

# 'Battle for Eire'

ST ANDREANS are in line for a mixture of Irish dance, fantasy and drama next month.

Siamsoir Celtic Dance Company's first theatrical performance, 'The Battle for Eire' — supported by the Anthony Tudor Fund — is set to be premiered at St Leonards School next Saturday and Sunday, May 5 and 6, and will also be performed at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August.

Shybairn, a university celtic band, are arranging and will perform the music for the show which is about a village called Nareena in Ireland, threatened by an attack from the neighbouring village of Kelton.

The Nareena villagers hear of this attack and turn to the powerful and untrustworthy force of the Faeries who live in the dark forest of Dorcha which separates the two villages. The Faeries agree to help and, if they succeed, demand a sacrifice of one of the villagers to go and live as one of them.



Two of the 'Unseen Ones' prepare to do their worst . . . ! (Photo by Mai Trebuil)

Also living in the forest is a group of banished Faeries who are neither living nor dead and are known as the Unseen Ones.

## ENTHUSIAST

They hear of the contract being signed and take the opportunity to have their revenge on the Faeries by teaming up with the Keltons, and so a great Battle For Eire is planned.

Behind Siamsoir (which is

Gaelic for 'The Entertainer') is 24-year-old Irish dancing enthusiast Jenn Hogan, trained by James McLaughlin of The McLaughlin School of Irish Dance, Glasgow, and now a graduate of St Andrews University, who originally arrived in the town as a student in 2001.

Jenn, from Paisley, started organising Irish dancing classes as part of the Students' Association's Dance Society in her second year and the bug was caught by fellow undergraduates.

She went from 11 students in her first class to regularly teaching classes of 45, and continued to teach through her degree studies.

## COMPANY

After graduating in 2005, she decided to set up her own independent dance company and Siamsoir Celtic Dance Company was founded in December of that year.

The company, which draws its membership from the student community, is available for hire to dance at balls, charity, private or corporate events.

Siamsoir has also performed at a number of university and charity events, including in and around the pubs of St Andrews on St Patrick's Day last month to help raise funds towards the cost of taking Battle for Eire to the Fringe.

Jenn told the *Citizen*: "We're delighted to have now booked



. . . and earn their just deserts! (Photo by Mai Trebuil)

our Fringe venue — C+1 at the C Venues from August 19-27 — although we still have some fundraising to do and would welcome offers of sponsorship.

"Next weekend's performances at St Leonards will be in the form of what Michael Flatley does with his Lord of the Dance Shows — a mixture of theatrical storylines and modern interpretations of traditional Irish dancing — but on a much smaller scale."

"We're hoping for good audiences, which should provide a nice springboard into preparing for the Fringe."