

Valhalla High School Honors Ensemble

Tour 2018: France & Belgium

Dear Parents/Guardians of 2017-2018 Vocal Music Students:

The Valhalla Vocal Music Honors Ensembles have had the opportunity to perform throughout Europe. Previous tours have included performances in Italy, Germany, Poland, England, and Ireland. Arrangements are currently being made for a 2018 concert tour of France & Belgium that would include singing at wonderful venues in these countries.

It is not mandatory for every student to participate. In fact, we must limit the number of participants due to passenger space on the tour bus as well as limitations created when addressing issues of balance associated with the number of singers on each vocal part. At this time I am accepting applications from students wishing to participate as well as from parents of vocal music students wishing to serve as chaperones.

Travel Considerations

This educational trip is a wonderful opportunity for students to experience the diversity of other cultures and to perform in some of the most historically significant and beautiful cathedrals, cities and ancient ruins of the world. However, **not all students or parents are suited for this type of trip**. Please carefully consider the following **before** submitting the application materials:

- **Environmental Allergies:** Most countries we visit do not have stringent anti-smoking laws. Your child will be exposed to second hand smoke in restaurants and buildings. The previous occupant of his/her hotel room may also have been a smoker. Smog, exposure to wool carpets and down bedding are also possibilities. If your child has severe allergies to any of these substances or if your child has asthma that is triggered by these substances, please consider carefully before sending your child. A child who must continuously take large doses of antihistamines to control symptoms may be too drowsy to enjoy the experience.
- **Foods:** Breakfast and dinner are included in the cost of the trip. Although vegetarian meals are offered, there is NO choice of actual foods. Frequently, the meals are representative of the country and may appear/taste quite “unfamiliar.” Most students will try (and usually enjoy) this ethnic experience. However, if your child has hypoglycemia, gluten or peanut allergy, diabetes or is a “picky” eater, you should carefully consider participation in this trip. If your child does participate, **please make Apple Tours and your tour leader aware of these allergies or restrictions (including vegetarian)** and send along appropriate snack foods to avoid adverse reactions.
- **Chronic Disease/Conditions:** We are traveling to a foreign country, often with a language barrier. If your child has a medical condition that carries a high risk if uncontrolled or exacerbated (such as diabetes or severe asthma), experiences frequent “flare-ups” and/or your child **DOES NOT USUALLY MANAGE OR RECOGNIZE CRISIS SYMPTOMS ON HIS/HER OWN**, he/she may not be a candidate for this trip. It is not appropriate or safe to send a child who does not

Valhalla High School Honors Ensemble

Tour 2018: France & Belgium

and has not managed his/her medical needs or frequently requires medical attention.

- **Coping Skills/Independence:** If your child has difficulty adjusting to new or strange situations or has difficulty following directions – often manifested by anxiety attacks, homesickness, dependency or rebelliousness, there is a high probability that he/she will not enjoy the trip. All students are expected to participate in all activities, adhere to a time schedule and follow instructions.
- **Behavior/Discipline:** Students are expected to abide by school rules before and during the trip. Any student that is suspended (in-school or out of school) during the 2017-2018 school year for any disciplinary reason before the trip occurs will not be allowed to participate in the trip. This will result in a loss of any payments made. While abroad, students must be ambassadors for our country and school. Before departing for Europe, all students must complete a behavior contract that outlines the expectations and consequences for the trip.
- **Stamina/Absences:** Our days begin early (often with a 6:00 a.m. wake up call), end late (usually around 10 or 11 p.m.) and involve a significant amount of walking as we tour the sites. If your child frequently misses school due to fatigue or a medical condition, he/she may not be a candidate for this trip.
- **Academics:** During the trip, the opportunity to complete homework assignments is limited. Please consider this when making your decision, especially if your child's grades are borderline. **All student participants must be carrying a C average in their classes in order to be accepted for participation and must maintain a C average in the 2017-2018 school year before departure or they may be denied participation on the trip with no refund of monies invested.**
- **Dates of Tour: February 9 – 18, 2018**
- **Cost:** Because of increased fuel costs for airline and bus travel, the costs for this trip have increased significantly in the past four years. Nevertheless, lowest price possible for a trip of this kind has been negotiated. The student price is \$3,910, and the adult price is \$4,110. Please use the above information when making your decision. As always, it is the goal of the Vocal Music Department and Valhalla High School to make this trip educational, enjoyable and safe for your child. Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have at pinfantino@guhdsd.net

Sincerely, Paul Infantino
Director, Vocal Music Department