

## Tom Irwin Bio

For over thirty years Tom Irwin has been taking life experiences, turning them into songs, and giving those songs life through performances and recordings. The 51 year-old singer-songwriter opened for Willie Nelson & Family at the 2001 Illinois State Fair Grandstand and has performed with many other popular artists. Readers of *Illinois Times* voted him Best of Springfield for musician (2007), solo musician (2004), male musician (2002), male vocalist (2001), and folk band (1994 & 1999).

Irwin works around 200 dates a year in diverse venues and various areas. He has released ten full-length recordings of original songs selling thousands of copies of his music. *Carry Me Home*, his most recent recording, released in October of 2007 on Clyded Records was produced by Gary Gordon with an all acoustic lineup of mandolin, dobro, fiddle, and standup bass. The host of Songwriters Circle, a weekly gathering of central Illinois tunesmiths, for over 10 years, Irwin also has performed nearly every Sunday for over 15 years at the Brewhaus in downtown Springfield, Illinois.

His music has been described as "a cross between Buddy Holly and Frank Zappa" by *Gajoob* magazine, "brilliant and lasting" by the *Tucson Weekly*, "enduring" by the *State Journal-Register*, "updated John Prine," by the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and "good enough to smoke" by *Supe du Jour* of the Ozark Mountain Daredevils. Irwin was the featured artist in the Arts & Entertainment section of the *State Journal-Register*, the daily paper in Springfield, Illinois on several occasions over the past 15 years.

The singer-songwriter performs as a solo acoustic act, with country-folk influenced combos, and with the Notorious Hired Hands, an electrifying 5-piece rock & roll group. Original songs in his live shows range from the bucolic hilarity of "I'll Be Your Bull (If You'll Be My Heifer)", to the life study of "Diggin' in the Dirt", from the heartfelt sincerity of "Thank You for Loving Me" to parental loss in "I Called Him Dad." Irwin time-travels to the 1880s with the tale of his "Uncle Fud," talks about hard knocks in "The Bottom of the Hole," laughs at trouble in "What Else You Gonna Do," and brings it all back home with "Where the Earth Meets the Sky." Most recently Irwin received a Master's of Art degree from the University of Illinois in Springfield in Liberal and Integrative Studies with a focus on songwriting and folk music. He covers tunes by Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson, Hank Williams, Steve Earle, Bob Dylan, Townes Van Zandt, Willie Nelson, and many others.

You might laugh and cry, chuckle and squirm, tap your foot and nod your head, but you won't ignore or walk away untouched by this talented teller of stories through words and music.