

WESTERN WIND TO MAKE FIRST TOUR TO AUSTRALIA
MARCH 16-26, 2012
JOIN THE ENTOURAGE -- AND THE SINGING!

The Western Wind Vocal Ensemble (WWVE) will perform at the Australian Jewish Choral Festival in Sydney Conservatorium, and at the “Shir Madness” pop / folk festival at Bondi Beach in Sydney. They’ll give a concert in the famous Jenolan Caves near the beautiful Blue Mountains 3 hours west of Sydney.

You’re invited to tour with the ensemble, meet local festival participants and singers, enjoy these concerts, and sightsee around Sydney on your own or with others in the entourage.

WWVE will also offer an optional package of workshops to festival participants and to interested members of the entourage. Participants enjoy a full-day workshop at the Choral Festival on Sunday and a Wednesday evening rehearsal led by Western Wind, and sing with the AJCF chorus at the Shir Madness festival the following Sunday.

Western Wind and the Australian producer, Maju Music, have secured a small number of apartment hotel accommodations very close to Sydney Harbour and the Botanical Gardens at an extremely favorable rate. So we can offer you a package including concerts, receptions, hotel (kitchenette studio, with breakfast), and some sightseeing, for far less than the market rate for the hotel alone.

A limited number of studios are available, so we’ll all have to act fast. If you’re interested, please send us an e-mail now and be ready to sign up for the trip. The available apartments will be allocated to entourage members in order of commitment. After these studios have been allocated, bookings may reflect higher accommodation costs.

Look at your calendars and talk to friends now about joining this unique tour.

- For details, see www.westernwind.org/australia2012.pdf
- If interested send a message to info@westernwind.org . *Please put “AUSTRALIA ENTOURAGE” in the subject line. We’ll contact you as soon as payment details are final.*

Mid March in Sydney is officially early autumn, with fairly cool weather (72 degrees F by day, 59 by night) and some rain (4-5 inches in the month). Temperate gardens in the Mountains are at their spectacular best. What a getaway after a long American winter!

ENTOURAGE DETAILS AND PRICING

A package fee of **only US\$1600 per person** will cover:

- Ten (10) nights accommodation (arriving Friday March 16, departing Monday March 26), double occupancy in a kitchenette studio, including a small breakfast, and weekly (not daily) housekeeping service. Single occupancy will cost about US\$800 additional.
- a welcoming dinner on Friday evening March 16, near the “headquarters” hotel.
- admission to the opening night concert by Western Wind and a reception at the Australian Jewish Choral Festival (AJCF) Saturday March 17.
- admission to the concert at Jenolan Caves Friday March 23, with tour of caves, receptions, and transportation by local friends of the festivals.

- admission all day to the Shir Madness festival at Bondi Beach Sunday March 25. This package fee includes a modest participation charge to help support the concert tour.

Monday March 19 through Thursday March 22 are at leisure for sightseeing. Stroll through the Domain, gardens, and if you wish, even to the Observatory and out to the Sydney Opera House on the harbour. We can suggest local commercial tour operators. Some of us “entourists” may strike out on our own, using public transportation and combination tickets to attractions.

You may check in to the hotel one day earlier (Thursday March 15) for an additional \$80 per person, double occupancy. Daily housekeeping, parking, and other services are available at reasonable rates. Inquire about longer stays.

You are responsible for air travel, airport transfers, passport, visa (an electronic tourist visa requires \$20 application fee), meals except the daily breakfast, and all other sightseeing and tourist activities.

OPTIONAL WORKSHOPS AND SINGING OPPORTUNITIES

Take part in an ensemble singing workshop Sunday at AJCF and a Wednesday evening rehearsal, and sing with the ACJF chorus at Shir Madness, **for only an additional US\$150**. There may be an additional workshop on Thursday evening hosted by the chamber choir *Bel acappella*.

TENTATIVE CALENDAR

Thu 15	Arrive one day early (optional)**
Fri 16	Arrive SYD airport. Evening: hosted dinner near hotel
Sat 17	AJCF Evening Concert/Program/Reception (Sydney Conservatorium)
Sun 18	Free. (Workshop singers: AJCF ensemble singing workshop, Conservatorium)*
Mon 19	Free. Evening: WWVE performs at Sydney Jewish Museum, invitation-only.**
Tue 20	Free day.
Wed 21	Free. (Workshop singers: evening rehearsal for Shir Madness)*
Thu 22	Free. (Workshop singers: tentative mini-workshop with <i>Bel acappella</i> , Sydney)*
Fri 23	Jenolan Caves tour, evening concert, reception. Transportation provided by local hosts. (Possible added tour of Blue Mountains attractions on way to Jenolan)**
Sat 24	Free day.
Sun 25	Shir Madness Festival (Bondi Beach, Sydney).
Mon 26	Depart SYD airport

* workshop package only

** not included in entourage or workshop packages

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BONUS EVENTS

Stay tuned for additional events. We may be able to find local hosts to drive entourage members to spectacular vistas and attractions in the Blue Mountains.

ATTRACTIONS

The “headquarters” hotel will be close to Sydney Harbour, The Rocks, and the Royal Domain including the Botanical Gardens and the Sydney Conservatorium (just 20 minutes by foot). It’s close to Circular Quay, ferries to the Taronga Zoo, and many other attractions. From The Rocks or on a ferry trip, you’ll have spectacular views of Sydney Harbour, the Opera House, and the Harbour Bridge; some of us will want to take a walk *onto* the Bridge. You’ll be within an easy cab ride (or a long walk) of the Aquarium, Wildlife Sydney, the Observatory, and the Sydney Tower Eye. You may wish to visit the Sydney Jewish Museum or book a tour of the Opera House. You may also wish to visit the Museum of Contemporary Art, Australian Museum, Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Powerhouse Museum. Combination passes are available.

Friday’s auto trip to Jenolan Caves takes over three hours (twisty roads the last hour!) passing alongside the Blue Mountains National Park. It may be possible to combine this trip with sightseeing in the park – the Zig Zag railway, Scenic World cable car and view points, Leura village, and so forth. Some of us may take advantage of CityRail and the ExplorerLink bus to visit the Blue Mountains (but not the caves) earlier in the week at budget rates.

Excursion companies can book travel to the vineyards of Hunter Valley or down the coast for ocean views, as well as to the Blue Mountains and the caves.

AIR TRAVEL

You are responsible for air travel and airport transfers. As of early November, air flights from New York (JFK, EWR) to Sydney and back with one connection in Los Angeles or San Francisco cost about \$1800-\$1900 including taxes. You can save about \$200 with a second stopover each way. The best itineraries take 21-24 hours each way. Sydney local time is 15 hours “ahead” of New York, so Wednesday evening departures arrive Sydney on Friday morning. Returning Monday mid-day from Sydney you will reach New York late the same day. The airport is about half an hour from the Harbour by shuttle, taxis, rail link, or bus.

MORE IDEAS

There’s a whole country to be explored. If you have time and money for a longer visit, consider taking fuller advantage of the long air flights to see more of eastern Australia or journey to the interior or the North, or even to Perth in the west.