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Powerful fiddler and mandolinist combine for melodic evening

BY TASHA AUTRY
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DAHLONEGA — Most violin prodigies pick up the instrument at about age 4 or 5. You could say Jamie Laval of Asheville, N.C., got a bit of a late start when he began playing at age 16.

But Laval's "late start" doesn't seem to have affected his success. Laval, who will play a concert with mandolin player Ashley Broder at the Crimson Moon Cafe on Saturday, has quite a resume.

The 2002 U.S. National Scottish Fiddle Championship winner, Laval began playing with symphonies after graduating from the Victoria Conservatory of Music in British Columbia, Canada.

While at the school, Laval got the rare opportunity to perform for the Queen of England.

"It was a big swanky affair with over 300 people in the ballroom of this mansion owned by the Lieutenant Governor (of British Columbia)," Laval said. "I didn't actually personally meet the queen, but when she proceeded past the stage after my performance as she was leaving the room, she nodded at me and smiled, so I gave her a wink back, and that's about the best I could do," he said.

At age 19 or 20, Laval said he found fiddle music.

For a while, he said he tried to play both classical and fiddle music, but finally realized he had to choose.

While he chose fiddle, making Celtic music his primary style, Laval still brings the refinement of classical music to his work. His music can be heard on numerous movie soundtracks, and he was the solo violinist on the theme for WB drama "Everwood" and participated in the recording of Dave Matthews' 2003 effort, "Some Devil."

In 2005, Laval met Broder, whose musical talent rivals his own.

The two began playing as a duo and still continue their partnership, recording together and touring across the country and internationally.

"It was kind of a really good fit musically when we met because she had a very similar approach to music as I have, which is to really arrange the music in a kind of a stylized manner," Laval said.

"That's not the traditional approach of playing this kind of old music. Typically people just play the old melodies as they've always been played for the last two, three or four hundred years."

Laval and Broder's upbeat, infectious

If you go

What: Fiddler Jamie Laval with mandolin player Ashley Broder
When: 8 p.m. Saturday
Where: The Crimson Moon Cafe, 24 N. Park St., Dahlonega
How much: \$15 advance reservations, \$18 at the door
More info: 706-864-3982

and complex style of playing can be heard on "Zephyr in the Confetti Factory," the duo's first CD, which was released in 2007.

Laval said he and Broder play "duo strations," in which the material is interwoven rather than separated into distinguishable melodies and accompaniment.

He said the duo will bring selections from "Zephyr" as well as pieces from a CD currently in the works, when they play at the Crimson Moon this Saturday.

"We have our program set, which is very toe-tapping and very playful between Ashley and me. It has some very delicate playing but it also has some pretty raucous, enthusiastic playing," he said.