



I Byde It Times

Nesbitt / Nisbet Society Newsletter

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Nisbet Horsemen and Tower by Andrew Spratt



Mairead and Me by Steve M. Nesbit of PA



ACT I On Wednesday, March 9, 2011, near Baltimore's Inner Harbor, I was able to scratch an item off my "bucket list." Playing the Hippodrome Theatre that night was **Celtic Woman**. I have followed their career since they flew into the US in 2004. They were an overnight sensation. Soon, world tours became a reality, and their albums have sold more than 6 million records worldwide.

My eyes were on the fiddle player, **Mairead Nesbitt** ---Get that? Mairead Nesbitt. Yes, our Caledonia cousin. It was absolutely an unforgettable evening. She has it all: beauty, perfection and grace. If you enjoy strong yet angelic female voices singing both Celtic and traditional music in perfect harmony, buy any of their CD's; you won't be disappointed.

(Shown at Left: Steve Nesbit of PA and Mairead Nesbitt of the *Celtic Woman*)

The original ensemble has changed. When I saw their performance in Baltimore, only three of the five original group members remained. (This was new information to me). Enter newest vocalist Lynn Hilary with her long red curls. She was on her maiden voyage with *Celtic Woman*. She blended in perfectly and the show was superb!

About a week before the show, I had an idea. If I could get a gift to Mairead before the performance and write a nice letter to go with it...maybe, just maybe...It might give me a slight advantage at the "Meet and Greet." Since I had never attended a "meet and greet" I didn't know exactly what it involved. (I thought it would resemble an athlete signing autographs at a mall). But what could I give her that would stand out as a thoughtful gift? I remembered I had a Nesbitt/Nisbet tartan scarf that I had never worn. That would be perfect, from one Nesbit to another Nesbitt. My preparation began. I found a beautiful card and wrote personal note to Mairead explaining the gift and that I was a Nesbit, too.

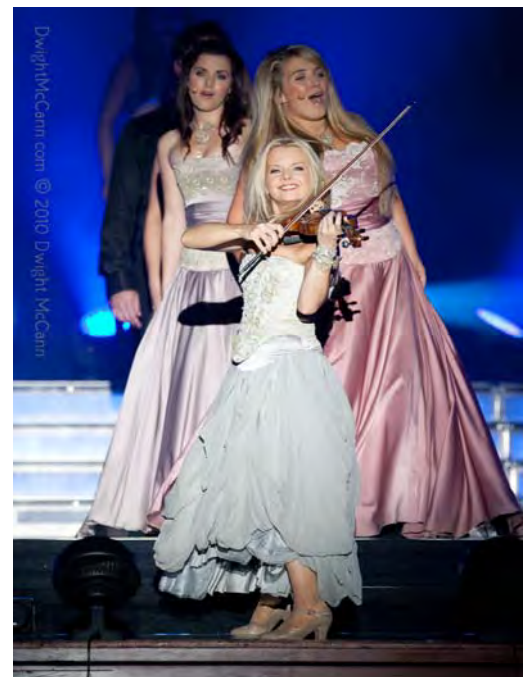
The day finally arrived. We booked a room for the night and headed south. After checking in Baltimore's at Day's Inn, Barbara and I grabbed a quick sandwich and arrived at the Hippodrome Theatre early. I had to make sure she received the gift before the show. It didn't take long to find a techie who was wired. I told him I had a gift that had to get back stage before the show. He used his headset to talk to the stage manager. In a moment he informed me he'd take the gift backstage. Perfect! Mission accomplished! Now, would it work like I planned?

ACT II The performance was incredible.

After the performance, there were a few house ushers down front to gather the "meet and greet" group of 30 to 35 people. Like a group of tourists awaiting the next walking tour, we headed out of the theatre and up a few flights of stairs to reach our destination.

Barbara and I were near the front of the line, maybe 10 or 12 back. Security was everywhere. It was a short wait. A gentleman gathered our attention, and talked about the "ground rules" when approaching the *Women's* table. No Camera's, no more than three items for autographs; covered items had to be examined by security, and we were to keep the line moving.

Enter Mairead and Lisa. They sat at the table and there she was. (The spokesperson had said only two of the *Celtic Woman* would be there to sign.



The line moved quickly. Barbara was in front of me as we approached the table, Barbara saw Mairead first and I was behind chatting with Lisa. (Now I was prepared, small camera, about six 8x10s safely protected in a folder. Barbara leaned over to Mairead and said, "We're Nesbit's." Mairead squealed, "Steven Nesbit?" as my wife pointed to me.

I stepped in front of Mairead, as we both smiled. She immediately thanked me for the thoughtful gift. I was star-struck. As I placed my folder on the table, she took it, opened it, and started signing every picture "Lots of Love, Mairead". Meanwhile the security standby was trying to get me moving, but I kept my focus on Mairead as we briefly chatted.

As the guard stepped between us, Mairead said, "You need a picture." The guard stepped back and Barbara was able to take one picture which I refer to as "Beauty and the Beast." Mairead thanked me for a third time for the scarf as we said goodbye. That entire experience took maybe 45 seconds and that quick she was gone. Walking down the stairs I thought, "What a night to remember!"

ACT III

Short Biography for Máiréad Nesbitt

Date of Birth: 1979

Loughmore, Co. Tipperary, Ireland

Birth Name: Máiréad Anna Kathleen Nesbitt

Mairead began playing the piano at age four and the fiddle at age six. She is a former All-Ireland fiddle champion. She studied at The Ursuline Convent, Thurles; The Waterford Institute of Technology, The Cork School of Music (under Cornelia Zanidache), and had post-graduate studies with Emanuel Hurwitz in London.



Mairead was born to John and Kathleen Nesbitt, both well-known music teachers, and has a sister, Frances, and four brothers, Seán, Michael, Noel and Karl, all of whom are musicians. Besides her family, Mairead cites such diverse influences as classical violinist Itzhak Pearlman, Irish Fiddlers Liz Carroll, Michael Coleman and Andy McGann, Jazz musician Stephane Grappelli, Country player Alison Kraus and rock performers David Bowie, Sting, U2 and Bjork.

Nesbitt got her break in 1996 when she was invited to perform in the Michael Flatley show *Lord of the Dance*. There, she played lead fiddle until 1998, at which time she went with Flatley to his second show, *Feet of Flames*. She toured in this production, again as lead fiddler, until leaving in 2001. Nesbitt also played on the original soundtracks to both shows, as well as for the soundtrack to *Riverdance*. She released her debut solo album in 2001 *Raining Up*, which features a broad range of musical styles, both traditional and contemporary.

In 2004, Nesbitt was invited to play violin for a performance at the Helix Theatre in Dublin called *Celtic Woman*. It was the brain child of Sharon Browne and David Downes of *Riverdance* fame, and put together five females that had not previously performed together: vocalists Chloë Agnew, Órla Fallon, Lisa Kelly and Méav Ní Mhaolchatha, and fiddler Máiréad Nesbitt. The popularity of this and subsequent performances on television and live albums has led to numerous tours throughout the world.

To watch **Mairead Nesbitt** and **Celtic Woman**, just Google Mairead Nesbitt. Plenty of you tube video's are available for viewing, and I recommend "The Butterfly."

Visit the website and sign up for the monthly newsletter.

<http://www.celticwoman.com>

Steve M. Nesbit

