

# American Celebration of Music In Ireland & Scotland

Standard Tour #3 (10 nights / 12 days)

## Day 1

Departure from the USA via scheduled airline service to Shannon, Ireland. Enjoy full meal/beverage service and in-flight entertainment during this trans-Atlantic flight.

## Day 2 Shannon / Galway, Ireland

Arrive in Shannon. Meet your MCI Tour Manager, who will assist the group to awaiting chartered motorcoach for a transfer to Galway via the Cliffs of Moher, one of Ireland's most spectacular sights. On a clear day, the views are tremendous. Evening Welcome Dinner and overnight.

*Galway is picturesquely situated at the northeast end of Galway Bay, at the point where the short tidal River Corrib, coming from Lough Corrib, pours its abundant flow of water into the Atlantic. Galway is the see of the diocese of Galway county, and has a university (part of the National University of Ireland), in which much of the teaching is in Irish. With its narrow streets, old stone and wooden shopfronts, good restaurants and bustling pubs, it is one of Europe's fastest growing cities and ranks fourth in size in Ireland, after Dublin, Cork and Limerick.*

## Day 3 Galway

Excursion along the Coast of Connemara and the Lakes. Visit Kylemore Abbey. Kylemore Abbey is a lakeside castle that is a romantic, battlemented Gothic Revival fantasy. It became an abbey when Benedictine nuns, fleeing from Ypres in Belgium in World War I, sought refuge here. The nuns now run the abbey as a select girls' boarding school. In the grounds, rhododendrons and fuchsias enhance lakeside walks. **Possible lunchtime or evening concert in Kylemore Abbey as part of the American Celebration of Music in Ireland.** Return to Galway for overnight.

## Day 4 Galway / Limerick / Killarney

Transfer to Killarney via Limerick for a visit to Bunratty Castle. The castle was begun by the Vikings, who built a fortified settlement on a former island surrounded by a moat. Then came the Normans, who built the first stone structure in the 1270's. The present castle is the fourth or fifth to occupy the location beside the River Ratty and was built in the early 1400's. Continue to Killarney for overnight.

*Renowned for its beauty, famed for the splendor of its scenery, Killarney is one of the world's best-loved tourist spots. Killarney (Cill Airne - The Church of Sloes) became a magnificent town around 1750 when the local magnate, Lord Kenmare, developed the tourist business and four major roads were built to the outside world. Killarney's main economic base is tourism.*



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### **Day 5 Killarney**

Full-day excursion along the Ring of Kerry, a 179 km road circuit around the Iveragh Peninsula. It has captivating mountain and coastal scenery, dotted with slate-roofed fishing villages. The Ring is one of Ireland's premier tourist attractions. *Evening concert in Killarney as part of the American Celebration of Music in Ireland.*

### **Day 6 Killarney / Cork**

Transfer to Cork via the beautiful Kinsale. Upon arrival in Cork, we will visit the Blarney Castle and Stone. The castle dates from 1446 and is built on solid limestone in beautiful grounds. The sacred stone is found at the top of the castle and when you catch a glimpse of it, you may well feel compelled to bend over backwards and kiss it!

*Cork City dates back to the 7th century and features many fine Georgian buildings of which the Grand Parade and South Mall are the finest. The Potato Famine reduced the city to a sorry place, where many emigrants bade farewell to their homeland. Cork also played a key role in Ireland's struggle for independence. Today, it is a thriving and fast growing city.*

### **Day 7 Cork**

Half-day sightseeing includes entrance to Cork Heritage Park. The center is housed in the outbuildings of the Bessboro estate, the home of the Pikes, a local Quaker family. As well as tracing the history of the family, who like many prosperous Quakers were known for their charitable works during the Famine, it has displays of local flora and fauna, Cork Harbor, horse-drawn transport, and Cork City fire brigade. We will also see the imposing St. Finbarr's Cathedral, which was designed by the Victorian architect William Burges and completed in 1879 and Shandon Bells. *Evening concert as part of the American Celebration of Music in Ireland.*

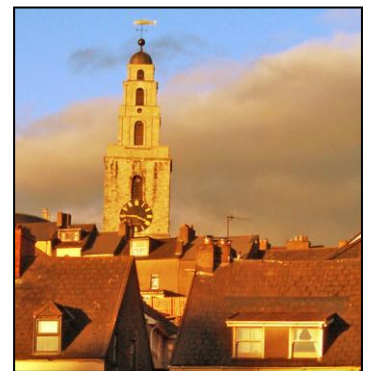
### **Day 8 Cork / Waterford / Kilkenny**

Transfer to Kilkenny via Waterford for a walking tour of the city given by Jack Burtchaell. Jack Burtchaell has for years now charmed and informed visitors on his historic tours. A walled city of Viking origins, Waterford retains much of its medieval character together with the graceful buildings from its 18th century expansion. Reginald's Tower marks the city's Viking heart and the surrounding area is particularly attractive. Also visit the Waterford Glass visitors center to some of the famous hand cut crystal. Continue to Kilkenny for a visit to Kilkenny Castle where the visitor will learn about life in the castle over the many centuries of its existence.

*Kilkenny is considered by many to be second only to Dublin in its attraction for visitors. Its narrow winding streets lend it an atmosphere of old world charm; its terraces of handsome Georgian houses give it elegance; and with all this it is a busy modern town and market center for a fertile agricultural area.*

### **Day 9 Kilkenny / Dublin**

Transfer to Dublin via Glendalough and the Wicklow Mountains. The steep wooded slopes of Glendalough the "valley of the two lakes" harbor one of Ireland's most atmospheric monastic sites — established in the 6th century. Here we visit the Round Tower, Cathedral, St. Kevin's Cross and Kitchen, and Gatehouse. Continue to Dublin for overnight.



*Dublin is Ireland's capital and its largest, most cosmopolitan city. It wasn't before the Viking raids of the 9th century that Dublin was fully established. The 'boom years' came in the 18th century and the city expanded across the river forming a new Dublin of stately squares, streets and Georgian mansions. Today, with its elegant Georgian streets, gregarious inhabitants and over one thousand years of history, it's little wonder Dublin is a city of writers.*



### **Day 10 Dublin**

This morning's touring includes visits to Dublin Castle and Trinity College. Beyond Dublin's City Hall stands Dublin Castle. In 1204 King John began the construction of a castle (completed 1226) of which little survives, and then much altered, in the present building. From the reign of Elizabeth I to the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1921 the Castle was the seat of the Viceroy and the headquarters of British administration. Next, enjoy a tour of Trinity College, which is Ireland's oldest university. It was founded by Queen Elizabeth I in 1592 on grounds confiscated from a monastery. Trinity College's official name is the University of Dublin, although it is popularly known by the name of its sole college. The highlight of the tour will be a view of the Book of Kells, which dates from AD 800, making it one of the oldest books in the world. ***Evening concert in Dublin as part of the American Celebration of Music in Ireland.***



### **Day 11 Dublin**

Enjoy the atmosphere of Dublin at our leisure. Perhaps you may like to relax in a pub listening to some traditional Irish music. Alternatively, just enjoy exploring the streets of one of Europe's most vibrant capitals. ***Lunchtime concert/recital in St. Patrick's Cathedral as part of the American Celebration of Music in Ireland.*** Evening Farewell Dinner and overnight.



### **Day 12 Depart for home**

Transfer to Dublin's International Airport for return flight to USA. Arrive home in the evening of the same day.