

Energetic Canadian band headlines Shuler

By **TIM KELLER**
The Chronicle-News

Canadian Celtic rock band Enter the Haggis pulled into Raton's Shuler Theater Saturday night with fans in tow, presenting a high-energy two-set show that had the audience shouting and clapping along.

Advance promotion trumpeted the claim that devoted "Haggis Heads" fol-

low the band's tours, but who could have expected them to make it all the way to Raton, N.M., especially since the band had performed in Massachusetts just three nights earlier. Yet there they were, fans driving in from Wichita, Albuquerque, and Denver; one woman so liked the band's Friday-night show in Farmington that she made the drive to Raton to catch a second show.

Raton benefited, as the visitors were impressed with the town and, especial-

ly, the Shuler. One out-of-state visitor was overheard during intermission exulting over her cell phone about the historic theater, about to celebrate its 95th birthday.

Enter the Haggis mixed accomplished original songs with traditional tunes from the British Isles. Not that they ever became mellow: even ballads and reels were powered by a strong rhythm section. Most of the band's 150 shows each year are played for people who are drink-



Photos by Tim Keller

Enter the Haggis' front line is, from left, Canadians Craig Downie, Trevor Lewington, Brian Buchanan and drummer James Campbell.

ing, shouting, and dancing. Drummer James Campbell said they play only about a half-dozen shows at performing arts centers, such as the Shuler, where people are soberly seated in an auditorium.

Indeed, the music would have worked better in a club where Guinness Stout was flowing freely, but it didn't suffer too much at the Shuler. The band succeeded at getting the audience to clap and shout, while a group of high school students danced in the upper balcony.

When leaders Trevor Lewington and Brian Buchanan played guitars, with Craig Downie on harmonica, the band was solid, if not rousing; it could have passed as a (northern) Americana band. But when Buchanan switched to fiddle and Downie to bagpipes and tin whistles, the band and the crowd came alive. The Celtic components of their music brought an infectious element that added to the musicians' confidence in front of the seated audience, the latter suddenly stomping feet and clapping.

No band can be better than its rhythm section: drummer Campbell and bassist Mark Abraham propelled every song, while years of incessant touring have produced a tight band with arrangements that rock and swing. All but Campbell sang, with Lewington or Buchanan singing lead on most songs, the others providing har-



Enter the Haggis brought its energetic Celtic rock to the Shuler Theater Saturday night.

monies. Apparently, some in the audience expressed frustration at not being able to make out all the words, but this is a rock band: their lyrics were fine, and they were clearer in the mix than those of many bands.

The band's cryptic name comes from the Scottish dish, haggis, a sausage made with sheep intestines, oatmeal, and various spices. Downie joked that New Mexicans can make haggis at home using oatmeal and road kill. Another crowd-pleaser occurred when Lewington unstrapped his Fender Telecaster and held it over the drum kit for Campbell, who beat a solo on the strings: even Jimi Hendrix never thought of that.

Raton Arts & Humanities Council deserves applause for its

annual series, bringing a diverse mix of high-quality, professional entertainment to town, year after year. The Haggis Heads brought the number of sold seats to about 2/3 of the Shuler's 450-capacity Saturday night. That still left thousands of Ratonians who weren't there: one has to wonder what could keep the Shuler from selling out for each show in RAHC's wonderful series. Those in the know got their money's worth Saturday night with Enter the Haggis.

THE FINE PRINT

Continued from page 1
Hometown Holidays

The Annual Easter Egg Hunt at the Las Animas County Fairgrounds starts promptly at 11 a.m. Sat, March 27. Don't miss the Pancake Breakfast provided by Holy Trinity Academy, which starts @ 10 a.m. Weather permitting, event will be held outside if not, it will be moved inside the event center. For more information call Christina @ 680-9878.

Community Co-op

FREE - "Successful Mountain Gardening" Workshop by Joni Steiner & Carter Morris, Directors of Earth Mountain Education Farm 1-3 p.m. Sat @ The Trinidad Community Co-op, corner of Elm & Maple. Come share great tips & info for high-desert gardening.

SUNDAY

La Casa Lodge

La Casa Monthly Meeting w/ Potluck 1:30 p.m. 4th Sun @ La Casa Lodge in Jansen.

Spaghetti Dinner

Come out to Holy Trinity Parish's Palm Sunday Dinner. Join us from 11 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. in the Sebastiani Gym. Takeout service 10:30-11 a.m. & 1:30-2 p.m. Adults/\$7 & Children/\$4. Call Louise @ 846-3369 (x14) for more information.

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It's a Boy!

Ray and Christina Duran of Trinidad and Kristy and Tracey Daniels of Rye, Colo., are pleased to announce the birth of their grandson **Cooper Ray Duran**. Cooper was born at 2:44 p.m. on March 19, 2010. He weighed 7 pounds 9 ounces and was 20 inches long. Cooper Ray is the son, of Chelsea Layne Duran, also of Trinidad.

Little Cooper is happily welcomed into the world by his aunts Bethany, Chanel and KylieRae Duran and his uncle Brett Duran, all of Trinidad.

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