ALTAN SELLS-OUT ONE CONCERT; TICKETS FOR SECOND CONCERT STILL AVAILABLE

Having taken reels, jigs and traditional Irish music to an international scale for three decades, Altan returns to the Wisconsin Union Theater with great community response. Its first show on Thursday, March 12, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. is sold-out but tickets for a second, 9:30 p.m. concert are still available. Both shows are in the Fredric March Play Circle. Purchase tickets online or call the Box Office at 608-265-ARTS (2787). Tickets can also be purchased at either Vilas Hall (entrance on East Campus Mall, 821 University Avenue) or the box office in the Wisconsin Union Theater. Ticket prices are as follows. General Public: $29; Wisconsin Union Members & Non UW-Madison Students: $25; UW-Madison Faculty & Staff: $27; UW-Madison Student (with ID): $10.

“Three and a half decades in, and Altan might be forgiven if they were tempted to hit cruise control. Instead, they’ve taken the high road,” according to The Irish Times. “It’s Altan’s affection for and embrace of American roots and Appalachian bluegrass fiddle and banjo that ignites much of this collection.”
Founded by husband and wife Frankie Kennedy and Mairead Mi Mhaonaigh, Altan has come a long way since the group’s beginning in private homes and pubs in Ireland. The group’s accomplishments include performances for international audiences, numerous albums, and Irish gold and platinum albums. Formed in 1981, the band eventually signed with Virgin Records in 1996, the first traditional Irish band to be signed by a major label.

The group survived its harshest turning point ten years after it was founded. Frankie Kennedy, facing a cancer diagnosis in 1991, continued to play and perform with Altan during treatment and leading up to his death four years after diagnosis. Mhaonaigh, alongside the group’s four additional members, continue to carry the spirit of traditional Irish music today.

Altan’s latest album, “The Widening Gyre,” presents the group’s newest member: accordion player Martin Tourish.

“The music on this album examines the lifecycle of Altan by exploring the influence of Appalachian music on Irish music,” said lead vocalist, fiddler, and founding member Mairéad Ni Mhaonaigh of Altan’s new studio album.

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