

Alasdair Fraser & Skyedance to perform Celtic traditional and cutting edge music Oct. 21 in Mandeville Auditorium at UCSD

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ALASDAIR FRASER & SKYEDANCE TO PERFORM CELTIC TRADITIONAL AND CUTTING EDGE MUSIC
OCT. 21 IN MANDEVILLE AUDITORIUM AT UCSD

Celtic, medieval, baroque, jazz and rock and roll music take the stage Oct. 21 when Alasdair Fraser & Skyedance perform at 8 p.m. in Mandeville Auditorium at the University of California, San Diego.

Widely regarded as one of the finest Scottish fiddlers and twice Scotland's national fiddling champion, Fraser is described by Folk Roots as a musician who "can make a fiddle speak, dance, grunt and weep all in the space of a few tunes."

Fraser's fiddling is integrated into the Skyedance ensemble with Chris Norman, wooden flute and piccolo; Eric Rigler, Scottish and Irish bagpipes; Paul Machlis, piano and keyboards; Peter Maund, percussion, and Mick Linden, fretless bass.

"The sound of expertise," the Glasgow Herald calls the group's music, "a sound to behold ... fiddle, pipes, flute and bass working tightly together, with lyrical rippling piano and the most considerate and imaginative of percussionists."

Scotland on Sunday adds: "The unmistakable, deeply satisfying sound of composers and musicians who know exactly what they are doing."

The band takes its name from the 1986 album Skyedance by Fraser and pianist/composer Machlis, featuring ancient Gaelic tunes from Scotland's isolated Isle of Skye. The band formed in the mid-1990s during the recording of Fraser's award-winning album Dawn Dance (Celtic Album of the Year, 1996), made up entirely of Fraser's compositions.

"I drove everyone around me crazy making that record," Fraser says, describing his shuffling of musicians at that time as a search "for people who are interested not only in beautiful sound and good tone, but also in the rhythmic, animal side of things Everyone in the band is exploring ... getting into that rhythmic high as well as a harmonic one."

Skyedance's latest album performed by all current member musicians is Way Out on Hope Street, a paean to Scotland in general and the Isle of Skye in particular. It is described in The Oregonian as "a fusion of traditional Gaelic airs, reels and laments with such disparate elements as world-beat, jazz, rock, even medieval and Renaissance composition. Fraser and crew blend their diverse expertise in a seamless style."

Skyedance has toured throughout Scotland, headlining the Celtic Connections Festival in Glasgow, performed two concert tours in Spain, and plays to sold out venues in California and the Pacific Northwest. Fraser's solo engagements include appearances in Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Australia, Denmark, Canada, Great Britain and the United States. Fraser oversees the Alasdair Fraser Fiddle Course on the Isle of Skye, as well as the Valley of the Moon Scottish Fiddling School in California. He also directs the San Francisco Scottish Fiddlers orchestra.

As band leader and soloist, Fraser blends sounds with a respect for Scottish tradition and cutting edge musical explorations. He says what interests him musically is having a conversation.

"Conversation is indeed the key to the door," writes The Scotsman of Edinburgh. "Fraser and his fellow musicians talk to each other using their instruments. And, crucially, they all have the gift of gab."

Tickets for Alasdair Fraser and Skyedance are \$17 general admission, \$15 for faculty, staff and senior citizens, and \$12 for students. Tickets are available at the UCSD Box Office, 534-8497, and at Ticketmaster outlets at 220-8497. The performance is sponsored by the University Events Office. For information on the entire season of events sponsored by the University Events Office, visit the website, <http://ueo.ucsd.edu>, or call the UCSD University Events Office at 534-4090.

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