

BYC tour to Venice 2008

Category : Berkshire Youth Choir (BYC)

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A review of the Youth Choir's tour to Venice in 2008.

If I were to depict an epic tale involving spies, scandals and large explosions, I would by and large be talking about another tour (or possibly a future tour, Peters take note). From the top, we started in a fashion befitting any good tour. We woke up really early and boarded a coach (which we spent approximately 2 of our 10 days on!). In accordance with the rest of Venice, our hotel was cosy and nice. However, for a group of young, lively musicians, remaining quiet is not an easy task, especially when the walls do nothing to mask the sound. Venice is a truly magnificent historical city, full of Italians, romance, beauty, culture and architecture. From a cultural viewpoint, there are obvious differences to us in the way that males express their interests with no subtlety at all and in the fact that Italians cannot queue. The BYC had the great privilege of being shown our tour guide's family vineyard where we learned about the subtle art of wine making. This mini tour within the tour culminated in the cellar where we gave an enthusiastic performance of King Henry VIII's 'Past Time With Good Company' as a sign of our appreciation for the visit. I suppose I really ought to comment on the music. Sorry if I start to get a little sentimental on you but after five years of BYC (3 of which have been with our bearded leader Peter Hunt), I have to say that the sound of the choir and quality of the concerts inspires hope for the future of an already renowned choir. Moreover, I believe that the ever-careful balance of music and fun was reached without compromise to the quality at all. It is also worth mentioning our other conductor Peter Asprey, who chose some of the brilliant repertoire (our schoolboy-like conductor is all grown up). In addition, I must pay tribute to all the brilliant staff who kept us in check, played the piano, patched us up and generally helped us through. The last evening was one of great joy and sadness for everyone. Singing our hearts out, we finished our last concert with several encores and a church full of people trying to hold back tears (the choir and conductor inclusive). After this we made our way back to the hotel for the traditional 'end of tour' shindig where awards were given, parodies sung and toasts given to mark the end of a truly brilliant tour. The tour ended pretty much how it had started: on a (very high) high and a 30 hour coach ride to Reading!

By Ben Lee