

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



A business manager, consultant and writer by trade, the author has twenty four years experience as Assistant Director of Cleveland's Irish Cultural Festival. A first generation Irish American whose father is Founder and Director of the festival and hails from County Roscommon, Ireland; John continues his father's legacy, love of the Irish heritage and vision for the festival. With nine stages, twenty eight bands, an extensive and nationally recognized cultural hall and numerous other attractions, the festival is recognized as one of the very best in the United States.

This love of the Irish heritage and dedication to producing an authentic cultural event has earned the respect and trust of the performers featured in *Festival Legends: Songs & Stories*, and an unmatched access to them and their stories.

John continues to write articles, profiles and reviews for travel, heritage and special interest publications such as the Irish American Post, where he has a byline. He also writes poetry centered on the themes of love, loss and glory. He has extensive experience in dealing with health issues related to Rheumatoid and Psoriatic arthritis, hearing loss and back pain.

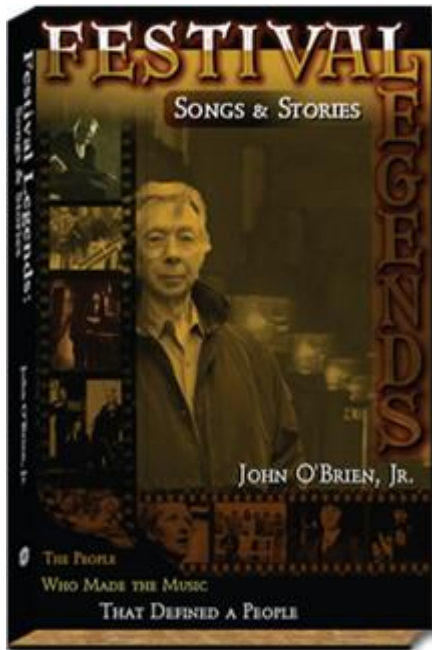
Founder and Chairman of *Eire Og* (Young Ireland) ; John was Editor and sole writer for the monthly special interest publication for the group, which has over 4,500 members, for more than two years. The publication features profiles, interviews, book and event reviews, historical items of interest and local and national special events. Active in the Irish community in Cleveland and with the Festival Organizers Convention, where he was a featured speaker in 2005 and 2006, John has been interviewed on numerous radio and television programs and in print media. He developed, wrote and produced, "The Legacy Project," a twenty-six minute video for the United States Library of Congress highlighting Cleveland's Irish Cultural Festival as "an event of cultural significance," featured dozens of interviews with festival organizers, performers and volunteers.

The author has taught extensively in the areas of Leadership, Coaching and Behavior Based Interviewing as well as Microsoft Word and Excel, for audiences ranging from one to three thousand. He is a graduate of **Cleveland St. Ignatius High School** and the University of Dayton, where he majored in Business Management and Communications.

John enjoys reading, traveling, attending cultural events and festivals and spending time with his seventeen nieces and nephews. **He lives in the Westpark neighborhood of Cleveland, Ohio.**

ABOUT THE BOOK

A Tommy Makem fan, when asked if she knew what music is, responded: "It is the soul of the world expressed in sound." To me, Tommy Makem and the other Festival Legends featured in this book, express the soul of the whole world, Irish or not, in each and every performance they give, in Dolby surround sound.



From Tommy Makem, The Godfather of Irish music, to his sons, The Makem & Spain Brothers, from the Ballad Boom to Riverdance, and the Ed Sullivan Show to Carnegie Hall, the incredible explosion of Irish music directly related to the success of the Clancy Brothers & Tommy Makem and Riverdance, as well the stunning growth of Irish music and cultural festivals across the United States, has led to live Irish music and dance being the most sought after form of cultural entertainment today. The Celtic Tiger is thriving in America.

The happiest times in my life are those spent around festivals, especially the afters parties. I have gotten the opportunity to get to know these wonderful men and women as people, not as performers. Seeing these amazing and genuine people, up close and off camera, has been the inspiration for writing this book. When I tried to find out more information about them, where they came from, in the sense of what made them who they are, beyond just the town they were born in, there was so little information available. I decided to change that.

Derek McCormack's sudden passing only reemphasized the need for me to get these wonderful stories, filled with humor, jaw-dropping accomplishments and deep love for the Irish heritage, from those who know it best, the performers themselves. I have strived to eliminate any inaccuracies, myths, false stories and general lack of hard information about each of these legends and present it in their own words. I hope you will enjoy finding out their stories as much as I have.

Festival Legends offers an entertaining but historically accurate look at these iconic entertainers with detailed, behind-the-scenes information on the journeys, backgrounds, inspirations, people and stories in the rise of these great talents to the top of their field, and a place in the indelibly linked

American and Irish histories. This capturing of these entertaining and surprising stories as well as correcting the myths and misinformation that seems to surround these performers, has been the driving passion behind this book.

Based on over twenty years of professional experience marketing and producing one of the top five Irish festivals in the United States and authored articles and media presentations, the author expertly writes Festival Legends to accurately detail such amazing and highly entertaining stories as:

- The Clancy Brothers & Tommy Makem - have achieved legendary status by igniting the Irish music boom in the United States and eventually, back in Ireland and are fatefully linked with folk music's own explosion that came out of New York's Greenwich Village in the late 1950's. The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem's story includes such luminaries as Odetta, Josh White and Bob Dylan, who called Liam Clancy the best ballad singer he ever heard in his life and professed at a young age that he would "be as big as the Clancy's." Both proved true. But it was not their first appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show that shook the foundations of Irish music in America, as most believe. The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show four times. Saving the best for last, the final appearance, for a record setting sixteen minutes, is the episode that altered history.

- Danny Doyle - His grandmother was a runner during the 1916 Irish Rebellion, burning haunting stories of the people and events of the war and the love of Irish history into one of Ireland's finest balladeers and Danny interweaves these harrowing and often humorous stories in powerful concerts, presentations and theatrical shows.

- Barleycorn - At the outbreak of Internment, on August 9th, 1971 at 4:00 a.m., British soldiers overran Catholic areas of Belfast, beating and imprisoning, without trial, scores of Irish men. In a political irony typical of the time, Barleycorn's Paddy McGuigan was interred for four months for writing The Men Behind the Wire, a song about internment. Barleycorn continued to perform the #1 song, despite opposition and Paddy's detainment.

- The Makem & Spain Brothers - The present, and the future, of the Irish ballad tradition, the Makem & Spain Brothers are gaining notice throughout the Irish music world for carrying on the legacy of those that came before, with a style and energy all their own. It is abundantly clear that this is what they were born to do.

- Johnny McEvoy - The Beatlemania era in Ireland took Johnny McEvoy to Superstar status, going from pub crowds of forty and fifty people to playing before sold out concerts of 70,000, all over the United Kingdom and the United States, and all in a few months.

· Tom Sweeney - Anthem for the Children, his peace song for children of all nationalities, brought Tom Sweeney to the Clinton White House, in the weeks before the Good Friday Peace Agreement was reached. Did Anthem for the Children help bring peace to Ireland?
