



# Tour Notes

PERFORMING ARTS NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

1998-1999

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## TABERNACLE CHOIR'S 3RD ACFEA TOUR

On June 12, a chartered Boeing 747 left Salt Lake City with 470 members of the world-famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir and their families at the start of a 20-day, 10-concert European tour. This was the culmination of 3 years' work for ACFEA's Richard Savage and marked the third time that ACFEA had been entrusted with responsibility for this choir's tour arrangements, including the negotiation of professional concert appearances. It was also ACFEA's largest tour so far, at one point comprising 720 participants, over 1,700 suitcases and 18 busses in convoy!

Previous itineraries focused on Scandinavia (1982) and Eastern Europe (1991), and this time the emphasis was on the countries of the Western Mediterranean. The halls were full, from the opening sell-out audience of 5,000 in London's Royal Albert Hall to the highly emotional closing scenes at the 2,500 seat Coliseu in central Lisbon. The concerts were televised nationwide in all

countries visited, from such prestigious venues as the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels, Victoria Hall in Geneva, the Accademia Santa Cecilia in Rome, the Palau de la Musica in Barcelona and from both the Escorial and the Auditorio Nacional in Madrid.

A group this large requires unusual travel arrangements. A chartered cruise ship acted as a floating hotel between various Mediterranean ports for 9 nights; a chartered Eurostar train carried the group from London to Brussels; two 40-ton trucks were needed to move the group's luggage; and 19 specially hired 2-way radios were used for security and communications.

Writing to ACFEA after his return, Choir President Wendell M. Smoot said, "The efforts put forward by you and your travel associates were indeed extraordinary. From my perspective, your contribution resulted in the marvelous concert results and a group of very 'happy campers'. Again, please accept my admiration for a job well done and extend my deepest appreciation to all of your team players." 



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## PACIFIC CHORALE IN SOUTH AMERICA

The Pacific Chorale (director, John Alexander), from Orange County, CA, chose South America for its fourth ACFEA tour. Visiting Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil, the group had a wide range of cultural and musical experiences as well as the increasingly rare rewards derived from visiting countries off the beaten touring track.

The first concert was in Buenos Aires. The Chorale was invited to participate in a special concert of music by Ginastera and Villa-Lobos, two composers whose works had previously featured in the Chorale's repertoire. The local orchestra and choir were the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional, the Coro Polifónico Nacional and the Coro Nacional de Niños, and the concert was broadcast live nationwide.

The Chorale then gave two concerts of their own repertoire, chosen as always with great care by John Alexander to appeal to a wide audience base, broaden knowledge of American music overseas, and show the Chorale at its best: Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, Ginastera's *Lamentations of Jeremiah* and Mozart's *Requiem*.

Having had plenty of time between rehearsals and performances to discover the sophistication of Buenos Aires, the group moved on to Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay. The journey went via Colonia, a delightful historic town just an hour by hydrofoil from Buenos Aires, and then by road to Montevideo.

Here happened one of the more dramatic moments in ACFEA's history. After the break in the dress rehearsal, the orchestra members announced that the cathedral was too cold and they would not play again until heating was provided. Looking up to the chorus risers this was hard to believe, since the Chorale, only recently from the Southern California summer, seemed quite comfortable in tee shirts and even some shorts. When the negotiations passed the moment after which there was no longer time to rehearse the rest of the program,

Alexander dismissed the orchestra and announced that the concert would be accompanied by piano. Six hours later, a grand piano had been moved across town and tuned, the pianists had rehearsed, and the concert went ahead to a packed cathedral, broadcast live on national radio and recorded for later broadcast on television. That this concert was such a success is a huge tribute to the true professionalism of Alexander and the Chorale.

Next stop, Rio. The group fell in love with this city's vibrancy on the busses from the airport, and the love affair only became more intense as the days sped by. The excitement was great at the first rehearsal with the orchestra, the Orquesta Pro Musica, when it became apparent that they were as comfortable with Bernstein's compound

rhythms as they were with Mozart's elegance. This led to the incredibly climactic final concert of the tour, when orchestra and chorus performed with a wonderful technical and emotional synergy to a crowd so full that all the VIP seats in the Candelária Cathedral were over-run 45 minutes before the down beat.

Many members of the group stayed on to visit Iguassu Falls for a few days but, when reunited in California, the verdict of many was that this was the Chorale's most successful tour...so far. 📺

Concert tour — Puerto Rican style



## CANTATE CARIBBEAN – A PUERTO RICAN BREAK

After a long and chilly winter season, the Huntington High School Choir (Long Island, NY) needed a singing break. The choir decided to embark on a touring opportunity that featured warm weather, economical accommodation, cultural diversity, close proximity to the US continent and quality venues – and wisely chose Puerto Rico as their destination. The choir left on a snowy morning from New York direct to San Juan where, greeted by the sun, the choir began their adventure, anxious to meet other students in Puerto Rico and share their common link of music-making.

The first performance was at the Baldwin School, a private institution that had been hoping to expand its choral department. The choir from Huntington started them off by inspiring the Puerto Rican students and exposing them to the sounds of American choral music.

After a fun visit in San Juan and a day hiking in El Yunque, North America's only tropical rain forest, the choir headed south to Ponce, Puerto Rico's second largest city. Here the group stayed in a *parador*, a small hotel along the oceanfront, and was picked up by boat to enjoy an evening swim in the famous Phosphorescent Bay.

The highlight of the trip was the next concert, in which they performed jointly with Ponce's top music school, Escuela Libra de Musica, along with the Doctor Pila and Juan Mariel Campo High School choirs. A sell-out crowd of over 700 people enjoyed an evening of both Puerto Rican and American choral works.

For the final leg of the tour the singers spent a day at Boqueron Beach before returning to San Juan for their final concert. The Union Church hosted their final cultural exchange with choirs from Puerto Rico's leading boys' and girls' schools. During a post-concert pizza celebration, all the performers had a chance to mingle and to learn a little more about each other's backgrounds. 📺

**"The tour had no way to be improved. It was perfect."**

**Polly Campbell  
Music Director**

**San Diego  
Children's Choir**

## GREATER BOSTON YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA'S PROFESSIONAL APPROACH

In celebration of its 40th anniversary, the Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra's leaders decided to send

the senior orchestra on tour to Great Britain and Ireland. This was to be the orchestra's 14th international tour and a professional objective was made very clear: find the best concert opportunities within the countries specified and piece them together with a viable itinerary. What started out as a blank piece of paper at a meeting in 1996 became, two years later, an outstanding tour, with concerts at leading venues in England and Ireland and culturally enriching experiences throughout.

The tour process was long and not uncomplicated. Professional level promotional materials provided by the orchestra were sent to all of the major concert halls in England and Ireland. Follow-up meetings ensued with all promoters who expressed any inkling of interest. As negotiations with the halls continued,

concert dreams became realities, and they were presented to the orchestra for consideration. Final selection was based on suitability, date availability, prestige, and most importantly, audience potential. With these criteria in mind, the following venues were chosen: Symphony Hall, Birmingham; Snape Maltings (as part of the world-renowned Aldeburgh Festival); the Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham; and the National Concert Hall, Dublin.

Once the concerts were in place, the process of linking them together began. Travel time, rehearsals and concerts were balanced by time at leisure and cultural activities. Highlights of the latter included a reception at the American Embassy in Dublin (during which the orchestra was personally greeted by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith), a visit to the Maritime Festival in Ipswich, attendance at choral matins in – *continued on page 4, see GBYSO*



Members of GBYSO at the US Ambassador's residence, Dublin

**"Thanks for a great experience. The acoustics of the performing venues were excellent. Thanks for your detailed work."**

**Linda Scheuffele  
Director**

**Whatcom Choral**

## WHEN IN ROME . . .

...do as the St. Louis University Mastersingers and the North Dakota State University Concert Choir did! These two exceptional university choirs chose Northern Italy as their tour destination in May, delighting audiences far and wide and discovering the unparalleled sights, sounds and intrigues that lay in wait.

The St. Louis University Mastersingers journeyed from south to


north, finding enthusiastic audiences and the passion for life for which Italians are famous everywhere they went. The group had an unforgettable day in Vatican City, where they had the distinct honor of attending and singing at a papal audience, as well as singing in a mass in St. Peter's Basilica. High in the hills surrounding Rome, one of the Mastersingers' favorite memories is of a performance in a charming town called Ceccano, where the group was greeted by the mayor and had the opportunity to meet and interact with a local choir. Visits to Perugia, Assisi, Florence, Venice and Cernobbio (on the shores of Lake Como) saw the group performing for standing-room-only crowds and rounded out this wonderfully rewarding tour.

The North Dakota State University Concert Choir's 1998 tour began in

Rome, where they had the honor of singing in a mass in St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City. Then it was on to Perugia where they performed a concert hosted by the Coro Polifonico di Valleceppi. The open-air markets and museums of Florence and the medieval walled city of Montagnana, where the group gave a performance in the exquisite Duomo, were



St. Louis Mastersingers at Lake Como

two more stops along the way. One of the many highlights included an impromptu performance at St. Mark's Basilica in Venice, where the group was given permission to sing for a few minutes, and the sweet, pure notes of Gabrieli's *O Jesu Mi Dulcissime* rang high above the hushed, reverent crowd. Sightseeing stops in Bergamo, Milan and Lake Como provided a perfect end to what was deemed "the best tour the group has done so far". 

**"The experience was one that I will never forget. I could not have imagined the positive rewards I experienced from the tour nor the benefits to my students. My program is stronger and my students and I are closer than ever. Thanks, ACFEA, for all of your help."**

**Michael Delaney  
Director**

**Ferris High School  
Orchestra**

## CUBA INVITES AND ENTICES THE OAKLAND YOUTH ORCHESTRA

It is hard to imagine that the Oakland (CA) Youth Orchestra (conductor, Michael Morgan) could surpass the incredible rewards that came from selecting the rather unusual destination of Latin America for their 1998 concert tour. Costa Rica and Mexico alone would have provided a full and wonderful range of musical exchange and cultural experience, but having the tour culminate in a three-day visit to Havana quite simply catapulted over the top the scope and dimension of the experiences.

No one would argue that the tremendous success of this tour was due to the talents, perseverance and hard work of many people — and the maintenance of the ever-important sense of humor!

Narrowing down the multitude of performance options, sightseeing excursions and opportunities for cultural exchange proved to be the most difficult aspect of the planning. An important objective, which remained throughout the process, was to incorporate joint concerts with youth orchestras from each of the countries OYO visited. This was accomplished at the highest level, first with the Costa Rica Youth Symphony Orchestra in San Jose's Melico Salazar Teatro, followed by a performance with the Mexico Youth Orchestra in the Blas Galindo Hall of Mexico City's National Center of the Arts, and finally with the Amadeo Roldán Youth Orchestra at the Gran Teatro in Havana. These performances stand apart as highlights of the tour where not only music but also so much more was shared.

The orchestra also took advantage of several other unique opportunities in this region. Forming a small brass ensemble, they performed in the bandstand of Coyoacan Plaza where the Mexican tradition of friends and family strolling on Sunday afternoons is still strong. Just outside Mexico City, OYO was warmly hosted by families from the International Center for Language and Culture, which sponsored a performance at the beautiful Filipe Villanueva Teatro. And, in the impressive Cathedral of Cuernavaca, they

joined with the young Cuernavaca Symphony Youth Orchestra to present another concert for a very large and appreciative audience.

Still there was time to explore the unique sites along the way. In Costa Rica, special accommodations were available at Eco Lodge, situated in the heart of a lush tropical rain forest. This offered the perfect vantage point to view the magnificent plant and animal life, as well as to visit the natural springs at Tabacon Spa, just at the foot of Arenal Volcano, which regularly performs its own evening light and fire show. The group also enjoyed

several aspects of Mexico's rich history, including a visit to the Teotihuacan pyramids and glimpses into its colonial past as seen in Taxco's extraordinary Santa Prisca Church,



US / Cuban cultural exchange in action

built by the wealth of its local silver mines. The last leg of the tour, and its amazing highlight, took place in Cuba where, at the invitation of Havana's Gran Teatro and with the blessing of the US Treasury Department, OYO performed an exhilarating program with the Amadeo Roldán Youth Orchestra to a sold-out crowd. Local promoters said this was the first American orchestra to play in Havana since the US embargo was imposed more than 30 years ago — and there was great anticipation for the visit from both sides. The incomparable thrill of this final performance was in contrast to the bitter-sweet delight of Old Havana itself: a magical port city with faded baroque buildings, 1950s-era automobiles, stately old churches, sidewalk cafes, and a rare atmosphere of quiet calm mixed with an

**"It is truly rare to find a tour agency which works together so well. I have only praise of the highest order for your entire team. It was a profound pleasure."**

**David Harman, Conductor  
Rochester Philharmonic  
Youth Orchestra**

**"In my 30 years of touring ACFEA is the absolute champ — exceptional advance planning, outstanding tour escorts and excellent results."**

**Steve Stevens, Director  
Columbia Choirs**

infectious rhythmic street beat.

Certainly, OYO will never again take for granted the musical facilities and supplies so abundantly available here in comparison with Cuba, where such basic things as manuscript paper, music stands, and strings are so strikingly difficult to come by. Still, no one would ever claim this situation threatens the inherent musical nature of the Cubans. Nor will they ever forget the joint performance of *Guanguanco*, which featured among other things a dancing trumpet section and a span of concurrent but different syncopated rhythms beaten out by each of the string sections. 🎵

— *GBYSO, continued from page 3*

Westminster Abbey and *The Merchant of Venice* at the Globe Theatre, and a private lecture on Shakespeare at the Swan Theatre in Stratford.

Despite skepticism from the professional promoters, director David Commanday insisted on traveling with a mostly American repertoire, which included works by Gould, Ives, Stravinsky, Schwanter and Gershwin. Mr Commanday was rewarded for his artistic persistence — and the orchestra for its outstanding playing — by the audiences. They came in droves (despite World Cup soccer) to hear the orchestra perform, and were dancing in their seats to the *Latin American Symphonette*, stunned into silence by *Aftertones of Infinity*, humming happily to *Porgy and Bess*, and left grinning by the *Star Wars* encore.

In addition to the professional venues, the orchestra performed in the Peterborough Cathedral Festival and in Arundel Cathedral. These concerts were especially poignant, as the orchestra teamed up with local choirs and professional soloists to perform Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, *A Symphonic Picture*.

Summed up in the words of first violinist Bryan Choir, "I think that all of us realized that this tour would become one of the milestones of our lives, and any outside observer would have realized it as well . . . It will last forever in our memories . . ." 🎵

## ACFEA OVERSEAS STAFF

**RICHARD SAVAGE**, Managing Director of ACFEA 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.

**TONY HASTINGS** is European Projects Director. He is a graduate of Sussex University and has worked in the music publishing industry with Oxford University Press. Tony has also run his own music store and booking agency. He currently sings with the Bath Camerata.

**TRICIA GEORGE** is Head of Operations in London. Before joining ACFEA, Tricia worked for the British Government Bureau dealing with international exchanges. Educated at Aberdeen University, she has traveled extensively in Europe and North America.

**THOMAS AINGER** is an Operations Manager in London. A graduate of Leeds University, he has worked as Choral Courses Organiser for the Royal School of Church Music, for Gamma International as Tour Manager for ballet companies and orchestras, and as Orchestral Manager for The Hanover Band.

**ELISABETH CAWOOD** is an Operations Manager in London. She studied Italian and music at London University before working in the travel business in Switzerland. More recently, she has worked in public relations and on the administration of the Consort of Musick and its associated recording company. She is fluent in German and Italian and, as a singer and violinist, has performed with choirs and orchestras in Italy and Britain.

**MATTHEW GROCUIT** is an Operations Manager in London. A graduate of Leeds University, he has worked in the music touring industry for the past four years. He maintains an active musical interest as a freelance trumpet player.

**GENEVIEVE WEST** is an Operations Manager in London. She graduated from Oxford University with a degree in modern languages and joined ACFEA after teaching English in Spain and working at the Barcelona Olympics.

**REBECCA WHITE** is Travel Manager in the London office. She has a diploma in Business and Finance with Travel and Tourism. Before joining ACFEA she worked on a schools travel program, coordinating and accompanying tours in Europe.

**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.



*Ipswich High School Band in London*

**SYLVIA MARIN**, ACFEA's Representative in France, is 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 the Mediterranean area using her linguistic skills.

**SUE PETER**, ACFEA'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'.

**SVETLANA PETROVSKAYA**, ACFEA's Moscow Representative, graduated in geography from the Moscow Pedagogical Institute. She studied piano as a child, and is a keen music fan. Her interests include international relations, travel and meeting people.

**JOHN TREGELLAS** is ACFEA's Regional Representative in Central Europe. Based in Prague since 1990, he works regularly with major concert promoters in the Czech Republic. A modern languages graduate from Oxford, he speaks fluent Czech, German, French and Hebrew. John currently sings with the Kühn Mixed Choir and the Prague Philharmonic Choir.

**OLGA YEMELYANOVA**, ACFEA's Representative in Russia, is based in St Petersburg. She attended a specialist music school, has a diploma in English and German education and is presently pursuing post-graduate studies in linguistics. Before joining ACFEA, she taught English at a high school and at Herzen University. She is actively involved in music-making, and is a keen American square- and contradancer.

**DON WHITBREAD**, ACFEA's General Manager for Australia and New Zealand, is based in Canberra. A former teacher and senior public servant with the Prime Minister's department, Don founded and directed the Woden Valley Youth Choir for 28 years, touring widely in Australia and overseas. He continues as a freelance conductor of musical theater and church music. He received the medal of the Order of Australia for service to music in 1980, and was Canberra's Citizen of the Year in 1997. He has been associated with ACFEA since 1981.

**JENNY RUSSELL** is Assistant Manager in Canberra. She plays flute and has sung in various choirs in Canberra and London; she toured the USA and Japan as a member of the Woden Valley Youth Choir. She worked in ACFEA's London office prior to joining Don on her return to Australia in 1992. 🇺🇸

## ACFEA NORTH AMERICAN STAFF

**CHARLES HAWK** is Managing Director of ACFEA North America. Charles has been a travel consultant since graduating from California State University in 1972 and has been specializing in music tours since 1980. He is a Certified Travel Counselor and has traveled to all areas of the world both with groups and as an individual.

**KENNETH NOREEN** is Artistic Director of ACFEA North America. He recently retired after 30 years with the Shoreline School District in Seattle, serving most of which as Band Director at Shorecrest High School. Ken is a Past President of the Washington Music Educators Association and traveled with his band to Europe ten times since 1966. He holds a master's degree in music education and is currently Director of Bands at Shoreline Community College.

**HUGH DAVIES** is General Manager 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.

**TARA CAMPBELL**, a Tour Manager in the New York office, was born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska. She attended Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, where she earned her BA in English with a minor in German. She then earned an MA in German from Bowling Green State University in Ohio. In addition to traveling throughout Europe, she worked and attended university in Germany and Austria for two years. Her musical experience includes playing the trombone and baritone in concert bands, orchestras and jazz ensembles in Alaska and Oregon. Before joining ACFEA, Tara coordinated admissions for an international exchange program, preparing high school and college students for academic programs and community service projects around the world.

**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 Boston and at Chicago's Theater on the Lake.

**MARK POWELL**, Tour Manager, is based in Seattle. Shortly after earning his degree in vocal music from Seattle Pacific University, Mark moved to England to manage the National Youth Choir of Great Britain. He then lived in Belgium, where he worked for the International Federation for Choral Music and sang in the professional Choeur de Chambre de Namur. Mark is now a freelance singer in several semi-professional choirs: the Tudor Choir and the Compline Choir in Seattle, and Cappella Romana in Portland.

**SUZANNE ROBBINS** is a Tour Manager in the New York office. She has a degree in music from Wellesley College and spent her youth traveling extensively in Europe and South America. Before joining ACFEA, Suzanne managed the booking division of Performing Arts Consultants in Boston. Suzanne has sung with such ensembles as the Dessoff Choirs, the New York Choral Society and the Uptown Sound. She is currently a member of the Blue Hill Troupe.

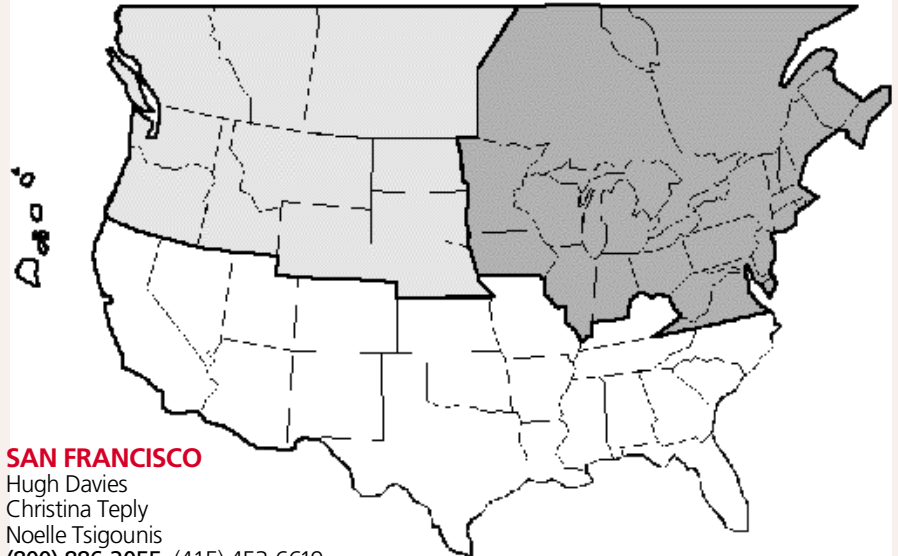


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**CHRISTINA TEPY** is a Tour Manager based in the California office. Born in San Francisco, she graduated from the University of California, San Diego, with a degree in French, and has worked with ACFEA since 1992. Her travels include study abroad programs in France and Central America, competitive tours throughout Europe with a track team, and trips to Russia, China, Australia and New Zealand. Currently, Christina sings with the Marin Master Chorale.

**NOELLE TSGOUNIS** has been a Tour Manager with ACFEA since 1992. Having worked in the Seattle and New York offices, Noelle now calls the San Francisco office home. A native of New York, Noelle earned her degree in vocal performance from the State University of New York at Geneseo. She has lived in London, traveled extensively throughout Europe, the Middle East, Australia, China, Guatemala, South Africa and the USA, and accompanied the Geneseo Chamber Singers on an ACFEA tour of Italy as the assistant conductor. An active musician in the Bay Area, Noelle has sung with the San Francisco Concert Chorale, conducted the Marin Youth Chorus *Les Etoiles*, and is currently performing with the California Bach Society.

**DAVID WERT**, Tour Manager, is based in the Seattle office. A native of Pennsylvania, he is the former Assistant Director of the Armed Forces School of Music in Norfolk, VA. As a director of US Navy Bands, he has performed in and conducted musical ensembles in over 30 countries, including many in South America, Africa, Asia and the Far East. David had choral training from an early age and is an accomplished performer on piano, contemporary keyboard and trumpet. He currently teaches trumpet at Music Center of the Northwest and performs freelance in the Seattle area.

**"It was my first experience with a tour company (I have always handled the details personally), and a very positive one! We appreciate your professionalism and reliability, and enclose our congratulations to you. Thanks again."**

**Don Kendrick, Director  
CSU Sacramento  
Chamber Choir**

## WELLESLEY COLLEGE CHOIR TOUR OF ITALY

By Susan Davenny Wyner  
Music Director

On its tour to Italy in March, the Wellesley College Choir sang a rich variety of music with a passion, commitment and skill that left their

listeners not only admiring, but moved. When the choir sang during the mass at St Peter's in the Vatican, the large congregation was so excited that it burst into applause. The audience at the American Academy in Rome included scholars and artists from the USA as well as musicians and scholars from the Italian community. In Pisa the concert drew a large audience that remained seated in spite of freezing temperatures and continued to applaud long after the last choir member had left the 'stage'.

In Mantua, we performed in a jewel of a theater that was inaugurated by the 14-year-old Mozart in 1770 and which has held many of the world's great artists since. After that concert, the hosting men's choir not only served a meal in a Gonzaga palace, but serenaded us between courses. When I attempted to thank the men for their hospitality and music-making, they responded by saying that we had brought them a gift of *un'altra genera* (another order altogether) and that Wellesley's concert would be remembered long after we had gone.

In addition to the five scheduled concerts, the choir performed informally in Rome at the Pantheon and the Catacombs, in Orvieto's *duomo*, and in Florence at the Church of Santa Croce. In Mantua, we sang in the room of the Gonzaga palace where Monteverdi's

Howard Payne University A Cappella Choir  
outside Westminster Abbey



**"All our major concerts were very well attended thanks to great advance publicity."**

**Mary Anne Sharp  
Director**

**Decatur  
Civic Chorus**



University of Pittsburg's Heinz Chapel Choir in Carcassonne, France.

*Orfeo* was probably first performed in 1607. In Venice, we received permission to sing in the great Basilica of San Marco. At these improvised performances, choir members formed a circle, singing across from one another. As their sound poured out, all noise would stop. Tourists would gather around or just remain transfixed, often weeping, young and old alike. For a few minutes those great spaces became newly radiant with the beauty and mystery of the human spirit. None of us will ever forget the gift these singers gave with their living transformations of space and time.

Throughout the whole trip I was impressed with our choir members – by the responsiveness of their music-making, by their flexibility in dealing with different acoustics, by their artistic growth as individuals and as an ensemble, by their sense of adventure, and by the range of culture, knowledge of history and open intellectual curiosity they brought to the visits to museums and historical sites. Perhaps most of all I was moved by the support they gave to one another and by

the love and compassion they communicated through their singing. It has been both an honor and a joy to work with them, and I would like to thank ACFEA for its help in making the whole tour such a pleasurable success. 🎵

**"I'll be recommending you to my colleagues and will use you for any future trips without question."**

**Cynthia Sheppard  
Director**

**Howard Payne Univ.  
A Cappella Choir**

## A DREAM REALIZED – ENGLISH HANDBELLS TO ENGLAND

After years of dreaming, hoping and dedicated fund-raising, The Bell Hops, a 24-member youth handbell choir from Fall City,

WA, boarded the Boeing 747 that would take them to England and the realization of their concert tour goals. The group, directed by Marion Querro, is from the Fall City United Methodist Church, a congregation numbering only 150, nearly a third of whom were on the concert tour. This talented, ambitious group of young musicians amazed audiences from London to Scotland with their musical and precise renditions of sacred and secular bell literature. From a tiny church in a village near Loughborough, to the nine-hundred-year-old St Fillan's in Aberdour, Scotland, audiences flocked to hear the beautiful handbell music played by these talented youths. All the concerts were well attended and the people were warm and enthusiastic in their response.

As a practical matter and as a method of cultural exchange, the group requested homestays during much of their time on tour. What they were not prepared for was the overwhelming response from the Methodist churches in Great Britain wishing to host the group and their entourage. "Regarding the homestays, they were an unqualified success," stated an adult member of the group. "To have the opportunity to live with host families, even for a short time, was special and memorable for every member of our group. If any musical touring group working with ACFEA is considering the benefits of homestays, we recommend you take the plunge and do it! For many of us, the friendships made from homestays will last a lifetime."

– continued on page 8, see Bell Hops



The Bell Hops at Fillan Forth

– *Bell Hops, continued from page 7*

Aside from their busy performance schedule, there were tremendous opportunities to take in the varied and plentiful sights of England and Scotland. With excursions to Stratford-upon-Avon, Loughborough, the John Taylor Bell Foundry, Melton Mowbray, Belvoir Castle, a special visit to the Epworth Old Rectory, and tours of both London and Edinburgh, the group really felt like

**“Thank you for another wonderful experience. No doubt I’ll be calling you again.”**

**Sherry Kelly  
Director**

**Hillsboro  
Presbyterian  
Church Choir**

they had seen it all.

One tour participant remarked, “Those two weeks will be in our memories forever. We learned that through organization, commitment and hard work, it really is possible to make a dream a reality. Best of all, our children benefited from the fruits of their labors and were rewarded with the chance of a lifetime! Thank you, ACFEA, you have our trust and our gratitude.” 📺

## **GAY MEN'S CHORUSES UNITE IN EUROPE**

Two of North America's most esteemed men's choruses – the New York City Gay Men's Chorus

(director, Gary Miller) and the Seattle Men's Chorus (director, Dennis Coleman) – traveled together on a two-week tour of Europe which included participation in the Amsterdam Gay Games.

The combined group of 156 people started in Barcelona where, instead of relaxing on the first evening, several singers headed for the television studios to participate in a live broadcast of Spain's leading late-night show. This appearance helped swell almost to capacity the audience for their concert the following evening at the Palau de la Musica, Barcelona's premier concert hall.

A day on Sitges beach was followed by all the challenges of an overnight train to Paris, the next stop on the tour. The group undertook enthusiastically the impossible task of discovering all that Paris has to offer in just two days, – *continued on page 9, see Gay Choruses*

## **MENDELSSOHN CHOIR AT VOICES IN THE CITY**

Once again, the *Voices in the City* festival proved to be a smashing success for singers and audience alike. For the July, 1998 event, the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh (music director, Robert Page) was invited to join the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales, under the baton of Sir Edward Downes, in two spectacular performances of Verdi's *Requiem*.

On Monday, July 6, choir members departed Pittsburgh for London, where they met their ACFEA courier and driver and traveled to Cardiff for a three-night stay. This first leg of the tour afforded many of the ensemble's seasoned travelers the opportunity to visit Wales for the first time. The second day featured a day trip to the famous city of Bath, not far away. That evening, the Mendelssohn singers joined the BBC chorus for a piano rehearsal and began a warm relationship that would last throughout their visit. On the third night they were joined by the orchestra and soloists, and continued to fine-tune the ensemble for performance.

Next the choir moved northeast, stopping en route for a guided tour of Stratford-upon-Avon. In Hereford, their hotel in the center of town easily allowed a morning of independent sightseeing around the impressive 12th-century sand-

stone cathedral. The first concert took place in Birmingham's beautiful Symphony Hall and was recorded for broadcast by the BBC.

The second concert was the grand gala finale of the famous Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod, perhaps the best-known choral competition in the world. This concert, in the pavilion on the festival grounds, was attended by thousands and left the choir members awed by its grandeur. In the words of Operations Manager Barry Miller, “The hospitality and camaraderie... will be remembered for a long time... We especially feel honored to have been able to participate in the gala concert of the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod – what an overwhelming experience.”

The final two nights of the tour found the singers in London enjoying some well-deserved rest and relaxation. Here choir members had time to explore the famous city and visit Windsor Castle before departing for home with fond memories of a wonderful tour. 📺



Mendelssohn Choir rehearsing at Llangollen

**“All in all, I will never again travel with any other company. ACFEA has won a true champion to their cause. I will steer all my musician friends your way with great confidence. Thank you for the trip of a lifetime.”**

**Jo Ann Miller, Director**

**North Dakota State  
University Concert Choir**





New York and Seattle at St Paul's Cathedral, London

– *Gay Chorus*, continued from page 8 and in turn offered a surprised group of fellow tourists on a Paris-by-night boat cruise a beautiful rendition of *We Shall Overcome*.

A day on the bus took the group to Amsterdam and four very full days of activity. The determination of the participants to achieve their own goals and objectives enabled them to overcome the inevitable practical frustrations inherent in being part of such a huge event as the Gay Games, and the collegial spirit that developed throughout the tour was impressive to see. Both groups performed in Amsterdam's Concertgebouw as part of the Gay Games Cultural Festival and in the starkly beautiful Beurs van Berlage in an independent concert. This was New York's second appearance in this hall, and it was immediately apparent to all why Miller had been enthusiastic about returning.

London was the last stop on the itinerary, reached by *Le Shuttle* under the English Channel. The limited time here

**"The two concerts in Perth and Dorchester Abbey were in beautiful old cathedrals and were shared concerts with local youth orchestras. This was an exceptional partnership and worked extremely well."**

**Gary Wolfman  
Director**

**Fox Valley Youth Orchestra**

was used to the full by the group, and culminated in an emotional evening of music and farewells. The concert, a benefit for the Terrence Higgins Trust in Westminster's Methodist Central Hall, was not only the last performance of the tour but also Gary Miller's last appearance with the New York City Gay Men's Chorus after 18 years. A very teary series of en-

cores lead to a tribute-laden farewell dinner, a fitting way indeed to close a four-year project which had resulted in a musical, spiritual and emotional odyssey for many of the participants. 📌

## METHODIST CHURCH CHOIR IN SCANDINAVIA

It was Denmark's 86th annual Fourth of July festival celebration in Rebild Park, near Ålborg, which brought the Los Altos United Methodist Church Chancel Choir (director, Michael Morris) to Scandinavia – and the beautiful church venues, lush countryside, and stunning port cities of Copenhagen and Stockholm, which filled the long summer days of the choir's two-week tour with constant wonder and awe.

The choir enjoyed much that Scandinavia has to offer, first performing on the famous outdoor stage of Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens, a unique turn-of-the-century amusement park that has a tradition of drawing professional performers to its stage. This event proved to be a good warm-up to the Fourth of July festivities, which took place over several days in and around the city of Ålborg and Rebild Park. Participation in the local 'Meeting at Huset' concert series offered the second unique venue, designed to entertain both locals and visi-

tors alike in an informal and merry outdoor courtyard. A more formal concert was given at the Church of Our Lady, prior to joining the July 4 afternoon celebrations in the park and attending the evening's very splendid gala dinner and midnight fireworks.

A ferry crossing brought the choir from Denmark to Sweden, where they spent several nights in Göteborg and performed at the Vasa Kyrkan. The lovely resort town of Halmstad offered a wonderful seaside stopover with opportunities to relax, sightsee and take part in a concert series where they performed to a full audience at St Nicholas Church. There was time to visit the glass-blowing shops and factories in Växjö before arriving in Linköping, where the choir performed in the very beautiful and centrally located church of St Lars.

The tour ended in Stockholm, but not before the choir first made an excursion to nearby Uppsala to participate in services at the Cathedral, Sweden's largest church and home to the Archbishop. One of Europe's oldest universities was founded here in 1477, and one may still visit the home and gardens of the botanist, Carolus Linnaeus, as well as Uppsala Castle.

Majestic Stockholm offered the choir a brilliant blue sky, time to stroll along the city's harbor walls, and a chance to meander along the winding cobbled streets of its medieval district for last-minute shopping. A visit to the Vasa



Los Altos United Methodist Church Chancel Choir in Uppsala

Museum was arranged, as well as a farewell dinner cruise on board the m/s *Prince Carl Phillip*, where the choir reflected on their Scandinavian adventures while dining on reindeer and watching the sun set over the waters of a late summer's evening. 📌

## SEATTLE CHILDREN'S CHORUS WINS 'CHOIR OF THE YEAR'

Children's Chorus. Bournemouth, a delightful Victorian town on the southern English coast, hosts about 1,500 young musicians from more than 15 countries each year as they compete, perform and enjoy the amiable hospitality of southern England. The festival is open to choirs, orchestras and bands alike.

"The concert venues and [the Bournemouth] festival were perfect for us," says director Kris Mason. The Bournemouth event functioned as a cornerstone for their customized tour, which began in London where the choir was able to experience first hand the sights of this first-class city, including the Tower of London, St. Paul's Cathedral, Buckingham Palace, Big Ben, and much more.

En route to Bournemouth, the choir made a stop in Winchester, home to one of Britain's most famous cathedrals. The group's courier, Mimi Cawood, orchestrated an informal, spontaneous performance in the nave of the cathedral. Kris Mason led the group as they sang a

The top prize at the Bournemouth Music Makers Festival was awarded to the Seattle

round of *Jubilate Deo* in the deep and rich acoustics of this ancient church. "It was the most spiritual moment for us on this trip," she said.

In Bournemouth, the choir clinched the 'Choir of the Year' award by their rendition of Rupert Lang's *Cantate Domino*, the only performance in the


competition which received a perfect 90/90 score. The choir entered the Senior Youth Division since there were high school students in the group, but more than 50% of the choir was aged 13 and younger, making their award all the more impressive. Kris Mason gave an interview with the Seattle Times upon the choir's return home: "The adjudicator stood up

at the end of the festival and said, 'In the end, I have to choose the choir that makes me want to look up and listen to the music. The heart of your choir spoke to my heart.' That is probably the most profound thing anyone has said to us in our 10 years," Mason stated.

After the Bournemouth experience the choir was hosted by the Park School for a concert in Yeovil in England's West Country, followed by their last stop in Oxford, where their hosts in nearby Marcham treated them to a

post-concert farewell tea and a typical English dessert: strawberries and cream, of course!

Director Kris Mason summed up her feelings at the end of the trip: "We are tremendously pleased with the work of ACFEA. It was a fantastic, excellent experience, a very rich sharing of music."

The choir is hoping to visit Scandinavia on their next ACFEA tour. 



Triumphant Seattle Children's Chorus in Bournemouth

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