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As highlighted in this newsletter, ACFEA arranges customized performing art tours throughout the world. From the Llangollen International Eisteddfod in Wales to delighting audiences in Beijing, ACFEA can make it happen. While we were only able to include a few of our tours in the newsletter, we wish to express our sincere thanks to all of the groups for making our 50th Anniversary year very successful.

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## Boston Gay Men's Chorus' First Tour Exceeds All Expectations

When the Boston Gay Men's Chorus went on tour in June, 2005, artistic director Reuben Reynolds III had several goals in mind, but none more important than showing the world what an outstanding chorus they have in Boston. This tour accomplished that and so very much more.

As ambassadors of gay marriage in America, the 125 BGMC singers were nothing short of celebrities during their stay in Berlin for the Pride Week celebrations. The chorus knew that performing in Berlin would be exciting, yet no one expected the level of adoration they would receive from the public, not only while walking as a group in the Christopher Street Day Parade, but also for hours after the conclusion of their first concert at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt. Built by the United States at the height of the



*BGMC performs for over 700,000 people during Pride Week in Berlin*

*BGMC . continued on page 4*

## Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra Resumes Touring

Unlike many of America's best youth orchestras, which tour regularly every two or three years, the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra (CYSO) has not recently had a tradition of international tours. This has now changed under the visionary new leadership team of Allen Tinkham (Music Director), Holly Hudak (Executive Director) and Joshua Simonds (Director of Operations), and in consultation with ACFEA there is now a plan for regular touring, alternating between the full symphony orchestra and Encore, the elite chamber orchestra.



*Chicago Youth Symphony in the Haydnssaal of Esterhazy Palace, outside Vienna*

*CYSO . continued on page 3*

# FUMC Youth Handbells Offers Up Good Vibrations in Italy

Article written by Glenn Rodgers, Director  
Moorestown First United Methodist Church Youth Handbells

Two years in the planning, our Youth Handbells Concert Tour to Italy was an overwhelming success. We were blessed by God in unexpected and unimaginable ways. Everywhere we went there were paintings, sculptures and buildings that had been created over many centuries and still exist for



FUMC Youth Handbells after concert in Agnone, Italy

the purpose of extolling the presence, power and grace of God. It was a delight for me to see our young people having fun and getting closer to one another as they took in the marvels of Italy and Italian history and modern life. For a few days I was privileged to be director, teacher, guide, father and friend to them. What could be better? Well, add to that being in the company of nine loving, spirit-filled adults who were there to be helpers to me, to be companions and role models

for the youth, and to receive God's blessings for themselves, and you have the description of one of the most successful and memorable group tours I have ever been part of.

In the massive basilica of Saints John and Paul in Venice we performed our first concert of the tour. As we got to the piece *The Heavens are Telling*, the heavens literally joined in with an accompaniment of thunderclaps and flashes of lightning filling the stained glass windows. What an inspiring experience!

Our second concert was in the village of Barga, which, if I didn't know better, could have been in the Alps of Switzerland. The audience grew as we performed more and more of the music – the sound would travel out the doors and echo through the alleys and into the streets of the town drawing people into the church to hear and see. There was a great interest among the people (handbells are not common in Italy), especially in the case of a little girl who sat in the front row. Actually, she practically climbed onto the handbell table at times – and at other times she was pretending to ring or conduct. We were warmly received there. But our experience and reception in Agnone was so incredible it defies description.

*"It was a delight for me to see our young people having fun and getting closer to one another as they took in the marvels of Italy and Italian history and modern life. For a few days I was privileged to be director, teacher, guide, father and friend to them. What could be better?"*

**Glenn Rodgers, Director  
Moorestown FUMC  
Youth Handbells  
Moorestown, NJ**

Agnone is a small village perched atop a tall mountain in a southern region of Italy. It is famous for its bell foundry, which has been casting bells since 1000 A.D. and has been run by the Marinelli family for over 700 years. However, as I mentioned, handbells are unknown in the area and proved to be an inspiring

## Charlene Archibeque's Thirty-Five Year Career in Choral Music

As the last chord of the last encore lingered in the glorious acoustics of Venice's Chiesa della Pietà, Charlene Archibeque's 35-year career as Director of Choral Activities at San Jose State University came to an end. ACFEA spoke to Charlene about her long history of touring.

*Interview with  
Charlene Archibeque, Director  
San Jose State University Choraliers*

revelation to all who heard. We were welcomed and embraced like relatives meeting for the first time. During the ringing of *Love Bears All Things*, which was composed by my friend Karen Buckwalter for our church and in memory of my daughter, Susan, the people were so compelled by the flow and cascade, the gentleness and drama of the music, that they were literally leaning forward in their seats to hear what was coming next. The audience got involved in the encore piece, Verdi's *Anvil Chorus*, by singing and clapping for the sound of the anvil. The show of appreciation by the townspeople, the town council and the mayor, the church organist and the Marinelli brothers was deeply humbling.

Our young people truly shared their music, the beauty of holiness and the grace, mercy and fellowship that is available to all in the Holy Spirit. Thanks be to God. 🙏

### How many tours have you gone on with ACFEA?

Wow, so many I have nearly lost count. My first tour with ACFEA was way back in 1981, and I believe this past tour was my tenth one.

### What have you enjoyed most about touring with ACFEA?

The knowledge and expertise of the staff – they have either traveled or lived in every single country we have visited on our tours. Since they are musicians, they know first-hand what needs to be taken care of in order to have a successful concert tour. They seem to know down to a penny how much everything should cost and therefore provide us with the best quality hotels and restaurants for our money.

### What are some of your most memorable experiences from all of the tours?

Winning many of the competitions we have entered including the 'Choir of the World' award at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod in 1991 and Tallin, Estonia in 1994. During a performance in Vilnius, Lithuania, the Lithuanian president

attended the concert and sat right next to my husband! But the most lasting memories are those of so many of my students having life-changing experiences while on tour and therefore going back to Europe again and again.

### Why do you usually include a competition as part of your itinerary?

Several reasons. It gives the choir members extra focus, as they have to perform a more complicated repertoire and tackle a higher artistic level than they would have normally. Competitions usually draw good size audiences as crowds come year after year to watch the performances. From a social aspect, it is wonderful for the choir to meet and get to know singers from all over the world.

### You have had some great success with fundraising to support your tour expenses. What is your secret?

First, you can't let an initial lack of

money stop you from doing the things you want to do. Therefore, you need to take a very proactive

approach towards fundraising. We sell CDs, have a Rent-a-Carol program where small portions of our choir go and sing at events (mostly in winter during the holidays) and each member of the choir sends letters to our supporters and personal acquaintances asking for donations to our travel fund. These are just a few of the fundraising activities that we have done over the years.



*Charlene Archibeque*

### Do you have any retirement plans?

I am going to do some traveling in Greece and Mexico and guest conducting in Florida and Texas as well as southern and northern California. I will also be the Scholar-in-Residence at Azusa Pacific University, teaching masters classes and starting a new summer workshop for conductors in Los Angeles. 📌

*CYSO . continued from page 1*

Encore was the first to hit the road, with a European tour in June, 2005 that encompassed three great musical capitals: Budapest, Vienna and Prague. ACFEA arranged a variety of concert experiences for this excellent group, starting with an almost sold-out performance (nearly 2,000 in the audience) at Budapest's brand-new National Concert Hall. To add to all the other thrills of this evening, the young players knew that they were performing on the stage where their adult equivalents in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra had played only a couple of months earlier.

From the most modern venue to the most historic, their next concert was in the Haydn'saal of Esterhazy Palace, outside Vienna. Playing in this beautiful hall, in the palace of Haydn's great patron, was a wonderful experience for the orchestra, which offered a delighted audience a performance of, naturally, Haydn: his Symphony No. 104.

Vienna is a hard city in which to find a concert audience, even for the best-known professional orchestras. To ease this problem, ACFEA occasionally teams with local charities, creating an event of grand elegance for the charity and providing an appreciative audience for the orchestra. In Encore's case, the organization was the St. Anna Kinderkrebsforschung, a charity that funds research into pediatric cancer, and the venue was the magnificent Herkulesaal of the Palais Lichtenstein. A large and appreciative audience heard Encore play Rossini (*Barber of Seville Overture*), Schubert (Symphony No. 8), Barber (*Adagio for Strings*) and Beethoven (Symphony No. 7).

In Prague, Encore's concert was in the Dvořák Hall of the Rudolfinum. This prestigious hall, home of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, has been the venue for many world-class performances, and Encore rose magnificently to the challenge. What an experience for these students, in Budapest and in Prague, to play on the same stage and be measured by the same standards as some of the world's finest professional orchestras, and to triumph!

ACFEA is pleased to have been part of CYSO's touring deliberations from the outset, and has offered advice on all aspects of touring based on our observations of what has worked (or not) with other orchestras. We are now engaged in discussions to sketch out the next two or three tours, so as to give ACFEA, the orchestras and the families as much planning time as possible. Great management, Allen, Holly and Joshua – thank you! 📌

*BGMC . continued from page 1*

Cold War, the Haus previously overlooked the Berlin Wall into the once communist east. That night the BGMC and its host choir, RosaCavaliere, filled the hall with songs of love and pride.

Steve Smith, executive director for the chorus recalled, "After many bows, Reuben sent the guys offstage, and I ran from the back of the audience out to the lobby. All the guys had left the stage but no audience appeared in the lobby. I ran back into the house and they were still standing and clapping to an empty stage ... this had gone on for about four minutes. Reuben knew we had to pull another encore out of the hat, so he was yelling down the backstage stairs, 'Get back up here!'"

When ACFEA was first working on the BGMC tour we knew the days in Berlin would be special. But to see 125 openly gay men onstage, underneath the Siegestsäule (Victory Tower), performing for over 700,000 people at the closing celebrations for Pride Week was beyond anyone's expectations. There was also the additional honor of a personal welcome from Berlin's mayor Klaus Wowereit. The chorus' participation the following morning in the service at St. George's church was the perfect ending to an outstanding weekend of Pride.

Though gay marriage is an issue the BGMC strongly supports, the chorus assumed a lower political profile for the next leg of its journey to Wrocław, Poland. The Boston Gay Men's Chorus would be the first openly gay chorus to perform not only in Wrocław, but also in the entire country.

As Steve states, "After we arrived in Berlin, we heard reports that a gay pride march in Warsaw had been violent and that there were rumors of a protest brewing about our concert ... [we] had no idea what was in store for us the next day."

Despite the concert's philanthropic purpose, to benefit a local organization that houses children with HIV/AIDS, the political atmosphere challenged the evening's festivities when Wrocław's Philharmonic Hall was threatened and, at one point, ticket sales were put on hold. With all of this swirling around them, the BGMC began its rehearsal only to be inundated by photographers, cameramen and reporters eager to get the group's story.

Reuben and Steve spent most of the

day – until the final moments before the concert in fact – giving interviews about that evening's performance to news crews from across the country. So it was with pride and renewed purpose that the BGMC gave one of its finest performances to exuberant applause. To add to this success, the BGMC raised enough funds to provide



*BGMC perform with great pride at Wrocław's Philharmonic Hall*



*At Dvořák Hall of the Rudolfinum in Prague*

*"We expected a wonderful trip with fine concerts. What we got was a life changing experience for the chorus and the audience. With the help of ACFEA we have really changed the world a little. I know we changed ourselves!"*

**Reuben Reynolds III, Director  
Boston Gay Men's Chorus**

the HIV/AIDS programs with more than a year's operating budget.

Upon arriving at their next destination, Prague, the singers were delighted to see their faces featured on posters adorning the Rudolfinum, whose grand nature and glorious history give any artist chills. The BGMC seized the opportunity to bring its message of equality to the city of Prague, joining with the Czech Gay Initiative to present a Concert for Partnership as its farewell performance. The success of the concert was even more fulfilling since just days before its performance Spain had legalized gay marriage, a step that the Czech Republic is still working towards. In the grandiose ambiance of the Dvořák Hall, BGMC sang with vivacity and purpose, surely filling the audience with pride and encouragement towards that goal.

During the farewell cruise along the River Vltava, chorus members snapped photos, celebrated and toasted each other. Though the Boston Gay Men's Chorus set out to make a difference for others, they had also dramatically changed their own lives in the process. 📷

*"ACFEA proved again that they are the company with which to travel. I have never had a bad experience on an ACFEA tour, and our tour to Italy exceeded my expectations on every level. The choir's response to your efforts is resoundingly positive. Thank you. I will continue to travel with ACFEA throughout my career."*

**Robert Istad, Director  
Irvine United Congregational  
Church Choir  
Irvine, CA**

## Following Apollo's Footsteps: The Saints Impress the Greeks with their Songs

During the time of Ancient Greece, music was thought to exert great power over human beings. The Saints, from St. Paul's School for Girls in Baltimore, Maryland, knew the Greeks had a long history of music appreciation and wanted to experience their ancient love of song. The choir's March 2005 tour of southern Greece focused on a variety of ancient cities associated with Apollo, the Greek God of Music.

The Saints started out in Delphi, which early Greeks believed was the center of the world and where Apollo killed the serpent Python and claimed the Delphic Oracle for himself. It is in Delphi that the Temple of Apollo still stands. After a day of sightseeing, the choir had its first concert with a local choir in the Trikoupeion Cultural Center. For the next three nights, the group stayed in the lovely beach town of Patras, known for its annual carnival that the choir was able to watch during its visit. Patras has been named the Cultural Capital of Europe for 2006.

The next visit was to Olympia, which is where the Olympian Games were held every four years to honor Apollo's father, Zeus. People would journey from all around the known world to attend these games and The Saints had a chance to visit as well. It was then off to another beach hotel near Navplion, where the choir visited many Byzantine churches from the 11th and 14th centuries. The choir performed a lovely concert in Navplion for a warm and enthusiastic audience.

Continuing on the path of the Gods, the choir stopped in Argos, home of the Temple of Helios (a rival of Apollo). The choir also had a chance to admire some of the greatest Greek theaters, including Epidaurus, which was built during the last quarter of the fourth century B.C. The quality of its acoustics makes it one of the great architectural achievements of its time.

The final stop along the road of Apollo was Athens, the city of Athena (who was born from the head of Zeus). Athens offers the crown jewels of ancient sites including the Acropolis, the Roman Stadium, the Theater of Dionysus as well as the modern Olympic sites from 2004. The choir was fortunate to be hosted by the American College of Athens for a final concert. As they sang, they knew that the ancient God of Music was listening in the distance ... 📷

*"Our trip with ACFEA was outstanding in every respect. Thank you for a delightful touring experience! The venues were outstanding (oops - used that word once already) and the service was phenomenal. I must stop now, as I am out of adjectives."*

**Martha Shaw, Director  
Shorter College Chorale  
Rome, GA**

# Berkeley Choir Tours Eastern Europe

Following on the successes of its very first international tour in 2001, this summer the Chancel Choir of the Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, California (Mitchell Covington, director) embarked once more on an ambitious tour of Europe, adding Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland to its growing list of countries visited. The choir achieved an impressive combination of accomplishments including multiple performances of a spiritually rich choral program, an organ recital presentation in the renowned Riga Dom, the sharing of song with the choir of Tukums Baptist Church in Latvia and participation in an



*Chancel Choir with the Choir of Tukums Baptist Church*

international service in Helsinki's famed Church of the Rock.

The tour began in Warsaw, the proud capital of Poland and home to the Santa Anna Church where the choir attended Mass just prior to their evening concert in this beautiful place. Due to a change in train schedules, time was cut short in this city and, instead of the adventure of an overnight train to Vilnius, the choir experienced a Poland-to-Lithuania road trip, complete with border crossing. With this under their belts, and a good night's sleep, Vilnius greeted the singers the next morning with its disarming charm. Currently in the midst of a comprehensive restoration of its old town, visitors can see that Vilnius is well on its

way not only to recovering, but also enhancing the cosmopolitan life of its past. For some, the concert in Vilnius' Jesuit Church of St. Casimir was the most exciting of all on the tour, with people rushing to enter the church for the concert after the previously scheduled service ran late. Who wouldn't find a standing-room-only audience exciting?

Others favored the magical acoustics of St. Saviour's Anglican Church in Riga, where the choir stayed two nights. The journey from the Lithuanian capital to the Latvian capital was hardly along the beaten path, but rather a meander through small Latvian villages on even smaller roads. Jelgeva, Tukums and Pakapieni were all featured stops this day, enabling the choir to meet two of

its important tour goals: the creation of a spiritual bond through the sharing of music with the Choir of Tukums Baptist Church; and the tangible support of the Pakapieni Mission through a generous donation the choir delivered during its visit.

After a packed schedule in Latvia

that included time in delightful Old Riga as well as a stop in Ainazi where the choir sang an informal recital, the tour continued to Tallinn. This capital of the smallest Baltic republic, Estonia, is the best preserved of the old North Hanseatic towns. There was a bit of time to enjoy the rich heritage of Tallinn's medieval architecture before the final concert in Jaani Kiriku (St. John's Church). Then, it was on to Helsinki via jetfoil. The choir settled into a modern hotel in the now trendy waterfront district, took in a guided tour of this forward-looking city, and marveled at the stunning Church of the Rock, where they were invited to sing during a service – a fitting end to this spiritually infused concert tour of Europe. 🇺🇸



*At the Llangollen International Eisteddfod*

## Colorado Springs Children's Chorale in Britain

*Interview with Brad Peterson, Director, and Marcia Hendricks, Executive Director, Colorado Springs Children's Chorale*

**What were some of your favorite concerts on the tour?**

**Marcia:** The concert in St. Fillan's Church in Edinburgh. The local parishioners were so warm and friendly. We went to their homes for afternoon tea before the concert. The performance itself was wonderful and afterwards we had a post-concert barbecue to celebrate the Fourth of July, complete with haggis burgers and blood sausage which the kids really enjoyed trying.

The concert in the Leonard Stanley Priory was memorable not only because it is a very historical venue, but also because the London bombings had taken place four days earlier. We felt our performance left a message of peace and caring for each other in times of despair.

**Brad:** I really enjoyed the performance at St. Nicholas' Church. The kids got to go into the audience



between sets and mingle with the locals.

**The choir got the opportunity to compete at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod. Can you share your experiences?**

**Brad:** Llangollen was tremendous, we got to see and hear other groups from around the world sing in their native tongues. We had two of our choir members entered in the solo competition; these

were the only two Americans in that division.

**Marcia:** It was amazing watching groups from thirty different countries compete. After the first day of the competition, there was the Competitors' Town Parade where four of our members got to march from the Eisteddfod Ground to the town.

**How important was it having a good courier on your trip?**

**Brad:** I feel it is essential to have an experienced, knowledgeable courier since he or she will be with you from the beginning of the tour until the end, making sure everything runs smoothly. ACFEA provided us with an exceptional courier, Douglas Hamilton. I can't say enough good things about him. He not only provided excellent service, but also did lots of little extras, like coming up with a scavenger hunt for the kids during some down time in Kenilworth, that made the tour all the more special.

**What advice would you give to other groups of children's choirs that are considering a concert tour?**

**Marcia:** First of all, do it. While the safety of the kids should be your primary concern, don't let recent world events deter you from touring. Traveling is such a great educational experience for the kids and teaches them humility and tolerance towards other people and cultures. Realize that through music you can share a common bond with foreigners, no matter what language they may speak. 📌



*An invitation to sing on one of Uruguay's national TV programs resulted in a very excited and enthusiastic audience for our performance at the beautiful Teatro de la Universidad Católica.*



*We enjoyed an excursion at Las Pampas estancia (a 200-year-old ranch) for horseback riding with costumed gauchos, a barbecue lunch and folk dancing.*



*We spent two memorable days on both the Brazilian and Argentine sides of Iguazú Falls exploring the trails, cliffs, and bridges to see every possible vantage point of the "Great Waters."*



# WomenSing Tour of South America

*written by Diana Jones, tour participant, WomenSing, Orinda, CA*

This trip was truly a wonderful opportunity to share our musical gifts in other parts of the world, to learn more about our South American friends and their cultures and to get to know our choir members better. We will be forever enriched by this experience.



*We got to enjoy a day trip to the snowy Andes. This was also another opportunity to purchase some unique gifts by local artists.*



*While in Buenos Aires, we were honored to perform for two sophisticated audiences. Our first was in the beautiful and historic Salón Dorado, in the world renowned Teatro Colón Opera House.*

*Our second concert in Buenos Aires was at the Salón de Actos de la Facultad de Derecho. It was here that we were professionally recorded for a future television program.*



## University of Victoria Chamber Singers in China

The University of Victoria Chamber Singers (Bruce More, conductor), from Canada's British Columbia, continued its tradition of traveling to less common destinations by touring China in April and May, 2005. Bruce strongly believes that a concert tour can offer much more than performances and sightseeing: it can be the means to create international links between people and institutions that have profound and long-lasting benefits. He therefore spends a great deal of time before a tour establishing and developing contacts that are the key to adding the extra ingredients that make a tour outstanding.

The China tour was no exception in this respect. Bruce made contact with the Sichuan Conservatory in Chengdu, and this led to an invitation to visit for several days and give a concert. Very shortly before the tour, another opportunity arose: if the group could find a couple of days to go to Chongqing, the local



*University of Victoria Chamber Singers with their Chengdu hosts*

radio station would cover their costs and record a concert. This idea was coordinated with the Canadian consulate in Chongqing, but in spite of its help it was a matter of only hours before the tour was due to start that everything was in place: ACFEA's Hugh Davies told Bruce at Vancouver airport on the day of departure that it was on. ACFEA's representatives in China helped greatly with the communications, and used their sway with the airlines to change reservations quickly and at minimal cost so that the students could have the opportunity to visit a city rarely seen on concert tour itineraries.

Chengdu and Chongqing were scheduled in the middle of a more conventional tour: Shanghai, Xian and Beijing. With major concerts in Xian and Beijing (in the magnificently restored Central Conservatory), a less formal exchange with students at the Shanghai Normal University, and a full program of sightseeing that included the Great Wall and the Terra Cotta Warriors, the singers gained an initial impression of all that China has to offer and pleased their audiences with their diverse and interesting concert program.

As the Victoria students discovered, China offers a compelling combination of great concert opportunities, exotic sightseeing and a very efficient travel infrastructure – and a chance to see and begin to understand a huge country that will be a major power in the world for the foreseeable future. ACFEA has many years' experience in China, and is seeing more and more groups tour there as the benefits, both cultural and economic, become more widely recognized. 🇨🇳

## George Washington University Singers: Spreading Its Songs Southward

With the value of the dollar having declined in Europe, many Americans are venturing into new continents for concert tours. Such a continent is South America and Argentina is a wonderful destination for those wanting high quality concert venues and hotels at reasonable prices. The George Washington University Singers had a limited budget and wanted a unique cultural experience. After its successful tour to Romania and Bulgaria in 2003, the group knew the benefits of going to lesser-known destinations, and therefore decided to embark on a tour of Argentina with a short stop in Uruguay.

The choir took off on a very convenient overnight, nonstop flight from Washington, D.C. to Buenos Aires. As there is very little time change between the two cities, they experienced little jetlag. This gave them plenty of energy to visit the lovely town of Rosario, just three hours northwest of Buenos Aires, on their first day. The highlights of this stop were the time spent on a traditional *estancia* (ranch), where the group rode horses and ate top quality Argentine barbecue, and the wonderful joint concert they had with the local university choir. As many university choirs really enjoy meeting students from other countries, every concert on the tour was a joint one.

Then it was back to Buenos Aires to experience Argentina's crown jewel. Buenos Aires is like no other city – it feels very European and offers





*George Washington University Singers relax in Argentina*

everything any major European city can offer, yet has a special South American flair about it. The choir got a sample of this distinctive culture by attending a tango lesson and show, indulging in Argentine steak and mingling with the locals.

In addition to visiting Argentina, the choir wanted to stop in Uruguay. One of the most pleasant ways to get to Uruguay from Argentina is by high-speed ferry across the Río de la Plata to Colonia, a city forgotten in time. Not much has changed during the past 300 years in the historic quarter, now a UNESCO world heritage site. The port area was built by the Portuguese and has colorful stone houses and windy cobblestone streets reminiscent of old Lisbon. It is a great lunch stop en route to Montevideo.

A few hours later, the choir arrived by bus in Montevideo, which is a very manageable city for its size and offers great restaurants and shopping. The choir performed another joint concert at the Teatro de la Universidad Católica. The venue was a nice chapel in the university and the group had a wonderful time sharing its music with a local choir, the Coro Juventus. After the concert, there was a warm reception hosted by the choir.

The final concert of the tour was for an enthusiastic audience in La Plata, Argentina. The concert was shared with three choirs from the University of La Plata, making it like a mini-choral festival. This was a great way to end a musically rewarding, culturally enriching, concert tour in the Southern Hemisphere. 📍

# Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church Choir's Inaugural International Tour

Three years in the making, the Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church Choir's first international tour began on June 14, from its hometown of Minneapolis. Led by director Bill Mathis, the group members had spent the previous several months preparing for their voyage to Estonia, Latvia and Russia. The route was chosen for its appeal as a unique destination and also because of a contact the group had with the Riga Dom Boys Choir and its manager, composer Ugis Praulins.

After a layover in Stockholm (welcomed by the several Scandinavians in the group), they arrived in Tallinn and began their tour of Europe. The Estonian portion of the tour was a great introduction, with a guided tour and a concert in the Jaani Church. The pastor of the church spoke at the concert and, to the group's surprise, his benediction quoted texts the group had sung. On the group's last morning in Estonia, the choir had the honor of singing for the opening worship of the annual conference of the Methodist Church in Estonia. What serendipitous timing!



*Concert poster in Novgorod*

After the service, the group continued to its next stop: Riga, the capital city of Latvia. While the original reason for including Riga on the itinerary was the connection to Ugis Praulins, their visit to this city offered much more. The bustle, culture and enthusiasm were a surprise to all of the singers. The concert in Riga was at St. John's church, where the group was thrilled with the acoustics as well as the reception. The audience was very friendly and welcoming, going so far as to bring flowers to Bill Mathis and each of the soloists.

The fifth night of the group's tour was possibly the most interesting, as it took place on a train to Russia. Overnight trains are often the setting of many stories to be told and retold, but when they involve

midnight awakenings by scowling Russian border guards, the stories take on a bit more color and appeal. Such was the case in the wee hours of the morning, just upon entry into Russia. The guards entered the compartments, grunted at the singers, skeptically inspected their passports and visas and, after some intimidating glances, moved on to the next carriage.

Unscathed, the group arrived in Novgorod, a favorite for many of the group members. The oldest church in Russia, the beautiful, friendly Kremlin, great restaurants, a sense of both history and a future, and a fabulous sounding concert hall all added to its appeal.

In planning for the tour, the group carefully chose a program that would incorporate its sacred roots and would also capitalize on the fact that they would be visiting St. Petersburg during its White Nights Festival. This festival takes place annually during the summer solstice when, because of its northern location, the sky remains light almost all night. The program was titled Music of Darkness and Light, a particularly appropriate choice. On the last night of the tour, they sang their program in the city for which it was chosen.

Sadly, the day of the homeward flights arrived. The group left Russia with a new appreciation for this exciting region, one that few have the chance to visit. In the words of Bill Mathis, "We are so glad we visited this unusual part of the world, especially for Americans, for our first tour ... and we will hold a special place for it in our hearts." 📍

# Overseas Staff

## **NICK ABBOTT**

is an Operations Manager in London. Nick received his degree in Music at the University of Cambridge and was organ scholar of Girton College. Prior to joining ACEFA, he combined post-graduate studies in Musicology at the University of Bristol with work as a conductor, organist, accompanist and baritone. He has toured throughout much of Europe, North America and Asia.

## **DAN BUCUR,**

ACEFA's Representative in Romania, is based in Bucharest. Dan graduated from the Economics Studies Academy of Bucharest with a degree in Tourist Marketing and International Relations. Fond of tourism and music, Dan joined ACEFA in 2003 and has already organized many successful ACEFA concerts in venues throughout Romania and has enjoyed introducing the delights of his country to those performing ensembles.

## **TRICIA GEORGE**

is Head of Operations in London. Before joining ACEFA in 1979, Tricia worked for the British Government Bureau dealing with international exchanges. Educated at Aberdeen University, she has traveled extensively in Europe and North America. She sings with the Islington Choral Society in London.

## **LEONE GRUEBNER**

is ACEFA's Manager in New Zealand. She has been in the travel industry for twenty-seven years, having owned a travel agency as well as managing coach companies and she now operates her own inbound tour company. Her singing has spanned a lifetime including twenty years in the Auckland Dorian Choir and ten years with her current group, the Orlando Singers. She has been associated with ACEFA for several years, arranging the New Zealand portion of their Australasian Tours.

## **VANESSA HADLEY**

is ACEFA's Representative for Latin America. After graduating with a degree in Music and Hispanic Studies from Birmingham University, she worked as an Operations Manager for ACEFA in London. As well as several years of study and work in Cuba, Mexico and Brazil, Vanessa has traveled extensively throughout Latin America and owns a fair trade jewelry business based in the Brazilian Amazon. As a cellist, she plays regularly with a string quartet in London.

## **TONY HASTINGS**

is European Projects Consultant. He is a graduate of Sussex University and worked previously in music publishing and artist management. He sings professionally with the choir of Bath Abbey, and is also a member of the Bath Camerata.

## **ROBERT LATIMER**

is ACEFA's Manager for Australia. Robert has been an educator and businessman, having taught at both primary and secondary levels, and involved in the photography and cinema industries.

## **LUIS LUCENA,**

ACEFA's Representative in Portugal, is based in Lisbon. Luis has received a degree in Engineering, obtained his MBA and set up his own business in Lisbon. He also teaches marketing at a private university in the city. Luis has been singing in choirs in Portugal for 15 years and in 2000 became a semi-professional tenor in the Symphonic Gulbenkian Foundation Choir in Lisbon.

## **SYLVIA MARIN,**

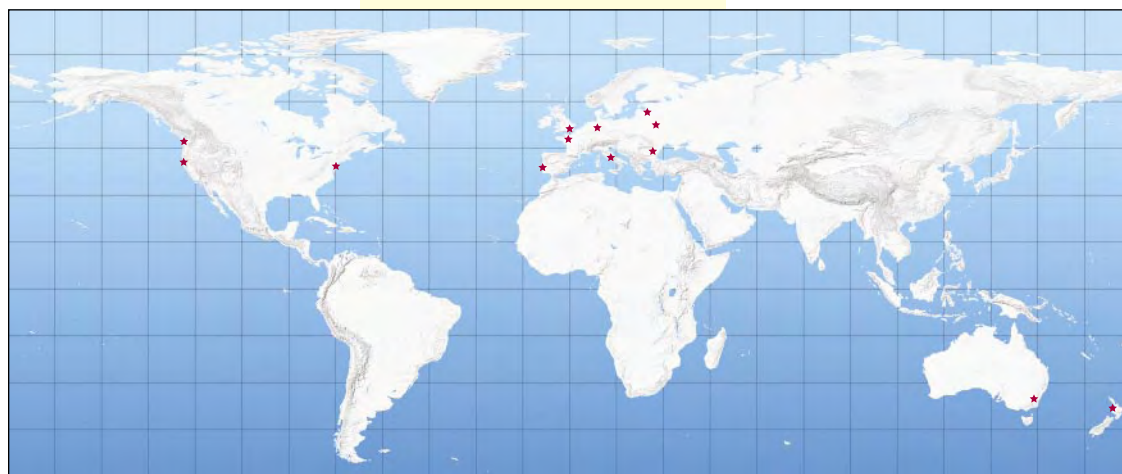
ACEFA's Representative in France, is based in Paris. She graduated

## **RICHARD SAVAGE,**

Managing Director of ACEFA Europe, has been with the organization since 1970. He graduated from Oxford University, where he sang in Christ Church Cathedral Choir. He still maintains his professional singing career, being a permanent member of the Monteverdi Choir since 1971 and of the Gabrieli and Taverner Consorts amongst many others.

## **NINA TATTERSALL**

is an Operations Manager in London. Nina studied Combined Languages (Spanish, Italian,



As an amateur musician, he has sung in choral groups in addition to performing in musical and dramatic productions. He is well traveled with extensive experience in organizing and conducting study tours of North America and Europe. Robert, who lives in rural Victoria, has been associated with ACEFA for over 15 years.

## **CLARE LAWRENCE**

is an Operations Manager in London. Clare studied translation and interpreting in French and Spanish at the University of Kent. Following periods of study and work in Belgium, France and Spain, she settled in London and started her career in the tourism industry. She is a keen amateur violinist and currently plays in a quartet and with the West London Sinfonia orchestra.

## **ELFRIEDE LEIMER-RIZZOTTI**

is the Regional Representative in Italy. Although born in Austria, Friede has been ACEFA's consultant in Italy since 1983. Before joining ACEFA, she worked for the Austrian diplomatic service.

from Georgia State University with a degree in Business Administration before moving to France. Since then, she has been involved in organizing music tours and accompanying groups throughout the Mediterranean area using her linguistic skills.

## **NEIL MCGOWAN**

is ACEFA's Representative in Moscow. Neil ran the English National Opera Schools and Community Touring unit for four years. He has acted as a tour leader for American groups around Russia, produces concerts of his own (using Russian professional performers) in Moscow, and is Artistic Consultant of the Vremena Goda Music Festival in St. Petersburg.

## **SUE PETER,**

ACEFA's Representative for Germany, has a varied background in travel administration and has worked for the British Tourist Authority and the Welsh Tourist Board. Now living in Berlin, she sings with the Wilmersdorf ensemble 'Kissi Choir'.

French and Portuguese) at Hull University and also spent time in Spain teaching English. She has always had a love of traveling, having traveled and worked in several continents over the years while her love of music stems from being brought up playing both the clarinet and piano.

## **OLGA YEMELANOVA,**

ACEFA's Representative in Russia, is based in St. Petersburg. She attended a specialist music school and has a diploma in English and German Education. Olga received a PhD in Linguistics from Herzen Pedagogical University of St. Petersburg, where she teaches English. She is actively involved in music-making, and is a keen American square- and contradancer.

# North America Staff



## 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 several excursions to Europe plus visits to Australia 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.



## KATE GUELKER-CONE

is a Tour Manager in the Seattle office. A long-time Washington resident, she graduated from Pacific Lutheran University where she received a degree in Public Relations with a minor in Vocal Music Performance. While at PLU, Kate sang and toured with the Pacific Lutheran University Choir of the West. After college, Kate spent two years in the Peace Corps, volunteering in Guinea. She has also lived in Budapest, and has traveled extensively throughout Europe, Africa, Asia and North America.



## CHRISTINA MARTIN

is a Tour Manager based in the California office. Born in San Francisco, she graduated from the University of California, San Diego, with a degree in French, and has worked with ACFEA since 1992. Her travels include study abroad programs in France and Central America, competitive tours throughout Europe with a track team, and trips to South America, Russia, China, Australia and New Zealand. She is currently singing with the University of California Alumni Chorus in Berkeley.

San Francisco  
New York  
Seattle  
London  
Auckland  
Berlin  
Bucharest  
Lisbon  
Melbourne  
Moscow  
Paris  
St. Petersburg  
Venice



## ROBYN GOLDSTEIN

is a Tour Manager in the New York office. After graduating with a degree in Psychology from Boston University, she lived in London and traveled extensively in Europe and Asia. A woodwind and keyboard player, her first touring experience was as solo clarinetist with her high school orchestra in Spain; more recently, she has played in several musicals in New York and was a member of the Columbia University Wind Ensemble.



## JANE KRUSE

is a Tour Manager in the Seattle office. Now beginning her fifth season with ACFEA, Jane has also worked in our New York office as well as in Portland, Maine. She graduated with a degree in Music Performance from the University of Maine and lived in Salzburg for a year as a student at the Mozarteum. Jane has traveled extensively throughout Europe and Australia. After spending many years performing as a soloist in New England and with community and church choirs, Jane is looking forward to becoming part of the arts community in Seattle.



## JAMES SMITH

is a tour manager in San Francisco. Born in Britain, James earned his degree in Maritime Shipping from John Moores University in Liverpool. He has traveled extensively through Europe, Asia and North America. James is an avid guitarist, having played for more than twenty years, and is now learning to play the mandolin as well. Since relocating to the USA, James has worked solely in arranging performing arts tours.

## SEATTLE

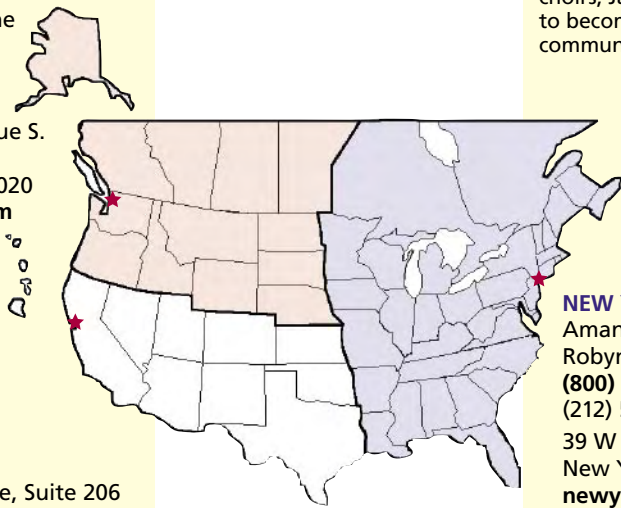
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## Unseen but Indispensable...

The Tour Managers are ACFEA's front line, but there are many others in our organization without whom our tours would never happen. We gratefully acknowledge the mighty efforts of:

**Papuna Bersenadze**  
Administrative Assistant

**Christine McLaughlin**  
Finance Manager

**Greg Newell**  
Marketing Manager

**Ken Olson**  
Operations Manager



# National Association of Church Musicians Conference Choir

July 12-15, 2006 in Pasadena, California

**Bring your choir and perform John Rutter's *Gloria* with guest conductor Charles Bruffy.**

Join Charles Bruffy, director of the Kansas City Chorale and the Phoenix Bach Choir, and perform as part of the National Association of Church Musicians' annual conference.

**\$975\* per person**

**Package includes:**

- Performance with orchestra on the evening of July 14th at Pasadena First United Methodist Church
- 3 nights' accommodation (double occupancy) at the Pasadena Hilton, with breakfast included daily
- 2 Los Angeles area sightseeing tours
- Conference registration fees
- Opportunity for individual choirs to perform at the conference, subject to audition
- Round trip transfers between the airport and hotel
- Airfare not included but available

\*Based on double occupancy, Minimum choir size is 20 individuals

**Contact ACFEA Tour Consultants at (800) 886-2055 or by email: [info@acfea.com](mailto:info@acfea.com)**



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## Alaskan Choral Cruise

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Spend a week attending choral workshops conducted by Duain Wolfe and Sir David Willcocks. This unique event will offer separate workshops held for children's choirs and for adult singers (or choirs) on parallel tracks. Each combined group will prepare for a final performance in Vancouver, Canada. Enjoy your cruise on Holland America as we explore Alaska's Inside Passage and Glacier Bay National Park.

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Cruise departs Vancouver, Canada on July 15, 2006 and returns July 22, 2006 with Vancouver sightseeing, farewell dinner and concert on July 22.

For more information: [www.acfea.com/cruise06](http://www.acfea.com/cruise06)

**For further information please contact**

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\* Prices in US dollars. Airfare not included but available.  
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