

# Albany Democrat-Herald

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## Enchanting songs breeze into town

Champions Laval and Broder play Celtic tunes off their most recent CD

Although we've almost lost them to time, there are names for many of the winds which blow through our world, most commonly based on Greek and Roman gods. For those who aren't familiar, the term Zephyr refers to a soft, spring wind coming in from the west.

The gentle nature of this wind belies its power, as musicians Jamie Laval and Ashley Broder can attest. Their new CD, "Zephyr in the Confetti Factory," sweeps through like a bright spring wind with a serious kick to it, leaving a sparkling trail in its wake.

**THERESA HOGUE**

Reality Bytes

Laval is a champion Scottish fiddle player, and his musical companion of two years, Ashley Broder, is a champion mandolin player. Their magical partnership has provided audiences with fabulously intimate yet powerful performances, which have been captured on "Zephyr," a collection of Celtic and original compositions as fresh as any spring wind.

We start our sprightly journey with a set of fast-paced Irish reels, "Paddy, Jenny and the Boys." Joyously gathering speed through the set of three reels that blend seamlessly together, the set culminates in "The Boys of Malin," which ends with the listener a bit breathless from dancing in her seat.

### CHECK IT OUT

**Jamie Laval and Ashley Broder** will perform at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 1, at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 2945 N.W. Circle Blvd., Corvallis. Admission is \$15 for Corvallis Folklore Society members, kids, or seniors, \$17 for the general public. Advance tickets (\$2 discount) are available at Grass Roots Books and Music. For more information, call 754-8171 or see [www.jamielaval.com](http://www.jamielaval.com).

Song two, "Staircase," firmly establishes that while the duo has a solid hold on traditional Celtic music, they're not afraid to veer off into some delightfully new directions. Written by Broder, the song starts out almost a bit ominously, reminding me of the sneaky footsteps of a film noir detective trailing a suspect down a dark alley.

The chase quickens, darting through open doorways, stepping in between light and dark, as the detective loses and once again finds his suspect, in my mind a dark-haired, elusive beauty who finally lets herself be caught in the final confrontation of the song.

By "Jig-Jag," the third song of the CD, we're back to familiar territory with another set of Irish tunes, this time jigs, followed swiftly by a Scottish reel. The reel has taken many forms throughout the centuries, from its origins as a Scottish fling, born about the same time as our nation, finally settling in the United States as a barn dance favorite. The song is titled "Sir Archibald Grant of Monymusk," who, I've learned, was a baronet and



Contributed photo

Ashley Broder and Jamie Laval play songs off their new CD, "Zephyr in the Confetti Factory," at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 1, at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

agricultural improver who lived in Scotland at the end of the 18th century, and was known as a bit of a schemer, but quite progressive.

I'm not sure why such a danceable tune was dedicated to Sir Archibald, but he deserves thanks for being such a worthy muse.

Jumping ahead to "Old Man Elzic," we are back in the Americas with an Appalachian song, its roots firmly planted in Celtic soil. This elegy of sorts to Elzic, played on cello, begins in a smoky jazz club sort of way, then slowly builds like a train increasing speed as it rolls through the mountains of the Carolinas. The rugged, rural scenery begins rushing by, as the smoky jazz club dissolves into the smoke pouring from the stovepipes of rugged cabins.

The train never gathers too much speed, allowing us to observe dilapidated front porches, rusting trucks and barefooted children gathering along the tracks as we pass. Finally we're surrounded by beautiful forests and rushing streams as we go higher and higher into the hills.

If "Elzic" took us on a slow journey through Appalachia, we gather speed again for the Spanish-flavored final song, titled "The Sorceress," a Galecian waltz. In Galecia, Celtic and Eastern sounds

mix together in a romantic and diaphanous way, much like the sorceress' ingredients melt into a love potion.

Perhaps the sorceress has paused from her spell-casting to dance with a creature of her own conjuring, spinning across the marbled floor with a shadowy, tall figure, her bright skirts flaring as she steps in time with the music. In the end, though, it is we who are enchanted.

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