

Crystal Cruises, Music Centre of LA up the ante

 By [Brian Berkman: contributing editor, travel](#)

28 Nov 2012

Special-interest tourism packages are a great way to get like-minded people to enjoy a holiday together. Cruise liners have long had erudite guests to entertain and educate passengers but Crystal Cruises and the Music Centre of Los Angeles' distinguished Spotlight Program, have upped the ante in the classical music and dance stakes by offering performances and master classes at sea on two Northern Europe cruises next summer.



On Crystal Symphony Iceland/Norway voyage (Reykjavic to London, departing June 4) Flamenco guitarist Tim Callobre, vocalist Geoffrey Hahn, and flautist Sarah Johnson will perform, while Broadway personality, Karen Morrow will conduct a master class in vocal performance.

On the Crystal Serenity's Scandinavia/Germany/Russia cruise (Copenhagen to Stockholm, departing June 15) Opera singer Sean Plumb, classical pianist Tianpeng Yu, and ballet dancers Charlie Anderson and Shelby Elsbree will perform classical and operatic pieces, with ballet mistress Francine Kessler-Lavac leading a master class in ballet.

In addition to solo and ensemble performances on/in the ships' stylish stages and expansive atriums, Master Classes at Sea will offer behind-the-scenes insight into the discipline required to perform at/with such esteemed institutions as Carnegie Hall, Julliard, New York City Ballet, and Kennedy Centre at such young ages. A new, dedicated, in-stateroom Music Centre television channel will also showcase the Music Centre's Spotlight programme and the performers' intensive training.

Reputation for excellence

"Like Crystal, the Music Centre has been a preeminent leader in its field for decades, with the highest standard for talent and a reputation for excellence," says Christopher Escamilla, Crystal's manager, production operations and entertainment integration. "When you consider the extraordinary stages these young artists have performed upon already, and the growing success sure to come in their futures, we're thrilled to have them playing exclusively for Crystal guests during even a few short weeks en route to the top."

The 11-day, June 4 "Emerging Artists" voyage overnights in Reykjavic, then visits Heimaey, Iceland; Tórshavn, Denmark; ? lesund, Hellesylt, Bergen, Eidfjord and Stavanger, Norway; and London. The 10-day, June 15 sailing overnights in Copenhagen on June 15 before calling in Berlin, Germany; Helsinki, Finland; St. Petersburg, Russia (two overnights); Tallinn, Estonia; and Stockholm, Sweden (overnight). Through December 28, all-inclusive "Book Now" cruise fares start at approximately R38 346 for 11 days and approximately R38 930 for 10 days, respectively.

Crystal Cruises' award-winning entertainment offerings include a range of venues and performances, from cabaret nightclub to piano bar saloon; acclaimed productions to headline entertainers; and sophisticated enrichment activities to in-room Blu-ray-viewing, for all world travelers.

For more information and Crystal reservations, contact a travel agent, call Cruises International on +27 (0)11 3270327 or go to www.cruises.co.za.

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