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CON BRIO CHORAL SOCIETY

PERFORMANCE TOUR TO SPAIN & FRANCE

Barcelona, Toulouse, Sarlat la Canéda, Tours, Paris

MAY 10 – 26, 2014

Saturday, May 10

Fly from New York City to Barcelona

- 4:45 pm Check in for Delta flight #476 to Barcelona.
- 7:45 pm Delta Flight #476 departs.
Meals served on board your transatlantic flight.

Sunday, May 11

Arrive in Barcelona

(Barcelona)

- 9:40 am Arrive at the Barcelona Airport. Claim your luggage and clear customs. You will be met in the Arrivals Hall, after customs, by your Cultural Tour Consultants tour manager.

A stop will be made on **Montjuic Hill** for photo shots of the city below. You will drive past the Olympic Stadium before descending to central Barcelona. You will see the Olympic Village area and Barceloneta before continuing on to your centrally-located hotel.
- Afternoon Time for lunch on your own.
- HOTEL** Check into your centrally-located hotel. **Hotel Regente:** <https://www.hcchotels.es/en/hotel/2/hcc-regente> (confirmed).
Afternoon at leisure.
- Evening Welcome Dinner at a restaurant located within walking distance of your hotel.



Monday, May 12

Modernista Architecture of Barcelona

(Barcelona)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Transfer to the [Parc Guell](#) for a visit. Designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, this is Gaudi's most colorful creation.

After a tour of the Parc with your Tour Manager, transfer by coach to the [Sagrada Familia](#). Tour the church, Gaudi's masterpiece which he was unable to finish. Work has continued for the last few decades and the interior has recently been completed!!

♪ **Con Brio Choral Society may perform informally in the Sagrada Familia (tentative).**

Lunch on your own in the area around the Sagrada Familia.

Transfer to the Illa de la Discorda to admire the *modernista* architecture in this most famous block of the city. Barcelona claims to have the greatest collection of Art Nouveau buildings of any city in Europe.

Arrive at Antoni Gaudi's [Casa Milá \(La Pedrera\)](#) for a tour including the modernista interior of the apartment of the Milá family and the spectacular roofscape of chimneys resembling abstract sculpture.

Choral workshop with a local choir from Barcelona (tentative). The afternoon will include time for music, fellowship, and exchange.

♪ **Joint performance this evening offered by Con Brio Choral Society and the Sedeta Gospel Singers of Barcelona or another local choir at a church in central Barcelona (tentative).**

Evening Dinner on your own.



Tuesday, May 13

Continued discovery of Barcelona

(Barcelona)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Free time in Barcelona and lunch on your own or

OPTIONAL *Excursion to Montserrat, site of a Benedictine Monastery, located on the Montserrat Massif located 4,055 feet above sea level. You will have a short orientation tour of the monastery complex. You may be able to hear the famous boys' choir perform. You may want to take the St. John's funicular for splendid views and walk back to the monastery. Time for lunch on your own at the site. (Depart hotel at 8AM and return to Barcelona at 2:30 PM. Supplemental fee of \$30. Must be booked and paid in advance.)*

2:15 pm Walk from your hotel to the [Palau de la Música Catalana](#) for a guided tour. Since its construction in 1908, the Palau has maintained its original purpose as a concert hall. The building is a masterpiece of modernist architecture, achieved by Lluís Domènech I Montaner. It is a celebration of tile work, sculpture, and glorious stained glass.

Continue by foot to the [Gothic Quarter](#) of Barcelona for a leisurely tour of this district's most important landmarks: the Cathedral, the Royal Palace, the Generalitat Palace (seat of Government) and the Town Hall. Tour will end at [Mercado la Boqueria](#), the very lively covered market located just off the famous Ramblas Street..

Evening Dinner on your own.

Wednesday, May 14

*Travel (398 kms/247 miles) from Barcelona to Toulouse, France
with a stop in the walled city of Carcassonne*

(Toulouse)

- Morning Breakfast at your hotel.
- 9:00 am Depart Barcelona, crossing into France.
- 12:30 pm A stop will be made in Carcassonne, surrounded by its medieval fortifications.
- Afternoon Lunch on your own in Carcassonne.
- Free time to explore the narrow medieval streets of Carcassonne.



- 3:30 pm Reboard coach and continue on to Toulouse, know as La Ville Rose (the pink city) for the lovely shade of stone used for much of the medieval architecture and built along the Garonne River.
- 5:00 pm Arrive in Toulouse.
- HOTEL** Check into your centrally-located hotel. **Grand Hotel de l'Opéra** <http://www.grand-hotel-opera.com> (confirmed).
- 8:00 pm Dinner at Le Florida Restaurant, in a private room on the top floor just off the rooftop terrasse where you will have splendid views of the Place du Capitôle and the city.

Thursday, May 15

Discovery of Toulouse

(Toulouse)

- Morning Breakfast at your hotel.
- Morning at leisure for independent exploration or
- OPTIONAL Interested individuals may sign up for a tour of the Airbus factory, specifically of the "super jumbo" A380 assembly site. Advance reservation and security clearance required. (Depart hotel at 7:45 AM and return to Toulouse at 11:00 PM. Supplemental fee of \$60. Must be booked and paid in advance.)*



- Afternoon Lunch on your own.
- 2:00 pm Meet your guides, Isabelle and Céline, and begin a tour of this amazing city including the Place du Capitole - the magnificent mansions built around it and the Roman ruins found underneath - the Romanesque Saint Sernin Basilica, Hôtel du Bernuy, the Carmelite Chapel, and Saint-Etienne Cathedral.
- Evening Dinner on your own.
- Rehearsal this evening with *La Chorale Populaire de Toulouse* in preparation for tomorrow's concert.

Friday, May 16

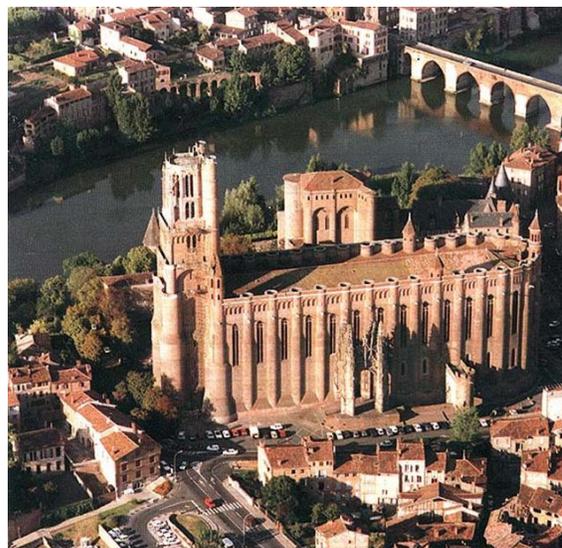
Day excursion into the Garonne Region

(Toulouse)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

9:00 am Transfer to the sleepy little town of [Albi](#), accompanied by your guide, Céline, who will remain with you for the day's excursion. (Some choir members from *La Chorale Populaire de Toulouse* may be able to join you for the day's excursion.)

10:30 am Begin a tour of the town which is dominated by the gigantic [Cathedral](#), resembling more a fortress than a place of worship. It was built during the period immediately following the Albigensian Crusade when the French King and Catholic Church put down the religious sect known as the Cathars or Albigensians. You will also see the [Bishop's Palace](#) now a museum dedicated to artist Toulouse-Lautrec. This district of the city, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Afternoon Lunch on your own in Albi.

2:00 pm Then continue on to the perched village of [Cordes-sur-Ciel](#) (Cordes in the Sky). Founded in 1222 by Raimon VII, Count of Toulouse, it is considered to be the first "bastide," planned towns constructed by the French King in an effort to colonize this virtually uninhabited land as the French and English fought to conquer the area.

Time for independent exploration.

4:00 pm Depart Cordes-sur-Ciel.

5:30 pm Arrive back in Toulouse.

Evening Dinner on your own.

🎵 **Joint performance this evening by Con Brio Choral Society with *La Chorale Populaire de Toulouse* at a venue in Toulouse (confirmed).**

Reception following the performance offered by La Chorale Populaire de Toulouse.

Saturday, May 17

Travel (197 kms/122 miles) from Toulouse to Sarlat-la-Canéda with a stop in Cahors

(Sarlat)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

8:30 am Depart Toulouse for Cahors.

10:30 am Arrive in [Cahors](#), tucked into a rounded nook of the Lot River. Visit the famous [Valentré Bridge](#) before continuing on to the medieval city. Free time to wander through the town, see the Cathedral and the impressive medieval townhouses dating from the 13th century.

Afternoon Lunch on your own in Cahors.

12:30 pm Reboard coach and continue on.

Continued on following page

CONTINUED FROM Saturday, May 17

Arrive in the town of [La Roque-Gageac](#), literally built into the side of a cliff overlooking the Dordogne River.

2:00 pm Board boat and commence a [cruise down the Dordogne River](#). You will see several castles dotting the cliffs and embankments on each side of the River. These date from the Middle Ages when the English and French fought over this area known as Aquitaine.



3:30 pm Arrive in [Sarlat-la-Canéda](#), a town that was largely passed by for centuries allowing for the almost perfect preservation of the medieval architecture. It has the largest concentration of Renaissance buildings in France.

HOTEL Check into your hotel: **Hotel de Selves** www.selves-sarlat.com (confirmed).

Evening Dinner on your own.

Sunday, May 18

Sarlat and the prehistoric caves

(Sarlat)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

9:00 am Meet your guides and begin a walking tour of of [Sarlat-la-Canéda](#), a vast outdoor museum of Renaissance architecture.



Afternoon Lunch on your own.

1:15 pm Transfer to the [prehistoric cave](#) of Rouffignac.

2:00 pm You will ride a train into the cave, viewing drawings of wooly mammoths, bison, horses and sooly rhinoceros dating from about 13,000 years ago. This area of France is where the study of prehistoric man began, with the discovery of Cro-Magnon Man. Two prehistoric eras are named after local towns where major archaeological discoveries were made.

4:30 pm Arrive back in Sarlat-la-Canéda.

Evening Dinner on your own.

🎵 **Con Brio Choral Society will give a performance this evening in the church of Domme (confirmed). This will be a joint performance with the Choeur Azalaïs of nearby Thenon.**

Monday, May 19

Day at leisure in Sarlat or optional excursion to Rocamadour

(Sarlat)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Entire day at leisure in Sarlat-la-Caneda. (There is a covered market happening on Place de la Liberté from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm.)

OPTIONAL *Excursion to the spectacularly-situated town of **Rocamadour**. Following the discovery in 1166 of an ancient grave and sepulcher, Rocamadour became one of the most famous centers of pilgrimages in the Middle Ages. The town's site, perched on a rocky peak above the Alzou Valley, is phenomenal. Free time to visit the town and its religious monuments and for lunch on your own. (Depart hotel at 9:30 AM and return to Sarlat at 4:00 PM. Supplemental fee of \$20. Must be booked and paid in advance.)*

Lunch and dinner on your own.

Tuesday, May 20

Travel (379 kms/235 miles) from Sarlat to Tours

(Tours)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Board coach and depart your hotel.

A stop will be made at **Oradour-sur-Glane**. The original village was destroyed on 10 June 1944, when 642 of its inhabitants, including women and children, were massacred on order of the German Waffen-SS as a collective punishment reprisal action. A new village was built after the war on a nearby site but on the orders of the then French president, Charles de Gaulle, the original has been maintained as a permanent memorial. Time to visit the site independently, an emotionally moving experience.

Afternoon A stop will be made en route for lunch on your own. Continue on to the city of **Tours**, known for its wines and the perfection of the locally spoken French language.

HOTEL Arrive in Tours and check into your hotel: **Hotel L'Univers:**
<http://www.oceaniahotels.com/hotel-lunivers-tours?lg=UK> (confirmed).

Evening Dinner on your own.

Wednesday, May 21

Châteaux of the Loire Valley and Tours

(Tours)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

9:00 am Board coach for transfer to the **Château of Chenonceau**, home to several royal mistresses including Diane de Poitiers. After the death of Henry II, his strong-willed widow, Catherine de Medici had Diane expelled and spent a fortune on the chateau. Visit independently - no guide is necessary.

Afternoon Lunch on your own in Tours.

Free time to stroll through the original medieval district, called **le Vieux Tours**. Unique to the Old City are its preserved half-timbered buildings and la Place Plumereau, a square with busy pubs and restaurants, whose open-air tables fill the centre of the square. The Boulevard Beranger crosses the Rue Nationale at the Place Jean-Jaures and is the location of weekly (day-long) Wednesday market.

5:30 pm Reassemble and walk together to the **Maison des Vins** for an introduction to the many fine wines of the Loire including Vouvray, Amboise, Chinon and Touraine appellations.

Evening Dinner on your own.

Thursday, May 22

Excursion to Amboise

(Tours)

- Morning Breakfast at your hotel.
- 9:30 am Transfer to **Amboise**, on the Loire River and capped by the beautiful royal château. The Renaissance King François I brought Leonardo da Vinci here where he spent the last three years of his life as the court architect. His tomb is in the courtyard of the Château.
- 10:30 am Entrance included to the **Château Clos Lucé**, former residence of Leonardo da Vinci, which now houses exact replicas of many of the inventions of da Vinci that were centuries before their time. Visit independently at your leisure, no guide is necessary.
- Afternoon Lunch on your own and free time in Amboise.
- You may visit independently the Royal Château (entrance not included).
- Or wander through the quaint town.
- 4:30 pm Return to Tours to prepare for evening concert.
- 8:00 pm **Con Brio Choral Society will give a joint concert with the A Piacere Choir in the Notre Dame la Riche Church of Tours. (Concert confirmed but date may change to May 21.)**



Friday, May 23

Travel (439 kms/272 miles) to Paris

(Paris)

- 6:30 am Breakfast at your hotel.
- 7:45 am Depart Tours.
- 9:45 am Arrive at Benedictine **Abbey of Solesmes**, originally founded in 1010. With a long and eventful history, it is a working monastery to this day.
- 10:00 am Mass begins and lasts 1 hour and 15 minutes. You will hear the monks singing Gregorian Chant. Immediately following the service, the monks will leave the church. You are invited to sing 1-2 religious pieces in the church.
- Continue on to Paris.
- Afternoon A stop will be made en route for lunch on your own.
- Arrive in Paris and check into your centrally-located hotel.
- HOTEL Hotel Château Frontenac** <http://www.frontenac-paris-hotel.com/> (confirmed).
- Evening Dinner on your own.

Saturday, May 24

Discovery of Paris

(Paris)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Transfer by coach to the starting of your guided walking tour. You will walk in the footsteps of the musical greats who lived, studied and performed in Paris: Mozart, Offenbach, Verdi, Liszt, Berlioz, Fauré, Wagner, Debussy, Ravel, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Carlos Gardel, Edith Piaf, Maurice Chevalier, George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Charles Aznavour to name a few. You will visit the 6th century Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Paris's oldest church, landmark of the troubadours during the Middle Ages; Marie de Medici's Luxembourg Garden and Palace, home to court music during the Renaissance; the Carrefour de Buci, a colorful crossroads notorious for its cabarets between WWI and WWII; the 18th-century picture perfect Cour du Commerce Saint-André, a charming street arcade home to Paris' oldest café, meeting point for the street musicians of the French Revolution. Learn all about the religious music of the classical period in the huge 17th-century Baroque Saint-Sulpice church, famous for its 7,000 pipes' organ. It is one of only three "100 stop" organs in the world. And finish in the Furstenberg square, one of the smallest, most romantic squares in Paris - Edith Piaf and Maurice Chevalier's favorite.

Afternoon Lunch on your own in the Marais.

Remainder of day at leisure.

Evening Dinner on your own.

Sunday, May 25

Discovery of Paris

(Paris)

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

9:30 am Board coach and transfer to a Paris church.

9:45 am Time for short rehearsal in upstairs choir room.

11:00 am Con Brio Choral Society will participate in morning services at The American Church of Paris (confirmed).

Fellowship hour following the service. You may change clothes and place your belongings in the motorcoach however these will not be available to you until tomorrow morning.

1:30 pm Farewell Luncheon at Chien Qui Fume.

Afternoon at leisure for independent exploration.

Evening Dinner on your own.

Monday, May 26

Return Travel to JFK Airport

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

10:00 am Transfer to Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport.

11:00 am Check in for Air France flight #006 to JFK Airport.

2:10 pm Air France flight #006 departs Paris.

4:25 pm Arrive at JFK Airport. Claim your luggage and clear customs.

SEE MAP ON FOLLOWING PAGE

