

Sousa International Honors Band

SOME QUICK ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS:

Detailed information will be sent out later

Q. WILL I BE ACCEPTED?

A. Yes, provided you return the enclosed application blank. We usually expect a response and will reserve a place for you for six to eight weeks. After that you will be accepted on a “space available” basis.

Q. WHAT ARE THE DATES?

A. The Sousa International Honors Band and Choir tour will leave Boston and return 17 days later. Exact flight dates and times are sent to participants around April 1st.

Q. HOW WAS I SELECTED FOR THE SOUSA INTERNATIONAL HONORS BAND AND CHOIR TOUR?

A. You may have been a member of a National Select Band, an All--State or Regional Band, or a Special Honor Band. However, many students are recommended by their music teacher as demonstrating a high level of interest and talent. In addition, you have been invited to participate in a high school and college band of national significance and quality.

Q. IS THE TOUR WELL CHAPERONED?

A. Yes, only successful and experienced high school and college band directors serve on the SIHB staff. Most chaperones have made several previous tours with the SIHB. An evening sign--in is required every night. All walking tours and sight--seeing activities are accompanied by staff members. No smoking or alcohol is permitted.

Q. WHAT IF I HAVE A HEALTH PROBLEM?

A. Simply tell us about it and we will look out for you. There is excellent medical help available all throughout Europe in the event that you have a problem.

Q. CAN I CANCEL IF I HAVE AN EMERGENCY?

A. Yes, but read the refund schedule very carefully which is on the back of the enclosed application blank. Cancellation insurance will reimburse your money that we are unable to refund to you.

Q. WILL A RECORDING BE MADE OF OUR CONCERTS?

A. Yes, audio recordings will be made. A CD will be available as well as a DVD of the entire trip.

Q. HOW MANY CONCERTS WILL WE PERFORM?

A. We have scheduled ten concerts during our tour. The group performs in important historic concert sites and there is a good balance of travel, performing, rest, and sightseeing.

Q. HOW IS SECTION SEATING DETERMINED?

A. A tentative assignment of chair placement is made on the basis of the information you enter on your application blank. Auditions are held during the pre--tour rehearsals in Boston to make adjustments. All auditions use the band music which will be sent to you prior to the tour.

Q. SUPPOSE I CAN'T GO THIS YEAR?

A. Let us know and we'll put you on the approved list for the next year. We will save a place for you and next September we will send you an approved application for next year's tour.

Q. WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE WILL I TRAVEL WITH?

A. Nice, friendly musicians like yourself who love to play their instruments. You will make great new friends and if you want to take along your own friend, we have a “Take Your Friend” program in which you can recommend another competent musician like yourself who might like to come along also. We want you to really enjoy this great adventure.

Q. WHY DO WE HAVE AN EVENING CHECK--IN EVERY NIGHT?

A. It is very easy for first--time travelers to get swept up in the excitement of a European tour and fail to get sufficient rest to maintain their health. To guard against this we set up a reasonable check--in time each evening (it's different in each city) by which time everyone is expected to have signed in and be in his or her own room. You will enjoy your tour much more if you are healthy and feel good.

Q. WHY DO WE TRAVEL BY BUS IN EUROPE INSTEAD OF FLYING?

A. You would miss seeing the countryside and the people if you flew from place to place. Also, much time would be lost checking in and out of airports. By using buses we always have our baggage (and instruments) with us so there is less chance for any of our things to get lost.

Q. WHY ARE NOON LUNCHES NOT INCLUDED IN THE COST OF THE TOUR?

A. A served lunch is a “big deal” in Europe. It is a heavy (and expensive) meal which can take an hour and a half or more to serve to a group. Eating on our own gives us a lot more time for personal sightseeing and allows for flexibility in budgeting and selection of food. It’s a great experience to order up a Dutch sandwich or an Italian pizza or a German schnitzel in the country of origin.

Q. WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO CARRY MY SPENDING MONEY?

A. First of all – don’t take too much money with you. It is really a musical tour and not a shopping tour, although you will have some time to shop. If your local bank doesn’t have foreign currency we will help you get it in the Boston airport. You can change the money in Europe, but only at banks or special “money exchange” shops (there is always one in the local railroad station). It seems that there are seven Sundays in a week on the tour and the banks are never open! A “Debit Card” is probably the best arrangement. There are ATM’s all over Europe and they deliver the money to you in the local currency.

Q. DO MOST THINGS RUN ON TIME DURING THE TOUR?

A. Usually yes, but sometimes no. The tour schedule is arranged in advance by our agents who are usually responsible for hotel reservations, meals, sightseeing, buses, and so on. Every effort is made to have the tour run on time, but sometimes the weather does not cooperate or there is a back--up of traffic going into Italy and we arrive a bit late for dinner, etc. In any event, when there are delays, just relax and use the time to chat with your friends, write in your diary, or just plain catch up on your sleep. But whatever happens – make sure YOU are on time and that the group isn’t waiting for you.

Q. WHEN ARE TRYOUTS HELD FOR POSITIONS IN THE GROUP?

A. Almost everyone selected for the SIHB are first chair players back home, so seating and position cannot be made on that basis. So, we make a rough “guestimate” from the material on the application blank and parts (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) are assigned on that basis. Then players are moved up or down on the basis of performance during the pre--tour rehearsals and in the early concerts. Time is at a premium so try--out and audition times tend to be brief. So try to play your best at all times – someone is always listening. Remember that it is important to have fine performers on all of the parts in order to have a truly fine band. If try--outs are held you will be asked to play scales, do some sight--reading, and perform the music sent to you prior to the start of the tour. No surprises!

Q. HOW CAN I ENJOY MY TOUR TO THE UTMOST?

A. Try not to consider your trip to Europe as a deluxe holiday experience where everything is as orderly and predictable as it is back home. Hamburgers, ice water, Holiday Inns, long hot showers, hair dryers, etc. are not always a part of the European scene. After all, if things were the same everywhere there would be no adventure in travel. Instead, look at your tour as an opportunity to learn how another part of the world lives and thinks. Traveling anywhere with a group necessitates one’s being a good natured realist, as well as a romantic wit with an agreeable acceptance of foreign conditions, people, accommodations, and services. A pleasant tolerance of different customs, habits, and living standards will make for an enjoyable and truly educational travel experience.