

NORTH TEXAS IRISH FESTIVAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

North Texas Irish Festival Celebrates 35th Year with 2017 Festival: ‘Texas Grown – Irish Roots’

Music. Dancing. Food. Storytelling. Art. This is a Celtic celebration as big as Texas.

DALLAS, TX – Thirty-five years of a passion for the great traditions of Irish culture has made the North Texas Irish Festival one of the largest Celtic cultural celebrations in the country. In 2017, the North Texas Irish Festival celebrates with its largest festival yet, entitled “Texas Grown – Irish Roots,” to acknowledge the Lone Star State’s role in preserving, celebrating and furthering Irish culture in the U.S. Produced annually by an army of music-loving volunteers, the Southwest Celtic Music Association Inc., the North Texas Irish Festival is known for bringing in hundreds of performers from Ireland and all over the world to entertain festival-goers here in North Texas. Mark your calendar for March 3-5, 2017, when a 35th Annual North Texas Irish Festival lights up Fair Park with dining, dancing, music and revelry unlike anything you have yet seen.

“This festival began as a giant commotion when fans overran one of our favorite Irish bars to listen to their favorite bands,” said Sheri Bush, president of the Southwest Celtic Music Association Inc., the all-volunteer organization that produced the North Texas Irish Festival and provides music and dance scholarships to local children. “That quickly grew into our festival at Fair Park, where we could share this love of music and dance with all of North Texas. It has only gotten bigger each year.”

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 35th Annual North Texas Irish Festival include: **Barrule**, a band from the Isle of Man that does “Manx” music, the Celtic world’s best-kept secret; **Breaking Trad**, with their first appearance at North Texas Irish Festival; **Brian McNeill**, described as Scotland’s most meaningful contemporary songwriter; **Brock McGuire Band**, named “Traditional Irish Band of the Decade” by the *Irish American News*; **High Kings**, Ireland’s Folk Band of the year; **The Elders**, music rooted in Americana and Celtic folk rock; **Máire Ní Chathasaigh and Chris Newman**, North Texas Irish Festival favorite musicians for more than 20 years; **The Town Pants**, with their Celtic roots rock; and **We Banjo 3**, with their Irish Music with old-time American and bluegrass influences. The music goes on all weekend and encompasses myriad approaches to Celtic music from traditional jigs and reels to pub ballads to Celtic rock.

Dance

Dancers will delight audiences with continuous performances on the dance stage. 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 led by local dance instructors.

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 3, 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 4; and 11:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 5.

Tickets will be 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 will be available at area Tom Thumb and Albertsons stores in February. 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 (214) 821-4173 or visit www.ntif.org for more information or to volunteer to work at the festival.

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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