

## Le Vent du Nord Shares French Traditions

Contributed by Kayla Robertson  
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On Saturday night, four young men celebrated their French heritage through song in the Arts Center. The performance was warm and well-received. Attendance was high and audience participation was good. Playing a combination of old, traditional songs and original compositions of the same flavor, Le Vent du Nord pleased the audience and brought their heritage to share. Full of energy, the group brought audience members to their feet to share in the joy of traditional French music.

Nicolas Boulerice, Olivier Demers, Simon Beaudry, and Réjean Brunet took to the stage with an incredible amount of energy and an uncanny connection to the audience despite their dedication to avoiding the English language. All of the songs were performed in French (although several were instrumentals, anyway) but nearly every song was introduced with a brief story (in English).

The versatility of the band was interesting, with each member singing a large part and playing at least one instrument.

The combination of Irish, Scottish, and French performers recently playing the Arts Center make it easy to see the link between the cultures. Back of the Moon, Tommy Sands, and Le Vent du Nord have all brought pieces of their culture and old traditions alive at Lake State through music (and occasionally dance). Most of the instruments and sounds are the same. Each of the musical types introduced have had shrill violins over guitars. Soft keyboard and ballad-like lyrics (even with the performance being entirely in French, most songs were prefaced as a story) unite the concert experiences.

However, Le Vent du Nord brought with them a few very interesting (and very foreign) instruments. Perhaps the oddest of the instruments was the "hudry-gurdy"; played by Nicolas Boulerice. The instrument is also known as a "wheel fiddle" and produces its beautiful sound when strings pass over a rosined wheel when the crank is turned. Other unique instruments included the accordion and a strange kind of foot-tapping that surpasses keeping time, but adds a whole new sound.

Also setting Le Vent du Nord aside from other performances was the upbeat sound. Many of the performers to come through the Arts Center have had a collection of both cheery and woeful songs but Le Vent du Nord seemed to focus only on the hope. Steady guitar, graceful piano and quirky accordion communicated stories and tradition of hope and cheer.

The band has been playing together almost six years and has released three albums. They've played with the Portland Symphony Orchestra and The Chieftains. The band gives over one hundred concerts each year and has toured over 30 American States as well as playing Europe and Canada. More information is available at [www.leventdunord.com](http://www.leventdunord.com).