

Andy Irvine's biography

Andy Irvine is one of the great Irish singers, his voice one of a handful of truly great ones that gets to the very soul of Ireland. He has been hailed as "a tradition in himself." Musician, singer and songwriter, Andy has maintained his highly individual performing skills throughout his over 50-year career. From [Sweeney's Men](#) in the mid 60s, to the enormous success of [Planxty](#) in the 70s, his duo with [Paul Brady](#) in the later 70s and then from [Patrick Street](#) to [Mozaik](#), LAPD and [Usher's Island](#), Andy has been a world music pioneer and an icon for traditional music and musicians.

As a soloist, Andy fills the role of the archetypal troubadour with a show and a travelling lifestyle that reflect his lifelong influence, **Woody Guthrie**. To quote The Irish Times, "Often copied, never equalled", his repertoire consists of Irish traditional songs, dexterous Balkan dances and a compelling canon of his own self-penned songs.

Andy Irvine first made his mark with the seminal band - "[Sweeney's Men](#)" in 1966 but after two years he left and travelled 'way out yonder' by 'the sunburnt thumb' to Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia, earning his living as a street musician and absorbing the musical traditions of the Balkans.

Returning to Ireland in 1970, Andy united with [Christy Moore](#), [Dónal Lunny](#) and [Liam O'Flynn](#) to form [Planxty](#), fanning the flames of Irish traditional music well into the next and future generations. Planxty broke up - for the first time - in late 1975 and Andy performed and recorded with [Paul Brady](#), making the classic album "[Andy Irvine & Paul Brady](#)" in 1976. He also worked and recorded briefly with [De Dannan](#) before re-uniting with Planxty in 1979 until it's second break up in 1983.

Andy's first solo album "Rainy Sundays...Windy Dreams" followed, as well as "Parallel Lines" a duo album with the great Scottish troubadour - [Dick Gaughan](#).

In 1985 Andy formed "[Mosaic](#)", a pan-European band that included [Dónal Lunny](#) and Hungarian singer [Marta Sebestyen](#). The band lasted for one blissful summer and Andy returned to solo work.

Andy was touring the US regularly with guitar player [Gerry O'Beirne](#) at this time and in 1986, at the instigation of fiddler [Kevin Burke](#) (Bothy Band), [Patrick Street](#) was born with the addition of [Jackie Daly](#) (De Dannan) and guitar maestro, [Arty McGlynn](#). Patrick Street has since recorded eight studio albums and one live with differing personnel. They released their last album in November 2007, "[On the Fly](#)", being the first with fiddle, banjo player, [John Carty](#) and the last with retiring member, Jackie Daly.

Andy recorded his second solo album "[Rude Awakening](#)" in 1991 and then created the hugely influential "[East Wind](#)" which featured [Davy Spillane](#) on uillean pipes and was produced by [Bill Whelan](#) who went on to write "Riverdance".

Andy recorded his third solo album "[Rain on the Roof](#)" in 1995 - this one really is (nearly) solo. It includes his anthemic song "[Never Tire of the Road](#)" and then his fourth, "[Way Out Yonder](#)" in 2000 which closes with the haunting song "[The Highwayman](#)".

In 2002, Andy drafted some long-time musical friends and formed his "dream band" - initially for a one off tour of Australia. Calling themselves [Mozaik](#), reminiscent of the earlier cross-genre group, Andy was joined by **Dónal Lunny**, Dutch multi-instrumentalist **Rens van der Zalm**, American Old Time fiddler and 5 string banjo player, **Bruce Molsky** and Hungarian multi-instrumentalist **Nikola Parov**. They have since released two albums, "[Live from the Powerhouse](#)"(2003) and "[Changing Trains](#)"(2007) and have toured Australia, Europe, USA and Japan with great musical success. This band, like Patrick Street is currently in mothballs but look out for it's new album recorded in Budapest in 2014 and about to see the light of day as "The Long and the Short of it"

2004 saw, after a break of 21 years, the return of the great group Planxty, The band played a small gig in Lisdoonvarna, largely to family and close friends - it was not advertised as Planxty - and then opened at Glór in Ennis to a fantastic reception. Planxty went on to play 10 sold out nights in Vicar Street in Dublin and record a live [CD](#) and [DVD](#).

The following year 2005, they played 6 sold out gigs at The Point Depot in Dublin, as well as shows in Galway, Belfast and The Barbican in London. It was generally reckoned that the band was better than ever and those who experienced it will never forget it.

In January 2008, Celtic Connections Festival in Glasgow featured a special reunion of [Andy Irvine & Paul Brady](#) at the Royal Concert Hall for their "Classic Album Showcase" concert, honouring the duo's album first released in 1976.

September 2009 saw Andy collaborating with the fine guitarist and singer, **John Doyle** for three highly successful concerts at the Irish Arts Center in New York City.

Though Planxty was no more, it's memory lived on with the band **LAPD** which featured **Andy**, **Donal** and **Liam** plus **Paddy Glackin**, the great Dublin fiddle player. LAPD had to throw in their hand when Liam decided to call it a day in 2012 but Donal, Andy and Paddy added **John Doyle** and his driving guitar and **Mike McGoldrick**'s brilliant flute, whistle and uilleann pipes to form a new band, "[Usher's Island](#)". Debut album – "[Usher's Island](#)" - out in June 2017.

Andy reached the age of 70 in 2012 and two great concerts were held in Vicar Street, Dublin to mark the occasion. Sweeney's Men were reformed(with **Johnny Moynihan** and **Terry Woods**, Mozaik got together, LAPD was there and Andy & Paul did a set. Andy's great friends from Athens, the **Galiatsos Brothers** came over and the shows were recorded and later came out on [DVD](#) and [CD](#) as "Andy Irvine 70th Birthday Concert at Vicar St 2012", music produced by **Dónal Lunny** and filmed by **Philip King**.

In August 2016 Andy went to Melbourne to record a new album with **Luke Plumb** – a brilliant mandolin player and record producer – they later toured Australia together in 2016/2017 with the album which is called "[Precious Heroes](#)". It has additional recordings by Rens van der Zalm and was remixed in 2017. The album was released in February 2018.

The year 2017 also coincided with the 40th Anniversary of "[Andy Irvine & Paul Brady](#)". (It was recorded in August 1976 but not released till January 1977.) Andy & Paul, together with **Dónal Lunny**, who produced the album and played guitar and bouzouki on it

and **Kevin Burke** who had played fiddle on the album, performed eight sold out concerts. Cork, three in Vicar Street, Dublin, Derry, Galway, Limerick and Belfast to rapturous audiences. The welcoming applause as they took the stage lasted for about five minutes on each occasion! This concert series was carried on the following year, October 2018 in Dublin, Cork, London and Prague, and was again very well received.

Andy received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the inaugural RTÉ Radio 1 Folk Awards in 2018. You can listen to the full show [HERE](#)

Ever the man for new pastures, Andy has played concerts all over Europe and has toured many times in Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada. He was also undertaken extensive tours of Costa Rica, Panama, Nicaragua, Japan, Iceland, Faroe Islands, Argentina and Chile.

Although an integral part of the finest Irish bands of our time, Andy Irvine continues along the path he set for himself so long ago - a vibrant career as a solo artist in the old style, a teller of tales and maker of music.