



### The Saw Doctors *Clare Island To Cape Cod* Shamtown Records

The front of the DVD liner bears the legend Clare Island To Cape Cod as well as the sub-title The Saw Doctors In Concert. On screen as the band takes the centrally located stage of the Melody Tent in Hyannis, Cape Cod, the titles 3000 Miles That Way and A documentary film by Stephen Lock flash on the screen. Confused already?

Songwriters Leo Moran (vocals, guitar) – his smiling face appears on the liner cover - and Davy Carton (vocals, guitar) formed the Saw Doctors in Taum, County Galway during 1986 and have in the decades since presided over ever-changing four to six piece line-ups. In 1990 their song *I Useta Lover* became the biggest-selling Irish single of all time and topped the national chart for nine weeks. The band released its debut album the following year. In October last year, following seventeen years famine the band once again reached # 1 on the Irish Singles Chart with a cover of *About You Now*. The Doctors line-up, as seen on this concert documentary are Moran, Carton, Kevin Duffy (keyboards), Anthony Thistlethwaite (bass guitar, saxophone), and Eimhín Craddock (drums). During one interview sequence, Craddock reveals that he was born in 1983.

Ireland's holy mountain a 2500 feet peak called Croagh Patrick aka 'The Reek' is located in County Mayo, which lies adjacent to and north of Galway. Saint Patrick reputedly fasted on the summit for forty days. On the last Sunday of each July thousands ascend to the summit, and as the opening credits roll scenes from that pilgrimage are merged with shots of the Doctors' pogo-ing Cape Cod fans. This being their third consecutive annual appearance, the Melody Tent has become a mid-August fixture on the Doctors' tour calendar. Cut into the first song - a performance of the rowdy, audience participation number *Hay Wrap* - Leo Moran comments *"It's such an unusual setting and energy builds up in the venue. It's like an old natural amphitheatre and people are in your face on all sides. There's almost a sense of something medieval happening in there, a really old kind of a ceremony, as well as rock music with a light show and loads of sound equipment."*

Onscreen, inside and outside the tent, there's no doubting the rabid worship displayed by their North American fans. Live performances apart, the documentary includes sequences filmed in Ireland, on their tour bus and with stage manager Long Haired Ollie. By way of reinforcing the reality that music crosses borders and oceans and in the process influences thousands of people, sat on a beach with Carton, Moran philosophises. *"Songs are about sharing feelings and emotions and ideas. That's what they do. If you have ideas and emotions that are somewhat similar or common to other people, they'll work no matter where you bring them. People telling us that a song about the road between Taum and Galway won't be understood abroad (a reference to their song N17), it's like telling Bruce Springsteen he's wasting his time writing about the Jersey shore."*

Shamtown Records have released this 65 minute in-concert documentary as a region-free DVD, and it contains a bonus video of *I Useta Lover*. With a marginal variation in song content, it's accompanied by a fourteen track CD titled Live At The Melody Tent. Steven Lock directed the Live In Galway DVD (2004)

and it was accompanied by a CD of the same name. The following year the band's Live In The New Year CD surfaced. Eight of the fourteen songs performed onscreen in the Melody Tent – including *N17*, *Clare Island*, *Green And Red Of Mayo* and *Joyce Country Ceili Band* c/w a Pee-wee Herman lookalike/Riverdancer – also featured on the aforementioned 2004 release. The profusion of common content begs the question why repeat the past?

**Arthur Wood.**

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