

The Renaissance

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Eileen Ivers & Immigrant Soul at the Renaissance March 13, 2009, 8:00 PM

It is a rare and select grade of spectacular artists whose work is so boldly imaginative and clearly virtuosic that it alters the medium. It has been said that the task of respectfully exploring the traditions and progression of the Celtic fiddle is quite literally on Eileen Ivers' shoulders. The Washington Post states, "She suggests the future of the Celtic fiddle."



She's been called a "sensation" by Billboard magazine and "the Jimi Hendrix of the violin" by The New York Times. "She electrifies the crowd with a dazzling show of virtuoso playing" says The Irish Times. Ivers' 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.

The daughter of Irish immigrants, Eileen Ivers grew up in the 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 awarded persons ever to compete in these prestigious competitions.

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 the mathematical mind coupled with her 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. The L.A. Times proclaims, "Ivers' presentation was music with the kind of life and spirit that come together when talented artists from different backgrounds find the linkages that connect all forms of music ...no wonder the audience loved every minute."

Source: www.eileenivers.com/Biography/index.html



Eileen Ivers & Immigrant Discography:
An Nollaig - An Irish Christmas
Eileen Ivers & Immigrant Soul
Crossing the Bridge
Wild Blue
Traditional Irish Music

A Few Things to Know About Celtic Music

Celtic music references in ancient sagas, medieval texts, even in the works of Dante and Shakespeare, all attest the importance of music, both vocal and instrumental.

Celtic folk song is for the most part pentatonic in origin.

- The 5-scale note forms the basis of the 6-note (hexatonic) and 7-note (heptatonic) scales respectively.
- It is this gapped scale system that distinguishes the music of the Celts from the more widely used major-minor system.
- To avoid monotony, folk singers exercise their creative instincts through the use of melodic and ornamental variants.

The principal instruments identified with Celtic music are the harp, the bagpipe and the fiddle.

- The harp is common to all Celtic areas. Harpers, many of them blind, flourished in Ireland, Wales and Scotland until the 18th century, when political, religious and social changes threatened the extinction of their language and their culture. The harp was used both for accompaniment and as a solo instrument. It was the instrument which incited Highlanders to battle until it ceded that role to the bagpipe after the Battle of Harlaw in 1411. Harpers disdained the adaptations of their music to the pipes at that time, and later to the fiddle, which they regarded as an inferior instrument.
- The bagpipe has a long history in Celtic society. The war-pipes and small pipes of Scotland, the Uilleann pipes of Ireland, and the biniou, a smaller instrument played in Brittany only in accompaniment with the bombard, all had their own music, and all are still very much part of the music in their respective areas.
- The fiddle tradition is a more recent development. Although well known in Scotland prior to 1680, it was enhanced and enriched by the great upsurge of dancing in the 19th century. Scores of folk tunes were adapted as dance music and transmitted in writing, not orally as with other forms of folk culture. Ireland, too, has a strong fiddle tradition. In both countries, as in Canada, the fiddle has experienced phenomenal popularity during the past 2 decades.

Source: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0001475