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Forever Young

Sure, the members of the Young Dubliners have edged into middle age, but they still know how to rock the Celtic way

By **MARIJKE ROWLAND**
BEE ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

SPORTS

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LIFE

Funny thing about the Young Dubliners, they're not all that young and they actually formed in Santa Monica.



But a name is just a name.

"Some of us just crossed the 40-year border this year," said lead singer and band founder Keith Roberts. "People ask, 'When will you consider changing the name from Young Dubliners to something else.' But as far as I know, the Fine Young Cannibals never ate anybody. And we still look pretty young."

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The Arts: Scene Stories

Dublin native Roberts founded the Celtic rock band in the early 1990s after meeting other musicians in his Southern California pub, Fair City.

The group is now rounded out by multi-instrumentalist Chas Waltz, guitarist Bob Boulding, drummer Dave Ingraham and bassist Brendan Holmes (the only other Irish member).

The Young Dubliners will headline the International Jousting Championships in Sonora on Saturday and Sunday.

Roberts said the group plays rock music with Celtic overtones. "Imagine your favorite rock song with a fiddle."

Roberts said the band originally was meant to be just the weekend entertainment for his pub. But then it signed with a record label and released its first album in 1994. By its second record, the pub was sold and music became Roberts' full-time gig.

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The band has been through several lineup changes, but for the past six years, the five-man group has remained the same. Roberts and Holmes are the sole remaining original members.

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The band plays some 200 shows a year, including a mix of rock events and Celtic festivals. Roberts said the band's sets remains the same for both crowds.

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"Our music isn't limited to Irish-Americans, it should be for everyone," Roberts said. "Though I will be more inclined to throw in a fun Irish cover song at a festival, if I see the crowd is all freckly and red-haired."

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Spontaneous "jig pits" have been known to erupt at shows. Roberts defines them as less destructive mosh pits.

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"Sometimes you have people who don't like to dance at a show; that is not an option with us," he said.

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Earlier this year, the band released its sixth album, "Real World." The disc includes an appearance by Jethro Tull frontman and flutist Ian Anderson on the instrumental track "Banshee."

At the end of October, the band will return to its roots for a tour of Ireland. The eight-day trip is a special package tour that will bring along 130 fans for sightseeing and live shows.

The Young Dubliners headline the International Jousting Championships. Also performing are Tempest, the Black Irish Band and Crazy Ivan. The event is 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday at the Mother Lode Fairgrounds, 220 Southgate Drive, Sonora. Tickets are \$16 in advance; \$20 at the gate; children 6-12 \$10; 5 and under admitted free. 588-9314.

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