

# 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 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 Kat Edmonson (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.** In January of 2012, the band began recording its sixth album. Other albums to the band's credit: *Live at Painted Sky* (2008), *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 story. Public radio stations on the West Coast favor the band's 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, headlines dulcimer festivals, and performs on the Celtic harp.

**Jill Egland** 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 sharp veer in career choice the least bit baffling.) She lived for many years in Southeast Asia, Europe, and eventually, New York's Lower East Side. After 20 years of being away, she returned to Bakersfield 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 manages, for the most part, to keep up with her equally busy and artistically talented teenager.

**Katharine Edmonson** grew up in a Pasadena home with a steady diet of folk music and weekly hootenannies. As a nomadic young adult, she worked her way across the US framing houses and driving heavy equipment by day and performing in coffee houses and country bars by night. She's sung with Buck Owens and the Buckaroos, performed in a disco band, and played C&W sporting big hair and lavender boots. She's also an award-winning kayaker, a visual artist, a mom, and a science teacher who works with at-risk youth, and who loves mountain biking. Kat's always been drawn to the intricate rhythms and modal harmonies of Irish and Scottish music, but it wasn't until meeting up with Brenda and Jill that she decided to pursue it for real.

**Kris Martin** started playing the bass when she was nine. She wanted to play drums, but that was quickly dismissed. Instead, her dad bought her a big plastic bass, which she lugged on and off the school bus all through grammar school. Then she lugged a full-sized wooden one on and off the school bus through high school. "While I've messed around with piano and guitar, the bass is my true love. I love its deep, rich voice. You can feel the bass way down deep in your soul. I'm a true backup musician by nature. My goal is to give the lead players a fuller sound." **Banshee in the Kitchen** shares Kris with the popular regional bluegrass band, Out of the Blue, based out of the tiny Kern community of Bodfish. When she's not being coaxed into bands, Kris works as an emergency room nurse in the hospital that serves the Kern River Valley.

**How they met, and the name.** In a happy coincidence of co-location, Jill, Brenda and then-guitarist Mary Tulin 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. When Mary's doctor husband retired in 2009, the two headed to the wilds of Washington State. Just when Brenda and Jill thought all was lost, Kat, who had taken dulcimer lessons from Brenda, mentioned she played guitar, and... well... you just don't mess around with providence. She was in.

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## Members:

Brenda Hunter: hammered dulcimer, fiddle, vocals  
Jill Eglund: flute, whistle, accordion, bodhran, vocals  
Kat Edmonson: 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, Arts Council of Kern  
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, San Diego, Costa Mesa  
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  
Morro Bay Harbor Festival  
Golden Fine Arts Festival, CO

## 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 Bacht (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, Midwinter Festival of Music, 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 [in Utah] during your second set at the Kern Highland Games last Saturday, so I could enjoy your music LIVE! You must know your music was the HIGHLIGHT of the day.

*- Utah fan*

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 fan*

Good job, mom.

*- Amelia Eglund, teenager*