

Pulling out the stops in Massachusetts

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EMBOLDENED by the recent U.S. census news that Massachusetts remains the most Irish-American state in the country, with nearly 24 percent of residents claiming Irish ancestry, local organizers are pulling out all the stops this St. Patrick's Day season with hundreds of concerts, dances, soirees, exhibits and cultural gatherings taking place from Boston to the Berkshires and from the Merrimack Valley to Cape Cod.

Here is a selected round-up of the best Irish events taking place throughout Massachusetts. You can find fuller details by visiting Irishboston.org.

Music and Dance

IRISH Tenor John McDermott returns to the Blue Ocean Room in Salisbury on Thursday March 10. He's got a big fan base here thanks to his charity work on behalf of veterans causes, including Fisher House Project.

On March 11-13, Irish fiddler Larry Reynolds and his Comhaltas group are the stars of A Little Bit of Ireland, hosted each year by the Reagle Music Theatre of Greater Boston. The show features, music, songs, dancing and storytelling.

The Pogues return to Boston to their adoring fans at the House of Blues on Saturday, March 11-12.

Irish Fiddler Charlie Lennon stars in a Celebration of Irish Music and Culture at the Indian Hill Music School in Littleton, on March 12. An all day festival of sessions and workshops featuring piper Michael Cooney, flutist Shannon Heaton and fiddler Laurel Martin runs from noon to 5 p.m. then an evening concert where Lennon's composition, Island Wedding Suite, gets its American premier by the Indian Hill Music Orchestra.

Women of Ireland, featuring up-and-coming female musicians from Ireland, comes to the Lynn Auditorium in Lynn



The Pogues.

on March 12, featuring fiddler Frankie Gavin.

Cape Cod welcomes the Seamist Trio at the Harwich Junior Theatre in West Harwich on Sunday, March 13. The band features Irish harpist Mairead Doherty, fiddler Rose Clancy, clarinetist Clayton March and Irish tenor Richard Sullivan.

The Dropkick Murphys - Boston's hometown punk rock heroes - open a three day stand at Boston's House of Blues from March 16-18. They've just released a new album "Going out in Style."

On March 17 Irish harpist Aine Minogue performs at the Tower Hill Botanical Garden in Boyston at 7:30 p.m.

Brian O'Donovan, of the popular radio show, Celtic Sojourn, hosts his annual St. Patrick's Day Celtic Sojourn on March 18 at Sanders Theatre in Cambridge and Zeiterion Theatre in New Bedford on March 19. The show features Teada, Seamus Beagley, Michael Cooney and singer Carol Noonan.

On Saturday, March 19, the John F. Kennedy Library presents New England Irish Harp Orchestra and Réagánta.

On March 25, singer Paula Wells and Declan Houston perform at Townsends Restaurant in Hyde Park, Boston, in a concert to benefit Mass Fallen Heroes.

On March 27, Irish tenor Ronan Tynan performs at the historic Wilbur Theatre in downtown Boston.

And rounding out the concert schedule, fiddler Brian Conway and pianist Brendan Dolan perform at the Connolly House at Boston College on March 31, part of the Gaelic Roots program put together by fiddle champ Seamus Connolly.

Music Around New England

IN CONNECTICUT, flutist Skip McKinley, fiddler Seamus Connolly, piper Jerry O'Sullivan and singer Eamon O'Leary perform at Saltwater Farm Vineyard on March 12. In New Hampshire, Celtic Woman performs at Verizon Wireless

Arena in Manchester, NH on March 15. On March 16, Dervish performs at the Palace Theatre in Manchester.

In Rhode Island, Pendragon performs at Blackstone River Theatre in Cumberland on March 13, and Lunasa performs there on March 20.

In Vermont, Irish band Gypsy Reel, featuring Claudine Langille, performs at the Old Tavern in Grafton on March 13, the Sitting Bull Lounge at Okemo Mountain in Ludlow on March 17 at 3:00 p.m., then later at The Killarney in Ludlow that evening.

Library Events

ON MARCH 13 Kyle Darcy, author of Under Current Conditions, joins the Eire Society's St. Patrick's Day party at the Boston Harbor Hotel.

James Carroll discusses his book, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem," at the Boston Public Library. On March 17, Stewart O'Nan reads from his new novel, "Emily Alone," at Porter Square Books in Cambridge.

As part of the Holyoke Parade festivities, historian David McCullough receives the JFK Award on March 19. Robert Bateman lectures on Irish Civil War soldier Timothy Deasy at Lawrence Heritage State Park on March 20. Theatre director Gemma Whalen reads from her book, "Fiona Stolen Child" at Four Green Fields in Boston on March 23.

Irish Film and Theatre

BOSTON'S Huntington Theatre presents "Educating Rita" by playwright Willy Russell, March 11-April 10. The 12th annual Irish Film Festival Boston runs from March 24-27 at the Brattle Theatre in Cambridge. This award winning festival, founded in 1999, screens new films coming out of Ireland and presents awards for excellence in Irish filmmaking.

The premier of White Irish Drinkers is taking place at Kendall Square Cinema in Cambridge on March 25. The film takes

place in Brooklyn in 1975 and recounts the struggles of two brothers to avoid the criminal life while staying true to their roots.

Parades

Worcester: Sunday, March 13, Noon;
Abington: Sunday, March 20, 1 p.m.;
Holyoke: Sunday, March 20, 11:50 a.m.
South Boston: Sunday, March 20, 1 p.m.
Scituate: Sunday, March 20, 1 p.m.
Manchester, NH, Sunday, March 27, Noon.
See more details at Irishboston.org/parades.php.

Exhibits

NO VISIT to Boston is complete without a stop at the John F. Kennedy Library, the official repository for President John F. Kennedy, the nation's 35th president and America's first president of Irish-Catholic ancestry. Current exhibits celebrate the 50th anniversary of President Kennedy's first year in office, while forums, lectures and educational programs flourish year round. More from JFKLibrary.org.

The AOH, Division 8, in Lawrence has an excellent new exhibit entitled "Hometown Heroes: The Lawrence Irish and the American Civil War," which runs through March 31 at the Lawrence Heritage State Park, One Jackson Street in Lawrence.

Irish Pubs

THERE ARE dozens if not hundreds of pubs throughout Massachusetts, but here are three worth noting, since they're celebrating milestones this year.

Black Rose, 160 Street, Boston, celebrates its 35th anniversary this year. Since 1976, the Rose has been a watering hole for local politicians, neighborhood folks, Irish immigrants, and tourists. It offers music every night of the week, good food and plenty of beverage choices. Started by Phil Sweeney, the Rose is owned by the Glynn Family, from Ballinasloe, County Galway, and operated by Paul Wilson from Dublin.

The Burren Pub in Davis Square, Somerville, celebrates its 15th anniversary in 2011 as one of the nation's best nightly Irish traditional sessions. It's owned by fiddler Tommy McCarthy of London by way of County Clare and banjo/accordion champion Louise Costello of County Galway.

The Four Green Fields Pub and Restaurant at One Boston Place in downtown Boston is the city's newest Irish pub. It's run by Colin Breen, who owns a popular pub in Tampa Florida by the same name. It opened its doors in February and already has gained popularity with its solid music programming and literary events.

For a list of local pubs, visit Irishboston.org/pubs_restaurants.php.

Boston's Irish Heritage Trail

IF YOU'RE in Boston this month, check out the three mile Irish Heritage Trail which winds its way through 300 years of history, starting at the Rose Kennedy Garden on the waterfront, winds through downtown and Back Bay, and ends up at Fenway Park and, which, surprise, surprise, Irish contractors built in 1912. You can pick up a free copy of the map at the visitor center on Boston Common or the Prudential Center. More at IrishHeritage-Trail.com.



Harpist Aine Minogue.