

# The Tommy Sands Songman

*A Journey in Irish Music*



'Tommy Sands has achieved that difficult but wonderful balance between knowing and loving the traditions of his home and being concerned with the future of the whole world.'

**Pete Seeger**

# Contents

	List of Illustrations	ix
	Acknowledgments	xi
1	The Songman	i
2	Between Sleeping and Waking	7
3	Before Books	18
4	Bad Boys and Good Uncles	30
5	Religious Persuasion	41
6	Changing Times	56
7	A Feast between Politics	67
8	Record Time	78
9	Civil Rights	83
10	Walking On	89
11	Vying for Light	97
12	All the Little Children	103
13	Let Ye All Be Irish Tonight	108
14	Beyond the Curtain	124
15	There Were Roses	134
16	Tour de France	140
17	Dino	146
18	Country Céilí	151
19	Plaisir d'Amour	162

20	Humpty Dumpty	170
21	On the Run	178
22	The Man from God Knows Where	187
23	14,000 Miles	194
24	Lessons in Moscow	204
25	Long Live the Chief	211
26	The Fall of the Wall	214
27	Twinkle Twinkle Little Star	220
28	Unsung Heroes and Unwritten Songs	229
29	The Music of Healing and the Citizens' Assembly	237
30	Goodbye Love, There's No One Leaving	248
31	Good Friday	252
	Index	259



# *List of Illustrations*

<i>The Connolly Clan, Burren, 1932</i>	8
<i>Eoghain Smith, my mother's grand-uncle on concertina, c. 1900</i>	9
<i>My father's family, 1924</i>	10
<i>Mother, 1939</i>	14
<i>I stood as a marker for the 'corn fiddler'</i>	16
<i>Father and Mother, 1959</i>	19
<i>Tommy and Hugh, aged 8 and 9</i>	32
<i>Fr Hugh and Fr Tom</i>	40
<i>The Thresher</i>	43
<i>The hay, 1958</i>	45
<i>Thatching the stack</i>	60
<i>The Sands, 1960</i>	63
<i>The Sands Family, 1966</i>	74
<i>In The Ship</i>	76
<i>The Sands Family in the Long Field</i>	81
<i>Sampling the new apple juice</i>	93
<i>On the banjo in Carlow</i>	94
<i>Tommy Makem welcomes The Sands Family to New York, 1971</i>	110
<i>Interviewing Mike Flanagan, the last survivor of The Flanagan Brothers</i>	119
<i>With the Clancys – Paddy, Bobby and Tom</i>	120
<i>The Sands Family in Germany, 1974</i>	130

<i>Da and Ma on fiddle and box beside where the roses grew</i>	135
<i>Dino, 1975</i>	146
<i>Dino memorial concert, 1976</i>	150
<i>Archbishop Tomás Ó Fiaich</i>	158
<i>Catherine Bescond in Brittany, 1976</i>	163
<i>Our wedding, 1979</i>	169
<i>With Gary McMichael</i>	193
<i>With Catherine, Fionán and Moya</i>	195
<i>Tucson concert with Mick Moloney and Eileen Ivers</i>	196
<i>Pete Seeger with Moya and Fionán</i>	198
<i>With Tanya Vladimirsky in Moscow</i>	209
<i>The Chief, in Gorman's, one for the road</i>	213
<i>With Eileen O'Casey and Catherine</i>	215
<i>Festival in East Berlin</i>	217
<i>Receiving a Doctor of Letters with Jill and Catherine</i>	226
<i>With Rubin Hurricane Carter</i>	232
<i>At Catherine Hammond's wedding party in Belfast</i>	235
<i>Launching The Music of Healing</i>	239
<i>With Joan Baez and Robin Cook</i>	241
<i>At the 'Talks' with Gusty Spence</i>	255
<i>Celebrating hope in the great hall of Stormont after performances</i>	256