

- N E W S R E L E A S E -

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Festival
June 27, 2006
3934

Adams County Irish

P.O. Box

Gettysburg, PA 17325

<http://www.adamscountyirishfestival.com>

CONTACT: Patrick Bowling
(717) 337-5999

MediaRelations@adamscountyirishfestival.com

Dan Diviney
(717) 624-2542

PublicRelations@adamscountyirishfestival.com

**FOLK MUSIC LEGEND TOMMY MAKEM HEADLINES
ADAMS COUNTY IRISH FESTIVAL**

**Seventh Annual Benefit at Gettysburg Moose Park on Saturday July 15
Offers Full Day of Family Fun**

GETTYSBURG, PA: The Seventh Annual Adams County Irish Festival will be held rain or shine on Saturday July 15, 2006 in the shady grove of the Gettysburg Moose Park. The gate opens at 10:30 AM and the festival runs until 8:00 PM. The park is located at 100 Moose Road which is just off of US Route 30 in Straban Township about a mile and a half east of the US 15 interchange near historic Gettysburg, PA. Admission is \$8 for adults and children under 12 are free.

With a full day of Irish music, dancers, food, merchandise and more, the festival offers wholesome family fun while primarily benefiting the Children's Friendship Project for Northern Ireland (CFPNI). CFPNI is a peace and friendship building program that selects and pairs Catholic and Protestant teens from Northern Ireland to pursue a friendship between themselves, their families and friends. The festival is again partnering with Moose Lodge 1526 of Gettysburg to fund CFPNI-paired teens to spend time with host families in the U.S. where they can pursue friendship and

understanding in a neutral environment while focusing on their similarities rather than differences. A long-term goal of the festival is to also fund the eventual establishment of a national Irish history museum and library in the Gettysburg area. This year's festival is sponsored in part by Environmentally Safe Products, Harrisburg St. Patrick's Day Parade Association, Conewago Enterprises and McSherrystown Home Association.

Southcentral Pennsylvania is traditionally known for being an area populated by German immigrants but what is less known is its Irish heritage. In the latest census, about 15% of Adams County's population claimed Irish ancestry. Many of the early 18th century settlers in what is now Adams County were Irish or Scots-Irish immigrants and various place names in the county such as Irishtown, Straban and McSherrystown reflect the Irish influence. Now in its seventh year, the Adams County Irish Festival appeals not only to those interested in Irish heritage and culture but also to bluegrass music fans as that genre has its roots in the traditional music of Ireland and Scotland. The festival was cited as a noteworthy annual event in Kate Hertzog's recently published *Insiders' Guide to Gettysburg* (2006, Globe Pequot Press).

The oldest and largest Irish festival in southcentral Pennsylvania drew a crowd of about two thousand people last year who enjoyed local, regional and internationally known musicians, Irish step dancers, Irish food, music workshops, living history exhibits plus art, craft and gift vendors. Another big turnout is anticipated for this year as festival organizers are pleased and privileged to announce an impressive star-studded line-up featuring three international recording artists headlined by folk music legend Tommy Makem who will be making his first appearance at the festival.

For over four decades, Tommy Makem has been mesmerizing audiences worldwide with his banjo, tin whistle, poetry, stagecraft and magnificent baritone voice. He is known as the modern-day Bard of Armagh and is globally regarded as "The Godfather of Irish Music".

A native of Keady, County Armagh in the north of Ireland, Tommy Makem is the son of Sarah Makem, a legendary folksinger who helped shape her son's musical background. In the mid 1950s, Makem's desire to become an actor took him to New York. After a brief but rewarding stint in live television, summer stock and Off-Broadway plays, Makem teamed with Liam, Tom and Paddy Clancy to form The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem in the late 1950s. By 1961, the group was signed to a major record label and acoustic folk music had emerged as a popular style of music. Around this time, Makem frequently shared festival bills with icons of the acoustic movement such as Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan and Joan Baez. Through the early 1960s, Tommy Makem, together with the Clancy Brothers, appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, *The Tonight Show* and every major television network show in the U.S. They soon became the four most famous Irishmen in the world. They played to standing-room-only audiences from New York's Carnegie Hall and London's Royal Albert Hall to every major concert venue in the English-speaking world. Makem left the group to pursue a solo career in 1969. In 1975, he and Liam Clancy were both booked to play a festival in Cleveland, OH and were persuaded to do a set together. The audience response convinced them that it was a magical combination and they often toured together for the next dozen years garnering several platinum and gold records. Makem once again went solo in 1988 and has been involved in various television projects that showcase traditional Irish music or Irish travel destinations. The World Folk Music Association awarded him its Lifetime Achievement Award in 1999, the same year that *Irish America* magazine named Makem along with his old partners Liam, the late Tom and the late Paddy Clancy in the Top 100 Irish Americans of the Century.

While Tommy Makem excels as an entertainer, being part musician, part storyteller, part singer and part actor; it is as a songwriter that he will live forever. Makem has written over a hundred songs including "The Rambles of Spring", "Gentle Annie", "The Winds Are Singing Freedom" and

“Four Green Fields”, all of which are standards in the repertoire of folksingers around the world.

Makem now makes his home in Dover, New Hampshire and continues to record and perform.

Another first-time act for the festival is Irish American Cathie Ryan whose crystalline vocals and insightful songwriting provides a unique and distinctive voice on the Irish music scene. Since her acclaimed seven year tenure as lead singer of Cherish the Ladies, Ryan has emerged as one of the most popular and enduring singer-songwriters in Celtic music. A Detroit native, Ryan is a captivating performer who truly relishes sharing music with a live audience and she has built a loyal following throughout Europe and North America by touring steadily and singing from her heart. Ryan has released four critically acclaimed albums including her latest, *The Farthest Wave* and she is featured on more than forty compilations of Celtic music. In 2003, Ryan was included in the famous Irish music collection, *A Woman's Heart – A Decade On*, placing her among the finest female vocalists and songwriters in Irish music. This marked the first time Americans were featured in the series and she shared the honor with Emmylou Harris, Allison Krauss and Dolly Parton. Recently, Ryan's original songs have been recorded by noted Irish vocalists including Frances Black and Mary Black. Ryan has performed on national and public television in the U.S. and Europe and appeared on National Public Radio's *Mountain Stage* and *Thistle and Shamrock*. The Boston Globe recently wrote, “Cathie Ryan is a thrilling traditional vocalist whose honey-pure soprano is equally at home on probing original ballads about a woman's place in the modern world.” In addition to her mid-afternoon performance at the festival, Cathie Ryan will also be demonstrating *sean nos* (literally “old style”; traditional Irish singing a cappella) during a workshop from 11:00am to noon.

Direct from Kilcock, County Kildare, Ireland and making his fourth appearance at the festival is “The Patriotic Spirit of Irish Music,” Derek Warfield. Born and bred in Dublin, singer, songwriter and noted historian Derek Warfield was a founding member and leader of the legendary Irish rebel

songsters, the Wolfe Tones. For over 40 years he has been the voice behind the stirring introductions and author of many famous ballads that have endeared him to countless thousands of fans all over the world. He has written and recorded over 60 songs and ballads. Through his songs, music and lectures, Warfield weaves history together with song to remind the Irish at home and abroad of their debt to patriots of past generations. Warfield is also known as the Bard of the American Civil War. Some of his work has focused on the music of the Civil War which involved half a million Irishmen on both sides. Warfield has released a total of ten solo albums since the mid-nineties. His latest album, *God Save Ireland*, is a two-volume collection of energetic ballads related to Irish patriotism and collective national memory.

Also appearing is Harrisburg area piper Rodney Owens, a fixture at every festival to date. The Adams-York area's ever-popular Irishtown Road will be making their sixth festival appearance as they celebrate a decade of performing traditional Irish and traditionally-arranged original music with the first-ever reunion of all seven past and present members of the band. Another local favorite, Cormorant's Fancy, returns for the second consecutive year as they showcase their recent album, *An Evening at the Fairfield Inn*. Rounding out the music slate are the thunderous sounds of the Lochiel Emerald Society Police and Fire Pipe and Drum Corps from Harrisburg who are making their first festival appearance along with newcomers The Spalpeens, a fiery, hard driving Irish band from Baltimore. Irish step dancing is also on tap as the Harrisburg-based McGinley School of Irish Dance appears for the third consecutive year.

In addition to music and dance performances, several other activities are offered at the festival. Over two dozen vendors will be selling different Irish goods plus food and beverage. Festival-goers can also participate in interactive music workshops on the tin whistle and bodhran (Irish drum) and watch a bagpipes demonstration. Living history exhibits will include Civil War re-enactors from the

69th New York State Volunteers which was part of the Union Army's famed Irish Brigade plus the Irish Volunteer Historical Society who portray the Army of Irish Volunteers from the early twentieth century Anglo-Irish War that established the Irish Republic. Among the Irish-American organizations that will be present include the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Irish Cultural Society and the Notre Dame Club of Gettysburg, who will be raffling two tickets to this year's Notre Dame-Penn State football game and a football autographed by Jerome Betis to benefit the club's scholarship fund. The Potomac Valley Irish Wolfhound Club will also be on hand along with some of their four-legged friends.

For more information, visit the festival's website at www.adamscountyirishfestival.com . The Adams County Irish Festival is produced and presented by the Irish Heritage Foundation of Gettysburg, an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

#

Main Stage Entertainment Schedule:

11:00am-12:00 *Sean Nos* Workshop by Cathie Ryan

12:00-12:30pm Opening Ceremony – 69th New York State Volunteers, Rodney Owens,
Lochiel Emerald Society Pipes and Drums

12:30-1:30pm Irishtown Road

1:30-2:30pm Derek Warfield

2:30-3:30pm Cathie Ryan

3:30-4:00pm McGinley School of Irish Dance

4:00-5:00pm Tommy Makem

5:00-5:30pm Irish Volunteer Historical Society (demonstration)

5:30-6:30pm The Spalpeens

7:00-8:00pm Cormorant's Fancy

MEDIA COVERAGE INVITED!

NOTE: Photos of artists and from previous festivals available upon request.