

Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



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Songs of Ireland: Marty Burke entertains at the Four Green Fields



The bar is a local pub and the Irish singer has to compete on many a summer evening with big-screen television broadcasting Tiger ballgames.

But, Marty Burke has probably dealt with worse things in his life — at least that's what you think when you listen to his smoky voice tell a story in song or watch him chain smoke in a European manner between songs.

Even the sound system, which can't overcome the talk at the tables full of softball players, is against Marty Burke some nights. Yet, he captures something Irish when he sings. Give him a chance at a song like "Streets of London" or the poignant "Armstrong" and his songs become unique, unforgettable things.

A 42-year old singer who's been at Royal Oak's Four Green Fields since it opened four years ago, Southfield resident Marty Burke is one of the few Irish singers in the area.

"Some people come for genuine Irish songs," Burke says between sets, "and that's what I'm known for."

That's not to say that he doesn't do contemporary songs or an occasional old Kingston Trio standard. But, Burke, who earns a living by day in the computer business, has been enchanted with Ireland and its history for much of his life. He has guest lectured on the subject here and there, and he adds, "If the audience is really listening, I like to weave a story out of my songs and the history. Often people don't know history well and I like to shake them up with it."

Born in Grosse Pointe, Burke thinks he's "always" been a performer. He recalls acting in the Unstable

Theatre in Detroit in the 1960s and that it was acting that led to singing and to a musical group called Tinker's Dam which recorded several albums.

Even as a solo act, which he's been for a few years now, Burke loves a good story and he emphasizes that's what his songs are all about. "I've always stuck to being a storyteller."

Marty Burke sings every Wednesday night at Four Green Fields, Woodward at 13 Mile Road, Royal Oak (226-2102).

SEVERAL MUSICAL highlights are on the scene this month. Included are a concert at Meadow Brook Music Festival on Monday, Aug. 12, by French pianist and composer Claude Bolling with Jean-Pierre Rampal and the beginning of the Montreux Detroit Jazz Festival.

Another highlight is the first Dirty Dozen Brass Band.

The Dirty Dozen will perform at 6 p.m. Monday, Aug. 19, at P.Jazz at the Pontchartrain Hotel Terrace in Detroit. The New Orleans-based brass band built its reputation in the Crescent City by playing in parades and funerals. It also, strangely enough, started out as a kazoo band.

And although it comes from a long brass-band tradition in its hometown, the music the Dirty Dozen Brass Band plays is anything but traditional. It doesn't sound like the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, which represents another tradition. Nor does it sound like the Canadian Brass.

Instead, the Dirty Dozen Brass Band keeps the spirit of turn-of-the-century New Orleans marching bands



on music

James Windell

while employing a contemporary format that brings together funk, bop and swing arrangements. The effect, both on its first album ("My Feet Can't Fall Me Now," Concord Jazz) and in person, is electric.

Using bop tunes like Thelonious Monk's "Blue Monk" and Charlie Parker's "Bongo Beep," along with big band standards such as Ellington's "Caravan" and its own chanted "My Feet Can't Fall Me Now," the band always generates audience enthusiasm and a dancing, marching spirit.

"Just let the people know that it's all right to get up and dance," Greg Tate, the band's leader and trumpeter, has been quoted as saying. And it's certain that he means it when he adds, "You should be up on your feet. You know, we want you to have a good time."

The Dirty Dozen Brass Band concert begins at 6 p.m. Monday, Aug. 19, at P.Jazz (965-0700).

THE MONTREUX Detroit Jazz Festival gets under way this year Wednesday, Aug. 28, with the Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra on the Terrace of the Hotel Pontchartrain and a Bobbie cruise with the Little McKinney Cotton Pickers and the Detroit Jazz All-Stars.

It will be a slimmed-down festival

in its 11th 6th year, with fewer jazz acts and fewer venues. But still, there'll be more music going on most of the six days of the festival than anyone could hope to listen to.

Among featured attractions, in addition to singer Sarah Vaughan and saxophonist extraordinaire Sonny Rollins, will be former Detroiters Ron Carter (bass) and Tommy Flanagan (piano). Carter and Flanagan will play at Baker's Keyboard Lounge Friday, Aug. 30, through Sunday, Sept. 1, with two shows each night.

Concerts that seem most appealing will be the Friday night (Aug. 30) concert by diminutive French pianist Michel Petrucci at the Detroit Institute of Arts Recital Hall. Petrucci, only in his early 20s, has been influenced by the major jazz pianist Bill Evans, but the Frenchman has a mature, individual style that has impressed both fans and critics.

Toshiko Akiyoshi is one of the major female voices in jazz, although she doesn't sing (that we know of). Her voice is heard through her compositions and arrangements for her own jazz orchestra. The Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra performs on both Wednesday and Thursday evenings (Aug. 28-29) at the Hotel Pontchartrain Terrace.



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