

# Arts & Entertainment

## Irvine's wild Irish sound fills Sheldon

By Dawn Watson

For 2½ hours at the Sheldon Art Gallery Sunday night, loud applause, whistling and country-western hoots were appropriate signs of enthusiasm. Irish musician Andy Irvine mesmerized an auditorium packed tight with fans of traditional music.

Fans with rigid definitions of "Irish" or "traditional" music were undoubt-

### Review

edly disappointed, though. Diverse might be the only way to categorize Irvine. His diversity was reflected in instrumentation, nationality of material, age and theme, and musical styles.

Irvine accompanied his rich, unadorned voice with the hurdy-gurdy, mandolin, harmonica, and two other mysterious mandolin-related instruments.

Selections varied greatly. Irvine included traditional and contemporary Irish ballads, old Irish hornpipes, songs by American folkies Woody Guthrie and Si Kahn, and a remake of a Bulgarian dance tune.

Song subject matter ran the gamut as well. A motif of pain and sorrow unified the pieces. Irvine sang of unemployed mill workers, the torture of supporters of former Chilean leader Salvador Allende by Pinochet and CIA

henchmen, the plight of the Irish immigrating to the United States, and two songs of deserted women—one woman shunned by her family, the other ditched by her lover after becoming pregnant.

Much of Irvine's music is rooted in traditional Irish sounds. Melancholy, hollow minor chords and quick, trilly *Twilight Zone* tempo shifts accomplished by complicated pick-stroke patterns, and delicate and sparse melodic runs between chord-strumming rhythm or back-up playing were some of the old-fashioned Irish techniques Irvine used.

Irvine also borrowed freely from other styles not commonly heard in Irish music. Jazz and lounge chords, Eastern sitar-like sounds, bassy rock 'n roll riffs, and adaptations of bluegrass licks set Irvine's style apart from mainstream Irish music. His harmonica playing and use of a chorus box for reverb are unusual within the genre, too.

Irvine's own compositions were also inventive. "Accidentals," which he introduced as "Accidentals Will Happen," is an energetic descending David Grismanesque instrumental with many chord changes.

"Rainy Sundays," with slides a la Leo Kottke and abrupt tempo changes, was also instrumentally interesting. However, Irvine succumbed to the clichés often associated with unrequited-love songs. Some of the lyrics were sloppy, such as "like dust that dances in a hazy sunbeam," and rhyming "skating" with "incapacitating." Irvine's compelling voice helped smooth over these



Andy Irvine

Allison Lee Agency

small transgressions.

Irvine delivered an exciting, innovative performance. His mastery of sev-

eral instruments and his warm voice combined nicely, offering a variety of fresh Irish-flavored music.

## 'Big Chill' rates eight, 'Lonely Guy' a loss

Excerpts from the cable television program *At The Concession Stand*.

Announcer: And now, the prophets of a new age, Glenn Stuva and Tom Mockler. Out of the West they rode, armed only with the will to do right, and an eye for the finer things in life.

Tom: Yes, that's right. And now to figure out what we're going to talk about. Should we talk about film, like we're supposed to?

### Tom Mockler & Glenn Stuva

Glenn: Yeah. We might as well. I certainly don't feel like discussing 20th century Soviet painting.

Tom: If you want to, I'm going to get a can of pop.

Glenn: You can't just get up and walk away like that! What will our millions of fans think? They'll say we're selling out.

Gaffer: I'll fill in for him. I've been waiting for this opportunity for weeks.

Glenn: But nobody wants to see you. A "gaffer" is an old guy without teeth.

Gaffer: No, that's "gipper." I'm a "lighting electrician on a motion picture or television set."

Tom (returning): Who is this punk?

Glenn: Some prima donna who wants your job.

Tom: Not for \$3 million a year he won't. A good right to the snotlocker should remedy this. (Tom connects and the imposter falls to the floor.)

Glenn: I knew he didn't have any teeth. Look. (Bending down, he picks up a pair of dentures lying on the stage.) I told you so.

Tom: So I was wrong. (abruptly) Which brings us to the movies we saw this week: *The Big Chill* and *The Lonely Guy*.

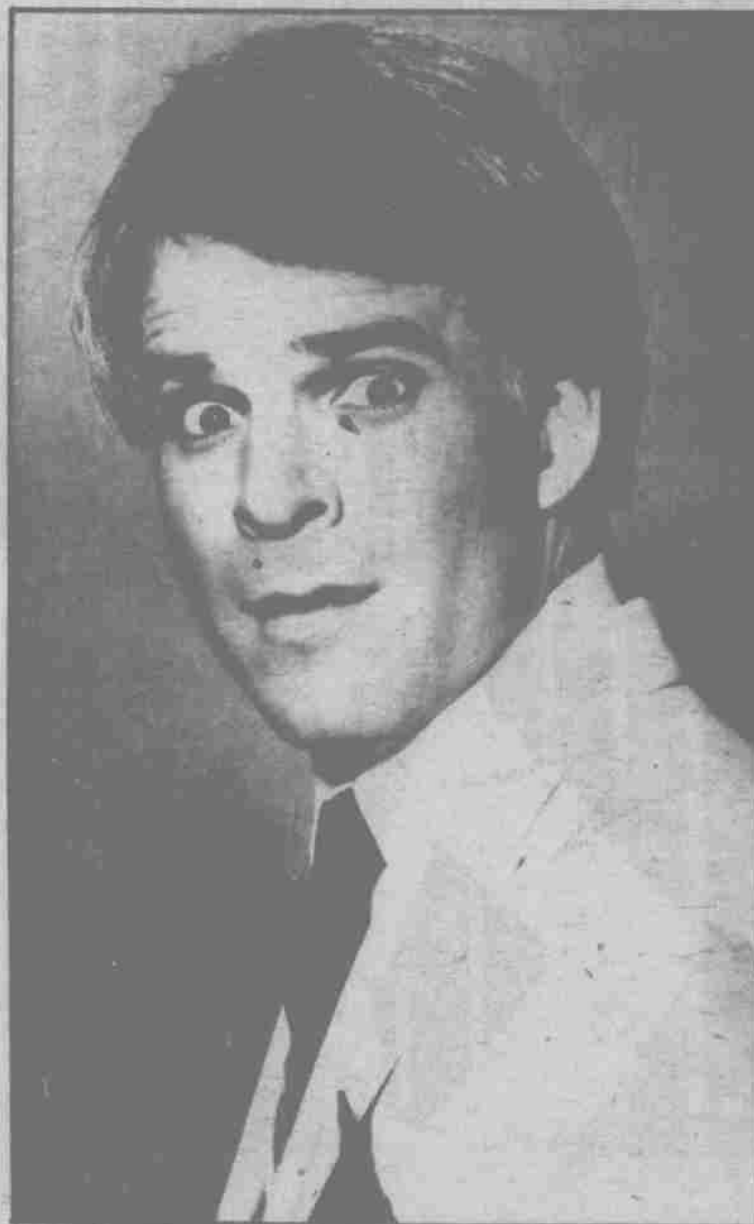
(A stagehand cautiously approaches Glenn and hands him a note.)

Glenn: Hey Tom. I've just been informed that Harry Callahan, the real life detective who inspired Clint Eastwood to make his Dirty Harry films, is in our studio audience. Let's get him up here. (The audience applauds the suggestion enthusiastically.)

(Clint Eastwood comes out of the audience and joins Tom and Glenn on stage.)

Glenn: Hey, Harry. Let's have a look at that gun of yours.

Eastwood: I don't think you understand. I'm Clint Eastwood. Harry Callahan is just a fictitious char-



Agency for Performing Arts

Steve Martin: Doing battle with Neil Simon.

acter I play in some of my movies.

Tom: "Go ahead, make my day." Pretty good, eh, Harry?

Glenn: Come on Harry, blow away somebody for us. That guy in the third row over there looks like a real scumbag. (The audience applauds the suggestion enthusiastically.)

Eastwood: You guys are just a little too weird for me. I'm getting out of here.

Glenn: What's the matter Harry? Lost your nerve?

Eastwood (afraid of appearing a coward): OK, but only for you guys. (Aims, then fires before the man has a chance to get away. Audience explodes. Eastwood then shakes hands with Glenn and Tom and walks off a hero.)

Tom: Can we talk about the movies now?

Glenn: OK. As you know, *The Big Chill* was a 1983 release, but since it has been rereleased recently, Tom and I thought it would be an appropriate topic for this week's show.

Tom: *The Big Chill* is essentially the story of the coming of the Second Ice Age. Like most survivalist sagas, this movie has a healthy dose of violence and is not suitable for younger viewers. William Hurt plays the role of Captain Medcalf, a former stockbroker turned hunter. I won't tell you how it ends. "Suspense" is the word to describe this film. Hurt is especially good and should be nominated for Best Actor. The rest of this star-studded cast is really swell too. The film should be nominated for Best Picture. I'd give it an 8 or a 7 on a 10-point scale, or ¾ of a beer on our beer rating system.

Glenn: I couldn't agree more. My favorite scene is when the giant walrus explodes.

Tom: *The Lonely Guy* is essentially a struggle between Steve Martin and Neil Simon. Martin tries valiantly to make Simon's screenplay funny, and it comes out about a draw. I'd give it a 5 on a 10-point scale, or half a beer on our beer rating system.

Glenn: I wish Steve Martin would make more movies using his own scripts. Martin's really a talented performer and is funny on his own. He doesn't need the likes of Neil Simon to write material for him. When was the last time any movie Neil Simon had anything to do with was any good at all? The man just isn't funny. If you like Steve Martin, the movie is worth seeing. If you don't, the movie isn't worth the price of admission.

Tom: Don't forget Marsha Mason.

Glenn: The best thing Marsha Mason ever did for her career was divorce Neil Simon so she wouldn't have to be in all of his pathetic movies. Of course, thinking about it, she's pretty worthless herself. She's such a lousy actress that without Simon she'll probably never land another job.

Tom: Bye. (walks off)

Glenn: I guess that means we're out of time. See ya. (walks off)

Announcer: So until next week this has been *At The Concession Stand* with America's favorite fab film critics Glenn Stuva and Tom Mockler. And remember, save the aisle seats for them.