



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 3, 2010

CAPA CELEBRATES THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED CELTIC BAND ALTAN

“The hottest group in the Celtic realm!” - *The Boston Globe*

“Altan continues to be one of the Celtic world’s great treasures, gifted with a front line that is a sheer powerhouse.” - *LA Times*

Legendary Irish traditional band Altan celebrate 25 years together in 2010, having established themselves as one of the most important live acts to play traditional Irish music in Ireland and on the world stage. To mark this, the band has recorded a very special album with the RTE Concert Orchestra and is touring internationally, making a stop in Columbus with the world-famous, original band line up.

CAPA presents **Altan** at the **Southern Theatre** (21 E. Main St.) on **Sunday, March 14**, at **7 pm**. **Tickets** are \$30 and \$25 at the Ohio Theatre Ticket Office (39 E. State St.), all Ticketmaster outlets, and www.ticketmaster.com. To purchase tickets by phone, please call (614) 469-0939 or (800) 745-3000. The Southern Theatre Ticket Office will open two hours prior to the performance. Students between the ages of 13-19 may purchase \$5 High Five tickets while available.

Founding members Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh and the late Frankie Kennedy began their musical careers whilst teaching in a school in Malahide in North County Dublin, playing music simply for fun and enjoyment. They began playing with and meeting older musicians from the Donegal tradition, learning their music and trying to emulate their style and general philosophy of life. Frankie and Mairead made their first forays into live shows in the US in 1985, releasing two albums together as a duo—1983’s *Ceol Aduaidh (Music of the North)* and the self-titled *Altan* in 1987.

Altan the band began as a quartet with Frankie on flute and Mairéad on fiddle, joined by Ciaran Curran on bouzouki and Mark Kelly and Dáithí Sproule sharing the role of guitar player. Later, Paul O’Shaughnessy joined on fiddle, augmenting and driving the sound of the band to new

levels on subsequent albums *Horse with a Heart* (1989), *The Red Crow* (1990), *Harvest Storm* (1991), and *Island Angel* (1993). *The Red Crow* became the first of three Altan albums to win the prestigious Celtic/British Isles Album of the Year award from the National Association of Independent Record Distributors and Manufacturers (NAIRD).

Ciaran Tourish on fiddle and whistle joined the band for *Harvest Storm*, adding his innovative harmonies and counter melodies. The context of having three fiddles in the band helped drive Altan to new heights and introduced the Donegal fiddle tunes, which the band became renowned for, to a much wider audience. *Q Magazine* described *Island Angel* as, “a combination of head spinning drive and pure melancholy,” qualities that gave the band “a one-two punch that is unmatched in contemporary folk circles.” Altan are also no stranger to the Billboard world music charts as *Island Angel* was the fourth best-selling album in 1994.

In the meantime, Frankie Kennedy was diagnosed with cancer, but continued to steer the band to international recognition, negotiating with Virgin Records UK to sign the band before his death in September 1994. This was a significant signing, as until then, traditional music was not on any major label. Altan recorded three albums for Virgin Records—*Blackwater* (1996), *Runaway Sunday* (1997), and *The Blue Idol* (2002). The merger with a major record label helped Altan bring their music, song, and culture to a wider audience worldwide and pave the way for up-and-coming bands.

Altan have proven to be important ambassadors of the music and culture of Ireland, so much so that they were invited to accompany Irish President Mary McAleese on several state visits in Greece, Korea, and Japan. Altan were asked to play at the White House twice by President Bill Clinton, and also played for him again when he visited Ireland. In 2006, the Irish government honored Altan by putting them on an official Irish postage stamp, one of the highest honors bestowed upon any living artist in Ireland. In 2007, Altan were invited to play by Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and were granted the celebrated Arkansas Traveler award from state governor Mike Huckabee. “Tommy Bhetty’s Waltz” from *The Red Crow* album was featured in the Oscar-winning film *Good Will Hunting* in 1997.

Altan have played their music in some of the most prestigious venues in the world—The Sydney Opera House, The Hollywood Bowl, The Royal Albert Hall, The Alte Opera Frankfurt, The Greek Theatre Los Angeles, and many, many more. They have played music and recorded with The

Chieftains, Dolly Parton, Bonnie Raitt, Alison Krauss, and Ricky Skaggs to name but a few. In 2003, they won the award for Best Group at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. In 2005, they recorded *Local Ground*, and like every other Altan offering, it was met with positive and enthusiastic reviews. The band have gained gold and platinum status in Ireland with their record sales and have won numerous awards in the music business as one of the most popular bands playing traditional folk or world music in the world.

In recent years, Altan have been exploring and experimenting with their music using orchestral arrangements of their most popular pieces. The arrangements have been scored by the highly respected arranger Fiachra Trench, and have been performed with the Ulster Orchestra, The RTÉ Concert Orchestra, and the Royal Scottish Opera Orchestra.

www.altan.ie

CALENDAR LISTING

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Sunday, March 14, 7 pm

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Owner/operator of downtown Columbus' magnificent, historic theatres (Ohio Theatre, Palace Theatre, Southern Theatre) and manager of the Riffe Center Theatre Complex, Lincoln Theatre, Valentine Theatre (Toledo, OH), and Shubert Theater (New Haven, CT), CAPA is a not-for-profit, award-winning presenter of national and international performing arts and entertainment now celebrating 40 years of service. For more information, visit www.capa.com.

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