



**Irish American Heritage Museum**  
21 Quackenbush Square  
Albany, New York 12207  
(518) 427-1916  
[www.irish-us.org](http://www.irish-us.org)

**MICHAEL CORNELIUS CLARKE**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**HAYDEN-GRACE FRANCIS**  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **THE IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM ANNOUNCES 2026 SERIES OF PROGRAMMING TO COMMEMORATE AMERICA'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY**

*IAHM Proudly Honors America's Independence Through Innovative  
Series of Educational and Artistic Lectures, Exhibitions and Performances*

ALBANY, NEW YORK - February 9, 2026: The Irish American Heritage Museum, which is dedicated to preserving and sharing the Irish experience in the United States, is proud to announce the 2026 launch of a new series of events honoring the upcoming 250th anniversary of American independence.

Titled "*Echoes of Freedom: Irish Voices in America's Story*," the multi-event performance series will explore the powerful and often overlooked role of Irish immigrants and Irish Americans in shaping the cultural, political, and social foundations of the United States. Through exhibitions, music, theater, spoken word, dance and storytelling, the series will highlight how Irish traditions and voices contributed to America's journey toward independence and democracy, and how those traditions and voices continue to influence the nation today. This series - which will run through 2026 and will be aligned with national commemorations of America's Semiquincentennial - will take place at IAHM and partner venues, and will also be offered as part of IAHM's extensive outreach program to community centers, schools and senior residences, making the series accessible to audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

*Echoes of Freedom: Irish Voices in America's Story* will commence with the launch of IAHM's "America 250 Performance Series" on February 17, 2026 (7:00 PM) at the Museum, with an informance (lecture and performance) given by legendary Irish performer Derek Warfield entitled "**Irish Hands, American Waterways: The Erie Canal in Song and Story**." Warfield - a founding member of the Irish band the Wolf Tones and globally recognized historian, singer, songwriter, and mandolin player - will both tell the story of the Irish and the Erie Canal and perform songs in this historical context with his band, the Young Wolf Tones.

"Irish immigrants were deeply woven into the fabric of early America—from Revolutionary-era soldiers and laborers to poets, printers, and political thinkers," said IAHM's Executive Director

Michael C. Clarke. “As the nation prepares to mark 250 years of independence, IAHM’s *Echoes of Freedom: Irish Voices in America’s Story* will offer opportunities to reflect on how the Irish American experience helped shape the ideals of freedom, resilience, and community that define the United States.”

Each event and exhibition in IAHM’s *Echoes of Freedom: Irish Voices in America’s Story* will connect historical themes with contemporary expression. Planned events include traditional and contemporary Irish music inspired by the Revolutionary period, original works based on letters and diaries of Irish immigrants, and modern interpretations of themes such as migration, identity, and civic participation by the Irish and their diaspora. Educational talk-backs and community discussions will accompany select performances, encouraging deeper engagement with history and its relevance today.

*Echoes of Freedom: Irish Voices in America’s Story* is part of IAHM’s broader commitment to public education, cultural preservation, heritage enhancement and community dialogue. As a relatively small institution, the Irish American Heritage Museum plays a vital role in amplifying stories that may not always be represented in larger national narratives.

IAHM invites the public, educators, artists, and community partners to participate in and support the *Echoes of Freedom: Irish Voices in America’s Story* events. Additional details, including performance schedules and artist announcements, will be released in the coming months.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **ABOUT THE IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM**

The Irish American Heritage Museum (IAHM) is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation created by the New York State legislature in 1986. The IAHM is located in Albany, which is the Capital of New York State. The IAHM is an educational institution which provides critical educational services to not only its membership, but to local school districts and educational institutions in both New York State and across the world. The IAHM fosters dialogue and exchanges of ideas between America and Ireland. Through this sharing, IAHM creates connections and community among all Americans in the context of both the appreciation and the study of the universality of the immigrant story in America.

In addition to exhibitions, IAHM hosts a robust series of programs, including traditional Irish music sessions and performances, lectures, once a month traditional and folk (“Trad/Folk”) Irish performances, a “Celtic Influences Performance Series” where non-Irish performers tell how their art was influenced by the Irish, film screenings, and assorted one-person shows, plays, and busking experiences. Through the generosity of committed donors in 2025, IAHM launched its Regional Irish Cultural Ambassador Scholarships program, designed to immerse recipients (“Ambassadors”) in Irish arts, heritage, culture, and community experiences in different U.S. regions. Through artistic exchange and cultural collaboration, Ambassadors return home enriched and ready to share their new experiences with their own Irish communities. Three IAHM Regional Irish Cultural Ambassadors were named in 2025.

IAHM is home of the Flanagan Theater, a fabulous and unique 60-seat performance space in the midst of the Museum. At Flanagan Theater, known as “Albany’s Most Intimate Venue,” world class Irish musicians and actors perform, and many of IAHM’s presentations, lectures, literature readings and workshops are held.

To learn more, visit [www.irish-us.org](http://www.irish-us.org), follow IAHM on [Facebook](#), and see programming on [IAHM Eventbrite](#).

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Michael Cornelius Clarke

Executive Director

**Irish American Heritage Museum**

21 Quackenbush Square

Albany, New York 12207

OFFICE: (518) 427-1916

MOBILE: (917) 742-9916

Email: [michael.clarke@irish-us.org](mailto:michael.clarke@irish-us.org)

**ATTACHMENT**

Announcement

February 17, 2026 Event, *Irish Hands, American Waterways: The Erie Canal in Song and Story*

IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM

PROUDLY PRESENTS

2026 AMERICA 250 PERFORMANCE SERIES

# IRISH HANDS, AMERICAN WATERWAYS: THE ERIE CANAL IN SONG AND STORY

Purchase tickets at [www.irish-us.org](http://www.irish-us.org)  
Admission \$20 Members/\$15 Not-Yet Members



17 FEBRUARY, 2026 - 7:00 PM

IAHM commences a 2026 multi- event performance series *Echoes of Freedom: Irish Voices in America's Story* with an informance (lecture and concert) by legendary Irish singer, songwriter, historian and musician Derek Warfield, who will present the story of the Irish and the Erie Canal in the context of music beautifully performed by Derek and his band the Young Wolf Tones.

IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM

Flanagan Theater

"Albany's Most Intimate Venue"

21 Quackenbush Square

Albany, New York 12207

518-427-1916

[www.irish-us.org](http://www.irish-us.org)

