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## Amore: Moments That Can Change the World



Allegro Community Children's Choir (director, Christy Elsner) toured Italy in June, 2011,

*Allegro performs in the Santuario del Buon Consiglio in Torre del Greco, Italy*

and, while they were gone, kept a tour blog following them from Naples to Rome and back home. The following was posted by Kimberly Stout, a mother and chaperone, after a concert in Torre del Greco, outside Naples.

*Allegro . continued on page 2*

## Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra Focuses on Bulgaria

Here's proof that patience pays off: after eight or so years of discussion, two conductors and four orchestra managers, the Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra (from Orange County, California)



embarked on its first tour on June 26, 2011, to the native country of its conductor, Maxim Eshkenazy: Bulgaria.

ACFEA has arranged several choir tours to this fascinating

*PSYO . continued on page 4*

*Director Maxim Eshkenazy and PSYO members perform in Bulgaria Hall, Sofia*



# Last Minute Save Sends Loma Linda Academy to France



It is always exciting for ACEFA when we work with a group for the first time, but there was an adrenalin rush added to the excitement when we received this email from Giovanni Santos, the director of the Loma Linda Academy Symphonic Band, at 9:40 am on Friday, September 24, 2010:

"This is my last hope, before having to cancel an international tour. Would it be possible to have a tour planned for June 2011 for 11-13 days,



*Loma Linda performs an outdoor concert in the cloisters of Abbaye de la Trinité in Vendôme, France*

to France, for \$2,850 per person? I need to know ASAP, before this Monday. You probably can't answer, but I thought I should give it one last shot."

The company with which he had been working had just told him that it could not deliver the tour that it had been promising, and he was faced with having to tell his many high school students that the trip to which they were so looking forward

was cancelled. ACEFA loves a challenge, so with some hard work over the weekend and some serious arm-twisting of hotels and airlines, Gio received the proposal he needed at 11:40 am on that Monday.

Just under nine months later, 129 members of the band, their families and supporters enjoyed a varied and rewarding tour of France that encompassed

Normandy, Orléans, Chartres and Paris. They performed at the American Military Cemetery in Normandy, the cloisters of the Abbaye de la Trinité in Vendôme, Chartres Cathedral and in Paris on June 21 as part of France's annual Fête de la Musique, an astonishing day on which thousands of performances of all types of music take place around the country.

In addition to sightseeing tours of Orléans and Paris, the group enjoyed visiting the Château de Chambord, the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre. Being a Seventh-day Adventist school, they had some dietary restrictions and limitations on what they could do on a Saturday, and ACEFA was pleased to respect those requirements and help the group adhere to them. We have never before had the opportunity to tell restaurants in France that we needed 129 vegetarian meals: there were some raised Gallic eyebrows, but we're told that it all worked out very well!

Only a few weeks after this tour, the group was back in touch with us to talk about its 2012 tour, so the effort that we put into saving the 2011 tour has led to a repeat client and a cherished ongoing relationship between ACEFA and the Loma Linda Academy. 🇫🇷

*Allegro . continued from page 1*

I am not normally at a loss for words, but I am struggling to choose the right way to convey what we felt after performing our first concert.

I do not think there are enough words to capture the most beautiful experience that we shared at a small church in Torre del Greco by the name of Santuario del Buon Consiglio. Our concert was part of a four-day celebration of the life of their past priest who founded the orphanage at the church. He died 50 years ago and they have been celebrating his life each year. This is a relatively small community known as the 'City of Flowers'. Although they have had many struggles, we saw the most positive side of its people tonight.

It is a special thing to be able to sing in a church where the acoustics

match the caliber of Allegro, and the girls experienced this when we rehearsed earlier today. However, it is taken to another level when you add an entire church overflowing with people who had come with excited anticipation to see our girls sing. We could all feel the energy from the beginning with their warm welcome and singing from their own local choir, but the way the night proceeded we could have never imagined. There were moments where my breath was taken away and I could not keep dry eyes, but it was not only me, it was also the perfect strangers who had come not knowing what they would hear.

When the girls had finished singing they were called back to do an encore. After the priest lavished

them with the most kind words of how "they were like angels and their music gave us all wings to reach closer to God", he gave them a special blessing "to not only carry on the beautiful gift of singing in their lives, but to carry that gift with them in their heart always in everything they do".

They also presented us with several special gifts to take home to remember them by. Although appreciated, it was their genuine kindness that they expressed in everything they had done to receive us that we will never forget. They made us feel like family in Italy!

They had prepared a beautiful reception for all of us after the concert to socialize and shared an amazing picture that they had made completely from fresh flowers. It

# Edmonton Youth Bridge Cultural Barriers



by Katie Maxfield, Tour Participant

After years of watching my three brothers trek all over the world with their boychoir, I finally got my chance. This July, I travelled with 25 choristers in the Edmonton Youth Choir to China, where we toured for two weeks and performed in Beijing, Xi'an, Nanjing, Hangzhou and Shanghai.

As we adjusted to the 14-hour time difference, we also adjusted to life in China, including curiously translated signs ('Heart cerebral disease sufferer, ascend the Great Wall to please watch for') and 'squatty potties' (footprints and a hole in the ground). We hiked up the steep stairs of the Great Wall, pausing to take pictures of the view and of the Chinese characters carved into the stone. Chinese culture and symbolism gained new significance as we walked through the ancient Forbidden City. Most of us rode

has been a tradition each year, but this year it was extra special as they needed nearly 20,000 flowers! The picture was of the priest they were celebrating along with Mary and the baby Jesus and it covered an entire wall. Upon returning to the reception room, we were presented with a cake in our honor and each singer was presented a gift.

When we departed, their choir along with the priest sang to us as we left the church. We felt the love with a capital 'L' tonight in so many ways. Lori Egan (Allegro Administrator) said "These are the kind of moments that can change the world."

Tonight the girls realized firsthand why it is worth it to invest the time and energy in something larger than yourself. It was truly a magical day in every way! 📷

rickety old bikes around the city wall of Xi'an. We wandered through a beautiful bamboo forest and through a park in Nanjing in the pouring rain that refreshed our spirits (and our feet). We gorged ourselves on 18 varieties of dumplings at a special lunch. In Shanghai, an elevator took us to the 88th floor of the Jin Mao Tower, which provided a view over the city that houses 23 million people.



Edmonton Youth Choir members enjoying dinner in Beijing

We loved not only the sightseeing, but also the concerts, which took place every

second day following afternoon rehearsals. One song that deeply affected both the choir and the audience was a Chinese folk song, *Mo Li Hua (Jasmine Flower Song)*. This song and even the flower itself have recently been suppressed by the Chinese government because of their association with the politically sensitive 'Jasmine Revolution' in Tunisia. At our first concert, we were not sure how the audience would react. When the song was announced, there was more murmuring than usual, but as the flute began to play the melody, the concert hall suddenly hushed, and then a barely perceptible

hum arose. When we began to sing in Chinese, the audience broke into applause and continued to applaud after every verse. They clearly loved it, and it quickly became one of our favorite songs to perform.

At the end of every concert, audience members, especially children, would clamber onto the stage to take photos with choristers. Between photos, our choir director was busy keeping up with the demands for his autograph on our CDs. At times it felt as if we were the center of attention, not only onstage but everywhere we went. From our first day in Tiananmen Square, we noticed people surreptitiously taking pictures of us or even in front of us, as if we were a tourist attraction. The bolder ones would ask to take pictures with them, sometimes putting their arm around us in a familiar way.

After shopping at a gift store one day, some of my friends and I sang *O Canada* in four-part harmony for the shopkeeper. She clapped and beamed wordlessly at me and I felt that, despite the language barrier, we had somehow become friends. It was little experiences like these that we will remember most of all, that through our music on and off the stage, we became not only tourists, but ambassadors. 📷

## IN CONCERT

### Denver Young Artists Orchestra

Denver Young Artists Orchestra has been touring with ACFEA since 1993 and, in 2011, conducted by Jurgen de Lemos, toured Germany and the Czech Republic. During its tour the group performed in Brandenburg cathedral, raising €2,400 (US\$3,400) for the refurbishment of the organ. "Great location, wonderful audience", said Peter Hellyer, Executive Director.



Photo courtesy of Marianne Swienink-Havard

# Portland Symphonic Girlchoir's Ninth International Tour is One of the Best Yet



*Portland Symphonic Girlchoir in the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, Germany*

*by Roberta Q. Jackson  
and Debra R. Burgess,  
Co-Conductors*

Glorious venues and appreciative audiences welcomed the Portland Symphonic Girlchoir and inspired us to new artistic heights on our recent tour of Germany and the Czech Republic. We shared an eclectic mix of traditional sacred repertoire, world music and examples of American jazz and gospel music with enthusiastic audiences everywhere we performed.

This tour, rich with history and beauty, provided lifelong memories

and transformed singing relationships into lasting friendships. Each city and venue provided special memories. To see the results of the incredible rebuilding of war-ravaged Leipzig and Dresden was breathtaking, yet sobering. Singing in the Thomaskirche, Bach's church, was deeply moving as we experienced the audience's appreciation by its warm applause ending in a standing ovation.

*PSYO . continued from page 1*

country, but this was our first for an orchestra. However, based on the great success of this tour, we very much hope that there will be more in the near future. The combination of excellent halls, good audiences, a variety of sightseeing opportunities and great value makes this a destination worthy of careful consideration by any orchestra.

PSYO started its tour in the capital, Sofia. This attractive city, with wide boulevards, plenty of green open spaces and some beautiful churches, was a surprise to some members of the group who had a drab, Eastern European image in their minds. A couple of days of rehearsing and sightseeing allowed time to recover from the journey and to prepare for the first concert, held in the magnificent Bulgaria Hall, the most prestigious venue in the country. This concert, like the others on the tour, was completely sold out, and the audience (which included the last Tsar of Bulgaria, His Majesty King Simeon II of the Bulgarians) responded with wild enthusiasm, calling for three encores.

The following day featured a run-out

to Plovdiv, an ancient city with a spectacular Roman amphitheatre, in which a small ensemble from PSYO gave a short, informal concert. The main concert that evening was in the Philharmonic Hall, and the crowd was as enthusiastic as in Sofia the previous day.

The next stop was Varna, a flourishing resort city on the shores of the Black Sea. Once the very non-socialist playground of the elite of Eastern Europe, the city is now a popular destination for all tourists. The group enjoyed a visit to the Roman baths, a performance by a local dance group and a piano recital before giving their own concert in the Congress Centre Concert Hall.

PSYO returned to Sofia for a festive Fourth of July celebration before flying back to California, but no



Our joint performances with the Junges Vokalensemble Potsdam, the choir from the Mittel Schule Pegau, and the Dresden Mädchenchor made for delightful music making and gave us the opportunity to make new friends and connect with this unique culture. Finishing in Prague, with its beauty and splendor, and singing our final concert in St. Nicholas Church in the Old Town Square, with its stunning interior and wonderful acoustics, was the perfect end to a fabulous tour, one of our best. We will never be the same!

This was our ninth international tour and fifth consecutive with ACFEA and once again this company exceeded our expectations with excellent promotion, exciting collaborations and a perfect balance of performing and sightseeing. We appreciated the attention to detail and personalization of this tour, based on our requests and desires, by ACFEA Tour Manager Erin Harlan. Thank you, Erin! 📺



*PSYO performs in the Congress Centre Concert Hall in Varna, Bulgaria*

tour of Bulgaria can be complete without a visit to one of Europe's most stunning sites, Rila Monastery. Just 75 miles south of Sofia, hidden in the middle of towering mountains and with a trout stream running past it, is this architectural, spiritual and aesthetic treasure – absolutely not to be missed, as the group would now testify.

Accompanying the main orchestral group was a group of patrons: supporters of the orchestra who wanted to share the excitement of the group's first tour. With their own bus and courier, and an itinerary

# Jonathan Griffith Singers Tours to its Third Continent

For the Jonathan Griffith Singers' sixth ACFEA tour, Maestro Jonathan Griffith was looking for somewhere new for the choir to explore after tours to Europe and China. After many options were considered, South

America emerged as the perfect destination for the singers from all over the US and Canada to gather and perform once again. Coming from a diverse array of choirs and musical backgrounds, these singers look forward to reuniting every two years to present a masterwork with professional

orchestras in world-class venues, and Uruguay and Argentina presented opportunities to do just that.

The repertoire was to be Mozart's *Requiem*, performed in two fantastic venues: the Teatro Solis in Montevideo, the oldest opera house in the Americas, and the exquisite Basilica San José de Flores in Buenos Aires. With the outstanding Montevideo Philharmonic Orchestra and the Buenos Aires

that only overlapped with the orchestra's at concerts, this followed the model that groups are increasingly adopting, whereby supporters and parents can be part of the experience but still have some independence and separation from the performing group. Since many groups add a surcharge to the price of these tours, they can also serve as a useful fundraising tool.

Melissa Craig, Director of Youth Ensembles for the Pacific Symphony, wrote this after the first concert: "I have to say, we were quite stunned with the experience, and the musicians were equally stunned. We received a standing ovation that went from the first row, all the way back to the very last row upstairs. I've never seen such an enthusiastic audience for PSYO." 📺

Symphony Orchestra, wonderful local soloists, and audiences of over 1,000 people at each concert, the choir could not have been more pleased. Said Maestro Griffith, "Both concerts were most successful, very well received, and musically fulfilling, especially the performance in Buenos Aires. The church was packed, standing room only, but it was the genuine and sincere response of the audience

following the concert that made it so memorable. Many in the audience waited and greeted the singers one by one as they left the church, with tears in their eyes expressing as best they could the impact of the music. Many of the singers were similarly moved by the sincerity of the audience and were also in tears."

While the choir needed plenty of rehearsal time to put together such a significant work, the singers still managed some sightseeing highlights as well. After a long set of flights,

the choir was welcomed to Uruguay with a vineyard tour and wine tasting to learn more about one of Uruguay's top industries. The group also enjoyed a guided sightseeing tour of historic Colonia. Of course, no visit to Buenos Aires would be complete without a tango show, so they attended one over dinner. While many in the group returned home after another successful JGS tour, nearly half extended their trip with an excursion to the world-famous Iguazu Falls on the Argentina-Brazil border, a magnificent way to cap off their South American experience. 📺



*Jonathan Griffith Singers performs with the Simfónica de Buenos Aires in the Basilica San José de Flores in Buenos Aires*



## IN CONCERT

### Saskatoon Children's Choir

The Saskatoon Children's Choir was honored to perform with the Drakensberg Boys' Choir during Saskatoon's tour of South Africa this July. After spending a day rehearsing and socializing on Drakensberg's beautiful school campus nestled in the mountains, the choirs performed for a very warm and welcoming audience. Highlights included the folk songs each choir performed from their home country, including Saskatoon's performances of the French Canadian folk song "Ah! Si mon moine voulait danser", and a joint performance of Drakensberg's signature song, "Tshotsholoz."



# Santa Barbara Choral Society: Fauré to Spain

Following the huge success of its 2007 tour of Italy and Germany, the Santa Barbara Choral Society (director, JoAnne Wasserman) decided on Spain as the destination for its 2011 tour. The combination of world-class cities such as Madrid and Barcelona with smaller, more low-key ones such as Cuenca and Zaragoza, the availability of great venues and enthusiastic audiences, and good value prices made this a sure-fire winner.



Looking to perform with an orchestra (as they usually do at home) for at least part of their program, they asked us to hire Spanish instrumentalists for performances of the crowd-pleasing *Requiem* by Gabriel Fauré. So, two of the concerts (in Cuenca and Barcelona, the latter being recorded) were with professional orchestras, and the other three (in Madrid, Zaragoza and Figueres) were a *cappella* or with piano accompaniment.

Photo courtesy of Marianne Swienink-Hauward



*Santa Barbara Choral Society performs with the Orquesta de Cámara de la Sinfónica Europea in Barcelona Cathedral*

Looking to bolster its numbers a little, SBCS invited members of the UC Alumni Chorus and of the choral program at Santa Rosa Junior College to join them, resulting in a musically robust ensemble and the potential for lots of new friendships to be made. The social part of SBCS's tours is always important, and much care was taken to allow plenty of time to enjoy the magnificent Spanish wine and cuisine in each place.

Add to this mix an excursion to Toledo, a visit to the Prado, sightseeing tours of Madrid, Zaragoza and Barcelona, and an afternoon of Salvador Dalí in Figueres, and the singers came back feeling that they had had a wonderfully full Spanish experience and had given their audiences great musical performances.

Paul Warner, President of the Santa Barbara Choral Society, was kind enough to write: "First of all, thanks for all of your work on our behalf regarding the Spain tour. It was fabulous! We had a great time singing and touring and we really appreciated the Berkeley/Santa Rosa group. They were very good singers, including the kids, and we all blended together after a very short rehearsal. Again, thanks." 📌

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*performs in Iglesia  
San Jose del Convento  
de Cayetano in  
Córdoba, Spain*

Photo courtesy of Marianne Swienink-Hauward



## IN CONCERT

### Virginia Children's Chorus

The Virginia Children's Chorus performed *Carmina Burana* in London's Royal Albert Hall in July, 2011. The large chorus, made up of 1,834 singers from 12 countries, sang under the direction of the renowned British conductor Brian Kay. The concert was a highlight of their tour: "It was a dream to sing with Brian!" Artistic Director Carol T. Downing said.



### Spiritus Chamber Choir

*performs in the Eglise du Sacré Coeur  
in Dijon, France*

### Tacoma Youth Chorus

*at Chartres Cathedral  
in France*



### Lawrence Children's Choir

*in Whistler, British Columbia, location of  
many of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games events*

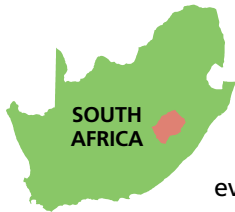


# Mississippi College Singers Enjoys Joint Concerts, Homestays, Angry Elephants...

by Sarah Pope, Tour Participant

When I signed up to travel to South Africa with my choir, the Mississippi College Singers, I had no idea that my life would be forever changed. Touring through Johannesburg, the Garden Route, Pilanesberg and Cape Town was like seeing four different worlds within one country. The views were breathtaking and the cultures were dramatically different.

We started our tour in Johannesburg. One of the most memorable events of the trip was our joint concert with Michael Dingaan's choir, the Chamber Choir of South Africa, in the Kwa-Thema Methodist Church, located in one of Johannesburg's most populous black townships. We learned many traditional African songs, some sacred and some secular, and performed them with the Chamber Choir. This concert was very emotional for our group, and the love shown to us by the community was overwhelming. They welcomed us into their homes, where we stayed overnight – a truly memorable experience. Despite how tired we were from such an eventful concert, we exchanged stories with our host families into the early morning. It was such a blessing to see how individuals half a world away live life every day.



When we left Kwa-Thema, we moved on to Pilanesberg National Park where we spent a whole day on safari. Despite being chased by an angry elephant, we had such a great time seeing animals that are uncommon to us in the States.

From Pilanesberg, we travelled to the Garden Route for more homestays in George. Just like in Kwa-Thema, we were graciously welcomed into the homes of the members of the Bergsig Dutch Reformed Church. The landscape in George was completely opposite from that of Johannesburg. I can still picture the wall of majestic mountains surrounding the area and setting a beautiful backdrop for our adventures to Knysna.

From George, we moved on to Cape Town where we spent the rest of our tour. We performed a joint concert with the Pro Cantu Youth Choir and the University of Cape Town Choir on the university's campus. On our final night, we travelled to Table Mountain, overlooking the city lights of Cape Town. It was such a special night for our group as we reminisced about the truly life-changing trip we had.

With each passing day we said, 'Tomorrow can't possibly be better than today.' We were wrong. Each day surpassed the one before. I will never forget my adventures in South Africa and will forever be grateful to those who made it possible. 📍

Mississippi College Singers on top of Table Mountain, overlooking Cape Town, South Africa



# Camaraderie Makes Italy Magical for GMC

by Emily Frye, ACFEA Tour Manager



One Sunday afternoon in April, as I was sitting in a church listening to a performance by the Greater Middletown Chorale, I realized that the group was going to have an absolutely wonderful tour of Italy.

We feel this way often, of course. It is our mission to create life-changing experiences by providing opportunities for people to share their music with the audiences of the world. So much care goes into planning a tour that by the time we wave goodbye to a group at the airport, we're over the moon excited for them.

And yet, there was something special about this group. They were not only singing beautifully, with a thoughtfully chosen and expertly presented repertoire, but there was also magic in their performance. Magic that made it absolutely clear just how much the choristers cared about each other and the music they were making.

Then it dawned on me: the magic they had was an advanced level of camaraderie and togetherness, the exact kind that groups usually develop when they travel together. They wouldn't get on the plane for another month, but in a way they were already on tour. Italy was going to be a dream.

Looking at the itinerary, that was already obvious. GMC was slated to perform formal concerts in three fantastic venues: the Chiesa San Marcello al Corso in the heart of Rome, the Chiesa San Stefano al Ponte Vecchio in the center of Florence, and Abano Terme's beautiful Duomo San Lorenzo, an intimate setting outside Venice. The group rounded out its singing with a mass participation in Venice's Basilica di San Marco, one of the most famous and iconic religious





spaces in the world. In addition to the performances, they would be treated to Italy's gorgeous landscapes, stunning history and legendary cuisine.

So what happens when you take a group that already sings with perfect *esprit de corps* on tour?

The levels of musicianship, the abundance of joy and the amount of sheer fun increase exponentially. In other words, the magic gets even better!

"The GMC's camaraderie fully blossomed and relationships between people deepened through what we experienced and through the music we made. Witnessing (and participating in) this throughout the entire tour was the most rewarding part for me, and the greatest blessing," Joseph D'Eugenio, Greater Middletown Chorale's Artistic Director and Conductor, wrote to me when they arrived home.



*Greater Middletown Chorale performs in the Duomo San Lorenzo in Abano Terme, Italy*

"To see people who I love so much, and whose presence I am so grateful for in my life, immerse themselves in the wonders of a beautiful place and in the best of each other is simply miraculous and a joy. Our GMC truly is a special family, one that you, as well as all those who helped organize and participated in it, are part of now too."

Getting to know the Greater Middletown Chorale truly does feel like becoming a part of a family, and I was honored to do so. And as they proved, tour preparations aren't just about learning the music and knowing what to pack. They're about how a group comes together as an ensemble and how they emotionally prepare for the life-changing experiences ahead. 📖

# University of Oregon Chamber Choir Takes Top Honors at Tallinn Festival



An interview with Sharon Paul, Director  
University of Oregon Chamber Choir

## What made you choose Finland and Estonia for your choir's tour?

We had been invited to audition for the Estonian choral competition by the Artistic Director of the festival, Hirvo Surva, after he worked with the Chamber Choir at the U of O in the fall of 2009. I had toured to Estonia twice before (in 1990 and 1991, both times with ACFEA), and wanted my singers to experience the passion the Estonian people have for choral singing throughout their culture.



*University of Oregon Chamber Choir in the Church of St. John in Tartu, Estonia*

## What were the main highlights of the tour?

We had so many highlights! Certainly everything surrounding the Tallinn International Choir Festival was a highlight, from performing at the opening night concert, to the three rounds of competitions, to hearing so many wonderful choirs from around the world, and especially being called to the stage twice to perform at the awards ceremony because we took top honors in two categories. My students loved the informal time with the singers from around the world, sharing common repertoire (singing into the wee hours of the night!), learning of amazing new repertoire, and sharing their passion for choral music with people from such a wide variety of places such as Norway, Germany, Estonia, Latvia, Sweden, Iceland and more.

## Did you choose repertoire for the Tallinn International Choir Festival that was different from what the students are used to performing? Did you prepare any differently?

The U of O is on the quarter system, so we often feel pressed for time in preparing our concerts. It was great to work on the repertoire for the competition over a longer period of time than just ten weeks. The music we prepared was not so different from what we normally explore, although the compulsory piece for the Chamber Choir competition, Rautavaara's *Credo*, was a piece I had not been familiar with.

## How did you overcome the cultural differences?

The people in Estonia and Finland were so warm and welcoming, it was not hard to overcome any cultural differences, although occasionally we felt challenged decoding the symbols on the public restroom doors and hoped we picked the right one! 📖

# Southern Maine in Southern Spain

by Amanda Bauman, ACFEA Tour Manager



One of the most rewarding moments in a tour manager's job is when a group you know comes to you and says, "Where should we go next?" Oh, the possibilities!

In May, the University of Southern Maine Chamber Singers, directed by Dr. Robert

Russell, embarked on its fourth ACFEA tour, and the beginning of the process started just like that. Southern Maine had already been to Italy, Central and Eastern Europe and the British Isles. The students are a vibrant, curious, close-knit group, who enjoy spending time together as much as they love performing. Having seen them perform a few times before, I knew firsthand they were also very talented musicians whose focus and energy can turn a great venue into a true sonic experience. I knew I was looking for a region with great acoustic spaces, a lot of history (both musical and general) and above all – maximum FUN potential. Then I knew: Southern Spain. *Southern Maine in Southern Spain*. It had such a nice a ring to it!

Once ruled by the Islamic Empire, who called the region Al-Andalus, present-day Andalucia still shows off its Moorish past, boasting some of the most spectacular and fascinating architecture in all of Europe. It went from being dominated by Christians, to being ruled by Muslims, and back to being Christian again. The result is a stunning, often overlapping mix of Arab and Coptic aesthetics. That *mélange* lends an air of mystery to its streets, which are lined with orange trees and café tables, and this, combined with its to-die-for cuisine (garlic shrimp, chorizo and croquettes, oh my!), its laid-back Mediterranean vibe, extraordinarily resonant venues, and its relative obscurity as a concert tour destination made this the obvious choice.

But along with the excitement comes some anxiety. How will this tour compare with their last three? Can we deliver again? I was so curious, I joined the group in Spain to see for myself! I arrived one afternoon in Córdoba, as the singers were getting ready to go on a sightseeing tour of the town. The tour began in the Mezquita, a historical site that has made many must-see-before-you-die lists. It is a city-block-sized structure, consisting of thousands of Moorish arches, surrounding a shockingly baroque Catholic church. It was like nothing I had ever seen. Never a group to miss an opportunity, the choir circled up and sang through Durufle's *Ubi Caritas*, sampling the acoustics. I joined the altos in the circle and was instantly reminded of the perfection of these moments. Singing this simple motet, in the round, looking at the focus and awe in the

faces of those around me in this space so mysterious – I could tell what every student was thinking: "Wow! I get to do this. I get to be here. And that is amazing."

From then on, I could rest easy knowing we made the right choice, knowing that this tour was, without doubt, the ideal tour for this group. At the choir's concert the next night, I chose my space and dug into the program. They performed the entire concert in a near-circle formation, having enjoyed it so much earlier. At one point, alto Rebecca Garthoff came forward for a solo on *In the Cool of the Day*. This young, slight, unassuming, former



*University of Southern Maine Chamber Singers performs in Iglesia San Jose del Convento de Cayetano in Córdoba, Spain*

spelling bee champion opened her mouth and let out one of the most amazingly rich vocals I've heard in a long time. In the last ten years, I've been moved by dozens of groups at dozens of concerts all over the world, and still, I was rapt. As a lone tear trickled down my beaming face, I thought to myself: "Wow! I get to do this. I get to be here. And that is amazing." 🎵

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**Poppy Savage**

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**Richard Savage**

Managing Director of ACFEA Europe

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**Tassos Strikos**

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**Charlotte Toms**

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**Olga Yemelyanova**

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For short bios, please visit  
[www.acfea.com/staff.php](http://www.acfea.com/staff.php)

# North America Staff

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## AMANDA BAUMAN

is a Tour Manager in the New York office. An Ohio native, she performed with the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus before receiving her degree in Music Education from Duquesne University, in Pittsburgh. There she was a member of symphonic and jazz bands, as well as the Chamber Singers, with whom she toured Europe on an ACFEA concert tour. Amanda currently sings with and serves on the board of the Young New Yorkers' Chorus. Her travels have included excursions to Europe, Australia, Africa and Central and South America.

## HUGH DAVIES

is Managing Director of ACFEA North America, based in the San Francisco office. Born in England, he has a master's degree from Cambridge, where he sang at King's College under Sir David Willcocks. Hugh sang professionally in Europe, including with the Monteverdi Choir, before teaching music in Australia. He now performs as a soloist and with several professional ensembles in the Bay Area, and serves on the boards of the American Bach Soloists and Chorus America.

## RACHEL FLAMM

is a Tour Manager in the Seattle office. Originally from the Chicago area, Rachel sang with the Palatine Children's Chorus for 14 years, including touring with them throughout North America and Europe. She graduated with a degree in Music from Carleton College in Minnesota. At Carleton, Rachel played clarinet and conducted and managed the Carleton Choirs on tours to Los Angeles and New Orleans. Rachel has also traveled throughout Europe, Mexico, China, South Africa, Israel and Jordan. She currently sings with the Northwest Chamber Chorus.

## EMILY FRYE

is a Tour Manager in the New York office. She grew up in Missouri, where she sang with the St. Louis Children's Choir for nine years, including on tours to Russia and Scotland. Emily received degrees in Music and Magazine Journalism from Drake University, during which time she traveled to Paris for a study abroad program and toured Europe with the university's choir. She is currently singing with the Pasadena Master Chorale.

## CHRISTA TURLINSON

is a Tour Manager in the San Francisco office. She has a degree in Music from California State University, Fullerton where she studied voice in classical and jazz styles. She grew up in Kansas, where she was involved with children's choirs. In Southern California, Christa taught voice, piano, choir and musical theater. She has also sung professionally with choirs, jazz bands and orchestras in the Los Angeles area. Christa's travels include tours with choirs to Germany and Eastern Europe. She is currently singing with Volti, the award-winning professional chamber ensemble dedicated to the performance of new vocal music.

Our goal is to provide unique opportunities for memorable and life-changing experiences.

## NEW YORK



Amanda Bauman



Emily Frye

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## Unseen but Indispensable...

The Tour Managers are ACFEA's front line, but there are many others in our organization who make our tours happen. We gratefully acknowledge the mighty efforts of:

**Bill Barber**  
Group Travel Manager

**Christine McLaughlin**  
Business Manager

**Greg Newell**  
Marketing Manager

**Ken Olson**  
Operations Manager

**Andrew Oom**  
Special Projects Coordinator

**David Wert**  
Finance and Operations Administrator

# Boston Children's Chorus: This is Really What it's All About



April 18-21, 2013 . Tucson, Arizona

Lynn Gackle, Artistic Director  
Steve Stevens, Festival Director

Hosted by  
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Join us in sunny Tucson for a weekend of music making, celebrating the art and achievements of women's choruses and singers.

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- Special events for directors of participating choirs
- All massed choir sheet music
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*"The festival was top notch, attested to by a constant feeling of accomplishment and elation."*

Bonny Milne

*"It was like a vacation for the soul."*

Glenda Smith

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Alison Gifford is a retired grammar school music teacher in Glasgow, Scotland, who had the chance to hear one of ACFEA's groups, the Boston Children's Chorus, directed by Anthony Trecek-King, on



*Boston Children's Chorus with Depot Arts at St. Bride's Episcopal Church in Glasgow, Scotland*

its recent tour of the United Kingdom. Alison's experience prompted her to send us her thoughts and thanks, and we can truly say that we glowed. Not only because of the beaming pride we feel when one of our groups receives such heartfelt accolades, which in this case are both musical and philosophical, but also because this letter reminded us all of something more profound:

This is what it's all about.

As Tour Managers, it's our job to operate tours, but it's our mission to create inspirational opportunities for our groups. Thank you, Alison, for reminding us how powerful these moments can be. 📺

Dear ACFEA,

*I just wanted to say how fantastic the Boston Children's Chorus' concert was the other night in Glasgow – I was absolutely blown away. Everything was superb – the singing, the concentration, the commitment, and the sheer joy of them. It was a privilege to be there. We were all impressed with their behaviour, general organisation and discipline. The young people were a credit to themselves and to everyone who has been working with them – real ambassadors for their country.*

*The repertoire was perfect – a great mix of serious, fun, old and new. Please tell them how great the choir was, what a wonderful job Mr. Trecek-King is doing, and how the lives of these young people are being transformed not just by the musical skills they are getting, and what they are learning from the*

*text and background of the music, but the friendships, the social skills and personal confidence they are gaining through these experiences.*

*I've been a chorister since I was a teenager too, and my life has been so enriched by what I learned from singing, the people I've met, the places I've been, and the events I've taken part in. Of course, I never realised it at the time, but looking back, my life would have been so much less rich without singing, and it was a treat for me to see these young people well on their way to finding what I found through music making.*

*Thank you too for all your organisation and arrangements. Everything went according to plan, and without a hitch. I hope the rest of their tour goes well. It was a delight to have them and we'd be happy to have them back again!*

Best regards,

*Alison Gifford*



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