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Irish festival at Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds this weekend

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BEREA: This weekend brings a touch of Ireland to Northeast Ohio with the Cleveland Irish Cultural Festival running today through Sunday.

The three-day celebration takes place at the Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds and features Irish bands, as well as Irish dancers, Irish art, Irish history and even Irish dogs.

This year's acts include Black 47 from New York and Ronan Tynan, Dervish and High Kings from Ireland.

Black 47 is a Celtic rock band with hints of reggae, folk and hip-hop in its style. It claims to have played more gigs at Shea Stadium than the Beatles, along with shutting down the city of Hoboken and appearing multiple times on Jay Leno's, David Letterman's and Conan O'Brien's late-night shows — not to mention starring in a movie with their fans Matt Dillon and Danny Glover.

Dervish is a five-piece band from Ireland, formed as a casual pub project in 1989. In recent years, the band has performed everywhere from China's Great Wall to South America's Rock in Rio Festival, which attracts over a quarter of a million people.

Solo artist Ronan Tynan was introduced to international audiences as a member of the Irish Tenors. He has had many memorable appearances, including Ronald Reagan's funeral, when an international TV audience of 35 million heard him.

Following an auto accident at age 20, Tynan had to have both his legs amputated at the knee. He went on to win 18 gold medals in the Paralympics and set 14 world records before embarking on his singing career at the age of 33.

Dozens of other musical acts will perform during the festival, including — as you might expect — pipe bands. A complete list is available on the website. The cultural event also includes children's activities and workshops.

Tickets are \$12 per person and are available from ticket booths at both the Bagley and Eastland Road gates. Parking and admission for children under 10 are free.

The Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds are located at 164 Eastland Road, Berea.

For more information, go to www.clevelandirish.org.

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