



ACOUSTIC EIDOLON, which features Joe Scott on guitar and Hannah Alkire on cello, performed for almost

100 people at The Gateway on Saturday. The duo has been working together for 14 years, have been married for 11

and just released their 10th album. You can buy the group's CDs on the website www.acousticeidolon.com.

Acoustic duo enchants, sings with their strings

It's arguably one of the most beautiful songs ever written about a lovers' quarrel.

Joe Scott and Hannah Alkire—the guitarist and cellist who make up Acoustic Eidolon, which performed at The Gateway on Saturday—have a story for almost every song they've written, and this one was no different. Wordless, the number had the two instruments echoing each other in movements that began as a love song, elevated into a crossfire, and mellowed back into a love song by the end. The couple laughed and poked fun at each other throughout the somber piece, smiling as they touched their instruments with practiced ease.

The two have been performing together for 14 years and married for 11.

"Falling in love is a bit of a risky thing to do when there's only one guy in the band," Ms. Alkire cracked as she told the story. The duo travel the world with their Spanish, Celtic and classically-influenced brand of music, and came to Oberlin on the way to Germany. They've performed here before, said Mr. Scott, but it had been three years, and they are now touring for their 10th album.

Mr. Scott said he designed the four guitars that flanked him on stage, two more or less regular and two with double necks. They were custom made for him, he said, as he showed the audience his ability to play rhythm and harmonic melodies simultaneously.

Ms. Alkire's cello wasn't quite as elaborate, but no less special, she said, as it survived an air-

plane accident and had to be rebuilt by its maker in 2003. They appeared to love their instruments almost as much as they loved each other.

The performance was preceded by a steak and shrimp dinner made by The Gateway staff and wine served by the Oberlin Arts and Humanities Commission. About 93 people attended the dinner and about 96 the concert.

The commission, set up in 1986, has brought music, art and theater to Oberlin every year, and has two more events planned for the spring. The next is the Euphoria String Band at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 16.

The commission was established by the City Council under Mayor David Nichols, but according to Ella Betts, long-time secretary of the agency, it was the late Idella Frickey, another former mayor, who really championed its cause.

"A lot of people don't realize that it was established under the City Council," said Ms. Betts. "People probably just think it was a bunch of women getting their heads together, but it was set up by the council. At the time, there was a Kansas Arts and Humanities Commission, and if you went by their guidelines you got grant money from them. At the time, Idella said it was just a wonderful idea, and that Oberlin was the perfect place for it. And we didn't even have a theater then."

Ms. Betts said that she, Ms. Frickey and Sharon Addleman, wife of current council member Rusty Addleman, were the first to jump on board. The commission currently includes Ms. Betts,

Tom Mullen, Janice Ganje, Mr. Addleman, Pam May, Eloise Smith, Mary Henzel, Sarah Bricker and Judy Groneweg, all of whom can be contacted for information or to purchase tickets.

"Anybody can come to the shows," Ms. Betts said. "You don't have to be a member. We had people there (Saturday) from as far as Colby and Norton, even."

Season tickets come in three packages: For a single, it's \$75, and includes the once-a-season dinner theater ticket, which otherwise would cost you \$34. For a family, it's \$155, and that includes all school-age children and two dinner-theater tickets. For a single-parent family, it's \$80 and includes all school-age kids and one dinner-theater ticket.

If you would like to buy a single ticket for a single event, the cost is \$12, and \$7 for kids. If you would like to help contribute to the commission, you can become a patron and buy your season tickets for \$85. If you would like to be a benefactor, the cost is \$110. Both patrons and benefactors are listed in the commission's programs for each event. A corporate sponsorship, for \$500, comes with four season tickets and front-page advertising on event programs. To purchase tickets or a sponsorship, you can mail your payment to Oberlin Arts and Humanities in care of Ms. Betts, 601 N. Penn Ave., Oberlin, Kan., 67749.



EACH SEASON, the Oberlin Arts and Humanities Commission makes one of its events a dinner-theater evening. George and Eilene Young (left) of McCook and Larry and Janice Ganje were some of the first in line for the succulent steak and shrimp Saturday.



AS IF THE DINNER and music weren't enough, Oberlin Arts and Humanities provided wine and candlelight for those who attended, including the performers, Acoustic Eidolon (left). Rusty Addleman (above) poured a glass of moscato for Charlotte Meints before everyone went into the theater, where cellist Hannah Alkire (right) regaled the crowd with the stories behind the songs.



— Photos and story by Stephanie DeCamp