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Presents

Cherish The Ladies

Wednesday, December 12, 2007
10am in the Concert Hall

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CHERISH THE LADIES

When describing Cherish the Ladies – the critics say it best…“It is simply impossible to imagine an audience that wouldn’t enjoy what they do”, the Boston Globe, “An astonishing array of virtuosity”, the Washington Post, “Expands the annals of Irish music in America…the music is passionate, tender and rambunctious”, The New York Times - and for 20 years, Cherish the Ladies have proven themselves worthy to live up to these accolades and in doing so have become one of the most engaging ensembles in the history of Irish music.

They have grown from a one-time concert concept to an Irish traditional music sensation, literally the most successful and sought-after Irish-American group in Celtic music. Organized by folklorist/musician Mick Moloney and sponsored by the Ethnic Folk Arts Center and the National Endowment for the Arts, they began as a concert series featuring the brightest lights in Irish traditional music.

Taking their name from the name of a traditional Irish jig, the group initially won recognition as the first and only all-women traditional Irish band. In a relatively short time, they soon established themselves as musicians and performers without peer and have won many thousands of listeners and fans of their music. With their unique spectacular blend of virtuosi instrumental talents, beautiful vocals, captivating arrangements and stunning step dancing, this powerhouse group combines all the facets of Irish traditional culture and puts it forth in an immensely humorous and entertaining package.

The past years have seen the group traveling all over North and South America, the United Kingdom and Europe, Australia and New Zealand performing in the finest concert halls and international festivals. They are equally at home in front of a symphony orchestra, a performing arts center, a folk festival or even at the White House.

They have been chosen Best Musical Group of the Year by the BBC, Entertainment Group of the Year by the Irish Voice Newspaper, recipients of the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall's International Group of the Year Award at the Celtic Connections Festival in Scotland and voted the Top North American Celtic act by NPR Radio’s “Thistle and Shamrock”.

They have shared the stage with such noted entertainers as James Taylor, Joan Baez, Emmy Lou Harris, The Clancy Brothers, Tommy Makem, The Chieftains and dozens of symphony orchestras. The "Celtic Album", their collaboration with the Boston Pops Symphony led to a 1999 Grammy nomination.

The Ladies have recorded eleven highly acclaimed albums. Their last two albums on Rounder records were released to rave reviews. “On Christmas Night” was chosen as one of the top Christmas Albums of the Year by The New York Times, Washington Post, The Village Voice and many other nationally syndicated Newspapers and their latest release, "Woman of the House" is heralded as their best album to date and hit Billboard Magazines' top 10 world music Charts.

Cherish the Ladies have appeared on CBS This Morning, Good Morning America, Evening at Pops, C-Span, Imus in the Morning, PBS and National Public Radio in the United States and on BBC and RTE radio and television overseas. At the Summer Olympics in Atlanta, they were chosen to represent Irish music and culture at the Official Cultural Olympiad.

The girls continue to blaze forward and continue to enchant audiences worldwide.
JOANIE MADDEN is the Grammy Award winning whistle and flute player who has been the leader of Cherish the Ladies since its inception. Born in New York of Irish parents, she is the second oldest of seven children raised in a musical household; her mother Helen, a dancer of traditional sets hails from Miltown Malbay, County Clare and her father Joe, an All-Ireland Champion on the accordion, comes from Portumna in East Galway.

MARY COOGAN was born in New York and also raised in a musical household. Her mother is from County Roscommon and her father is a first generation Irish-American accordion player. Mary is a self taught guitar, mandolin and banjo player. She began playing at an early age listening to various types of acoustic music and is a highly sought after accompanist.

In an astonishingly short time, vocalist HEIDI TALBOT has gone from a variety of club, session and busking stints in her native Ireland to fronting one of the world's premier Celtic music ensembles, the all star Cherish The Ladies. One listen to her solo album, the disarmingly gorgeous Distant Future, and the reason for her rapid rise becomes instantly clear. Her smooth, lilting voice is matched with a musical intelligence and charisma rare for one so young.

MIRELLA MURRAY grew up in Claddaghduff, near Clifden, on the north west coast of Connemara. Her father John Joe, a notable sean nós dancer, comes from Inishark Island and has a deep understanding of, and love for, traditional music. Mirella learned the piano accordion from Mary Finn, herself a great player from the musical Finn family of Ballymote, Co. Sligo. She met up with fiddler Liz Kane from Letterfrack, and they played and learned a lot of their music together going through the Fleadh Cheoil competitions. They won the All-Ireland duet in 1995, while Mirella gained the title on the piano accordion that same year. The pair performed together for years and toured in France and in North America with Comhaltas. They formed the Hydledoodles, a short-lived band which featured at the Fiddle and Accordion festival in Shetland and returned to the Folk Festival there the following year.

ROISIN DILLON was born and raised in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and has relocated to the United States. Her interest in music was mainly inherited from her father, Eamonn, who taught her the whistle at the tender age of 11. At the age of 13, Roisin placed 2nd in the All Irelands Competition on the tin whistle and was just picking up the fiddle as a primary instrument. At 15 she placed first in the Oireachtas Competition again on the tin whistle but since then she has been playing the fiddle exclusively. At 18 Roisin came to America for three months with a tour of musicians sponsored by "The International Fund for Ireland", and within a few years had decided to move permanently to the U.S.
What makes a fiddle different from a violin? Believe it or not, the fiddle and violin are the exact same instrument! The name is determined by what kind of music you play! So, if you play bluegrass, country or Irish music on this instrument, it is generally referred to as a fiddle. If you play classical music, then it is usually referred to as a violin. Interesting, huh? There are many different styles of fiddle playing in Ireland—County Sligo, where the Culkins come from has its own style of playing!

A fiddle player.

The mandolin is a small stringed instrument, which is tuned the same as a fiddle. Instead of using a bow to make sound, you fingerpick the strings. The unique aspect of a mandolin is that it has eight strings but only four notes! There are two strings of G, two strings of D, two strings of A, and two strings of E. Why is this? Mostly because this instrument is fairly quiet and having two strings of the same note make it a bit louder. The neck is fretted, unlike the fiddle and a mandolin player will move his/her fingers up and down the neck on different frets to get different notes.

The bodhrán is an Irish drum and is considered the heartbeat of Irish music. It is traditionally made with a wooden frame in which a dried goatskin is stretched. The drum is held by placing a hand under the crossbar in the back (check out the picture!) while the other hand beats the drum with a double-headed stick called the *cipín*. Some bodhrán heads are ornately decorated with Celtic artwork, which are beautiful! Others are just plain—but you can’t mistake the haunting rhythms of the beating of a bodhrán. As a matter of fact, the Irish word *Bodhar* means deaf or haunting!

The uilleann pipes are distinctly Irish. The Scottish war pipes, which you may have seen are mouth blown, loud, and were used to rally warriors into battle! The uilleann pipes are smaller, much quieter, and you have to sit to play them. The main difference is that the uilleann pipes are blown by a bellows system. (This bellows system uses a device that is pumped to inflate). The bag or air reservoir on the uilleann pipes is inflated by means of a bellows operated by the elbow of one arm with the bag being held under the other. (Coincidentally, uilleann is the Irish word for elbow!) These pipes are very difficult to play and are very mechanical. A set generally consists of bellows, a bag, chanter, drones, and regulators. The drones provide constant background sound. Regulators have keys that are hit with the wrist and allow the player to play chords for accompaniment. The chanter plays the melody and the fingering is similar to that of the flute. All in all, it is a very complicated system to learn!

A concertina is another instrument used in traditional Irish music. Often times gypsies are pictured with them! Concertinas are generally octagonal in shape and have folded bellows in the middle with buttons on each end. Check out the photo! The English or Wheatstone concertina was the first style invented and generally has 48 buttons but can have 56. In order to get sound, the player pushes buttons while pulling open or pushing close the bellows. Each button on
a Wheatstone has the same note whether you push or pull! This is unlike the Anglo concertina. Each button on an Anglo has two notes, one when you push and one when you pull! (Similar to blowing in to or out of a harmonica) The Anglo generally has fewer keys than the English style.

The button box is similar to an accordion, however the accordion has keys like a piano and a button box doesn’t. Button boxes are the same shape as accordions, larger than concertinas, and are similar to concertinas in that they have bellows in the middle and buttons on each side. Generally there are two to three rows of buttons on each side, one side is base and the other side is treble. You will see Irish musicians playing both button boxes and accordions.

The tin whistle or penny whistle is a simple and cheap wind instrument used in Irish music. The most commonly used whistle has a plastic top, which is attached to a cylindrical brass or metal tube. The tube has six finger holes, which are covered and uncovered producing different notes. Tin whistles come in different sizes and the size determines what key that whistle plays. Tin whistles can be purchased for as cheap as $10! If you are interested in learning to play Irish music, the tin whistle may be your best bet!

Last but not least, the Celtic harp! The Celtic harp or lever harp is another popular instrument used in Irish music. When picturing a harp, most people immediately think of a classical floor harp in which the musician uses pedals to change keys. The Celtic harp is smaller, lighter, and more portable! A Celtic harp uses levers that push against the strings making them tighter to change keys. The sound of an individual harp will vary greatly depending on what kind of material the strings are made of. Nowadays, harps are strung with nylon strings making the sound quieter and softer.

If you are interested in finding out more about bodhráns check out this website: www.ceolas.org/instruments/bodhran/

If you are interested in learning more about the uillean pipes check out this website: www.aniar.com/pipes.html

If you are interested in concertinas or button boxes check out these websites: www.concertina.info/ and www.buttonbox.com

If you are interested in the Celtic harp check out this website: www.celticharper.com/faq.html
Performances by Cherish The Ladies always include stepdancing. The forms used include Irish Stepdancing and Ottawa Valley Stepdancing.

THE HISTORY OF IRISH DANCE
http://www.irelandseye.com/dance.html

The early history of Irish dance reveals a constant shifting of population through migration and invasions. Each of these peoples brought their preferred types of dance and music. There are only vague references to the early history of Irish dancing, but there is evidence that among its first practitioners were the Druids, who danced in religious rituals honouring the oak tree and the sun. Traces of their circular dances survive in the ring dances of today. When the Celts arrived in Ireland from central Europe over two thousand years ago, they brought with them their own folk dances. Around 400 AD, after the conversion to Christianity, the new priests used the pagan style of ornamentation in illuminating their manuscripts, while the peasants retained the same qualities in their music and dancing.

The Anglo-Norman conquest in the twelfth century brought Norman customs and culture to Ireland. The Carol was a popular Norman dance in which the leader sang and was surrounded by a circle of dancers who replied with the same song. This Norman dance was performed in conquered Irish towns.

During the mid sixteenth century, dances were performed in the great halls of the newly built castles. Some of the dances were adapted by the sixteenth century English invaders and brought to the court of Queen Elizabeth. One of these dances was the Trenchmore, which was an adaptation of an old Irish peasant dance. From this period onward another style of dance called the Hey was popular where female dancers wound in around their partners, in a fore-runner of the present day reel.

When royalty arrived in Ireland, they were greeted at the shore by young women performing native dances. When King James landed at Kinsale, County Cork, in 1780, he was welcomed by dancers. Three people stood abreast, each holding ends of a white handkerchief. They advanced to slow music and were followed by dancing couples, each couple holding a handkerchief between them. The tempo of the music increased and the dancers performed a variety of lively figures.

Irish dancing was accompanied by music played on the bagpipes and the harp. In the houses of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy, the master often joined with servants in some of the dances. Dancing was also performed during wakes. The mourners followed each other in a ring around the coffin to bagpipe music.

The Irish Dance Master

During the eighteenth century, the dancing master appeared in Ireland. He was a wandering dancing teacher who travelled from village to village in a district, teaching dance to peasants. Dancing masters were flamboyant characters who wore bright clothes and carried staffs. Their young pupils did not know the difference between their left and right feet. To overcome this problem, the
dancing master would tie straw or hay to his pupils' left or right feet and instruct them to "lift hay foot" or "lift straw foot".

Group dances were developed by the masters to hold the interest of their less gifted pupils and to give them the chance to enjoy dancing. The standard of these dances was very high. Solo dancers were held in high esteem and often doors were taken off hinges and placed on the ground for the soloists to dance on.

Each dancing master had his own district and never encroached on another master's territory. It was not unknown for a dancing master to be kidnapped by the residents of a neighboring parish. When dancing masters met at fairs, they challenged each other to a public dancing contest that only ended when one of them dropped with fatigue.

Several versions of the same dance were to be found in different parts of Ireland. In this way a rich heritage of Irish dances was assembled and modified over the centuries. Today, jigs, reels, hornpipes, sets, half sets, polkas and step dances are all performed. Solo dancing or step dancing first appeared at the end of the eighteenth century.

The costumes worn by Irish dancers today commemorate the clothing of the past. Each school of dancing has its own distinct dancing costume. Dresses are based on the Irish peasant dress worn two hundred years ago. Most of the dresses are adorned with hand-embroidered Celtic designs, copies of the Tara brooch are often worn on the shoulder. The brooch hold a cape which falls over the back. The clothes worn by men are less embellished but steeped in history- they wear a plain kilt and jacket, with a folded cloak draped from the shoulder. Male and female dancers today wear hornpipe shoes, and for reels and jigs, soft shoes similar to ballet pumps are worn.

Today there are many organizations promoting Irish dance. The Feis has been an important part of rural cultural life. Children, teenagers and adults compete in separate competitions for Feis titles and prizes. There are group and solo competitions where dancers are graded by age from six to seventeen and then into the senior categories.

There are dancing championships in all four provinces, and winners of these provincial competitions qualify for the All Ireland Championships. The World Championships are held in Dublin at Easter where dancers from England, Ireland, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand compete for the World title.

The Irish word céili originally referred to a gathering of neighbors in a house to have an enjoyable time, dancing, playing music and storytelling. Today it refers to an informal evening of dancing. Céilis are held in large towns and country districts where young and old enjoy together group dances. The céili can be traced back to pre-famine times, when dancing at the cross-roads was a popular rural pastime. These dances were usually held on Sunday evenings in summer when young people would gather at the cross-roads. The music was often performed by a fiddler seated on a three legged stool with his upturned hat beside him for a collection. The fiddler began with a reel such as the lively "Silver Tip", but he had to play it several times before the dancers joined in. The young men were reluctant to begin the dance but after some encouragement from the fiddler, the sets of eight filled up the dancing area.

The world-wide success of Riverdance and more recently Lord of the Dance has placed Irish dance on the international stage. Dancing schools in Ireland today are filled with young pupils keen to imitate and learn the dancing styles which brought Jean Butler and Michael Flatley international acclaim.
Today there are many opportunities to watch and enjoy Irish dancing. It is still a regular part of social functions. Dancing sessions at céilis are usually preceded by a teaching period where novices are shown the initial steps. During the summer months, céilis are held in many Irish towns. Visitors are always welcome to join in and with on the spot, informal instruction, anyone can quickly master the first steps and soon share the Irish enthusiasm for Irish dance.

Illustrated by Anne Farrall
extract from the Appletree Press title Irish Dance.

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OTTAWA VALLEY STEPDANCING
http://www.fiddle.on.ca/fiddle/valley.htm

Ottawa Valley Style stepdancing originated in the Ottawa Valley Canada which includes a large area North of Ottawa and a small area across the river on the Quebec side. This style of stepdancing has influences from the Scottish and Irish. Interestingly, American tap dance is also an ingredient to this unique style of stepdancing.

The Ottawa Valley style is characterized by the constant aggressiveness of the dance and the steps are danced high off of the floor. The better dancers include a wide variety of steps and different moves in their routines so that no step looks similar to another. The dancers’ legs look very "rubber like" and much coordination is required of the legs, feet and ankles. A distinguishing factor in this style is that there, is use of the dancers arms. Arms are controlled to an extent but because this dance is done high off of the floor, arms are placed out from the dancers body and are used to naturally flow with the dancers movements. This emphasizes the aggressiveness and energy of the dance and is as much a part of the dance as the feet are. Both men and women dance the same dances and also compete against one another in contests.
IRISH IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

The Making of a Melting Pot

Irish Immigration to America From 1700 to the early 1800s

Irish Immigration to America represented the first mass immigration to the United States and set the stage for all future immigrating ethnic minorities. Reflecting on their experiences brings insight to the challenges facing today's twentieth century immigrants.

Early Irish Contributions

Although Irish immigration to America didn't reach its peak until the mid 1800s, during the revolutionary war, there were enough Irish soldiers to account for nearly half of General Washington's Continental army, including 1492 officers and 22 generals.

In 1770, the U.S. government took its first census and the results showed that of the 3 million people in America, 44,000 were Irish immigrants and another 150,000 were of Irish ancestry. Not until the success of the American Revolution and the failure of the Irish revolt in 1798, did the voyage across the Atlantic become a reality for many Irish and the number of Irish immigrants to America increase dramatically.

Who Was Immigrating?

The majority of Irish immigrants from 1780 to 1820 were tradespeople, artisans, teachers or professionals, and for them assimilating was fairly easy and many prospered at a pace that was virtually unheard of back in Ireland.

When word spread of the success the Irish were finding in America, families with very little means began saving for the passage and soon, the farmers who had few skills outside of working the land began flooding the banks of America. For the most part illiterate, and with limited skills, from the 1820s on most Irish immigrants found their first job as laborers.

Major projects such as the Erie Canal, the Statue of Liberty, and the eastern section of the transcontinental railroad were all constructed in large part by these former farmers. From 1815 to 1845, wave after wave of Irish immigrants braved the Atlantic and in all roughly one million Irish embraced America as their new home.

The Great Famine

Tragedy struck in 1845 when an obscure fungus migrated to Ireland and subsequently caused an almost complete failure of the potato crop, which led to the largest famine in Irish history. The potato, known in Ireland as "the only property of the poor," was decimated, and the crop yielded 20% of its pre-famine years.

Potatoes were consumed at almost every meal, as other foods were too expensive and what little money there was went to pay the rent. As many as 3 million of Ireland's 8.1 million inhabitants depended on the potato for their daily survival. When the potato failed, so did the poor family's finances. Irish families were evicted in droves and left to battle some of the coldest Irish winters ever recorded, without so much as a warm meal in their stomachs to withstand the rampant disease and sickness.
Not until 1851 did the potato crop start to make a comeback, but the toll had been taken; over one million Irish had perished and nearly one and a half million had taken to the seas in search of reprieve from almost certain death on the Island. In 1851, a census of Ireland found that only 6.5 million Irish remained, in stark contrast to the 8.1 million in 1841.

Beginning of the Great Experiment

At this point in American history, the United States was a homogeneous community of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants of English descent. However, Irish immigrants would indelibly stamp their story on American history and represent the beginning of the "melting pot." The so-called "Famine" Irish immigrants were the original huddled masses and their sheer numbers flooded the ports of America were great cause for concern among many Americans.

The living conditions, in which these newcomers landed, were dismal at best. Though the Irish were well accustomed to living in harsh circumstances, the slums of New York were so revolting that according to one account, a young policeman compared a neighborhood in lower Manhattan to hell. His partner replied, "Hell's a mild climate. This is Hell's Kitchen," and the name stuck.

With what appeared to be the whole world against them, these individuals with their backs against the wall drew upon the strength afforded them by their families, their religion and of course their fellow Irish. The will to endure long hours of repetitive labor and backbreaking work would become their trademark and eventually prove to be an asset in their climb from poverty.

Successful Irish Immigrant Entrepreneurs

Unafraid to work, Irish laborers contributed to the great cities in which they lived by helping to construct roads, bridges, elevated railways, and subway systems. In fact, John Daniel Crimmins, the son of one such immigrant, worked his way up from being a hod tender to owning his own construction company in New York City. His firm would go on to build more than 400 buildings, miles of streets and gas lines, and a large portion of New York City's elevated railway system.

The California Gold Rush of 1849 was the cause of great excitement among many newcomers and it especially appealed to the Irish. Several were fortunate enough to strike it rich, including "Leadville Johnny" Brown and his wife, Margaret Tobin. Margaret nevertheless made her mark on the world when she survived the sinking of the Titanic and will forever be remembered as the "Unsinkable Molly Brown."

From Huddled Masses to the White House

Irish Immigration to America From the 1800s to the Present

Irish Immigration to America represented the first mass immigration to the United States and set the stage for all future immigrating ethnic minorities. Reflecting on their experiences brings insight to the challenges facing today's twentieth century immigrants.

The Roots of the Irish Political Machine

Throughout much of the nineteenth century, the thousands of Irish immigrants who came to the United States seeking a better life were often met with prejudice and resentment. Newspaper adds touting, "No Irish need apply," and less obvious forms of prejudice were not uncommon, yet the Irish learned of a power they had not previously enjoyed in Ireland, the power of the polls.
Because the Irish were concentrated in large cities, they held considerable clout when it came time to vote. The grassroots urban political organizations formed by the Irish would thrive on the concept of providing for those who could not otherwise help themselves in exchange for their votes come election time.

A Different Style of Politics

In 1828, Andrew Jackson became the first president of the United States of Irish heritage. His style of politics known as "Jacksonian Democracy," disbursing favors to loyal supporters gained the support of the commoners and disenfranchised, and would forever change the face of American Politics. In America's short history, the list of Irish politicians who have influenced its system of government is both long and distinguished. Presidents John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan as well as Senators George Mitchell and Daniel Patrick Moynihan are just a few among the many.

Remember the Alamo

While the majority of Irish immigrants settled in large cities, many preferred the wide-open spaces of the "West." Two such notable frontiersmen were Davy Crockett and Colonel William Barret Travis. They were among the small garrison of 186 Texas volunteers that held off Mexican General Santa Anna long enough for fellow Irishman General Sam Houston to regroup his forces and win the decisive victory securing Texas' independence in the battle of the Alamo.

The Industrial Revolution and the Irish

As the Industrial Revolution raged in America, its appetite for manual labor was matched only by the Irish supply of workers. One mid-nineteenth-century newspaper claimed that "America demands for her development an inexhaustible fund of physical energy, and Ireland supplies the most of it."

Although the majority of early Irish immigrants were common laborers, as the nineteenth century matured Irish American workers could be found in almost every conceivable occupation and at all levels. Irish success in government quickly translated into economic opportunity and the number of contracts and jobs delegated to Irish Americans proliferated at an unprecedented rate.

For example, the massive Brooklyn Bridge that took fourteen years to construct was presided over by the Irish-born contractor William Kingsly and Irish laborers, skilled and unskilled alike, did much of the excavation work for the foundation.

Originators of the Unions

The Irish's ability to build support for organizations didn't end with politics. For years Irish immigrants dominated the labor-intensive positions associated with the construction industry. In 1855, twenty percent of the Irish were working as unskilled laborers compared to the 3 percent average for other immigrant groups.

With heavy labor came long hours and rarely did the pay increase despite the grueling hours and often dangerous working environments. Over time, Irish Americans banded together to organize unions and improve the working conditions of all laborers. In 1879, Terence Powderly, a son of Irish immigrants, was elected head of the Knights of Labor, a national association of labor unions. Under his stewardship, it grew to include more than 700,000 members.
Powderly's success was short lived as the industrial magnates tightened down in response to worker unrest. However, at the turn of the century, Sam Gompers and P.J. McGuire, a second-generation Irish American, co-founded the American Federation for Labor (AFL). By 1910, nearly half the AFL's 110 member unions were led by Irish-born or Irish American. In 1920, union membership rose to new heights reaching 5 million nationwide.

With the increase in numbers, the unions' ability to facilitate strikes and boycotts posed a real threat to industries. Soon negotiations were taking place and the working conditions for U.S. laborers began to improve dramatically.

The AFL-CIO and its Irish Heritage

In 1955, George Meany, who began as a plumber's apprentice, became the first head of the merged American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Workers (AFL-CIO), the nation's largest labor organization. Today the AFL-CIO, which represents more than 13 million working Americans, is directed by John Sweeney, a second-generation Irish American.

Other Notable Irish Americans

The son of Irish immigrants, Henry Ford would go down in the history books as the man responsible for introducing the concept of mass-production and for making the first car affordable to the middle class, the Model T. Single handedly, Ford created a social and economic revolution in a class of its own.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, Edgar Allan Poe, Thomas Flanagan and Frank McCourt are among an extensive list of Irish American novelists. Among America's greatest actors, John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara both hailed from Ireland.

Conclusion

Irish immigrants played a significant role in diversifying the early American populous and paved the way for future ethnic groups to do the same. The United States of America will forever show the indelible and remarkable stamp of the Irish.

Prepared, August 2001

Bibliography
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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES - Oral Histories

Simple classroom activities and projects

For younger students but adaptable to all ages:

1) The Gossip Game:

Have students sit in a circle. The first person is given a sentence or perhaps several sentences written on a piece of paper. He or she commits the information to memory and then sets the paper aside. He "whispers" the information, as well as he can remember it to the next person in line. This person does the same, passing the information down the line until it reaches the end. The last person reveals what he has been told to all assembled. The first person then reads the paper.

2) Make a notebook of jokes, proverbs, riddles known to the students (illustrate if desired). Reproduce copies for everyone in the class.

3) Sing nursery rhymes and well-known children’s songs. Do you or the students know different words or verses to the songs? Discuss how the changes may have come about.

For grades 5 and up

1) Research an urban legend to find variants of the story. Try this website for many internet legends: www.snopes.com Point out what characteristics make the choice an urban legend. Report on the urban legend in class or via a written report. Compile the reports into a booklet, if desired.

In-depth classroom project
adapted from http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=406

Introduction

In this lesson, young students will gain a frame of reference for understanding history and for recognizing that the past is different depending on who is remembering and retelling it.

Learning Objectives

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- take an oral history
- compare and contrast two or more accounts of the same event
- write an account of an event which synthesizes eyewitness testimony from two or more sources
Preparing to Teach this Lesson

You might want to review the following EDSITEment-reviewed resources for use in this lesson plan:

- **Great Chicago Fire and the Web of Memory** [http://www.chicagohistory.org/fire/](http://www.chicagohistory.org/fire/) — This site provides several eyewitness accounts of the same event - the great Chicago fire. The three perspectives on the O'Leary legend provide a great opportunity to explore the similarities and differences between two accounts as well as the written report, which became the official historical account.

- **Internet Public Library** [http://www.ipl.org/](http://www.ipl.org/)

- **Eye-Witness—History through the eyes of those who lived it** [http://www.ibiscom.com/](http://www.ibiscom.com/) — This is a teacher resource with examples that could be used with students

Guiding Questions:

What is the past, and why is it important? How do we learn about events in the past? How are historical accounts influenced by the biases of eyewitnesses?

Oral Histories

Have each student interview two family members about the same event, compare the two versions, and write or dictate their own version of the story, which becomes the "official" account. In this way, they will experience the power of both first-hand accounts and historical documentation. Some examples include:

- Ask two family members who were present about the day you were born or adopted;
- Interview both your father and your grandmother about their memories of some significant moment in your father's life (such as high school graduation, a bar mitzvah or confirmation, etc.)
- Ask your mother and your aunt to describe their first day of school.

Keep in mind that events from diverse cultures will help students broaden their understanding of the scope of history. Students may want to tape record their interviews if possible, though distance may require them to conduct such interviews over the phone or email. Students should then fill out the following **Versions of History chart**, provided in pdf format (younger students may need help writing). [http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson_images/lesson406/VersionsofHistoryChart.pdf](http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson_images/lesson406/VersionsofHistoryChart.pdf)

With worksheets in front of them, students will be ready to take part in a class discussion about what they learned. Begin by asking if anyone was surprised by the differences in the two stories that they heard. Why might the stories be different? Some possibilities are that each person remembers different details, or that certain parts of the story were more important to one person than to the other.

Also discuss stories that are very similar. Why aren't there many differences in the two accounts? Perhaps it is a recent event and the two people have not forgotten many details. Perhaps one person's memory is affected by hearing the story from the other person. (For example, if a student were to interview her brother and her mother about her brother's first day of school. Are her brother's memories genuine, or are they formed by hearing the story from her mother?) What does this tell us about history? How do history books get written? The work of an historian is to gather information from many places, including primary sources, and to create an official written account.
RESOURCES

For activities using movement and dance in the classroom:

- [www.mathdance.org](http://www.mathdance.org)
- [http://www.ket.org/artstoolkit/dance/lessonplan/](http://www.ket.org/artstoolkit/dance/lessonplan/)

For information and activities regarding music:

- [http://www.ceolas.org/instruments/Whistle_making](http://www.ceolas.org/instruments/Whistle_making) - How to make a tin whistle
- [http://www.geocities.com/Athens/6464/hrmpg.html](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/6464/hrmpg.html) - About the Donegal Fiddle music
- [http://www.folkmusic.net/htmfiles/inart378.htm](http://www.folkmusic.net/htmfiles/inart378.htm) - Information on Sean nos, a traditional form of Irish singing that is not accompanied

Lesson plans on immigration:

- [http://americanhistory.mrdonn.org/immigration.html](http://americanhistory.mrdonn.org/immigration.html)
- [http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/score_lessons/immigration_debate/](http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/score_lessons/immigration_debate/) - Irish experience
- [http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/courses/ed311/kafai/Team%204/immigration](http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/courses/ed311/kafai/Team%204/immigration) - Irish experience
- [http://www.biography.com/classroom/study-guides/investigative_reports_irish_in_america_part2.jsp](http://www.biography.com/classroom/study-guides/investigative_reports_irish_in_america_part2.jsp) - the Irish in America
Evacuation Procedures

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation of the building, procedures are in place to ensure that the audience can exit safely.

Sections 4, 5, 6
Exit through the lobby.

Sections 1, 2, 3 & Pit
Exit toward stage.

Note: Interior house conditions may necessitate alternate exit routes.

Mezzanine 1, 2, 3
Exit rear through lobby.

Balconies 1, 2 exit toward stage, up two flights and down interior fire escape.
NOTICE TO ALL TEACHERS AND CHAPERONES

- **PERFORMANCES BEGIN PROMPTLY AT 10AM OR NOON.**
  Many of our performances sell out. This means we can have up to 1,600 students to seat. Please help us by arriving **30 minutes** prior to the start of the performance. This will allow our ushers to get everyone seated and for you and your students to visit the rest rooms and get settled. It is important that we begin our performances on time so that all schools can meet their lunch and/or dismissal times.

- **PLEASE CHECK LOCATION OF PERFORMANCE WHEN MAKING YOUR BUS RESERVATION.**

- The staff of the Fine Arts Center needs your help! An increasing number of students are coming into the performance space with gum, food, beverages, cell phones and portable music players. **None of these items is allowed in the halls for performances.** Many of these items are stowed in backpacks and are not easily noticed. Our goal is to offer high quality performances for young people. In order to enhance the experience, we ask for your cooperation in preventing these items from entering the hall.

- For the comfort of all concerned, we ask that backpacks, lunches and other gear be left on the bus. Our long-standing policy of no cameras or tape recorders still is in effect.

- At the conclusion of the performance please remain in your seats until your school group is dismissed.

> *We hope that you and your students enjoy your theatre experience!*
School Bus Parking: Students should be dropped-off at Haigis Mall off of Massachusetts Avenue. University Security will direct buses to an appropriate parking lot during the performance (typically by the football stadium). PLEASE BE SURE YOUR BUS DRIVER KNOWS THAT ALL PERFORMANCES LAST APPROXIMATELY 1 HOUR AND THEY SHOULD RETURN A FEW MINUTES BEFORE THE ANTICIPATED END TIME. If drivers are not with the buses, they may miss the radio call from security asking them to return for pick-up, resulting in unnecessary delays returning to your school.

Individual cars: If necessary, individuals may drop-off students with a chaperone at Haigis Mall (you will be directed by security to the mid-point turn of Haigis Mall – see map) prior to parking. We recommend parking in the Campus Center Parking Garage to avoid searching for a metered space. It is a five-minute walk to the Concert Hall. All other available parking during weekdays is at meters. Available lots and pricing (current as of 1/1/07) are listed below:

Parking in the Garage is available to our patrons at a discounted rate of $1. To receive this rate you MUST give the Garage attendant a parking pass. To receive your pass, please call our office to let us know that you will be arriving by car. Parking passes are sent with the invoices. Please call (413) 545-2116 if you didn’t receive one.

Parking meters are enforced Monday - Friday, 7AM - 5PM. Meter rates are $1.00 per hour.

Parking Garage - near Campus Center, across from the Mullins Center off Commonwealth Avenue
Lot 34 - Behind Visitors Center with 3, 5 & 10-hour meters available
Haigis Mall - 2 hour maximum on meters
Lot 62 - Adjacent to Fernald Hall with 3 hour maximum on meters, limited spaces available.

From the North: (Vermont, Greenfield) I-91 south to Route 116. Follow signs on 116 “To the University of Massachusetts.” Exit ramp leads to Massachusetts Avenue. Turn left (east) on to Massachusetts Avenue toward the campus. Continue through one light and watch for Lot 34 by the Visitors Center on your right and the entrance to Haigis Mall on your left.

From the South: (Springfield, Holyoke) I-91 north to Route 9. Turn right (east) on Route 9 over the Coolidge Bridge and through Hadley. Turn left (north) on Route 116 (across from Staples) heading toward campus. Turn right at first exit at “University of Massachusetts,” then bear right onto Massachusetts Avenue toward campus. Continue through one light and watch for Lot 34 by the Visitors Center on your right and the entrance to Haigis Mall on your left.

From the West: (Northampton, Pittsfield) Route 9 east through Northampton and over Coolidge Bridge. Follow remaining directions under “From the South”.

From the East: (Belchertown, Ludlow) North on Routes 21, 181 or 202 to Route 9 into Amherst. Right on to North Pleasant Street (main downtown intersection), north through center of town. Turn left at Triangle Street (Bertucci’s Restaurant on your right), rejoining North Pleasant Street. To reach Lot 34 and Haigis Mall continue on main road, which becomes Massachusetts Avenue. Haigis Mall will be on your right, Lot 34 on your left.
For Concert Hall, Rand Theater and Bowker Auditorium – Patrons traveling by car are encouraged to park in the parking garage. Discounted parking is available in the garage for $1. A parking permit is required for discounted parking in the garage. Please call the Arts & Educational Programs Office if you require permits at (413) 545-2116. All other parking on campus is at available meters at the rate of $1 per hour. Parking is enforced Monday – Friday, 7AM – 5 PM.

Buses will drop-off students as indicated on map. Buses will be given parking instructions by Campus Security.