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MICHIGAN IRISH MUSIC FESTIVAL CELEBRATES 20 YEARS **4-Day Festival Returns Sept. 12-15**

The Michigan Irish Music Festival observes its 20th anniversary this year, and what better way to celebrate than by hosting more bands than ever in the history of the event?

The festival returns to Heritage Landing in downtown Muskegon Sept. 12-15 and features Irish and Celtic music on seven covered stages. The festival kicks off Thursday, Sept. 12 with its Pub Preview Party featuring food, beverages, and three bands in the pub tent only. The full festival begins Friday.

In addition to live music, the Celtic Kitchen and beverage stations serve authentic Irish food and drinks. The Tea Room has non-alcoholic choices and treats in a relaxed atmosphere. Other activities include the Irish Market and Irish Store, children's activities, a cultural center, and a session tent. FEIS, an Irish dance competition, and the Highland Games are held on Saturday. Sunday, Catholic mass at 9 a.m. will be followed by a traditional Irish breakfast.

This year's festival, expected to draw 40,000 patrons, will host a record 26 bands. Here's a sneak peek at 10 of the bands on tap:

GAELIC STORM

After two decades and more than 2,000 live shows, this multinational Celtic band returns to the festival for the first time in five years. Gaelic Storm attributes their continued success to a diversified fan base from several musical genres: country, bluegrass, Celtic, and rock.

Gaelic Storm, which has gained a reputation as a genre-bending Irish rock band, has topped the Billboard World Chart six times, appearing at mainstream music festivals and headlining the largest Irish festivals across the country.

THE HIGH KINGS

The band's most recent release, "Decade-Best of The High Kings," garnered rave reviews, and their recently completed U.S. tour sold out many of its venues. The High Kings' unique contemporary style and arrangement to songs of yesteryear are sure to delight.

AOIFE SCOTT

The singer and songwriter from Dublin was named the 2018 winner of the Best Irish Folk Act at the Irish Post Music Awards. Her music has a broad creative scope but is largely influenced by her own roots in folk and traditional Irish music.



ONE FOR THE FOXES

This exciting and dynamic transatlantic trio presents a rousing blend of Irish and American folk music. They offer both traditional and newly composed music, presented in an energetic and engaging manner.

JIGJAM

The award-winning quartet from Ireland blends the best of traditional Irish music with bluegrass and Americana in a new genre, which has been branded as "I-Grass" - Irish influenced bluegrass.

DOOLIN'

Doolin' is one of the most innovative bands of the Irish music scene. Formed in Toulouse in 2005, the band comprises six accomplished and eclectic musicians. French in origin, this sextet brings a fresh approach to Irish music. Doolin' combines instrumentals, vocals, and original compositions in a resolutely modern style. The arrangements at times taking their inspiration from pop-rock, folk, jazz, funk, and even rap.

PIGEON KINGS

Pigeon Kings draws from Celtic and rock influences, but they're not Celtic Rock. There are traditional elements, but they're not a traditional band. With elements of Americana and Bluegrass, they have a sound and persona all their own. Pigeon Kings offers a high energy stage show backed by unique compositions, honest lyrics, and experienced showmanship.

THE DROWSY LADS

Jack Baker of the Irish American News named The Drowsy Lads the "Best Irish American Band of 2018." The Lads, out of Columbus, Ohio, have won over both casual music lovers and those steeped in hardcore traditional Irish music. They're fond of creating their own spirited arrangements and offer occasional original compositions (even mixing in bluegrass and classical), but that never gets in the way of their obsession with the pure old Irish tunes, songs, wit, and friendship that has defined Irish music for centuries.

CONNLA

After winning New Group of the Year (Chicago Irish American News) and Best New Group (Live Ireland Music Awards) in 2016, Connla has been quickly making an impact on the folk/traditional scene. More recently, Connla won Album of the Year for 2019 at both the ALSR Celtic Music Awards and the Livvies Awards. Songlines magazine named Connla their "must-see act" for their UK tour and proclaimed, "A band this young shouldn't be this good."

THE CONIFERS

The five young musicians that make up The Conifers met while studying traditional music at the University of Limerick. They have since developed a lasting friendship, which is evident in their music. In 2018, The Conifers, whose music is energetic and lively with a wholesome sound, won first place in the prestigious Michigan Irish Music Initiative competition in Dundalk.



michiganirish.org

Advance tickets and passes for this year's Michigan Irish Music Festival are available online (patrons save \$5 per ticket online vs. the gate price). The festival offers an Early-In Free promotion on Friday only from 5 to 6 p.m., sponsored by Family Financial Credit Union. Other major sponsors of the festival include G&L, Van's Car Wash and Budweiser. The Delta Hotels by Marriott and Shoreline Inn are host hotels for the festival. For complete festival information, and the announcement of additional bands, visit www.michiganirish.org.

For media information, call 231.683.2065.