

Tom Lanigan: Irish Music from an Irishman



by Noah
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Since last month, Hibernia Irish Pub has been hosting Irish sessions every Sunday, from 4-7:30 PM. These events provide a great opportunity for people to enjoy traditional Irish music performed by a true Irishman, but some of you may be wondering just what an Irish session is.

According to the *Field Guide to Irish Music Sessions: An Authoritative Guide to Enjoying Irish Traditional Music in its Natural Habitat*, an Irish session is:

“...a gathering of Irish traditional musicians for the purpose of celebrating their common interest in the music by playing it together in a relaxed, informal setting, while in the process generally beefing up the mystical cultural mantra that hums along uninterruptedly beneath all manifestations of Irishness worldwide.”

Tom Lanigan hosts these Irish sessions at Hibernia. He was born in Dublin, where he lived until he moved to the United States with his family seventeen years ago. He sings and plays guitar in the Tom Lanigan Band, with whom he has already released an album, *As The Light Declines*. The band is also in the middle of recording a second album, with a limited release EP on the way as well. Just last week I had the chance to speak to Tom about his brand of traditional Irish

music:



Tom Lanigan
on stage.

Well good day to you, Mr. Tom Lanigan. Please tell me who you are and what are doing here in New Bedford?

I'm an Irish singer/songwriter playing one of my first shows ever in New Bedford, at The Hibernia Pub.

Nice. I love Irish music. I heard a little bit of your music a couple weeks ago and you sounded really good. I also like the idea of an actual Irishman playing Irish music. Where do you normally perform?

I perform all over. This is my 11th year as a full-time musician, and I just go where the work takes me. My usual route has me going through Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

Do you perform much in the South Coast area?

Besides Hibernia Irish Pub, I play Cape Cod quite regularly at the O'Shea's Olde Inne and The Sons Of Erin. I love the Cape because of how many great musicians and great people there are: It's a real education.

How long have you been performing Irish sessions?

Most Irish musicians get involved with sessions in one way or another, but I don't play them very well. My band's style is a

bit different, more along the folk/rock Irish style. Thankfully, we've been able to play it in one form or another for the past eleven years.



That's why the music I heard at Hibernia was a little different from what I normally would expect to hear at a traditional session. You are putting a more modern spin on a classic pastime. How did the band come together?

Music has always been a part of my life, and through the years I have played with many great musicians. This current lineup has come together very organically, and it's been going great. We can accommodate anything from a solo show to a six-piece band.

Is this the first time for many of your members being in a band?

This is definitely not the first band for these players, and I feel blessed to have access to their talent. Here is the lineup:

Tom Lanigan-Vocals, Guitar and Djembe,

Brian Bercher— Bass Guitar

Jordan Tirrell Wysoki— Fiddle and Mandolin

Sue Young— Bodhran, Vocals and Whistles

John Eagan— Guitar,Vocals, and Harmonica

Chris Leary— Piano and Organ



The Tom Lanigan Band performing.

Do you guys have jobs outside of the band?

Some of us have jobs on the side, but the goal is for the music to be full-time. I want to be able to have the whole band out playing full-time, and we're on our way there.

Good for you guys. Well, for all the ladies out there: Are you single?

I am not single, but I'm a musician, so God knows how long she'll put up with me.

Haha. Yeah, I imagine it can get tricky sometimes. Have you ever gone on tour?

I have toured Europe and the United States. I feel like I have been very fortunate to have done so.



Tom Lanigan

Do you have any big shows or events coming up?

We just opened for *Derek Warfield & the Young Wolf Tones* for the second year in a row, at RiRa in Portsmouth, NH. We are looking forward to the *Canton Irish Music Festival* and *The*

Dorchester Irish Music Festival this summer. We love the festivals and can't wait to get back out there. There will be more to come, but that's what we have confirmed for now.

Is there anything else you'd like to add in here?

In closing, I'd like to say that this music, and the tradition involved, is my calling. It is a hard road to travel, but I am in this for the long haul.

For those wanting to learn more about Tom Lanigan, or check out where he will be playing next, visit his website: www.tomlanigan.com . There are videos there so you can check out samples of his music. The band is available for shows, with contact info through the website. Also, don't forget to check them out on Facebook to get access to all their latest information.