

Welcome to the 2010 edition of Tour Notes. As highlighted in this newsletter, ACFEA Legato organises concert tours for all types of ensembles to a wide range of destinations, from coach tours within Europe to long-haul tours worldwide. Whatever your budget, with over 50 years of experience and a worldwide network of accomplished musicians and travel experts to open doors to some of the best venues and performance opportunities available to choirs, orchestras and bands, we are dedicated to providing every group with the highest quality tour at affordable prices.

Contact us on 020 8799 8360 or tours@acfea.eu to start planning your next tour.



NYCGB in Salt Lake City

© Carl Browning

National Youth Choir of Great Britain in the USA

Report by Tony Hastings, ACFEA

When the National Youth Choir of Great Britain started the planning process with ACFEA for their 2009 tour, an ambitious round-the-world project was mooted, with stops in Australia, New Zealand, Polynesia, Canada and the USA. As so often with major projects, the shape of the tour changed radically from its original conception, due in large part to the collapse of the pound against most world currencies in early 2009.

Luckily, the possibility of two major events narrowed the focus of the tour to the west coast of the USA. One was an invitation from the Los Angeles-based composer Eric Whitacre, who has developed a very special relationship with the choir over the last couple of years, to perform and record much of his choral catalogue. The other was an invitation from the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, via former NYCGB member and current King's Singer Stephen Connolly, to join them in Salt Lake City for one of their famous weekly TV broadcasts.

The tour started with a week of intensive rehearsals based at the University of San Francisco, ending with a concert at Grace Cathedral, and two further church concerts in the Bay Area. The choir then flew to Salt Lake City to take part, with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, in the weekly live half hour TV broadcast *Music and the Spoken Word*, which is the USA's longest-running network programme, having run continuously since 1929. During the summer, the broadcast takes place in the

huge Conference Center, where they sang to over six thousand people.

From Salt Lake City, the choir flew back to San Francisco, where they boarded coaches to Los Angeles, singing in San Luis Obispo's Performing Arts Center en route. Based in Glendale, a leafy suburb of Los Angeles, the choir then met up with Eric Whitacre for two days of rehearsal, followed by a sold-out concert of Whitacre's choral music in the fabulous Disney Concert Hall.

Choir members were rewarded for all their hard work with a visit to Disneyland, including a Magic Music Days performance, and an elegant farewell dinner in Riverside's historic Mission Inn.

"Overall, a brilliant tour"

**Mike Brewer OBE, Conductor,
National Youth Choir of Great Britain**

East Sussex Youth Orchestra Tours Italy



ESYO, conducted by Colin Metters, performs © C Moore to a packed house in Chioggia Cathedral

"Excellent posters and venues. One of the best tours ever for ESYO"

**Richard Sigsworth, Deputy Director,
East Sussex Music Service**

Lancashire Youth Concert Band Tours Germany

Report by Elizabeth Meyer and Anthony Breach

The Lancashire Youth Concert Band's recent tour to Germany was highly successful and extremely enjoyable for both the musicians and the tutors. After a long journey we arrived at the Ramada Hotel in Bad Soden where we were shown to our rooms and shortly afterwards began to rehearse to prepare for our first concert. In the evening we were able to explore the city and visit its many shops.

Our first concert, held in a beautiful church in Hainzell, was enjoyed by a large and enthusiastic audience. We played a mixture of pieces ranging from *The Poet and Peasant Overture* to *Birdland* and received a warm welcome and great hospitality. Performing in towns such as Bad Soden and Eichenzell we had all of our German audiences, many of whom had never heard of Lancashire, clapping along enthusiastically to the

likes of *Preston Guild*, and crying out for multiple encores. One highlight was a visit to Siegfried's Mechanisches Musikkabinett in Rüdesheim, which contains all kinds of mechanical musical instruments on which some of the band members were encouraged to perform!

The hospitality of our German hosts was wonderful throughout. At our concert in Eichenzell we were presented with a new LYCB mascot and were all given a specially printed mouse mat to remember our visit to the town. After socialising and enjoying the views of Germany we then travelled to our final venue. The people from Niedergründau welcomed us greatly and we thanked them with, what we hoped would be, one of the best performances of the tour.

The memories of the tour will stay with us forever as new friendships

were made and we all became closer as a band. This tour was as special and exciting as previous tours and left our band with aspirations to begin what we hope will be another successful year. Our performances have made and will continue to make the people of Lancashire proud that they have such a fantastic musical tradition, and I know that the rest of the band and I are eagerly looking forward to our next tour in two years' time!

LYCB in Eichenzell, conducted by Edward Hoyle



© S Grills

Phoenix Singers in Hungary

Phoenix Singers Birmingham in the Carmelite Church, Keszthely

"The organisation and forward planning have always been meticulous and very well thought out. The venues we sang in have all been magnificent and importantly had good audiences thanks to the advance publicity by ACFEA Legato. We are already looking forward to our next tour with this great organisation. I would highly recommend this company for a memorable tour."

Eric Jones, PR and Marketing, Phoenix Singers Birmingham



© V Barnish

St Andrew's University Tour to Normandy

St Andrew's University in Eglise Notre-Dame d'Etretat



© C Josting

"I cannot imagine a better planned or more rewarding tour. There has been no choir tour which I have enjoyed more than this one. I am delighted that my last trip with the choir was such a great success with the students. You deserve huge praise for a really wonderful job."

Dr William Stevenson, St Andrew's University



© Peter Backhouse

St Giles' Cathedral Choir in Canada

Report by Michael Harris, Organist and Master of the Music

St Giles' Cathedral Choir set off from Edinburgh on 6 July 2009 in great anticipation of their first tour to Canada. The schedule of five concerts and a service in eight days was a tight one, but it was to prove a highly successful trip. Having flown direct from Glasgow to Toronto, we met up with our coach and driver, Al, and ACFEA courier, Amanda, who both made sure that all the transport arrangements worked very smoothly.

The combination of venues

organised by ourselves and by ACFEA proved to be a good one, and we sang in some marvellous spaces and enjoyed a warm welcome everywhere. Starting with Christ Church Cathedral, Hamilton, where we stayed with host families, we moved on to the picturesque Niagara on the Lake, and a concert in nearby St Catharines, taking in a winery tour along the way, which proved very popular with the choir. Our next stop was Buffalo, over the border in the

USA, but we couldn't miss Niagara Falls, so a morning was spent getting soaked on a "Maid of the Mist" tour. Following our concert in St Paul's Cathedral in Buffalo, we made the longest road journey of the trip, all the way round Lake Ontario to Kingston, where St George's Cathedral hosted us for an evening concert. On the Sunday, after we had sung at the morning Eucharist we had the rest of the day to ourselves; some quick planning by Amanda ensured that we enjoyed an evening cruise around the Thousand Islands. The final stop of the tour was in Toronto, which though brief, was highly enjoyable; the farewell meal organised as part of the tour was a splendid occasion, and many of us enjoyed a final lunch the following afternoon in the revolving restaurant of the CN Tower, a spectacular way to conclude our visit.

Having been involved with and responsible for many tours over the years I can honestly say that this trip ran the smoothest of any of them, very much due to the detailed work behind the scenes at ACFEA, and everyone involved had a memorable experience.

Exultate Singers Tours Krakow and Prague

Report by Nick Abbott, ACFEA

The Exultate Singers is a 30-voice mixed chamber choir from Bristol that undertook its first international concert tour with ACFEA two years ago. Germany was the destination on that occasion and such a success

that a pattern of biennial touring has emerged, with the decision taken to push eastwards this year to Poland and the Czech Republic.

The Chopin Hotel was home for the first three days of the tour, during which time choir members explored the delights of medieval Krakow, visited the famous salt mines at Wieliczka and the notorious concentration camp at Auschwitz, and gave a concert to a sizeable and highly-appreciative audience in St Catherine's Church in Kazimierz, the Jewish Quarter of Krakow.

Overnight train was the chosen means of transport to take us on to Prague. On arrival the group dispersed to acquire (for some) their first taste of this magical city. Later that day we checked in to the Duo Hotel, conveniently positioned next to one of Prague's newest Metro stations and a mere 12-minute ride from Wenceslas Square, enabling choir members to explore independently.

The Kostel Sv. Havla (Church of St Gallus) was the venue for our Saturday night concert. Nestled in between buildings just off the Old Town Square,

*"Wonderful buildings,
wonderful audiences,
wonderful food,
faultless organisation!"*

**David Ogden, Conductor,
Exultate Singers**

it would be quite easy to miss this baroque treasure of a church – luckily for us the audience didn't. Extra chairs were sought and installed wherever there was space, but alas, some who came late had to be turned away. The wonderful acoustic was matched by an atmosphere of great excitement and tremendous enthusiasm from the local audience.

We returned to Bristol the next day, but not before the icing on the cake: singing Sunday morning mass at St Vitus' Cathedral. Every movement of the Langlais *Messe Solennelle* in that vast acoustic with the organ resplendent sent shivers down the spine. It was a truly memorable experience and the perfect end to a highly successful tour.

Exultate in the Church of St Gallus, Prague



© Martin Pospíšil



Singing in the gardens of Lesabe Primary School, Wattville

© Sue Young

Eton College Chapel Choir Returns to South Africa

Report by Ralph Allwood, Precentor and Director of Music

In the middle of an area south of Johannesburg where those who don't still live a traditional life of subsistence farming are mostly unemployed, is a fine choir school of 89 boys whose excellent choirs tour the world. Once again it was pouring with rain when we arrived at the Drakensberg Choir School, but cleared up for our five-hour hike in the foothills the next morning. Leading us was the housemaster at the school, the intrepid Pieter du Preez, quintessential South African adventurer, who had broken his neck twice and was as kind and gentle to the youngest boy in his charge as he was unequivocal in his instructions to us and seemed to be able to identify, with infectious excitement, all flora and fauna on our way. Tired but surprisingly focused, we rehearsed for two hours and joined with "Drakies" under their conductor Johann Van der Sandt for our first concert. We learnt from their discipline, commitment and joy and were energised by the choir's lively teaching to us of their unofficial National Anthem "Shosholozza", originally sung by railway working teams: "the train is coming in" symbolising the new South Africa slowly, surely, joyfully and peacefully arriving.

Pretoria was the setting for the busiest day I can remember on a tour: for two of the three performances we sang with the Chamber Choir of South Africa, whose Director, Michael Dingaen, gave us a workshop of African music the next day. Our midday recital at Kwa Thema Methodist Church was received with the excited vocal enthusiasm peculiar to the South Africans. The third and final

occasion that Sunday was in complete contrast to the ululating, calling out and waving of our early start at Regina Mundi Church in Soweto. We sang a traditional Choral Evensong of Howells, Elgar, Rose and Walford Davies in Christ Church Arcadia. At the end of that busy, tiring day and with touching spontaneity, our boys still found the voice to sing their new African songs to a girls' school choir who had attended our Evensong. During this day alone they had demonstrated that, through their teamwork, musicianship and enthusiasm, they were an outstanding touring group. Our courier, Pieter Myburgh, who had set up the tour, was exceptional, and it was clear from the outset that we were in the capable hands of a thoughtful, experienced man.

While Michael Dingaen was teaching an exuberant song to the choir, with strictness admirably tempered with a winning smile, I caught the sound of distant singing from another part of Kwa Thema Church. Curious, I wandered. The church was operating a soup kitchen, but before receiving their food, the dozen frail old people were singing a hymn in gentle, beautiful four-part harmony. Later, we entered Lesabe Primary School through groups of children lining the school drive. Choirs sang each other songs and joined in a ceremony commemorating tolerance and forgiveness. For our concert with St Alban's College (our generous hosts) we had learnt more African songs from their exuberant conductor, Ralf Schmidt.

Our final call of the day was on the

British Deputy High Commissioner, Barbara Bailey, in her residence, where we sang for her guests. She encouraged us to visit the Refilwe "Life for All" farming and schooling project. Amused, we donated some tubs of worms to aid recycling, set off for some model tribal villages, and headed for that night's home, a children's camp in Pilanesberg game reserve.

On Wednesday we were up before the sun at 5.30 to drive in an open vehicle and stop to watch elephant, rhinoceros, springbok, vervet monkeys, ostrich, waterbuck, wildebeest, impala, antelope, giraffe, guinea fowl, hippopotamus (well, his eyes, anyway, just above the water) and (my personal favourite) warthog. The huge breakfast on our return at 9.30 was most welcome, and we spent the rest of the morning relaxing and went off on another three-hour safari in the afternoon. Some of the group went off again at 5.30 the next morning, and were lucky enough after a long, patient wait to see two huge, impressive lions.

South Africans who are not from Cape Town tend to tell you that their town is better, so we knew we were in for a treat. Having seen from the air the beautiful combination of mountains and bays that make up the area we were able to experience via cable car the peace of the top of Table Mountain in perfect weather. We also saw an extraordinary peace in the faces and in the clarity of purpose of the sisters who operated Nazareth House to look after destitute children and the dying. Later that day we sang with Leon Starker, the director of the youth choir Pro Cantu, whom I had heard five years ago when they won the Llangollen Eisteddfod. We joined them to give a concert to a packed St George's Cathedral.

With their new-found African energy,

Pilanesberg Game Reserve



© Sue Young

the choir joined with Bishops College Choir and Herschel College to give a concert in Bishops' beautifully resonant chapel. Mark Mitchell, Bishops' excellent Director of Music, conducted the joint items. As our chief host for the three days, the warm, kindly smile never left his face as he organised, rehearsed and directed.

On our final full day we joined in the two-and-a-half hour highly charismatic service in the Baptist Church in Langa township. For me the most moving moment of the tour was when I left the choir to sing on their own the gentle prayer "Ukhutule", and the congregation were thrilled.

Finally, a joint Choral Evensong with our friends from Bishops, hilarious in the amount going on: two choirs, two



Service participation at Langa Township Baptist Church, near Cape Town

© Sue Young

conductors, too many parents for the available seats, brass instruments hastily passed along the row from a cupboard, cross and candle-bearers apparently taking a wrong turning and giving up, three organists taking turns at the console and very enthusiastic

adolescent hymn-singing. The brass arrangements really lifted the service, and the Elgar: *Give unto the Lord* gave it drama.

A trip to Cape Point complete with recently-endangered penguins, ended College Chapel Choir's best tour yet.

Concert Touring in Morocco

by Becky Shaftoe, General Manager

Looking for a concert tour off the beaten track? In recent years ACFEA has opened up Morocco as a great new destination for performing musical ensembles.

Tangier has always been the gateway from Europe to Africa, and at just 35 minutes by high speed ferry from mainland Spain, it is the natural port of call for groups wishing to combine a concert tour of Spain with northern Morocco. 2006 and 2007 saw ACFEA's first cross-continental choir tours, combining Tangier with the seductive Andalusian cities of Granada, Ronda and Seville.

Striking concert venues with welcoming audiences are to be found at Tangier's imposing Catholic Spanish Cathedral and the step-back-in-time English Church of St Andrew's, once painted by Matisse and colourfully described more recently in Michael Palin's travel series, *Sahara*. The modern Centre Hassan II Des Rencontres Internationales is an ideal venue for visiting orchestras, located just 60km south of Tangier in the picture postcard coastal town of Asilah.

Inhabited in bygone eras by the Portuguese, the Spanish and the British, Tangier has attracted many artists, writers, musicians and Bohemians over the centuries. Traces of its international history can

be seen in the old Jewish quarter, the Portuguese fortifications, and the whitewashed villas inhabited by European expats since the 1920s. The Kasbah is the heart of the old town, and is bordered by the former sultan palace of Dar El Makhzen with stunning Moroccan architecture. The old Medina is best explored wandering through its maze of alleyways and narrow streets, where life continues as it has done for centuries.

For groups wishing to focus on Morocco as a single tour destination, Marrakech is the ideal base to experience the buzz of quintessential Moroccan life. Here visitors can explore Marrakech's celebrated square, Djemaa el Fna, with its array of lantern-lit refreshment stalls and year-round snake charmers, musicians and street entertainers. Towering over the city is the 70-metre-high Koutoubia minaret, which

provides a powerful reminder of Morocco's Islamic heritage. Concert opportunities include the French Catholic Church of Saints-Martyrs as well as numerous secular cultural centres which attract local audiences from all faiths.

If desired, tours can be enriched with philanthropic elements, where concerts support local Moroccan charities trying to improve the condition of inner-city orphanages, provide basic school equipment or fund the provision of education for young women in rural villages. In 2010 ACFEA is organising a ground-breaking concert tour to Morocco for the Anima Young Singers of Greater Chicago. This American children's choir will perform concerts in Rabat, Casablanca and Marrakech and have cultural exchanges with young people learning English at summer camps from poor rural communities.

Morocco is clearly a fascinating country with a very rich cultural history. The main spoken language is Arabic, whilst French is used in most business settings, and English in the main tourist centres. In northern cities, Spanish is also commonly used. By air, Morocco is a convenient and affordable destination from the UK for all budgets. In addition to established airlines such as Royal Air Maroc, Easyjet run direct flights to Marrakech from Gatwick and Manchester and Ryanair fly from East Midlands, Bristol and Luton.

For more information about concert tours to Morocco, please call 020 8799 8360.

Oak Park & River Forest Children's Chorus in St Andrew's Church, Tangier



© Marianne Swienink-Havard

Peterhouse Chapel Choir, Cambridge in Andalusia

Report by Helen Smee, Organ Scholar

We flew from Stansted to Málaga, where we caught a mercifully air-conditioned coach to the beautiful city of Seville and checked in to our hotel. Accommodation was of an extremely high standard throughout the tour: perfect for daily siestas!

The following day we performed our first concert in the Iglesia del Santo Ángel, which was happily prolonged by standing ovations and encores, despite having to battle with adverse heat. Everyone throughout the tour was hugely welcoming and kind which made the experience all the more enjoyable.

Tuesday allowed us some hours of sightseeing in the sleepy town of Carmona, before continuing the journey towards Osuna, the home of a 16th-century university and our next concert venue. The university chapel was not wholly unlike our own in size and acoustic; when we were due to appear in concert however, it became rapidly clear that the local population were more keen than any audience we had enjoyed at our own college as they packed the space shoulder to shoulder, cramming in extra chairs and an Andalusian television crew. The concert went extremely well and more ovations followed!

Wednesday was taken up by the journey to Córdoba, where we were accommodated directly next to the mosque-cum-cathedral in the historic

centre of the city. After another relaxed, sangria-soaked afternoon we made gentle attempts at rehearsal before enjoying dinner en masse. Then there was Thursday's concert in the beautiful monastery church of San José del Convento de Cayetano, where we were warmly received and fed, before delivering another fantastic concert and attracting the interest of an enthusiastic local music teacher.

The trip to Granada on Friday allowed some time for sightseeing around the Alhambra and a welcome dip in the hotel's swimming pool. The next day there was more sightseeing and swimming, followed by a mass participation and concert at Nuestra Señora de las Angustias.

Sunday morning saw our last singing commitment in the magnificent Basílica de San Juan de Dios, where our performance solicited uncalled-for applause and the flattering comparison to 'los mismos ángeles' by the presiding priest.

The experience was a fantastic one and we all learnt a huge amount both in terms of repertoire and about performing

together as a group. Everyone is extremely grateful for the opportunity to refine their talent and we are all looking forward to incorporating what we learnt into our singing in our own chapel. Huge thanks go to ACFEA, who made sure that we had everything we needed and more! The tour was meticulously organised and went without a hitch!

Poster advertising choral mass and concert in Granada



Low Cost Airlines – A User Guide for Musical Groups

by Richard Savage, Chairman and CEO, Europe

Each time we plan and budget a new tour, having decided on the target area(s), the first major decision is the mode of transport to get there; normally the largest single cost factor. Low-cost carriers vary more widely than the “legacy airlines” in their policies towards group bookings and the carriage of musical instruments both in the cabin and the hold.

At the ultra low cost end, Ryanair charge for additional seats for hand-held instruments and won't allow odd-sized instruments in the hold. Unless the specific route mandates their use, they cannot be considered a good bet for bands or orchestras – or a truck

can be sent separately. EasyJet fly to more recognised airports and are more consistent in their policy towards instrument carriage, however they require full payment at the time of booking. Carriers such as Monarch, Jet 2, Wizz Air, Air Berlin, Transavia, ThomsonFly, Tui and Aer Lingus all fly to fewer destinations but offer better flexibility for deposits, payment, cancellations, name changes etc and are generally more sympathetic to the needs of groups and musicians. Similar patterns exist amongst low cost carriers operating within the USA such as Southwest and Jet Blue, South East Asia (Air Asia) and

Australasia (Jetstar).

“Scheduled” airlines have adapted their fares and practices to compete. In some cases they will match or beat the pricing of the low-cost carriers. Given that in many cases they require small deposits and names only at the time of ticketing, and that they have expertise in handling instruments, they can sometimes be the best option. Being part of Specialised Travel means that ACFEA Legato has access to a full time team of specialists working continuously on finding the most cost-effective solutions to this ever-evolving issue.

Our Team



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Richard Savage worked as a courier for ACFEA whilst a student at Oxford University where he was a Lay Clerk in Christ Church Cathedral. He became Managing Director of STL in 1983 and has combined his travel career with being a professional singer, having over 150 CD recordings to his credit, and appearing regularly with the Gabrieli and King's Consorts, Polyphony, Tenebrae and Le Concert d'Astrée amongst others.



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Following a degree in Music from Sussex University, Helen worked for the Philharmonia Orchestra as Tours Manager for 15 years. In this role she travelled widely across Europe, the USA and the Far East. Helen studied the violin at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and has sung with the BBC Symphony Chorus on various occasions.



Nick Abbott
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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.



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Following her degree in Music, Becky trained in arts administration at the London Sinfonietta before spending five years organising concerts and education projects for the London Symphony Orchestra. In her role as LSO Tours Manager she travelled widely across Europe and the USA. Becky plays the oboe and, prior to joining ACFEA, taught English in Spain.



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After graduating from the University of Leeds with a BA in Arts Management, Anna initially embarked on a career in marketing, before deciding to combine her keen interest in music with the travelling she experienced during her gap year. Anna plays the violin and enjoys organising concert tours for music groups to destinations across Europe and beyond.



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Tony is the European Projects Consultant for ACFEA. He is a graduate of Sussex University and worked previously in music publishing and artist management. Until recently, he was a member of the choir of Bath Abbey, and sings regularly with Bath Camerata, one of the UK's leading chamber choirs.



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Eleanor attended the University of York, where she studied Music to MA level, specialising in vocal studies and community music. After leaving university, Eleanor travelled extensively in Europe, living and working in Germany and the Netherlands. She enjoys singing in choirs and is currently a member of the London Bulgarian Choir.

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Nigel has had a varied musical career before founding Legato Tours in 2000 as teacher, pianist and increasingly as conductor. Professionally now time restricts musical activity to conducting with the occasional Mozart Piano concerto! Nigel is conductor of the Lincolnshire Youth Orchestra as well as several other ensembles in east and central England.



SFC in front of the Shanghai Oriental Art Center

© Cathryn Gallacher

Southwest Festival Chorus in China

Report by Tony Hastings, ACFEA

The Southwest Festival Chorus, based in Bath but drawing singers from all over the south west of England, has always been an ambitious organisation. Each of its well-attended summer schools for the last two years has been followed by an overseas tour – Germany with Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony* in 2007 and France with Brahms' *Requiem* in 2008. When they were discussing with ACFEA's Tony Hastings where to go after their 2009 performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* in Wells Cathedral, an almost casual remark – "Why don't we go to China?" – led to a musical adventure which captured the hearts of the chorus, and tested ACFEA's musical resources to their limit. The fact that Elgar was virtually unknown

in China, that *Gerontius* had never been performed there and last, but by no means least, that the Chinese authorities were actively hostile to performances of sacred music in general, led to some sleepless nights, and much crossing of fingers. Official government permission, and an impressive red stamp, or "chop" as it's known in China, were finally delivered ten days before the chorus left for Beijing.

Jason Thornton, SFC's artistic director, had left for Beijing several days ahead of the chorus, to meet Nick Smith, ACFEA's concert organiser in China, and to start rehearsing the Beijing Xinya Kongqi Orchestra. A fascinating partnership developed, with the young Chinese orchestra

"A well-nigh faultlessly run tour: efficient, friendly, entertaining and good-humoured couriers and guides, generally excellent accommodation, fine travel co-ordination, all the vital sights seen, and truly brilliant concert venues."

Gavin Carr, Chorus-Master and Baritone Soloist, Southwest Festival Chorus

benefitting from Jason's considerable experience as an Elgar interpreter, and Jason struggling at times to find suitable alternatives to words like "pastoral" and "elegiac", which meant nothing to the Chinese players.

The final result was two idiomatic and highly successful performances in Beijing's Forbidden City Concert Hall and Shanghai's spectacular Oriental Art Center. Gaps in the busy rehearsal and performance schedule were filled by sightseeing tours of Tian'anmen Square, the Forbidden City, the Great Wall and the Terracotta Warriors Museum.

Lancashire Youth Jazz Orchestra Tours Spain

Report by Stuart Grills, Musical Director

August 2009 saw the Lancashire Youth Jazz Orchestra set off to Spain for their annual summer tour. We had worked with Nigel Morley of Legato Tours on a number of tours in the past that had been professionally organised and had fully met our requirements so we were confident that this one would be no exception.

Our expectations however were far exceeded; the hotel accommodation and food was second to none, which is very important to a group like ours. The Jazz Orchestra is made up of senior students aged 17 to 19 from

all over Lancashire and as you will appreciate if the accommodation and food is not up to scratch, I soon get to hear about it!

The overriding criterion we have when touring is the quality of the concerts and this is the main reason we use Legato Tours. Being a county ensemble the concerts on tour are extremely important and surely the highlight of the Spain tour was when we performed as part of a major international festival held in Madrid to over 4,500 people rubbing shoulders with the likes of Michel Camilo and

Burt Bacharach no less (not on the same gig I must add).

Legato Tours always caters for our needs and this year Nigel and his colleagues in Spain did us proud.

LYJO performs to over 4,500 people in the Plaza de España, Madrid



© Christopher Mawdsley



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