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Thirteen lucky for Celtic Colours

ERIN POTTIE
The Cape Breton Post



Howie MacDonald and Brenda Stubbert perform during the Master Cape Breton Fiddler: A Tribute to Jerry Holland show, Saturday night at the Joan Harriss Cruise Pavilion in Sydney. The tribute was the final show of the 13th annual Celtic Colours International Festival. Laura Jean Grant – Cape Breton Post

SYDNEY — Number 13 was lucky for the Celtic Colours International Festival. Since 1997, the festival has brought Celtic music fans together for dozens of concerts held over nine days against a backdrop of the island's fall colours. But with the world economy still recovering, organizers were unsure what kind of turnout to expect for the 13th annual festival.

"People were saying 'Oh you can expect a really bad year because of the economic situation in the States and here.' It didn't happen," said festival artistic director Joella Foulds. "It was a banner year for us both artistically and in terms of audience. I think we have to throw away the idea that 13 is unlucky because it was very, very good for us."

While the numbers are still being crunched, Foulds said it appears ticket sales surpassed last year, despite having three fewer concerts.

She estimates more than \$5 million was pumped into the local economy, thanks to more than 1,300 festival-goers. Beginning Oct. 9, the event showcased Celtic artists from countries such as Scotland and Ireland and homegrown talent. The festival ended Saturday with a tribute to late fiddler Jerry Holland, a promoter of Cape Breton Celtic music.

Other highlights included the commission of Suite Silver Dart to honour 100 years of Canadian aviation history by musician Scott Macmillan and featuring Symphony Nova Scotia, and The Fiddle Tree, a concert featuring the music and instruments of Cape Breton luthier Otis Tomas.

"We don't just book our artists and put them on the stage," said Foulds. "We create something new and different with every single performance, every single show, and that's one of our hallmarks and our niches within the festival world."

"You will never see that show anywhere else again. You may see that artist do what they do again, but that combination is unique."

Almost 300 community events were planned around this year's festival. Each year there are between four and five full-time staff, which grows to 10 near the festival's start date. There are another 1,500 volunteers.

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19/10/09



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DOREEN KELLY from EAST FALMOUTH, MA writes: It was one of the best! This was my 3rd year at CC and I'm still tapping my feet! I'm spreading the word on the Cape (Cod) and to my relatives in Vermont that it is a wonderful take. I love the casualness, the cultural events, and meeting so many people who have the same love of Celtic music that I have. Seeing Jeff MacDonald was one of the highlights. His voice is so soothing and melodic I can't stop singing Blue Mountain Lullaby and I've been home for two days. Last year we requested that song and he was reluctant to sing it lest he put the audience to sleep!! This year, both times I heard him do it, the entire audience was joining in on the chorus! He has to do a CD. His new song is fabulous, too! Let's get him to record. Can say enough positive things about the festival! How about Joanie Madden of Cherish the Ladies for next year?? Wonderful Job! Thank you!

Posted 20/10/2009 at 12:36 AM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

Dont be fooled from NS writes: Like I said before, someone please tell our local MLAs how to properly pronounce Celtic.

Posted 20/10/2009 at 10:43 AM | [Alert an Editor](#) | [Link to comment](#)

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