

## Mick Moloney and Friends in Concert to Celebrate St. Patrick's Day

A ceilidh is a social event featuring Scottish or Irish folk music, singing, traditional dancing, and storytelling. Mick Moloney's performance on **Saturday, March 17, 2018 at 7:30 pm at the Historic Earle Theatre** is more of a ceilidh than a concert. Moloney is bringing with him Niall O'Leary, Athena Tergis, and Billy McComiskey.

Moloney has recorded and produced more than 40 albums of traditional music and acted as advisor for scores of festivals and concerts all over America. He created the group the Green Fields of America 40 years ago, touring with a combination of singer, instrumentalists, and dancers. It was the first band to tour America with Irish dancers in every show. Moloney has taught ethnomusicology, folklore, and Irish studies at the University of Pennsylvania, Georgetown, Villanova, and New York University. He has hosted three nationally syndicated series of folk music on American Public

Television; was a consultant, performer and interviewee on the Irish Television special "Bringing It All Back Home;" a participant, consultant and music arranger of the PBS documentary film "Out of Ireland;" and a performer on the PBS special "The Irish in America: Long Journey Home." In 1999 Moloney was awarded the National Heritage Award from the National Endowment for the Arts, the highest official honor a traditional artist can receive in the United States. In 2013, he was awarded the Presidential Distinguished Service Award from the President of Ireland.

Niall O'Leary is a former All-Ireland and World Champion dancer. He began dancing at age 4 and trained under Kevin Massey, who also trained Michael Flatley, the founder of the famous Riverdance troupe. In 1996, O'Leary put together and choreographed the first-ever multi-national team to compete in the World Irish Dance Championships, including dancers from Germany, Finland, Switzerland, Belgium, Australia, Botswana, the United States, and Ireland. He is the Director of the New York City Irish Dance Festival presented by the Irish Arts Center every May. O'Leary founded the Niall O'Leary School of Irish Dance in Dublin in 1995, in New York in 1996, in Florida in 2007, and in Mexico in 2012.

"Dance adds a very powerful visual element," O'Leary says. "The music is really powerful by itself, but the dance just adds an extra element to it. Watching people dancing to fast, exciting music adds an extra layer to the whole enterprise." Students from Lismore Academy, an Irish dance school in Winston-Salem, will join O'Leary and Moloney for the show.



Fiddler Athena Tergis was born and raised in San Francisco. She began with the Suzuki method but found more creativity and freedom at Alasdair Fraser's Valley of the Moon Scottish Fiddling School where she studied with such greats as Mairead Ni Mhaonaigh, Alasdair Fraser, and Buddy MacMaster, winning the Junior National Scottish Fiddling Championship three years in a row. Though she considered a music degree, at 18 Tergis moved to Ireland and immersed herself in Irish traditional music for nearly four years. She toured extensively for years, finally accepting an offer to star in a new production of "Lord of the Dance" in Las Vegas. Not long after, she was invited to become the principal fiddler for the Broadway production of "Riverdance." Tergis met Mick Moloney while living in New York, and it wasn't long before she was playing regularly in the Green Fields of America.

Billy McComiskey is another National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage award-winner (2016). A world-renowned accordion player and composer, McComiskey was born in Brooklyn, New York, to a family steeped in Irish music and dance. Masters in Irish fiddle, accordion, flute, tin whistle, and dance immigrated to the area, and McComiskey was taught by Sean McGlynn, a master of the East Galway style of Irish traditional music, learning intricate fingering and phrasing techniques. During the 1970s and '80s, McComiskey won gold and silver in the prestigious All-Ireland musical competitions in solo accordion and in duets with fiddler Brendon Mulvihill. He has been invited to share his music at the White House, the Kennedy Center, and throughout the U.S., Ireland, and beyond.