

New Haven Symphony Press Release: Just in time for St. Patrick's Day, the New Haven Symphony Orchestra Pops is celebrating the Irish tradition with *The Emerald Isle*. Conductor Sarah Ioannides will lead soprano Kaitlin Lusk, uilleann pipe player Andrew Thomson, tap dancer Trent Kowalik, and the NHSO in a collection of tunes from the Old Sod compiled by the conductor. Saturday, March 15 at 2:30pm at Hamden Middle School, and Sunday, March 16 at 3:00pm at Shelton Intermediate School. Tickets are on sale now at www.NewHavenSymphony.org.

One highlight on the program will be a world premiere performance of *Tour de Tap*, a concerto for orchestra and dancer by composer Kim Scharnberg. The piece was conceived to highlight the unique talents of dancer TRENT KOWALIK. Trent, now a freshman at Princeton University, began dancing at age 3 at the Inishfree School of Irish Dance. He won multiple step dancing national titles in the United States, Ireland, England, Scotland, and ultimately, the 2006 World Championship. Trent then relocated to London's West End to perform the title role in *Billy Elliot: The Musical*, and ultimately he opened the show on Broadway. At age 14 he won the Tony Award for Best Performance by a Lead Actor in a Musical, as well as the Theater Fans Choice Award, Fred Astaire Award, Theater World Award, and the Outer Critics Circle Special Achievement Award. Upon "retiring" from the show Trent studied at the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School of the American Ballet Theater.

The concert offers a lively mix of exciting contemporary celebrations of Ireland (such as Riverdance) and traditional favorites, all leading to an audience sing-a-long. The Irish love a grand tale, and the Symphony will weave just that with "The Fair-Day" from *An Irish Symphony* (by Hamilton Harty) and "The Gale" from *The Brendan Voyage (Waking Ned Devine)* composer Shaun Davey). Some of the best-selling popular entertainment in recent memory has been strongly influenced by Irish culture. Audiences will enjoy highlights from Enya (*May It Be*) and the movie *Titanic (My Heart Will Go On)*. Guest vocalist Kaitlyn Lusk has taken the world by storm with her ethereal, Celtic-tinged vocals performing the *Lord of The Rings Symphony* with over 50 orchestras. Traditional Irish favorites will include *The Minstrel Boy, Water is Wide, Irish Washerwoman, Carrickfergus, Finnegan's Wake, She moved thro the Fair, When Irish Eyes are Smiling*, and even *Danny Boy*.

KAITLYN LUSK has quickly gained international acclaim and won the hearts of audiences with her incredible voice and captivating presence. Kaitlyn's first studio album, *No Looking Back*, features some of the finest musicians and songwriters in the industry today, and was produced by the award-winning composer and arranger, Kim Scharnberg. Since 2004, Kaitlyn has been the featured vocal soloist in Howard Shore's *Lord of the Rings Symphony*, performing this role with over fifty of the world's finest orchestras and many renowned conductors. Leading the program This role brought her centre stage in Radio City, Royal Albert Hall, the Sydney Opera House, and in cities along the West Coast, Munich, Luzern Switzerland, Singapore, Paris, Taiwan, and Chicago. Her new show *FilmSong*, features her unforgettable voice in a 75-minute tour de force of songs from blockbuster movies delivered with full orchestra.





ANDREW THOMSON began his musical training in piano and voice, and sang with Chorus Angelicus under the direction of renowned composer and performer Paul Halley. Since then, Andrew has continued his musical career with organizations ranging from local orchestras and theater ensembles to the U.S. Marines (enlisted). During his training at Ithaca College, where he earned a B.M. in composition and percussion, Andrew re-visited his desire to learn uilleann pipes and has been playing steadily for the past five years. Andrew also plays Highland Pipes, Lowland Smallpipes, a variety of whistles and flutes, and Bodhrán.