



# Irish Christmas in America

**PROGRAM**

*There will be an intermission.*

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**Saturday, December 9 @ 8 PM**

Zellerbach Theatre

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## **Irish Christmas in America**

Produced by Sligo fiddler Oisín Mac Diarmada, the hugely popular Irish Christmas in America show features top Irish music, song and dance in an engaging performance rich in humor and boundless energy. The 2017 tour features special guest singer Niamh Farrell, a Sligo vocalist who has toured with UK singer/songwriting star David Gray. Farrell teams up with legendary West Kerry singer Séamus Begley, famous for his charming wit and stunning voice. This family-friendly performance features lively instrumental tunes on fiddle, flute, uilleann pipes and harp, along with thrilling Irish dancing from Samantha Harvey. In addition, evocative photographic images provide a backdrop to some of the rich historical traditions of Ireland. Take a memorable glimpse into the enchanting spirit of Christmas, as the best traditional artists from Ireland take you on a fun-filled start to the holiday season of 2017.

### **Niamh Farrell** (Vocals)

Farrell, a talented young singer from Sligo, came to the world's attention in 2014 during a 10-month world tour with English singer-songwriting star David Gray. The tour highlight for Farrell was performing at the Ryman Auditorium, the home of the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. For this show, she brings a magical voice and stage presence, invoking the warmth and charm of an Irish Christmas evening.

### **Séamus Begley** (Vocals/Accordion)

Begley comes from the Irish-speaking region of West Kerry, and is a member of one of Ireland's most musically-acclaimed families. Famous for his heartfelt singing, Begley is equally brilliant on the accordion, which he plays with astonishing energy and spontaneity, belting out jigs, slides and polkas with rapid sprays of ornamentation. He was awarded the prestigious TG4 Traditional Singer of the Year award in 2013.

### **Oisín Mac Diarmada** (Producer/Fiddle)

A graduate in music education from Trinity College Dublin/RIAM, Mac Diarmada has been described by *The Irish Echo's* Earle Hitchner as "one of the most gifted and creative traditional fiddlers playing today." Founder of noted group Téada, he is also a regular solo performer, having appeared as guest soloist with the Southern Georgia Symphony Orchestra (USA) and Württembergische Philharmonie Orchestra (Germany), and also boasts an extensive recording history.

### **Gráinne Hambly** (Irish Harp/Concertina)

Hambly is from County Mayo in the West of Ireland and is an internationally-recognized exponent of the Irish harp. In 1998, she completed a master's degree in musicology at Queen's University, Belfast, for which her main research topic was music collections and the harp in 18th-century Ireland. Since then, Hambly has toured extensively throughout Europe and the United States, giving concerts, workshops and masterclasses.

### **Samantha Harvey** (Dance/Piano)

Harvey is an award-winning step dancer, pianist and accordionist. She has performed throughout the world. Most recently, Harvey performed in RTÉ's Centenary 2016, broadcast live from the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre in Dublin, and with the Omaha Symphony in *A Celtic Journey*.

### **Sean Gavin** (Flute/Uilleann Pipes)

Gavin's ornate and driving style on the flute and uilleann pipes reflects his lifelong immersion in traditional Irish music. Despite his young age, he is already an accomplished performer, having toured extensively on three continents. He is currently residing in Chicago, and remains mostly dedicated to playing and teaching traditional Irish music. Gavin is a member of the groups Bua and NicGaviskey, and often performs with his family.