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Triton College

For Immediate Release: February 26, 2026

'Soulful and Uplifting' Irish Music Comes to Triton College on March 4



Mike Austin (left) and James Conway, teaching artists at the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago.

RIVER GROVE, III. – Audiences are invited to take a musical journey to the Emerald Isle on March 4, as Triton College's Global Music Series presents the Sounds of Ireland.

This free concert takes place between 7 and 8 p.m. in the J-Building Fine Arts Gallery, Room J-107, followed by a Q&A.

Mike Austin and James Conway, teaching artists at Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music, will guide listeners through centuries of Ireland's musical heritage using tin whistles, harmonicas, bodhran, guitar and voice.

"Just like only certain types of tunes are played in Irish traditional music, only certain types of instruments are part of the tradition," said Austin.

Austin promises a concert full of energy and joy.

“Irish traditional music is soulful and uplifting because at its core, it is dance music,” he said. “That doesn’t mean it can’t be contemplative, but for the most part, the five main categories of Irish traditional tunes – jigs, reels, slip jigs, hornpipes and polkas – are toe tappers!”

While it is a type of music that “remains closely tethered to its roots,” said Austin, it has influenced genres of folk music in the United States, especially old time, bluegrass and country music.

March is Irish American Heritage Month, but Austin said he and Conway perform weekly in an open session at Chicago’s Irish American Heritage Center and teach weekly at the Old Town School of Folk Music. Their weekly sessions can include more than 30 musicians and rarely have fewer than 15.

“It’s a mighty sound when we’re all playing together, but there’s something about playing as a duo that we love just as much,” said Austin. “Also, to be introduced to a new audience is always a treat for us.”

This will be Austin’s first time visiting Triton College, but Conway said he attended Triton as a student in the 1980s while preparing for a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) certificate.

“It was a very enjoyable experience, and it led to a lengthy career in the HVAC trade,” said Conway.

Both Conway and Austin said they are looking forward to performing in Triton’s Fine Arts Gallery. “To be among creative work while we’re performing our own creative work will no doubt be rewarding and memorable,” said Austin.

Triton’s Global Music Series is an initiative of the Visual, Performing and Communication Arts Department, and presents four concerts per year. Learn more at triton.edu/vpc.

“We are now in our fourth year of collaborating with Chicago’s Old Town School of Folk Music,” said Salvatore Siriano, a lead music instructor and band director at Triton.

“The goal of the Global Music Series is to bring excellent musicians representing diverse musical traditions to campus for both our students and the broader community,” Siriano added.

Visit Triton’s performing arts webpage at triton.edu/entertainment/ for upcoming music, art and theater events.

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ABOUT TRITON COLLEGE:

Triton College is a public institution of higher education dedicated to student success. Recently recognized by the Aspen Institute as one of the Top 200 community colleges in the nation, Triton offers more than 130 degree and certificate programs that prepare students to pursue

meaningful careers, transfer to four-year universities, and thrive in a global economy. Guided by our mission—*Valuing the individual, educating and serving the community*—Triton serves nearly 17,000 students annually on its 110-acre campus in River Grove, Illinois. Our dedicated faculty and staff provide high-quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities that empower students and strengthens the communities we serve. Triton College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and a member of The Illinois Community College Board. Illinois is home to 45 colleges in 39 community college districts. Learn more at triton.edu.