



Fiddlin' Around

Volume 13, Number 1

www.salinefiddlers.com

Fall 2006

Hometown Concert Series

A call-back with Millish



Millish plays an encore with the Fiddlers at the February 2005 Hometown Show. From left, that's Jesse Mason on guitar, Brad Phillips on mandolin, Tyler Duncan on the pipes, and Mike Shimmin playing the drum.

The Fiddlers couldn't be more excited to present the group that is 40% alumni and 100% talent at the 13th Annual Fall Hometown Concerts, Saturday and Sunday, October 28 and 29.

Millish was the second guest artist to play with the Fiddlers at the new Ellen A. Ewing Performing Arts Center at Saline High School. They were a lot of fun as they brought the audience to their feet several times. This concert can only be better now that Millish is in its fifth year.

Millish: the group

2003 Saline graduate Brad Phillips plays fiddle, mandolin, guitar and dobro. Twice the State of Michigan Old Time Fiddle Champion, Brad has played with Natalie MacMaster, Jeff White, and The Chieftains, and previous Fiddler Hometown guest artists Byron Berline and Mark O'Connor. Brad is on the faculty at the Mark O'Connor Fiddle Camp and is a jazz violin major at the University of Michigan. And he began playing violin in the fifth grade.

From Principal Percussionist at the University Symphonic Band of Western Michigan University to the Battle Creek Symphony Orchestra to Millish, percussionist

Mike Shimmin has been playing from the age of eight. Since age ten he has sat in with the popular Detroit 'ethnic-rock' band Immigrant Suns. Mike won the "Best Jazz Soloist" award at the National Jazz Festival in Chicago in 2000.

A jazz studies major at the University of Michigan, Tyler Duncan is a winner in uilleann pipes (the Irish bagpipes), flute, whistle, guitar, and bodhran (the Irish drum) at the Irish music competition, the Midwest North American Fleadh. He was the first American to win the All-Ireland Championship on the uilleann pipes in 1999 and 2000 and on the bodhran in 2001. The groups that this 21-year-old

has played with are too numerous to mention. At age 16 Tyler composed and performed the musical score for the Irish musical comedy *The Changeling* for Ann Arbor's Wild Swan Theater.

Jesse Mason, 1998 Saline graduate, was Saline Fiddlers Assistant Artistic Director for four years before stepping down upon his graduation from Eastern Michigan University. Jesse's musical career began as a piano student at age five. Jesse has composed several high-speed

(Please see Millish, page 2)

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**Saline Fiddlers and Millish:**

**Saturday, October 28, 7:30 PM**

**Sunday, October 29, 2:00 PM**

**Tickets are \$20, \$15, and \$10**

**Call toll free 1-866-257-5333**

**or visit [salinefiddlers.com](http://salinefiddlers.com)**

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Millish

(Continued from page 1)

Fiddler tunes, including "Hungry Man #1," "Mason's Ape Ron" and new favorite "North Summit," which will be featured at the Hometown Concert. The places Jesse has performed are also too numerous to mention, but highlights are the Ark in Ann Arbor, Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion* and the White House.

Millish very recently added bass player **Andrew Kratzat**, from Fort Wayne, Indiana and the University of Michigan. Andrew was awarded Best Student Jazz Instrumentalist by *Downbeat Magazine* while he was still in high school, and won first prize at the International Society of Bassists jazz competition.

Millish.com describes their music the best:

Never forcing a preconceived notion of "fusion," the band has let their music coalesce over the past four years, and it's already turning heads worldwide. Their debut album earned them an International Acoustic Music Award - before it was even released.

Millish is united by a single musical goal: to participate in the evolution of modern music. Judging by their accolades, they're well on their way.

For their part, the Saline Fiddlers have been working on several new tunes and updating old favorites. Listen for the classic, high-speed "Big John MacNeil" and new tunes with fiddling solos "Wheel Hoss," and Jesse Mason's "North Summit."

The Fiddlers are testing out a Sunday matinee performance, which will begin at 2:00. The first performance will be at 7:30 PM Saturday, October 28. Tickets are \$20, \$15 and \$10 and are available at the website,

www.salinefiddlers.com,

or by calling toll-free: 1-866-257-5333.

Fiddlin' Around is the official newsletter of the
Saline Fiddlers.

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Stories by Jen Lahmala, Editor, and Beth Bartley.
Photos courtesy of loving Fiddler families and
millish.com.

Will Warner, Executive Director

www.salinefiddlers.com

Good stuff from our website

Every now and then we like to pull out our (electronic) mailbag and share with our readers some of the interesting comments we received. We hope you find them interesting, too!

Saline, MI, October 11, 2006...

I soooooo can't wait till your concert, it's going to be totally sweet!!! Good Luck

Corunna, MI, September 28, 2006...

I saw you guys on television the other day and thought that you were really cool. I wish my high school had a program such as this when I was growing up. Have fun.

Hartland, MI, September 10, 2006...

I saw the Fiddlers at a graduation party for Brad L. We were impressed. We could not believe these kids were high school students. Keep up the good work. You are astounding!

Mayville, MI, August 24, 2006...

I so enjoyed your concert in Mayville during our Sunflower Festival in July. Your enthusiasm and genuine love of the music was incredible!

Hanover, MI, August 19, 2006...

I go to a fair amount of musical events and I must say that the last one to move me like that was a Rolling Stones concert.

Wayne, MI, August 17, 2006...

I was surprised when I saw how many performers were on hand. I was expecting a 4 piece group, perhaps a cello and 3 violins.

Commerce Twp, MI, August 14, 2006...

I too play the violin and I practice a lot. I also want to join the Saline Fiddlers, I heard of the Fiddlers when I went to the Milford Memories. I'm only 12 though, almost 13.

Roseville, MI, August 3, 2006...

We're all big fiddle/Celtic fans. And that makes us big Saline Fiddler fans. Thanks for the fun of watching YOU have fun.

Whitehall, MI, July 27, 2006...

I am from Norway and have not heard fiddlers in so long. I was a folk dancer and fiddlers usually play our dance music. Maybe next time I go to one of your concerts you will play some music from Norway.

Wade, MS, July 13, 2006...

"HOLY MOLY!" You younguns sure know how to crank up a crowd. Meeting y'all and playing on the same stage has to rank right up there with Vienna sausage and sardines in my book.

Hurley, MS, July 6, 2006...

My prayer is that I hope these kids know what a blessing they were to us on the Mississippi Gulf coast.

Lucedale, MS, July 2, 2006...

I just want to Thank the Saline Fiddlers for all that y'all done here in Mississippi. You will never know how much it means to all of us that were able to hear your performances.

Saline, MI, February 4, 2006...

I had the time of my life at your Hometown Concert. Yours and the Sam Bush concert were the best performances I've ever seen....

You've probably wondered who dresses the Fiddlers in those stage-savvy but sensible outfits for their performances...

It's not a costume, it's a *uniform*

Yes, it's that season of the year again. No, not Halloween, but a much more important holiday, no doubt widely celebrated and marked boldly on many a calendar....indeed, it is *New Saline Fiddler Fall Uniform* (try saying that ten times fast) *Season!*

The Fiddler fall uniform has come a long way from the long skirts of yesteryear (they must have looked especially lovely on the guys!). Some may recall when Fiddlers sported mom-made vests. Designer Peggy Rzepka recalls, "Wearing vests was pretty hokey, but times were hokier then." The uniforms, like the music, have evolved into a much more lively and contemporary style. Under the helm of Mrs. Rzepka, new uniforms are ordered from Alberta, Canada. Designer Helen Delnick of Alberta has a wide range of approximately 40 uniforms to choose from on her web site, which can be custom-made for a particular customer. "There is an art to doing this," says Peggy about choosing and making alterations on uniforms. "I can do any color combination on the planet, but combinations of red, royal blue and black seem to work best, and we do love our pink!!!!"

Some Fiddlers would like to have more of a say in costume design. Peggy says there are too many differing opinions

on this issue; therefore, Fiddler individuality will have to continue to be expressed by way of hat pins and decorations.

Today's fashion-forward Fiddler

After selecting one of Helen's catalog styles and then the colors, Mrs. Rzepka draws seven or eight different shirt possibilities. She presents them to Artistic Director Ben Culver, who makes the final decision. The order is then placed with Delnick and with lot of sewing and a little luck these new shirts will arrive in time for the Hometown concert. This year's Fiddler uniform will sport the colors of royal blue, black and white.

As for the other half of the uniform, the guys get black dungarees sold anywhere and the ladies use special dance skirts, which wear well and last for years.

Dangerous shirts at the border!!!!

There are a few drawbacks to ordering uniforms from out of the country. Two years ago shirts for the Fiddler guys were held up at the border under the newly enacted rules on border security, and never made it in time for the Fall Hometown Concert. The Fiddlers were

fortunate in this instance to have a quick thinking, talented designer to step in and make things right. Mrs. Rzepka purchased white oxford button-down shirts and quickly sewed new buttons as well as black and pink ribbon on them. As a result the concert came off without a hitch and the audience was none the wiser.

In a world of such talented kids, it is nice to know that some of the *parents* have still got it.



Sneak preview:

Just for our readers of *Fiddlin' Around*, designer Peggy Rzepka has released her drawings of the 2006-2007 fall uniform. We expect to debut the new shirts at the Fall Hometown Concert with guest artist Millish. We'll leave it up to you to guess which design is for the ladies and which is for the gentlemen.

See the front page or the back page of this newsletter for more information about our Fall Hometown Concert with Millish.

Meet our managers

Shea & Rhine: turning the gears behind the scenes

She's a study in movement and sound, well-organized, who can run circles around most of us. The Energizer Bunny. He's quieter, slipping in and out behind the scenes, often not even noticed. A man whose personality runs deep, like his knowledge and experience. Their personalities compliment each other well, and together with Artistic Director Ben Culver and Technical Manager Ed Brosius they get the show on the road. Thirty active, noisy teenagers with instruments, uniforms, water bottles, snacks, homework and other issues, pile into half-a-dozen or so family vehicles and travel across Michigan and beyond some seventy times a year, presenting professional-grade performances to delighted audiences of all sizes and shapes.

Lynda Shea and Doug Rhine have been our managers for almost two years now, getting the gigs and getting the players to the gigs. They stepped up to their assignments shortly after joining the organization.



Administrative Manager Lynda Shea and Event Manager Doug Rhine stop only a moment for a photo op during the Katrina Relief Tour in June

Lynda

Administrative Manager Lynda Shea is the agent. She finds and books the gigs, gets the contracts signed, and otherwise acts as liaison between the Fiddlers and the people at the venues. She handles the payroll, bookkeeping and other finance issues. Lynda pulled off a huge task this past summer by planning the Katrina Relief Tour, booking the hotels and making all the travel arrangements. Lynda also does the bookkeeping at two area dental offices.

Lynda's life began in Dearborn Heights. At age eleven her family moved to Saõ Paulo, Brazil for three years. Lynda graduated from Churchill High in Livonia after moving around several times. She graduated from the University of Michigan with a bachelor's degree in

dental hygiene, and has been working in dental offices for 26 years.

Lynda met her husband Bill, who worked for her father at the time, at their office Christmas party. They were married a year and a half later and now have three children, one is a Fiddler. They picked up their dog Scooter while on Bill's work assignment in Brazil in 1999. They also have a cat.

Lynda is a small group leader for the confirmation class at St. Andrew's in Saline. She likes cross-stitching, reading and baking.

Doug

Event manager Doug Rhine is the 'available adult' at performances. This does not mean he is single or eligible. This means he attends rehearsals, runs errands, and coordinates other practical details, like food, drivers, maps, CD sales table and the security of the Fiddlers' belongings while they're on stage.

Doug "started off small," he says, by helping coordinate gig transportation — seeing that we had the 'half-a-dozen or so family vehicles' and directions to every gig. When Shelly Banet, Business Manager then, "graduated," it was decided that her job would be broken up into the two positions that Lynda and Doug now hold.

Doug was raised in Washington, Pennsylvania, about 30 miles west of Pittsburgh. He graduated from Penn State with degrees in psychology and sociology and then worked in youth ministry for five years. He then went to seminary where he earned master's degrees in history and theology.

Doug and Kathleen met at Penn State and married while Doug was at seminary. Their first child came along during Doug's seminary years, so he became the at-home parent. He has been the at-home parent ever since for their two children, who are both Fiddlers.

Doug likes to play guitar, read and run. Their family also has a dog.

With Doug's background in human behavior and Lynda's background in business administration, the two make a perfect combination for moving the Fiddlers forward through their musical and otherwise intensively active high school years. The Fiddlers are extremely fortunate to have two such able and willing people pulling this off. Their generosity with their time is beyond compare. Ben Culver is pleased with the managers and says, "Our team is amazing and dedicated. Doug, Lynda and Ed are wonderful to work with and are great assets to our organization." Our sincerest thanks go Lynda and Doug for doing so much with such little thought of their own reward.

Meet the new Fiddlers

We're proud to introduce here and at our Fall Home-town Concert some new, stage-enhancing talent. We are featuring four Fiddlers in this edition and the remaining six in the next edition of *Fiddlin' Around*.



Michael added the violin to his year of piano playing when he was eight years old. He says playing both instruments was his mom's idea. His attraction to Fiddlers was his friends, the music and the performing.

The best things about being in the group is meeting new friends, performing, and meeting the audience! He likes both fiddle tunes "Farewell Set" and "Born to Fly."

A pleasant surprise about being a Fiddler is how fun the tours are, and how much Michael enjoys playing at each performance.

Outside of Fiddlers, Michael, a sophomore, plays tennis. He likes friends, parties, mountain biking and camping. He has made no career plans at this point, and "will see what fits when it comes." He would, however, like to attend the University of Michigan.

Hannah

began playing the violin in the fifth grade. She got hooked on Fiddlers when she saw them play at their CD release party in 2004. She bought the CD, "The Sky's the Limit," and eventually began playing along with it.

Choosing a favorite fiddle tune is difficult for Hannah because, "I like mostly all of them." She says the best thing about being in the group is the fun. There's a lot of it. The number of gigs the Fiddlers play came as a surprise to her.

Freshman Hannah is a figure skater. She enjoys video games and computers.

Career plans are too far in the future for Hannah at this time, but she is considering attending Eastern Michigan University.



Brendan has joined the group on bass guitar. He began playing bass in the sixth grade when there was a shortage of double bass players in the school orchestra, and he went on to buy an electric bass. A sophomore, Brendan also plays guitar and ukulele.

Class of 2006 Fiddler bass guitarist Scott Kendall influenced Brendan to audition. His favorite tune is the more modern "Born to Fly." He really enjoys the trips and spending time with his Fiddler friends. He was surprised by how much work it is to learn all of the music.

Brendan plays varsity water polo and is on the swim team. He also likes to sleep, but his main hobby is "messing around" on the bass.

Brendan is still looking for a career that would fit him, "but would still be successful," and is considering Michigan State or the University of Michigan.

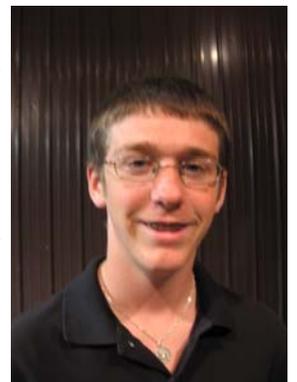
Jack

is our new sound technician. He has been working sound boards since he was selected to be a Fiddler in February! The freshman also plays guitar.

Jack wanted to be a Fiddler because they go so many places, and he looked forward to building a strong musical background. His favorite fiddle tune is "North Summit." He says the thing he likes best about Fiddlers is they're "a second family to me."

Other school activities include track and field and running cross-country. He hopes to work on Hornet Light & Sound at his first opportunity to do so. Jack is also a hunter and plans to go on his first deer hunting trip this year.

Career plans for now are engineering or something else technical. Jack would like to go to Michigan Tech or University of Michigan.



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SALINE
Fiddlers

Will Warner, Executive Director
Ben Culver, Artistic Director
Doug Rhine, Event Manager
Lynda Shea, Administrative Manager
Ed Brosius, Technical Manager

For bookings call: 1-866-257-5333
www.salinefiddlers.com

Upcoming Public Events

- ♫ October 14, Cleveland, OH, **Cattle Baron's Ball** Fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. Opening for country music star Darryl Worley. More information available at www.cbbeleveland.com
- ♫ October 28, 7:30 PM and October 29, 2:00 PM, Saline, **13th Annual Fall Hometown Concert** featuring guest artist **Millish**. Saline High School's Ellen A. Ewing Performing Arts Center. Tickets are \$20, \$15 and \$10 and can be purchased online (see below) or by calling toll free 866-257-5333.
- ♫ December 19, Ann Arbor, MI, **Veterans' Hospital**
- ♫ December 31, Cadillac, MI, **First Night @ Cadillac 2007**. Details to follow.
- ♫ February 4, Saline, **13th Annual Winter Hometown Concert**. Details to follow.

For the latest info visit our website:
www.salinefiddlers.com



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To:



Millish and Saline Fiddlers October 28 & 29