

NORTH TEXAS IRISH FESTIVAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

North Texas Irish Festival Sponsored by Sprint Set to Jig in to Fair Park March 2-4

Music. Dancing. Food. Storytelling. Art....Plenty of family fun at everyone's favorite festival

DALLAS, Texas – Whether there is Irish blood in your ancestry -- or whether you are simply Irish for a day -- make plans to be in Fair Park March 2-4 to kick up your heels and enjoy concerts from the best Irish musicians from around the world. [The North Texas Irish Festival](#) sponsored by Sprint and presented by the Southwest Celtic Music Association is a family-friendly festival that celebrates the music, dance, and culture of Ireland with a weekend of delights.

Unique as the largest cultural celebration in DFW, and one of the largest Irish festivals in the U.S., the North Texas Irish Festival is produced annually by almost 1,000 volunteers, some of whom have volunteered for decades, often alongside generations of their families.

“Our volunteers are the heart and soul of this event,” said Sheri Bush, president of the Southwest Celtic Music Association Inc., the organization that produces the North Texas Irish Festival and provides music and dance scholarships to local students. “They bring in their families to volunteer together to create an event that is a wonderful thing for other families to come and enjoy. Whether it’s the music or the dancing, tasting whiskey, shopping, researching your family history, or doing crafts with the kids, this is the kind of festival with fun for everyone.”

Music, dancing, whiskey tastings, blacksmithing demonstrations, horse displays, Celtic storytelling, animal rescue groups, Shepherd’s pie, Irish stew, dozens of activities for kids and child-friendly entertainment, and chef demonstrations are all found at this family-friendly festival that includes 13 stages of entertainment.

Musicians

Headlining performers at the 36th Annual North Texas Irish Festival include:

- **The Elders**, the dynamic and critically-acclaimed group whose stage shows are real magic, where their powerful personal and musical chemistry forge a deep sense of community with their audience. During the upbeat numbers, everyone is shouting gleefully, singing along and dancing as the band stirs up their latest moment of wild abandon.

- **Screaming Orphans**, four sisters from County Donegal, Ireland, who once all sang back-up for Sinead O'Connor and who know wow crowds with their Irish pop rock sound.
- **Mari Black**, a violinist and many-time champion fiddler who is at home in a variety of styles, and who has a reputation as one of the most dynamic young artists of her generation. Mari holds a master's from the Yale School of Music and a doctorate from Columbia University's Teachers College.
- **Calan**, five young musicians giving a fresh and vibrant sound to traditional Welsh music. With a contemporary approach, they breathe new life into the old traditions through their sparkling melodies, foot tapping tunes and spirited and energetic performances of Welsh step dancing.
- **Gailfean**, an Irish traditional music group featuring All-Ireland musician winners John Whelan, Brian Conway and Máirtín de Cógáin, and renowned musician Don Penzien, is sure to set a new standard for the well-loved story form that is traditional Irish music.
- **Ed Miller**, hailed as one of the finest singers to come out of the Scottish folksong Revival and as one of Scotland's best singing exports. Miller is joined by John Taylor, a multi-award-winning Scottish fiddler with a long and successful musical career, and popular musicians Jil Chambless and Scooter Muse, who will create a group that fans feel is an unforgettable musical experience.
- **Crannua** brings together the talents of singer Moya Brennan, guitarist John Doyle, musical brothers Cormac and Éamonn De Barra and American singer/songwriter Ashley Davis in a band that has produced an album of contemporary tracks firmly rooted in tradition and yet infused with fresh ideas.
- **Tommy & Sandra O'Sullivan**, a husband-and-wife vocal duo, accompanied by Tommy's guitar, are of the great hidden treasures of traditional Irish music who perform at major festivals the world over.

Dance

Dancers will delight audiences with continuous performances on the dance stage in Fair Park's historic Tower Building. The colorful traditional and modern Irish dancers with their hand-embroidered dresses and fast foot-tapping rhythms are not to be missed. In addition, there will be dance workshops throughout the weekend, and everyone is encouraged to get into the spirit of Ireland at Saturday night's Dance "Céilí," a traditional Irish party that is open for everyone to attend.

Cultural

The North Texas Irish Festival brings together a wide variety of exhibitors, workshops and demonstrations. Pick up a few culinary tricks for modern Irish cuisine (and sample it!) at the **Chef Stage**. **Urchin Street** will offer a special place where kids can find entertainment, education, play and fun, including crafts, music, dance, storytelling, magic and mystery. **Storytellers** -- or "Shanachie" -- will perform traditional Irish stories in the way that the Irish learned of their history for hundreds of years. Love animals? The North Texas Irish Festival hosts **animal rescue groups** where you can find your new best friend -- or, if you already have one, bring your pet into the festival to enjoy it with you for a \$1 donation. **Equestrian shows, blacksmithing, sheep herding** and other demonstrations will be performed in various areas of Fair Park.

Hours, Admission and Location

Gates open on Friday evening, March 2, at 6 p.m. Hours are 6 to 11 p.m. on Friday; 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 3; and 11:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 4.

Tickets are available online in February at www.ntif.org. Admission is FREE on Friday from 6 to 7 p.m.; \$10 after (50% off coupons online at www.ntif.org). A one-day ticket is \$20 on Saturday and \$15 on

Sunday at the gate, while a two-day ticket is \$25 and a weekend pass is \$30. Discount tickets are available at area Tom Thumb and Albertsons stores. Children 11 and under are FREE when accompanied by adult family member. Seniors over 65 or current military members (with valid military ID) receive \$5 off all gate prices. Dogs are allowed in on a short leash with a \$1 requested donation to animal rescue groups supported by the festival. Leprechauns (in full ceremonial dress and carrying pot of gold) are FREE.

Parking is available in and around Fair Park, or attendees can take the DART (take the **Green Line!**) to the front entrance of Fair Park and the North Texas Irish Festival. Detailed directions and parking tips are available at www.ntif.org. The public can call (972) 943-4616, or visit www.ntif.org for more information or to volunteer to work at the festival.

Sponsors

In addition to almost 1,000 volunteers who support the festival by volunteering their time, other local civic and corporate partners make this festival possible. The North Texas Irish Festival is sponsored by Sprint and presented by the Southwest Celtic Music Association. Additionally, the festival is sponsored by Guinness, Magner's Irish Cider, NBC 5, DART, CBS Radio, the City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs, Visit Dallas, Tom Thumb, Albertsons, Scarborough Faire, Topgolf, Leaf Filter Gutter Protection, Bushmills Irish Whiskey, DoubleTree by Hilton, The Dallas Morning News and Yelp.

About the Southwest Celtic Music Association Inc.

The Southwest Celtic Music Association Inc. (SCMA) is the producing organization for the North Texas Irish Festival. More than 600 volunteers will help in organization, promotion and execution of this year's festival. The first such festival was held on March 5, 1983, at the legendary Nick Farrelly's Lounge on Oak Lawn and was billed as the First Texas Céilí. This event was so popular that it has continued every year since on the first weekend in March as the North Texas Irish Festival. Shortly after the first festival, the all-volunteer Southwest Celtic Music Association Inc. was formed to promote the study, performance and preservation of traditional Celtic music, dance and culture. In 1984, the event was moved to Fair Park and its name changed to the North Texas Irish Festival. The Southwest Celtic Music Association Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit cultural corporation headquartered in Dallas, Texas, and serves a five-state regional area. The organization maintains a web site at www.scmatrix.org.

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Editor's Note: Link to Dropbox with photos from past North Texas Irish Festivals:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1ku7pt4r6amnefw/AAB6HRXcjlwRSBpu7R78owQ24a?dl=0>