



Tommy Sands





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Overview



A Rarified Talent

Tommy Sands enjoys celebrity status in his homeland and elsewhere, tempered by artistic integrity and the sorrow of personal tragedy in his war-torn homeland of Ireland. Walking the road between Protestant and Catholic, he dreams of improving that reality.

Cultural Program

- History of Northern Ireland through song

Holiday Program

- The shortening of the Winter

Lectures & Historical Programs

- Northern Ireland history through the songs of Ireland

Music Education

Library & Museum Programs

Elementary, Middle & High School

Family Programs

Sands writes his own script, of course, and delivers it with the split second timing of a master storyteller. With *The Heart's a Wonder* he has spun a web of wisdom, tenderness and joy that should enthrall even the most jaded listener.

-Dirty Linen Magazine



Tommy Sands

Biography (1 of 3)

“Enchanting,” “Irresistible,” and “Charming,” are but three words out of many that describe Ireland’s most acclaimed performer, Tommy Sands. County Down’s singer and songwriter, Sands has achieved something akin to legendary status in his own lifetime.

A rare combination of storyteller, author, singer, songwriter and social activist, Sands’ reviews come from politicians and major authors as well as fellow musicians and music reviewers. Practicing his craft for more than 35 years, Sands has become an integral part of the Irish folk music revival and a one of a kind North Ireland native, whose music is often found to speak louder than violence.

Since his pioneering days with the Sands Family, who brought Irish Music from New York’s Carnegie Hall to Moscow’s Olympic Stadium, Sands has developed into one of the most powerful songwriters and captivating solo performers in Ireland.



His song writing, which draws the admiration of Nobel Poet Laureate Seamus Heaney and father of folk music, Pete Seeger, prompts respected US magazine "Sing Out" to regard him as "the most powerful songwriter in Ireland, if not the rest of the world."

Although the author of music masterful enough to reach a global stage, Sands’ work carries a special focus: to reach the people in his own country and affect the world. Songs including, “There were Roses,” and “Daughters and Sons,” covered by Joan Baez, Kathy Matthea, Dolores Keane, Sean Keane, Frank Patterson, Dick Gaughan, The Dubliners and many others, have certainly

attracted the desired audience, and then some.

From children to politicians, more than just Sands’ fans have recognized the power of his music to impact the spirit by focusing on peace.

Tommy Sands

Biography (2 of 3)

Sands' songs, translated into many languages, currently reach out to students from the English language syllabus in German secondary schools.

In 2006, Sand's work reached a level of international respect few others are able to boast. The Tipperary Peace Convention announced Tommy Sands as a nominee for their 2007 International Peace Award. Sands now joins a group of previous nominees that includes Nelson Mandela and the Dalai Lama.

While international acclaim is abundant for Sands, it is paralleled equally only by his respected status in his home country of Ireland. Mary McAleese, President of the Irish Republic, worked in theatrical productions with Sands before she held her current position. To this day she has kept up their friendship and periodically calls upon him for advice on cultural events.



"It would take a mean bastard to dislike him, he has a way with words to charm and disarm and coax a chorus out of the tightest jawed audience."

Eamon McCann, Hot Press

An exceptional artist Sands' performance extends through his music and draws the audience into the rhythmic tales of Ireland's great loves, conflicts and its playful and unbreakable spirit.

Sands' body of work, however, comprises more than meets the eye. Although constantly performing all around the world, Sands prides in taking his music and talent down from the lights and into the darker corners of society. One of his current projects, teaching underprivileged prisoners in Reno, Nevada, to write their own song with which to defend themselves in court is creating a wide spread stir in the world of community art in the United States.

In Northern Ireland, Sands co-wrote a CD with Protestant and Catholic schoolchildren about their own areas, in towns and villages around Northern Ireland. During the Good Friday Agreement Talks, his impromptu performance with a group of children and Lambeg drummers was described by Northern Ireland Deputy First Minister Seamus Mallon as "a defining moment in the Peace Process."

In May 2002, Sands received an honorary doctorate of Letters from The University of Nevada for his outstanding work as musician and ambassador for peace and understanding and, May 18th was pronounced "Tommy Sands Day" in Reno.



Tommy Sands

Biography (3 of 3)



In December 2002, although the Northern Ireland Assembly had been stood down, Sands managed to persuade the Members to return for a special Christmas musical party together.

As one politician after another joined him on stage for a song, Loyalist leader David Ervine was heard to remark, "Tommy Sands is the only man, without a private army, who can intimidate me."

Recorded for the Sands weekly radio program, the concert later received a special award at the "World Festival of TV and Radio" in New York.

Still, through all his achievements, Sands has not alienated the original inspiration for his work. Sands performs for one main reason: "I want to share a little of my story, my country...my people." In this vein, this past year Tommy released his book, "The Songman." Reviewer Frank McCourt stands in awe of Sands' "rare gift of combining objectivity with passion. He is - and the world knows this - the bard of peace, loved by both sides." The book chronicles Sands' life journey through what he is admired most for, his music of peace.

Peace is like a little baby that slips and stumbles before it learns to walk. But with enough helping hands, it'll learn to dance."

- Tommy Sands



Tommy Sands

Press Quotes (1 of 1)

Tommy Sands is one of the most powerful songwriters in Ireland if not the rest of the world...
SING OUT (USA)

The gentle songs of a gentle man, ringing out above the tumult and the shouting. Through people like Tommy Sands there will be an answer... BELFAST TELEGRAPH

Most gifted songwriter...with an ability to write on serious subjects which come across as songs rather than sermons...also well able to be extremely funny in the way he puts words together... IRISH TIMES

*"There were Roses" is certainly one of the best songs ever written about the "Irish Problem"...*TO BEAT THE DRUM (Scotland)

*Timeless Sands still with irresistible lure....*IRISH NEWS

*Tommy Sands has achieved that difficult but wonderful balance between knowing and loving the traditions of his home and being concerned with the future of the whole world....*PETE SEEGER

*I love the version of 'Where Have All The Flowers Gone' by Tommy Sands. That is the best version that has ever been recorded. It is just chilling, isn't it?*JOHN STEWART (KINGSTON TRIO)

*In two minutes the entire audience were singing with him "Armenia, Armenia", a very moving performer...*PRAVDA

*Richly talented singer and songwriter...*BOSTON GLOBE

*One moment my tears were of sorrow, the next moment they were tears of joy, his songs are unforgettable stories.....*RADIO LEIPZIG

*You feel you can trust the singer as well as the song.....*SEAMUS HEANEY

*Sands sang two ballads... everyone in the room was mesmerized. Hairs stood at attention on peoples arms. Eyes moistened....*WAYNE MELTON (RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL)

*Sands is a true weaver of dreams and spells.....*OLIVER P. SWEENEY (HOT PRESS) (December 2001)

Stirring, spellbinding performance... EARLE HITCHENER (Irish Echo and Wall Street Journal)

*Tommy Sands is the only man, without a private army, who can intimidate me...*Loyalist Politician David Ervine (After coaxed on stage to sing with Sands at "Re-Imagining Ireland," in 2003)

*Every word is wrought with love and care, the musicianship and arrangements are superb, and every note is a celebration of man's power of creation....*HOT PRESS, 1996



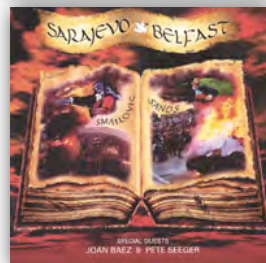
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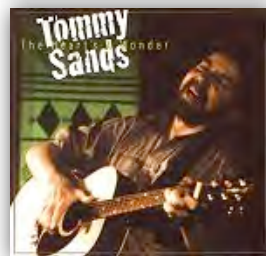
To Shorten the Winter: An Irish Christmas with Tommy Sands

Green Linnet, 2002



Sarajevo to Belfast: Smailovic & Sands

Appleseed Recordings, 1999



The Heart's a Wonder

Green Linnet Records, 1995



Beyond the Shadows

Spring Records, 1992



Hedges of County Down: And other traditional songs

Spring Records, 1989



Tommy Sands

Discography (2 of 2)



Down by Bendy's Lane: Irish songs and stories for children

Green Linnet Records, Inc, 1987



Singing of the Times

Green Linnet Records, Inc, 1985

Music Awards and Nominations

County Down - Tommy Sands (performed by Dan)
BEST ORIGINAL SONG 2004 - BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards

There Were Roses was nominated for the award in 2003.