

Ambassadors of Music and Friendship

San Marino Chamber Singers on concert tour in Central Europe

It's been only five years that Howard Cheung, a passionate pianist and choir director, started the choral program at San Marino High School, about one hour outside of Los Angeles, California. Today, he directs five choirs and his top ensemble, the San Marino Chamber Singers won the Golden State Award 2006 making them the best high school choir in California and were invited to perform at the ACDA National Convention in Miami in March of 2007 – a huge honor for the young director and his fine singers. Already in 2003, the chamber choir with 40 auditioned members between the ages of 15 and 17, went on its first international performance tour to Italy and gave concerts in Florence, Venice and Rome and were the featured guest performers for high mass in St. Mark's Basilica in Venice and St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. A national concert tour led them to New York City in 2006, for a special performance in Carnegie Hall.

On April 1, the San Marino Chamber Singers will land in Prague to embark on a ten-day journey through Central Europe. Their mission is to make new friends along the way across the Czech Republic and Austria to Hungary by sharing the gift of music with locals and other visitors alike. The choir will perform both classic European and contemporary American choral repertoire including several spirituals. The program will be adapted to the respective venues and includes accompanied works by flute, organ and piano.

The entrance to all the concerts is free as the tour is completely self-financed. Any donations from the audience will go towards the music program of the churches they are performing in. And in Cesky Krumlov, where the group will be joined by the Cesky Krumlov Pipers and Fioretto, the choir is going to ask their concert guest to support this fine local ensemble and is bringing a special present for these fellow young Czech musicians themselves.

The San Marino Chamber Singers are accompanied by over 30 parents, sisters and brothers and other family members. This big entourage shows the support that the choir receives both from the singers' families and their school that encourages educational travel.

Bringing the choir to Europe on a regular basis is very important to the director. "Performing in such beautiful and historical venues with their rich music tradition are unique opportunities for these young musicians. It enables them to bring their singing to the next level", explains Cheung who himself went on performance tours to Europe and China when studying at Fresno State. He also hopes that his students will have chances to connect and talk with the audience after the performances. "We are trying to learn a little bit Czech, German and Hungarian, so we can at least say welcome and thank you very much for coming in the local languages."

Concert Schedule:

April 2, 2 p.m. St. Nicholas Church on the Old Town Square, Prague,
April 3, 7:30 p.m. Prokyuv Hall, Cesky Krumlov,
April 6, 3 p.m. Stiftskirche Göttweig,
April 8, 4 p.m. St. Stephan's Basilica, Budapest.