

Guest artists to perform Scottish, Irish music

2/19/03

Mark and Kate Cushing will perform traditional Scottish and Irish music at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 2, in Susan Howell Hall as part of the Alfred University Guest Artist Series sponsored by the Division of Performing Arts. They will perform a program of airs, marches, hornpipes, reels and jigs on a variety of instruments including harp, fiddle, Scottish highland small pipes and great pipes, flute, whistle, guitar, accordion and bodhran. Kate Cushing will also sing ballads. A native of Alfred, Mark Cushing began his musical training on piano and French horn, and took bagpipe lessons with William MacCrea of Alfred, starting in 1968. He continued studying piping at the Invermark College of Piping in Petersburg, NY, and studied piobaireachd with Donald Lindsay, R.U. Brown and R.B. Nicol. He spent a winter in Scotland in further study with Nicol. Mark Cushing has taught piping at Invermark College, at Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT, and at the Community School of Music and Arts in Ithaca, NY. He recorded a piping album, "Land of My Youth," with Lindsay in 1983. He has played at numerous coffeehouses and festivals throughout the Northeast, performing with a number of bands including Ceol Mor and Dal Riata, both of which he founded with his wife, Kate. Dal Riata included Ed McGowan, and recorded a CD in 1995. He now devotes full-time to making bagpipes, as well as performing and teaching private students. Kate Cushing began her musical instruction at the age of 7, learning to play the accordion. She has been a classically trained cellist since her teens, performing in numerous chamber groups and orchestras such as the Riverside Symphony and the San Bernadino Orchestra in California and the Binghamton, Syracuse and Elmira symphonies in New York. She has played viola de gamba in early music ensembles. Kate Cushing started playing bagpipes 30 years ago, studying with John Partenan. After moving to New York State, she played with the Syracuse Scottish Pipe Band. She also plays the fiddle and Celtic harp. She teaches private students on cello, harp, pipes and accordion, and has been on the faculty of the Community School of Music and Arts in Ithaca. The performance is open to the public free of charge.