

Cape Breton International Drum Festival 2001

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Review by
Angela MacNeil

The inaugural Cape Breton International Drum festival was held at the UCCB Boardmore Playhouse in Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada on April 17 and 18, 2001. The evening of April 17th was filled with drum clinics. Dave Skinner demonstrated Roland V-drums and Michelle Stewart gave a well-informed workshop on the Bodhran (Celtic hand drum). This was followed by Charlie Cooley (Sabian, Pearl) of Prairie Oyster. With a dazzling display of musicality, it was clearly evident why Charlie is one of Canada's first call drummers. First time clinician Matthew Foulds was next up and he demonstrated his skills not only with the sticks but with brushes as well when world class fiddler Howie MacDonald joined him on stage. The evening concluded with an amazing performance by Randy Cooke (Sabian, Yamaha). His wit and drumming virtuosity enthralled the crowd.

The following evening, April 18th, was performance based with the first half of the show consisting of the Kitpu Singers, Michelle and Mark Stewart, Lucy and Stewart MacNeil, Brian Talbot and Bruce Aitken (Paiste). The house band for the evening included bass player Jamie Gatti, guitarist Dave McKeough and musical director Fred Lavery. The second half of the performance opened with Ethan Ardelli and the Academy Drummers, followed by Shawn and Aaron Parris, Keith Mullens and Matthew Foulds. The final act of the evening was New York megadrum monster Billy Ward (DW, Sabian, Evans) performing his first ever Canadian Clinic. Billy's clinic was very informative and his impromptu jams with bassist Jamie Gatti were simply astounding. Billy talked drums and life, and his humor had the crowd eating parradiddles out of his hands. He received two standing ovations. Co-organizers Bruce Aitken and Nigel Kearns then called all the performers down on stage and they jammed out under the lead of drum master Billy Ward. This was given yet another standing ovation. Terry Ryan of Musicstop, Halifax, emceed the evening's performance.

During the two-day festival, a very successful trade show was held in the lobby outside the Boardmore playhouse. Participants included Atlantic Music Supplies, Paiste, Yamaha, Musicstop, Cape Breton Bodhrans, Roland, Pearl, Sabian, Evans, Pro Mark, Brennan's Travel Agency and more.

For more information, and updates on the 2002 festival, please visit the Cape Breton International Drum Festival Web site at <http://www.cbdrumfest.com>.

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