FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Drop in to Milwaukee Irish Fest Summer School
New and Returning Programs for 2012 Include Bluegrass, Basket Weaving, Celtic Design and Walking Tour of the Irish Third Ward

MILWAUKEE, Wis. (June 5, 2012) – Milwaukee Irish Fest’s 26th annual Summer School, a week-long series of programs offering professional instruction by the world’s top authorities in Irish music, history and culture, announces several new and returning programs for 2012, including Bluegrass, basket weaving, Celtic design and a walking tour of the Irish Third Ward. Enrollment is now open to students of all ages for the 2012 program, which runs August 13 to 17 and marks the kick off to the annual Irish Fest lakefront festival.

“The Irish Fest Summer School promises all things for all ages,” said Jane Walrath, director of the Irish Fest Summer School. “With the kind of unique instruction you’d find studying abroad in Ireland, these are classes you definitely won’t want to skip.”

Bluegrass
This year’s Irish Fest and the Irish Fest Summer School will highlight Ireland’s influence on Bluegrass and Old Time music. In addition to music classes on fiddle and banjo, cultural programs at the Summer School will trace the roots of Bluegrass, Country and Old Time music. World-class professors will shed light on how these styles of music evolved from the folk music traditions of 18th century Irish, Scottish, English and Welsh immigrants to the U.S.
IRISH FEST SUMMER SCHOOL – ADD ONE

Visiting New York University professor, Mick Moloney, will host a lecture on “Irish Influences on American Music.” In a two-hour class, he’ll discuss Ireland’s musical influence on everything from Vaudeville to Broadway to Bluegrass. For those looking for just a taste of Ireland’s musical history, Moloney will also host a sampler class on “Hillbilly Music Roots in Ireland and America.” In a presentation rich with audio, visuals and live performance, Moloney will trace the multicultural roots of Bluegrass, Country and Old Time music.

Students can then dive into the music of Bluegrass itself with workshops on fiddle, banjo and Old Time tunes hosted by Berklee College of Music faculty member, Bruce Molsky. Molsky will teach a class on “Old Time Tunes and Celtic Roots,” a Master class on “Old Time Fiddle” for advanced students and a workshop on “Old Time Banjo.” Students will have a chance to listen to several genres of music while trying their hand at various instrument playing styles unique to Bluegrass music.

Crafts – Celtic Design, Knitting and Basket Weaving
The nation’s foremost artist in Celtic design, Patrick Gallagher, will host an introductory class on “Celtic Design” and its techniques. Gallagher is a professional artist, designer, sculptor and print maker who helped make Celtic Art a modern phenomenon. His work is archived by the UCLA School of Architecture and Design. Students will work with a variety of materials, including metal.

“Aran Knitting” brings together two experienced knitters – Joyce Ennis and Jo Winkler-Bley – to teach the famous knitting style that began on the Aran Islands on the west coast of Ireland and produced the world-renowned cable-knit, fisherman sweater. Ennis has been knitting since she was a child and learned Aran knitting on the island of Inis Mhór. Meanwhile, Winkler-Bley taught herself this unique knitting style while biking around the United Kingdom. Students with a basic knowledge of knitting will learn the history as well as various techniques of this intriguing craft.

Considered one of the greatest proponents of the ancient craft of basket weaving, Vincent McCarron will teach two levels of classes on how to weave traditional baskets once used daily by Aran Islanders. McCarron resides on the Aran Islands in Inishmore where he has a studio and conducts workshops on the art. An intro session is designed for students with no prior basket weaving experience; a second session takes the basics to the next level.

Walking tour of the Irish Third Ward
Longtime Historic Milwaukee guide, Mary McAndrew, will lead students on a walking tour of Irish history in Milwaukee’s Third Ward. Students will gain an understanding of how the area thrived when the Irish began settling and laboring there beginning in the 1840s.

(more)
IRISH FEST SUMMER SCHOOL – ADD TWO

More classes
There are a variety of classes for all ages to choose from covering: music, language, dance, crafts and culture. For a full schedule listing, course descriptions and instructor bios, visit www.irishfest.com.

Students may sign up for individual classes or enjoy a discount for multiple. Special rates apply for early enrollment by June 30 and a scholarship opportunity is open to music students age 12 to 21. Classes take place on the campus of the Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE) in downtown Milwaukee. Dormitory housing is available to Irish Fest Summer School students. Register online at http://irishfest.com/Summer-School.htm.

About Milwaukee Irish Fest
Milwaukee Irish Fest is North America’s largest celebration of Irish music and culture. The four-day festival showcases more than 100 entertainment acts on 16-stages at Henry W. Maier Festival Park on Milwaukee’s lakefront. The annual festival occurs every third weekend in August. The 2012 festival takes place August 16 to 19.

More than just a festival, the Milwaukee Irish Fest organization is passionately committed to igniting a love of Irish culture in all people. Milwaukee Irish Fest teaches Ireland’s music, dance, drama, sports, culture, children’s activities and genealogy through year-round programming. For more information, visit www.irishfest.com.

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