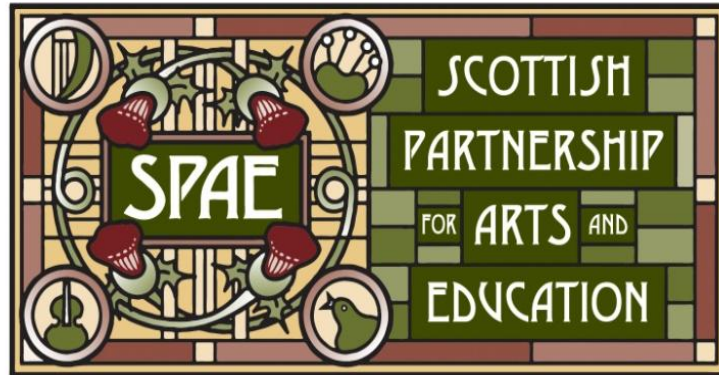


# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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 ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S DESK

Winter 2011

Once again the SPAE Board thanks you for your loyal support for Scottish traditional music! Residencies took place September 27 - October 8, 2010. SPAE provided six full school residencies and one exposure group in Scottish traditional fiddle and five full residencies in Scots and Gaelic Song. Students participating in the workshops totaled **690**. We made a major change in the way that we organized the culminating concert. In previous years we had one large concert involving all of our schools. This required renting a hall and getting both the performers and the audience to the location. In 2010 we scheduled a concert at every school (except Jefferson Intermediate Center in St. Charles). These concerts were scheduled during school hours and featured the artists as well as the student workshop participants. We were able to reach far more people in this way. Audience members numbered **1560**. In addition there were two teacher development events – a Scots and Gaelic Song workshop taught by Dominique Dodge and Mitzi MacDonald (**12** participants) and a concert given by Brian McNeill as part of a workshop at Laumeier Sculpture Park organized in partnership with the E. Des Lee Fine Arts Education Collaborative (**50** participants). Focal Point concerts by our artists brought another 101 audience

members. Altogether our total numbers for 2010 were **2413**. **These numbers are more than double our 2009 numbers.**

All the Best,

Diane McCullough  
Founding/Artistic Director/Grants Administrator

## Ed Miller comes to the 2011 St. Louis Tionól

By Mike Mullins



Singer Ed Miller will be joining an all-star lineup of musicians at the **14<sup>th</sup> Annual St. Louis Tionól**, April 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Tionól (pronounced chun-awl) is a Gaelic word for a gathering for the purpose of sharing. The weekend includes informal “sessions”, workshops, and master musicians teaching and performing. In addition to Ed, a number of musicians from Ireland, including fiddle player Tony Linnane (whom some may remember from McGurks), Oisín Mac Diarmada (a fiddler from Sligo and leader of the band Téada), along with harper, Michael Rooney - to name just a few.

There are two concerts. The first is on Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, at the *Saint Louis Brewery Taproom*, 2100 Locust, starting at 7:30pm. Tickets are \$15 and will be available at the door or on line at [www.tionol.org](http://www.tionol.org).

To hear Ed in one of the best venues in the city, come out on Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, at 8pm, for the second concert at *The Sheldon Concert Hall*, 3648 Washington Blvd, just west of the Fox Theater. Tickets are \$20, seniors and students are \$18, and children 12 and under are \$12. Tickets are also available at Metrotix (314-534-1111, or [Metrotix.com](http://Metrotix.com)) and at the door.

Following both concerts, sessions will get underway with toe tapping music coming from every corner and going long into the night.

If you are interested in a workshop with Ed and a chance to learn some of his many songs, join us Saturday (April 16<sup>th</sup>) at Nerinx Hall High School, 530 E. Lockwood, Webster Groves. Check-in begins at

9:00am, with classes running from 9:30am to 4:00pm, with a break for lunch. Visit the website [www.tionol.org](http://www.tionol.org), for more information, to pre-register, or to obtain a mail-in registration form.

If you have a tin whistle or bodhrán and have always wanted to play, this is an ideal opportunity to come out and spend a day learning the instrument. For those who want to improve their technique or learn a few new tunes, we have a number of classes with a full day of instruction from some of the very best.

Class attendees receive free admission to both concerts and may purchase additional concert tickets at a discount.

Both concerts will be followed with music sessions at the *Saint Louis Brewery Taproom*, at 2100 Locust. These are informal music “sessions” -where Irish musicians play together in small groups – unrehearsed and free flowing. Sessions are free and open to the public.

On Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup> the weekend will finish up with breakfast and more music beginning at 10:30am, at John D. McGurks Pub (12<sup>th</sup> and Russell).

**For additional information, please contact Mike Mullins at: [mmullins@tionol.org](mailto:mmullins@tionol.org), or: 636-926-9192.**

**Photo courtesy of: [www.songsofscotland.com](http://www.songsofscotland.com)**


## Concerns Regarding the Future of Pipe Band Competitions\*

By Matt Pantaleoni

Economic woes have touched everyone and the highland games circuit is no exception. Games organizers face tougher choices than ever on how to allocate their funds. A disturbing trend has swept the continent and seen piping and drumming competitions at games axed in favor of hiring duty bands to perform throughout the day. On paper, this looks like a healthy compromise that maintains the presence of pipe bands on the games field while keeping the costs fixed at an acceptable level. Unfortunately, this decision runs counter to the ultimate purpose of the games: to promote Scottish culture and arts. Competition is the *raison d'être* for all serious pipe bands and is largely responsible for the exponential increase in piping and drumming standards over the last 30 years. Getting rid of competitions will ultimately see a reduction in both the number and caliber of pipers and pipe bands. Can we really afford to let this happen?

In stark contrast to other musical instruments whose main performance venue is the concert hall, pipers and pipe bands are geared primarily towards the competition arena. Parades, concerts, and the rest of the performances on the piper's calendar help secure funds and focus preparation for competitions. These competitions, which are almost exclusively held at highland games, provide an exciting cauldron in which bands and soloists pit their musical ideas and technical mastery against each other in front of a panel of judges who are themselves active or retired competitors at the highest level. New tunes and cutting edge harmonic arrangements get an airing and live or die based on their success.

Piping competitions don't come cheap. They are a major item on any games budget and an easy target for desperate bean counters. While competitors pay an entry fee for each event, this sum doesn't cover the cost of hiring and paying for accommodations for accredited judges, who often must be flown in from out of town. Bands and professional solo competitors receive cash prizes based on their performance while solo competitors in amateur grades I through IV receive medals. Rules dictate that



pipe band competitions sanctioned by the governing regional pipe band association must have two piping judges, a drumming judge, and an ensemble judge. Even the smallest competitions will need to hire a minimum of four judges. It's easy to see how these items add up to an expensive event.

Sadly, these numbers fail to tell the whole story. Pipers and drummers bring numerous unquantifiable benefits to the games. Competitors pay entry fees for their events but usually get free admission to the games. Spouses and children tag along to provide moral support and to enjoy a good day out at the games. They pay admission at the gate and are often the first to show in the morning for solo competitions and the last to go in the evening after the closing ceremonies and massed bands. Spending eight hours at any festival entails patronizing the food vendors, not to mention the many other vendors. And rare is the piper or drummer who is a stranger to the beer tent!

Nor should the presence of piping and pipe bands be underestimated as a major draw for the ordinary spectator. Ask anyone what they expect to see at the games and you will hear one or more of "the big three" mentioned: piping/drumming, highland dancing, and athletics. Smart games organizers should build their festival around these events and find a way to capitalize on them. Depending on a games venue's layout, there must be a way to sell grandstand or some other form of VIP seating to the opening and closing ceremonies. People love to be up close to the pipe bands. Solo and band competitions should not be relegated to some distant and out of the way corner of the games field. Organizers should draw visual attention to the competitions, whether by providing wooden platforms for soloists or a more formal arrangement of the pipe band arena complete with signage, flags, bleacher seating, etc., that makes it a clear focal point of the games experience. The PA system should be used to steer people towards the competitions, whether piping, dancing, or athletics. You know something is wrong when people say they went to the games and never saw a piper or pipe band!

The onus for maintaining piping competitions round the games also falls on the piping fraternity itself. Having seen a drop off in the number of competitions at the games over the last ten years, the Midwest Pipe Band Association (MWPBA) this year eliminated the travel money requirements for bands. The sanctioning rules formerly mandated that each competing band receive a cash travel allowance for performing in the competition and the massed bands. While the travel allowance scarcely put a dent in the cost of attending a competition for a pipe band, it was an unwieldy budget item for games organizers, for whom a large band entry could sink the budget into the red. The bands were willing to sacrifice the travel money in order to preserve this important venue for their music.

While this was a solid first step, pipe band associations need to take more aggressive steps to keep the competition circuit healthy. The Eastern United States Pipe Band Association (EUSPBA) has taken the lead on this as they have expanded their sphere of influence into areas with fledgling piping populations. Flexible sanctioning rules have seen new, often small-scale competitions emerge in Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas where the traditional sanctioning package of a full solo and pipe band competition is often too costly a proposition. Games organizers can start as small as they like, perhaps by hiring a single judge to oversee a small solo competition. Getting that foot in the door with the games early on gives the piping competition the opportunity to grow along with the games and hopefully blossom into a full slate of band and solo events.

If piping competitions around the games are allowed to wither, the traditional pipe band paradigm that has driven musical innovation and seen technical standards soar will fundamentally change. The games circuit gives geographically estranged pipers and pipe bands a venue at which to meet, perform, and exchange ideas. Take that venue away and pipers will be isolated from each other. It won't be long before stagnation sets in and standards as well as interest drop.

Matt Pantaleoni teaches highland piping in St Louis, Missouri, and competes in professional solo competition both here and in Scotland. He can be reached through his web site, [www.pipingstl.com/Home](http://www.pipingstl.com/Home). Matt was the 2008 winner of the US Silver Medal in Kansas City.

\*Article title provided by Rebecca Warren

## SCOTTISH/CELTIC CULTURE & EVENTS CALENDAR

### Scottish St. Andrew Society of Greater St. Louis

#### Monthly

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month, 6pm - 9pm: Social at *The Scottish Arms*: [www.thescottisharms.com](http://www.thescottisharms.com)

### Seven Rivers Highland Society

#### Monthly

3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month, 7pm - 9pm: Kilt Night. Please visit their website: [www.7rhs.net](http://www.7rhs.net), for location updates. The new website is still under construction, but the calendar is operational.

### Mitzi MacDonald and Keltic Reign

Annual Irish Hoolie for the IRWP (Immigrant and Refugee Women's Program)

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011, 1pm – 3:30pm. Doors open at Noon.

Maggie O'Brien's Restaurant: 2000 Market Street, St. Louis, MO.

For ticket prices and information, please visit: [www.irwp.net](http://www.irwp.net)

### 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Missouri Tartan Day Festivities

April 8 – 10, 2011

Frontier Park. St. Charles, Missouri. Please visit: [www.motartanday.com](http://www.motartanday.com), for additional information.

Free Event.

**The Focal Point:** 2720 Sutton, Maplewood, MO 63143, 314.781.4200, [www.thefocalpoint.org](http://www.thefocalpoint.org)

April

17<sup>th</sup>, 8pm: **Ed Miller.** Ed Miller has been hailed as one of the finest singers to come out of the Scottish Folksong Revival, and as one of Scotland's best singing exports. His clear, sure way with a song and his gentle, humorous way with an audience, will surely charm every listener. \$15.00 per person.

## LINKS

Folk School of St. Louis: [www.folk-school.com](http://www.folk-school.com)

Scottish Partnership for Arts and Education: [www.stlspae.org](http://www.stlspae.org)

Matt Pantaleoni: [www.pipingstl.com/Home](http://www.pipingstl.com/Home)

Scottish St. Andrew Society of Greater St. Louis: [www.slssas.org](http://www.slssas.org)

Mitzi MacDonald: [www.mitzimacdonald.com](http://www.mitzimacdonald.com)

Seven Rivers Highland Society: [www.7rhs.net](http://www.7rhs.net)

Scots for Tots: [www.scotsfortots.org](http://www.scotsfortots.org)

St. Louis Scottish Games: [www.stlouis-scottishgames.com](http://www.stlouis-scottishgames.com)

Scottish Arms (The): [www.thescottisharms.com](http://www.thescottisharms.com)

Thistle and Clover: [www.thistleandclover.com](http://www.thistleandclover.com)

## SPAE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## SPAE IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH:



SPAE receives partial funding from the Regional Arts Commission and Missouri Arts Council, a State agency

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

For additional information about SPAE or to become a member, please contact us at: [www.stlspae.org](http://www.stlspae.org)

**SPAE is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Corporation. Donations are Tax Deductible to the extent the law allows.**

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SPAE Brochure and Annual Report are available at:

[www.stlspae.org](http://www.stlspae.org)