

Arts Councils sponsored EVENTS

FLEADH 2010 acts

Don Meade USA Don will be part of Eddie Clarke HARMONICA Recital Sat 2pm in Farnham Arms Hotel.

DON MEADE

Don Meade grew up in southern California in the 1960s and, like many Irish-Americans of the time, was introduced to Irish music by the recordings of the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem. He got his first harmonica in 1965 and started trying to play the melodies he'd learned from those LP's. After moving to New York City, he encountered musicians from the older Irish instrumental tradition and became a regular attendee at the weekly sessions at the former Eagle Tavern, where he drew particular inspiration from the late Longford fiddle great Paddy Reynolds.

In addition to learning the tenor banjo and fiddle, Don tried to apply his harmonica skills to traditional dance music but was frustrated by the limitations of the little ten-hole diatonic mouth organs he had been playing. The recordings of Cavan-born harmonica virtuoso Eddie Clarke opened his ears to the greater possibilities of the chromatic instrument. While tremendously inspired by Clarke's approach, Don was also influenced by Irish two-row button accordionists, whose techniques for playing the music of fiddle, flute and pipes to the button box could in turn be adapted to the chromatic harmonica, a free-reed instrument of similar construction. Playing on a chromatic harmonica, Don won the mouth organ championship in 1987 at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann. Perhaps not coincidentally, the mouth organ competition at the fleadh has since been restricted to diatonic players!

Don plays regularly at concerts, dances and pub sessions throughout the New York area. He is a member of the Washington Square Harp and Shamrock Orchestra directed by Mick Moloney and leads a weekly session the Landmark Tavern in Manhattan's Hell's Kitchen district. He is also well known as the producer, since 1985, of a series of Irish traditional music concerts at the Eagle Tavern, Blarney Star bar and, most recently, at New York University's Glucksman Ireland House. He served as the founding Artistic Director of the Catskills Irish Arts Week in East Durham, New York and is still on the teaching staff of that annual program of music classes, concerts, dances and sessions. Don was a traditional music columnist for ten years at New York's Irish Voice newspaper and has contributed articles to Current Musicology, New York Irish History, The Companion to Irish Traditional Music and New Hibernia Review.