

June 16, 2008

Our first day of The “Blues City” Tour has gone well. Everything went as planned- we left St. Peter’s about 7:45 am with everything we needed for the week packed on the two buses- snacks, drinks, uniforms, vestments, risers, and suitcases as usual, but this year we also have a myriad of percussion and sound equipment for two of our commissioned pieces. The drive to the Knoxville area proceeded smoothly with a quick rest stop outside Asheville and then on to The Museum of Appalachia where we ate our bag lunches as expected- but with a peacock in attendance! He was definitely used to getting handouts from the school groups that frequent the museum. We were treated to a special musical presentation of music from Appalachia and then wandered the living museum on our own. We saw many structures from the time period, sheep and more peacocks and spent time in the Hall of Fame looking at a huge collection of artifacts, from musical instruments to caskets. Everyone had a fun time throughout the afternoon and of course there was the quick trip through the gift shop on the way out of the museum to the bus. Then it was on to First Presbyterian for our first rehearsal and concert.



It is always amazing how even the first day of unloading the buses for a concert goes smoothly. Everyone has their job to do and their piece of equipment they are responsible for and even the first time, we appear to be a “well-oiled machine”! It usually takes about an hour or less to determine the best concert set up, the best rooms to use for suitcases, uniform changing, etc. and then actually get everything unloaded, in its proper place and for rehearsal to begin. In addition to reviewing the music and working on specific areas in the songs, an important part of the rehearsal is learning where to stand on stage and where to sit in the pews when not singing and how and when to get from one place to the other. The kids performed the logistics flawlessly- again, a great accomplishment for the first day.



A quick dinner of pizza, salad and fruit followed and it was off to change for the concert and perform. We

had a wonderful audience. It was a large crowd for tour and they were extremely warm and appreciative. The kids seemed to appreciate them also, and performed well. They completed the concert to a LONG standing ovation! The soloists for “The Lord Bless You and Keep You” were Kelvin Jones and Carolyn Dalrymple. They set a high standard for the soloists for the rest of the week. It’s always a surprise when the soloists are announced at rehearsal, and a time all anticipates.



After the concert, we reloaded the bus and met our wonderful host families. The people at First Presbyterian are so generous. Several families took home more than one pair of our kids and all were looking forward to relaxing with friends for the remainder of the evening.

Tomorrow we continue our travels west, visiting The Hermitage before arriving at Glendale Baptist Church, Nashville. Check back throughout the week for more updates!