

His great-grandmother was Sarah Makem, a collector of folk songs from Ireland. Her son was Tommy Makem of the famed folk band The Clancy Brothers, who played for Bob Dylan at the White Horse Tavern in New York City's Greenwich Village.

McElhinney will play a variety of old and new folk songs from America, Scotland and Ireland.

"One moment I'll have you laughing and the next moment you'll be crying with tears for the old country," he said.

McElhinney enjoys performing folk music because it's a "music of the people." "It's a music about the people. It's about their lives, their stories," he said.

He said Irish music isn't celebrated in Ireland as much as it is in the U.S. Surprisingly, Irish people want to hear more American country music.

But he says there's something special about the atmosphere of an Irish pub. "It's just a community hub — that's what I like about an Irish pub," he said.

Josh Curll, a vocalist and guitarist from the band the Sons of Malarkey, said he feels like the band is "brothers and sisters in arms" after playing together for 10 years.

"We just have a feel for each other," he said.

The six-person band plays Irish rock and is inspired by bands like The Clancy Brothers and The Dubliners.

Curll described Irish music as "sad stories set to upbeat melodies." "There's a lot of pain in those songs," he said. "At the same time, they're a way of expressing joy."

He said the band is looking forward to playing at the first year of the festival and is excited about its potential.

Stout Pounders are one of the festival's other large bands.

Darin Wallace, a vocalist in the five-person group, said they are "untraditionally traditional." They play traditional Irish and Scottish Folk music as well as covers and original songs.

Stout Pounders have been the house band for Seattle's St. Patrick's Day Dash for the last 10 years. For festivals the band tries to create sets that have good starts that carry through the middle and finish strong.

"We don't care if we're playing for 20 people, 200 people or 2,000 people, we bring that same energy," he said.

The band, he said, "tries to be a fun, good-time band that makes you forget about any troubles or things going on, and you can just sit back and enjoy, or throw back a pint or three."

For the full musical line-up, see page 5. 



Luke Whittaker

Aubrey and Dan Tobin own Crown Alley Irish Pub in Ocean Park.



Les Hause

Marian DiCicco.



Annie Henry

Annie Henry.



That Irish Guy

That Irish Guy, aka Ireland native Emmet McElhinney.



The Bold Doherty

Zach Doherty, aka The Bold Doherty.