



Operatunity's daytime concert *When Irish eyes are smiling* hosts a number of talented favourites, including our favourite fiddler and seasoned NZ entertainer **Marian Burns**, pianist **Paul Carnegie-Jones** and singers **John Cameron**, **Alex Milligan** and **Lynette Martin**. However, there is also a new face who will be presenting a unique flavour to the concert.

Operatunity newcomer **Serena Hendry** is bringing her dancing shoes to the stage in their latest show. Having won the New Zealand Irish Dance competition last year and competed in places as far afield as Canada and the UK, she is ready to show off her skills across her home country.

We caught up with this talented performer to learn more about her connections to Ireland, her experience as a performer and the upcoming tour with Operatunity.

Although Serena is new to the company, she is a seasoned performer and knows her way around a stage.

"I come from a big family of seven and we have put on variety shows across Auckland since I was young," she said. "I started Irish dance when I was 10".

She credits her grandmother for keeping the Irish roots alive in her family, even encouraging both Serena and her brother to pursue Irish Dance.

"Whenever there was an opportunity to celebrate Irish culture, she'd get us together to do so," she explained.

She was also lucky enough to travel to the Emerald Isles to experience the culture for herself.

"My great grandmother was from a town called Donegal and my family got to visit there a few years ago," she said.

Although Serena has been on Auckland-wide tours with her family troupe and a National tour with the Voice Dance Company, she is full of anticipation for the rest of the *When Irish Eyes are smiling* series.

"It's extremely exciting to be travelling with Operatunity for the first time and is a great chance to perform a style I enjoy so much," she explained. "I feel privileged to perform with the talented artists on this tour".

The expressive nature of Irish music, the fun and the wonderful stories are what Serena really loves about the style and hopes it will warm everyone in the audience.

"I really enjoy bringing a bit of my culture to everyone as well as a bit of extra happiness," she stated. "With all the craziness in the world right now, it is great to be able to give some joy to someone, even for a little while".

Be sure to see Serena in action with the rest of our wonderful performers in *When Irish eyes are smiling*. To book your tickets or find out more information, go to www.daytimeconcerts.co.nz, call toll free on 0508 266 237 or send an email to bookings@operatunity.co.nz.

