

# Banshee in the Kitchen



**Banshee in the Kitchen** plays Celtic music with eclectic skill and merry abandon. Touring and recording since 2002, the trio has delighted audiences in festivals, theaters, living rooms, and countless other venues from New York to Japan. They take traditional Celtic tunes, find the sweet spot between old and new, stirring it all up with trademark playfulness and musicality they term “banshee-fying”.

To do it right, Celtic music requires a certain amount of sassiness, a bit of impudence along with strong respect and joyful spirit. The three women of **Banshee in the Kitchen** know how to balance their audacity with reverence of the art form.

- Joe Ross, reviewer, *talentondisplay.com* and *Bluegrass Unlimited*

Critics praise their instrumental precision and flair for arrangement, concert producers love the way they can pack a house, educators rave over their ability to tap into the passion of their students, while audiences applaud the fun and oh-so-musical experience of being with **Banshee in the Kitchen**.

**Banshee in the Kitchen** kicked off our 2008 holiday concert series with good humor and musical panache. The next morning they returned to entertain and educate an audience of 400 or so K-12 kids from our local schools, all in one assembly. They were a hit.

- Susan Klinker, *Utah Cultural Celebration Center*

**On stage**, National Champion hammered dulcimer player Brenda Hunter (fiddle, hammered dulcimer) and Jill Eglund (flute, accordion, whistle) trade off inspired flights of lead and counter melody over dynamic backing by Mary Tulin (six- and twelve-string guitar, bouzouki). No strangers to the microphone, the three trade off lead and backing vocals on a choice selection of songs, as well as jocular commentary in between.

**Banshee in the Kitchen's** performance at our house concert brought the audience to its feet with a standing ovation, and a well deserved encore. Fun, fun, fun!

- Russ & Julie Paris, producers, *Russ and Julie's House Concerts*

**Albums and Radio play.** With the **Banshees'** latest release, *Live at Painted Sky*, the band has five albums to its credit: *Invite the Light: World Music for Winter* (2006), *Even Hotter Water* (2005), *Catching the Mooncoin* (2003), and *If We Were Us* (2002). All are radio favorites on public and independent stations across the land and cyberspace. Public Radio International's *Echoes Nightly Soundscapes* has featured many tracks from *Invite the Light* and *Catching the Mooncoin*, along with two Living Room Concerts and a feature on **Banshee in the Kitchen**. Public radio stations on the West Coast favor the bands' upbeat Celtic material, along with numerous on-air performances and interviews.

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## Biographies

**Brenda Hunter** was born in Whittier, California, and grew up singing four-part harmonies with her family. She studied several instruments and voice, graduating with honors in music education. Brenda is a veteran of numerous ensembles, from Renaissance to rock, and legend has it she once wore a tiger-striped dress while playing 'Tequila' on her saxophone at a gig. She discovered the hammered dulcimer in 1993, while living in Indonesia with her husband and children, and three years later won the **National Championship** on that instrument. Since returning to Bakersfield, Brenda has mastered the Irish fiddle, gotten her teaching degree, and authored a book of arrangements of Irish tunes for hammered dulcimer. Between Banshee road trips, she teaches high school piano and choir, headlines dulcimer festivals, and attends to her newest love, the Celtic harp.

**Jill Eglund** was born and raised in Bakersfield, California. In college, she studied music, photography and creative writing before embarking on a career in international development. (Being a Pisces, she didn't find her career choice the least bit baffling.) She lived for many years in Southeast Asia, Europe, and eventually, New York's Lower East Side. She returned to Bakersfield with her 3-year old daughter, and was playing in a community orchestra when she was recruited to the all-women Celtic/Klezmer band out of which, several iterations later, **Banshee in the Kitchen** was born. Between Banshee road trips, she directs special projects for the Arts Council of Kern, including its wildly successful concert series, and for the most part manages to keep up with her wildly talented teenager.

**Mary Tulin** was born in Los Altos, California, the youngest of seven. She learned music by ear from her talented family and their wonderful sixties and seventies pop record collection. Nine years of choral training in classical, renaissance and award-winning jazz choirs helped, too. She strove for fame as a teenage street folkie in Berkeley, actually opening for Jerry Garcia twice at the old Keystone clubs. Years later, as a doctoral student at Boston University, Irish music stole her heart, albeit mostly via her stereo. She married a dashing pediatrician from Bakersfield, and after years of cross-country commuting, moved there. Soon she met Jill, who quickly drafted her into an iteration of the aforementioned band out of which, etc. Between Banshee road trips, Mary books the band, and manages their website and recording projects.

**How they met, and the name.** In a happy coincidence of colocation, the three met years ago in that hotbed of Celtic music, Bakersfield, California. Brenda and Jill moved to town first, and met at local musical gatherings, yet joined different bands. Mary arrived soon after and joined Jill's band, and later (finally!) so did Brenda. The three discovered a strong musical and personal synergy, and were soon off on their own. The name came easily. Brenda wanted to be in a band called Banshee. Jill liked the feminist ring of Barefoot in the Kitchen. Mary offered, "How about **Banshee in the Kitchen**?" And so they were, and are to this very day.

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## **Members:**

Brenda Hunter: hammered dulcimer, fiddle, vocals

Jill Eglund: flute, whistle, accordion, bodhran, vocals

Mary Tulin: 6 & 12-string guitars, Irish bouzouki, vocals

## **Festivals and Concert Series:**

Live Oak Festival (main stage), Santa Ynez

San Luis Obispo Mozart Festival, fringe stage

Sonora Celtic Faire

Winter Concert Series, multi-school assembly, Utah Cultural Celebration Center

San Juan Capistrano Multicultural Arts Series

Calif. Traditional Music Society New Years Camps and Solstice Festivals (faculty)

Winter Festival of Acoustic Music, Irving, TX (headliners, faculty)

Spenger Garden Music Series, Benicia

Red Barn Community Concert Series, Los Osos

Community Concert, Yerington, NV

Paso Robles Parks Concert Series

Painted Sky Studio, Cambria

Valhalla Boat House Celtic Concert Series, Lake Tahoe

Concert Under the Oaks, Descanso Gardens, La Canada

San Diego Folk Heritage Society

Los Angeles Irish Fair and Music Festival

House Concerts: Musica del Rio, Russ & Julie's, Duncan, Sounding Board, Kern Arts

City of Hope Concert Series

Concert series, multi-school assembly Calaveras, Amador, and Contra Costa Counties

Highland Games: Pleasanton, Dunsmuir, Kern County, Fresno, Loch Lomond

Topanga Banjo-Fiddle Festival

Tahoe Ridge Winery, Genoa, NV

Montevina Winery, San Andreas

Peter Strauss Ranch Summer Concerts

Fallbrook Americana Concert Series

Big Grey Concert Series, Long Island NY

Long Beach Celtic Festival-by-the-Sea

Under the Moon and Stars Festival, Las Vegas

New York City Library Children's Concert, Manhattan

## **Other Venues:**

Military tour, Japan [AKA Productions]; Kulak's Woodshed, Monterey Live, Don Quixote's

International Music Hall, Coffee Gallery Backstage, Boulevard Music, The Fret House,

Cozmic Café, Mission Coffee Roasters, An Beal Bocht (The Bronx), Two Boots

(Brooklyn), Paddy Reilly's (Manhattan)

## **Radio play:**

Features: Echoes Nightly Soundscapes (PRI) [interview, two live concerts], KAOS,

Olympia, WA; live broadcasts KCBX San Luis Obispo, KUSP, KPIG Santa Cruz, CA, World

Muse on KVPR, central CA. Ongoing play via traditional and internet stations.

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## Reviews and comments

While they are most often referred to as Celtic musicians, this label suggests a limitation unknown to these fine mistresses of diverse music. ... They have graced many stages nearby and we have had the pleasure of hearing them on at least four occasions, [but] their main stage appearance at the Live Oak Music Festival 2008 was a true treat for all. - *Fred Munroe, site coordinator, Live Oak Music Festival; co-presenter, Musica del Rio House Concerts*

These three women put on a show of amazing versatility and charm, showcasing a variety of approaches to (mostly) traditional Irish music. ...The Banshees' friendly manner and relaxed good humor spread quickly through the audience of about 260 folks, sitting in the stone amphitheater under the big oaks and eucalyptus trees. -*Kathy Bawn, Folkworks*

...there were some fabulous performers, the most impressive of which (at least to me) was Banshee in the Kitchen, a trio of extremely versatile and talented performers who offered an artfully prepared dish of Celtic music seasoned with a dash of jazz. - *Anonymous reviewer, Texas*

Banshee in the Kitchen brings all the right ingredients to the seasonal mix of Invite the Light, creating an ambience that welcomes winter and warms the spirit. It's among a small handful of new seasonal albums to make the Echoes playlist in 2006. -*John Diliberto, Host-Producer of Echoes the music soundscape heard on 130 public radio stations and at echoes.org*

My husband telephoned me during your second set at the Kern Highland Games last Saturday, so I could enjoy your music LIVE! ...He gave me a detailed report of the day's events and you must know your music was the HIGHLIGHT of the day. - **Utah**

We are so very blessed that you so graciously agreed to be an integral part of our Tsunami Relief concert! ...We were especially touched by your spirit throughout the evening, as you struck such a wonderful balance between joyousness at the opportunity to help, and the sober reflection that so many lives have been upturned and devastated. ...Thanks again for your generosity!  
- **California**

I have been listening to you for quite some time now, but would LOVE to see you come to the East Coast! The Leaf Festival is in NC in May, and would be an unbelievable forum for you. ...Please, please, think about it! - **North Carolina**

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