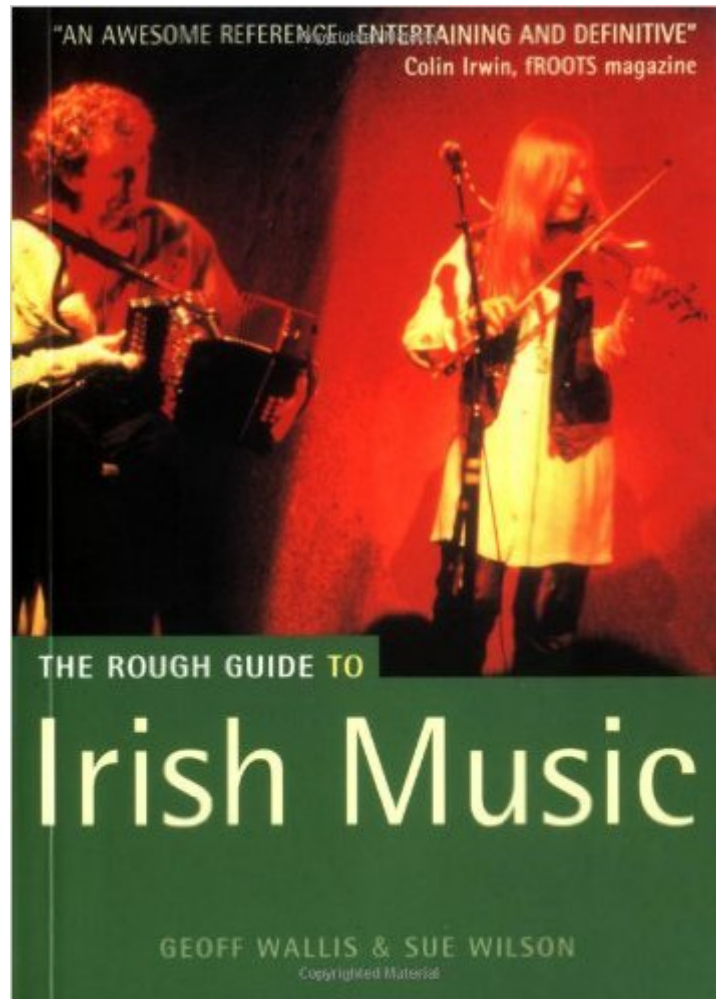


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# The Rough Guide To Irish Music (Rough Guide Music Reference)



## Synopsis

Taking Irish traditional music as its starting point and focus, this guide traces the music's history, describes its fundamental elements and provides a detailed directory of all the key singers, musicians and bands, listings of venues, festivals, record companies, and instrument makers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

My only problem with this book is that it wasn't written four years ago when I first became seriously interested in Irish music (I eventually started the Arizona Irish Music Society...). I could not find a quick cure to my ignorance and reading Irish Music Magazine was frustratingly unsystematic. Most books on Irish music are focused on the early history of the music, but there was little about the last 50 years. For me The Rough Guide to Irish Music is absolute God send. It is incredibly thorough and yet quite readable. The first part of the book gives an excellent background on the history of Irish music and its evolution over the last fifty years. The next sections give profiles of key artists and bands with recommendations about their best CD's. Beware, reading this section can be very expensive! I cannot pretend familiarity with all the performers and bands covered, but I was favorably impressed with their coverage of the performers I do know. The Rough Guide Guide to Irish Music is an incredible achievement.

The format and content of this compact guide to Irish music makes the reader eager to listen and

learn. The guide has three main sections: background, musicians, and listings. Within each section, the layout allows the reader to peruse for specific information, such as recording history, accompanying artists, and recommended CD top choices as well as recording labels. The background section provides an overview of style and form; while the listing section includes resources not readily available to Americans in such a concise format. I recommend the book for the balanced and well researched information, adroitly presented, that can help with purchases for one's own or a Celtic friend's collection.

It is, of course, impossible to know all that is knowable about Irish music, much less present it in a single book. Geoff Wallis and Sue Wilson come amazingly close to accomplishing that daunting task, however, with *The Rough Guide to Irish Music*. The volume is deceptively small, though thick, and it's packed with information. It begins with an explanation of the roots of Irish music, its relation to "Celtic" music -- the terms are synonymous in some circles, antithetical in others -- and the people responsible for keeping the music alive and/or bringing it back into the public's fickle consciousness. Next, an excellent chapter spells out the differences among the many Irish vocal and instrumental styles. Do you know what "sean nos" really means? Can you identify a reel, jig, slip jig or hornpipe by its time signature? This section will help. The bulk of the book is devoted to a "who's who" of Irish music, and you'd be hard-pressed to find a reference more complete. After dividing the musicians into loose categories -- singers, groups, families, fiddlers, harpers, etc. -- the book provides concise but thorough biographies detailing their influences and impact on the music scene. Each entry also notes the most influential albums from each band/musician, making it easy for readers to know where to expand their collections. The book ends with a listing for sessions around Ireland, plus music festivals, schools, media, recommended reading and other resources. If you have any interest in expanding your knowledge of Irish music and Irish musicians, this is the place to do it. *The Rough Guide to Irish Music* is a phenomenal package that's useful and well-written to boot. It's compact size makes it easy to stow in a music case or jacket pocket, and I predict you'll find yourself pulling it to browse a lot more often than you'd expect for a reference book.

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