The excitement of dance, music, theatre and storytelling comes to you!

A Gaelic gathering: Irish music and dance
LET’S GET STARTED!

Enclosed is a packet of information about the scheduled program. Please review all of the documents carefully, as they are the materials you will need to sponsor a successful program.

THE DAILY SCHEDULE

It is important that the daily schedule be maintained as specified on the confirmation document. If special circumstances occur once the project has begun, notify Music Center staff as soon as possible. Changes may be accommodated pending artist availability (which can be limited). We request that all participants be seated in the performance area and ready to begin at the scheduled times.

STUDENT SUPERVISION AT SCHOOL SITES

In accordance with California law, The Music Center requires that a classroom teacher be present with students at all times. It is expected that teachers will attend events with their class and actively participate in the learning experience.

YOUR FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

About a week after the performance, you’ll receive an invoice in the mail. You have 30 days to pay upon receipt of the invoice. We do ask that you wait until you receive the invoice before sending payment.

ARTIST INTRODUCTION & STAGING REQUIREMENTS

Please introduce the artist with the enclosed introduction. There is also specific information you will need to prepare for the arrival of each artist. Please give the tech sheet to the school personnel in charge of setting up the performance area well in advance of the scheduled dates. Be sure to have ready any equipment which may be required.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

These pre- and post-event classroom activities are designed to enhance the understanding and enjoyment of the program. Please duplicate this preparation material and distribute to all teachers whose students will be attending the event to allow them to fully prepare the students.

PRESS RELEASE AND POSTER

A pre-made press release is available should you wish to publicize the event. A premade poster is also included so that your school community can be aware of the upcoming event.

We applaud your commitment to arts education and look forward to working with you.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to call us at 213-972-4310.
"I would like to introduce today's performance which is presented by The Music Center of Los Angeles County. This performance is titled A Gaelic Gathering: Irish Music & Dance. Created by Irish dancer and choreographer, Maíre (pronounced: mor-uh) Clerkin, this performance features the exciting jigs and reels of Irish dance, stirring Celtic songs and traditional Irish instruments. Please welcome A Gaelic Gathering: Irish Music & Dance!"

Feel free to encourage the adult members of your audience to share the experience on social media! Tag us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram at @MusicCenterLA and we might repost your photos!
**TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

**SPACE**
- 15’ wide x 12’ deep minimum, 25’ wide x 15’ deep preferred
- Portable stages must be sturdy, level and securely lashed with steps leading up to the stage

**SURFACE**
- Freshly mopped (not waxed)
- Irregularities covered with tape
- Extraneous clutter removed
- No carpet, concrete, or rubber surfaces

**OUTDOOR PERFORMANCES**
- In general, not recommended. Wood floor, shelter from wind, sun and noise required

**AUDIENCE SEATING**
- Raked seating preferred so that dancers’ feet are visible

**EQUIPMENT**
- Sound system
- 4 microphones on stands, one down-stage right and two in front of the musicians
- 6 armless chairs

**ARRIVAL**
- 45 minutes prior to the scheduled start time to prepare and set up

**PARKING**
- Six spaces, one space close to the venue for loading and unloading

**ASSISTANCE**
- Please have a school representative ready to welcome the performers and to stay and help as needed.

**START TIME**
- Please prepare to start the program on time
- Students should be in the auditorium, seated and ready to begin at the listed times
A GAEIC GATHERING: IRISH MUSIC AND DANCE

ART FORM: Music & Dance
STYLE: Traditional
CULTURE: Irish (Gaelic)

MEET THE ARTIST:
A Gaelic Gathering: Irish Music and Dance, commissioned by The Music Center, is a feast of Irish tunes and dances created by the group’s leader Máire Clerkin. She is accompanied by Music Director, fiddle player and vocalist, Kira Ott, and uilleann piper, vocalist and bodhran (drum) player, Patrick D’Arcy. The group’s ensemble also features dancers Megan Drake, Daithi Fisher and Ian McLeod. Frank Simpson (flutes and whistles), Susan Winsberg (flute and whistle) and Brendan Bell (flute), Eric Rigler (pipes) and Steve Pribyl (pipes) are guest artists. Together they guide their audience on a cultural journey through Ireland’s rich heritage.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE:
A Gaelic Gathering – Irish Music & Dance celebrates the exuberance of Irish culture. Traditional instruments accompany rhythmical hard shoe Jigs and Hornpipes, as well as lyrical soft shoe Reels and Slipjigs. The artists explain the social context of Irish people gathering to socialize and relax, by singing, playing and dancing. Audience members experience interactive rhythm exercises and participatory singing, hear stirring melodies, and see intricate footwork in both the rhythmic step and Ceili (group) dances. Several students are invited onto the stage to join in with a social dance. The musicians describe the origins and mechanics of their instruments, teaching the students to name and understand the string, wind and percussive differences. The program also mentions the emigration history of Irish people to the United States and highlights their impact on American culture.

PREPARING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:
Ireland – despite its many cities and towns, is mainly a rural country made up of small farms, large families and close communities. Traditional Irish music and dance originates in those communities whereby people would assemble after work in kitchens and barns. Before television, computers and rapid transportation, this was the main form of entertainment and social interaction. Vocals were a central part of the culture with song and storytelling often in Gaelic, the Irish language. Fiddles, flutes and pipes formed the basis for many gatherings. One of the oldest instruments is the Uilleann Pipes. Uilleann (“illun”) is Gaelic for elbow, which pumps air into the bag strapped to the piper’s waist. There are many varieties of whistles, including flute and tin whistle. Bodhran, (“bowrawn”) the unique Irish drum is made of goatskin and wood. The fiddle (violin) is the oldest stringed instrument played in Irish music, along with the harp. In contemporary Irish bands, guitar, banjo and mandolin are added to the mix along with accordion and piano. The main tunes and dances are the Reel, Jig, Slipjig and Hornpipe. Social dances in groups of four, six, eight and twelve, known as figure or Ceili (“kaylee”) dances, are ancient formation dances. Within a figure dance you will see symmetry and shapes such as circles, squares, and straight lines made by the dancers. Stepdancing’s intricate footwork has evolved in part from visiting European dancing masters in the 18th and 19th century. Rhythmically, it reflects the complexity of the music. Students may be familiar with Irish Dancing’s American relation Tap Dance (an African American / Irish clog amalgam). Appalachian culture traces its roots back to Ireland. Ceili dance is closely linked to other folk dance. Today Irish dancing has become a global phenomenon with touring shows such as “Riverdance.” Irish step-dancing is always recognizable: the body is upright, the legs move fast, but the arms stay down by the sides. A large party of Irish music and dancing is nowadays referred to as a Ceili, with musicians on-stage and dozens of dancers on the floor, holding hands, standing in floor patterns of lines and circles, their feet keeping time with the music. In Irish pubs, it is called a Seisiun (i.e. session). A smaller party at home is referred to as a gathering.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- List the musical instruments you saw and heard (bodhrán drum, uilleann pipes, whistle, fiddle). Discuss the sounds made by each; then divide the instruments into these three groups - string, wind and percussion.
- Name all the Irish dance moves and patterns (square, chain, rock, wheel, heel and toe taps, etc.). Discuss the differences between these movements or how they are combined.
- Describe how the body is held in Irish dance: posture, arm position and position of the legs. How does this compare to other dance forms you might know?
- Choose your favorite instrument and explain what you like about it—the sound, appearance, and the name.
- Culturally, what did people in Ireland do to enjoy themselves before electricity? Do you know of any situations where people today entertain themselves without electricity or electronic devices?

FRAMEWORK FOCUS—HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES:

The traditional music and dance of Ireland started in the kitchens of ordinary country people. Family and friends would come together to eat, drink, tell stories, sing songs, play music and dance. However, now these folk traditions have evolved into very defined practices that are taught to children who continue to develop their skill as they grow to adults. There are specific dances and steps that are learned and perfected; people come together to compete and are awarded different levels of achievement. Today, there are community-based festivals throughout the world, called a feis, to promote and maintain Gaelic culture and traditions which include Irish Dance competitions. Discuss other competitions, such as sport events, dance contests and TV shows where people compete. (Dancing With the Stars, American Idol, The Olympics, etc.) Discuss reasons why people come together to compete and strive for excellence, promotion or awards. Guide students in a discussion that allows them to express their experience with, and ideas about, competition.

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

- Take a partner and have a rhythm conversation: “Call & Response.” You clap a phrase; your partner echoes in reply. Now repeat with foot stamps. Alternate stamps and claps. To develop the exercise, respond with a different rhythm to your partner. This can be expanded, where one person beats a rhythm (claps or stamps or a combination) and the rest of the group responds in unison. Try doing it with a recording of Irish music.
- In groups of four, re-enact the Ceili dances from memory—the Square, Chain, Wheel, Ring. Don’t worry about doing the exact steps: walk or skip to a beat (recorded music or someone clapping); make the shapes of circle, straight lines, square and being opposite. Hold hands at shoulder height.
- Think of yourselves as Irish storytellers and sit in a circle with three or four others. One person tell the group about a typical Irish gathering, a meeting of people playing music and dancing. Describe the scene, calling upon your knowledge of Ireland’s climate, musical instruments and dance traditions. After a couple of sentences, the next person takes over, building onto the ideas of the previous storyteller.
- Discuss the meaning of “tradition.” Consider how activities originally meant for fun can become performance and even a career. What traditions do you and your family share? Are there similarities with the Irish culture? Write down examples of another culture and compare it to Irish culture. Aspects of culture can be the language (e.g. Gaelic), customs, symbols, food, clothing, music, dance, stories, and song.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Caera, Aislingeach. Traditional Irish Gaelic Children's Songs = Amhráin Gaeilte tradisíonta Do pháistí.


Author: Māire Clerkin. Edited by Susan Cambigue-Tracey © The Music Center of Los Angeles County
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School Contact Name: ________________________
Phone: ____________________________________

_________________ AND THE MUSIC CENTER ANNOUNCE
A GAELIC GATHERING: IRISH MUSIC AND DANCE TO PERFORM ON

_________________ and The Music Center today announced the upcoming A Gaelic Gathering: Irish Music and Dance performance. As part of the school’s continuing efforts to enrich its curriculum and its students’ educational experience, the school will present a special performance of A Gaelic Gathering: Irish Music and Dance. The performance is presented by The Music Center’s education department which provides many offerings including live performances, classroom workshops, scholarship and training programs, online arts curriculum, on-campus events and professional development.

A Gaelic Gathering – Irish Music and Dance, was first commissioned by The Music Center for a performance in March 2007 at the Walt Disney Concert Hall. The program is a feast of Irish tunes and dances originally created, and now adapted for schools, by Máire Clerkin. She is accompanied by Musical Director, fiddle player, dancer and vocalist, Kira Ott, and champion step-dancers Daithi Fisher, Megan Drake and Ian McLeod. Susan Winsberg plays an array of flutes and whistles; Patrick D’Arcy plays ancient instruments such as the uilleann pipes (elbow bagpipes) and bodhran (drum). Together they guide their audience on a cultural journey through Ireland’s rich heritage.

The Music Center on Tour is the premiere resource for high-quality performing arts performances in Los Angeles County. For more than 35 years, schools and communities have benefited from the program’s roster of diverse and compelling performing artists who serve as models of artistic excellence, inspire creative thinking and introduce young audiences to the world’s diverse cultural traditions. Music Center artists represent and celebrate the finest artistic contribution of the world’s cultures – from the colorful regional dances of Mexico and the exquisite music of the China, to the pulsating rhythms of Brazil and the golden harmonies of 20th century America.

Schools can choose from more than 70 performances in music, dance, theatre and storytelling from an internationally acclaimed roster of artists seen across the globe in films, theaters, concert halls, television shows and museums.

About The Music Center
As L.A.’s performing arts destination, The Music Center is L.A.’s home to the world’s greatest artistic programs and events. With four iconic theaters and four renowned resident companies – Center Theatre Group, the LA Master Chorale, the LA Opera and the LA Philharmonic – and recognized for its illustrious dance programming, Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center, The Music Center is a destination where audiences find inspiration in the very best of live performance, as well as nationally recognized arts education and participatory arts experiences. With The Music Center On Location, the non-profit performing arts organization brings events and activities to locations outside of its Downtown Los Angeles campus. The Music Center also programs and manages Grand Park, a 12-acre adjacent greenspace, with year-round free programming. For more information, visit musiccenter.org Follow The Music Center on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (@MusicCenterLA).

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For more information, please contact The Music Center at 213-972-3338. Members of the media are welcome to cover this performance. Please contact The Music Center prior to sending a reporter or photographer to the school.
THE MUSIC CENTER PRESENTS

A GAELIC GATHERING:
IRISH MUSIC AND DANCE

DATE: ___________________  TIME: ___________________

SCHOOL: ___________________
ARTS INTEGRATION PARTNERSHIPS

The Music Center’s teaching artists work in the classroom facilitating student learning and modeling effective instructional strategies for teachers. Essential skills and vocabulary in music, theater, dance, or visual art are connected to universal themes and integrated with other content areas.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our Professional Development targets arts integration strategies for K-12 teachers in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts. Teachers learn creative and effective approaches for integrating the arts into their content areas. Additionally, The Music Center offers the Summer Arts Studio for Educators. This program consists of events tailored for classroom teachers, arts teachers and educators.

STUDENT MATINEE PERFORMANCES

Each year Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center offers free student matinee dance performances. All performances include a teacher orientation session and curriculum guide for students.

THE BLUE RIBBON CHILDREN’S FESTIVAL

The Blue Ribbon Children’s Festival, designed specifically for fifth grade students, is an annual admission-free program at The Music Center. Students experience a live professional performance at a world-class performing arts center, then gather together to perform a short choreographed dance inspired by the production.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS FESTIVAL

The Very Special Arts Festival is an annual admission-free event celebrating the artistic achievements of students with disabilities and their mainstream peers. The festival features student and professional performances on two stages, visual and performing arts workshops, and a student art exhibit created around a central theme.

SPOTLIGHT

Much more than a competition, Spotlight is a scholarship and training program, which encourages personal and artistic growth, while exploring new possibilities in the arts.

ARTSOURCE®

The Music Center’s Artsource® curriculum is designed to bring the expressive world of the arts into classrooms. The materials are available online free of cost.

OTHER ON CAMPUS MUSIC CENTER OFFERINGS:

Glorya Kaufman Presents Dance at The Music Center, Dance Downtown, Symphonia Campus Tours, Grand Park