

CONTACT:
Christina Kellogg 510.643.6714
ckellogg@calperfs.berkeley.edu
Joe Yang 510.642.9121
scyang@calperfs.berkeley.edu

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**THE VIRTUOSO IRISH BAND ALTAN BRINGS
TRADITIONAL CELTIC MUSIC TO ZELLERBACH HALL
FRIDAY, MARCH 19 AT 8:00 P.M.**

**SchoolTime: One-hour Performance for Bay Area Students Will be Given
Friday, March 19 at 11:00 a.m. at Zellerbach Hall**

BERKELEY, February 12, 2010—“One of the Celtic world’s great treasures” (*Los Angeles Times*), the Irish band **Altan**, celebrates 25 years of spirited music-making with a post-St. Patrick’s Day concert in Zellerbach Hall on **Friday, March 19 at 8:00 p.m.** A favorite the world over for their dynamic live performances and stellar recordings of traditional Irish music, Altan will grace the Berkeley audience with a delight-filled evening of songs, reels, jigs, ballads and Donegal fiddle tunes. Altan’s music is ignited by the two-violin team of **Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh** and **Ciarán Tourish**; additionally, Ní Mhaonaigh provides the vocals and Tourish plays whistles. The band is completed by **Dermot Byrne** on button accordion, **Ciarán Curran** playing bouzouki, and **Dáithí Sproule** on guitar. “Under no circumstances should they be missed in concert” (*Irish Echo*, New York).

A one-hour *SchoolTime* performance by Altan for Bay Area K–12 students and chaperones will be given on **Friday, March 19 at 11:00 a.m. at Zellerbach Hall**. Tickets must be arranged in advance only.

ALTAN

The late **Frankie Kennedy** and his partner **Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh** founded **Altan** when they were both schoolteachers in Malahide in North County Dublin. The pair met and played music with artists from the Donegal tradition, including John Doherty, Con Cassidy, James Byrne, Dinny McLaughlin, Vincent Campbell, and Ní Mhaonaigh’s father Francie. Irish music is traditionally learned not from books but at the side of experienced performers, and these older musicians taught Ní Mhaonaigh and Kennedy not only the songs, but also the philosophy of life that is at the music’s heart.

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The duo gave their first live performances in the United States in 1985, and soon Altan grew into a quartet, with Kennedy on flute, Ní Mhaonaigh on fiddle and vocals, Curran on bouzouki, and Sproule playing guitar. Ciarán Touris, playing fiddle and whistle, joined the band in the early 1990s, adding innovative harmonies and countermelodies to the band's sound. Kennedy died in September 1994, but his aspirations for the band carried on. Today, Altan includes Dermot Byrne, who provides intricate accordion tunes. "Thought by many to be the finest traditional Irish combo working today, Altan seamlessly blends dazzling instrumental prowess and the gorgeously delicate vocals of Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh" (*Chicago Reader*).

Altan has become a global ambassador for Irish music and culture, accompanying Irish president Mary McAleese on state visits to Greece, Korea, and Japan. The group played for president Bill Clinton at the White House twice, and played again for Clinton when he visited Ireland. The band also has a large and enthusiastic fan base in Japan. In 2006, the Irish government honored Altan by putting the band on an Irish postage stamp—one of only four bands so honored. Altan's website is www.altan.ie.

Altan has played in many of the world's most prestigious venues, including the Sydney Opera House, the Hollywood Bowl, the Royal Albert Hall and the Alte Opera Frankfurt. The band has performed or recorded with artists including The Chieftans, Dolly Parton, Bonnie Raitt, Alison Krauss and Ricky Skaggs, and their song "Tommy Bhetty's Waltz" was featured in the Oscar-winning film *Good Will Hunting*.

The band's discography includes ten albums, beginning with 1989's "Horse with a Heart" and continuing through "25th Anniversary Celebration," recorded with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, which will be released simultaneously with the band's North American tour. Three Altan albums have won "Celtic/British Isles Album of the Year" awards from the National Association of Independent Record Distributors and Manufacturers, and "Island Angel" was the fourth-best-selling World Music album in 1994. Members of the group have also appeared on numerous recordings with artists including Seamus and Manus McGuire, Matt Molloy, Maura O'Connell, Gabriel McArdle, and Peter Ostroushko.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for the **Altan** on **Friday, March 19** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$20.00**, **\$28.00** and **\$36.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperformances.org.

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced three hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush ticket prices are \$10.00 for UCB students; \$15.00 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20.00 for all other community members. Information is available on Cal Performances' Facebook page and at 510-642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, three hours prior to a performance only.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, March 19 at 11:00 a.m.
SCHOOLTIME PERFORMANCE

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

World Stage
Altan

Program: The traditional Irish band Altan will present a special one-hour performance for Bay Area schoolchildren. Songs will be announced from the stage.

Tickets: \$4.00 per student or adult chaperone, available in advance only through Cal Performances at (510) 642-1082. *SchoolTime* performances are open to students in kindergarten through grade 12 in Bay Area public and private schools. Supplemental study guides for the classroom are provided. For more information about the *SchoolTime* program, contact the *SchoolTime* coordinator at Cal Performances by email at eduprograms@calperfs.berkeley.edu or by phone at (510) 642-0212.

Friday, March 19 at 8:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

World Stage

Altan

Program: The acclaimed Irish band Altan will present a concert of traditional Celtic music. In the spirit of spontaneity, all songs will be announced from the stage.

Tickets: \$20.00, \$28.00 and \$36.00, with special half-price tickets for children 16 and under for all performances; available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperformances.org; and at the door.

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