



Conroe Courier - Lifestyles

Switchback duo celebrates Celtic heritage at Crighton

By Tori Brock

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If St. Patrick's Day is your favorite holiday and you can't wait to celebrate your Celtic heritage next March, Switchback has an upcoming performance you won't want to miss.

Switchback is a part-Americana, part-Celtic duo that has performed all over the world and now the duo is coming to the historic downtown Crighton Theatre Saturday, thanks to the Montgomery County Performing Arts Society.

"I had the opportunity to see them perform in St. Paul," said Rennie Kirkpatrick, executive director of MCPAS. "The best way to describe them is to say they perform Americana with Celtic roots. They are absolutely amazing.

"What they can do together -- their sound and their performances are just so intriguing to see how they can bring this all together," she added. "They're great. If you have an ounce of Celtic blood in you, you'll be very pleased with their performance. If you don't have any Celtic blood, then you'll wish you did."

Marty McCormack and Brian Fitzgerald are the duo known as Switchback and the two have been performing together for 23 years with more than 10 albums under their collective belt.

For the 2008-09 Irish Music Association awards, Switchback was named top duo in a pub, festival or concert setting for the United States, Ireland, European Union and the United Kingdom, according to the band's web site at <http://www.waygoodmusic.com/>.

The duo's first album featured a song used by Chevrolet in a commercial promoting the Chevy Blazer. Eventually, according to their biography, the band's music was heard by producer Lloyd Maines, who then produced several albums for the band.

Over their career, the duo has opened for bands such as The Moody Blues, Leon Russell, Lee Greenwood, John Hartford and Beausoliel. The duo has also shared the stage with Celtic musicians Cherish the Ladies, Gaelic Storm, Liz Carroll and John Williams.

"They bring back Celtic heritage," Kirkpatrick said. "They have that deep soul of the Celtic musical ability.

"They're going to entertain a wide audience," she added. "They will also be doing outreach in local schools while they're here. They love working with children, so it's going to be great for the community."

Now in the middle of its current season, MCPAS has presented a variety of performances over the past couple of months with many more to come this performing arts season.

"This season has been awesome. We started out with "Ballroom with a Twist," and that was received as one of the best performances the Montgomery County Performing Arts Society has ever put on," Kirkpatrick said. "We followed that with Bella Sorella, who wowed the audience with their awesome performance. They were just as wonderful inside as they were on the outside.

"We've got a real mixture in the types of performance we're offering this season," she added. "We try to get it mixed up and give everyone an opportunity to enjoy a live performance."

MCPAS welcomes Switchback on Nov. 14 to the Crighton Theatre, 234 N. Main Street in Conroe at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$37 for orchestra seating, \$22 for balcony seats and \$10 for students.

"Rave On," a Buddy Holly tribute show, will be the next performance presented by MCPAS on Feb. 6. For more information call (936) 760-ARTS (2787) or visit the website at <http://www.mcpas.org/>.

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