

**Little Rock Singer/Songwriter,
Peg Roach Loyd
Wins Gold Medal at Midwest Fleadh Cheoil**

Little Rock, AR (May 15, 2008) Little Rock singer-songwriter, Peg Roach Loyd received a gold medal for Newly Composed Songs in English at the Midwest Fleadh Cheoil held in Detroit this month. With the first-place finish, Loyd qualifies to compete in the All-Ireland, Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2008, in Tullamore, County Offaly, Ireland in August. That competition draws qualifying musicians from throughout all of Ireland and around the world.

Loyd won for her song, *The Fiddler's Feet*, which describes what it is like to experience a traditional Irish music session.

"I am thrilled to have received the gold medal," Loyd said. "This was my first time to compete in the Fleadh. I am very excited and grateful to have the opportunity to represent the U.S. and compete in the All-Ireland competition in August."

The Midwest Fleadh Ceoil is one of two traditional Irish music competitions held in the North America. The Midwest Fleadh attracts musicians from across the U.S. and Canada. Over 200 musicians competed in over 100 contest categories based on age range and gender.

"There are only two competitions in North America, the Midwest Fleadh and the Mid-Atlantic," said Helen Gannon, Chairwoman of the North American Comhaltas, the organization that governs the Fleadh. "Both competitions draw from across the U.S. and Canada. Those who finish first or second in this competition are among the top 16 in the world for their classification."

Loyd, who also won a bronze medal, placing third, for the category, Singing Traditional Songs in English, plans to compete at the All-Ireland in August. "My husband and I were planning a trip overseas for our 25th wedding anniversary this year, so we'll just fold this into our plans and move the timing up a couple months," Loyd said.

Loyd released her **debut solo CD, *Carving in Stone*, earlier this year.** The CD includes three traditional Irish songs and nine original songs of Irish themes and stories written in traditional Irish and American folk styles. The winning song, ***The Fiddler's Feet***, is the fourth track on the CD. Proceeds from the sale of the CDs benefit three not-for-profit organizations: Heifer International's Ending Hunger program and music scholarships for the Augusta Heritage Center's Irish Week and the St. Louis Tionol, two music schools Loyd has attended over the years.

The selection of Heifer International stems from Loyd's ancestral background. "My great grand-parents emigrated from Ireland during the Great Potato Famine, from 1848 to 1860," said Loyd. "When I read about how Heifer got started and

what they try to do to provide a longer-lasting solution to the hunger problem around the world, not just providing food, but real, practical and economical solutions for families in need, I knew immediately Heifer was a good fit.”

“The other organizations I support are music scholarship programs at two Irish music educational festivals – the Augusta Heritage Center’s Irish Music Week in Elkins, West Virginia, and the St. Louis Tionol. I have benefitted from the music education workshops offered at these two festivals for many years and wish to donate a portion of the proceeds from my CD to help young students who may not otherwise be able to afford to attend.”

To hone her craft, Loyd took several songwriting workshops from the well-known Irish singer/songwriter, Robbie O’Connell and acknowledges O’Connell in her CD booklet for teaching her to refine her songwriting skills. “Robbie’s songwriting workshop opened a door for me and taught me to write songs in a completely different way,” said Loyd. “I no longer sit by and wait for inspiration to strike. I learned new ways to nurture the creative process and the importance of editing to refine songs and make them better songs.”

Before striking out on her own, Loyd was the former lead singer of the Little Rock-based Irish folk band, Cairde, which performed for eight years throughout Central Arkansas and at regional festivals including the North Texas Irish Festival in Dallas, CelticFest in Jackson, Ms., and Clanjamfry in Memphis.

Sample audio tracks from Loyd’s CD, *Carving in Stone*, are available on her website, www.CellaDawnMusic.com. Her CD is available for purchase locally at Cregeen’s Irish Pub and online through CDBaby.com, DigStation.com and iTunes.