Kansas State University Chamber Orchestra
American Celebration of Music in Ireland

March 17 – 26, 2017  (8 nights/10 days)

Day 1  Friday, March 17  
Depart via scheduled air service to Dublin, Ireland

Day 2  Saturday, March 18  (D)
Dublin
Arrive in Dublin  
Meet your MCI Tour Manager, who will assist the group to awaiting chartered motor coach for a transfer to the hotel via panoramic tour of Dublin's highlights including St. Stephen's Green, South Bank, College Green, Merrion Square, Liffey Footbridges, Grafton Street, Temple Bar, O'Connell Street, Phoenix Park, etc.  Also visit Trinity College, Ireland’s oldest university (including viewing the Book of Kells)  
Late afternoon hotel check-in  
Evening Welcome Dinner and overnight  

Dublin is Ireland’s capital and its largest, most cosmopolitan city. 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 long history, it’s little wonder Dublin is a city of writers

Day 3  Sunday, March 19  (B,D)
Dublin

Breakfast at the hotel  
Morning visit to the National Museum of Ireland housing houses artifacts which date from 7,000 BC to the 20th century. The Kildare Street site is home to artifacts from Viking times displayed alongside Celtic masterpieces and it houses one of the largest collections of Bronze Age gold in the world  
Lunch on own  
Travel north to the picturesque maritime village of Malahide for some time in the village or on the beach.  See the Malahide Castle, one of Ireland's oldest and most historic castles  
Return to Dublin via Howth (a fishing and yachting port, and popular suburban resort) and Dublin Bay  
Performance as part of the American Celebration of Music in Ireland  
Evening dinner and overnight

Day 4  Monday, March 20  (B,D)
Dublin / Galway

Breakfast at the hotel  
Transfer to Galway via Clonmacnoise.  The ancient monastic settlement of Clonmacnoise (Cluain Mic Nois, "Meadow of the Son of Nos") lies in the heart of Ireland, on high ground above the east bank of the Shannon. The walled precinct of the monastery is like a large and lonely churchyard with its many graves scattered about amid the ruins of buildings and high crosses of the Early Christian and medieval periods  
Lunch on own  
Continue to Galway for 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. With its narrow streets, old stone and wooden shop fronts, 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 5 Tuesday, March 21 Galway (B,D)
Breakfast at the hotel
Full-day tour of Connemara. Connemara is a land of lakes and rivers, bogs and mountains, a land of small villages where Gaelic is still the spoken language and where little has changed since the beginning of time. It is without a doubt the wildest and the most romantic part of Ireland.

Enjoy a visit to Kylemore Abbey. The architecture is best described as neo-gothic and the house still displays all the characteristics of that period. One of Kylemore Abbey's most famous features is its miniature cathedral, built in 1870 and known locally as the Gothic church. Today, the abbey is home to the Irish order of Benedictine nuns.

Lunch on own

Performance as part of the American Celebration of Music in Ireland
Evening dinner and overnight

Day 6 Wednesday, March 22 Galway / County Sligo / Derry (B,D)
Breakfast at the hotel
Transfer to County Donegal via County Sligo. The lakes of Sligo, with their still waters and wooded islands, are truly spectacular, and form a striking contrast to the county's rugged uplands. The imposing Neolithic cairn on the summit of Knocknarea, known locally as Queen Maeve's grave, is a striking landmark. At Carrowmore, you'll find the largest megalithic cemetery in Ireland. Enjoy a cruise on Lough Gill. It is very easy to see why this lake area so influenced the poet William Butler Yeats. The 50 minute cruise will pass the historic Parkes Castle and the famous "Isle of Innisfree". During the trip, the skipper George McGoldrick will recite tales of folklore, history and poetry associated with Ireland's most famous son, W.B. Yeats.

Optional visit to Belleek Pottery (not open on weekends). Visit the factory and see firsthand, how this world-renowned pottery is created.

Lunch on own

Continue to Derry for dinner and overnight

If you long to get away from it all, then Donegal is the perfect spot. With soaring sea cliffs, deserted white sandy beaches, jaw-dropping landscapes, excellent seafood and quiet cozy pubs, Donegal forces you to sit back, slow down and admire the view. Whether you want to opt for long rambling walks over rugged terrain, laze around on a scenic beach, or explore an ancient site, this spectacular county in Ireland's North West corner is hard to beat.

Day 7 Thursday, March 23 Derry / Donegal Region (B,D)
Breakfast at the hotel
Enjoy a full-day touring in the Donegal region passing through Killybegs, a famous fishing village and the Glenties. Visit the Glenveagh National Park, in many ways one of Ireland’s hidden treasures - its 10,000 acres of protected wilderness are there to be explored as well as Glenveagh Castle and the splendid gardens which surround it.

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At the south-west end of the Park are the ice-carved cliffs of the Poisoned Glen and Bingorm, while the north-east end has a gentler array of hills, deep peat bogs and a swampy valley.

Lunch on own

Performance as part of the American Celebration of Music in Ireland

Evening dinner and overnight

Day 8  Friday, March 24  Derry / Giant's Causeway / Belfast  (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel
Transfer to Giant's Causeway for a visit. The Causeway was formed more than 60 million years ago when red-hot lava erupted onto the surface of the earth. It was quickly cooled by the sea, which crystallized it and formed it into the 40,000 basalt polygonal columns, which today form the Giants Causeway. A must on any visit to the North of Ireland, the Causeway is an UNESCO World Heritage site, and is referred to as the 'Eighth Wonder of the World'
Lunch on own
Also visit Carrick-a-Rede, on the Antrim Coast, a spectacular rope bridge, which spans a chasm some eighty feet deep
Continue to Belfast
Performance as part of the American Celebration of Music in Ireland
Evening dinner and overnight

Belfast, capital since 1920 of the six counties of Northern Ireland, is an important industrial city and port. It lies beautifully situated on Belfast Lough in the northeast of Ireland, at the mouth of the River Lagan. The central pedestrianized area on the west bank of the River Lagan makes a pleasant place to stroll, with several department stores, shopping arcades, pubs and restaurants. The magnificence of its 19th century buildings earned the city the sobriquet "Athens of the North"

Day 9  Saturday, March 25  Belfast  (B,D)

Breakfast at the hotel
Half-day guided tour of Belfast including the leaning Albert Memorial Clock tower (Ireland's answer to the Tower of Pisa), the Opera House, The Crown Bar (dates from 1885), Queens University, the Botanic Gardens, and Shankill and Falls Road. Visit Belfast City Hall, built in 1896. Its centrepiece is a central copper dome 53-m high. On the lawn outside there are numerous monuments to those who have contributed to civic life in Belfast. The central statue is of Queen Victoria, but also to be seen is the monument to those, from Belfast, who lost their lives on-board the ill-fated Titanic, which was built in the Belfast shipyards in 1912.
Lunch on own
Enjoy some time at leisure for sightseeing, shopping or other activities
Evening Farewell Dinner and overnight

Day 10  Sunday, March 26  Depart for home  (B)

Breakfast at the hotel
Transfer to Dublin’s airport for return flight

This is a very flexible itinerary. Except for confirmed appointments and performances, the places of interest and the sequence of sightseeing might be changed if necessary or desirable. In the event of an unavoidable conflict in the performance and the sightseeing schedule, the concert schedule will prevail, and it may be necessary to exclude some sightseeing activities.

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