



NSAA Concert Tour of Norway

June 19-July 5, 2005

June 19 -- Everyone arrived in Trondheim today and checked into the beautiful Radisson SAS Royal Garden Hotel right on the Nidelve River. The sun was shining, so many explored the area nearby. We had a wonderful meal at the hotel to meet everyone. The men practiced this evening and are ready for their first concert.

June 20 -- We started the day with a bus tour of Trondheim including stops at the Nidaros Cathedral and the Christensten Fortress. It is a beautiful city along the winding river and the fjord. Even saw a statue of Leif Erikson on the pier. We had an hour long bus ride to Selbu for our evening concert at a beautiful old stone church -- the initial church was built in 1100. Acoustics were great and the concert went very well. We were greeted with a reception in the nearby museum and learned about the history of the mill stones and the Selbu knitting that made the Selbu area famous. A quick stop at the knitting / gift shop ended our evening before the bus ride home. This was a great way to start our trip!!

June 21 -- Today was a free day to explore Trondheim. Some people went to the Ringve Music History Museum, others visited the Trøndelag Folk Museum, or the Archbishops Palace museums by the Cathedral, or took a boat trip to Monk Island, or just shopped in downtown Trondheim. A few spent time visiting relatives in the area. Tonight's concert was a Byneset Kirke, another beautiful old stone church overlooking the fjord. A local choir also performed with us and they were great. We ended the day with a nice dinner back at the hotel.

June 22 -- This morning started with a bus ride in the rain to the airport and ended with a flight to sunny Stavanger. The bus that greeted us at the airport also served as a tour bus of the Stavanger area. We went to a high overlook to see "all of Norway" (as the guide stated), and then drove around the city and toured the magnificent Domkirke (cathedral) in downtown Stavanger. At 4:30 pm, we met our host to walk the 1/2 mile or so to St. Johannes Church for a rehearsal and concert. Our concert was hosted by the Ladies Chorus Kvinnekoret Concentus. They performed as well with some beautiful music. A late night dinner on the waterfront (or in our

hotel) ended the night for most. It is amazing to see how light it still is at 11:30 pm when we finished eating and saw all the young people out and about. Congrats to Lyle on the birth of a new granddaughter!!

June 23 -- Today was a free day in Stavanger. Most went to the Sardine Canning Museum. Others went to the Petroleum Museum to learn about the oil industry on the North Shore of Norway. Some went on a harbor cruise out to see the fjords and Pulpit Rock and Jake climbed to the top of Pulpit Rock!! The day ended with a Skt. Hans Fest at a local farm, with grilling steaks, a special church service inside the barn, music accompanied by Ray's accordion, and a huge bonfire for midsummer. It was a great way to meet with local people and learn about a very special tradition here in Norway.

June 24 -- This morning we boarded an express catamaran for the trip to Haugesund. Our boat seemed pretty small compared to the Queen Mary 2 which has arrived that morning in the Stavanger harbor - what a ship!! A 1 1/2 hour ride brought us to Haugesund. We were greeted by a bus and tour director for tour of the city. We visited the Haraldshaugen, the national monument of Norway - the burial site of King Harold Fairhair who united Norway in 872. Nearby was Krosshaugen, a stone cross erected in early Christian periods about 1000. We also learned about the importance of the herring industry in forming this city -- and got a taste as well. Most spent some time exploring Haugesund, a city built along the shores of a north-south channel. Our guide stated that people would point to the sea as the "way north" and that is how Norway got it's name. Most of us found the statue of Marilyn Monroe on the waterfront - her father had immigrated to the US from Haugesund. The Amanda Hotel we are staying in has a film theme and is named after the famous Amanda Awards given at the film festival held here each year. We ended the day with a group dinner, and watched the beautiful sunset about 11pm.

June 25 -- Today the choir sang in the beautifully modern Udland Kirke. The steeple was shaped like the bow of a boat on the waves of the roof. The church was strikingly beautiful but the crowd was small. The afternoon was free to explore Haugesund. The city has a pedestrian mall that was the center of many shops -- only two with tourist souvenirs. Our hotel was located on the main channel that went through the city -- a great place to sit and watch boats go by. We surprised Ed Kramer with a "waffle cake" for his birthday. Waffles were available every afternoon from 3-6pm for all to enjoy.

June 26 -- After breakfast in our hotel (all the hotels have wonderful breakfast buffets), Roger Buhr led us in an English-language church service at the hotel. A few ventured to the church in Haugesund for the Norwegian service. We left Haugesund at 1:30 pm on the Flaggruten for the 3 hour trip to Bergen. We are staying at another beautiful Radisson SAS hotel right on the plaza next to the Ole Bull statue. This evening we headed south for a joint concert with the Fana Manskor in the old Fana Domkirke. The concert was great and well attended. We enjoyed a reception of homemade sandwiches and desserts with the other chorus.

June 27 -- Today we awoke to scattered clouds and some sun in Bergen. We learned last night that they have had rain almost every day for 2 months, so this was a pleasant surprise. We had an organized bus tour out to Trondhaugen, the home of Edvard Grieg. What a beautiful site. Then we headed back into Bergen and visited the Hanseatic Museum on the Bryggen. These buildings

have been around for many centuries and are often pictured on posters of this area. The afternoon was free to explore Bergen, the Fish Market, Håkon's Hall, the Domkirke (Cathedral), Mariakirke (this church is the oldest building in Bergen), and other sites. Several caught the funicular and rode to Fløyen for a beautiful view overlooking Bergen. It is hard to believe our trip is half over. We have had a great time so far, wonderful concerts, attendance of over 100 at each concert but one, and are enjoying getting to know each other well. We are looking forward to the remainder of the trip.

June 28 -- Today we took an early morning express catamaran up the Sogenefjord to Balestrand. Unfortunately it was cloudy, but still a beautiful ride. We arrive about noon and checked into the unique Kvikne Hotel overlooking the fjord. Several people spent the afternoon in the home of a local artist; others explored the town. We were served a buffet dinner in the hotel -- the food was elegantly prepared and tasted fantastic!! A prayer service was being held in the local St. Olaf's church so a few of us attended. We were invited to have the men sing the following evening in the church. Others attended a piano performance of Grieg music in the hotel. A very relaxing day.

June 29 -- The morning breakfast at the Kvikne was as impressive and the evening buffet -- and the sun was shining besides. Some hand-made posters were distributed around the town and hotel to generate interest in tonight's concert. Many people took a boat trip up to the Glacier Museum. The ride up the fjord had many waterfalls and photogenic scenery. The trip included a bus ride to one finger of the largest glacier in Europe. Other people explored this unique little community. We ate an earlier buffet dinner in order to get ready for the concert at 9 pm. We had a packed church, plus 50 or so people who listened to part or all of the concert from outside! Many people stopped to say thanks and show their appreciate for the concert.

June 30 -- This was one of the longest days of the trip. It started with another boat trip to start the day, this time to the city of Flåm. Then a ride up the valley on the Flåmsbana railway -- an old time train that proceeds up the steep valley through 20 tunnels and past spectacular waterfalls. At the top, we caught another train from Myrdahl to Gol. Our bus was waiting in Gol to drive us to Lillehammer. We had a short hour between check-in and a joint concert with the Klang Manskor in the Lillehammer church. A wonderful dessert reception followed and a chance to renew acquaintances. The Klang Manskor had just finished a USA tour which included stops in most of the cities where NSAA choirs had hosted them.

July 1 -- We started the day with a tour of Lillehammer and a short stop for shopping in the downtown area. It was great to see the ski jumps used in the Olympics, plus we drove past many other venues used during the Olympics. We had a short guided tour of the Maihaugen Folk Museum, an outdoor museum located in Lillehammer. We visited an original stave church and went inside farm buildings that were part of the museum. After checking out of the hotel, many returned to Maihaugen to see additional areas and saw some demonstrations of cheese being cooked over an open flame, flax being beaten into fiber for clothing, and how to make felt. Back on the bus for a drive along Lake Mjøsa to Hamar. Here we saw the Olympic skating rink that looks like an up-side-down viking ship. We arrive in Oslo about 5:30 pm with the evening free to explore. Happy Birthday to John Myhre today.

July 2 -- Today started with a 3+ hour tour of Oslo. We saw many historic buildings downtown, including the city hall where the Nobel Peace Prize is given each December, the Royal Palace, Parliament Buildings, and the Akershus Castle. We walked through Vigeland Park with the many granite statues. Then a ride out to the Bygdøy peninsula to visit the Viking Ship Museum and the Kon Tiki Museum. The afternoon was free before a bus ride to Drøbak for the evening concert. This concert was held outdoors in a natural rock amphitheater along the Oslo Fjord. A beautiful setting in a special little town. The pastor took us on a walk to see the town center and the waterfront after the concert before the bus ride back to our hotel.

July 3 -- Our last full day started with the chorus singing for church in the Bekkelaget Church in Oslo. The organist here is Trond Dahlen, arranger of the Per Spellman song sung by the chorus. The church service included four baptisms and communion. It was a special and meaningful service to attend and the music of the chorus was a beautiful addition to the service. We were hosted with coffee and waffles after the service and the men gave a short concert on the church steps of the non-religious music in their program. Another bus ride to Drøbak and then a ferry ride across the fjord to Oscarsborg Fortress. This fortress is on an island that was used to protect the Oslo harbor for many years. The fortress was opened in June 2004 to the public. The men sang a concert inside the walls of the old fortress with attendees sitting on the grass. Another beautiful setting for the final concert of the tour! Back via ferry and bus to our hotel for a farewell dinner. It was the last night that all members of the tour group would be together, so thanks and awards were given to the directors. Many photos were taken and some members of the group said good bye.

July 4 -- Fourth of July in Oslo!! Group members scattered all over the city and community for a day of individualized sightseeing. Many toured the Akershus Castle and the Resistance Museum, some toured the Royal Palace, others toured the new Peace Prize Museum, even others climbed to the top of the giant Holmenkollen Ski Jump. Others spent time visiting family in the area, going for a boat ride on the fjord, or just relaxing. At noon, the cannons at the castle sounded 12 times. We claimed it was fireworks for the 4th, but found out it was really in honor of the Queen's birthday. We joined together at the hotel for our last group meal. The waiters surprised us with fireworks in honor of the 4th of July -- a pineapple with an American flag and a huge sparkler!! What a way to enjoy America's Independence Day.

July 5 -- People departed from the hotel in various shifts for the bus ride to the airport and flights home to the US. Others left for visits with family in Norway and Germany. We can all look back on this trip as a special time this summer where new friendships were made and great music was shared with people in Norway. We look forward to a reunion of the chorus members and those who traveled with our group next summer during Sangerfest. Thanks for the support of many people back home too. Mange Tusen Takk!!