European Music Tour

On the morning of Thursday 30 June, 49 students from the Pembroke Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Singers and Jazz Bands, as well as 5 Teachers, arrived at Adelaide airport eagerly ready for an amazing trip to Europe.

The first leg of our journey landed us in Zurich, the largest city in Switzerland. From tasting the well-renowned Sprüngli (more commonly known to us as Lindt) macarons to shopping at European clothing stores, many of us found plenty to do in this city.

Here, we performed our first concert—in a beautiful church to the locals. Our next stop was Romainmôtier, a mediaeval village located in the west of Switzerland. The hospitality of the local community was amazing, providing us with a beautiful lunch and giving us the privilege of celebrating the 100th anniversary of Jehan Alain’s birth by performing in the town’s beautiful Romanesque church, which had an amazing amount of reverb (a 7-second delay!).

We were then off to the beautiful city of Montreux, located on Lake Geneva at the foot of the Alps. The atmosphere of the city was absolutely buzzing with the energy of the famous Montreux Jazz Festival running at the time we were there. Our most exciting performance of the trip was definitely performed at the actual festival itself, as we found ourselves among some of the upcoming and famous jazz musicians from all over the world—not to mention staying in the same hotel as Ricky Martin!

From Montreux we stopped at Dachau, a German city, and got a first-hand look at a real concentration camp used by the Nazis during World War II. After this interesting and unsettling experience, we headed on towards Austria.

Salzburg was a stunning city, with abundant Baroque architecture in the ‘Old Town’. Sightseeing in this city included visiting the apartment of Mozart’s birth, strolling in the Mirabelle Gardens (seen in The Sound of Music), visiting the Hohensalzburg Castle and viewing the scenic Eagles Nest (also known to be Hitler’s retreat) in the Bavarian Alps. To take advantage of the beautiful acoustics at our performance venue, the concert mainly featured the Choir, with a few pieces played by the Orchestra and Jazz Band. We were allowed plenty of time for shopping both at the Salzburg direct factory outlet and within the city of Salzburg.

Perhaps the most important concert of our trip was held at the Schönbrunn Palace, a World Heritage site. It was a beautiful venue, once again with beautiful acoustics, and a fabulous concert. Vienna, the Austrian capital, is most famous for its cemeteries, and for this reason we visited the graves of Beethoven, Schubert and the Strauss family. Other highlights included St Stephan’s Cathedral, a Romanesque and Gothic-styled building; the Haus de Musik, a museum dedicated to sound and music; and the Esterhazy Palace, where Haydn once resided as a composer and musician.

Our next destination was Prague (Praha), the capital of the Czech Republic. We had a great concert at a community hall, where we performed most of our repertoire, and it was a fantastic way to finish our tour. Prague was a beautiful city and we were able to see much of it by foot.

On the way to Frankfurt airport, we stopped in the German city of Nuremberg. This small town was our last chance to stock up on chocolate to bring home for friends and family, so many of us took this opportunity and bought as much as we could possibly fit into our suitcases without exceeding the weight limit.

We arrived back in Adelaide as a changed group of people, due to the most amazing experiences we have shared as well as the new friendships that were made, and these memories will live with us forever. Huge thanks go to Mr Tony Paye, Mrs Mel Jones, Ms Pauline Baker, Mr Mark Joyner and Mr Matthew Atherton for their huge efforts that went into making this such an amazing experience for every one of us.

Corinne (Yr 12)
Concert Master