

# Christmas Céilidh Band

**Christmas Céilidh Band** is five outstanding Celtic musicians: Kevin Angus, Pat Carey, Ben Ford, Cathy McGrath, and Paul Gluchowski. Together they create an exciting energy, unique sound, and lively performance. Originally formed in 2001 after encouragement from Mitzie Collins, this lineup of CCB has been delighting holiday audiences with their varied program of traditional, contemporary, and original Celtic influenced music and song for ten years. Their combination of smallpipes, Irish flute, whistles, bagpipes, guitar, mandolin, Celtic bouzouki, cittern, cello, fiddle, percussion, and multi-voice harmonies create an energetic, jovial, and ceilidh-like atmosphere fitting for the holiday season. A ceilidh (kay-ley) is a Celtic community celebration of song, story, and dance where everyone participates. This year's program features a variety of carols, wassails, and instrumental tunes from the Celtic traditions of Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Isle of Man, Canada, Cornwall, and Australia with themes centered around Christmas, the late autumn harvest, winter solstice, Hogmanay (a pagan Celtic celebration), and New Year's. Audience participation is an integral factor of CCB's performance as many of the pieces are traditional communal or story-telling songs. So come with your voice and holiday energy and have some old-fashioned fun!



**Kevin Angus** plays pipes and percussion and adds vocals to Christmas Ceilidh Band's ensemble. His first musical influences come from listening to his family's collection of Scottish vocalists (almost all on 78s) and west coast jazz. Later musical experiences with the likes of Bill Spence and Alistair Anderson to Nick Brignola and Milt Jackson continued to feed his curiosity and exploration of varied genres. Drawing from his Scottish and pan-Celtic roots and his love of jazz, he is eager to experiment with rhythms, sound, and ensemble with this band. Kevin is a founding member and the former Pipe Major of the Feadán Òr Pipe Band with

whom he produced acclaimed concerts and led to medal winning performances throughout the eastern United States and Canada. He is also affiliated with Bagad New York, a Breton music Orchestra where he plays bombarde, clarinet, and highland bagpipes.



**Pat Carey** adds Irish flute, penny whistle, guitar and voice to the CCB. Pat treasures her family's Irish background and lends a balance to the Scottish influence of some of the other members. Pat also plays with her traditional Irish trio Cuisle Mó Chroí and is a founding member of the Rochester branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann – or Irish musicians' association. She has performed at Golden Link's Turtle Hill Folk Festival and the Rochester Irish Festival and can be found throughout upstate New York participating in Irish music sessions. In 2016 Pat Carey and Cathy McGrath, along with Cuisle Mó Chroí bandmate Mary Lester and several others, were honored to be inducted into the Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann US Northeast Regional Hall of Fame, in recognition of their

contributions to Irish traditional music, dance, language and culture in the Rochester area.



**Ben Ford** brings his well-honed skills to the Christmas Ceilidh Band playing guitar, banjo, mandolin, cittern, electric bass, and concertina as well as singing. Starting on guitar and trumpet at age ten, he began studying classical guitar as a teen. Ben's wide-ranging interests in international folk, Celtic and jazz music took fire in college, and as he has played in many acoustic music ensembles over the years. He's played with several Rochester-based bluegrass bands, and founded the Scottish trio Haggis du Jour. Ben is formerly guitarist with Kate Lee with No Strings Attached, a current member of the Rochester Strathspey and Reel Society and Rochester Mandolin Orchestra, and he is also a Scottish-style snare drummer with the successful Feadán Òr Pipe Band. He transcribes and arranges much of the Christmas Ceilidh Band repertoire, continually scouring the globe for new sounds and ideas.



**Cathy McGrath** plays Irish wooden flute, penny whistle, guitar, silver flute, and sings. She is delighted to be a part of CCB. She is a member of the Rochester Branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, and belongs to the Tom Finucane Ceili Band, playing for Irish dances and sessions. In 2010, Cathy and Pat Carey were chosen to be part of the Rochester Sister Cities delegation to Waterford, Ireland, where the group played with the Waterford Traditional Musicians for a series of concerts and pub sessions. In 2016, Cathy, Patricia Carey and Mary Lester, members of Cuisle Mó Chroí, were Hall of Fame honorees for the US North East Region of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann for their work in promoting the love of Irish music and culture. Performances include libraries and schools across upstate NY, the annual Irish Cultural Day at Nazareth College, Historic High Falls "Holiday Memories," Golden Link's Turtle Hill Folk Festival, and the Rochester Irish Festival.



**Paul Gluchowski** plays cello and fiddle and sings. Starting cello in elementary school and playing with various orchestras throughout his years, he added classical violin instruction at the Hochstein School of Music & Dance in his middle years. Paul has been captivated with the sounds and styles of traditional Scottish, Irish, and old-time music, spending time at Valley of the Moon Scottish Fiddle School with Scottish fiddler Alasdair Fraser and cellist Natalie Haas immersing himself in the styles. Summer music camps at Ashokan Fiddle and Dance, Boston Harbor Scottish Fiddle School and Scottish cellist Abby Newton's cello workshops further broadened his experience. He has also played with several smallpipe groups at Celtic music concerts in Rochester and Syracuse along with supporting his church's music ministry.