



Building Bridges *and* Transforming Lives *through the* Power of Music

Derry-Londonderry, Northern Ireland | June 19-24, 2023

American Songbook

Exploring Shawn Kirchner's folk-inspired music in Ireland, the land of traditional music



Artistic Director

Dr. Gene Peterson
Director of Choral
Studies, California Baptist
University Collinsworth
School of Music



Guest Composer

Mr. Shawn Kirchner
Composer & Arranger

The Setting



The Setting: Derry-Londonderry

Stand on the city walls in Derry-Londonderry and you'll feel it. History is all around you. The very walls beneath you were built over 400 years ago. Look over to the city's Bogside area and you'll see history literally written on the walls in those famous murals. Traditional music spills out onto the streets from cozy pubs, museums tell stories of times past, and people still celebrate ancient festivals. Discover the county's literary side with a visit to Seamus Heaney Homeplace in Bellaghy, which celebrates the life and legacy of the Nobel prizewinning poet. Derry is a staple in the cultural hub that makes up Northern Ireland. The city was celebrated in 2013 as the UK's very first City of Culture and is host to the annual City of Derry International Choral Festival. Derry has been named 'Friendliest Destination in Northern Ireland' so you will be guaranteed the warmest of welcomes and, of course, it's home to the popular Netflix show "Derry Girls"!

The Venue: The Guildhall

Sitting within reach of the famous 400-year-old Walls is one of the City's most recognizable, and arguably one of the most stunning landmarks, the Guildhall. An integral part of Derry's history since 1887, this beautifully ornate building has played host to presidents, playwrights, and poets over the years. The Guildhall's most arresting feature is its collection of stunning stained-glass windows. Donated by London Companies, they represent everything from fishmongers to musicians. The building's staircase, main hall organ and corridors give a fascinating insight into this distinctive building's history.

The Theme: I Will Arise And Go

Yeats' poetry still permeates Irish life and inspires artistic expression. Much of his poetry is inherently musical with its hauntingly beautiful words and simple rhyme schemes. Explore Shawn Kirchner's folk-inspired music, in the cultural hub of Derry, with its active folk and traditional music scene. The 4-day festival, will culminate in a gala concert, accompanied by Mr. Kirchner and local traditional players, and include repertoire for both treble and mixed voices. This choral event is sure to excite the hearts and minds of all that participate.



The Organizers: Perform International

*"Building Bridges and Transforming Lives
through the Power of Music"*

Boldly informed by the belief that music inherently speaks as an expression of the human spirit beyond borders and in all cultures, Perform International seeks to empower music directors and ensembles to realize meaningful and life-changing immersion experiences and performances around the world.

Faculty



**Dr. Gene
Peterson**

Artistic Director

Dr. Gene Peterson, a nationally and internationally recognized conductor, music educator, and church musician, is the Director of Choral Studies at California Baptist University Collinsworth School of Music. Dr. Peterson's primary focus at CBU is in the development of choral arts ensembles, but his diverse and extensive background in both academic and church contexts supports his leadership across the entire choral program at CBU. He also mentors future conductors in CBU's graduate program in choral conducting.

Dr. Peterson's recent appointments include choral and music education faculties at Bethel University and The University of Tennessee. Dr. Peterson previously held posts as music director and conductor for college, high school, church, and community choirs in California, Washington, Tennessee, and Minnesota. Ensembles under his leadership have performed in venues throughout the United States, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, including the Sistine Chapel, the Sydney Opera House, Chicago Symphony Hall, and Carnegie Hall. Due to his reputation in the international choral community, Dr. Peterson is in high demand as a lecturer, choral clinician and adjudicator for local, regional, and international choral festivals and has conducted numerous honor choirs and all-state choirs.

Dr. Peterson holds a Bachelor of Music in Conducting and a Master of Arts in Education from Chapman University in Orange, California, and the Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting from the University of Washington, Seattle.

Dr. Peterson is a consummate choral conductor who combines engaging charisma with musical expression and studied nuance. His breadth of expertise and experience, engaging and articulate teaching, and passion for mentoring the next generation of musicians is most apparent through his work at the Collinsworth School as well as his work around the world.



**Mr. Shawn
Kirchner**

Guest Composer

Shawn Kirchner is a composer/arranger/songwriter, singer, and pianist based in Los Angeles whose choral works are performed throughout the world. A member of the Los Angeles Master Chorale since 2001, Kirchner has enjoyed an enduring creative relationship with music director Grant Gershon, culminating in his tenure as the LAMC's Swan Family Composer-in-Residence from 2012-2015. Kirchner has also collaborated with such leading ensembles as Conspirare, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Lorelei Ensemble, San Diego Master Chorale, Los Robles Master Chorale, Coro Allegro, Atlanta Master Chorale, and Tonality.

Kirchner's creativity is driven by his passion for songwriting, folk/carol traditions, and poetry – but fused with the improvisatory virtuosity of Baroque and bluegrass instrumental traditions. Best-known for his setting of the Kenyan song *Wana Baraka* and for *Heavenly Home: Three American Songs* – praised by the LA Times as “arranged with mastery” – Kirchner has also composed deeply expressive cycles on the poetry of Neruda, Plath, Hopkins, Blake, and the Psalms (*Songs of Ascent*). His original songwriting ranges in style from jazz and gospel to folk and bluegrass, the latter featured on his CD *Meet Me on the Mountain*.

Kirchner's principal creative mentor is the banjo-playing poet Steve Kinzie, with much inspiration from American choral matriarch Alice Parker. Kirchner earned a BA in Peace Studies (Manchester University) and an MA in Choral Conducting (University of Iowa) where his teachers included William Hatcher, Richard Bloesch, and Donald Jenni.





June 19-24, 2023

American Songbook

The Music of Shawn Kirchner

Tour Itinerary

Monday, June 19, 2023 - Departure USA

The journey to Northern Ireland begins by boarding an international flight to Dublin.

Tuesday, June 20, 2023 - Arrival Derry

Upon arrival in Dublin, meet with your Tour Manager and transfer by bus to Derry. Enjoy a festive Welcome Dinner with participating choirs. Overnight in Derry.

Wednesday, June 21, 2023 - Sightseeing & Rehearsals

Breakfast followed by a morning rehearsal with Dr. Peterson and Mr. Kirchner. Afternoon sightseeing including highlights such as the Ramparts, the iconic Peace Bridge, the City Murals, and the Derry Craft Village. Rehearsal in the evening. Dinner and overnight in Derry.

Thursday, June 22, 2023 - Sightseeing & Rehearsals

Breakfast followed by a morning rehearsal with Dr. Peterson and Mr. Kirchner. Afternoon sightseeing including a visit to the home of poet Seamus Heaney. Rehearsal in the evening. Dinner and overnight in Derry.

Friday, June 23, 2023 - Dress Rehearsal & Gala Concert

Enjoy the morning at your leisure. After lunch take part in a dress rehearsal at the concert venue. Enjoy dinner before getting ready for tonight's festive gala concert at the Guildhall. Overnight in Derry.

Saturday, June 24, 2023 - Depart Derry / Start Post Festival Tour Programs

Begin your journey back to the USA, taking with you lifelong memories of performing in Derry or start of post tours by the individual ensembles

Pre/Post Festival Tour Programs

Optional pre- and post-tours for groups of 20 and more passengers are available including additional individual performance opportunities for balanced ensembles. All of PI's pre/post tours are fully customized to each choir's specific needs. Following are some examples:

Tour B - June 2023

From Derry-Londonderry, head north along the Antrim Coast and explore the UNESCO world heritage site of the Giants Causeway and the Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge. Stop to visit some of the filming location of "Game of Thrones." Enjoy a sightseeing tour of the Titanic quarter in Belfast and see the city's murals and peace walls. Two nights in Dublin will include visits to Trinity College to view the Book of Kells and a fun interactive entertainment dinner with traditional music and Irish dancing.

Tour C - June 2023

From Derry-Londonderry, explore Donegal, including Sliabh Liag and the Glencolmille Folk Village. Excursion to Sligo and Drumcliff to see W.B. Yeats Grave. Enjoy an "Atlantic Sheepdog" experience. The final afternoon in Dublin will include visits to Trinity College to view the Book of Kells and a fun interactive entertainment dinner with traditional music and Irish dancing.