



# hear the Voices

A Newsletter for Friends of Choral Music at Mansfield University

Peggy Dettwiler, Director of Choral Activities  
Jürgen Thym, Editor  
Patrick Murphy, Layout and Design

## Preface

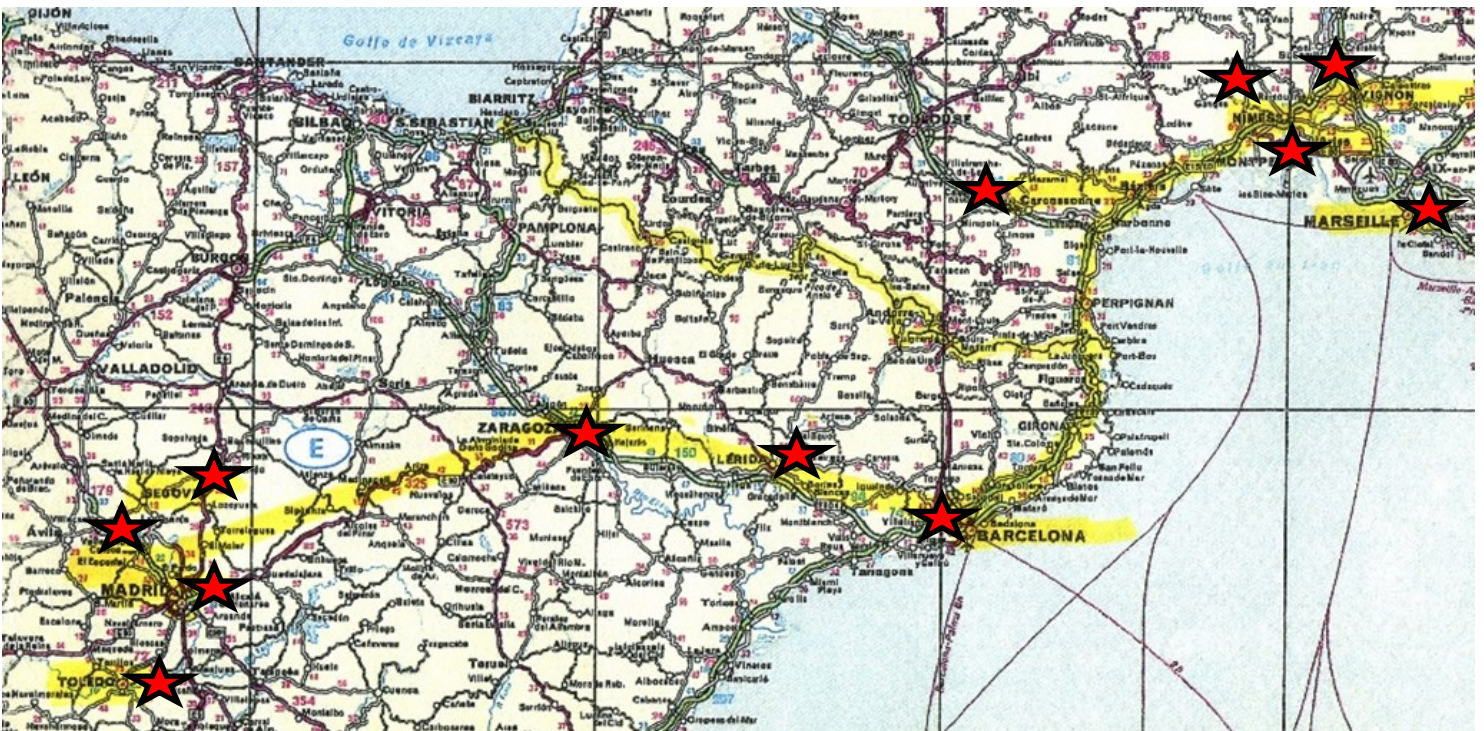
This issue of *Hear the Voices* is devoted entirely to telling the story of the Ninth European Tour of the Mansfield University Concert Choir, a journey organized by Encore Tours that led the Concert Choir and the Mansfieldians (plus an entourage of “other” travelers) to Madrid and its surroundings, Barcelona and Montserrat, as well as Southern France with Carcassonne and Avignon as highpoints. (See map below.) The tour took place between May 15 and 27 (with an extension of stay for some travelers to June 2).

The narrator of the story, assuming most of the time a collective voice (saying “we”), feels a little bit like a con artist, pretending to know more than he really knows. Granted, he has been a more than casual observer of the Concert Choir and the Mansfieldians in the past and during this enterprise and thus hopes to qualify as a reliable witness to the story unfolding over several years and culminating in the European Tour in May 2022. But there have been important situations and individual experiences that he did not witness.

Thus, I am grateful to those who contributed to this issue with pictures and little essays (or blurbs) of their own to share with others what they experienced. I have also invited the section leaders of the Concert Choir to give me their reactions and fill in some blanks in words and images. (Whenever I relied on images not in the Director’s or Editor’s Collections, I have given credit to the photographer.) I am reasonably sure that the following travelogue captures much, or even most, of the story we lived through in the second half of May 2022, the mixture of pleasures and obstacles of traveling, the wonderful sites and sights we encountered, the great music we performed, and the camaraderie that developed among us (and those that helped us) during the tour as a result of the joys and tribulations we experienced. YouTube links to performances in Europe have been added to round off the travelogue.

Finally, it is my pleasure to introduce a new Associate Editor of *Hear the Voices*: Patrick Murphy succeeds Sheryl Monkliem as the wizard responsible for layout and design. Welcome to the editorial team!

Jürgen Thym



The story is dedicated to all those who helped us to get there and made sure that, despite all the obstacles, known or unknown, the Ninth European Tour of the Mansfield University Concert Choir was a great success: Jon Linker, Sabrina Nikolov, and Isabelle Bourges of Encore Tours; John Perry and Miguel Araque, our tour guides; Ricardo and Pedro, our bus drivers; and, last but not the least, Dr. D. aka Madame Conductor.

## European Tour 2022

### Plans Thwarted and Revised

Planning for the Ninth European Tour of the Mansfield University Concert Choir (with Mansfieldians joining the group) had been on the mind of Madame Conductor for a long time; it kicked into high gear in 2019. Every three years since 1996, the ensemble had traveled across the Atlantic Ocean, participating in choral competitions (except in 1999) and performing concerts, formal and informal, in churches and concert halls. The ninth iteration would follow a similar pattern. The World Choir Games in Flanders beckoned in 2020 with Antwerp and Ghent in Belgium hosting the event organized by Interkultur, a German company sponsoring international musical events across the world, and, before the choral competition, the Mansfield folks would explore sites in Germany, France, and Belgium. Students began saving for the trip and made payments at scheduled intervals; an appropriate repertory was chosen; and donors were asked to help out through their generosity to lower the cost for students. And a travel company, Encore Tours of Boston, had been chosen to organize the part of the tour not covered by Interkultur.

Everything was on track in the spring of 2020 to journey to Europe in July. But then the pandemic hit, forcing Interkultur to postpone the World Choir Games in Flanders to the summer of 2021. Yes, that was disappointing, but unavoidable considering the international character of the event with choirs from all over the world getting together to sing and produce aerosols—a super-spreader if there ever was one. Most Mansfield students who had been looking forward to the European Tour (and made payments) would still be around the next year. With a few adjustments in dates, the itinerary could simply be transferred to 2021.

Except that 2021 did not look much better than 2020 with countries all over the world coping in different ways with waves of infections: washing hands and social distancing; quarantines and lockdowns; masks and mask mandates; vaccinations and boosting (after vaccines became available around a year after the outbreak of the pandemic). The invisible pathogen without a brain really challenged the animal with the big brain, even produced mutations to ensure its own survival. The World Choir Games in Flanders rescheduled for the summer of 2021 were finally cancelled. As a result, a substantial cohort of Mansfield students would not benefit from what in the judgment of all those who had “done it” before had been a life-changing experience: a European Tour. Madame Conductor was utterly discouraged.

But she managed to get the Concert Choir into a few virtual competitions in that year, one of them, the Rovdo Competition, in Belarus, others in Prague and Barcelona (*HTV #37* reported on them in August 2021), and she continued to look for opportunities advertised on the internet and choral competitions that would be compatible with the summer schedule of students and herself. The overcast sky broke in form of an announcement, by Interkultur, that an event, called “Sing for Gold” or “World Choral Cup”, would be held in Calella, Spain, in the third week of May 2022. Nobody ever had heard of Calella, except perhaps for a few beach tourists frequenting the Costa Brava on the Mediterranean Sea, but a glance at an atlas proved that the town was located close to Barcelona. And soon an itinerary developed around the golden cup: Madrid, Barcelona, Southern France. Encore Tours was game and, within days, produced a detailed travel plan that was mouth-wateringly exciting (and doable). That was the plan described in one of the issues of *Hear the Voices* after the Flanders thing fell through. Alas, even this plan had to be modified, as Interkultur felt the need, for whatever reason (health or economic issues), to cancel the Calella event in January 2022.

**Mansfield University Choir Spain & France Tour**  
Mansfield University Concert Choir

**TRIP ITINERARY**  
Depart From: New York  
13 Days | Overnights: Overnight Flight (1), Madrid (4), Barcelona (3), Carcassonne (1), Avignon (3)

**DAY 1, MAY 15, 2022: OVERNIGHT FLIGHT**  
Departure from the United States on Lufthansa Flight: 403 Depart: Newark 06:05 PM; Arrive: Frankfurt Mon, May 16, 07:30 AM. Lufthansa Flight: 1112 Depart: Frankfurt 09:30 AM; Arrive: Madrid 12:05 PM

**DAY 2, MAY 16, 2022: MADRID**  
Bienvenidas a España. Upon arrival in Madrid, meet your Encore Tour Manager at the airport and begin exploring the city. Check in to the Hotel Meliá Madrid Centro, Calle Gran Vía 72, and have time to relax before a welcome dinner this evening. (D)

**DAY 3, MAY 17, 2022: MADRID**  
Madrid's rich heritage comes alive on your guided sightseeing tour of classic Spanish boulevards, grand plazas, and the diverse architecture of modern-day Madrid. Highlights include the Plaza de España with its statue of Don Quixote, the majestic Alcáza Gate, and the famous bullring Las Ventas. Then breeze past the crowds with your timed reservation to visit the magnificent Prado, one of the world's premier art museums. Here, an expert provides illuminating commentary via personal headsets on the artwork of Velázquez, Goya, Raphael, Rubens, and Bosch. Even the 18th-century Neo-Classical building that houses the

collection is stunning. This afternoon, rehearse for tonight's debut concert performance! Dinner is on your own tonight. (B)

**DAY 4, MAY 18, 2022: MADRID**  
Today's visit brings you to Segovia! A UNESCO heritage city, Segovia is surrounded by walls dating back to the 8th century. Architectural influences include Moorish and Roman, including the impressive Roman Aqueduct, built in the 1st and 2nd centuries and remarkably well preserved. The city also boasts one of the largest Gothic cathedrals in Europe as well as the Church of Vera Cruz, built by the Knights Templar! An informal performance may be possible this afternoon at a local venue. Then visit the charming Spanish city of Avila this morning. Often called the 'Town of Stones and Saints', Avila has one of the highest numbers of Romanesque and Gothic churches in Spain! (B)

accounts@encoretours.com | www.encoretours.com

Now the companies we had been dealing with showed their mettle. Interkultur quickly returned the money that had been transferred from Mansfield several years earlier to pay for the days of the World Choir Games in Flanders in 2020 and 2021 and then for the Sing for Gold: World Choral Cup in Calella in 2022. The freed-up money then was used to pay Encore Tours (John Linker, our trustworthy contact, had been replaced meanwhile by Sabrina Sokolov) to fill in the four Calella days with something else: Madame Conductor proposed to extend the 3 days in Madrid to 4 and develop an itinerary for 3 days in Barcelona. Sounds simple, right? It was not, as Accounting on the Eastern Hill threw in a monkey wrench by insisting that the five-digit amount needed to be justified through a state-mandated bidding process. Sometimes administrative offices have to prove their existence by rolling logs into one's path rather than by facilitating passage through difficult terrain. Somewhat annoyed, Madame Conductor (and with the help of Nate Rinnert) confidently submitted emails proving that such bidding process had taken place years ago and that the choice had been Encore! Indeed, the refund from Interkultur reduced the amount considerably. (A letter of apology for generating yet another administrative obstacle was called for, and it arrived!)

Thus, a final itinerary materialized in mid-April (see above). During the Concert Choir's final concert of the academic year at the end of April, Madame Conductor could announce that all necessary monies had been transferred to Encore, all students had made their final payments, everybody had a passport, and, after several years, the ensemble was indeed going on its Ninth European Tour.

Well, not quite. The academic year was coming to an end, graduation was around the corner, faculty were retiring—a time to say farewell, enjoy each other's company, and celebrate friendship through partying. And, also, a time to pick up another variant of covid! Just one case could endanger the many and thereby plans and investments for which all had sacrificed a lot. In early May, seven members of the group tested positive, quarantined, and hoped/prayed to regain their health in time. The time to get the all-important negative test was tight, but, when Jim Welch, the university's czar for security, administered the required testing before departure on Friday the Thirteenth (of May), all results were negative. Madame Conductor breathed an audible sigh of relief.

But only for a moment: One of our travelers had damaged his passport in the all-important data-section and would not be able to join the group going overseas. Serious efforts were made to get a replacement in time (but, unfortunately, it was a weekend), and equally serious efforts to fly him out later (and there is an email later on in this narrative to capture a moment in this good-faith effort). Alas, it did not work out, for whatever reasons. Instead of 56 travelers, there would be just 55.

Even the last stragglers had, admonished by several stern emails, signed the travel expectations that had been agreed on by a committee of faculty and students: no airplane jokes, in bed by midnight, no drugs, no noise in hotel rooms, alcohol in moderation, and never before a concert. It sounded eminently sensible.

One last hurdle had to be overcome: The Spanish government required that each traveler, 48 hours before entering the country, fill out a Health Control Form with flight information, personal information, and vaccine information. On Saturday, Patrick Murphy, the choir's high-tech wizard, helped those on the other side of the generation gap to negotiate the internet and explained how to do things to all the others while the Benedict's Bus was rolling toward Newark Airport on Sunday. A reward beckoned: a certificate with a QR code sent by email to the "devices" of those individuals who successfully entered the information. The irony: When we arrived in Spain the next day (May 16), we learned that the health certificate was no longer required as of mid-May.

**Day 5, May 19, 2022: Madrid**

Today's excursion brings you to the old Visigothic capital of Toledo. With an expert local guide giving commentary, explore the Medieval Synagogue, visit El Greco's great painting in the Church of Santo Tomé and have a complete tour of the treasures of the Gothic Cathedral. Continue to El Escorial where you'll visit the Royal Monastery. Return to Madrid tonight where you'll have dinner together. (B,D)

**Day 6, May 20, 2022: Barcelona**

This morning, board the high speed AVE train from Madrid to the coastal city of Barcelona. Founded by the Romans in the 3rd century BC, it's known for its artistic treasures and fine architecture from Gothic to modernist. This afternoon, enjoy a backstage tour of the Palau de la Música, where you will have a chance to sing 1-2 songs on the beautiful stage. Check into the Hotel Astoria, Calle Paris, 203, and have dinner together. (B,D)

**Day 7, May 21, 2022: Barcelona**

Begin your day with a panoramic sightseeing tour. Our local expert will point out all the major highlights of Barcelona, including the unique Gaudi-designed houses. Antoni Gaudi, one of Catalonia's most famous sons, was a Modernist architect whose distinctive style is revered to this day. After, you'll be able to study the intricate design inside and out of his still-unfinished Sagrada Família. Then take part in an informal singing opportunity inside the cathedral. Then stroll whimsical Parc Güell. Then have the afternoon to wander the narrow cobbled streets, peaceful squares and towering old buildings that characterize Barri Gòtic (the city's Gothic Quarter) which was at times home to both Picasso and Joan Miró. Dinner is on your own tonight. (B)

**Day 8, May 22, 2022: Barcelona**

Today's excursion brings you to Montserrat, a mountain that is home to one of the most important religious sites in Spain. Have a chance to explore the Monastery as well as have an informal singing opportunity. Return to Barcelona where you will have dinner together. (B)

**Day 9, May 23, 2022: Carcassonne**

This morning, check out of your hotel and journey to France. En route, stop in historic Gerona where you will have a group lunch together. Then continue to across the Spanish border into France. Upon arrival in Carcassonne, enjoy sightseeing with your Tour Manager. Check into the Hotel les Chevaliers, 3 Rue des Calquères, and enjoy dinner together. (B,L,D)

**Day 10, May 24, 2022: Avignon**

This morning, board your private motorcoach and transfer through the countryside to the Provençal town of Avignon. En route, visit Nîmes where you will see the Roman Arena. Continue to Avignon, a charming town once served as the center of the Roman Catholic world. Check into the Hotel Mercure Pont d'Avignon, Quartier de la Balance, and have dinner on your own. (B,D)

**Day 11, May 25, 2022: Avignon**

This morning, enjoy a morning visit to the Roman museum in Arles. Have time for lunch on your own, then enjoy an afternoon visit to the Amphitheater and St Trophim Cloisters! Then, visit the hilltop village of Les Baux de Provence. This afternoon, perform your final concert of the tour. Possible venues include Saint-Agricol or Eglise St. Pierre. Enjoy dinner on your own tonight. (B)

**Day 12, May 26, 2022: Avignon**

This morning, discover the beauty that makes Aix-en-Provence a favorite sojourn for artist (especially painters) during your orientation tour led by your Encore Tour Manager. The afternoon is yours to explore at your own pace before rejoining your group for a special, farewell dinner together. (B,D)

**Day 13, May 27, 2022: Departure**

Transfer to the airport for return flight to the United States. Lufthansa Flight: 1091 Depart: Marseilles 06:50 AM; Arrive: Frankfurt 08:35 AM Lufthansa Flight 402 Depart: Frankfurt 1:25 PM; Arrive: Newark 03:55 PM (B)



## The Travelers

Sopranos	Altos	Directors
Samantha Ball (Weedsport, NY) Madison Boyd (Moravia, NY) Emma Criswell (Lewisburg, PA) Abigail Dalton (Factoryville, PA) Madison Felpel (Lititz, PA) Alexandra Fisher (Owego, NY) Marita Gattone (Hamburg, PA) Natalie Holsey (Altoona, PA) Rachael Karwowski (Lock Haven, PA) Bronwyn Stermer (Millport, NY) Michaiah Watkins (Schnecksville, PA) Hanna Worthington (Hickory, NC) Lily Woughter (Vestal, NY)	Jennifer Andrianos (Endwell, NY) Samantha Feely (Hawley, PA) Kreslynn Kilmer (Lawrenceville, PA) Amos Kohne (North Wales, PA) Jael Niedermeyer (Syracuse, NY) Jenna Nila (Auburn, NY) Jessica Nistad (Hawley, PA) Nicole Ann Orlando (Mountain Top, PA) Emily Sanker (Osceola Mills, PA) Taylor Stevens (Waynesboro, PA) Jessica Strouse (Northumberland, PA) Victoria Wormuth (Pleasant Mount, PA)	Peggy Dettwiler (Mansfield, PA) Sheryl Monkeliien (Wellsboro, PA)
		Pianist
		Linda Seipler (Monroetown, PA)
		Non-Performing Entourage:
		Hilma Cooper (Wellsboro, PA) Christine Griffith (Towanda, PA) Marjory Harris (Troy, PA) Marlys Kerkman (Lakehurst, ON) Amanda Lamoree (Deposit, NY) Thomas McCutcheon (Pittsburgh, PA) Roger Miller (North Salt Lake, UT) Sandra Peterson (Ames, IA) Jürgen Thym (Mansfield, PA) Barbara Winters (Wellsboro, PA) Alene York (Mansfield, PA)
Tenors	Basses	
John Christopherson (Colorado Springs, CO) Jay Falgo (New Berlin, PA) David Hull (Tamaqua, PA) Jeremiah Loubriel (Reading, PA) Patrick Murphy (Depew, NY) Carter Route (Canton, PA) Seth Shields (Spring Grove, PA)	Tyler Boyles (Cogan Station, PA) Austin Brien (Rochester, NY) Mayson Bryant (Etters, PA) Andrew Clark (Owego, NY) Isaac Ilgen (Mifflinburg, PA) Matthew Merolla (Dalton, PA) Cody Ranck (Harrisburg, PA) Ryan Stanley (Elkland, PA) Carson Witherite (Mt. Pleasant Mills, PA)	

## Rough Beginnings

Let's admit it: The beginning was rough. After the Benedict's Bus had dropped us off in the afternoon of **May 15** at Newark's Liberty Airport, we waited in the usual long lines to be processed for check-in and security. The Lufthansa plane—a Boeing 747—was late for take-off (the pilot blamed it on insufficient infrastructure at EWR); the night was short (we lost six hours by flying east), and sleep in our cramped seats was hard to come by. It was just the usual, except a little more of it, in getting across from Here to There.

The nightmare began after the plane landed the morning of **May 16** in FRA or Frankfurt an hour late. The captain and his crew cheerfully wished us well on our continuing flight; and, in case of questions, Lufthansa officials were waiting outside and would be most eager to help us. Well, if they were there, we did not see them. We had to find our way all by ourselves from area G (the international section) to area A (where flights within the European Union would have their gates). Poor signage mis-led us around in an endless loop (a Möbius strip of sorts): up the escalator, down the staircase, up the escalator, down the staircase. And so forth! (Cleaning staff in the early morning may have removed signs and never put them back where they would have helped travelers.) Indeed, assistance to get us out of the loop was nowhere to be found. People dressed in some kind of uniform, and thus indicating “officialdom,” were either not in the know or did not see it as their responsibility to help (“I am just security,” was one of the excuses your chronicler overheard). The “infrastructure” of the Frankfurt airport was as bad as, or even worse than, EWR from where we departed.

A small pathway with letters B, C, D, E, and Z (but not A) provided a welcome escape out of the endless loop, and it led, after a lengthy walk, to passport control: We indeed entered the European Union (or so-called Schengen area) in Frankfurt, but, to our horror, the line of people waiting to have their passports checked snaked around several corners: it would take a long, long time to encounter an officer putting the all-important stamp of approval into one's passport. And it dawned on us that our group probably would not make it to our connecting flight to Madrid with just half an hour to spare.

One traveler in our group had a European Union passport and thus could cross the border at a faster pace by just sliding the passport, like a credit card, through a slot, and, after a few moments of face recognition (fearful moments but filled with hope that his tired and exhausted visage would be recognized), the gate to Europe opened for one Mansfield traveler. But not the other 54. The obstacle course, however, continued for our “soloist”, because soon he found himself waiting in another long line: Security at Newark (or EWR) was not enough; the Europeans needed to check whether their colleagues on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean had done a thorough job. It turned out that they had not. Our solo traveler was singled out for additional scrutiny. A container with toothpaste was the culprit. It could not, by any means, continue to the Spanish capital. Well, if that was the price to pay for moving on... Tooth-cleaning paste can be purchased wherever. But before getting to A (remember we needed to get from G to A), a long, long walk, partly underground and conveniently facilitated by lengthy conveyor belts, awaited the traveler who was trying to cross over to a different terminal. Ten minutes before departure, one lonely traveler from Mansfield had reached the gate with the plane to Madrid. (Lufthansa could have facilitated transfer in a tight connection, but the airline, suffering from obvious staffing shortages, was unprepared or negligent in this case.)

“No,” said the gate keeper at the counter, “planes cannot wait.” And she added, somewhat sternly, that all flights to Madrid, later in the day, were pretty full (and she checked her computer to verify the dismal information she had just passed on). “Rebooking may be possible tomorrow.” This trip was beginning to seem jinxed.

A ray of hope made its appearance in form of half a dozen folks from Mansfield who, like your solo traveler with a German passport, arrived at gate A 18. Frantic intercontinental phone calls with Madame Conductor (who was only a few hundred yards away, but on the other side of the “fence”) confirmed that more Mansfield travelers would be on their way. A conversation with a flight attendant, in the smoothest and most persuasive German your solo traveler could muster, turned the earlier “No, we can’t wait” into a much softer (and maybe promising) “Perhaps we can.” It was the first ray of hope! The information that the group, arriving in bits and pieces, was an award-winning choir (“gold medals” at various international competitions were persuasively slipped into the conversation) obviously helped the flight crew to keep their options (i.e., gate A 18) open. Madame Conductor, they were told, would arrive last, like a good captain of a ship, and make sure that everybody was on board (the plane’s pilot could easily relate to that revelation), or, like the good shepherd mentioned in the Bible, ascertain that no sheep was lost. Alas, in spite of playing the religious card, it would not quite turn out in the way we had hoped!



Our Boeing 747 at Newark Airport (Photo credits: Patrick Murphy)

When Madame Conductor finally arrived on the plane, believing that she was the last to board, the obligatory roll call revealed to her horror that two students were still missing. One of them had lost his boarding pass (and reissuing it would take time); the other stayed behind to help him. Having already waited for nearly an hour, the pilot of LH 1112 decided to move on: after all, there were other passengers on board, eager to get to Madrid and not wait any longer.

Apparently defeated, our group leader was consoled by two female flight attendants—the most sympathetic reaction of Lufthansa officials during the trip thus far! They promised to do everything to get the missing students to Madrid. (And we think that their intervention was sincere and made a difference.) It was not until late in the day that the two arrived via Munich on a rather bumpy and nauseating flight that tried, with little success, to avoid thunderstorms. The luggage of our latecomers would not get to the hotel until another day had passed.

### *Madrid and surroundings*

Our hotel was ideally located in the center of Madrid on the stately Avenida (or Calle) Gran Vía and was appropriately called Melia Madrid Centro. Some of the major sites and sights could be reached from here by foot, and John Perry, our tour guide (he was joined by Miguel Araque during the Spanish part of our trip), promptly went about showing us the city, or some of it. It would be good for us, he insisted, to move our bodies after the long flight. And the folks from Mansfield agreed. Every Spanish city has a Plaza España (except for Barcelona, whose main square is called Plaza Catalunya, suggesting somewhat separatist sentiments), and, since Madrid’s Plaza España was just a stone’s throw away from the hotel, we began our walking tour there with a monument to Cervantes—the Spanish equivalent of Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe—overlooking his most famous creations, Don Quixote and his sidekick Sancho Panza, riding an exhausted steed and a donkey, respectively. (Windmills, though, were not included in the monument. -- Remember the 1965 musical *Man of La Mancha*? If yes, you can relate to the story, albeit to a simplified version of it.) Next came the Royal Palace surrounded by gardens and parks (and Madrid is full of green spaces, even prides itself of its ecological urban landscape) and the famous Teatro Real (Madrid’s opera house admired, like its competition, Barcelona’s Teatre del Liceu, for its imaginative productions of musical theatre). Somehow the site inspired a call for gathering the Mansfield folks for a group portrait in front of the Teatro (it would be the first of many to follow), and so it happened.



Sunset over the Atlantic Ocean  
(Photo credits: Patrick Murphy)



Cervantes with his creations at the Plaza España  
(the Riu Hotel is to the right)



The Royal Palace



Group Portrait #1 at the Teatro Real with an equestrian statue of one of the kings named Felipe (it may be the fourth)

A lunch late in the afternoon followed with the group dispersing to various eateries in order to avoid overwhelming the establishments with too many customers at the same time, but the area of restaurants to order some tapas was the Plaza Mayor, site of several auto-da-fés hundreds of years ago when the inquisition called the shots, and which have been captured in quite a number of paintings now displayed in the Prado. (Leonard Bernstein's operetta/musical *Candide* refers to those times with the lines: "What a day, what a day / for an auto-da-fé! / What a sunny summer sky! / It's a lovely day for drinking / And for watching people fry!") Of course, we were unaware of the historical implications of the site when we consumed our first tapas.



Plaza Mayor in Madrid: Stressed John Perry, grasping his throat and looking at his notebook, and equally stressed Madame Conductor, on the phone, trying to solve remaining problems at a tapas place on the Plaza Mayor (the issue is, most likely, how to get two students who did not make the plane from Frankfurt to Madrid, to join the group later in the day)—a statue of Felipe on horseback is shown as well (it could be the third)

When the bills had been paid for the tapas extravaganza, John Perry guided us, taking a shortcut through some side streets, back to the hotel. A lavish dinner was waiting for us exhausted travelers a few hours later in a classy restaurant with the colorful name “La Gloria de Montera” in an alley close to the Gran Via.

An ambitious sightseeing program awaited us on the next day (May 17). John Perry was quite determined to let us experience Madrid and surroundings to the fullest: 6:30 wake-up call, 7:30 breakfast, 8:30 at the bus. Suffering from jetlag (we had lost six hours), some of us clearly had difficulties following such a rigorous taskmaster. The bus took us in a north-easterly direction past the Puerto de Alcalá with the Parque del Buen Retiro on the right and stopped at one of Madrid’s most famous sights and sites (featured prominently, next picture, on the front page of Encore’s first itinerary of our tour): the Plaza de Toros—the bullfighting arena.

All kinds of lore is connected with that premier bullfighting arena: We learned that Ernest Hemingway (of literary fame and a Nobel laureate in literature) and Ava Gardner (of Hollywood and movie fame), who were in a relationship in Madrid in the late 1950s, became avid bullfighting enthusiasts here. And we were introduced by our local tour guide to the pros and cons of bullfighting, but let’s be honest: mostly the pros. She casually mentioned that we just happened to be in Madrid at the right time: In a few days, there would be a *corrida de toros*, and John volunteered to get tickets for those interested. (He was not sure that he would go himself, but he was willing to facilitate things in case someone in our group was interested in observing that bloody and deadly sport.) The principal argument to sway the anti-*torrinos*, and those sitting on the fence, like me, was that the bull would die a more heroic death in the arena than in the slaughterhouse. A straw poll taken on the bus, surprisingly or not so surprisingly, suggested considerable interest in watching such a spectacle—the balance was similar to the one in the US Senate: 50-50. Thus, John would be looking into getting half of our group into the arena: ticket prices were 30 Euro in the sun (hand-held fans would provide self-ventilation in that case) and 45 Euro in the shade. (A class society existed in Spain even with a socialist government either in power or close to taking over or losing power!)



Plaza de Toros

Your chronicler was tempted to participate in this once-in-a-lifetime experience and ready to commit, but then a student's voice in the hotel elevator was more persuasive (later I learned that she was Samantha Ball): she did not like animals being shown for entertainment. Thus, yours truly, remembering the five felines left behind at home in Mansfield, pulled out and rested his case by remembering a wonderful description of a bullfight in Lisbon by Thomas Mann in *Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man* (1954), the Nobel laureate's last novel. Literature can occasionally substitute for reality! (Madame Conductor, it should be said, was never tempted to watch a bullfight.)

After a brief stop at the Plaza de Toros, allowing us all kinds of photo opportunities (see above), the bus took us in a southerly direction on an expressway to reach the old city of Toledo, high up on a hill and protected by steep ravines and fortress walls. Ricardo, our bus driver, knew from experience exactly where to stop to allow us a breathtaking panoramic view of the city. (See images below.)

An escalator took us up the hill to begin a walking tour of the old city. Through a labyrinth of alleys, occasionally interrupted by open spaces, we reached the magnificent Gothic cathedral of Toledo, centerpiece of Spanish Catholicism. A cornucopia of sights overwhelmed us inside: stained-glass windows, sculptures, paintings (especially impressive the El Greco collection in the Sacristy), and a monstrance made of gold. And we were given the opportunity to sing in this space. Hassler's "Exultate Deo" and Riley's "Celtic Blessing" resounded in the wide spaces of the cathedral, perhaps not the most ideal acoustic environment, especially for the fast-paced "Exultate," but who cares when the history of the place and its artworks give you shivers!



A modern sculpture with Bull and Toreador, expressing unbridled masculinity, is used as a backdrop for photo opportunities by females and males alike



Toledo (known also as Tolosa), like England's Durham, protected on three sides by a river and its ravines—what a gorgeous location for a city



Group Portrait #2: Here's the proof that we were there ("there" being Toledo, Spain)





Toledo Cathedral, outside (Gothic with some Moorish touches) and inside including the golden monstrance

On the way back, we briefly visited the Jewish quarters of the city, especially an old synagogue turned church (Santa Maria la Blanca) and now a museum. In its heyday in the Middle Ages, Toledo was a center of trade and learning, where Muslims, Jews, and Christians lived together. But pogroms and the Reconquista—military campaigns to “liberate” the Iberian peninsula (Spain and Portugal) from non-Christian elements—put an end to that era of religious tolerance.

We returned to Madrid in the afternoon because a guided tour of the Prado, Madrid’s famous art museum, had been scheduled for us, allowing our group to bypass long lines of tourists waiting to enter the galleries. The Prado’s rich collections are much too large to get to know in a few hours. It was wise of our guides to focus on just a few artists and highpoints in the museum: Velasquez, Rubens, El Greco, and especially Goya. The latter’s scenes of war (Goya began his career as a court painter and experienced the horrors of the Napoleonic wars as an old man) were particularly gripping; they also foreshadow expressionistic artistic utterances by almost 100 years. The guides, who clearly had a background in art history, were excellent with their comments and explanations of individual paintings, and they left us with Goya’s scenes of war to ponder—the connection to what happened in Ukraine was obvious—now, and in the days and weeks ahead. Art matters—that seemed to be the message with which we were left.



The Sinagoga de Santa Maria la Blanca with its Mudéjar (Moorish-looking) arches



A view at one of the galleries in the Prado (Photo from the current Prado Catalogue)

*While working on the story, your chronicler became aware of the following e-mail message dated May 17, about 13:00 EDT—most likely six hours later in Madrid:*

Hi Peggy, Three things...

1. Sabrina is trying to arrange a flight for Ryan to join us. He may still join. Nothing confirmed. Contact Sabrina for more information.

2. Miguel would like the name of the Jazz Song you had envisioned for tomorrow. Each song needs an approval from the Archbishopric so if it hasn't been clearer already, it needs to be. Could you send this to me either via email or text/phone? Thanks. I can then send to Miguel.

3. Are you able to send me your phone number? I don't have it saved in my phone. I think you have mine - just in case...00447470073130

See you later or tomorrow...Best, John

A glimpse behind the scenes, showing how Management Central, in hectic fervor, tried to stay on top of multiple issues.

Another important event, with an almost conspiratorial subtext, happened late in the evening of that day. Carson Witherite, the bass section leader, having advanced to legal adulthood by turning 21 on May 17, decided to “pop the question” to Jessica Strouse, section leader of the altos and his sweetheart since high-school days. The site for the engagement, witnessed by about ten Phi Mu Alpha brothers, was the Cervantes Monument at the Plaza España near our hotel. No picture has surfaced showing Carson on his knees, but there is an image of the couple-to-be, smiling happily into the camera and with Jessica sporting an engagement ring. We wish all of us could have been there, but reports have reached the chronicler that Jessica was serenaded and proposed to with multiple cheers not only by the brothers present but also from passers-by in the Plaza. In any case, congratulations are in order!



The couple and their supporting cast on the steps of the Cervantes Monument (Photo Credits: Carson Witherite)

The next day (**May 18**) was a little more relaxed. (Madame Conductor, we suspect, may have interfered on our behalf.) The wake-up call was not quite as early as on the day before, and, in turn, breakfast and departure by bus occurred at an hour more amenable to what time our bodies told us. And of the two destinations on this day, Segovia and Avila, the latter would be scrapped to allow more time in the former. The bus took us in a northerly direction, straight into the Castilian mountains, some of them still snow-capped, that we could see in the distance. On the way, we passed the Valle de los Caidos (Valley of the Fallen), a memorial to those who died in the Spanish Civil War, whose gigantic cross was visible from the distance. Our bus stopped at the bottom of the ancient hill town of Segovia, whose most famous landmark is an aqueduct built by the Romans in the first century AD to supply water to their military base. It is, as far as your chronicler knows, the largest such structure still in existence, spanning nearly half a mile—a feat of ancient engineering if there ever was one! (Ancient Rome had its aqueducts, but, over the centuries, the structures in that city were dismantled and became ruins because later generations used them as quarries to build churches, palaces, and houses.)

A ten-minute walk, ascending through narrow alleys, got us to the cathedral, a magnificent late Gothic structure, where we would perform an informal concert around noon. Miguel, John’s sidekick with important connection to ecclesiastical authorities (see e-mail above), negotiated free entrance for our group, and then proved indispensable as Madame Conductor tried to find the right spot for a performance of the Concert Choir. Various places inside were explored (including behind or before the gilded gates in the image of the



What a great sight: The aqueduct in Segovia with Mansfield travelers (Group Portrait #3, if your chronicler is not miscounting)

church interior, until the roped-off choir loft was chosen as the ideal spot. (The images below suggest that the ropes, protecting the old cubicles and seats from being used by anybody else but singing monks, were removed just for us.) And soon the church was filled with the gorgeous sounds of a modern choir that even included females! Ambient noises and a baby, pitching in as well, will not make the performance eligible for a Grammy nomination, but to sing in that special place had its own rewards.



The Segovia Cathedral, outside and inside (with members of the Concert Choir allowed to sound from the hallowed seats)





Concert Choir performing in the Segovia Cathedral



Mansfieldians at the Plaza Mayor in Segovia

The rest of the day was really on our own in Segovia (the Avila excursion had, as noted before, been eliminated as duplicating what Segovia had to offer). Some Mansfield folks followed John's suggestion and explored Alcazár, the castle on the western edge of Segovia's old town; others explored restaurants nearby, trying out a Castilian menu, not the most refined of international culinary experiences (but worth having tried it at least once); and yet others, after exploring castle and Castilian dishes, went shopping. After all, on the way up in the morning, all kinds of stores proved irresistible (but had to be resisted at the time). And while sitting on the Plaza Mayor, your chronicler saw most of the members of the group, holding ice cream cones or licking chocolate fudge, or carrying shopping bags with souvenirs purchased in a great old town.

Sometimes it just pays to stay put, and the world comes to you. Except for those exceptional images following that your chronicler missed because he did not leave his comfortable seat at a Castilian Restaurant at the Plaza Mayor in Segovia.



A great image of Segovia (from the castle) with the cathedral at its center



Madame Conductor proved that she made it to the castle in Segovia

The return to Madrid proved to be uneventful until we got to Madrid. The traffic was heavy, and the access roads to the Plaza de Toros were utterly congested. Some of our folks—almost half of them—had tickets to witness a bullfight. And the clock was ticking. Ricardo tried some different roads to get us there. To no avail! Traffic jams everywhere. John was desperate, because he felt responsible for those having purchased tickets for the *Corrida* to get them into the arena on time. Alas, the preliminaries of the bullfight (perhaps just the introductory fanfares and music) had begun when our bus was finally able to drop off those with tickets to the event. The rest continued to the hotel Melia Centro Madrid.



Inside the arena: one toro against two toreadors seems unfair (Photo credits: Carson Witherite)



A bull seeing red, cliché as much as documentary (Photo credits: Barb Winters)

Madame Conductor and your chronicler retired to a rooftop experience, this time on top of the Riu Hotel nearby. The food was expensive and barely okay, but the view over Madrid in the evening splendid. It proved that, in the midst of choral travel, we had a few private moments, while others watched bloody sports or went about their business in other ways.

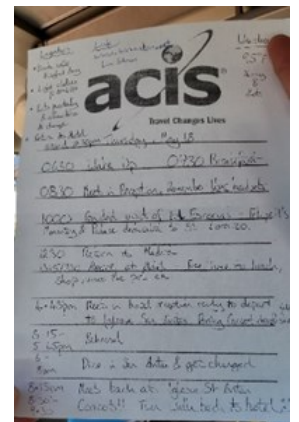


Views from the Rooftop of the Hotel Riu (as the sun was setting): Plaza España with the Cervantes monument just below, the Royal Palace with gardens on the left



From the Riu Rooftop (after sunset): The Gran Vía displaying its splendor (our hotel, not visible, to the left of the Avenida)

**May 19** would be our last full day in Madrid, and it was filled with sightseeing and music-making. Our bus took us, again, north toward the Castilian mountains and then turned west to drop us off in the village of San Lorenzo. After a little bit of walking, we reached El Escorial (not the liqueur, but the palace of Spanish royalty). In other words, the Spanish Versailles. But King Felipe II, under whose reign the construction of the complex took place, was not a fun-loving Louis XIV. The unadorned and austere buildings communicated an imposing severity to us visitors, and it was said during our guided tour that the king spent as much time praying as governing (5-6 hours), which left the other half of the day for sleeping, dining, and family life. The guided tour (taking photos inside was not allowed) took us first to the library (impressive, but the volumes behind the roped-off shelves were placebos), the church (more about that in a moment), the monastery (Felipe II was a pious man, and, when he could not pray, he wanted others to do it for him), the marbled mausoleum (called the pantheon, more about that shortly), and the living quarters of the palace.



One of John's daily missives with schedule, weather information, and important reminders.

The cathedral of El Escorial is an architectural marvel (hard to believe that it was just built for the royal family and its entourage). Thanks to Miguel and his superb connections to ecclesiastical authorities we were allowed to take pictures, occasionally, and perform a few pieces in that hallowed space. (See images below.)



El Escorial: Palace, Cathedral, Monastery, Mausoleum (the site's unhealthy combination of power and religion, as in Moscow's Kremlin nowadays, should raise questions in modern times). (Photo from a booklet on El Escorial)

The Pantheon is perhaps a misnomer, but the remains of all the rulers plus spouses and offspring (even if they did not rule) are gathered here in marble sarcophaguses. Your chronicler has seen something similar in the basement of the Kapuziner Church in Vienna, where Maria Theresia and all the other Austrian Habsburgs are laid to rest, but nothing prepared him for the reverence bestowed on departed family members as in El Escorial's Mausoleum. And his sense of history and of the transitoriness of life was touched by seeing a marble sarcophagus with the name of Charles V. (For those who want to know: He was the emperor, who, at a young age, chaired the interrogation of Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms in 1521, had to cope with the Lutheran Reformation in significant parts of his empire, fought it and, having lost hope about making the world a better place during his reign,

gave up power, before his death in 1558, to his son—the abovementioned Felipe II. For more details, see Verdi's opera *Don Carlos*!) We returned to Madrid in mid-afternoon for a lunch on our own.



Singing in the basilica of El Escorial was a high point of the tour



Marbled sarcophagus in the Pantheon of El Escorial  
(Photo from a booklet on El Escorial)

The Iglesia San Anton was a long walking distance from our hotel. The streets were too narrow to try to squeeze a bus in there during the day. But we finally arrived, rehearsed, and got ready for what would be our first full concert in Europe. The church, dedicated to the patron of animals (as music lovers know from a song by Mahler about this saint preaching to the fish), was not glamorous in comparison to what we had witnessed in Toledo, Segovia, and El Escorial; its artworks were, well, unremarkable, and it had an unkempt appearance. And yet, it was a special place: a foodbank had replaced some of the pews; there were plates, positioned in social distance, to feed the hungry, and, who knows, in the aisles there may have been places for the homeless to rest their bodies and sleep. We had entered a different (and perhaps more accommodating) world. Rather than appearing good, to paraphrase a sentiment by André de Quadros, it was more important to be good. Glamor was replaced by humility, and a cardboard cut-out of Pope Francis invited folks to join him, perhaps also through photo opportunities, to welcome the downtrodden.

The mastermind behind San Anton’s social outreach is Padre Angel (his real name: Angel Garcia Rodriguez), aged 85, another Mother Theresa, if you wish, and worthy of a Nobel Peace Prize. (You can google him.) We would have liked to meet him, but he was busy on that evening either in Segovia or San Lorenzo, the two places we just had visited. We dedicated the rendition of Riley’s “Celtic Blessing” to him, Madame Conductor found just the right words to reinforce our well-wishes, and we are sure that someone told him about our greetings.

Because San Anton is a church with global outreach, our concert was heard across the world through streaming. Well, that may be an exaggeration. We are not sure how many people really watched, but we heard from folks in Germany and in the United States that they did.



Watch the  
Concert  
Choir  
Perform  
A Ukrainian  
Prayer!  
[Click Here](#)

Rehearsal of “Clap Praise” in San Anton—group portrait #4a



And now the same piece with the choir sporting Mansfield colors during the concert—group portrait #4b



Remember the “gorilla girls” at the Kalahari resort? (HTV #39) They just know how to pose! And they did it again at San Anton in Madrid, but who is the guy in the white dress whom they seem to adore?

John warned us on the bus returning to the hotel (it was past 10 pm, and at this hour the big vehicle was able to negotiate the narrow streets) to get packing, because the night would be short, and, since the hotel had only two elevators, he proposed different schedules for the inhabitants of various floors to get their luggage to the lobby. Be ready, he said (or may have said), because the high-speed train to Barcelona (Train à Grande Vitesse or TGV—pronounced the French way but with American diphthongs: tay-jay-vay) will not wait.

### Barcelona and Montserrat

The wake-up call at 5:45 am on **May 20** was brutal, but the hotel, catering to needy early risers, served breakfast for us ahead of the regular schedule, the elevators worked in tandem to get luggage and the persons attached to their belongings down to the reception area. The bus waited for us at the usual spot (an alley close to the Gran Via), and soon we were heading to the train station. It happened to be the Atocha Station where, many years ago, Islamist terrorists blew up several commuter trains, a trauma for Spaniards similar to what 9/11 means for people in the United States. A more current scare developed, as we were unloading luggage to a sidewalk at the station and, all of a sudden, John’s leather briefcase disappeared. Pickpockets was the only sensible explanation! No money was in the briefcase, but all kinds of tour and ticket information. Granted, such data could be retrieved electronically, but it would be a nuisance and time-consuming. We were still in shock, as someone with a smiling face returned the briefcase (it had been found on the street a few yards away); we applauded the honest finder, as he walked away, but later it dawned on us that we may have applauded the thief. A quick check of the contents of the briefcase suggested that the only thing missing was a set of covid masks.

The Spanish countryside between Madrid and Barcelona is characteristically rural. Hardly any industry, but much agriculture with olive groves and sheep or cows grazing. The high-speed train stopped only three times before reaching Barcelona.

(Zaragossa, Lleida (or Lerida), and at a juncture with connecting tracks to Tarragona). A few hours after we had left the Spanish capital, the serrated mountains to the west of Barcelona came into view on the left (more about those later) and, in the distance to the right, the Mediterranean Sea. Many of us dreamed about going to the beach, as John, ever the guide who could relate to younger folks in our entourage, let it be known that Barcelona had a reputation for really nice sandy beaches.

Our hotel, the Astoria with an artistic decorative theme—quite an upgrade from Madrid Centro—was near the Avinguda Diagonal in the district called Eixample (meaning extension). Barcelona expanded by leaps and bounds in the second half of the nineteenth century; it left its quaint medieval Gothic quarters behind and, guided by city planners with a grand vision, became one of the great cities of the world, open to the arts with astonishing results and hosting the Summer Olympics in 1994. (We had to get used to a different language, though, as Castellán (or Spanish) was replaced here by Catalan, a tongue linguistically somewhere between Paris and Madrid.)



Madame Conductor with section leaders Rachael and Patrick on the taxi ride to the Palau.  
(Photo credits: Patrick Murphy)

Our major event, after checking into the hotel and settling down, was to sing in the Palau de la Musica, a temple to music built 1905-08 at the instigation a community choir. Inspired in its construction and artwork by *modernism*, the Catalan version of the French *art nouveau* or the German *Jugendstil*, it turned out to be one of the great concert venues in the world, and we were able to perform a few pieces there. Taxis during rush hour traffic (and the Spanish have four rather than just two such traffic nightmares, as they love their siestas) got us there, but barely before the tour began. (Madame Conductor was on edge.) The Mansfield ensemble was warmed up, as usual, in a special choir rehearsal room, followed by explanations of the tour guide, and then there was a unanimous “Wow,” as we were finally allowed to enter the inner sanctum.





“Wow” happened to be the only way to express astonishment and wonder, because the Palau’s visual miracles are overwhelming, even for someone, like your narrator, who had seen the space dedicated to music before. No matter where we looked, our eyes encountered a visual feast of the senses, and notice that, high up, not only J. S. Bach is mentioned by name as one of the saints of music but also composers like Carissimi and Palestrina (clearly a different, perhaps a choral rather than orchestral, perspective on the musical canon)

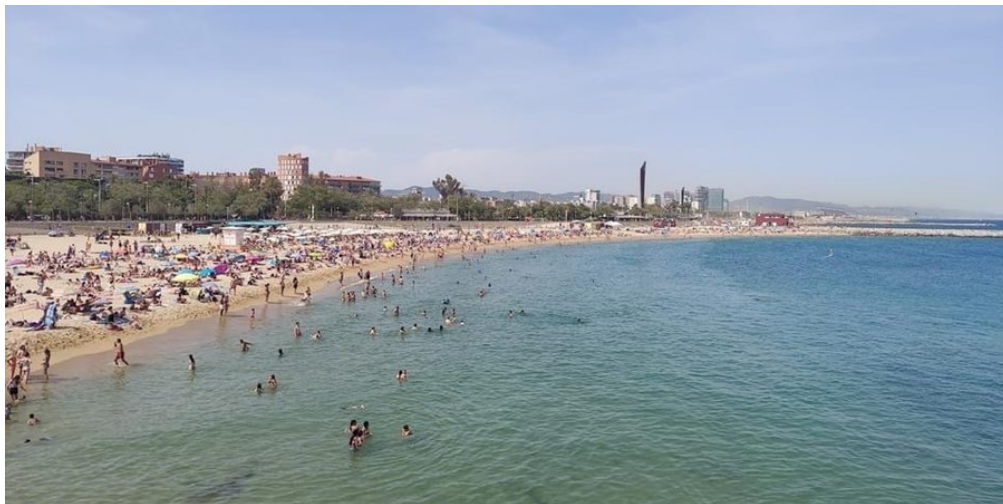


We have to pinch ourselves, but, indeed, we sang in the Palau de la Música in Barcelona, and we all are beaming during this photo opportunity—group portrait #5! (Photo credits: John Perry)

Watch the Concert Choir Perform “Threads of Joy” (Hanna Worthington, soloist): [Click Here](#)

John, our tour guide, ever the hands-on leader, introduced us to the Barcelona metro system on the way back. Everybody got a subway pass that could be used, within certain limits, ten times; it would come in handy in hours and days following—from the Plaza Catalunya it was just two stops to the Avinguda Diagonal, but lots of walking was required before and after reaching those metro stops that would get us to the Astoria Hotel. We longed for a day at the beach, and the metro ticket was the ticket to get us there. An evening meal for all of us at La Dolça Herminia near the Palau de la Musica wrapped up an eventful day of travel and music-making.

**May 21** was to be our lucky day: nothing was scheduled except for later in the day. We could pursue individual interests. The metro pass helped but, in case we found the subway too complicated to figure out, taxis could help move us around. Many of us went to the beach, others saw a castle high up above the city, and others just stayed near the hotel to recover and reflect on days past.



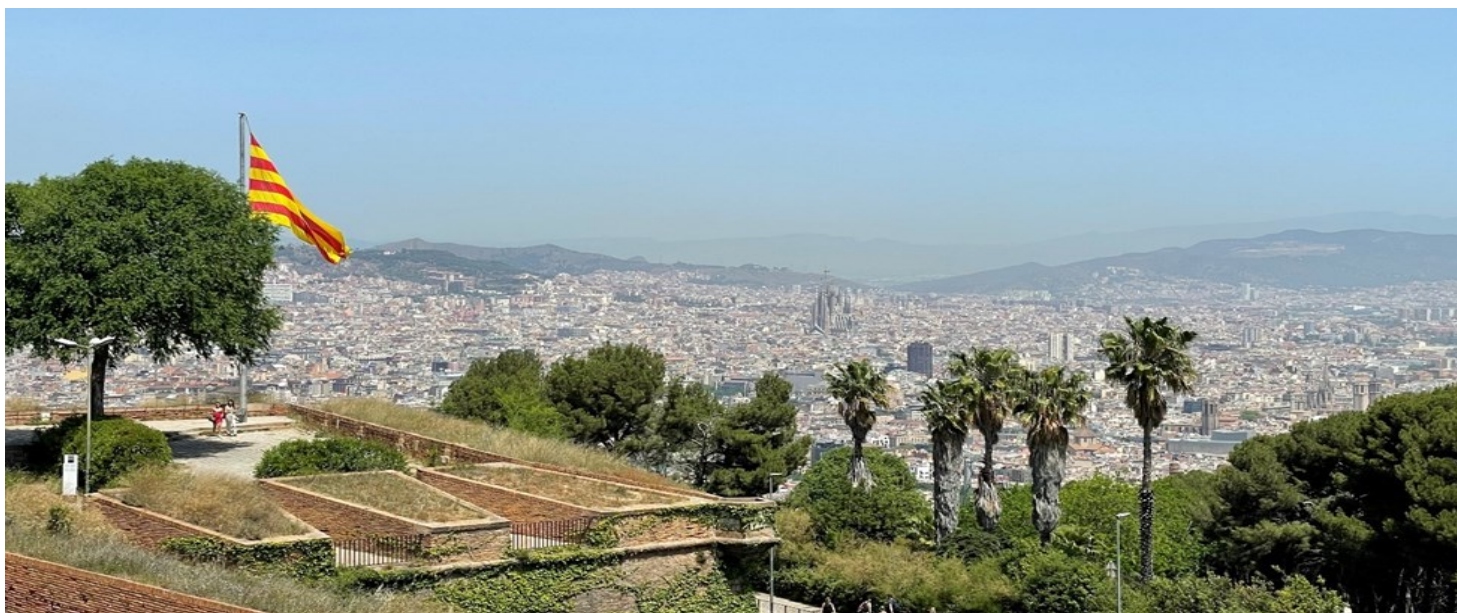
The Metro Pass

### *Birthdays on our European Tour*

- May 17 Carson Witherite
- May 19 Tom McCutcheon
- May 20 Linda Seipler
- May 21 Hilma Cooper
- May 22 Jael Niedermeyer
- May 26 Andrew Clark

All of them were acknowledged with a resounding “Happy Birthday.”

One of the sandy beaches for which Barcelona is famous (Photo Credits: Anonymous)



A breathtaking view of Barcelona from the Castello Montjuïc: Sagrada Familia can be seen slightly right of center, the flag of Catalunya (not of Spain) blows in the wind on the left—an expression of separatist political strivings (Photo Credits: Sheryl Monkliken)

The evening saw us again together, as a Flamenco Show in the Palau Dalmases in Barcelona’s Gothic quarters beckoned with rhythms and tap dancing that reminded us a little bit of “Clap Praise,” one of the pieces in our repertory that always was in an instant applause-inducer when we performed it. A lavish dinner in a restaurant called La Fonda in the Gothic quarters followed. Afterwards we walked through the labyrinthine alleys of the old city and—someone must have guided us this maze—ended up at the medieval Barcelona Cathedral. The Mansfieldians had a chance to perform a serenade on its front steps, and soon a sizable audience developed.



The front yard of the Palau Dalmau

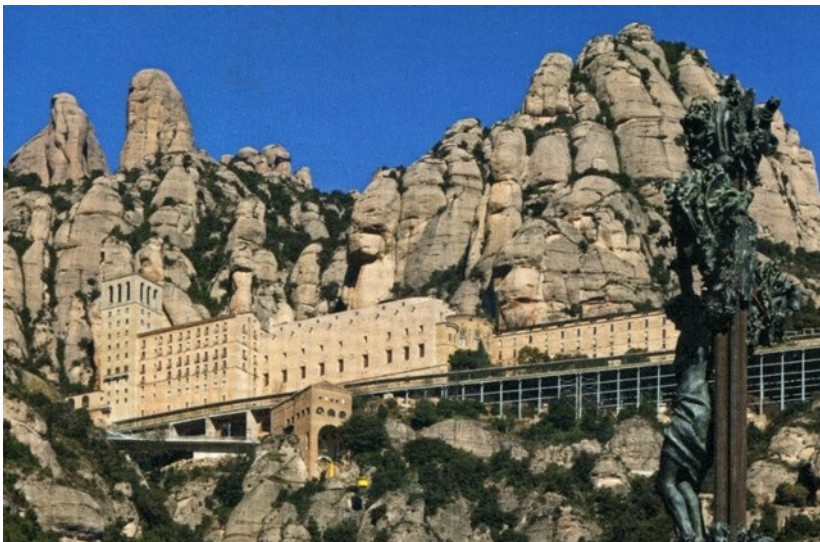


The Mansfieldians serenading on the steps in front of the medieval Barcelona Cathedral

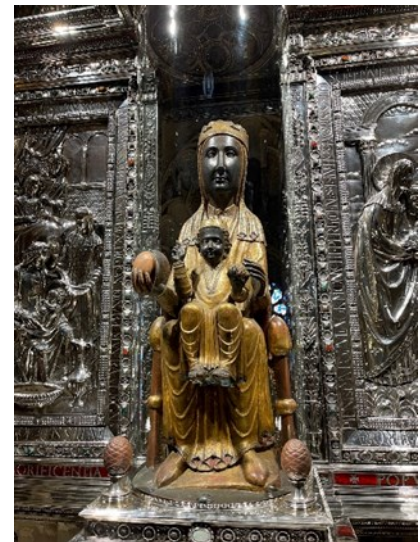


Poster of the Flamenco Show

On **May 22**, a Sunday, a pilgrimage to a holy site was scheduled, albeit not by foot as undertaken by most pellegrinos (or pilgrims). Ricardo, our bus driver from Madrid days, had found a way to drive us around in Barcelona as well and considered it a special honor and challenge (he had never negotiated those spine-tingling hairpin curves before) to get us to the Monastery of Montserrat, heart of Catalan culture and located high up in the serrated mountains west of Barcelona. It was a treacherous ascent, but, to his honor, it should be mentioned that he succeeded in getting us up and, later, down.



The Monastir di Montserrat (Photo from a Montserrat booklet)



The Black Madonna

After paying homage to the Virgin of Montserrat (a black wooden sculpture said to be brought over by St. Peter around 50 CE, but—if one prefers the scientific explanation—carbon-dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> century), the Concert Choir, dressed up in Mansfield’s colors (black with red accents), observed a special mass dedicated to the confirmation (and first communion) of about two dozen youngsters attending the monastery school. It was a very special occasion with the grandees of the monastery participating (a bishop was present with his stave, looking like an inverted J), and the famous Montserrat Boys Choir was singing. (Miguel with his superb connections to church authorities had threaded Mansfield’s participation.) When the concluding “Ite missa est” had sounded, the Concert Choir performed several pieces (all of them sacred, of course) to an audience of several hundred. The conductor of the Montserrat Boys Choir seemed impressed.



Waiting for first communion and waiting to be heard: Scenes from the Basilica of Montserrat

Watch the Concert Choir Perform “Ave Maria” in Montserrat: [Click Here](#)

A few hardy globe trotters among us ventured out on the funicular to reach an even higher altitude in the serrated mountains and search for hermits who, trying to be oblivious to the world, are said to live and pray there in cave dwellings. As it turned out, the pious men were nowhere to be found, but the view of the monastery complex and the valley further down below was, again, breathtaking. (Paying for the extravaganza was a different matter, and the issue was not resolved until Avignon many days later.)

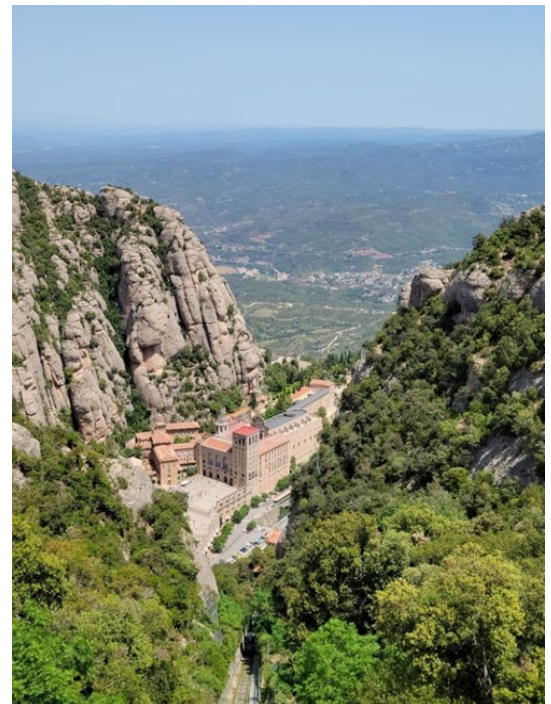
The bus brought us back to Barcelona for a free afternoon of relaxation, shopping or just window-shopping (the prices at Pedro del Hierro were just a tad too high for most of us). In the evening, there was another wonderful meal for us waiting in a restaurant around the corner, called “Balthazar.” And late in the evening, a few of us managed to see a soccer match (rumored to be in the champions league), FC Barcelona vs. Valencia. Barça won, but the metro shut down after midnight, and taxis were nowhere to be found. Our soccer fans had to walk several miles from the stadium to the hotel.



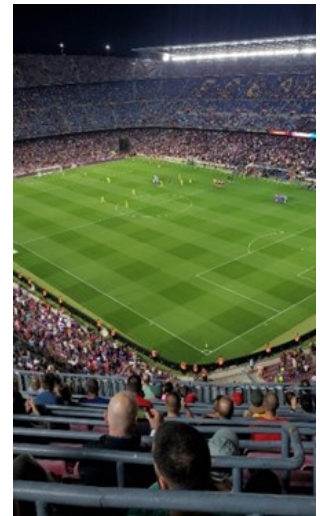
Shopping, without buying anything, at Pedro del Hierro



Hanna Worthington and others are waiting in the hotel lobby before walking over to the restaurant

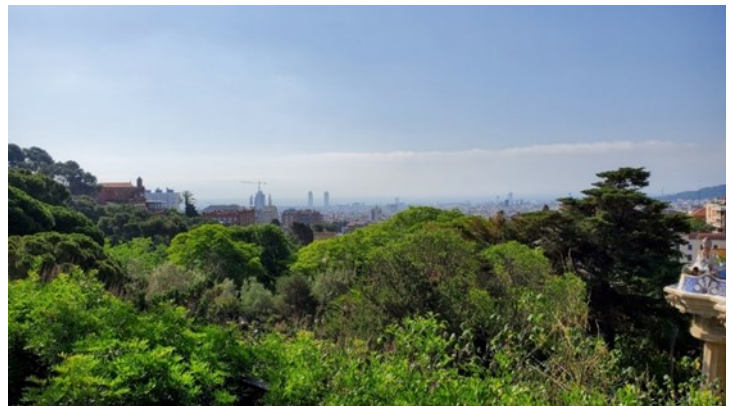


A glimpse of the Montserrat Monastery from the upper funicular station (Photo Credits: Hilma Cooper)



A selfie with John holding a ticket to the football stadium (Ally, Nicole, Marita, and Kreslynn in the bottom row; Matt in the top row). And on the right: Everybody else calls it football, Fußball, or futball; but in the USA it is called soccer (Photo Credits: Nicole Orlando)

We had been on the road now for nearly ten days. Our European extravaganza entered the last few days of travel. On **May 23**, we would say farewell to Barcelona (and Miguel as well) but not before encountering another highpoint in this most impressive of cities. It would be Gaudí Day before boarding a coach to Southern France. Antoni Gaudí (1852-1926) was an architect and perhaps the main representative of Catalan modernism; his “artworks” are all over Barcelona. We already had seen, in passing from the bus, La Pedrera and several houses that exhibited his characteristic style, but today we were shown two major architectural projects of his: Park Güell, a housing complex on the hillsides north of the city that was left incomplete; and Sagrada Familia, a basilica in the Eixample district that is nearing completion (to coincide with the centennial of Gaudí’s death four years from now). Despite their state of incompleteness, both have been declared Unesco heritage sites. Which may tell us something about the process of application and acceptance. (But whoever quibbled with history’s judgment of Schubert’s Unfinished Symphony as being one of the greatest pieces of music, ever?)



Tourists from Mansfield, PA (among others) strolling down the staircase in the Park Güell

View of Barcelona from the Park Güell (the crane completing a tower of Sagrada Familia is visible at left of center)



The market place of the abandoned urban complex in the Park Güell had just the right acoustics for choral singing

Like the Palau de la Musica a few days ago at the beginning of our stay in Barcelona, Sagrada Familia provided an unforgettable “mountain top” experience, as Madame Conductor sometimes put it, at the visit’s end. (Or bookends if you wish.) While the outside of the basilica is astonishing in its architectural textures inspired by nature (some ill-informed commentators, like me, have likened it to a hedgehog or porcupine), the inside is overwhelming with its columns alluding to a forest of trees with trunks and branches, and natural light flooding the interior with iridescent colors.

We were allowed to sing in this extraordinary space: Busto’s “Ave Maria,” Rutter’s “Ukrainian Prayer,” and Paulus’s “The Old Church” may never have sounded as heartfelt as on this afternoon.

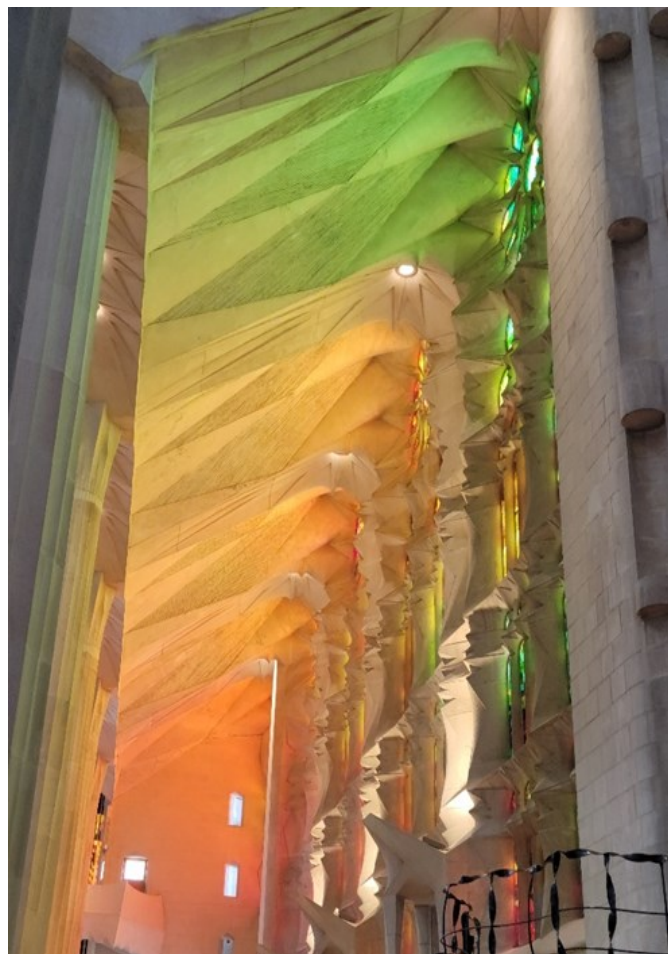
Concert Choir  
Performs  
“The Old Church”  
[Click Here](#)



Sagrada Familia, when completed, will have 18 towers (12 for 12 apostles, 4 for 4 evangelists, plus one each for St. Mary and, the highest, for Jesus; Group Portrait #6 with Basilica



Sagrada Familia, inside (just two of many unforgettable views of that unique basilica)



Miguel Araque, our second tour guide, left us at the end of the Barcelona visit; John Perry would have to guide us from now on without additional assistance. But the latter assured us that we were “manageable” in comparison to some of the groups he had shepherded before. And we also said farewell Ricardo, our bus driver in Madrid and in Barcelona. “Make sure not to leave anything on the bus,” we were told, as we were dropped off at the hotel; “you will get a new bus and a new driver for the last leg of the tour.”

## Southern France

A new bus with a new bus driver (his name was Pedro) arrived indeed at the agreed hour near our hotel in Barcelona's Calle de Paris, and soon we were rolling again, this time in a northeasterly direction, and within a little more than an hour we had crossed into France. Before evening we reached Carcassonne, whose old medieval town is another Unesco Heritage site. The Hotel des Chevaliers, located in the new part of the town, offered grandiose vistas of the old town up on the hill. After dinner, quite a number of indefatigable travelers joined John in exploring the *cit e m di vale* at night (the vistas, below, had just been too tempting), but to reach it required a strenuous march uphill. Still, there was enough energy left to perform a few numbers in our repertory on a quaint square in the old town. An audio has emerged (somewhat treble-heavy, perhaps caused by the position of the microphone) that proves that we do not always need our principal conductor to sound reasonably good. And an image of that spontaneous music-making has surfaced as well (see below).



Miguel Araque (on the left) and the brothers of Phi Mu Alpha posing for a farewell photo in Sagrada Familia



Carcassonne in the evening

The next morning (it was **May 24**) found some members of our group exploring Carcassonne's fortified dwellings by way of an audio guide. Lots of information had to be absorbed. Somehow the town played a significant role during the Middle Ages in the Albigensian Crusade, a war against heretics in the South of France, and, once overtaken, became a royal stronghold and important for projecting the central authority of the French king. In other words, it was a step in the direction of France becoming a nation state. Whatever its historical significance, we just enjoyed the authenticity of the medieval theme park.



A view of the fortress walls



Carcassonne at night

Our bus got us moving again, and, after several hours we reached N mes, a city with a rich history going back to the Roman Empire. Its most important landmark is the Roman arena, at once site of gladiator fights but now used for bullfights and—believe it or not—concerts. Nimes was little more than a lunch stop for us, but we managed to use the arena as a backdrop for a little bit of singing (inside). Inspired by the location where gladiators had shown off their skills, the men in our choir remembered their masculine rendition of “The Armed Man” (in Spanish: El hombre armado). A link to an audio of the piece can be found on the next page.)



Tenors & basses perform “El Hombre Armado”  
(The Armed Man):  
[Click Here](#)

Then the bus continued in an easterly direction, crossing into an area of France known as Provence. After another hour or two, we reached Avignon, seat of the papal court during some seventy years in the Middle Ages (also known as the Schism), when Rome became too dangerous for pontiffs to live there (or when Christians could not agree which pope was the right one: the one in Avignon or the one in Rome). From the bus, we briefly took a glimpse at the papal palace, before checking in for the night in the Hotel Mercure, the last hotel during our European Tour. A dinner in the hotel followed.

Singing at a clandestine location at night (Photo credits: Rachael Karwowski)

The ancient Romans left lots of traces on the landscape and countries in which we were traveling. In fact, they may have been the first to unify Europe as a continent (unsuccessfully attempted by Napoleon and Hitler in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), and now again, with a little more success, by the European Union. John Perry, our tour guide (a British subject living in Spain’s Palma di Mallorca and worried about the effects of Brexit), made a case for the Romans as an “imperial” force of civilization: we had witnessed the aqueducts (or at least one of them in Segovia) and arenas (in Nîmes, and another one would show up shortly), and (he added) “you could pay with the same accepted currency in what is now England, Spain, and Israel.” John, bless him, was not a supporter of Brexit, just the opposite, and could marshal lots of evidence to make his case. Arles in Southern France would be his showcase (the day was **May 25**), and it would focus on the Romans (and also on someone else not yet introduced).



The Arena in Nîmes (the Romans, it seems, were everywhere we traveled)

First, there was another arena built by the Romans (and another group portrait of the choir). A visit to the Roman museum proved instructive. Caesar (and his The Gallic War came to mind) conquered today’s France (then known as Gallia), extinguished the Celtic culture (now relegated to the western edges of Ireland, France, and Spain), and claimed it as a Roman province, adding another piece of the



world to the Roman Empire (see map below). And Arles thrived as a major city. In comparison to Roman outposts in Germany (mostly military settlements except for a few cities founded by the Romans), Arles is major. Artifacts in the museum suggested a more than casual presence of an ancient civilization.

And another Roman arena: Group Portrait #7 in Arles





But then there was more to Arles than just Romans, and folks in Mansfield could really relate to it. Troubled by mental illness, Vincent van Gogh, an artist at the threshold of the twentieth century and famous for his glowing way with colors, spent several years in Arles and captured in a painting a wonderful restaurant, “Le Café la Nuit” (renamed the “Night and Day” eatery at the corner of Routes 6 and 15 in Mansfield), and then cut his ear off and rendered himself in such a condition in a self-portrait. The luncheon, wherever we had it, was good enough for the historical sites we encountered during our visit—Roman or Vince.

Arles was an important city in the Roman Empire (just find it in today’s Southern France)

On the bus, John reminded us for yet another time that he had not received all the monies owed him by some individuals for special events (bullfight, soccer game, flamenco show, funicular), and this time Madame Conductor added oomph to the request by threatening to name delinquents. That seemed to have done the job because we never heard John asking for money again.




On the left, the café painted by Vincent van Gogh with Mansfield folks passing through the street nearby




The most famous café in Arles with sunflowers and Van Gogh’s painting on the wall (just as in Mansfield’s Night and Day)

**MUSIQUE CHORALE CLASSIQUE ET JAZZ**



**MANSFIELD UNIVERSITY PENNSYLVANIA ÉTATS-UNIS**  
 Sous la direction de PEGGY DETTWILER & SHERYL MONKELIEN



**MER 25 20h00** **ÉGLISE SAINT AGRICOL**  
**MAI** **AVIGNON** Rue Saint-Agricol, 84000 Avignon

The image is familiar, but now it has been rendered *en Français*: We gave our all at L'Église Saint Agricol in Avignon and trust that future audios, emerging in the aftermath of the European Tour, prove us right

We returned to Avignon, rehearsed for what would be our last concert in Europe, and then gave our all in the church of St. Agricol. The concert was well attended. The sizable audience may have helped as well: the performance perhaps was our best ever in Europe, many of us thought. And it featured all the pieces we prepared for the European Tour, sacred and secular, plus "Celtic Blessing" just in case a spare (not listed above) was needed as an encore. The Mansfieldians added to the enterprise with their unique sounds. The concert in Avignon would be Sheryl Monkelién's swan song as director of the vocal jazz ensemble. An audio and several videos, we are sure, will confirm our estimate as this being a top-shelf concert. (In any case, the section leaders of the Concert Choir, featured below with Madame Conductor, think we did well!) The celebrations at the hotel bar went on for a long time, stressing out the bar tender as he could not mix special cocktails fast enough. His margaritas were barely okay, but his mojitos found general acceptance.

Madame Conductor and her Section Leaders, beaming, after the Concert in Saint Agricol in Avignon

**PROGRAM**  
 (to be selected from the following)

**Concert Choir**

Ave Maria..... Javier Busto  
 The Old Church..... Stephen Paulus (1949-2014)  
 Prayer for Ukraine..... John Rutter  
 Somewhere..... Leonard Bernstein (1918-90), *arr. Robert Edgerton*  
 Sogno di Volare..... Christopher Tin  
     Linda Seipler, *Piano*  
 Exultate Deo..... Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612)  
 Juramento..... Miguel Matamoros (1894-1971), *arr. Flecto Silva*  
     Samantha Feely, *Claves*  
 Elijah!..... Spiritual, *arr. Stacey V. Gibbs*  
 Threads of Joy..... Tim Brent & Amanda Quist  
     Hanna Worthington, *Soprano*  
 Clap Praise..... Diane I. White  
     Jessica Strouse, *Soloist*  
     Jeremiah Loubriel, *Speaker*  
     Linda Seipler, *Piano*

**Mansfieldians**

The More I See You..... Mack Gordon and Harry Warren, *arr. Paul Langford*  
 Moanin'..... Jon Hendricks and Bobby Timmons, *arr. James Rose*  
 And So It Goes..... Billy Joel, *arr. Kelly Kunz*  
 I Could Have Danced All Night..... Alan Lerner & Frederick Loewe, *arr. Kerry Marsh*  
 Country Dances..... Traditional, *arr. Wand Swingle*

**Chamber Singers**

Sing Joyfully unto God..... William Byrd (1543-1623)  
 Sing Gently..... Eric Whitacre

Our repertory during the Ninth European Tour





Before the concert, some of our folks, mostly “older semesters,” were riding horses on a merry-go-round in Avignon and thus making up for not dancing around on the famous bridge there (“Sur le pont d’Avignon, / L’on y danse tous en rond”)!

John Perry, our tour guide, had one more trump card to play on **May 26**, the day before our departure. Originally, we were supposed to go to Aix-en-Provence, but then Les-Baux-de-Provence, a once-fortified village high up on a limestone crag, became the destination. Its advantages were obvious: it was closer to Avignon and it was smaller (just the right size for exploring on our own). It was wonderful to just stroll through the narrow alleys, get an idea of life in a medieval village-turned-tourist-attraction, have lunch in a quaint restaurant half-way up the hill, and move in and out of boutiques on the way to take care of last-minute shopping (presents for relatives and friends who had supported us, financially and otherwise, at home). Those with some energy left could ascend to the top where the ruins of a citadel had left traces of a once-glorious past and where breathtaking vistas into the fertile valleys of the Provence beckoned.



Les-Baux: Alleys



Les-Baux-des-Provence: A medieval dwelling-turned-restaurant

After we returned to the hotel, it was time to get tested. Encore had put up the money to have a nurse come into the hotel and administer the covid test required before departure. It looked good, initially, with only negative results being reported, but then came the bad news (and I can still hear several “tings” in quick succession on Madame Conductor’s cell phone): at least three of us had tested positive, which meant they could not go home tomorrow but had to quarantine near the Marseille airport until the tests were negative.

The news put a damper on the remainder of the day. We had a last dinner in a restaurant in Avignon, which was late being served anyway (perhaps a dinner at the hotel would have been better), and the mood for reflecting on the last two weeks was somewhat subdued. The night would be short. The wake-up call would come at the ungodly hour of 1:30 am. (Some of us may have squeezed in an hour or two of sleep; others decided that it was not worth going to bed.)



View from the hilltop



Our last group portrait in Avignon, waiting for the bus to get us back to the hotel

### Where did we sing?—A list of venues, looking back

Toledo: Cathedral (informal)  
 Segovia: Cathedral (informal)  
 Segovia: Plaza Mayor (informal)  
 El Escorial (informal)  
 Madrid: Iglesia San Anton (formal)  
 Barcelona: Palau de la Musica (informal)  
 Barcelona: In Front of the Cathedral (informal)  
 Monastir Montserrat (semi-informal)  
 Barcelona: Park Güell (informal)  
 Barcelona: Sagrada Família (informal)  
 Nîmes: Roman Arena (informal)  
 Carcassonne: Before the Gate into the Medieval Fortress Town (informal)  
 Avignon: Église Saint Agricole (formal)

### Getting Home?

*(Notice the question mark in the subtitle!)*

In the middle of the night (it was **May 27**), Pedro, our bus driver since leaving Barcelona for France, steered us with our luggage safely stored in the underbelly of the coach, to Marseille’s airport. Airports all over the world are not constructed for buses delivering or picking up travelers, and Marseille was no exception. But Pedro finally managed, after several attempts, to find a spot where we could unload and from where we could roll our belongings to the terminal.

“Vous avez effectué un test de dépistage de la COVID-19 le 26/05/2022” began the message left

on our “devices,” and the results were crucial in deciding on who was getting home or staying in France for a little longer. Three of us had tested positive; another chorister with an ear infection thought it wise to stay behind as well. (It was considered too risky to have his ear drums exposed to the pressure changes connected with flying.) Since one of the students who tested positive was not yet 21, a chaperone was required to stay behind as well, and Hilma Cooper (bless her!) volunteered to serve in that capacity. Being a grandmother and having catered to clients of a most hospitable Bed-and-Breakfast high up in the Appalachian hills near Wellsboro for several years, she was eminently qualified for being a supportive steward of the Mansfield infirmary abroad (the “covid squad,” as she cheerfully put it). The group checked in early in the morning at a hotel near the Marseille airport (some rooms allegedly had windows with a view of the Mediterranean Sea) and were handed over to the long-distance care of Isabelle Bourges, an Encore staff member charged with staying in touch with them on a daily basis and making arrangements, when that time came, for return flights. (She was “wonderful,” according to reports your chronicler received.)

But there were two more “losses” we had to cope with before the rest of us could board the flight to Frankfurt. Electronic tickets for the two students who, nearly two weeks ago, missed the plane from Frankfurt to Madrid (and were rerouted via Munich) had “disappeared”; in other words, they were not “in the system,” as the jargon goes, even though we could prove that they had seat assignments on the flight they wanted to board. Frantic phone calls with Encore, and from Encore with Lufthansa led nowhere. The revenue enhancement mentality of a struggling airline industry prevailed over common sense. A horrendous amount (that hopefully will be disputed by Encore or ACIS, its umbrella company) was paid in rebooking the two students for a one-way return flight, on short notice, to Newark (again via Munich, Lufthansa’s other German hub). Needless to say: Madame Conductor was not amused. And Lufthansa looked, again, shabby and with egg on its face, and to be avoided whenever the choir would be crossing the Atlantic Ocean again in the years ahead. Unless we are assured that they have become a more customer-friendly company. (We have someone in our midst who can translate our displeasure with LH into German.)

The layover in Frankfurt was five hours—much better than the hectic one-hour transfer time a few weeks ago—and was unremarkable (except for a last-minute gate change). Thus, we flew into a long, long afternoon regaining the six hours that we lost on the flight to Europe, crossed over the British Isles, reached the North American continent in Newfoundland, then traveled along the East Coast in a southwesterly direction, and landed on time in Newark’s Liberty Airport. Passport control and getting our luggage was speedy (infrastructure at EWR was not as bad as alleged by the Lufthansa captain on our flight to Europe), and soon we rolled our suitcases to the curb. After some confusion, Benedict’s Bus appeared with another Perry on the steering wheel (this time, his first name was Ted, not John). He had shepherded us to and from the PMEA Conference at the Kalahari Resort in April and had fallen in love with the choir’s performances there, especially with a piece called “Clap Praise”; he was eager to safely return us home. And he did. Around 10 pm we reached the Eastern Hill. (We had been on the road or in the air or waiting for connections for more than 24 hours.)

Marlys Kerkman parted company at Newark to reach a connecting flight to Toronto; Roger Miller did the same to go to Salt Lake City, but his flight was cancelled, and all United Airlines (the friendly skies) could do was to get him to Denver and, once there, into a hotel, before he could continue to Utah the next morning.

### ***Statistical Trivia***

All 55 of us had been vaccinated and boosted. All of us tested negative before we left for Europe.  
 3 of us, even though vaccinated and boosted, had to stay behind in Marseilles because they tested positive.  
 4 more, even though vaccinated and boosted, came down with covid within days of arriving in the US.  
 Statistics to ponder by the CDC!

The two folks rerouted via Munich arrived later that day in Newark. The father of another student, living nearby, volunteered to pick them up

(another helpful angel to show up in an emergency). We are most grateful that the proverbial Mounties Spirit, usually associated with athletics, extended to the choral program and to our parents.

The Mansfield infirmary in hotel rooms near the Marseille airport was gradually dissolved, as “patients” tested negative and were able to fly home, one by one, with the abovementioned Isabelle quickly arranging travel. Hilma Cooper was the last to return with the not-yet-21 student in tow. Parents of the latter came to Newark airport for pick-up, and a special vehicle sent by none other than Madame Conductor arrived at the parents’ residence in Northeast Pennsylvania to meet Hilma and chauffeur her home to Wellsboro, PA. Even though jet-lagged and tired, she was thrilled and quite talkative. Full of praise for Encore Tours and ACIS (see her report below under *Reminiscences*), Hilma was the last to report to friends that she had gotten home. It was Thursday, June 2, 9:55 pm.

Finally, and only then, could Madame Conductor, having tested positive 36 hours after getting home and recovering herself from covid, breathe a sigh of relief. The Ninth European Tour of the Mansfield University Concert Choir was over.

### ***Fan Letters to Madame Conductor***

Saying “thank you” just doesn’t cut it! What a great trip we all experienced! I know an event like this doesn’t just happen; so much time, effort, tears, creativity go into the preparation. How fortunate that you not only have the gift of music, but also the gift of organization and attention to detail. You managed to overcome all the negative aspects that you confronted. What a feat! -- Of course, the choir was spectacular at each of the performances. What ales they have to tell their grandchildren! I was sorry to learn today of your positive covid test. This definitely puts a new slant on the encouraging expression we often use—that of “stay positive.” -- Hilma and I have been able to keep in touch by texting. Technology can be wonderful when it works. Although it was an inconvenience, I’m certain she is viewing it as a true adventure. -- Your positive covid test may just be what you need to allow yourself an extended time to rest. May you be able to relax in the assurance that your hard work brought joy and new experiences as well as lifetime memories to so many. ... I send my thanks, my wishes for good health, and prayers for a wonderful summer.

Alene York

Let me say again, what a great pleasure it was to go on tour with the Mansfield choir. Different from any tour I've ever joined and filled with one incredible moment after another. Montserrat had been a source of mystery and wonder ever since the Mormon Tabernacle Choir had arrived in Barcelona by tourist ship years ago, and we saw the serrated landscape from offshore. What a gorgeous place to visit and hear your students perform. -- Likewise, the Sagrada Familia church. Everything about it was different from previous memories. I recall piles of stone and sawdust everywhere, with no indication of a final structure. Also, the surroundings seemed very different. To see an interior that looked very much like its final form was inspirational, to say the least. ... I loved the glimpses into Roman subalpine France. ... -- I enjoyed seeing the pictures that have been posted and look forward to Jürgen's narrative of the tour.

Roger Miller

Fans on display in a Toledo souvenir shop



A fan gifted to Madame Conductor in Madrid (in case she would not be in the shaded area during the bullfight)

## Accolades to John Perry: 3 Variations on a Theme (A Selection)

You have worked so hard to make our trip fun, memorable, educational, and musical. Your expertise, knowledge, confidence, and organizational skills have put us all at such ease and made our European excursion simply dreamlike. I have been on Cloud 9 since day one. ... Hanging out with you has been the absolute highlight. Thanks for everything. Truly, you have been like a father to me.

Matthew Merolla

This has been such a wonderful trip, and it wouldn't have been possible without you! I admire your dedication and adaptability in managing such a large group and giving us the best experience possible. Thanks for being a good sport with all of our silly accents and antics; we were just so happy to get to know you and have fun with you! ...Cheers!

Emma Criswell

This trip would not have been as great without all of your insights, great historical background of places and your energy! You really gave your all for us, and it has been greatly appreciated. Thank you for everything!

Sheryl Monkelién

## Postlude

**Hilma Cooper** (and she deserves to have the last word, as she was the last to return home) describes how she and her charges spent a few more days in France

When three choir members tested positive for Covid-19 and another one had a serious ear infection prior to the return flight from France, no one knew exactly how the situation was going to play out even though the tour manager had presented information on that possibility the evening before. As it turned out, Encore staff went into action. A few hours later when the bus left the hotel for the trip to the airport in Marseille, arrangements were complete. The main group of fifty entered the airport while the five, 4 students and their shepherd, were shuttled to the Marseille Airport Hotel where 5 rooms were ready for occupancy. We understand that other travel problems cropped up, but the Covid Squad were comfortable in their hotel rooms. John Perry, tour manager, returned to the hotel at 9 am to deliver a brief lesson on using self-test kits and more masks. And I was given contact information for Isabelle Bourges, Encore/ACIS who took over support.

Fortunately, no one was or became seriously ill. And we agreed that anything short of ending up on a respirator in a Marseille hospital was going to be chalked up to experience. The students rested in their rooms, gathered to eat in the outdoor dining area, always socially distanced, didn't get into elevators with other hotel guests and did some walking. They also on occasion ordered out food to be delivered by UberEats. (French food had apparently lost its appeal.)

The main activity every day was a trek to the official testing center in the Marseille airport, about a mile away. We made some friends in the testing center, but no one would provide a negative test in exchange for a song. As each person got the negative test, arrangements were made by Encore for a flight the next morning. The young man with an ear infection left first, two others were cleared to leave a few days later and the last student and I were cleared for travel on Thursday, one week after the original positive tests. The choir members exhibited a very high level of cooperation at all times and the tour company representatives provided quick and complete support. It was a unique experience.



Au cœur d'un grand parc calme avec piscine, l'hôtel M.I.A. est situé à **1 min des terminaux principaux de l'aéroport** Marseille Provence et à 10 min de la gare TGV Aix-en-Provence. Les chambres spacieuses avec air conditionné invitent à la détente. Les salles de réunion équipées, modulables accueillent jusqu'à 250 notes. Le wifi est disponible et offert dans tous les espaces. Notre **hôtel 4\*** dispose d'un **restaurant-bar lounge lumineux avec terrasses**. Vous pourrez y venir aisément avec le service **navette aéroport 24h/24** ou vous garer dans le **parking clos et gratuit**.



In the heart of a large and quiet park with swimming pool, the M.I.A. hotel is located **1 min from the main terminals of the Marseille Provence airport** and 10 min from the Aix-en-Provence TGV station. The spacious, air-conditioned rooms are perfect for relaxing in. The fully-equipped, modular meeting facilities can accommodate up to 250 guests. WiFi is available free of charge in all areas. Our **4-star hotel** has a bright **restaurant-lounge bar with terraces**. It is easy to reach with the **24-hr airport shuttle service**, or you can park in the **free enclosed car park**.



Marseille International Airport  
Hôtel  
Aéroport Marseille Provence  
BP 50  
13728 MARIGNANE CEDEX  
FRANCE  
+33 (0) 4 42 78 42 78  
+33 (0) 4 42 78 42 60  
hotel@mia-marseille.com



MIA Hotel - Tous droits réservés - Crédit photos: ©Stefan Kraus / Kpictures.fr

PS. Above find a bilingual blurb, listing the amenities of the Mia Hotel with some pictures. Not a bad place for being quarantined.

## ***And now the Quiz!***

1. The plane that flew us to Frankfurt was
  - a) an Airbus 320
  - b) an Airbus 380
  - c) a Boeing 747
  - d) a Boeing 777 Max
2. The plaza known for auto-da-fes in centuries past was the
  - a) Plaza de Toros
  - b) Plaza España
  - c) Plaza Real
  - d) Plaza Mayor
3. The Cervantes Monument in Madrid features all EXCEPT
  - a) Windmills
  - b) A horse
  - c) A donkey
  - d) Steps
4. Which of the following birthdays on our trip can be linked to an engagement?
  - a) May 17
  - b) May 19
  - c) May 20
  - d) May 21
5. Which of the following places in Barcelona was NOT designed by Antoni Gaudí?
  - a) Palau de la Musica
  - b) Sagrada Familia
  - c) La Pedrera
  - d) Park Güell
6. St. Anthony is the saint of
  - a) hunters
  - b) the poor and destitute
  - c) animals
  - d) bull fighters
7. Roman arenas or aqueducts can be found in all of the following places EXCEPT
  - a) Segovia
  - b) Montserrat
  - c) Nimes
  - d) Arles
8. Which of the following composers is NOT inscribed on the ceiling of Palau de la Musica?
  - a) Palestrina
  - b) Carissimi
  - c) Bach
  - d) Beethoven
9. Madame Conductor was spotted riding a wooden horse in
  - a) Arles
  - b) Avila
  - c) Avignon
  - d) Beaux-les-Provence
10. Ricardo and Pedro were two of our bus drivers. Who was the third?
  - a) John
  - b) Miguel
  - c) Jon
  - d) Ted

*Answers should be sent to [jthy@aol.com](mailto:jthy@aol.com) by August 15. The first three all-correct entries will be rewarded with a hard copy of HTV #40. All other all-correct entries will be mentioned by name in the next issue of HTV. The correct answers will be revealed then as well.*

**The Mansfield University Concert Choir  
gratefully acknowledges the following donations to the**

**2022 European Tour General Fund**

**Oratorio**

Committee on Finance, Howard & Olynda Smith, Curtis & Kim Smith

**Mass**

Stephen & Nancy Bickham, Larry & Barbara Biddison, Keith & Hilma Cooper,  
Peggy Dettwiler, Mary Pritchett

**Cantata**

Peter Ellis, Jürgen Thym, Alene York, Erika Zinkan

**Motet**

Richard Cashman, Richard & Mary Eaton, Wesley & Ankie Foell, C. Frederick & Judith LaVancher,  
Horst & Jutta Lubnow (“German Fans”), Luzerne Foundation – John Dawe, John Manchester, J. Paul  
& Dusty McMillen, Larry & Marian Miller, Fred Moyer, Larry & Donna Uffelman, Dave & Kay Werner,  
David & Susan Zimmerman

**Madrigal**

Kimber Billow, Ron Butler, Jon Clark, John Dulik, Sandra Folzer, MayBelle Golis, Rebecca Santoro  
Hetzl, Thomas M. Jones, Lewis B. & Linda D. Lee, Roger L. Miller, Carl & Christina Sechrist, Eugene  
Seelye, Ed & Darlene Sydlik, Dale Terry, Kathleen Thomas, Daniel & Karen Usavage, Marlene  
Wetmore, Barbara York

**Spiritual**

William & Joan Berresford, Jean Ellen Dreese, Linda Schwab Farrer, John & Eileen Firmani, Louis &  
Esta Fisher, John Haupt, George Martinec, Anne Nevin, Priscilla Older, Kelly Roth, Dolores Weed

**Total Donations as of 4/15/22  
(a month before departure)  
\$55,650**