

ANNENBERG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

13/14 Season SEP-DEC





The Makem & Spain Brothers

with
Conor Makem
Rory Makem
Liam Spain
Mickey Spain

PROGRAM

*There will be no intermission.
Set list will be announced from stage.*

Saturday, October 12 at 7 PM

Harold Prince Theatre

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Every generation has a few acts that define where a musical genre is going, performers so confident in their chosen field that they are able to completely embrace the genre and yet introduce something new to it. In Irish folk music today, that act is the Makem and Spain Brothers.

Not in the past 30 years has a group taken the international stage with such vocal power and stage presence, capturing the essence of their genre, while standing out as something truly unique. A host of various instruments and strong male vocals, using precise three-part harmonies blend perfectly for what many have described as a wall of sound.

Folk songs are ingrained in both the Makem and Spain families and the band's songwriting contains the timeless qualities of folk classics: songs of the worker, songs of the sea and Irish culture. They tell the tale of Ireland and its people—a culture that has undergone terrible strife, but remains strong.

The Makems' father, Tommy Makem, is considered a cultural icon. Called the modern day "Bard of Armagh", he helped to bring Irish music out of the corner and into the international spotlight during the latter half of the 20th century. His success brought him three honorary doctorates, numerous lifetime achievement awards and his place on an Irish stamp.

Tommy learned songs from his mother Sarah Makem, a folk song collector in Northern Ireland. Folk luminaries such as Pete Seeger, Alan Lomax and Diane Hamilton visited Sarah to record her singing and collect and preserve the folk tradition. She was considered one of the prominent source singers, or true keepers of a tradition, in Ireland.

The Makem Brothers, **Conor** and **Rory**, were born in Drogheda, County Louth, about an hour north of Dublin. They continue the lineage of one of Irish music's dynasties.

The Spain Brothers, **Mickey** and **Liam** learned traditional folk songs from their father, Michael, who performed throughout New England for decades. Mickey's rich, baritone voice and Liam's mastery of stringed instruments quickly found a home when the Makems met the Spains and the brothers realized the power of their combined talents.

The Makem and Spain Brothers are continuing iconic lineages, preserving old folk songs, while creating the future of the tradition. Their love and knowledge of folk music comes as the result of generations of being steeped in it.

The Makem and Spain brothers' powerhouse vocals allow them to belt out old Irish standards like no one else today, both boisterous numbers and quiet ballads. Their original pieces are practically indiscernible from centuries old songs, even as they speak of modern life. Recently, the Makem and Spain Brothers have recorded with some of the biggest names in folk music, including Roger McGuinn, Tom Paxton, Noel Paul Stookey and Jonathan Edwards.

The Makem and Spain Brothers' educate audiences through a show that is all entertainment, from real-life stories to humor that can be enjoyed by everyone. They mix boisterous sing-alongs with touching ballads, infusing the history of Ireland and its people throughout the performance.

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