

Women's Voices Chorus

2024 Performance Tour of Ireland



August 2-11, 2024

Tour Packet 1 – September 3, 2023

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Goals of Our Performance Tours

1. Deepen our appreciation and understanding of music within the context of other countries' musical traditions.
2. Honor our mission to promote music composed for women's voices by taking this music abroad.
3. Uniquely combine travel to a new place with music.
4. Increase the choir's cohesion and allow us to make better music together.

Tour Committee Contacts

Please feel free to contact members of the tour committee with any questions. Most questions should be directed to the Tour Manager, Jackie Walters; she can answer or relay your question to the appropriate individual.

Position	Name	Email
Tour Manager	Jackie Walters	jjwalters.silverspring@verizon.net
Music	Laura Sam	director@womensvoiceschorus.org
Logistics	Available Position*	
Financial Aid	Virginia Byers Kraus	vbk@duke.edu
Fundraising	Anne Menkens	ajmenkens@yahoo.com
Tour Treasurer	Available Position*	

*Please contact Jackie if you are interested in exploring the available positions. Help is available for volunteers new to these positions!

Tour Communications & Information

Key Points

- All information will be posted in the 2024 Ireland Tour page in the members' section of our website: [2024 Ireland Tour - Women's Voices Chorus \(womensvoiceschorus.org\)](https://www.womensvoiceschorus.org). Note that you must be logged in to your member account to access the page.
- Our tour company is Music Contact International (MCI)--[Choir Travel, Choir Festivals, & Choir Tours - Music Contact International \(music-contact.com\)](https://www.music-contact.com). Laura and Jackie have extensive experience with MCI taking choral groups abroad, and Nathan Bramhall, our MCI liaison, has been working with us to mold the perfect tour for us.
- Going forward, MCI will create a web site specifically for our group and our trip. This web site will contain travel, hotel, and other information. We can give access to family members and friends so they can follow along on our itinerary, obtain hotel contact information if they need it, and see what we're up to on any given day.

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Current Travel Information—Summary

IMPORTANT NOTE: As tour plans develop, they *will* change as we work with Nathan to craft the best tour possible, with special attention to concert and performance opportunities. The itinerary currently on the web site is a *proposal* – not a final set of plans. We will keep you posted and invite your input when needed, and we will continue to post current information on the website.

Here is a link to the *current proposal* on the WVC website: [WVC Tentative Itinerary Ireland-2024](#).

Passports & Other Travel Information

Every traveler *must* have a valid U.S. Passport. “Valid” is defined as having an expiration date at least six months from the planned return date. Thus, for example, if you plan to return with the Chorus on August 11, 2024, your passport’s expiration date must be *no earlier than* February 11, 2025. ***Please check your passports NOW!*** If you will need to renew and if you are not planning to travel outside the U.S. any time soon, please visit [Renew my Passport by Mail \(state.gov\)](#) for information on how to renew your passport.

General information from the U.S. government for international travelers can be found here: <http://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en.html>.

You must sign your passport, and you *will* be required to show your passport along with your boarding pass before you can board an international flight.

We will be repeating this information many times!

Dates: Depart from RDU on Friday, August 2, 2024, and return home on Sunday, August 11, 2024.

Costs

The *current* cost is estimated at \$4,776 per person (air and land, based on 40 paying travelers). [Note this figure is a change from the original proposal.]

Any personal deviations from the standard trip will result in an adjustment to your tour cost. A “deviation” may include choosing a land-only option (e.g., not flying overseas with the chorus), extending your stay on your own, or requesting a single room.

Travel Insurance: *Every* traveler (including a spouse/partner when traveling as a couple) is encouraged to purchase travel insurance and to select the coverage that best meets their personal and family circumstances and needs. Music Contact International works with a travel insurance company that offers a variety of coverage levels, but you are free to choose your own. The rate will depend on your total tour cost, including any personal additions, such as an extension. This insurance is completely optional.

Financial aid is available to WVC singers for the standard tour costs only. Please see the Financial Aid Guidelines accompanying this packet.

Music Contact International will establish an **online payment system** for every traveler. Any exceptions due to receiving financial assistance or other circumstances will be negotiated once the payment system is set up.

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Forms Dealing with Specific Traveler Issues

Once we have committed to the trip (on/about October 2023) and going forward, Music Contact International will be issuing forms to participants. These forms include trip deviation requests (e.g., extending for personal travel), medical/mobility issues, dietary preferences/restrictions, and so on. Like other materials, these forms will be disseminated via email and will be available in the 2024 Ireland Tour section of the website.

Guests

Family members and friends of singers are welcome to join us at the same tour costs. All payment and commitment schedules will apply.

Inclusions in the Tour Cost – please see the proposed itinerary on the website.

Exclusions

The following items are NOT included in the estimated cost per person:

- Passport (or travel visa for non-U.S. passport holders)
- Transportation to and from RDU; parking at RDU
- Airline baggage fees, if applicable
- Difference between current and actual costs for airline taxes and estimated fuel surcharge
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Drinks (other than water or sometimes tea and coffee) at the included meals

Proposed Rehearsal & Performance Timeline [Spring & Summer 2024]

Tour rehearsals begin following WVC's spring concert in May 2024. Singers are encouraged to attend *all* rehearsals in May and June. If necessary, they may be excused for up to two of them. The July rehearsals (July 27 & 29) are *required* for all singers.

Current proposed rehearsal schedule:

Monday, 5/13/24 - 7:30-9:30 Rehearsal

Monday, 5/20/24 - 7:30-9:30 Rehearsal

Monday, 6/3/24 - 7:30-9:30 Rehearsal

Monday, 6/24/24 - 7:30-9:30 Rehearsal

Saturday, 7/27/24 – **Required** Retreat, Information Meeting Q&A, and Pre-Tour Concert*

Monday, 7/29 - 7:30-9:30 PM **Required** Rehearsal

Post-Tour Concert: TBD (depending on how many tour participants elect to extend their trip) but most likely in late August or early-to-mid September 2024.

*The Retreat on July 27 will include a rehearsal, an informational meeting, and our pre-tour concert. Current plans call for starting at 9:30 am and ending at 5 pm following the concert. We are looking for a venue, such as a retirement community, that will support both our retreat and our concert. Please send any suggestions to Jackie Walters, jjwalters.silverspring@verizon.net.

About the Music: WVC will perform a variety of music on our tour, with most pieces being recently performed by the chorus. Some 'performances' will be as part of religious services (most likely Catholic Masses), and other performances will be in secular settings. Our repertoire will showcase American music/composers as well Irish music/composers. We plan to include at least one friendship concert with an Irish chorus (TBD) and one performance at a senior citizen's center. Practice tracks/reference recordings will be posted to the WVC website.

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Finances & Fundraising -- Commitment Form, Financial Aid Guidelines and Financial Aid Application

The Financial Aid Guidelines are located at the end of this document. The commitment form and financial aid application are in a separate, fillable PDF document accompanying this packet. We ask that you **return the form(s) to Virginia Byers Kraus as soon as possible, but not later than September 25, 2023**. The completed form can be printed and handed to Virginia or emailed to her at vbk@duke.edu [Please talk with Virginia if you need an extension of this deadline.]

Payment Schedule

This information will be repeated periodically. Once the final costs have been determined, Music Contact will provide us with payment amounts. To repeat: every traveler will have an individual payment account (secure and password protected) with Music Contact International.

If you are receiving Financial Aid (FA), each of your payments will be reduced by your FA percentage (e.g., if you are receiving half the tour cost in FA, each of your payments will be half of the standard payment.)

	Due Date
Payment 1 (20%)	October 9, 2023
Payment 2 (20%)	December 4, 2023
Payment 3 (20%)	February 5, 2024
Payment 4 (20%)	April 8, 2024
Payment 5 (Balance)	June 7, 2024

Cancellation Charges

If you must cancel and cannot find a traveler to replace you, you will forfeit a portion of what you have paid. We will publish the cancellation deadlines when we receive them from MCI.

Reminders: Jackie will remind travelers periodically (and often) of payment deadlines and cancellation deadlines.

Fundraising & Other Volunteer Opportunities

All travelers are expected to contribute in some way to the success of the tour. This may be by donating financially to the tour fund or by volunteering before and during the tour. [NOTE available Tour Committee positions listed on page 3 of this document.

It will take a concerted effort to make this tour affordable for everyone. Experience preparing for previous tours shows that group fundraisers were fun, group-bonding experiences. This year, fundraisers will include several Trunk Sales (members can contribute goods, food, or services to be sold at rehearsal); an Irish Salon (Irish-themed events, to which to invite your friends and family); a Raffle; T-shirt Sales; and other events. In addition to group fundraisers, individuals can also come up with creative ways to raise money to contribute. We have over a year to make this happen, but the sooner you start, the better idea you'll have of what it will take to make this exciting opportunity a reality for you. Beyond the theme-based sales, some examples of Trunk Sale offerings or individual efforts include:

1. Babysit for one of the many parents in the chorus.
2. Help clean out garages or organize storage space.
3. Run a yard sale (maybe include members' goods that don't sell at Chorus Trunk Sales.)

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Guidelines for Financial Aid for 2024 Ireland Tour

Applications for FA are **not** competitive. Each applicant's FA package will be customized for her.

In order to keep FA as confidential as possible, the Financial Aid Committee (FAC) will consist of the Chair (Virginia Byers Kraus), the Tour Treasurer, and the Operations Manager. Virginia will collect all commitment forms via fillable pdf or a printed/typed paper copy, review all financial aid applications, and determine the recommended aid package for each applicant. Once the amounts have been decided, she will share final FA amounts with the FAC to allow making payments to MCI. No other information in the FA application will be shared.

1. Eligibility: Only members of WVC will be eligible for financial aid. Members who: a) bring a spouse/significant other/dependent child(ren), b) are going on an individual trip extension, c) who are requesting a single room, or d) who are going on and paying for another major trip within a year of the chorus tour are expected to pay their own way. Under special circumstances, the committee may allow exceptions to this rule. Since we cannot anticipate every situation, requests for exceptions to this rule will be considered individually. Members will not receive financial aid for personal trip expenses.
2. Financial Aid: Two categories of FA will be offered.
 - A. \$1000 or less: The applicant requests up to \$1000. The Tour Treasurer will send a prorated amount to MCI for each payment. These requests do not need to be approved.
 - B. More than \$1000: Applicants requesting more than \$1000 must fill out the application form (Section 4 of the Commitment Form) requesting the minimum aid necessary for their participation. The applicant will be expected to raise at least 15% (~\$750) of her total tour cost, not including personal expenses. As always, exceptions are possible. The Tour Treasurer will send a prorated amount to MCI for each payment.
3. Timeline for Application: Applicants are encouraged to submit applications on or before the deadline for the first payment to MCI. This is a "soft" deadline, as circumstances may change for women; if necessary, the FAC will consider applications submitted after this deadline.
4. The [2024 Tour Commitment Form and Financial Aid Application](#) is on the 2024 Ireland Tour section of WVC's website.