

CHANDLER'S 18TH ANNUAL NEW WORLD FESTIVAL – SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 5

The 18th annual New World Festival opens Chandler's 2010-2011 season on Sunday September 5. From noon to midnight the town of Randolph will be alive with family activities and traditional – and occasionally not so traditional – Celtic and French Canadian music and dance presented on six all-weather performance stages.

Over the course of its 17-year history, this family-friendly festival has earned a passionate following among both patrons and performers. The intimate nature of the festival site makes for close connections between musicians and audience members and for easy access to all performance venues. More than one band has said, "This is our favorite festival!" because of its celebratory atmosphere, intimate connection with audiences, cheerful volunteers, and superb acoustics within Bethany church and Chandler Music Hall, one of New England's finest concert halls.

The New World Festival celebrates Vermont's Celtic and French Canadian heritage by way of the musical traditions that immigrated to the "New World" with French and Celtic peoples. Performances range from the strictly traditional to music that's based on this vibrant heritage, yet stretched to include modern influences. Many loyal fans are eagerly anticipating the return of one of the festival's favorite bands, Prydein, which will close out the day in the dance tent with its unique Scottish "kilt-rock".

Artistic Director Kevin Dunwoody is especially excited to welcome back Norouet after a long hiatus. The band's music remains firmly grounded in the traditional music of Québec, but it reflects the Québec of 2010 not 1810! If the music of the first Québec revival during the late 1970s was about the rebirth of a tradition, then the next wave, to which Norouet belongs, is about a generation that grew up with that traditional music ringing in one ear, while the other was cocked to the music of the world.

This year's festival features a variety of terrific Irish music. The John Whelan Band makes its first appearance, blending humor and high energy with impeccable musicianship. The band takes Irish music into an energetically eclectic direction, finding magical associations between Celtic sounds and music from many other parts of the world. Piper extraordinaire Paddy Keenan returns, and The Press Gang makes its debut with high-octane Irish music, a bold new sound on New England's traditional music scene.

In addition to Norouet, French music and dance traditions are well-represented. Festival-goers will appreciate fine performances by an array of Québécois musicians including venerable fiddler Claude Méthé and Dent-de-Lion, the young

performers of Les Poules à Colin, Rapetipetam, and Raz-de-Marée.

Performers this year also include Cantrip, Nightingale, Atlantic Crossing, Skellig, Tri, and a young musicians' showcase. Randolph's own No Strings Marionette Company will entertain children of all ages in the family tent, and Midnight Capers brings their Morris dancing to Main Street. Callers Nils Fredland and Adina Gordon will lead dances in the Dance Tent.

The New World Festival planning committee is excited to make use of Chandler's newly renovated and expanded facilities. For the first time in many years, Chandler's fully-accessible Upper Gallery will host an acoustic showcase, adding a sixth performance stage. New restrooms and hospitality spaces will provide additional comfort for patrons and performers.

The Festival store is a favorite destination, offering performers' CDs, including some that are hard to find on-line or anywhere else. The Food Tent provides a rich variety of international offerings cooked up (or poured) by civic organizations and restaurants. Local breweries and vineyards offer the finest in liquid refreshment. Performances in Chandler Music Hall and Bethany Church are augmented by participatory activity in the Dance Tent and a Family Tent with storytelling, marionettes, creative activities, music, and dance by young fiddlers and dancers.

Inside the Chandler Gallery and on the streets, Vermont-made jewelry, prints, foodstuffs, instruments, and fabric arts will be for sale, along with traditional crafts from around the world. For a full listing of performers, vendors, ticket, lodging and travel information, visit www.NewWorldFestival.com.

This pedestrian-friendly festival is easily navigable, rain or shine. All venues are indoors or under tents. Once parked at Randolph Union High School or the Town's municipal parking lots, cars become unnecessary. The Stagecoach will shuttle people to and from lots for free, as always. All venues are wheelchair accessible.

The New World Festival enjoys generous support from the Vermont business community. The lead sponsor for all 18 years has been Randolph National Bank. The bank is joined by Gifford Medical Center, Vermont Technical College, Vermont Law School, Casella Waste Management, Rain or Shine Tent Company, and Inner Traditions. The Delegation of Québec also contributes, for the furtherance of French Canadian culture in New England. The Festival received a generous Community Arts grant from the Vermont Arts Council, a program made possible by public funds received from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Vermont State Legislature. All festival proceeds go to support programming for youth at Chandler.

All tickets are available at the gate on the day of the festival. Discounted advance

tickets are available through August 31. They must be pre-ordered online or by calling the Chandler Box Office at 802-728-6464. Volunteer opportunities are still available. Free admission to the New World Festival can be earned by working three hours. Call 802-276-3808. All performance spaces are wheelchair accessible. No pets, s'il vous plait.