

# Arts & Entertainment

## Kean University to Host Aspiring Irish Dancers in Studio2Stage

UNION – Kean University will welcome 85 aspiring musicians and Irish dancers to its campus as part of Studio2Stage, a whirlwind nine-day professional workshop and rehearsal process culminating in a public performance on Sunday, August 3 at 8 p.m.

According to promotional material for the event, Studio2Stage is “a performance experience and variety show that has gathered together young amateur musicians, singers and Irish dancers who want to break into the touring show industry.”

“Dancers and musicians will witness firsthand life as a professional performer, experience living away from home, immersing themselves in nine days of intense rehearsals and watching a full-scale show production come to life,” stated a release from Studio2Stage’s production

team.

Studio2Stage’s producers include Jim Murrhly, an original cast member of Michael Flatley’s famed *Lord of the Dance*, and co-director of Dublin-based Damhsa Irish Dance Entertainment Ltd; Michelle Lee, founder of Dublin’s esteemed Lee-Byrne Academy, which teaches and promotes Irish dance and culture; and choreographer Rachel Byrne, an original cast member of *Riverdance* and faculty member at Lee-Byrne. Ms. Byrne will share choreography duties with dancers Bobby Hodges, Chris Naish and Aidan Garvey.

Music direction will be provided by the acclaimed British composer and arranger Anthony Davis, cited in promotional materials for his “unique fusion of Celtic music with jazz, funk, and percussive rhythms [to] create modern versions of tradi-

tional tunes that are upbeat, infectious, and unforgettable.” His CD “Anton and Sully” is widely considered the definitive training CD for Irish dance students of all ages. Acclaimed button accordion player Liam O’Sullivan, another veteran of the Irish Celtic tour, will serve as assistant musical director.

Studio2Stage will be presented on Sunday, August 3, at 8 p.m. in Kean University’s Wilkins Theatre, located at 1000 Morris Avenue in Union. Tickets are \$35, and can be purchased online at [www.keanstage.com](http://www.keanstage.com) or by calling (908) 737-SHOW (7469).

For more information on Studio2Stage, visit [www.studio2stage.ie](http://www.studio2stage.ie). For a full calendar of all arts programming at Kean University, visit [www.keanstage.com](http://www.keanstage.com).



BREATHTAKING VIEWS... The views from the CN Tower’s observation deck at 1,122 feet high are breathtaking, even for the acrophobic.

## An Afternoon High Above Toronto — Not For the Faint of Heart

By FRED T. ROSSI  
Specially Written for The Summer Travel Series

If you happen to find yourself in Toronto—one of my all-time favorite cities, as I detailed back in 2011—and have a few hours to spare, get yourself downtown and then up to the top of the CN Tower.

Built in the mid-1970s, it was the world’s tallest free-standing structure and world’s tallest tower at the time. Since eclipsed in both of those categories, the tower continues to be the tallest free-standing structure in the Western Hemisphere at 1,815 feet high and is the sixth tallest such structure in the world.

In 1995, the American Society of Civil Engineers named it one of the modern Seven Wonders of the World.

The main portion of the CN Tower is a hexagonal pillar that contains its stairwells and the power and plumbing connections. The tower’s six elevators are tucked into the three inverted angles created by the tower’s hexagonal shape.

For those who suffer from acrophobia, the tower’s elevators will be your first challenge. I embrace my acrophobia—whose intensity can vary according to the weather and my frame of mind—so on the very hot summer day that I visited the CN Tower, I was already feeling a bit dehydrated when I arrived.

Not wanting to risk losing my courage right at the start, I shut my eyes as the glass-windowed elevator whisked its way from ground level to the tower’s observation decks more than 1,100 feet above the earth.

Unlike, say, the top of the Empire State Building or the Sears Tower, I was a bit more wobbly at first atop the CN Tower. Maybe it was because the elevators to the top of those buildings are located securely inside versus the CN Tower’s elevators, which, to me, seemed to cling delicately to its outside walls. Or maybe because the observation decks in New York and Chicago are atop solid, massive buildings whereas at the CN Tower, I felt like I was perched perilously at the top of a tall needle, one that could blow over in a strong gust of wind.

Nevertheless, I was not about to ruin the visit with a variety of fear-inducing thoughts so I stepped out of the elevator, absorbed how high up I was, realized everything was all right and immediately focused on the views on this spectacularly clear day where it seemed as if you could see

forever.

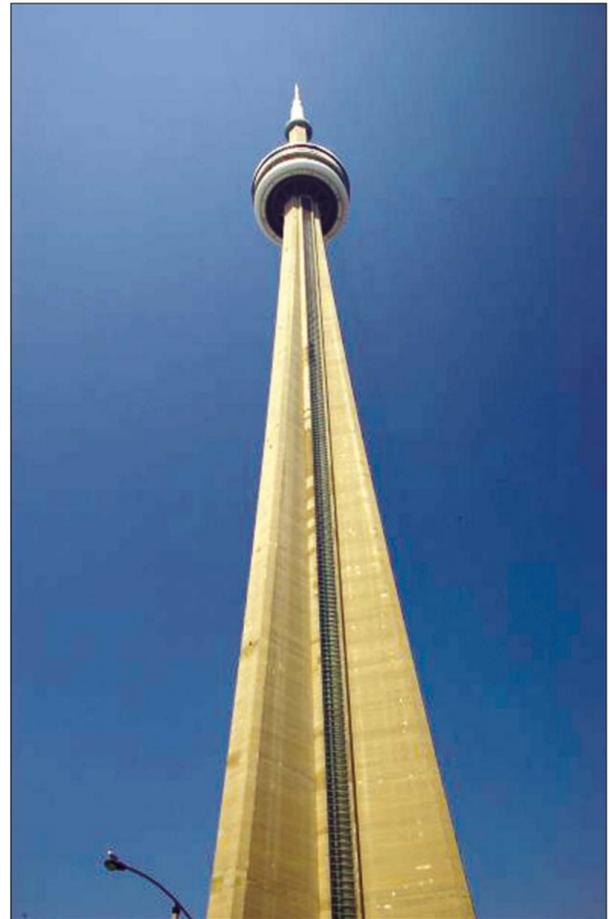
To the south is the great expanse of Lake Ontario, which, despite being the smallest of the Great Lakes at 7,540 sq. miles, seems to be as endless as the blue sky that stretched all the way to New York State. Looking down, you will see Toronto Island, the beautiful public park and beach that is one of the city’s jewels. At its western edge is Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, a very convenient spot to fly in and out of as long as you don’t mind flying in a turboprop plane.

Straight below is the massive white

dome of the Rogers Centre. To the northeast are the tall towers populating the city’s financial district and the rail lines heading out of Union Station to points east and west. Less than a mile to the north you can pick out the campus of the University of Toronto.

The observation deck also features several glass floors that the braver souls not only stand on and lie on, with the ground visible nearly a quarter mile straight down, but also jump up and down on to send shivers up the spines of us cowards. Recently, one

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HIGH ABOVE IT ALL... The CN Tower in Toronto soars 1,815 feet into the air.

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