

# The Chieftains

Tuesday, January 21, 2003, 8 pm  
Zellerbach Hall

Paddy Moloney, Uilleann pipes and tin whistle

Kevin Conneff, bodhrán and vocals

Matt Molloy, flute

Seán Keane, fiddle

With special guests including:

Allison Moorer, vocals

Caroline Lavelle, vocals and cello

Chris Jones, vocals and guitar

Jon and Nathan Pilatzke, dancers

Donny Golden and Cara Butler, traditional Irish dancers

Tonight's program will be announced from the stage  
and will include one 15-minute intermission.

The Chieftains record exclusively for RCA Victor.

Exclusive Management:

ICM Artists, Ltd., New York

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Lee Lamont, chairman emeritus; David V. Foster, president & CEO

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and the California Arts Council, a state agency.

**V**ith a career that spans four decades and 40 albums, The Chieftains are not only Ireland's premier musical ambassadors but also the most enduring and influential creative force in establishing the international appeal of Celtic music.

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Paddy Moloney, the group's founder and front man, first brought together a group of local musicians in Dublin in 1962, fashioning an authentic instrumental sound that stood in sharp contrast to the slick commercial output of most Irish music at the time. The group's first four albums, recorded between 1963 and 1974, established a worldwide reputation even as the band continued to perform on a semi-professional basis.

In 1975, The Chieftains recorded the soundtrack to Stanley Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon*, featuring the hit single "Women Of Ireland," for which they won an Academy Award. Continued extensive touring followed, further establishing the group as a major concert attraction. A string of subsequent

albums—including such standouts as Bonaparte’s Retreat, Boil the Breakfast Early, and Chieftains in China—enhanced the band’s status as Ireland’s most important musical export.

In 1988, the group joined forces with fellow countryman Van Morrison on Irish Heartbeat, which began a historic series of collaborations, including recordings with James Galway, Jackson Browne, Elvis Costello, The Rolling Stones, Sting, Tom Jones, Sinead O’Connor, Linda Ronstadt, Los Lobos, Ry Cooder, and many other artists. The Chieftains also continued their acclaimed soundtracks on such films as Treasure Island, Tristan and Isolde, The Grey Fox, and Far and Away.

In 1992, The Chieftains recorded the double Grammy-winning Another Country, featuring performances by such country and bluegrass stars as Emmylou Harris, Ricky Skaggs, Willie Nelson, Chet Atkins, and Don Williams. The musicians returned to Nashville in 2002 for Down the Old Plank Road, their 40th album, featuring such special guests as Vince Gill, Lyle Lovett, Earl Scruggs, Alison Krauss, and Martina McBride. Six-time Grammy winners and 18-time Grammy nominees, The Chieftains maintain an international touring schedule that has brought them before millions of fans. Last March, The Chieftains played a tribute

performance for rescue workers at Ground Zero in Manhattan, and the group’s current 40th anniversary celebration has included sold-out performances in North America, Europe, and Asia.

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Kevin Conneff, one of the newer members of the current lineup of The Chieftains, was enlisted in 1976 to replace Peadar Mercier, who retired from the band to spend more time with his family. In addition to playing the bodhrán (a goatskin drum that is played with the hand or a stick), Conneff also sings.

“Kevin loved singing and listened to songs and ballads when he was younger,” says Paddy Moloney. “In fact, he was very upset the day Frank Sinatra died. Before Kevin joined the band, we only performed instrumentals in our concerts. But then, with each show, I began to add songs into the set list so that Kevin could sing. Of course, this has continued, with many guests also singing in our shows and on our albums.”

Born in 1945, Conneff was raised in the heart of Dublin in a district known as Liberties. His family loved music, especially by legendary Irish tenor John McCormack and Caruso. As he notes, he wasn’t exposed to traditional Irish music in the same way as other members of The Chieftains. He preferred pop music in his early years, but gradually came to appreciate the traditional music of his country. Conneff began singing it and soon learned to play the bodhrán.

At one time, Conneff and some friends ran the Tradition Club in Dublin, where future bandmates Moloney and Seán Keane played. When he was 31, he got the call from The Chieftains, and he has been a mainstay of the band ever since.

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Seán Keane is one of the early Chieftains, joining in 1968, and making his band debut at the Edinburgh Festival. His first recording experience with the group was on The Chieftains 2 (1969). “Seán comes from a traditional music background,” says Moloney. “Both sides of his family were into Irish music. I met him the first time in the mid 1950s in a Dublin club. Seán studied classical music and developed his own style of traditional fiddle playing.”

Keane was born in Dublin in 1946 into a musical family. Both of his parents were fiddlers, but he chose to start out on the pipes. At age five, he began exploring the fiddle and was sent to a violin teacher a year later. He was later accepted into the Dublin College of Music to study classical music. But by the time he was in the seventh grade, he abandoned his classical studies and began playing traditional music in pubs and at house parties. At the age of 14, he was in several performing bands, and by 16, he had left school. A year later, Keane entered a fiddle competition, where he came to the attention of Seán Ó Riada, who invited him to join the Irish band Ceoltóirí Cualann. This not only got him accepted into the Dublin music scene, but also acquainted with Paddy Moloney, a member of the band at the time.

“Seán grew up in such a rich environment of traditional music that he fit naturally into The Chieftains,” says Moloney.

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Matt Molloy is the newest member of The Chieftains, and joined the group in 1979 as the replacement for Michael Tubridy. His first appearance with the band took place at the Edinburgh Festival, and his first recording was The Chieftains 9: Boil the Breakfast Early.

Born in 1947, Molloy comes from the western area of Ireland, where, according to Moloney, “the music was kept so much alive as a source of entertainment.” He adds, “It took longer for radio and television to make it out there, so people used to go to each other’s houses and play music. Matt comes from an area that has wonderful music.”

A native of county Roscommon, Molloy is widely recognized as the best flute player in Irish traditional music and was formerly in The Bothy Band and Planxty. He started playing at the age of

12, going on to excel at traditional music festivals, where he won numerous competitions. In 1964, at the age of 17, he moved to Dublin, where he both played in clubs and studied aeronautical engineering. He met Moloney at the Old Sheiling, and soon the two were playing duets around town.

By the 1970s, Molloy was working as an airline mechanic and playing music on the side. But when the traditional music scene boomed, he tried his hand at being a professional musician after securing a six-month leave of absence from his company. He never returned. Molloy was a founding member of The Bothy Band, where he became known as Irish music's premier flute player. Shortly after the group broke up in 1979, he joined up with Planxty, and then was snagged by his old duet partner.

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Chieftains member Derek Bell (oboe, piano, harp, tiompán), who had been with the group since 1972, passed away in October 2002. The Chieftains will continue to perform and keep Derek's memory with them always. Kevin, Seán, Matt, and Paddy are looking forward to sharing many more years of music with special guests and friends.

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