

Friday, February 10, 2006, 8 pm  
Zellerbach Hall

Eileen Ivers & Immigrant Soul  
with Special Guest Burhan Öçal



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Fiddler **Eileen Ivers** has established herself as the pre-eminent exponent of the Irish fiddle in the world. The daughter of Irish immigrants, Eileen grew up in a culturally diverse neighborhood of the Bronx, New York. Rooted in Irish traditional music since the age of eight, Eileen proceeded to win nine All-Ireland fiddle championships, a tenth on tenor banjo and over 30 championship medals, making her one of the most widely acclaimed performers ever to compete in these prestigious competitions. It has been said that the task of respectfully exploring the traditions and progression of the Celtic fiddle is quite literally on Eileen Ivers's shoulder.

Being an Irish American, the intrigue of learning more about the multicultural sounds of her childhood took hold. After graduating *magna cum laude* in mathematics from Iona College and while continuing her post-graduate work in mathematics, Eileen fully immersed herself in the different genres of music which she experienced growing up in New York. Perhaps it was a mathematical mind coupled with a passion for seeking parallels in certain traditional music styles which

contributed to what has become the signature sound featured in much of Eileen's recordings since the late 1980s.

In 1999, Eileen established a touring production to present the music which now encompasses Eileen Ivers & Immigrant Soul. This mix of African and Latin percussion and bass, Irish instrumentalists and American soulful vocals headlines major performing arts centers, guest stars with numerous symphonies, performs at major festivals worldwide and has appeared on national and international television.

Eileen is also privileged to share the stage with two of the world's most celebrated violinists, classical virtuoso Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg and jazz great Regina Carter, in the critically acclaimed *Fiddlers Three*. This show continues to fascinate audiences throughout the United States.

Ivers has also appeared with the London Symphony Orchestra, the National Symphony at the Kennedy Center, the Boston Pops, The Chieftains, Hall and Oates, Afrocelts, Patti Smith, Paula Cole, Al Di Meola and Steve Gadd. She is a founding member of Cherish the Ladies and has toured as the musical star of Riverdance.

Ivers's recording credits include over 80 contemporary and traditional albums and numerous movie scores. Her latest CD, entitled *Eileen Ivers & Immigrant Soul*, continues to display why Ivers is hailed as one of the great innovators and pioneers in the Celtic and World music genres.



**Isaac Anderson** (*uilleann pipes, flute, whistles*) began playing Irish music while growing up in his native Chicago. Having studied with some of the greatest names in traditional music on both sides of the Atlantic, he has quickly become known as a skilled performer and teacher in his own right. He has played with such noted musicians as Dennis Cahill, Kieran O'Hare, John Whelan, Benedict Koehler, Brendan Bulger, Jerry O'Sullivan and the Cygnus Ensemble. At the 2002 Fleadh Cheoil in Listowel, Isaac was named the All-Ireland Senior Champion on no less than three instruments: uilleann pipes, flute and whistle. He is the first American ever to win such a "hat trick" victory, the first American to win either competition for the flute and pipes, and the first since Joanie Madden to win the tin whistle championship. Isaac now resides in New York and is the newest member of Eileen Ivers & Immigrant Soul.



Hailing from the Boston area and now living in New Jersey, bassist and vocalist **Gregory Jones** is well known in the jazz and world music circuits. He has recorded and toured with such diverse artists as tap great Savion Glover in *Bring In Da' Noise, Bring In Da' Funk* and pop legend Carly Simon. Gregory brings a South African bass style to Eileen Ivers & Immigrant Soul which helps to underpin the Irish melodic top line.



Bronx, New York, native **Tommy McDonnell** is an inspired vocalist and percussionist who has been performing professionally since the age of 15. The son of a carpenter and a

professional actress/singer/dancer, Tommy brings a deeply soulful aspect to the multi-dimensional thrust of Eileen Ivers & Immigrant Soul. Tommy had played only drums until 1988, when he decided to embark on a singing career. He has appeared as a featured performer in Universal Pictures' *Blues Brothers 2000*, with Dr. John on *Late Night with David Letterman* and on *Saturday Night Live* with the Blues Brothers. Tommy has also shared the stage with such greats as B. B. King, James Brown, Eric Clapton, Lou Rawls, Isaac Hayes and Wilson Pickett, and he was a member of the "ORIGINAL Blues Brothers Band" with Dan Aykroyd, John Belushi and a host of music legends.



Turkish music specialist **Burhan Öçal** has made the bridging of musical cultures his central mission. A native of Kırklareli, near Istanbul, he grew up in a musical family. From his father, he learned a variety of percussion instruments, while his mother introduced him to religious vocal music. At an early age, he began performing Turkish court and folk music, as well as neo-classical Turkish music. After his first contact with Western music, he became interested in combining other genres and cultural traditions, such as jazz and Western classical music, with his own.



Dublin-born guitarist and vocalist **James Riley** always had a love for traditional music. Raised in Ballyfermot, he learned music from his father, the famed Irish balladeer Kit Riley, and studied with guitarist Jon Hicks. He performed throughout Europe and the Middle East before immigrating to the United States in 2000. Since then, James has become a much sought-after traditional Irish music accompanist and has recorded with such artists as Solas members Mick McAuley and Steve Holloway and Cherish the Ladies fiddler Marie Reilly.

Öçal's instrumental array is as diverse as his music. In addition to a wide variety of percussion instruments, such as the *darbuka* (a vase-shaped drum played with the fingers), *kös* (kettle drum), *kudüm* and *bendi*, he is a highly skilled player on a number of stringed instruments, including the *divan-saz*, *tanbur* and *oud*. His expressive voice adds to the spectrum of musical elements at his command.

Since 1977, Öçal has divided his time between Istanbul and Zurich. He has won wide renown for touring and recording with his own Istanbul Oriental Ensemble (IOE), which performs traditional Gypsy and Turkish folk music. Seeking out a range of world-class collaborators, he has also performed with classical pianist Maria João Pires, jazz keyboardist and Weather Report founder Joe Zawinul and classical guitarist Eliot Fisk. He has toured and recorded with German fusion

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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specialists in the Burhan Öçal Group and as a guest artist with the George Gruntz Concert Jazz Band and the Australian pianist Peter Waters.

In March 2001, Öçal appeared at a benefit for the Red Cross in Los Angeles featuring Sting and Argentinean actress Mia Maestro. The Orange County Philharmonic Society's Eclectic Orange Festival commissioned Öçal to write a piece for the Kronos Quartet, Öçal and *zurna* player Ahmet Elbasan, which was premiered by Öçal and the Kronos Quartet in October 2001 and repeated in June 2001 at the Turkish Music Festival in Istanbul. Öçal returned to the Montreal Jazz Festival that summer, this time with an oriental-style funk ensemble, Groove ala Turca, featuring bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma, as well as the IOE. They performed for more than 50,000 people in the featured outdoor concert in downtown Montreal.

Öçal's recent and continuing collaborations include a tour with Huse Sermet, the noted French-Turkish pianist in 2003, and a tour and recording with the Zurich Chamber

Orchestra under British conductor Howard Griffith, featuring Öçal's first orchestral compositions (for percussion, violin and voice).

Öçal has an extensive discography which includes several award-winning recordings. *Gypsy Rum*, his first disc with the IOE, won the 1995 German Record Critics' Award and was a best-seller on the world music charts. The group's follow-up recording, *Sultan's Secret Door*, was accorded the rare honor of a second German Record Critics' Award. The IOE's third recording, *Caravanserai*, was released in 2001. Öçal also received the Prix Choc in 1996 for his solo disc of 17th-century Turkish classical music, *Ottoman Garden*. In 1998, Öçal formed the Classical Ensemble of Istanbul and released *Orient Secret*, a recording of the traditional art music of Islam. *Sultan Osman* followed shortly thereafter, a collaboration with Peter Namlook, Öçal's second CD with the German techno artist. His most recent release, *Kirklareli Il Siniri*, features the Trakya All Stars and is quickly gaining acclaim throughout Europe and the Middle East.