



Voice of Chicago's Irish Community

April 2014

Paddy Homan's New Album Launches in April

PADDY HOMAN – The Hard Way Home

"There's a voice that speaks to everyone"

Launch April 19th

Robert F. Lyons, contributor, teaches Irish Studies at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, University of Southern Maine.



The lyrics of the title track of **Paddy Homan's** new CD album, **The Hard Way Home**, reflect the Chicago Irish tenor's philosophy of life. This native born Cork man chose this title "because the words of this song - 'without a light to guide you, you will take the hard way home' - resonate loudly with me in terms of my own personal development and my career as professional who is engaged in programs for elderly citizens. They have universal meaning."

The Chicago launch of Paddy's new CD on Saturday, April 19th at Chief O'Neill's Pub & Restaurant, 3471 N. Elston, which is named after the celebrated song collector, Francis O'Neill, also a Cork man with an intense passion for the traditional music of his native

Ireland. Paddy will be joined by some of the best of Chicago's musicians who collaborated with him on this outstanding recording. The Pub's hosts for the launch, co-owners Brendan and Siobhan McKinney - themselves All-Ireland award winning musicians - were recently featured on WTTW's Emmy-winning restaurant review series, Check, Please! Chicago.

Since the day he set foot in the windy city over a half dozen years ago, Homan has embraced Chicago with the same celebratory verve displayed by the city's poet, Carl Sandburg: "Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive." And music critics have responded in kind: "It was a wonderfully lucky day for all of us in the Chicago area when Paddy Homan landed in town and decided to stay," writes Jack Baker in his Irish American News review of this new CD. Bill Margeson of LiveIreland.com agrees. In announcing the 2014 Livies Irish Music Award to The Hard Way Home for Male Vocal Album of the Year, he said: "Paddy is absolutely the best. And this album is a pure delight."

This gem of a recording, produced by Dennis Cahill and Victor Sanders, features Paddy's voice accompanied by the finest of Chicago's talented musicians: Dennis Cahill on guitar, bass, and mandolin, James Moore on guitar and bouzouki, Maurice Lennon on fiddle, Ben Lewis on piano, John Williams and Sheila Doorley on accordions, Teresa Shine on fiddle, Steven Houser on cello and Sue Demel on backing vocals. More information and a set of informative sleeve notes on the twelve tracks are available at www.paddyhoman.com.

The new CD album with its handsomely designed jacket offers several ancient Irish ballads and brand new ones. A sprightly Reel in the Flickering Light leads the way and will move feet and hearts of all ages. The title track, The Hard Way Home, sounds a plaintive tone but with Paddy's passionate delivery, strikes a hopeful chord: "There's only grace and miracles, And learning how to dance the dance". John O' Dreams, set to a Tchaikovsky tune, portrays all people as – Chief O'Neill's Pub at 8pm is fittingly booked at being "equal in sleep". The Bonny Bunch of Roses - featuring Paddy and his bodhrán - is a ballad related to the old Irish Air, An Binsin Luachra (The Bunch of Rushes). Paddy's passionate performance of the folk classic The Voyage has inspired many brides and grooms. Cill Cháis – the moving 18th century lament for Kilcash - "Cad a dhéanfaimid feasta gan adhmaid? What will we do for timber, with the last of the woods laid low?" - finds poignant expression in the cadences of Paddy's delivery.

Stephen Foster's Slumber My Darling never seems more tender than through this arrangement by Ben Lewis. The Gentle Maiden, an allegory of Ireland from the ancient canon of Irish songs is emotively sung. The popular Song of Bernadette is dedicated to Paddy's mother and to all faith-filled mothers. The album concludes with The Holy Ground, a lovely sea shanty from the singer's native Cork. All the collaborating musicians who make this CD a model of clarity and artistic delight are showcased in two sets of reels and jigs.

Although this Cork born singer misses the chance to catch a few salmon off the banks of his own lovely Lee, he relishes the rich harvest of opportunity available to him surrounding the banks of Lake Michigan and beyond in America. Paddy says: "I came to Chicago by accident to visit a friend of mine, and I ended up coming back here to study social work. I thought Chicago was the greatest spot to be doing both my day job and my music. And I'm getting closer to having just one career - a combination of both."

Reflecting on his current work as Foundation Regional Director for two Lutheran Life communities: St Pauls House, Chicago and Wittenberg Village, Crown Point, Indiana, Homan notes: "I am a huge advocate of the role of music in engaging with people who are on this journey. Many of our residents need a guiding light to be that beacon of hope by which they can live out their days with dignity and respect." This theme permeates his life's work. "Music", he says, "goes right down to the fabric of the human person. We all have a song that needs to be shared." Paddy's guiding lights have been John McCormack, Seán Ó Riada who revived Irish traditional music, and his mother, Lizzie who says: "Paddy's been singing since he was bawling in his crib."

Three years ago, Irish Music Magazine announced that Paddy Homan was "A major new force on the scene" when the Livies LiveIreland Irish music awards for best Male Vocalist and Male Vocal Album of

the year 2010 were bestowed on him for his self-titled album, Paddy Homan. Bill Margeson, music critic for Irish American News, gave his assessment: "Chicago's Paddy Homan is probably the best male Irish singer I've ever heard....He is a tenor. Don't roll your eyes. Everyone – and I do mean everyone – says the same thing: 'I don't like Irish tenors'. But Paddy Homan is not an Irish Tenor. Well – yes he is – but that is like saying Secretariat was simply a horse."

Homan's imprint on the music landscape is deep and wide. Rick Kogan, veteran Chicago Tribune reporter, author and radio/TV personality, introduced his St. Patrick's Day guest on his Chicago Live! TV program thusly: "Paddy Homan came here from his native Ireland four years ago. His impact in Chicago and on the national music scene has been nothing short of astonishing. You are about to see why." And then Paddy gave a rousing performance of 'Come Home, Paddy Reilly. Kogan previously had Paddy as a guest on his popular Tribune-WGN radio show, The Sunday Papers, to talk about his music and social work with the elderly. The Chicago Tribune's front page headline Thanksgiving Day, 2007 summed it up: 'His Irish songs lift others' hearts; As he visits the disabled, social worker Paddy Homan connects by bringing memories, songs of native Ireland.'

In the tradition of a lively rambling house, Paddy has been presiding for six years every Sunday night at the Galway Arms Pub, joined by a retinue of outstanding musicians and performers in the greater Chicagoland area. Paddy is a regular performer on the stage at all the usual Irish and Celtic festivals in the Midwest. A busy February and March saw Paddy performing on the stage with Dennis Cahill and Teresa Shine at the University of Chicago Folk Festival, the Midwest Buddhist Temple, the Irish Fellowship Club at the Hilton, Gaelic Park and a return engagement at the annual St. Patrick's Day program at the Wilmette Theater.

The organizer of Detroit's annual Crossroads Ceili advertises: "Homan doesn't just create an atmosphere of beautiful music, he crafts an authentic Irish experience in the process." Paddy's far ranging concert schedule has included Harvard's international Celtic Colloquium, MIT, Dartmouth College, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes at the University of Southern Maine, Northwestern University and Tufts University. Combining his roles of Irish tenor, social worker, and eldercare provider, Homan enrolled in the Master of Arts Program in Applied Professional Studies (MAAPS) at De Paul University where he completed his graduate degree in 2013.

At the Cork debut of Paddy's first CD album, Far From the Land in 2005, a local newspaper, the Southern Star, began its news story: "If you enjoy a good Irish song performed with passion and feeling, get yourself a copy of Paddy Homan's new CD album." Discriminating music lovers of all tastes and ages would do well to heed the same advice for this superb new CD, The Hard Way Home, where they will discover there's a voice that speaks to everyone.

www.paddyhoman.com.

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