Irish song called “The Rambling Siuler (Beggar)”. In fact, not only is it not a matter of shame to me, it’s a matter of great satisfaction to me to be part of a chain of writers who used the same, proven effective over and over again, tools.

So if you asked me why I write the kinds of songs I do, songs which are politically engaged, songs which talk about the relevance of history to the modern day, then I’d have to tell you that I do it because I couldn’t imagine not doing it. I firmly believe that the past has a great deal to teach us about the future, and that a culture’s traditions are very often the key we can use to link the two. They’ve certainly done it for me.

So write your songs. I look forward to hearing them.

Brian McNeill

Unpublished Copyright Brian McNeill, August 13, 2009. Article references are listed on SPAE’s website: www.stlspae.org/HEC-TV/HEC-TV.htm. Click: Old Patterns, New Songs 2009 – by Brian McNeill

SPAE'S JULY 11TH HOUSE PARTY FUNDRAISER

The Board of Directors would like to thank our gracious host, Peter Wollenberg, the talented Pattonville Heights Middle School musicians, and their wonderful teachers and parents for making SPAE's first House Party a huge success! The performance was superb and everyone enjoyed themselves. The Board would also like to extend a special thank you to Chris Fulton; the food was spectacular. Thanks for coming out and supporting our first of many House Party's. If you would like to host a House Party, please contact Diane McCullough at www.stlspae.org



Photographer: Chris Fulton



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LINKS

Folk School of St. Louis: www.folk-school.com

Missouri Tartan Day: www.motartanday.com

Mitzi MacDonald: www.mitzimacdonald.com

Scots for Tots: www.scotsfortots.org

Scottish Arms (The): www.thescottisharms.com

Scottish Partnership for Arts and Education: www.stlspae.org

Scottish St. Andrew Society of Greater St. Louis: www.slsas.org

Seven Rivers Highland Society: www.sevenrivers.us

St. Louis Caledonian Pipe Band: www.slcpb.com

Thistle and Clover: www.thistleandclover.com

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SPAE IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH:



SPAE receives partial funding from the Missouri Arts Council and the Regional Arts Commission

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

For additional information about SPAE or to become a member, please contact us at: www.stlspae.org

SPAE is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Corporation. All donations are 100% Tax Deductible.

If your employer will match your donation, please provide your Corporate Matching Gift Form

Please mail donations to: SPAE, P.O. Box 6761, Chesterfield, MO 63003-6761

SPAE Brochure and Annual Report are available at:

www.stlspae.org