

About Lava

BC Musician on Tour with Kiwi Family Band

BC musician-composer and choir director Johnny Popoff's St. Patrick's Day birthday may account for his latest batch of "Irish Luck".

On a working visit in New Zealand he met some fellow musicians, a family group already well-known in NZ and the USA as The O'Connors. Sean O'Connor and Amanda Ironside O'Connor, New Zealanders of part Maori descent, with deep roots in their Irish Celtic heritage, are a musician/school-teaching couple based in Wellington. They've also lived in Nashville, USA, produced several CD recordings and have toured, teaching and performing, in New Zealand and America. Composing much of their own music they've also played folk, mixed in with Maori songs and interpretations of rock and pop classics.

USA reviews have stated, "There are many fine singers in Nashville but when the O'Connors sing together it has the x-factor, even a spiritual quality..." In NZ, their melodic, soaring songs have been described as "moving and powerful" and "unique and beautiful", with "emotional and intellectual depth, able to reach the audience's heart".

Last July, within days of their meeting, Johnny was "adopted" by the O'Connors and toured with them for Sean's new solo album, and all three appeared together on New Zealand radio and TV. The mix seemed inevitable. Within a month they formed LAVA, a new band comprising Johnny ("Vanya Popov"), Sean and Amanda, and their teenage daughters Acacia and Rose.

LAVA performed to rave reviews at various venues, including the Grand Hall of Parliament, and undertook a tour throughout New Zealand. The general response can be seen in some of the Kiwi publicity:

"LAVA's hot! This exciting acoustical folk/pop band is touching hearts nationwide with their beautiful songs, stunning harmonies and fine musicianship".

Indeed, one of LAVA's big drawcards is its beautiful singing. Amanda and Sean were already renowned for their voices and harmonic blend, and Acacia and Rose, fine singers in their own right, bring a magical resonance to the sound. Vanya's vast choral experience and sensitive musical ear adds depth and richness to the amazing harmony.

Amanda is also a brilliant flautist, Sean a strong rhythm guitarist and Vanya a gifted and versatile keyboard/pianist. Acacia and Rose are each an exciting, up and coming violinist and keyboardist respectively. All lend a skilled hand to various percussion

instruments to add rhythmic spice and drive to many of their original songs, classic folk/rock covers and traditional Irish/Celtic music.

September 4, 2010, LAVA was in Christchurch as the 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck. They were shaken but safe, and the experience gave birth to "Earthquakes", the first song that Vanya composed with LAVA, while driving from Christchurch along the stunning Kaikoura coast that same day. With the destruction just behind them, they created this poignant folk ballad, reflecting New Zealand's beauty and looking ahead with optimism and resolve that all "shake-ups" in life can be overcome! (Quite a timely message, in light of all the events since then!)

This unforgettable song is now one of 13 tracks on LAVA's brand new CD, "Dream, Love, Dare". Comprising all original songs composed by the band and recorded at Life of Riley Studios in Wellington, the CD has already been selling well online and at all of their live appearances in New Zealand and the USA. American audiences have embraced the refreshing new Kiwi sound, praising LAVA's special "energy":

"... a powerful, yet gentle and joyful peace and beauty that shines through their music, lyrics and performance - that can best be experienced live!"

Those who are not already familiar with this sensational new group can learn more online at: www.myspace.com/lavanz as well as on other websites and in Facebook.

Best of all, residents of four BC cities have a chance to see LAVA live! (*This eclectic, exotic mix of Irish/Maori/Kiwi/Folk/Pop, with Vanya's Canadian/Russian/Doukhobor music heritage added is just not to be missed!*) Prior to the third leg of their world tour in Europe, LAVA has squeezed in four appearances in Vanya's home province at the following venues:

April 21, 2011 - GFSS Centennial Auditorium, Grand Forks, BC.

- (SOLD OUT Concert - with LAVA playing to a thrilled, over capacity audience!)

April 30, 2011 - Capitol Theatre, 421 Victoria, Nelson, BC.

- A very successful LAVA Concert (despite heavy competition from the 25th annual "Festival Nelson" and other major events) - with LAVA enthusiastically received by their second large Canadian audience!

May 7, 2011 - Vancouver East Cultural Centre, 1895 Venables St., Vancouver, BC.

-Advance Tickets: (604) 251-1363 - Noon to 6:00 P.M., Monday through Friday, Noon to 4:00 P.M. Saturday (Or online: <http://tickets.thecultch.com>)

May 8, 2011 - SCA Branch #17, 1353 Richter St., Kelowna, BC.

- Advance Tickets: (250) 861-1140

All starting times at 7:30 PM, ticket prices vary - please inquire. Seats are limited in all venues, so call early.