



Devine blasts the stage in New York City.

James Devine's Irish dance embraces modern Influences.

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Guinness World Record-holder James Devine blasted the stage at NYC's New Victory Theater with his fast taps, intensely intricate rhythm, and surprisingly urban funky freshness. Devine clocks in at an astounding 38 beats per second, but his talent is not merely a matter of speed; he has fast feet and knows how to use them.

TAPEIRE highlights the rich history behind Celtic music and dance while embracing modern influences like jazz and rock music that bring traditional Irish step dance to a new level through cultural fusion. Devine shared the stage with respected young musicians Ashley MacIsaac (fiddle), Paul Jennings (percussion) and Phamie Gow (electric harp) all of whom contributed to the earthy atmosphere on a stage which was heightened by eclectic black and white vintage step dance and session photos projected onto a large screen behind the stage.

One of TAPEIRE's first stand-out numbers involved kitchen pots and pans, and Devine, who battled drummer Jennings in a percussive showdown. Jennings successfully turned kitchenware into a makeshift drum kit in a matter of seconds, coordinating each piece according to size and density. As Jennings battered out rhythms, Devine mimicked each beat meticulously. Later in the show, Devine revealed his fascination with his mother's old typewriter and the sharp clicking sounds that his mum melodically produced while typing. Again, Jennings turned a simple rickety typewriter into a music machine. Devine tapped and Jennings typed simultaneously, reminding every tap and step dancer in the audience of the natural cadences that move our feet and spawn innovative dance moves and combinations.

The show was organized by scenes that explained an element of Irish dance and history. "Sean-nos" (or "old-style"), "ceili," and "feis" were described by a narrator whose voice accompanied mini-documentaries comprising old video footage and photo montages depicting Irish cultural events and images of the homeland. Scene two explored the role of the "Dancing Master," who traveled regionally teaching students the basics in Irish step dance. As the introductory video explained, the best dance masters preached the "economy of space," and that a truly talented step dancer should be able to perform any step on top of a dinner plate. Following this video, Devine entered the stage holding a small box, both the width and height approximately the size of a large serving plate. Without hesitation, Devine dazzled

the audience with intricate and daring trebles and taps – all while balancing on the box.

Crowd involvement was key for TAPEIRE. Devine instructed the audience to synchronize their hand-clapping. Once the beat was to his liking, Devine introduced his fancy tapping. The audience roared with laughter upon realizing that that the clapping and tapping combination had culminated in an accapella version of Queen's hit *Another One Bites the Dust*.

Devine's dancing has earned him World, US, British, All-Ireland and Munster championship titles, and he has starred in popular Irish dance shows Lord of the Dance and GaelForce. His musical team is no less impressive. MacIsaac has released a number of albums since the 1990s, has toured internationally on many occasions, and appeared on a slew of popular television shows such as *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* and *Late Show with David Letterman*. Percussionist Paul Jennings toured with Scottish band Old Blind Dogs and Wolfstone, and continues producing alongside Celtic music's most widely recognized musicians. Phamie Gow not only excels as an electric harpist: this multi-talented musician plays piano and accordion. She's entertained such audiences as the British Royal Family and the Dalai Lama.