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As highlighted in this newsletter, ACFEA arranges customized performing arts tours throughout the world. From singing in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris to concert tours through South America, 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 2006 a very successful year.

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Performing at a High Level

The Peninsula Women's Chorus (Martin Benvenuto, Artistic Director) returned to California after a rewarding European concert tour, which culminated in its participation in the 22nd Béla Bartók International Choir Competition in Debrecen, Hungary. This highly regarded competition aims to bring into focus the relationship between contemporary music and the public, and proved a fitting complement to the Peninsula Women's Chorus' ongoing commitment to commissioning, performing and recording new music. Competing in the top tier category, against formidable Eastern European choirs, the Peninsula Women's Chorus earned a third place prize with a score of 84.5 points, trailing by one half point the two choirs that tied for the second prize. A demanding 95 points is required to earn a first prize, which wasn't awarded to any choir in this year's competition.

Competing in such a high-level competition is always an incredible learning experience for any

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*Peninsula Women's Chorus performing in
St. Matthias Church, Budapest*

Blame It On Rio

Over milkshakes in the Pittsburgh International Airport, Director John Goldsmith, his brother Ed, their longtime friend Dave Cameron and ACFEA Tour Manager Amanda Bauman had the opportunity to witness the excitement that built as the members of the Heinz Chapel Choir were only moments from boarding their airplane. The quartet watched in amusement as all of these University of Pittsburgh students sucked down their last cheeseburgers and fries before hitting the road on their very first non-European concert tour. The group had chosen to visit South America, including stops in Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. The tour upon which they were embarking was to be one of unfathomable scenery, warm and enthusiastic people, fantastic food and incredible musical experiences.

After landing in Argentina, Heinz was greeted by its courier, Sylvia Marin. Sylvia had been the courier on HCC's tour to France and Spain in 1998 and it was a special treat for the group

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Heinz Chapel Choir at Corcovado in Rio de Janeiro

Denver School of the Arts Orchestra Amazed by Russian Culture

Article written by Elinor Phillips, Tour Participant

Last spring break, I participated in an ACFEA-led tour of Russia with the Denver School of the Arts Orchestra. During this trip, we visited the capital city of Moscow, the small town of Novgorod, and the historic city of St. Petersburg. We



Denver School of the Arts Orchestra in Smolny Cathedral, St. Petersburg

our hotel on the first night, we met a group of Russian high school students who happened to be visual artists from an arts school in Moscow. Over the next few days, we chatted back and forth and learned so much about each other's culture.

Russia was such a fascinating country to explore. We were awe-inspired at every corner by the centuries-old buildings, incredibly designed churches and by observing the traditional Russian way of life. One Sunday morning in Novgorod, I tagged along with a group of students to attend Sunday Mass at a Catholic church. What a fascinating experience it was to listen to the Mass in Russian! When I talked to my friend after the service, she said that even though it was recited in Russian, the entire format was the same as here in America.

"I think the company far exceeded our expectations. We truly got all that we paid for and more, as we were very well taken care of throughout the entire trip. The accommodations, concert arrangements, tour guides, and overall organization of the trip were all excellent."

Erica Burkland, Tour Participant
Vassar College
Women's Chorus
Poughkeepsie, NY

was extremely informative and well organized in every aspect of the trip. Each activity in which we participated was exciting and was what we as a student group were eager to do. My spring break tour to Russia with my high school orchestra couldn't have been better! 🇷🇺

Texas A&M Women's Chorus Tours China

Interview with Jess Wade, Director

ACFEA has been arranging tours to China and Hong Kong for nearly 20 years. We have access to a full range of venues in cities both on and off the normal routes, and our expertise in concert promotion produces concerts that are often sold out.

As the interview below exemplifies, our groups are usually amazed by the value and quality of the travel, hotel and meal arrangements.

Why did you choose China for the Women's Chorus?

I had always considered a trip to China to be cost prohibitive. What we discovered, with guidance from ACFEA, is that it was not only reasonable, it was actually cheaper. Probably the comment I heard most often on the trip from students, parents, and former members traveling with us alike, was what an incredible value the trip was. People could not believe the amount and quality of the various tour elements received compared to the cost of the trip. For the cost of the previous year's trip to Italy, we got China with all meals and inter-city flights included.

How difficult was the pre-planning (shots, visas, trip preparation, etc.) compared to planning a trip to other destinations?

We were pleased to discover that there were no shots required to go to China and the visa application process was taken care of by ACFEA. Other than a little more intense attention to language concerns, the preparation for the trip was very similar to that of any overseas tour.

What were your favorite aspects of your concerts?

The audiences were packed and extremely appreciative. It was great to hear the local choirs in the first and

last concerts singing in their own language and singing English, just as we had sung in Chinese. The acoustics were all very good, but the concert venue in Xi'an was especially wonderful, both architecturally and in the sound it allowed us to produce. One of the most exciting parts of the trip was conducting the piece that combined the local choir with our women on stage. It was fun for all the singers and the audience seemed to really like this cooperative effort.

What comments do you have for other directors about what to expect from performances in China?

We had been told that audiences in China tend to be a little less attentive than in other places, while still enjoying the concert. But our experience was that they were anxious to hear all kinds of music and were always very generous in their applause. In fact, during intermission of one concert, one of our non-singing tour members, who happens to speak Chinese and was seated in the audience, overheard an audience member use her cell phone to call a friend and encourage her to get to the concert as quickly as possible!

How were the food, sightseeing, hotels, and local guides?

I think everyone was amazed at the variety and quality of food served in China and even the pickiest eaters seemed to be satisfied. I was expecting every meal to be essentially the same. However, during the entire trip, all in different restaurants and in three different cities, I only counted two entrees that were the same. The one meal that deviated somewhat from the norm was the traditional dumpling meal, a favorite of the entire group.

I have to admit, my knowledge of China was extremely limited going into this trip. So, it was quite enlightening to visit the great monuments you only ever hear about: the Forbidden City, the Great Wall, the Jade Temple, the Terra Cotta



Texas A&M Women's Chorus at the Forbidden City in Beijing

carried out as planned, but were also willing to tweak the schedule as other interests became apparent or small problems arose that were quickly solved. The hotels were all above what I am used to having student groups stay in when traveling to Europe. 📍

Heinz . continued from page 1

to have her as its courier again. The members collected their bags and headed into the first port of call: Buenos Aires, one of South America's most cultured and sophisticated cities. The choir spent the next two days in Buenos Aires acclimatizing, attending a welcoming dinner, enjoying a guided sightseeing tour and watching a tango show.

On the third day of the tour, HCC traveled to the town of La Plata, about an hour away. It was there, in the gorgeous Basílica del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, that the group had its first concert. To a large and excited audience, the group performed with a local choir, the Coro Polifónico, as part of the Festival of Religious Music.

The next stop on the tour was Colonia, on the Uruguayan side of La Plata River, which they reached by ferry. Colonia is a UNESCO heritage site and, as a result, it has an untouched feel, boasting colonial architecture and narrow, tree-lined, cobblestone streets. Their concert here was a fantastic success. It was another joint concert, this time with the Coro Municipal de Colonia.

From Colonia, Heinz traveled into the hills for one of the more notable portions of the tour, for it was here, in Treinta y Tres, that the group had the opportunity for homestays. Truly an experience to remember, staying with local families can be an important

Warriors, etc. We also had the opportunity to attend several local cultural events.

The local guides were great about answering questions and providing interesting information without boring the students. It was great to have an ACFEA guide and a local guide with us at all times to make sure arrangements were

tool in learning about a culture intimately. The group members took great advantage of the opportunity to practice their Spanish, and enjoyed meeting the residents on a personal level. The concert in this rural town was completely full of friendly and enthusiastic locals.

Just around the corner lay Brazil, where the weather is perpetually perfect, the *caipirinhas* are always flowing and the pace of the world slows down just a bit. One of the group's most memorable and enjoyable moments was an all-day schooner tour in the tiny, historic hamlet of Paraty. Everyone donned their bathing suits and flip flops, and jumped aboard the vessel for some welcome R&R. They snorkeled. They sunbathed. They did cannonballs off the starboard bow!

For an ideal end to a fantastic tour, Heinz finished in one of the world's greatest cities, Rio de Janeiro, which is situated on the beaches of the Atlantic Ocean with a stunning mountainous backdrop, countless white sand beaches and a tropical atmosphere. The group performed its final concert in the Salão Nobre do Centro Cultural Justiça Federal, in the center of Rio. Heinz had the concert recorded as a memento of all of the experiences they had in South America. The name of the recording is the same as the name they had given the entire tour: *Blame it on Rio!* 📍

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performing ensemble. One PWC singer remarked on how impressed she was with the hard work demonstrated by all the choirs at the competition, bringing her a new awareness of a heightened level of preparation needed for a performance, competitive or not. This new awareness had an exciting and palpable effect on the performance level of PWC throughout the stages of the competition – and indeed throughout the tour.

There were many other impressionable moments on the tour, which began four days earlier in the beautiful city of Prague. After settling into a lovely hillside hotel offering stunning city views, the singers set out to get their European bearings and prepare for their first concert, which they shared with the Prague Male Choir, the contemporary incarnation of the Prague Male Choir that visited California in 1996 and was hosted by PWC. The joint concert took place in St. Saviour's Church and offered a delightful musical warm-up to the tour, as well as an opportunity to appreciate the sound and style of a local choir. Both choirs were able to visit with one another after the concert when they joined together for a dinner cruise on the River Vltava.

Under the auspices of the Teplice Cultural Summer Festival, the Peninsula Women's Chorus presented its next concert performance in the Church of St. John the Baptist, a stunning Baroque venue, located outside Prague and filled with an audience of avid music lovers.

The chorus members enjoyed their final days of the tour in Budapest where they had a few hours of cherished leisure time to sightsee and dine in this most elegant European city. Arriving in Budapest directly from the choral competition in Debrecen, the singers had hit their stride and were charged with energy during their finale performance in the renowned St. Matthias Church. Too soon, they would return home and yet there was so much more they wanted to sing! 📌

Toronto Children's Chorus Goes to ~~China~~ Europe

Plans were proceeding well for the Toronto Children's Chorus (Jean Ashworth Bartle, Music Director) to tour China when, in November 2005, concerns about bird flu caused an abrupt change of direction. ACFEA likes to have twelve to eighteen months to work on a tour for any group, especially one as prestigious as the Toronto Children's Chorus, so starting from scratch a mere eight months in advance was not something we undertook lightly. We were delighted, however, that the leadership of the chorus gave us the broadest criteria we could have hoped for: Europe, good concerts, same budget. A couple of weeks of inquiry determined that there were suitable opportunities still available in



Toronto Children's Chorus performs with orchestra in Salzburg Cathedral

Hungary, Slovakia and Austria, so we rolled up our sleeves and got to work with a whole new list of venues, hotels, flights, buses and couriers.

By January almost everything was in place: concerts in

Budapest's St. Matthias Church and Eger's Cathedral; a concert in the beautiful hall of a Slovakian castle; a concert with orchestra in the Stephansdom, Vienna; and, as the grand finale, a concert (again with orchestra) in Salzburg's Cathedral as part of the Salzburg Festival. Typical of Jean, the repertory was wide-ranging in style and era: from Bach and Brahms through Randall Thompson and Healey Willan to Stephen Hatfield. This was well received by the audiences, which Jean described as "huge, intelligent and appreciative."

ACFEA was pleased to have the resources to be able to come up with a tour worthy of this group, rather than having to let cancelling the China tour be the end of the travel hopes of all the fine young people in the chorus, and it was very gratifying to receive this note from Jean Ashworth Bartle: "The trip you organized for us exceeded our expectations in every way and I cannot thank you enough. We had huge audiences at all six concerts – and excellent acoustics. The orchestral players in Salzburg were consummate professional artists...

Thank you also for taking time to come to the Toronto airport to see that everyone got looked after. With much gratitude, and all good wishes and continued success, Jean." 📌

"ACFEA did a wonderful job making sure everyone on the trip was happy and satisfied. They were very flexible with the schedule changes and we couldn't have asked for better tour guides."

Megan Stenehjem
Tour Participant
Texas A&M University
Women's Chorus
College Station, TX

Nevada Union High School Band Together in England

Article written by Lynn Skrukrud, Tour Participant

Heading back to school this fall, I ran into several of my friends whom I hadn't seen all summer. When I saw them they'd always ask, "How was your summer?" Truthfully, I didn't even know where to begin. This summer had been incredible, largely due to my trip to England with the Nevada Union High School Band.

As cheesy as it may sound, it was the trip of a lifetime! How many high school students get the chance to travel to England with sixty of their closest friends, march down the streets of Cornwall while leading a procession for the mayor, make friends from around the world, see the artistry of Stonehenge and discover the ancient beauty of England?



NUHS in the Mazey Day Parade in Penzance

Traveling to a foreign country presents so many opportunities for discovery. We saw history first-hand by visiting some incredible sights such as Stonehenge, where we learned of its vast and mysterious origin based upon the sun. During our stopover in Bath, we were told that the Roman Baths were once thought to have magical healing powers. We went to the steps of our forefathers at Plymouth where the Mayflower set sail.

Most importantly were the people I grew close to and the unforgettable memories that I have of

the tour. I stayed with an amazing family in Penzance, who not only opened up their home, but also their hearts, to me and two of my fellow band members. We barbecued on the beach and swam on the shores of Penzance at sunset. We experienced English hospitality by drinking tea with three Cornish gentlemen in the midst of parade floats and decorations. We performed to thousands on the packed streets of Penzance, with the breeze blowing my gold and blue color guard flag and a smile on my face as I heard comments from the crowd of, "There go the Americans", and while spinning my wooden rifle the exclamations of, "They've got shooters!" We marched through the colorful streets filled with bright banners and floats in the Golowan festival. We listened to music in the park by our hosts, the Penzance Youth Wind Band.



Nevada Union High School Band in Plymouth

All in all, more happened on this trip than I could possibly put into words. I will always remember the amazing time I had and England will forever hold a special place in my heart. 🇬🇧

"We were all very satisfied with this tour. Every aspect was well done and your staff was first rate.

What a thrill it was to sing for large, appreciative audiences in just the right size venues. Especially meaningful was singing Dvořák in Czech for Czech audiences. What a great idea to book concerts outside the big cities! I could go on and on. Great job, ACFEA!"

**Barry Torres, Director
Laurentian Singers
Canton, NY**

"Exceeded my highest expectations! ACFEA has earned a loyal customer – with no hesitation! Thank you for a tremendous first overseas tour with my group."

**Kevin Tison, Director
Fountain Valley
High School Troubadors
Fountain Valley, CA**

"Best tour ever with ACFEA! I have two tours left in my career as a conductor before I retire. I would definitely consider returning to Argentina and Uruguay for my final tour. Really an outstanding value from the economic point of view, as well as offering outstanding concert venues and audiences."

**Gordon Spice, Director
Washington and Lee University
Chamber Singers
Lexington, VA**

photo courtesy of Andre Havard



Portland Symphonic Girlchoir in Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris

Portland Symphonic Girlchoir

The Portland Symphonic Girlchoir performed in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. The group, which was performing an informal recital, had over 200 people sit down to enjoy their performance in the famous cathedral. The choir toured through Paris and York, where they participated in the Choral Music Experience festival.



The Head-Royce School concert in of the B M Cernohorsky Festival of Republic

Central Dauphin and Hershey High School Choir

Central Dauphin and Hershey High School Choir enjoyed a wonderful 10-day tour of Italy, which included stops in Rome, Montecatini Terme, Vicenza and Venice. A highlight of the tour was a joint concert in Marostica with Gioventu in Cantata in the Chiesa S. Antonio.



Central Dauphin and Hershey High School Choir in concert in the Chiesa S. Biaggio, Sant' Oreste, Italy.

Colorado Children's Chorale

The Colorado Children's Chorale toured Spain and France, stopping in Barcelona, Montelimar and Saint Maximin. The group performed concerts in Barcelona, Pals and Montelimar, an informal recital in Montserrat and participated in the 11ième Festival Choral International En Provence.



Colorado Children's Chorale enjoys some free time at Parque Güell, Barcelona

photo courtesy of Marianne Swienink-Havard

St. Paul's School Singers

The St. Paul's School Singers visited Spain and Morocco in March, including stops in Madrid, Cordoba, Seville, Malaga and Tangier. The group performed five times, including a joint concert with Coral de la Cátedra Ramón Medina del Liceo de Córdoba and Mass participation followed by a concert performance in Tangier.





Head-Royce School and Colla Voce

The Head-Royce School and Colla Voce choral tour to Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic began with a Mass participation in the stunning Church of St. Matthias in Budapest. This was followed by joint concerts in Bratislava and Brno, and ended with a Mayoral reception and finale concert in Nymburk as part of the B M Cernohorsky Festival of Sacred Music.

the Church of St. Giles as part Sacred Music, Nymburk, Czech

GBYSO performs in the Plaza de las Pasiegas, Granada as part of the Granada Festival



photo courtesy of Marianne Swiciniak-Havard

Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra

The Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra toured Portugal and Spain on its sixth tour with ACEFA. The group performed concerts in Lisbon and Seville and took part in the Granada Festival as well as the Nits d'Estiu Festival near Barcelona.

Palo Alto High School Choir

Brazil was a whole new experience for the Palo Alto choir members who began their tour in the northern city of Salvador da Bahia that is rarely visited by touring choirs. At the height of World Cup fever, the choir performed to an almost full house in Rio de Janeiro, enjoyed an excellent joint concert in Petropolis Cathedral and sang to a standing-room only audience in the beautiful coastal town of Paraty.



Palo Alto High School Choir during a workshop with a Bahian Afro-Brazilian percussion group in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil

Chorus North Shore

Chorus North Shore, under the direction of Sonya Pryor, chose to slow down the pace for its sixth international concert tour with ACEFA. The group traveled to Amsterdam, Brussels, Brugge and Paris, with a day in Normandy that was a true highlight for the choir. The chorus also spent a day in Tournai, Belgium with a local choir at the Eglise St. Jacques. As well as participating in morning Mass, they performed an afternoon concert to a packed audience.



Chorus North Shore singing in the Eglise St. Jacques in Tournai, Belgium



photo courtesy of Marianne Swiciniak-Havard

St. Paul's School Singers enjoy an alternative mode of transportation in Morocco

photo courtesy of Andre Havard

CSU Fullerton Delights Australia

John Alexander chose Australia as the destination for his final tour with the Chamber Singers of California State University, Fullerton, where he had been Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies from 1994 until his retirement this summer. He continues as Artistic Director of Pacific Chorale and serves on the Board of Chorus America.

The repertoire that Fullerton took to Adelaide, Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney was of great interest to the Australians. Very familiar with European choral music, they were delighted to be introduced by John and his fine choir to a broad selection of music from the Americas. From North America, there were two pieces by John himself, and works by Meredith Monk, Moses Hogan and Adolphus Hailstork. South America was represented by, amongst others, Francisco Lopez y Capilla and Alberto Ginastera.

All the concerts were given in collaboration with local choirs, providing the Californians an opportunity to meet Australians with a similar interest in music



Members of the CSU Fullerton Chamber Singers at Manly Beach in Sydney

and to benefit from the loyal audience of the local group. In Adelaide and Canberra, the local choir started with a short set, Fullerton took over for the rest of the first half and the bulk of the second, then both choirs joined together to sing Alexander's *Musica*, an accessible and appropriate piece with a beautiful text about the beneficial power of music. In Melbourne and Sydney, Fullerton sang their own program in the first set, and joined with a local choir in the second half to perform Fauré's Requiem – with orchestra in Melbourne, and organ in Sydney.

The Sydney concert was in aid of the church's support of a hospital in Ethiopia, and a handsome sum was raised. The choir also gave a benefit performance at a winery outside Adelaide, in Australia's famous McLaren Vale. The concert was a great success, in spite of untypically wet and cold weather that caused some last-minute shuffling of arrangements.

Australia certainly seems to have worked its magic on the Fullerton singers. Christopher Gravis, John's assistant, wrote: "I want to thank you for everything that you did to make our Fullerton Chamber Choir tour the most memorable, well organized and insightful tour that I have ever been a part of." Tour participant Joe Ward wrote: "I wanted to say thanks again for the wonderful experience that I had in Australia. It was one of those life-changing experiences that I will always think fondly of and NEVER forget."

John Alexander wrote to Robert Latimer, ACFEA's manager in Australia: "I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your wonderful leadership in planning and executing our tour. It was absolutely first class all the way, and having you with us for the whole trip really made our experience in Australia something to treasure."

ACFEA, in return, thanks John for the relationship we have had for 20 years, and wishes him a very happy retirement from his university career and continued fulfillment in his other endeavors. 📺

Vassar College Women's Chorus' Tour of Turkey



*Interview with
Christine Howlett,
Director*

How did you go about choosing Turkey for the Women's Chorus?

We wanted an economical trip and the girls wanted to go somewhere that was interesting and different from the usual destinations. We thought the idea of touring in Turkey was fantastic and Robyn, our ACFEA Tour Manager, helped to eliminate any pre-conceived fears about the country. I also felt that with ACFEA's strong background, they would arrange a tour for us where we would be completely safe.

What was your most memorable concert?

While each of the girls has her favorite, the first concert in Ankara was the most memorable for me. It was a wonderful hall and the sound was beautiful. We were so excited and there was something special about the chorus being announced in Turkish for the first time that made this concert so exceptional.

How was your experience with all the media exposure?

It was unbelievable. Coming into Bursa, when we arrived at the venue there was a humungous two-story banner with our picture on it and our faces were two to three times their normal size. The girls were just so thrilled and thought this was incredible. It was something you'd expect for a rock concert and afterwards they gave the banner to me as a souvenir.

We had a very long spot on the morning show on TV 8, which is Turkey's national television station. We were interviewed for about twenty minutes and then sang a few songs from our repertoire. Viewers called in right after we had finished to complement our performance

and some of the girls were even recognized on the streets shortly thereafter.

In every city we visited our concerts were mentioned in the local paper along with our picture. I also did interviews in each city with Ilker, one of our ACFEA couriers, handling the translating.

What comments do you have for other directors about what repertoire works best in Turkey?

I know a lot of choral directors like to have a range of repertoire when they go on international tours, and I would say that is essential in Turkey. Our program went from slow, sacred, more cerebral material in the beginning, to music that was a little more rhythmic, which seemed to work well since a lot of the audience didn't understand English. We even performed some spirituals at the end. Throughout the tour, we received many positive comments from audience members regarding our repertoire.

What were some of the unique cultural opportunities that Vassar encountered on the tour?

Along the way to Bursa, we stopped and had a traditional lunch at the home of a rural Turkish family. A little old woman sat on the floor and hand-rolled dough that resembled a crepe and then put cheese, potatoes and vegetables in it and placed it into the fireplace. So while it took a long time to feed each of us, it was a wonderfully intimate experience and also was a great meal.

I just can't say enough good things about our ACFEA couriers, Ilker and Esra, who were both from Turkey. They were amazing and more than half of my group was in tears when we had to leave them at the end of the tour. For me, it was an important part of the trip that the group got to know, learn from and bond with these two extraordinary people from another country. 🇹🇷



Vassar members enjoying a traditional meal at a rural Turkish village

Mount Royal Youth Choir Has a *Muy Bueno* Tour of Mexico

Under the direction of Arlie Langager, the Mount Royal Youth Choir from Calgary, Alberta traveled through Central Mexico. Though Mexico, unfortunately, is not a country that most groups think of when planning a concert tour, Mount Royal found the scenery astonishing, the food savory and the audiences warm and receptive. The group had a wide range of concert opportunities including concert halls, colonial churches, a former convent and an exchange with a local school.

The tour began in Mexico City where the group members started their love affair with the local food, which was fantastic and flavorful throughout the tour. Mount Royal had the opportunity to sing for a full and enthusiastic audience in the recital hall of the Palacio de Bellas Artes, a venue that welcomes important guest artists from around the world.

One of the choir's most memorable experiences was an exchange with the choir at the Conservatory of Music in Queretaro, which was the next stop on the group's tour. They performed for one another and soon discovered that they had both recently sung Mozart's Requiem and therefore finished the exchange with a combined performance of the first few movements. Mount Royal's concert in Queretaro was performed at the Templo de San Antonio, a brightly painted colonial church where the group was thrilled with its overwhelmingly warm reception and large, eager audience.

The tour continued through San Miguel de Allende, where the group enjoyed another successful concert with an audience of over 500 people in the Iglesia Las Monjas. From there, the choir visited the colonial silver mining town of Guanajuato, where they performed in the central theater, Teatro Juarez, a gorgeous, gilded concert hall reminiscent of the stunning opera houses of Europe. The singers were given an evening tour of the town center by an *estudiantina* (a student minstrel singer), who sang, told jokes and led them around the windy streets and lively squares of Guanajuato.

Guadalajara, the second largest city in Mexico, was the final stop on the tour. The choir did some last minute shopping in the classy crafts center of Tlaquepaque and performed one final time at the Convento del Carmen, a beautiful former convent turned arts center. The convent now houses an

art gallery and hosts classical music concerts, poetry readings and theatrical performances. The choir was very well received and the audience was standing-room only.

Mexico is an amazing mix of architectural and scenic beauty paired alongside great cultural richness. The members of the Mount Royal Youth Choir learned a great deal musically and were thrilled to have visited a country that was so interesting and rewarding, yet so close to home.

Mexico was a remarkable experience that changed the way many from the choir saw Mexico and saw the world. 🇲🇽

"In my opinion, any group that is looking for a different kind of tour – one filled with a culture that diverges from the one that we are used to – will absolutely love Turkey. The people are incredibly gracious, there is so much to do and see, and it is unlike anything else you will ever experience."

**Cara Grieco, Tour Participant
Vassar College Women's Chorus**

Overseas Staff

NICK ABBOTT

is an Operations Manager in Bath. Nick received his degree in Music at the University of Cambridge and was organ scholar of Girton College. Prior to joining ACFEA, 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

is ACFEA's Representative in Romania, 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 ACFEA in 2003 and has already organized many successful ACFEA 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 ACFEA 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 ACFEA's Manager in New Zealand. She has been in the travel industry for twenty-eight 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 ACFEA for several years, arranging the New Zealand portion of their Australasian Tours.

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 ACFEA'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. 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 ACFEA for over 15 years.

CLARE LAWRENCE

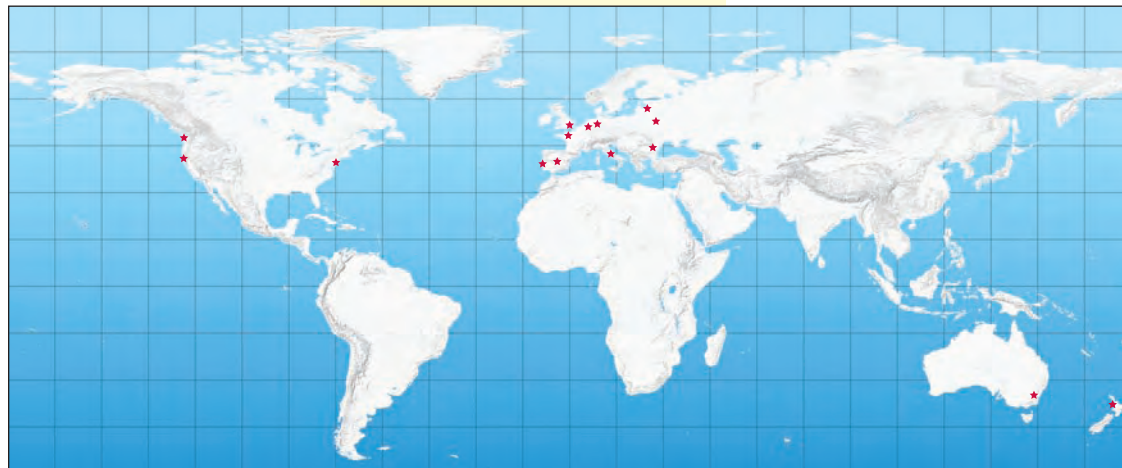
is an Operations Manager in London. Clare studied translation and interpreting in French and Spanish at the University of Kent. Following periods of study and work in Belgium, France and Spain, she settled in London and started her career in the tourism industry. She is a keen amateur violinist and currently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

NEIL MCGOWAN

is ACFEA'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.

RICHARD SAVAGE

is managing Director of ACFEA Europe, and 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.



ELFRIEDE LEIMER-RIZZOTTI

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

LUIS LUCENA

is ACFEA's Representative in Portugal, 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 over 15 years and in 2000 became a semi-professional tenor in the Symphonic Gulbenkian Foundation Choir in Lisbon.

SYLVIA MARIN

is ACFEA's Representative in Latin America and France, based in Paris. She graduated 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 Latin America and the Mediterranean area using her linguistic skills.

CARLOTA CASTELLÓ MOLIA

is ACFEA's Representative in Spain. She studied piano teaching at the Conservatorio del Liceo de Barcelona, and enjoys playing classical repertoire and jazz. She holds a degree in Public Relations, Marketing and Publicity from the University of Barcelona. A native Catalan, Carlota has spent time in both London and New York and her foreign languages include English, French and German.

ALINA PERETTI

is ACFEA's Representative in Poland and has worked for ACFEA since 1987. Educated in Wrocław, she has a degree in Architecture and Art. Alina worked first as an architect and then as a qualified tourist guide in four different languages: Polish, Russian, French and English. She has lived in Poland, France, Switzerland and the United Kingdom and is a keen piano player.

SUE PETER

is ACFEA's Representative for Germany. She 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'.

BECKY SHAFTOE

is an Operations Manager in London. After receiving a degree in Music at Newcastle University, she trained in arts administration at the London Sinfonietta before spending five years organizing concerts and education projects for the London Symphony Orchestra. In her role as LSO Tours Manager she traveled widely with the Orchestra across Europe and the USA. Becky plays the oboe and, prior to joining ACFEA, taught English in Spain.

TOM SPANYOL

is an Assistant Operations Manager in London. Tom has a degree in English from Robinson College, Cambridge, where he sang in the Chapel Choir and played french horn in various ensembles. This was followed by two years of professional singing at St. Thomas's Church in Toronto and Liverpool Cathedral. Tom has enjoyed traveling in various European countries and Canada, and is currently a member of the London Oriana Choir.

OLGA YEMELANOVA

is ACFEA's Representative in Russia, 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 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.



KATE GUELKER-CONE is a Tour Manager in the Seattle office. 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. Kate currently sings with the Seattle Symphony Chorale.



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, plays the mandolin and is learning to play the banjo as well. Since relocating to the USA, James has worked solely in arranging performing arts tours.

- San Francisco
- New York
- Seattle
- London
- Auckland
- Barcelona
- Bath
- 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 and is a clarinetist in the Williamsburg Community Orchestra in New York.



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.

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
- Papuna Bersenadze**
Administrative Assistant
- Christine McLaughlin**
Finance Manager
- Greg Newell**
Marketing Manager
- Ken Olson**
Operations Manager



Farewell, Jane

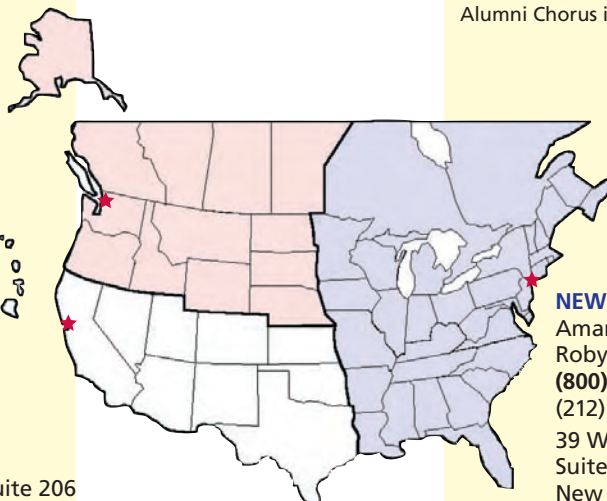
ACFEA was very sad to say goodbye to Jane Kruse at the end of this past season. Jane had been with us for six years, working in our New York, Portland and Seattle offices. She contributed enormously to the development of ACFEA and earned the greatest respect of her colleagues and clients. We sincerely thank her, and wish her a very happy and fulfilling future. We'll miss you Jane! 📺

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Alaska Choral Cruise with Duain Wolfe and Sir David Willcocks

This summer, nearly 200 singers from the United States, Canada, England and New Zealand enjoyed a week-long Alaska cruise aboard one of Holland America's newest ships, the *ms Zuiderdam*, while rehearsing with Sir David Willcocks and Duain Wolfe.



There were two sets of rehearsals, one for children and one for adults, all held while the ship was at sea so as not to preclude any shore excursions. The children's section consisted of members of

the Central Carolina Children's Chorus and the San Diego Children's Choir, while the adult section combined members from nearly forty different choral groups. All the singers enjoyed learning from the two eminent conductors as they prepared for the culmination of the tour: a concert held on the final evening in Vancouver's Christ Church Cathedral.

When they weren't rehearsing for the upcoming concert, everyone benefited from all that Alaska has to offer, with stops in Juneau, Skagway, Ketchikan and Glacier Bay National Park. Many members of the group enjoyed a wide range of excursions, including whale watching, gold panning, sea kayaking and floatplane trips, while others simply took in the amazing scenery from aboard the ship.

The Vancouver performance was a great success, especially considering that many of the choristers were strangers to one another just a few days before the concert. Sir David Willcocks and Duain Wolfe both conducted pieces for the children's choir, the adult choir and the two combined groups at the end of the concert. The program included choral classics by Byrd, Brahms, Copland, Haydn, Vaughan

University of Richmond 1971 Tour: 35th Anniversary Celebrations



Dr. Erb & Richard Savage

James Erb's 1971 arrangement of *Shenandoah* is a perennial favorite amongst ACFEA's touring choirs, appearing very regularly in repertoire lists. Despite its renown, many are unaware that it was written for an ACFEA European tour by the University of Richmond choir, who sang it from handwritten manuscript photocopies. The courier for that tour was Richard Savage, now Managing Director of ACFEA Europe, who sang with the choir in their concerts.

Thirty-five years on, in April 2006, more than half of the original choir reassembled in Richmond for a weekend reunion during which Dr. Erb presented Richard Savage with a signed and framed copy of the best-selling piece. Plans for the 40th anniversary are already under way! 📖

Williams and three works by Sir David Willcocks. The concert ended with everyone on stage, singing *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*, arranged by Mack Wilberg, and *Dona Nobis Pacem*, from the Mass in B-minor by J.S. Bach: a powerful and emotional ending to a wonderful week. 📖

The Alaska Choral Cruise was ACFEA's third choral cruise and plans are already being made for a fourth cruise sometime in 2008. If you are interested in participating in this unique event, please contact us at (800) 627-2141 or email seattle@acfea.com.



Sir David Willcocks and Duain Wolfe

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