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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Championship Irish Dance, Drum Corps Coming to Cohan Center March 8

SAN LUIS OBISPO, In a dynamic sensory feast for those who love Irish culture, the debut tour of "Different Dances Different Drums" delivers an unforgettable evening of precision, passion, and percussion.

Cal Poly Arts presents the never-before-seen music/dance extravaganza -- which pairs championship step-dancing with the tribal beat of a drum-driven Celtic band -- on Tuesday, March 8, 2005 at 8 p.m. in the Christopher Cohan Center.

The 22-member Trinity Irish Dance Company provides the "thunder" and the Different Drums of Ireland group brings the guitars, pipes, and indigenous drums.

"While I've wanted to bring Ireland's premier Trinity Irish Dance Company here for awhile now, what really excited me was the addition of Different Drums of Ireland to the event," explains Cal Poly Arts director Ralph Hoskins.

"To showcase an emerging band from Northern Ireland is a rare treat and the combination of both Celtic companies promises to be outstanding."

The Trinity Irish Dance Company was founded in 1990 as a means of providing professional career opportunities to students who formerly had no outlet for their dance training beyond the competitive circuit.

Inspired by ancient Celtic myths and stories, Trinity translates that magic with an encompassing flair that has made many of these 22 company members repeat World Champions of Irish dance. In fact, the present company has 22 consecutive World Titles between them.

The innovative ensemble is constantly searching for original means of

expression while maintaining a high regard for old traditions. Trinity, a uniquely Irish-American company, was the birthplace of progressive Irish dance which opened new avenues of artistic expression, leading to commercial productions such as "Riverdance."

Over the past several years, Trinity has also collaborated with many noted contemporary choreographers for an increased catalogue of movement and the development of a unique form of story ballet which tells the ancient and modern history of the Irish people through dance and specially-commissioned live music.

The Trinity Irish Dance Company has performed to great critical and popular acclaim on stages throughout the world. In addition, its list of film and television credits include the film "Backdraft," "The Tonight Show" with Johnny Carson and with Jay Leno, "Late Night with Conan O'Brien," "CBS This Morning," and ABC's "Good Morning, America."

The company has toured internationally as invited guests for dignitaries, including the Royal Family in Monaco, Ireland's President Mary Robinson, and Indian meditation master Gurumayi Chidvilasananda.

Trinity recently received an Emmy Award for their appearance on the PBS television special, "World Stage," and was featured in the ABC special, "Dignity of Children" hosted by Oprah Winfrey.

Sharing the Cohan Center stage will be Different Drums of Ireland, which brings the indigenous drums of Ireland -- the "Lambeg" and the "Bodhran" -- together for the first time ever in performance.

Hailing from Northern Ireland, Different Drums started in 1991 as a deliberate exercise in community relations. Performer Roy Arbuckle was asked to do something in the community using arts as a vehicle. He came up with the concept of "different drums," which was borrowed from Henry Thoreau. "It is the notion of people marching to the beat of different drums."

At the same time, he was reading a book by M. Scott Peck entitled, "Different Drums," which was about the essential human need to be in community with other living things.

It was clear to him that that there was a good philosophical underpinning for a project that addressed both the rights and respect of the individual and the rights and respect one has as part of a community.

The music also features the "Uilleann" or elbow pipes, whistles, guitar, four voices, and is driven by the engine of the African "djembe."

Adding myriad percussion and other instruments to original and traditional songs makes a unique and exciting combination of traditions and sounds -- a unique celebration of cultural diversity and linkages.

Tickets for the performance range from \$32 - \$44, with student discounts available, and may be purchased at the Performing Arts Ticket Office, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays. To order by phone, call 805/756-2787; to order by fax: 805/756-6088. Order on-line at www.pacslo.org.

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