



# Traub Trip 2024

Amalia Socha



# About me

Hi! My name is Amalia Socha and I am the winner of the 2024 Traub Music Scholarship. Thanks to this incredible opportunity, I was able to travel around Northern Europe for three weeks. On this trip, I learned about many different folk music styles and immersed myself in the cultures surrounding the music. Please enjoy the following summary of my trip!



# Norway

July 1 – July 9

## Førde World and Folk Music Festival

July 3 – July 7



# July 1 - July 2

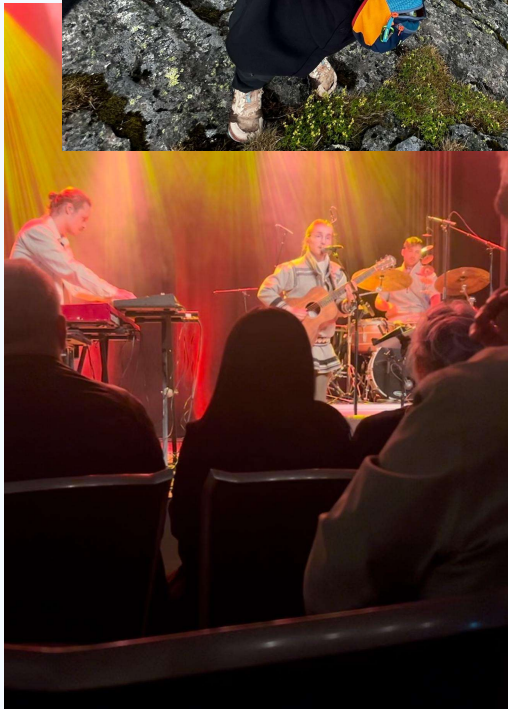
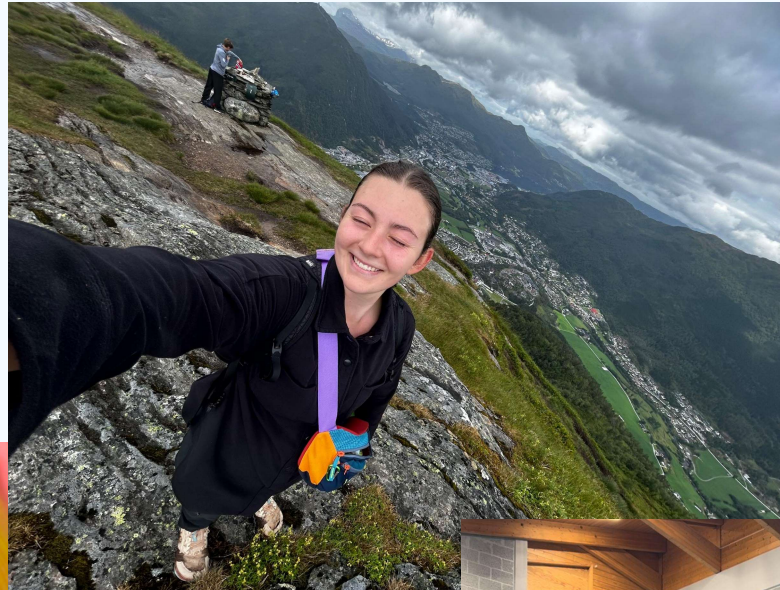
We landed in Bergen and spent a few hours walking around the city before catching a bus to Førde. The next day, we explored the town and went on a hike before festival activities started the next day.





# July 3

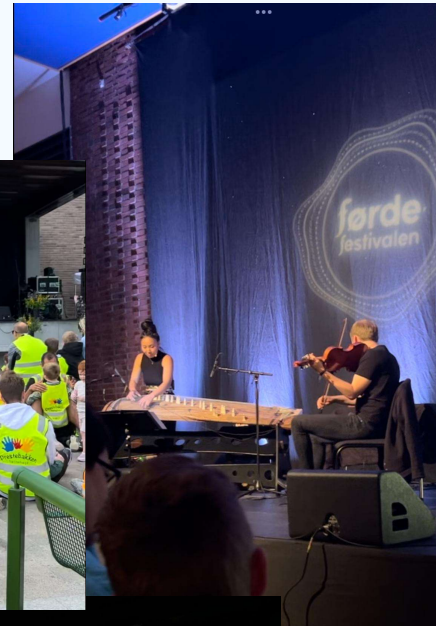
We went on another hike in the morning before attending a Norwegian dance class. We learned two dances, one specifically from the west coast and another that is known nationally. Both were “running dances”, which involves rhythmic running in a circle while incorporating different steps, spins, and partner moves. In the evening, we attended our first concert of the festival. The group was called Lávre and they showcased the Norwegian Joik style that is traditional to the Sami people of Northern Norway.





# July 4

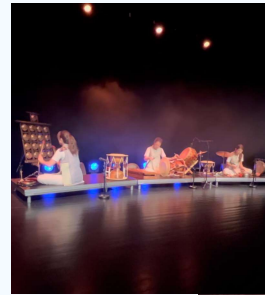
We started our morning with music in the square where we saw four different groups perform short sets as previews of their upcoming performances. We went on a hike before heading to the next performance by a Japanese and Norwegian duo. They both played traditional instruments and modified their uses to adopt each other's style. Next, we headed to the opening concert of the festival which showcased seven different groups and their traditional music.





# July 5

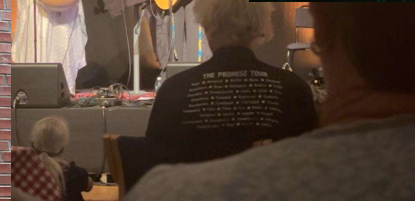
We saw more music in the square this morning, another set of groups playing previews of their performances. Our first concert of the day was a Korean percussion trio called groove&. They played numerous traditional instruments and their speed was impressive. We then went to an art museum in town and learned about the textile art that is popular in the area. Our next concerts were a Norwegian group called Monja and a Ukrainian singer named Yusan Zillya. The main concert of the night was called "Celtic Party Night", which was amazing because celtic music is some of my favorite. After this, we attended a late night concert of the Norwegian fiddle group called the Gjermund Larsen trio. This was by far my favorite concert of the entire festival, and I haven't been able to stop listening to their music since.





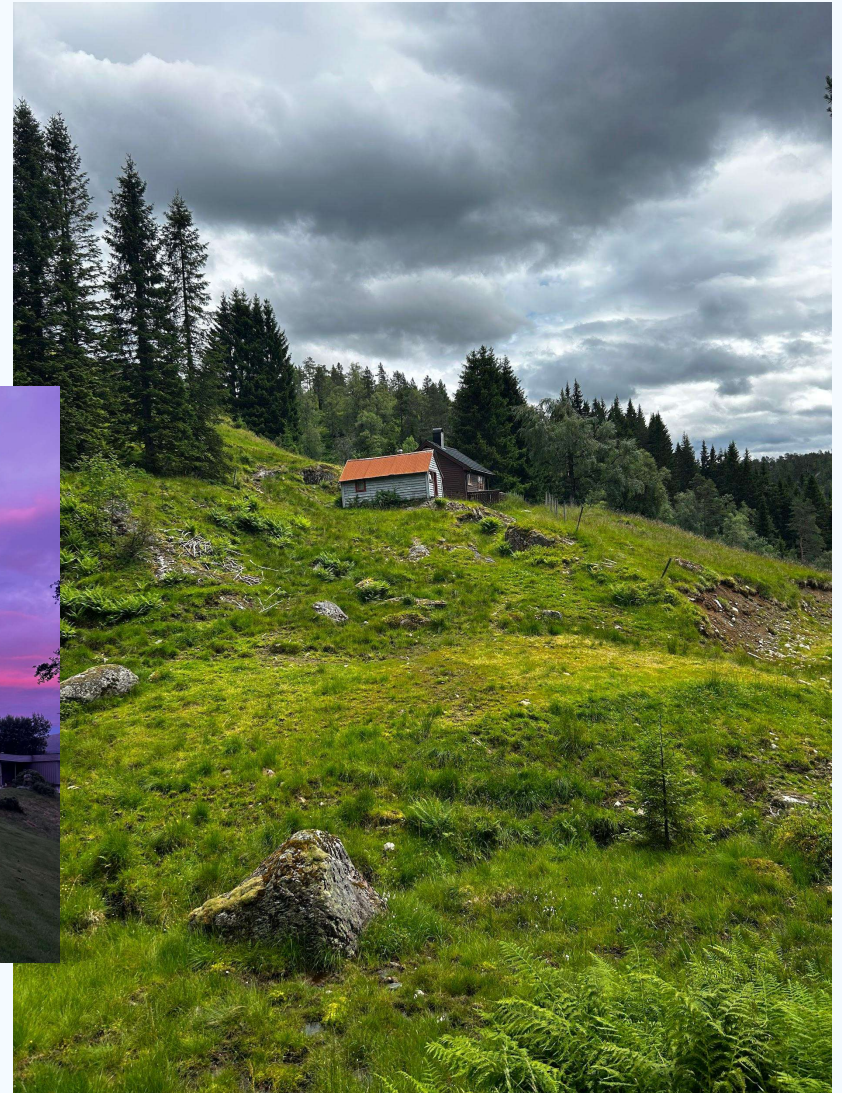
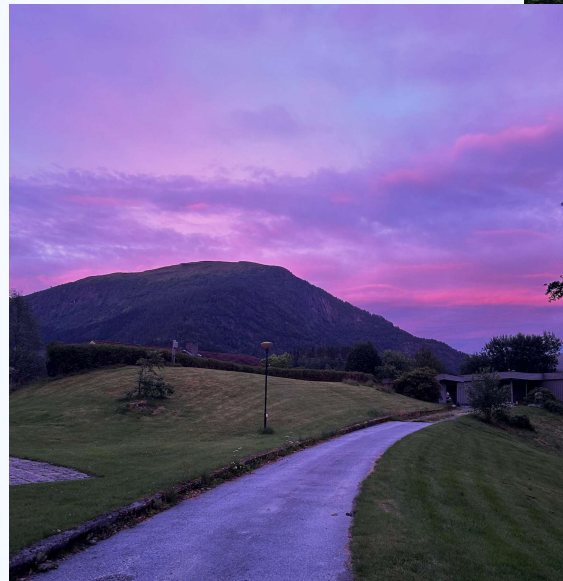
# July 6

Our first concert of the day was a Norwegian band called the Gabriel Fillet band. There were a lot of members and the music was a mix of old and new. Next, we saw a group lead by Tuva Færden which was very interesting and modern. They didn't stop playing for the entire performance. Later, we saw a Swedish and Senegalese duo that played a cool instrument called the kora with 23 strings. The main concert of the night was called "Nordic Roots", and it was a great way to end the festival.



# July 7

Today was a travel day. We flew from Førde to Oslo.



(Some of my favorite pictures from Førde)



# July 8

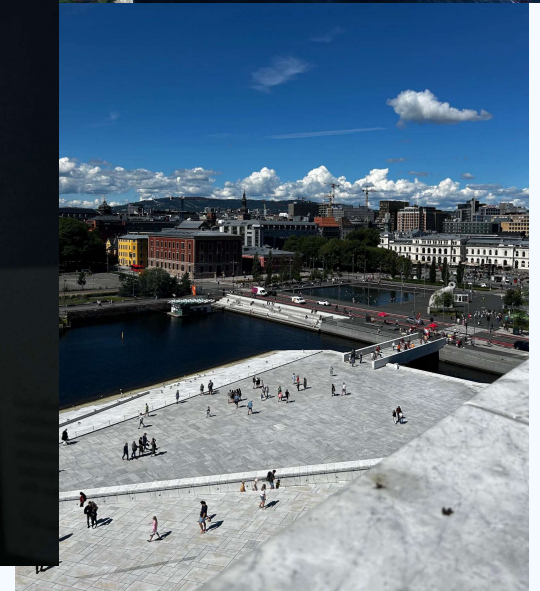
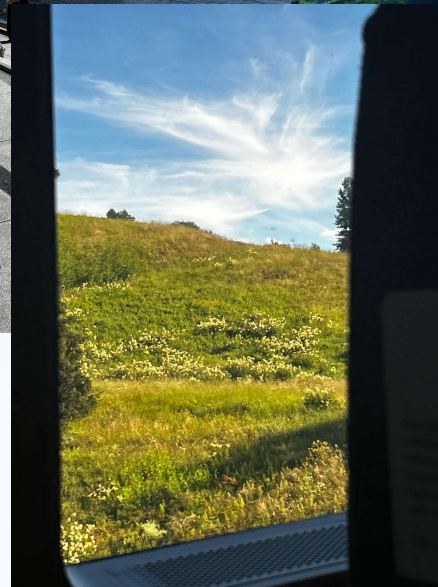
We visited the Nobel Peace center this morning and learned all about the prize and the 2023 winner Narges Mohammadi. We then headed to the Norwegian museum of cultural history and spent time learning about the evolution of Norway's culture and walking around the open air exhibits. In the afternoon, we took the ferry to three different islands in the Oslofjord and explored for a while. We attended a bluegrass concert to end the night.





# July 9

We went on a kayak tour of the Oslofjord this morning and learned about the Norwegian saying; “there is no bad weather, only bad clothing”. Our guide emphasized the outdoor culture of Norway and pointed out all the measures the city of Oslo takes to encourage healthy lifestyles for its people. Next, we visited Oslo’s iconic opera house where you can walk up the roof and see views of the entire city. After this, we headed to the train station and made the journey to Stockholm.



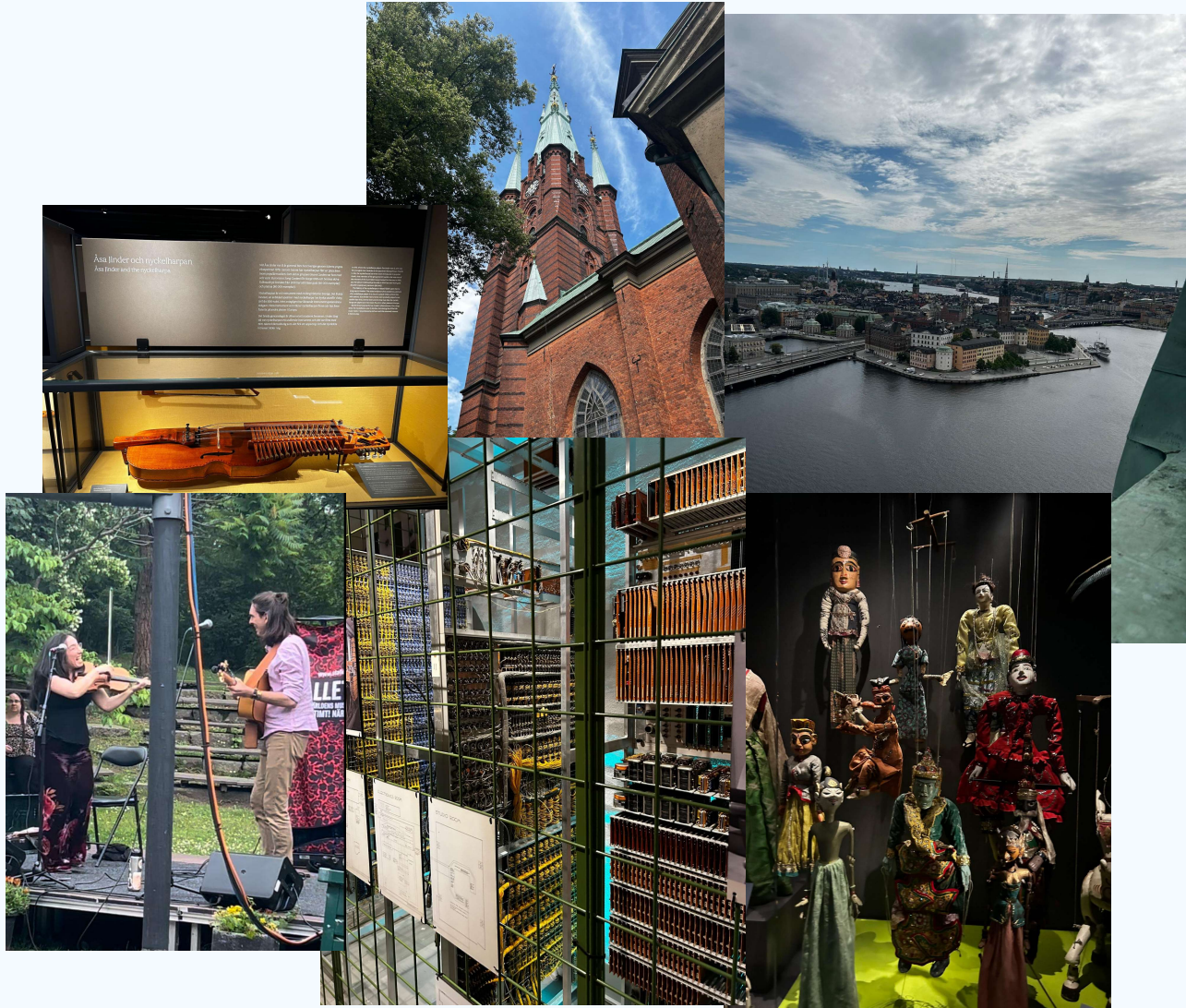
# Sweden

July 10 – July 13



# July 10

We were able to see views of the Stockholm skyline from the city hall tower in the morning before heading to a performing arts museum. On the way we saw the Swedish Royal Army Band performing in the square. At the performing arts museum, we learned all about traditional Swedish instruments and the electroacoustic genre that is popular in Sweden. Next, we headed to a park to listen to John Sousa and Sandra Wong perform on Nyckelharpa and Guitar. They played a mix of traditional tunes and songs they had written themselves.





# July 11

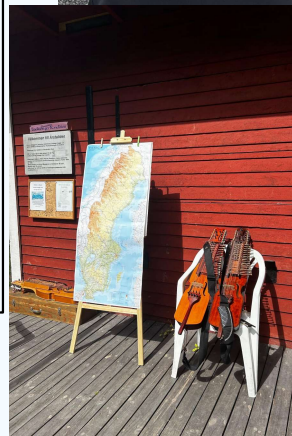
We started our day at the Swedish royal palace museums and caught the changing of the guard ceremony with a performance by the Swedish Royal Army Band. We walked around the old town for a bit and tried some traditional Swedish meatballs and Kroppkakor. In the afternoon, we attended a performance by Johannes Jacobsson who gave a fiddle tour through the entire country by performing tunes from different regions. He was joined by two dancers who also performed traditional dances from each region.





# July 12

We took the metro to a suburb of Stockholm to meet up with a lady who was going to teach us all about the Nyckelharpa. This traditional instrument (“keyed fiddle”) is played on its side and bowed vertically. We learned about different tunes and where they came from, and we even got to try out the instrument and learn some simple dances. We ended the day at Skansen, a folk museum recommended by our guide.





# July 13

Today was a travel day. We walked around the Swedish Royal Library before heading to the airport. We flew from Stockholm to Edinburgh.



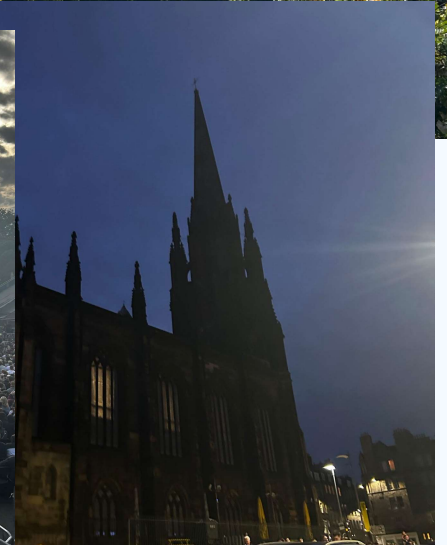
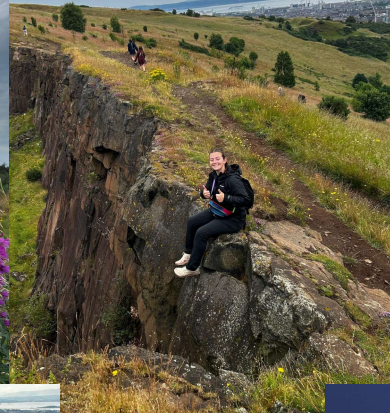
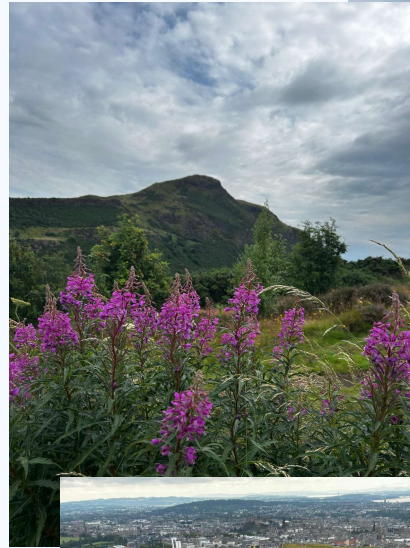


# Scotland

July 13 – July 16

# July 14

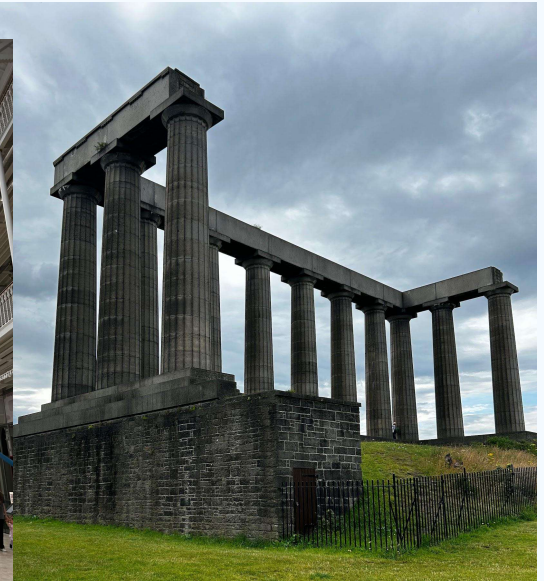
We checked out the Stockbridge market in the morning before heading to Hollyrood park. We explored the whole park and hiked Arthur's seat which is an extinct volcano. In the evening, we attending Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone in concert with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. They showed the movie on a big screen while the orchestra played the entire soundtrack on the stage. The concert was behind Edinburgh Castle which felt like Hogwarts!





# July 15

We explored the National Museum of Scotland in the morning, which had amazing animal/history/art exhibits. We then walked the Royal Mile, a span of historical street that runs from Edinburgh Castle to the Scottish parliament building. Later, we walked up Calton Hill which had incredible views of the city. After dinner, we headed to Sandy Bell's. We listened to a traditional music session at this historic folk bar. It was very interesting, anyone can join these sessions and the musicians were drinking and getting to know each other between tunes.



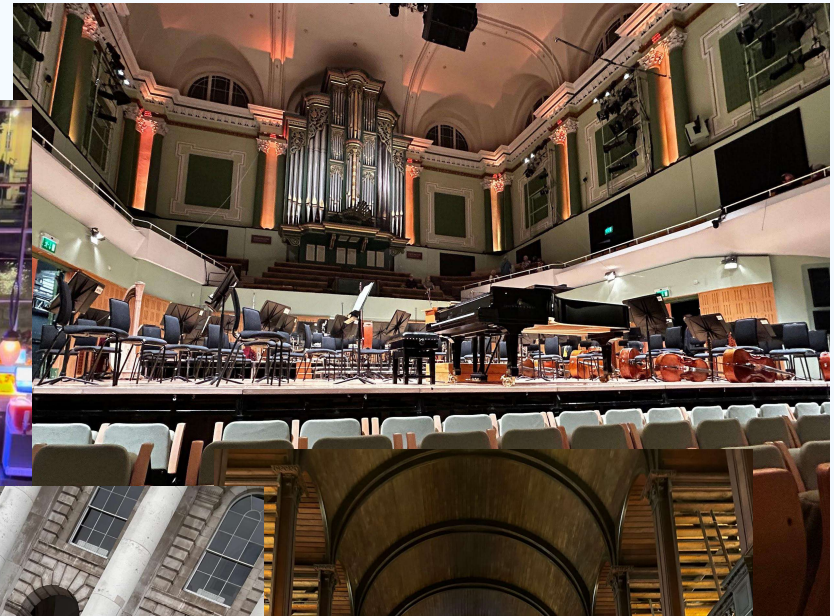
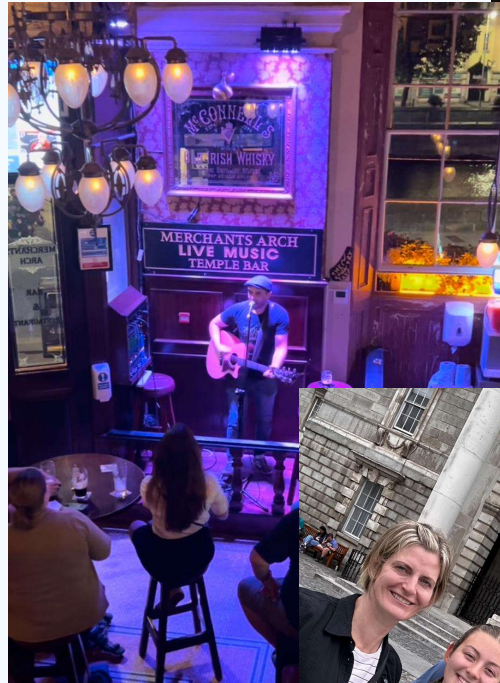
# Ireland

July 16 – July 19



# July 16

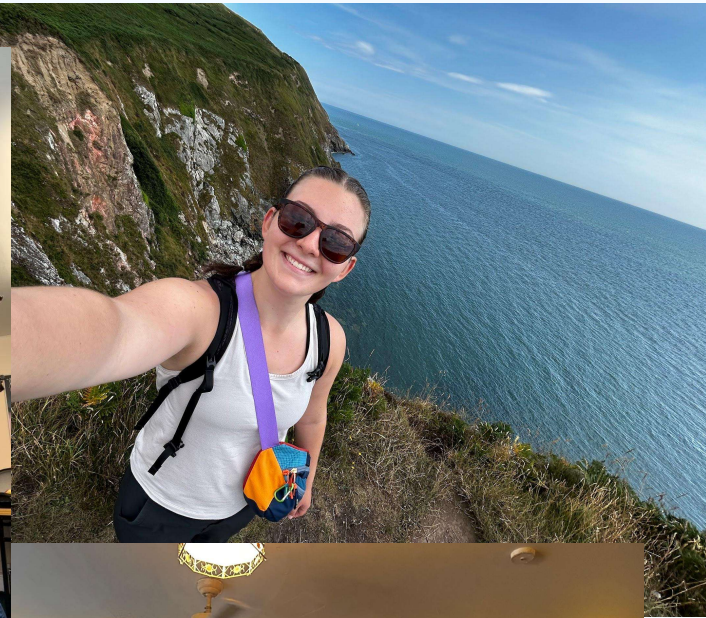
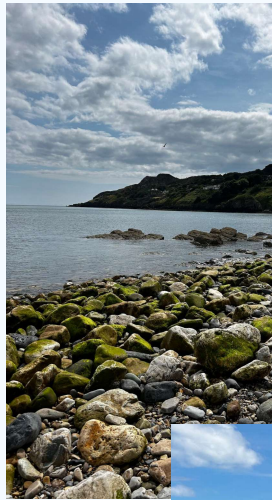
We flew from Edinburgh to Dublin early in the morning and were surprised by my parents once we got to the city! We all headed to Trinity College and explored for a bit. We attended a lunchtime performance by the National Symphony Orchestra. They performed some Gounod, Liszt, and Rimsky-Korsakov. At night, we heard live music at the Merchant's Arch pub.





# July 17

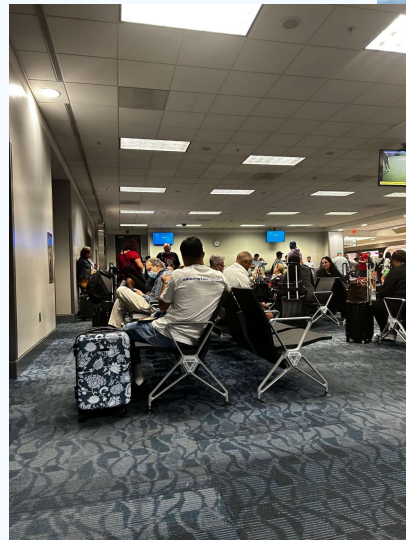
We took a train to Howth in the morning and went on beautiful hike along the shore. In the afternoon, I took an intensive fiddle lesson at the Waltons New School of Music. I learned a polka, a jig, a hornpipe, and a reel—one tune from each of the categories of traditional Irish music. We walked around Dublin for a couple hours and then headed to a pub called Cobblestone to hear some of the best trad music in the city (according to my fiddle teacher). There were a ton of musicians there and the music was incredible.





# July 18 - July 20

We woke up early this morning to catch a bus to the west coast of Ireland. We spent a couple hours at the Cliffs of Moher (incredible views), and checked out an area called the Burren. Next, we headed to Galway and explored for a couple hours before returning to Dublin. We spent our last night wandering into different pubs and listening to live music. Our flight home was the next day.



# Takeaways

My trip around Northern Europe this summer was by far the most incredible trip of my life, and one of the most impactful experiences I have ever had. Many, many thanks to the Traub Scholarship for this amazing opportunity. I was able to experience more types of folk music than I could have ever imagined. Each one was so special in its own way. I especially liked Norwegian fiddling, and I discovered my absolute favorite fiddling group at the Førde festival. They're called the Gjermund Larsen trio and I am obsessed with their music and have been using it as a base for the Norwegian fiddling I've tried out since I've been back. I also learned so much from the fiddle lesson I took in Dublin. My instructor was telling me all about the fiddling culture in Ireland. I was surprised to learn that most people never have any formal instruction on the fiddle, so a lot of traditional technique is compromised. I think this is interesting, though, because the culture is only focused on being together and playing music as opposed to playing "correctly". After this trip, I am even more excited to start becoming more of a fiddle player. I am so thankful that I was able to go on this trip, and again, many thanks to the Traub Scholarship for this once-in-a-lifetime experience!