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Rapid River

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LIVE MUSIC

Celtic musicians bring new arrangements to old styles

BY JAMES CASSARA

Editor's note: This semi-regular feature furthers Rapid River Magazine's ongoing commitment to exploring and promoting the local scene with a critical and discerning ear. Area bands and performers are encouraged to email JJCassara@aol.com if you'd like him to consider giving you a mention. It would be his pleasure to do so.

While I've only briefly met the duo of Jamie Laval and Ashley Broder my first impression couldn't help but be a positive one.

Right off the bat I realized they were the sort of people who were just as interested (if not more so) in what others were doing as they were in talking about themselves. In today's seemingly self absorbed society that's a rare trait. It's even rarer among musicians who, by the nature of their work, strive to attract attention to themselves.

The pair, after having spent the better part of 2006 on the road, has recently moved to Asheville. Both bring with them impressive résumés: Laval is widely considered among the premier Celtic violinists on the international music scene. He's the winner of the 2002 US National Scottish Fiddle Championship, where he was heralded as "A new star for the Old World" by *Fiddle On Magazine*.

His major performances include the Freight & Salvage in California, Swallow Hill Productions in Colorado, Club Passim in Boston, the Northwest Folklife Festival's Fiddler Showcase in Seattle, the Scots Fiddle Festival in Edinburgh, and a private appearance for Her Majesty the Queen of England.

In the recording arena Laval is widely respected for his solos on the movie soundtracks *Wild America* and *Finding Home*, as well as the Emmy-nominated theme for the HBO drama *Everwood*.

His solo album *Shades of Green* has received both critical praise and nationwide radio airplay, eliciting strong reviews for its "evocation of the ancient traditions of Ireland, Scotland, and Brittan" by the *Albany Democrat Herald*.



His music making is born out of his Scottish and Irish heritage. After his student years at the Victoria Conservatory of Music he traveled extensively, immersing himself in a wide variety of musical styles including classical, jazz and folk. It was on the road where he met musical partner Ashley Broder, whose musical journey closely parallels his.

At the age of eight Broder saw her first demonstration of musical instruments and immediately declared her desire to take up the violin. After a year of conventional training with a local teacher, she began her studies in earnest, while simultaneously learning the mandolin. For the next several years Broder competed in local, state and national fiddle and mandolin competitions, winning the Western Open Master Picker Championship in 2003 and 2004.

At 15 she began performing publicly with a country rock band called Ashland Road and a bluegrass/jazz/blues trio known as STASH.

She also worked as a studio recording musician. Following high school, Broder went on to major in music at Moorpark College in California, where she studied

cello with Stephen Custer of the LA Philharmonic and violin with Diane Gilbert. During this time she kindled a growing interest in classical composition, all the while teaching violin and mandolin privately and in class settings. In 2005 she served on the faculty of the Mandolin Symposium in Santa Cruz, Cal. That same year she met Laval. The two spent the ensuing six months forging a new duo style, rendering "traditional Scottish, Irish, Bretagne and bluegrass music with innovative hints of classical refinement and ethnic music from around the world."

The pair now tours together full-time throughout the US and Scotland.

Having settled into their new environs, Laval and Broder are eager to make their mark on the local scene. Fans of Celtic music and superlative playing would be well advised to check them out.

Jamie Laval and Ashley Broder at The Asheville Arts Center, 308 Merrimon Ave. Friday, June 8, at 8pm. Tickets are \$17 at the door, \$15 in advance, with \$5 off for students and seniors.
www.AshevilleArtsCenter.com