

Getting Around

By ETHEL SIMMONS

With his black hair and beard and pale blue eyes, Marty Burke of Beverly Hills looks every bit the Irishman he claims to be. Burke, leader of the folk group Tinkers Dam, says his Irish heritage goes back 100 years.

The Tinkers Dam started out as a traditional Irish group. Most of the year, the group tours the country, but right now Burke is back home with his wife Pat and their two sons, Kevin and Sean, for the holidays.

Another member of Tinkers Dam, Dan Fogarty, also is an area resident, who lives in Birmingham. He and Teddard of Westland and David Heffer of Philadelphia complete the musical foursome.

Burke played on a cassette taped from a live performance during the interview around the kitchen table at home, where he is relaxing in a plush chair, the incident of a traditional Irish playing of windows.

CANDID, he said several times that there were comments he was making that didn't make it into the paper, but he won't mind about it and said that.

For example, he declared, "Detroit is a friendly provincial city. Its hard to get around in the city, but a stranger to show you can do with an audience."

have to make a living elsewhere."

According to Burke, "We've always gone over very well, every single place we've played. A lot of place we set records that are still broken. Like in Pittsburgh where we got our first vinyl release."

Tinkers Dam played a guest set this summer at the Wagon Wheel Saloon in Troy and returned for its first engagement there two days at Thanksgiving.

Burke was pleased about appearing around home in part because it enables him to be with his family at the holiday season. Tinkers Dam can't travel over Christmas and New Year's either.

"MUSICIANS IN Detroit are playing for peanuts," he said, explaining the reason why the group performs mostly in other cities throughout the country.

He added that a strictly local group can afford to work for less, but because of their travels his group has high overhead. On the road, Burke lives in a motel room, occasionally a hotel room.

It's like supporting two households," he said.

Sometimes wife Pat comes along with the children in the summer. She's stuck watching the kids, he said, when they can't get a babysitter and he's out performing.

Of Irish heritage and Tinkers Dam

Being on the road can definitely lose its charm. "I'm getting sick of it," he admitted. "Sometimes you wake up and don't know what city you're in."

Burke said that in Detroit the only people who seem to be using the acoustic instrument was opposed to the electric one in the smaller rooms that can't afford live group.

In the last year or so we've performed more in Pennsylvania and New England than anywhere else. We're moving south gradually to Florida and Texas."

ORIGINALLY from Grosse Pointe, Marty Burke went to Austin Prep School, the University of Michigan and Wayne State University graduate school majoring in psychology.

The interest in psychology stemmed from his background in the military. Burke said he has been acting since he was eight years old and performed with the Grosse Pointe Children's Theatre and later with the Playhouse in Detroit.

It's an addiction," he said of his acting, and although he doesn't have time to appear with an theatrical group now, "My last role is in 'The Shakespeare'." He incorporates dramatics on stage when he gets a chance.

"In bars, there's a lot of noise," he said. Burke likes to tell stories to his audiences, which range from lounges to bars and concerts.

He tells Irish stories and stories from the coast of Maine, where people are like the Irish, with dry humor. He also has languages and gets into accents.

Burke said he started out singing, but he college and assure he is a single act but wound up organizing the Tinkers Dam playing the Tipperary, an Irish pub in northwest Detroit.

Roger Redmond is a member of the original group formed in 1971. Dan Fogarty joined Tinkers Dam last February and David Heffer has been with them in the last two months.

"OUR SOUND is basically a New England folk group," Burke said. "I've been compared to the Kingston Trio and the Irish Rovers," although we don't sound like either one.

The Tinkers Dam does more than sing and is heavy on vocals. All four have guitars and instruments are fairly portable, almost anything else," he said, "is a liability."

Burke said two of the latest music styles anywhere, great on folk and string N.



Marty Burke is group leader.

played in Birmingham and Pick & Stum in Westland. All the group's instruments also come from there except for a banjo from the Rochester Folk Workshop.

The Tinkers Dam has a repertoire of thousands of songs from all over the world. They've got the sound they want but their material is always changing and they're doing more original things.

What's to put on a good show. We do an actual 14 of comedy," he added.

Tinkers Dam has recorded two albums for Boston Records. Burke's own company has two more albums awaiting release from the International Folklore label. Burke said he would be happy with one hit single.

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