

LET'S CELEBRATE!



CELTICFEST  
VANCOUVER 2024

EVENT GUIDE

MARCH  
13TH - 17TH  
2024

# YOU'VE ARRIVED



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## A MESSAGE FROM FESTIVAL CHAIRMAN, HARRY CUSSEN

On behalf of the CelticFest Board, I am delighted to invite you all to join us this March to celebrate the 20th anniversary of CelticFest Vancouver!

We are thrilled to bring you a wonderful lineup of artists, activities and more for what promises to be a very special celebration.

Be prepared to dance, laugh and have a great time! It's a day of celebration culture, the arts and traditions, new and old.

šxwł' ənəq Xwtl'e7énk Square at the Vancouver Art Gallery will be transformed once again for a day full of community-focused fun with music, dancing, food and family entertainment.

A huge thank you to all our sponsors, staff and volunteers who are working on making this a safe, exciting and enjoyable festival.

Harry Cussen  
CelticFest Board Chair



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## A MESSAGE FROM CONSUL GENERAL, CATHY GEAGAN

On behalf of the Irish Government, I would like to sincerely congratulate all those involved in organizing CelticFest 2024.

The Consulate General of Ireland in Vancouver is proud to support CelticFest, which is funded through the Consulate under the Emigrant Support Programme of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

This year marks 20 years of CelticFest's extraordinary celebrations of music, entertainment, and community focused fun at the heart of Vancouver. With c.12% of Canadians claiming Irish heritage, it is little wonder that the sizeable Irish community in British Columbia look forward to the Festival each year.

My particular thanks to the event sponsors, without whom this excellent programme of events would not be possible. As a major outdoor event, CelticFest is a signal to the city not only to celebrate St. Patrick's Day but also that summer fun will soon be here again. This joyous event is a cornerstone not only of the celebration of Irish and Celtic culture, but also of the arts and culture scene in the city. I hope you enjoy being part of it!

Cathy Geagan  
Consul General of Ireland, Vancouver



# CELTICFEST VANCOUVER 2024

CELTICFEST VANCOUVER CELEBRATES 20 YEARS MARCH 13-17

CelticFest Vancouver, the city's annual celebration of Celtic culture, returns this March celebrating 20 years of bringing Celtic music, dance and culture to Vancouver. Festivities kick off Thursday March 14 with an Irish comedy show hosted by local comedian Amy Walsh and finish Saturday March 16th with an all-day St Patrick's Day festival in the heart of downtown Vancouver. The free, all-ages, community festival offers live music, performances, beer tent, food trucks, Irish dancing, Celtic-themed market, games, Irish Wolfhounds, family zone, face painting, sports demonstrations and more.

CelticFest is Western Canada's largest annual Celtic festival. For 20 years, the festival has delivered a rich cultural celebration of the Celtic nations to thousands of festival goers. In addition to comedy and the flagship downtown festival, ticketed festivities include a performance from the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir and the annual St. Patrick's Day Ceilidh. Chasing Abbey, a rising Irish pop group from Tullamore, Ireland will headline the festival along with local sensation Paul Caldwell.

The free full-day festival will showcase a range of new and returning performances including music from local favourites like Matty & The Barge Boys and traditional dance by the O'Brien School of Irish Dance. Storyteller Jess Murray and kids' ensemble, the Showstoppers will delight young festival-goers in addition to a family zone with games and activities for all ages. A curated Celtic marketplace will offer everything from international snacks, jewelry, a photo booth and locally made Celtic crafts. Local sports teams and community groups will play games and promote Celtic culture in Vancouver. Cold beer, beverages and a selection of international cuisine will be available through mobile bars and food trucks.

"Over 20 years, CelticFest Vancouver has earned its place as one of the City's most popular celebrations," says Alan Cosgrave, Vice President of the CelticFest Vancouver Board. "Fusing Celtic traditional sounds with modern music, art and celebration, the festival brings people together from around the province. We're very excited to be hosting pop group Chasing Abbey who are coming all the way from Ireland as well as local favorites like Paul Caldwell and the O'Brien School of Irish Dance. In Canada, March is Irish Heritage Month. Irish people have been making their home in Vancouver for decades now and our history here is growing. We're pleased we were able to keep this year's festival a free event so everyone can celebrate."

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# FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

07

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13:



Join the ICCCVAN and special guest, the Tánaiste Micheál Martin, TD, for breakfast at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

Get ready for a morning filled with Irish culture, music and festivities, and hear about Ireland and Ireland Canada business relations.

[Buy Tickets](#)

## THURSDAY, MARCH 14:



Irish Comedy Night  
Hosted by Amy Walsh

Performers include:

- Darragh Bourke
- LJ Quirke
- Cass Furman
- Daragh Turner
- Rory Dunn
- Niki Mohrdar

Donnellan's Irish Pub  
Tickets \$10 at the door

## FRIDAY, MARCH 15:



Kick off your St Patrick's weekend at the biggest Ceilidh west of the Rockies hosted by Blackthorn, Vancouver's longest-running Celtic Band!

Join Blackthorn and friends for a full night of Celtic Music, Dance and Fun!

with Guests:

- BCR Regiment Irish Pipes & Drums
- Eire Born Irish Dance Company
- Shot of Scotch Vancouver Company

[Buy Tickets](#)

# FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

## SATURDAY, MARCH 16:



Live outdoor concert and festival fun at šxw'łənəq Xwtl'e7énk Square - the Vancouver Art Gallery North Plaza.

See page 11 for Main Stage festival schedule



Get prepared to laugh your arse off! On Saturday, March 16, Clare Voyeur presents another instalment of WHAT'S THE CRAIC? A Night of Irish Devilry.

This variety show is the precursor celebration to Paddy's Day, packed with acts full of hilarity, sexiness and the spirit and lore of the Emerald Isle! We've got burlesque, comedy, live music, games and more! Say another rosary, count your lucky shamrocks and wear your best greens in honour of the big man himself, St. Patrick! [Buy Tickets](#)



**VANCOUVER  
WELSH MEN'S CHOIR**

The Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir, directed by Jonathan Quick presents 'Our Hearts in the Highlands', a concert in collaboration with Celtic Fest

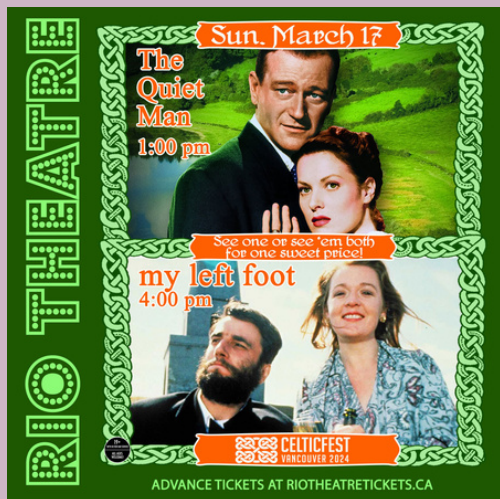
[Buy Tickets](#)



# FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

09

## SUNDAY, MARCH 17:



Join us at the Rio Theatre on Sunday, March 17 for a St. Patrick's Day Double Bill featuring a pair of beloved Irish classics that we can all raise a pint to while feeling all those nostalgic feels – John Ford's THE QUIET MAN, and Jim Sheridan's MY LEFT FOOT.

Why not make is a St. Patrick's Day Double Bill for one sweet price?

[Buy Advance Tickets](#)



The Rogue Folk Club & CelticFest Vancouver Present

Twin Embers | Dani Larkin  
St. Patrick's Day Double Bill

[Buy Tickets](#)

## THURSDAY, MARCH 21:



There are many reasons to be excited about new Glasgow-based five-piece Ímar – not least a line-up featuring current and former members of Mánran, RURA, Talisk, Barrule and Cara whose trophy-cabinet includes the 2018 BBC Radio 2 Musician of the Year, 2016 Radio Scotland Musician of the Year, BBC Radio 2 Horizon Award, BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Award and several All-Britain & All-Ireland titles. By far the best and biggest reason, however, is how excited the band are themselves.

[Buy Tickets](#)

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 **CELTICFEST**  
VANCOUVER 2024

# LIVE STAGE: SATURDAY SCHEDULE

**10:00 KIDS STORYTELLING**  
WITH JESS MURRAY (BEER TENT)

**11:00 CELTIC MEDLEY**

**11:15 SHOW STOPPERS**  
KIDS ENTERTAINMENT

**11:45 LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
& TRADITIONAL WELCOME**

**11:55 OPENING  
REMARKS**

**12:10 PAT CHESSEL  
BAND**

**12:15 KIDS STORYTELLING**  
WITH JESS MURRAY (FAMILY ZONE)

**12:55 GAA SHOWCASE**

**13:15 GLASTA**

**14:00 KIDS STORYTELLING**  
WITH JESS MURRAY (FAMILY ZONE)

**14:00 SHOT OF SCOTCH**

**14:20 SOPHIA STRANG**

**14:30 O'BRIEN SCHOOL  
OF IRISH DANCE**

**14:50 TWIN EMBERS**

**15:30 QUEEN JAS MINH**

**15:35 IRISH PIPE BAND**

**15:55 MICHAELA  
CUNNINGHAM & CO.**

**16:40 DYLAN MULLEN**

**17:00 MATTY & THE  
BARGE BOYS**

**18:05 WHISKEYDICKS**

**19:10 PAUL CALDWELL  
& BAND**

**20:20 HEADLINE ACT  
CHASING ABBEY**

# FESTIVAL SITE MAP



**LEGEND**

FESTIVAL ZONE INCLUDES:  
-KIDS ZONE;  
INC. GAMES & FACE PAINTING  
-PHOTO BOOTH  
-MARKET VENDORS;  
INC. CELTIC TREASURE CHEST  
-IRISH WOLFHOOUNDS  
& MANY MORE!

= WASHROOMS

= FIRST AID

ROBSON STREET

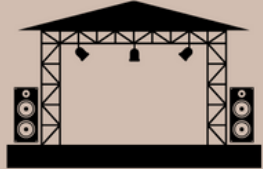
HORNBY STREET

GEORGIA STREET

BIKE SHARE



BAR



MAIN STAGE



PHOTO BOOTH



BAR AREA



FESTIVAL ZONE



ENTRANCE/EXIT



HOWE STREET



FOOD TRUCKS

## CELTIC MEDLEY



Doug "Celtic" Medley's explosive fiddling style is an Irish Musical Stew simmering for five decades with lots of ingredients and everything except the kitchen sink.

From electric violin in the San Francisco Acid Rock scene in 1969 to concert master of the North Shore Chamber Orchestra, Doug has enjoyed performing with Vancouver based bands like Foxfire, Blood on the Saddle, Railway, Wallbangers, Quenchers, Halifax Wharfrats, and the legendary music warehouse "City Space" at 343 Railway Street was his creation. Watch the horsehair fly off Doug's violin bow and join him to dance to the Irish fiddle.

More recently, Chasing Abbey have revisited their roots as Irish traditional music musicians and are pioneering a new genre of music - 'Trad House' - were they reimagine and rework centuries' old Irish traditional songs and fuse them with their distinctive dance pop sound.

## DYLAN MULLEN



County-Monaghan born Dylan Mullen soloist got his start playing guitar at bars in Sligo. When he moved to Vancouver, he continued doing what he loves. You'll frequently find Dylan at venues throughout Vancouver. He prides himself on the broad mixture of styles he plays - there's something for everyone!

## CHASING ABBEY



Chasing Abbey are a dance pop trio from Ireland who have honed their artistic talent to create a uniquely Chasing Abbey sound, achieved only by combining the group's pool of talent with each member being a multi-instrumentalist, vocalist and producer.

## GLASTA



Glasta is a local band from the Vancouver area fronted by 3 original members: Catherine Flynn – Vocal/Banjo, Terence O'Shea – Fiddle, And Matthew Miles – Guitar.

This Celtic Fest they are absolutely honoured to be joined by their very talented friends Melany Yeap – Flute, and Anthony McDonough– Mandolin. Glasta and Friends enjoy sharing and spreading their love of Irish Music, uplifting and connecting audiences all throughout the year. They hold a deep respect for tradition while always being open to the possibilities that collaborating in music brings. They wish you all a healthy and happy St. Patrick's Day 2024.

## IRISH PIPE BAND



The British Columbia Regiment (BCR) Irish Pipes and Drums is an all volunteer band made up of civilians affiliated with the British Columbia Regiment (Duke of Connaught's Own) reserve regiment. In June 2002, the Irish Fusiliers of Canada and the British Columbia Regiment were merged to preserve the Battle Honours and name of the Irish Fusiliers. The band was formed as a visible symbol of the Irish heritage of the two regiments. Under the guidance of Pipe Major Andrew Hayes the band performs at military and civic functions, charitable events, and parades primarily in Metro Vancouver. The band currently practices out of the Beatty Street Drill Hall, home of the BC Regiment.

## JAS MINH



Listen up, we are twins and we're really good at drag, and we're gunna take you on a journey to the end of the rainbow. From Dublin to Belfast, and Cork to Killarney, Jas Minh will take you on a journey down the River Liffey, Irish dancing her way into your heart. We know you're hungry, so Continental Breakfast has prepared a full serving and a half of Irish fry. Get your belly ready, because it's time to eat it up!

## JESS MURRAY



Jess is a storyteller, healthcare worker, and social work student from Roscommon, now residing in Snuneymuxw on Vancouver Island. Inspired by her studies with psychologist and mythologist Sharon Blackie, Jess shares the enchanting realm of Celtic myth and tradition through storytelling, as a way to preserve this aspect of our rich cultural heritage.

## MATTY & THE BARGE BOYS



Matty Miller and the Barge Boys are Vancouver's most exciting new covers band. Known for their crowd engagement and energy, the Barge Boys bring a wide range of bangers to make your next event one to remember.

Hailing from New Zealand, California and Vancouver - their mutual love of music, as well as a mutual appreciation for beached sea vessels, gave rise to the Barge Boys in 2022. Since then, the band has been busy in the Van pub scene playing all your favourite sing alongs from the 60's to today.

## MICHAELA CUNNINGHAM & ANDY HILLHURST



Michaela was born in Vancouver and grew up on salt spring island. During her teenage and young adult years Michaela made frequent trips to Ireland to learn Irish music

She later studied it at college where she earned a degree in music and an MA in Music performance from Dublin Institute of Technology. Michaela has performed with a number of notable musicians such as Andy Hillhouse, Sharon Shannon, Pierre Schryer, Martin Tourish (of Irish band Altan) and others. She runs a Bed & Breakfast and Spa on Salt Spring Island with her husband.



Andy cut his teeth in the folk world as the founder and manager of the Celtic funk band Mad Pudding, who toured festivals and folk clubs in North America and Europe through the 1990s. Since 2000 he has provided driving, groovy guitar for several of the Celtic music scene's most respected and exciting acoustic musicians, including the Juno Winning McDades, Pierre Schryer, Mark Sullivan, Nuala Kennedy, and Michaela Cunningham. Andy obtained a PhD in Ethnomusicology from the University of Toronto in 2013, and he is currently the Executive and Artistic Director of the Harrison Festival of the Arts in Harrison Hot Springs, BC.

## O'BRIEN SCHOOL OF IRISH DANCE



Celebrating 27 years this season, the O'Brien School of Irish Dance offers both competitive and recreational classes for beginner to championship dancers in three locations: Victoria, Ladner & Duncan. Students are taught skills beyond the dance class with performance opportunities, community involvement, and personal fitness all in a fun, friendly and respectful environment.

## PAT CHESSELL BAND



The Pat Chessell Band will transform the stage into a kitchen as they throw the best kitchen party EVER! Traditionally, a kitchen party is a celebration of live music and a gathering of friends: something we could all use these days! Audience members will be at the centre of an authentic Kitchen Party during a fun-filled evening as musicians and storytellers regale with songs and stories as they are encouraged to clap and sing along.

## PAUL CALDWELL



Coming from the northwest of Ireland, Paul Caldwell has quickly made himself well known in the local music scene. From County Donegal, Paul has a well crafted, smooth and rich tone to his music. His repertoire builds its foundations from Irish/Celtic music, mixed with country and blues, and hints of pop and rock. With harmonies that cement all of this together, there is character in everything he puts his hands to. Paul brings a well rounded choice of songs that will always have you listening in.

## SHOT OF SCOTCH



Formed in the spring of 2013, Shot of Scotch Vancouver is a non-profit society dedicated to honouring and expanding the Highland dance tradition through performance and education. The company creates imaginative and innovative Highland dance that engages and inspires diverse local, national and international audiences on an emotional level. Shot of Scotch Vancouver serves as a cultural and arts ambassador based in Vancouver BC, creating community connections and opportunities that allow adult Highland dancers to thrive beyond their competitive careers.



## SHOWSTOPPERS



Perry Ehrlich's ShowStoppers is a GLEE troupe that appears in concert, on radio and TV, and at numerous galas, awards dinners, conventions, corporate and charitable events throughout the Lower Mainland. Upcoming performances include with the legendary group Foreigner at the Abbotsford Centre on May 3 and with the Universal Gospel Choir at the Vancouver Playhouse on June 2. Previous performances include shows with Barry Manilow and Eric Church at Rogers Arena; Canada Day at Canada Place; singing the anthems for the Vancouver Canucks; and at the Pacific National Exhibition. All members of ShowStoppers have participated in Perry's Gotta Sing! Gotta Dance! musical theatre summer camp, now heading into its 30th year at the Jewish Community Centre of Greater Vancouver.

## SOPHIA STRANG



Sophia Strang is a mezzo-soprano from Surrey, British Columbia. She recently graduated from the Manhattan School of Music with a Bachelor's Degree in Vocal Performance, where she performed the roles of: Fortuna in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and the partial roles of Ursule in *Béatrice et Bénédic*t, and Meg in *Falstaff*. Sophia also has sung with Classic Lyric Arts Programs in Italy and the Berkshires, performing and studying the roles of Romeo in *I Capuleti e I Montecchi*, Annio in *La Clemenza di Tito*, and Cherubino and Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Sophia was part of Seattle Opera's Teen Vocal Studio in which she performed the role of Penelope in *Odyssey* by Ben Moore and Kelley Rourke. She was a member of the chorus in Vancouver Opera's productions of *Turandot* and *Hansel and Gretel*. In 2015 and 2016, she was awarded as the BC Provincial Champion in Classical Voice. This summer Sophia will be performing the role of Zweite Dame in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Berlin Opera Academy.

## TWIN EMBERS



Twin Embers brings a dynamic fusion of Celtic, Cape Breton, and Scottish styles, with a touch of contemporary innovative creativity. Musicians Annika Wilson & Danielle Leonard have used their fiddles and voices to create inventive interpretations of traditional & original tunes, seamlessly blending their individual influences into a unique musical experience.

After meeting at a pub session in Vancouver in 2021, Annika and Danielle have been inseparable as musicians and friends. However, it wasn't until a few years later (and over a couple glasses of wine) that they decided to form a musical duo, and bring their ideas to the performance stage.

## WHISKEYDICKS



Celtic-World-Party-Folk-Rockers The Whiskeydicks brew fiery fiddle, titillating trumpet, giddy guitar, busty bass, delicious drums, and a quaffable quartet of voices to tell legends of good times past, and infuse classic songs in ways one would never imagine. Since their humble beginnings busking their original tunes outside a Vancouver liquor store in 1st year music school, for money to burn at said liquor store, The Whiskeydicks have showcased their contagious enthusiasm and eclectic sound at festivals such as Woodford Folk Festival in Australia, the Southeast Alaska State Fair, Celtic Fest Vancouver, Galway Bay Irish Music Festival in Washington State, PaddyFest Havasu, Sunstroke Festival in Whitehorse, ScotFest BC, Harmony Arts Vancouver, Whistler Beer Festival, and on tour from Hawaii to Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Chicago, and Florida.

## NZR PRODUCTIONS



NZR Productions is a circus company with emphasis on producing specialty acts and stage shows. They have 20+ years of experience with performances all over the world like olympic events, fairs, festivals exhibitions and Film/TV productions...Catch NZR strolling at CelticFest this year featuring their signature Stilt-walkers, Bubble Performers and Jugglers!

## LOUISE COTTER



Louise is originally from Dublin , Ireland and moved to Vancouver 13 years ago. When she's not mountain biking on the North Shore or running around after her two kids you can catch her live on FreedomFm.ie , an Irish radio station, talking about all things MomStrife. It's a lighthearted show that makes you laugh about the tricky parts of parenting.

This is the 2nd year that Louise will Emcee for Celtic Fest and she is super excited to be back!

# FESTIVAL ZONE

In addition to the many live acts on the festival stage, the festival zone will feature lots of family-friendly activities for festival goers to enjoy, including pop-up market stalls featuring a range of local Celtic & Irish-owned businesses, games, face painting and more.

## MARKET STALLS



[@sarahmclureart](https://www.instagram.com/sarahmclureart)



[@celtictreasurechest](https://www.instagram.com/celtictreasurechest)



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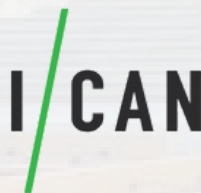
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## ACTIVITIES

Face painting by Gossamer Designs, roaming circus acts with NZR Productions, a fun CelticFest photo booth, tips and demonstrations from Vancouver GAA, meet Irish in BC, say hello to the famous Irish Wolfhounds, and more!!



# FOOD TRUCKS & BARS

Come for the music and dancing - and come hungry & thirsty!! On March 16 some of Vancouver's best food trucks will be onsite to keep festival goers filled with a delicious selection of hearty meals including wood-fired pizza, vegan goodness, tornado potatoes, Polish comfort food, ice cream and Vancouver's best egg sandwiches! Warm up with a hot coffee and don't forget to save room for a cold pint or delicious cocktail!



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# IRISH ARTISTS

CelticFest 2024 is delighted to announce that with thanks to Culture Ireland, this year's festival headliner will be Irish pop trio Chasing Abbey, all the way from the Emerald Isle!



Cultúr Éireann  
Culture Ireland

## Chasing Abbey



"Pop shimmer and incredibly evocative" – Billboard US

Chasing Abbey are a dance pop trio from Tullamore who have honed their artistic talent to create a uniquely Chasing Abbey sound, achieved only by combining the group's pool of talent with each member being a multi-instrumentalist, vocalist and producer. More recently, Chasing Abbey have revisited their roots as Irish traditional music musicians and are pioneering a new genre of music – 'Trad House' – where they reimagine and rework centuries' old Irish traditional songs and fuse them with their distinctive dance pop sound.

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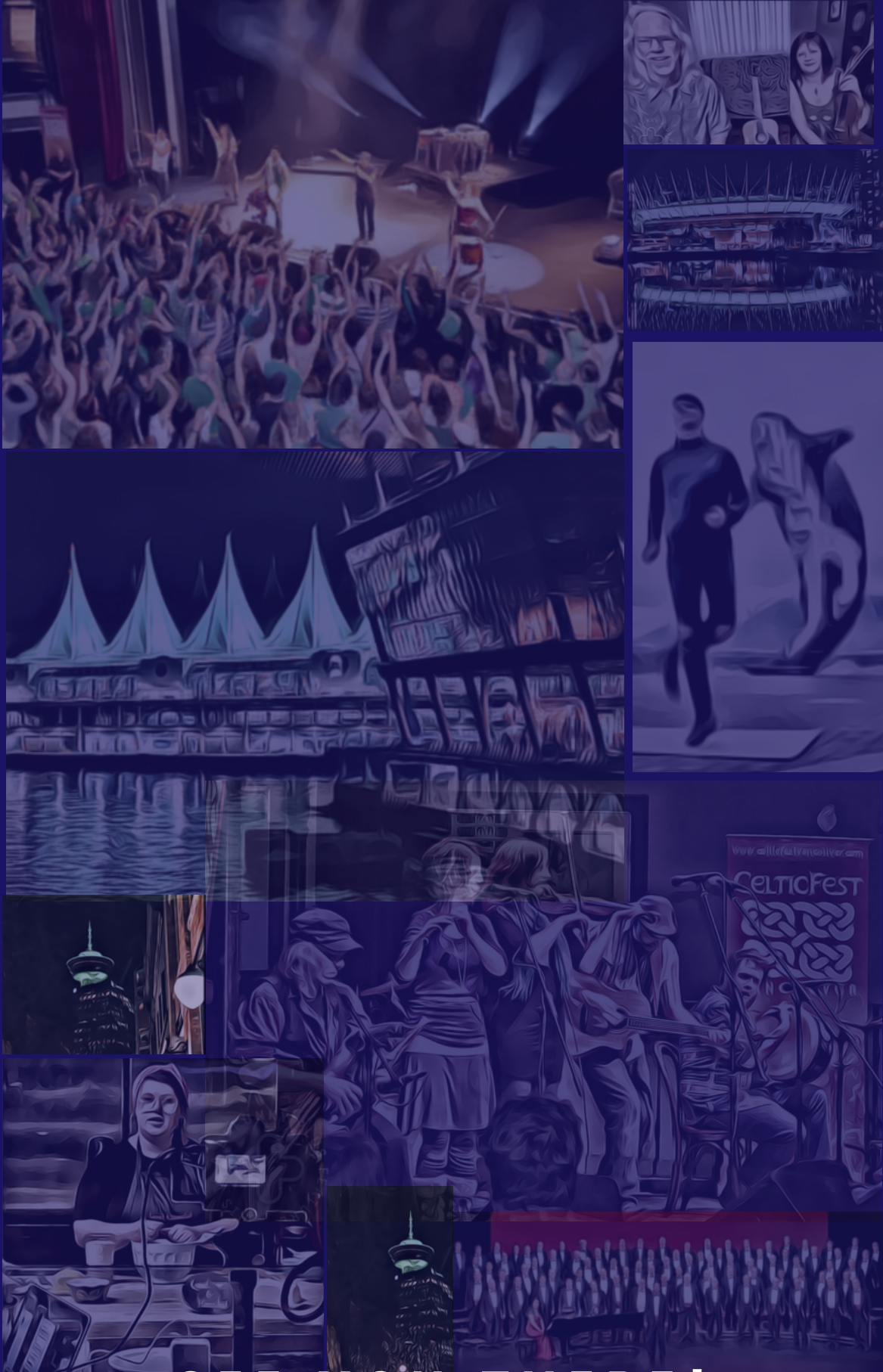
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**CELTICFEST**  
VANCOUVER 2024



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