

Blackthorn quartet poises Tisdale audience

By Salome van der Merwe

The Celtic music group, Blackthorn delivered an unforgettable performance in front of a full house in the RECplex Maurice Taylor Performing Arts Theatre in Tisdale this Saturday.

The audience enjoyed a variety of traditional and not-so-traditional Celtic music that were a combination of original and existing songs.

The Vancouver based foursome consists of Michelle Carlisle, Rosie Carver, Tim Renaud, and Michael Viens and has joined the band in various stages of its existence.

"The band goes back to 1988 or so and was actually four folks who have immigrated from England," explained Michael Viens. "The original guys started playing in local pubs, coffee shops, and folk clubs and just started to gel".

The longest member of the current band members is Rosie who joined Blackthorn in 1989, followed by Michelle who joined in 1994, Michael in 1995, and the newest addition to the band, Tim, who joined in 2001.

The talent in the band is truly amazing and between the four they master a number of instruments including the flute, piccolo, penny-whistle, fife, fiddle, bass, bodhran, octave-mandolin, and guitars. But the talent does not end there,

because throughout their performance, all four band members add some incredible vocals to their beautiful music.

One of the reasons to the band's success and originality is the fact that all four members bring a different skill and influence to the group's music style.

"We all have very diverse backgrounds, musically as well," explained Viens. "The one common thread is just the love for this style of music, being Celtic traditional, Irish, and Scottish".

Viens further explained that between Tim and him there is also some French background and they have brought in several French-Canadian songs as well.

"We just find stuff we like to do and that's fun to play and that comes into our repertoire," said Viens.

Blackthorn's performance included songs that they have written themselves as well as old, well-known songs that they have rearranged.

"Sometimes we do research on some old tunes that just fit with our style and add original instrumental on to it which is very typical of what we do," explained Tim Renaud. "And between that and our originals we get a bunch of songs put together for our performances".

The band is currently busy with the first part of a tour through Saskatchewan and will return in April 2011 for the second part.



Blackthorn, a traditional Celtic band from Vancouver, delivered a superb performance in Tisdale this Saturday. The band members are (l-r) Tim Renaud, Michael Viens, Michelle Carlisle, and Rosie Carver.

Tim Renaud explained that during the second part of their tour the band will perform a whole different number of songs and audiences who enjoyed their first performance should definitely come back for the second one.

"The show we're going to do in the spring will be a completely different one," said Renaud. "We're bringing in a piper and a bit

of a new style and as far as the song list goes, it will be completely different".

During their Saskatchewan tour, Blackthorn has been premiering a new

song "Open Skies" that was written by band member Michelle Carlisle who was born in Broadview, Saskatchewan. "Open Skies was inspired by my experi-

ences of growing up in the prairies and having to move away," explained Carlisle. "The prairies will always be near and dear to me".

Blackthorn was present-

ed to the community by the Tisdale Arts Council and next up members can look forward to a performance by the Foothills Brass Quintet on March 19th, 2011.