



Canterbury Pilgrims, 12<sup>th</sup> c. Glass in Canterbury Cathedral

# WHAT DIRECTORS AND PARENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S CHOIR FESTIVAL

AT  
CANTERBURY AND LONDON

## *Comments from the Festival Conductors on the Rebirth of the Festival in 2011:*

"What a week we had in England! Like me, those glorious sounds of superb singing are probably still ringing in your ears. I know I have said this before to each of you, but I would like to reiterate my deepest gratitude for your wonderful preparation and participation in this year's Canterbury Festival. **Of all the festivals we have done, this was by far, one of the strongest!** Your students came impeccably prepared and what joy the music making created in all of us. I saw so many "conductor tears". As a festival conductor, it is one thing to hear beautiful sounds and create beautiful music, but it is a complete added bonus to read the joy and expression on the faces of the young singers. Never once (and this is a first in twenty five years of doing this) did I have to worry about the attention, enthusiasm or work ethic of the singers. During the performances, I felt the spirit and the eyes of every singer on me. **What a privilege and joy it was for me to work again with David Flood and with this incredible festival.** I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I hope your singers had an experience they can treasure for a lifetime, and I hope we can work together again sometime soon."

- Henry Leck, Festival Conductor since 1997

"The community of the Cathedral is always hugely enriched by these Festivals and we are truly delighted that we are back to strength with the series, but what a way to take off again! The choirs were superbly well prepared and very eager to embrace all the variety of their new found circumstances and new friends. I am always thrilled to work with my good friend and colleague Henry Leck and to welcome him back to his British home. **We are delighted, too, that David Searles is firmly back in the driving seat and we are looking forward to many such festivals in years to come.** It was the greatest pleasure to work with you all and with your fine choirs. Thank you for being part of this and I trust that the experience will live on in your singers' memories for a long time to come."

- David Flood, Festival Conductor since 1997

## *Comments from the Festival Conductors on the 2013 Festival:*

"**Canterbury, 2013, was perhaps the most extraordinary festival to date. With eleven very fine choirs, the music making was unparalleled !!** With the beauty and acoustics of Canterbury and Southwark Cathedrals, the aesthetic experience was almost beyond belief! What an incredible memory to carry for a lifetime!"

- Henry Leck, Festival Co-Conductor since 1997

"It was such a thrill and a privilege to be able to host the International Children's Choirs Festival again in Canterbury and to continue this to London. **The festival is one of the most astonishing events in our Cathedral calendar and the calibre and achievement of all these gifted choirs was truly outstanding.** It was wonderful to see and hear these young musicians evolve and grow together in such a remarkable way. Many congratulations to all who were involved."

- David Flood, Festival Co-conductor since 1997

## *Comments from 2013 Festival Participants:*

"**You were absolutely remarkable to work with and your festival was beyond my imagination,** so wonderful (and I had GREAT expectations!). Thank you so very much!"

- Elizabeth Shepley, Director, Northfield Youth Chorus, Northfield, MN

"On behalf of the Hong Kong Children's Choir, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for your arrangement of the International Children's Choir Festival held in Canterbury and London. **It is believed that our stay in the United Kingdom is one of the most precious and memorable events in our children's lives.** We look forward to working with you again in the near future."

- Wilson Tse, General Manager, Hong Kong Children's Choir

"This was an awesome experience for the kids! My son was there from Toronto Canada, and **it was the most beautiful thing I have ever heard.** Would do it all over again."

- Bob Jones, Etobicoke Youth Choir Parent, Toronto, Canada (from YouTube)

"Thank you for all your hard work in making this such a wonderful festival. We truly enjoyed every minute of it. You were wonderful to work with and very supportive during the process."

- Susan Benson, Manager, South Bay Children's Choir, Torrance, California (third participation)

"We had such a wonderful time at the International Children's Choral Festival performing in historic venues like Canterbury Cathedral and Southwark Cathedral. We worked hard and our choir came away a better choir: more musical, thoughtful, close-knit, and responsive. The girls loved working with David and Henry, and enjoyed listening to the many other fine choirs. **This festival is a life-changing experience for the singers and their directors alike. Euro Arts Tours was very easy to work with, very responsive and available to answer any questions or concerns that arose.** The musical selections were of the highest quality. We had an amazing time and we're so glad we decided to participate in this festival!!"

- Karen Silva, Director, Peninsula Girls Chorus, Burlingame, CA

"**I want to thank you for a splendid festival--one of the best ever.** How gratifying it must be to you to see so many young choirs bursting with new life as a result of your hard work. I had a rehearsal with my choir this morning--the first since the festival--and they sounded wonderful. **I wish we could do this every year!**"

- Capers Cross, Choirmaster, St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Charleston, SC (fifth participation)

"What an incredible experience the tour was. Thank you for all of your hard work!"

- Mary Evers, Assistant Conductor, Indianapolis Children's Choir (fourth participation)

"**I must congratulate you for always managing to be wholly and comfortably on top of all the details, seeming always to be calm and collected, even with time to linger and chat. That is an amazing accomplishment considering the enormous and manifold logistic complications of a festival like this one. You are bloody brilliant! And you can quote me on that.** The two conductors were a wonderful idea, as we got different ideas and inspirations from each. David Flood is very British, with zeal for choral music in every fibre of his being, delivered with zany, child-friendly humour and fun. His repertoire included some of the more exciting new British composers like Bob Chilcott, Howard Goodall and Timothy Noon, with older gems by Constantini and Massenet. Flood is brilliant with boys' voices and vocal production, as his choir at Canterbury Cathedral is men and boys. Henry Leck works at a very high level, but does so in a friendly, easy-going American style. He is a masterfully expressive conductor, especially good with rubato and nuanced dynamics. His repertoire choices included beautiful contemporary settings of Hebrew and Latin texts, plus reworkings of Baroque treasures by Handel and Vivaldi. **The festival was full of wonderful experiences for all involved. I wholeheartedly recommend this festival to any children's or treble youth choir, as it was well organized by David Searles and delivered high-level performance experiences in stunning historical venues. The atmosphere was supportive and convivial and the festival conductors – David Flood and Henry Leck – were superb.** Beyond the artistic program, time was built into the schedule for sight-seeing, with each group having its own professional tour guide. Our guide, Tim Martin, was excellent, informative, entertaining and very patient with our enthusiastic and energetic membership. As a previous member of Lady Diana Spencer's personal security team, he was uniquely qualified to provide a myriad of interesting anecdotes and details about the British monarchy."

OVER

- Paul Grindlay, Director, Calgary Boys Choir, Calgary, Canada

"**Many thanks for a rich musical experience - it was such a joy to watch my singers take it all in and grow.** I felt that we got to know Canterbury musically - a very special treat that no ordinary tourist can ever hope to do!

- **Peggy Spool, Director, Vivace Youth Chorus, San Jose, California**

"Congratulations on another triumph! I hope you enjoyed the festival as much as the choirs did! **It is such an inspiring occasion watching the individual choirs become one, seeing the children make new friends and experiencing new places and seeing their personalities blossom.** Thank you for asking me to be a part of this unique venture. I hope you are able to get a well-earned rest and bask in the knowledge that you have transformed the lives of 300+ children!"

- **Gavin Webb, Blue Badge Tour Manager, Northfield Youth Choir**

"The Choir Festival concerts were fantastic (a couple of the arrangements are still buzzing around my head) and **all the more enjoyable having seen the immense amount of planning and preparation that went into them beforehand.**"

- **Rachel Kolsky, Blue Badge Tour Manager, Centennial Children's Chorus**

### **Comments from Earlier Festival Participants:**

"We all had a wonderful time at the Festival! **Thank you for all of the great planning to make it run so smoothly.** We all loved working with David and Henry and learned so much. My choristers loved the music and the venues – and meeting all of the choristers!"

- **Kimberley Davidson, Roanoke College Children's Choir, Roanoke, VA**

"**Congratulations on a fantastic festival!** I hope you feel good about it. My kids, chaperones, staff, and I all had a wonderful time and we all learned a lot. Thanks so much for all your hard work!"

- **Brian Clissold, Fort Wayne Children's Choir, Fort Wayne, IN**

"Congratulations to you on a fantastic festival in England! We are so grateful to you for all of your hard work in making the tour a great experience for our kids. We enjoyed our tour manager, Jenny Mitchell, so much! Jenny really did make the tour extra special for YCCO! Again, thank you for everything David! **We are already looking forward to returning to your festival in the future!** The KIDS loved traveling to England and will treasure this tour for the rest of their lives! Thank you again for working so hard to make this experience so positive and wonderful for each and every kid on your tour. **I'm hoping we can have a round two in 2013!!**"

- **Chris Asher, Tour Manager, Youth Choir of Central Oregon, Bend, OR**

"One of the main reasons I was interested in coming to this festival was because of the choir time we will spend with David and Henry. We watched David two years ago at the cathedral and were very impressed. Also **we sensed that this tour was quality and that is because of you and the care you have taken with it.** We had a wonderful trip and thank you for sending such GREAT pictures to document the experience. I am so glad to have the pictures you took of our individual performance in Canterbury.....I didn't think I would have any pictures of that concert! The students enjoyed working with both conductors. We especially liked having the individual sessions with Henry and David. They are tops!"

- **Julie White, Kentucky Youth Chorale, Owensboro, KY**

"Having been involved in many choral festivals, we have found them to be a source of personal and musical growth for singers and directors alike. However, **the International Children's Choir Festival exceeds others in musical excellence** by providing consistently challenging and elevating repertoire expertly refined by world-class directors such as Dr. David Flood and Dr. Henry Leck. Crowning months of preparation are the glorious concerts, where young singers and professional instrumentalists create beauty and magic in some of England's most special spaces. As Artistic Director, my festival choice focuses on the quality of musical experience. However, the attention to all related travel and festival details, including a Shadow Tour for family and friends, really "sealed the deal."

- **Diane Jones, Children's Chorus of Carroll County, Westminster, MD**

"Many thanks for what was an incredible trip. The children were amazing in the cathedral performances and the shadow tour was wonderful. **One of the best trips our family has ever taken.** We appreciate all you did for the children and their families."

- **Lee Adams, Children's Chorus of Carroll County Parents' Shadow Tour, Westminster, MD**

"What an incredible time and enriching experience we all had! This was an amazing experience and a wonderful festival! **It was the best festival I have been to** - I truly enjoyed every minute of music and learning!"

- **Sarona Mynhardt, White Rock Children's Choir, Surrey, British Columbia, CANADA**

"We have all returned to reality now after the wonderful tour to England. **This was by far the best tour we have ever taken.** The singers were incredibly mature, well behaved, enthusiastic, energized and most of all, very musically capable. I never heard a complaint from anyone. The singers made friends with so many choristers from Canada, Australia and other parts of the US. If I may paraphrase a quote from Ruth Williamson who was there at the final concert, "These singers have experienced excellence". Yes, the singers were ALL well prepared and made the most beautiful music. Their lives are changed in so many ways I cannot even express. For me, to see the learning, the great music making and the changes these singers made inside themselves was very fulfilling. Each singer brought their best to the concerts, even when they were tired and thought they could not sing one more note. They rose to the top and gave their very best each and every time."

- **Beth Basham, Youth Choir of Central Oregon, Bend, OR**

"I hope you are settled in and rested following the wonderful choir festival in England. We all had an amazing time, felt very privileged to spend so much time in Canterbury and the Canterbury Cathedral, getting to know it so well. Our workshops with Henry and David upstairs in the Choir Room were definite highlights! The performing opportunities were wonderful, being able to sing in Canterbury and Southwark was quite overwhelming for us all. **Thank you so much for all of your efforts to make this tour such a resounding success.** Overall it was a great experience, with much learning and many good memories. Thank you again for everything. **I hope to work with you in the future.**"

- **Cathy MacKinnon, Tour Director, Calgary Children's Choir, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA**

"From the viewpoint of a spectator sitting in the cathedrals, **it was a highlight of my life to witness such beauty and "excellence"!!!** Bravo to all that made this experience happen! We are all so blessed to have you in our lives. I think I will ALWAYS tear up when I think of this experience!!!!!"

- **Laura Forest, Parent, Youth Choir of Central Oregon, Bend, OR**

"I must compliment you for an excellent tour! The trip is indelibly etched in my mind and will be for a lifetime. **Thanking you again for your magnificent accomplishment.** You should be very proud."

- **Dr. Mark Belza, Parent, Youth Choir of Central Oregon, Bend, OR**

"David Flood and Henry Leck proved again and again why they enjoy world-class status as choral directors. **The Canterbury experience was for my choir an unforgettable high point in their young lives that will probably never be bested!** I am left with the hopeless task of trying to figure out what could possibly equal this experience next year and thereafter. I can assure you that I will want this experience for all of the children who go through my choir program, so be prepared to hear from us every three to four years! The parents who attended the festival were, if it is possible, even more overwhelmed than the children and I. I felt that you, David, as a professional singer, choral director and former lay clerk at Canterbury, knew what was important to choir directors and what would be most beneficial to the children. I felt that your whole approach to your work was from the view point of a musician. **I saw in you not a tour operator who "does" choir tours, but a musician whose goal was not just making a buck, but who was motivated by a deep desire to provide a valuable and lasting contribution to the musical training of young singers.** My confidence in you proved to be well-founded, beyond anything I could have imagined. Thank you for becoming a partner in helping my choir become all it can be. Attending the Children's Choir Festival at Canterbury every three years has become a critical component of our children's choir program. I – we all – are so grateful for your dedication to the highest ideals of children's choir training. For us, you have made all the difference. So please accept our thanks."

- **Capers Cross, St. Philip's Episcopal Children's Choir, Charleston, SC**

"Everyone I see that went on the tour has RAVED about the experience. I can't begin to imagine how much effort went into the planning and execution of it on your part. **Your depth of understanding based on your background and personal experience sets you apart from all the other touring companies.**"

- **Bonnie Slade, Cache Children's Choir, Logan, UT**

"My thanks to you for providing this marvelous experience for all these choirs! I know that it is a monumental amount of work, but the musical experience and learning make it all worthwhile. It was a wonderful experience for us, particularly the workshops. The sound that both Henry and David Flood got out of them was just out of this world and they continued to have that sound in their concert in Paris, so it must have had a profound effect on the children. It was worth the price of the ticket!"

- Carol Nelson, Heart of the Valley Children's Choir, Corvallis, OR

**"It was really the type of "once in a lifetime" experience we had hoped it would be.** It was tremendous. As for the total experience at Canterbury, that would be hard to top. The sense of holiness at that place, the history and the wonderful sound of the combined choirs right from their first notes will be memories for us all to treasure. Mr. Leck and Mr. Flood were both great, as we knew they would be, and the final concerts were magnificent!"

- Tim Cahalan, Logansport Children's Choir, Logansport, IN

**"The entire tour was extremely well organized,** and I was particularly impressed with the concert venues. Each afforded our choir a different but thrilling acoustic in which to perform. From the small, intimate Holy Trinity Church in Stratford, to the grandeur of Canterbury Cathedral and Notre Dame, the majestic architecture of La Madeleine, we always had a fabulous place in which to perform to make beautiful music for appreciative audiences. The scheduled workshops with David and Henry were fantastic learning experiences for both the choir and me."

- John Fleischman, Western New York Children's Chorus, Orchard Park, NY

"We had a wonderful experience with you. It was well worth our hard work and the experience was invaluable. **I couldn't have been happier with the accommodations, the guidance, the festival itself, the venues** and it has meant so much to the lives of the young people who were a part of it. I still hear from them - one of our soloists who was with us now has her doctorate and is a college professor in voice."

- Carolee Curtright, Pueri Cantores Children's Choir, Lincoln, NB

**"My heartiest congratulations to you for putting together an experience that, to me, qualifies as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for these young artists, their directors, and their chaperones."**

- Frank Jacobs, The Summit Choral Society, Akron, OH

**"Our trip was an unforgettable experience that changed many lives.** Our singers will never be the same. Their world outlook has grown and the confidence they gained through performing the literature selected by the conductors was immeasurable. We have repeated much of the repertoire from 1998 and have increased the level of difficulty on most of the repertoire we now perform. The tour experience convinced many of our young singers that they were capable of great things. What more could anyone ask for than to inspire new musical dreamers!"

- Dr. Betty Karol Wilson, Classical Chorus of Abilene, Abilene, TX

"Can you ever top performing in Canterbury Cathedral? The time and opportunity to know the Cathedral and the town so intimately was superb!"

- Robyn Lana, Children's Choir of Greater Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH

"Our England Tour was fabulous, one we will never forget. **I would recommend this festival to other choirs without hesitation."**

- Mary Krauss, Parent and Shadow Tour Participant Meredith College Girl's Chorale, Raleigh, NC

"I commend you on all your efforts and energy spent on the planning of The International Children's Choir Festival. The accommodations were very comfortable and inviting. The selection of the tours provided was "well done". The concerts given by the children were multi-sensory experiences. The cathedrals, churches and chapels all had their own ambiance and lent themselves to the beautiful music created by the voices of the children. Thank you for having a major role in providing such wonderful experiences to the children and the many adults who felt the magic."

- Kathy Barleen, Parent and Shadow Tour Participant Contra Costa Children's Choir, Pleasant Hill, CA

"Thank you so much for making our Canterbury trip so magnificent. This trip truly made a difference in many lives. **From the musical to organizational aspects, all was handled with great attention to detail.** David Flood and Henry Leck were wonderful with the children as they came away with increased musical maturity."

- Dr. Faythe Freese, The Austin Children's Choir, Austin, TX

"Thank you and your staff for an incredible trip to England! We feel so very privileged for the musical opportunities we had while in Canterbury and London. **You and your staff did a fantastic job of planning each part of the trip.** Henry Leck and David Flood were incredible! My children loved both men. The individual workshops with them really thrilled my singers. My singers wrote in their journals about the energy and expertise of the conductors and how they liked to hang around with the kids after rehearsals. That meant a lot to the singers. My singers were thrilled with the magnificent music they made together with the other choirs. They especially liked singing with the orchestra though they liked singing in the cathedral too. I feel a real regret for each of my singers who didn't go to England with us. While their reasons were strong enough to decide against going, they seem weak when weighed against all the benefits and joys we reaped. What a great vision you have had for our young people! Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your hard work on our behalf. I can't wait to go again!"

- Laura Swartzendruber, Kokomo Children's Choir, Kokomo, IN

"My choir and I cannot thank you enough for the wonderful experience we had. **I continue to be amazed at the "ripple effect" this trip has had on my students;** as I told them during the trip and will remind them of frequently, they are forever changed and will not be the same singers/humans ever again now that they have completed this trip."

- Michelle Klotz, Children's Choir of Waukesha, Waukesha, WI

**"This festival choir was the most polished of any group we have been a part of;** our workshops with David Flood and Henry Leck were outstanding; our separate concerts at Canterbury and St. Paul's Cathedral were absolutely thrilling. In fact, the St. Paul's concert has gone to the top of my "outstanding CCC memories" list - replacing Carnegie Hall!"

- Peggy Rosenkranz, Centennial Children's Chorus, Fort Collins, CO

"It was wonderful to see our kids from Hawaii being part of that sensational festival. **There are so many wonderful musical memories that I have had in my lifetime. The festival is one of the greats!** I cannot thank you enough for the impact this has made on me and all the children and parents that came on this tour."

- Ester Macy, Ko'olauloa Children's Choir, Laie, HI

**"It certainly was a "class act" in every way. Your organization and attention to detail were without fault,** and we (and I) felt very honored to be a part of such an outstanding festival. Both Henry and David were superb in both their leadership and their interaction with our singers."

- Sandra Miller, Oregon Children's Choir and Youth Chorale, Lake Oswego, OR