



# the freebird

VOLUME II

MAY 2006

*The Freebird is the newsletter of the Irish Fair of Minnesota. Its purpose is to keep us connected, provide updates, celebrate successes and share our stories, and to support the mission of the Irish Fair by promoting and cultivating Irish culture.*



## HEADLINER LINE UP FOR 2006 FAIR

*Liam Clancy will make his only 2006 US appearances at the Irish Fair of Minnesota and the Summer School. He will perform Friday evening on the Comcast River Stage and twice on Sunday on the Cara Irish Pubs Stage. Liam Clancy's performances are a mix of telling stories, singing ballads, with a moment or two of poetry thrown in as the mood stirs him.*

Liam, the youngest of the Clancy Brothers, displayed an artistic disposition exploring writing, painting and acting while growing up in Co. Tipperary. In 1955, American song-collector Diane Hamilton arrived at the Clancy home while on a song-collecting tour of Ireland. Liam joined her on the trip to Keady, Co. Armagh, where they met the singer Sarah Makem and her son, Tommy. Both Liam and Tommy emigrated to America the following year, where they became a fixture in Greenwich Village life, along with Maya Angelou, and Pete Seeger and Bob Dylan—who described Clancy's tenor voice as “the finest I have ever heard”.

Clancy is also the author of an autobiography, The Mountain of the Women: Memoir of an Irish Troubadour (2002), described in a Rolling Stone review as “rich, engaging prose cut from a timeless Irish tradition.” Here he shares the details of his Bohemian lifestyle and the experiences of his rise to fame as a part of the Irish folk group the Clancy Brothers. “The buzz was incredible in New York in the Sixties,” Clancy says. “It was a time of ferment and of immense shifts in perspectives. America was just coming out of McCarthyism. We were all coming from repressed backgrounds, finding our own versions of freedom. It was very liberating, like being born again.”

In early 2004 he created what many critics consider his greatest musical contribution since the dissolution of the original Clancy Brothers. He received an important role in Martin Scorsese's Peabody Award-winning film *No Direction Home* which also raised critical awareness of his later work.

The Irish Fair of Minnesota third book club title is The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem: The Men behind the Sweaters by Conor Murray. This large format paperback (254 pages and 300 photos) just been published in 2006 is a combination group biography and history of the band(s) over the years. The cost is \$29.95 per copy but *will be ½ priced for book club participants on a first come, first served basis for the first ten people.* Contact [Patrick.ODonnell@normandale.edu](mailto:Patrick.ODonnell@normandale.edu) for more information ASAP.

The next Book Club meeting will be a Saturday morning BRUNCH format at The Liffey in the Snug on June 17th at 11:30 a.m.

Friday headliners at the Fair are the high- energy Lancaster County Prison, and Seanchai & the Unity Squad, a coupla' bands highly approved by renowned Pogue leader Shane McGowan.

Lancaster County Prison is a Queens, New York-based band said to be reminiscent of early Pogues. They play a hard driving punk- rock sound with a surprising country twang built into it, but do it with traditional instruments and include politically charged songs in their repertoire.



*Lancaster County Prison at play*

Here is a sample of their sound:

[http://www.lancastercountyprison.com/sounds/Lord%20Lovat's%20Lament\\_Scotland%20the%20B rave.mp3](http://www.lancastercountyprison.com/sounds/Lord%20Lovat's%20Lament_Scotland%20the%20B rave.mp3) More can be found on their website <http://www.lancastercountyprison.com/>

Seanchai & the Unity Squad consists of Dubliner Rachel Fitzgerald and New Yorkers Chris Byrne, Terry Wetmore and Jason Goodrow, so it's natural that they are grounded in both the Irish *and* American traditions.



In the same set they easily segue into a reel with uilleann pipes and mandolin from a hardcore rap piece—peppered with history and a smattering of the Irish language, as in the following excerpt :

One time we were kings  
Under Brehon law  
Fair to the weak and the strong  
But thugs came in  
So- called aristocrats  
Crossed the sea  
Gave us some static  
Have you heard before  
About Fiach O'Byrne at Glenmalure  
Picked up his sword  
Showed Lord Gray the door  
But *An Gorta Mór*  
Nearly wiped us out  
So we were poor  
By the time we came out  
To Brooklyn, U.S.A. ...

As one reviewer puts it “On paper, the whole concept of the Unity Squad just doesn't work – a rapping, uilleann pipe playing Irish-American ex-cop with a passion for reggae. A Dublin born, female DJ with an angelic voice and finally a big riffing NYC guitar player... On CD it's pure genius.”



For more info please see [www.seanchai.com](http://www.seanchai.com).

Gaelic Storm, the steerage band from the film ‘The Titanic’, will perform both Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon.

Scythian, the hottest new band on the Irish festival circuit, and The Fuchsia Band will also be performing.

The next edition of The Freebird will have in-depth coverage of these bands, and also introduce a couple of the fine local bands such that will be playing for our enjoyment at the 2006 Fair. We will also have information on 2 EVENTS new to the Irish Fair this year. *Stay posted!*

*Check out the newly vamped Irish Fair Website at  
<http://www.irishfair.com/>*



*The best place to find out more about plans for this year's Fair, volunteer opportunities, updates through out the year and more*

## EVENTS

### *In case you didn't know it: THE IRISH FAIR OF MINNESOTA*

**AUGUST 11 - 13, 2006**

Harriet Island in St. Paul FREE ADMISSION

Join us for a three-day celebration of Irish heritage with food, fun and music on the banks of the Mississippi River. Since 2001, the Irish Fair has been held at beautiful Harriet Island Regional Park in downtown St. Paul. The festival is recognized as one of the most family-friendly events in the Twin Cities and one of the most authentic Irish festivals nationwide.

### **2ND ANNUAL IRISH FAIR SUMMER SCHOOL August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

**University of St. Thomas**

This is an opportunity for us to get a more focused, in depth understanding of Irish culture. Last year's Summer School was thoughtful, lively, varied and personally my favorite element of the weekend. This year's will build on the first-rate inaugural effort. *Sneak Preview: Dr Anthony Roche* Senior Lecturer, University College Dublin School of English & Drama will be speaking on Synge at the Summer school to complement the presentation of Synge Cycle at the Guthrie Theater:

<http://www.guthrietheater.org/PLAYSTICKETS/ThrustStageProsceniumStagePlays/DruidSynge/tabid/149/Default.aspx> .

### **ANNUAL HUBERT H. HUMPHREY PUBLIC LEADERSHIP AWARD HONORS IRISH PEACE ACCORD**

Former Senate majority leader and peace advocate George J. Mitchell among those to be honored at the annual Hubert H. Humphrey Public Leadership Awards. Join us to honor the ten year anniversary of the peace accord reached between Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom.

During Senator Mitchell's 14-year career representing the state of Maine in the U.S. Senate, he served six years as majority leader. In 1996, the governments of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland asked Mitchell to chair the peace negotiations in Northern Ireland. He led the negotiations for two years, work that ultimately resulted in a historic accord that ended decades of conflict.

The University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs will honor the recipients of the 2006 Hubert H. Humphrey Public Leadership Awards at a gala dinner Tuesday, May 30, at the McNamara Alumni Center, 200 Oak St. SE, Minneapolis. To support future leaders, the gala dinner also is a scholarship fundraiser. Since its inception in 2003, the Public Leadership Awards dinner has raised more than \$100,000 for student scholarships. Tickets for the dinner and program are \$125, of which \$75 is a tax-deductible contribution. For tickets to the Hubert H. Humphrey Public Leadership Awards dinner, e-mail Burke Murphy at [bmurphy@hhh.umn.edu](mailto:bmurphy@hhh.umn.edu) or call 612-626-3661.

## HOBGOBLIN CELTIC MUSIC FESTIVAL

**Sunday 12-8PM, June 25, 2006**

Hobgoblin Music's new outdoor amphitheater, 920 Highway 19, Red Wing Minnesota, 55066 admission \$10 all day. children under 13 \$5 children under 5, free! Bring blankets or lawn chairs and come join in a day of fun and music, visit artisans and crafters booths, enjoy good food, attend a musical workshop.

*This event will be held rain or shine!!!!  
For more information call 877-866-3936 toll free*

### Performers

*Todd Menton  
5 Mile Chase  
Daithi Sproule  
Lehto and Wright  
Brittany and Friends  
Scoil na dTri Irish Dancers  
MN Scottish Celtic Dance Association  
Aura, Laura Mackenzie & Andrea Stern  
Many musical & educational workshops  
& More*



## GUTHRIE WORLDSTAGE SERIES PRESENTS DRUIDSYNGE June 27 - July 1, 2006

The plays of John Millington Synge --directed by Garry Hynes

The Guthrie Theater will present a unique celebration of the life and work of John Millington Synge. Acclaimed as one of the most ambitious undertakings in Irish theater for many years, this collective presentation of all of Synge's work fulfills a long-term artistic commitment by Tony Award-winning director Gary Hynes to re-evaluate and re-engage with one of Ireland's dramatic giants. The experience can be enjoyed over one, two or more days and plays include: *The Shadow of the Glen*, *The Playboy of the Western World*, *The Tinker's Wedding*, *The Well of the Saints*, *Riders to the Sea* and *Deirdre of the Sorrows*.

**THE 1ST ANNUAL "RUN WITH THE CELTS"** will take place Saturday morning (Irish Fair Weekend) and include a 5K event plus a 1K family / kid run as well - all at the Harriet Island site. This promises to add an extra fun event to an already very cool weekend and a great chance for the whole family to get active together. Contact Steve Hyland [mshyland@aol.com](mailto:mshyland@aol.com) if you would like to volunteer to help make this a reality or are interested in more information.

### AN GHAELGE

*Courtesy of Gaeltacht Minnesota <http://www.gaelminn.org/index.htm>*

**Maireann croí éadrom i bhfad.**

*A light heart lives a long time.*

For a wonderful introduction to the living Irish language in a beautiful setting, come to Gaeltacht Minnesota's annual Weekend in Winona, July 7-9. This immersion workshop is great fun, I went last year, had a blast and learned a lot. The evening musical sessions are a bonus.

See <http://www.gaelminn.org/pdf/win06reg.pdf> for more information.

*Until Next Time,  
Best Regards from the*

**Irish Fair of  
Minnesota**