

Christus Tour

Walk In Love

By Elisabeth Coats

There has been a growing excitement within Concordia's Christus Chorus as they prepare for their national tour to Texas. The choir has been embarking on Holy Week tours since 1995. Dr. David Mennicke, the current director of Christus Chorus, recalls that in 2009 the choir set out on tour over spring break "because of the way the calendar fell." Mennicke said, "Students vastly preferred the Holy Week tour. It was more meaningful for them." Mennicke selects musical works that are appropriate for Holy Week. Embarking on a tour over Easter break aligns very well with the choir's name, which translates to 'chorus of Christ'.

The Holy Week tours have greatly impacted CSP's music department. "It gives us a strong focus on the promise statement 'Christ is honored,'" declared Mennicke. The repertoire that Christus sings is primarily Christian with a few secular pieces added as well. Having the choir prepare all year long for a Holy Week tour helps bring more of a spiritual definition to the work that not only Christus Chorus has done, but everyone involved in the music department.

In Mennicke's twenty-five years of work and devotion to Concordia, he has developed a rotation in deciding where the choir goes from year to year. "We alternate years between a flying and driving tour. Every four years is an international tour and a short bus tour within the international tour." As for deciding which coun-



try, he picks three different ones and receives input from the choir. "That's what we did with Ghana as well as South Korea," he said. Mennicke has a similar approach with the tours within the country, developing a list of pros and cons to every new tour location.

As for this year, Christus will have a "kick-off" concert in Afton, near the Twin Cities. They will then fly to Dallas on Saturday and stay for the first weekend preceding Holy Week. "Then we'll do a triangle down to San Antonio," explained Mennicke. "We are flying across to Houston, and then we'll come back on Friday to do a noon service on the way to Dallas, and we'll perform at an evening service in a suburb outside of Dallas." The choir will have the opportunity to visit exciting locations such as Galveston Beach, the Kennedy Space Center, and the Alamo.

The week after Easter Break, the choir has a chance to settle into the home show and complete the experience of the tour. Dr. Mennicke calls this show "dessert... everything is really learned and solid, and it is very fun to do [the concert] for your family and friends." This year's homecoming show will be Friday, April 25th at 7:30 P.M. in the Graebner Memorial Chapel. This event is free for all and is one not to be missed. Dr. Mennicke and the Christus Chorus will surely be excited to share their gifts of music after a successful Holy Week tour.

Band Tour Recap

By Meredith Wagner

Over the first few days of Spring Break, Concordia's Concert Band went on its first out-of-state tour in over 20 years. The trip consisted of stops in Albert Lea, MN; Kansas City, MO; Omaha, NE; and Sioux Falls, SD Monday evening. The group arrived back in St. Paul on Tuesday morning. They played in a different LCMS church in every city, and three times at St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Kansas City (one evening concert, two church services the following morning). Oboe player Karina Schlect accurately touched on few different aspects of the trip as she said, "I loved how much we grew as a band throughout the tour. Our music improved tremendously, and a lot of friendships were both formed and strengthened. As far as free time goes, I loved the beautiful weather we had in Kansas City and Omaha. Playing ultimate frisbee (without coats or shoes!) was definitely a highlight for me."

The trip was a great community-building opportunity for the entire group of musicians. During the average school week, the band has two one-hour practice times on Monday and Wednesday which are spent practicing music, leaving little time for much social interactions or relationship building. Fortunately, there is nothing like spending approximately 12 hours on a bus together over a period of 4 days to start building some relationships and give a feeling of community. There were many learning opportunities throughout the trip, as well as a few teaching opportunities. Throughout the trip, the band improved exponentially in their playing abilities, and was able to make the music they played more dynamic as time went on. The teaching opportunity was in Omaha on Monday morning, when the band met up with Concordia



Lutheran High School. The group of high school and college musicians had a chance to play through a couple of the high school's music pieces under the guidance of the Concordia University Concert Band conductor, Professor Aaron Isakson. "I was surprised at the level of difficulty that the [high school] band was playing at, but it was really neat to be able to play along with them; it made the hour we played together go by really fast," remarked Andrea Timm, an alto saxophone player.

A break from traveling and playing was provided with free time on Saturday and Monday afternoon in Kansas City and Omaha, respectively. In Kansas City, students were

dropped at Zona Rosa, an outdoor mall and restaurant center. It consisted of a lot of shops that can be found in Minnesota, but nonetheless, it was nice to have leisure time to stroll around and take in the scenery. In Omaha, students had the choice of going to the Henry Doorly Zoo or the Omaha Old Market District.

Both places were said to be great fun, and part of that had to do with the weather, which was a beautiful 65 degrees and sunny. The Old

Market is an area of cobblestone streets lined with unique shops and restaurants. The host families said it has a great night-life scene, which unfortunately the band did not get to participate in. The zoo was also a hit, with a great indoor tropical rainforest, huge aquarium, and an impressive glass dome that housed their desert plants and animals exhibition.

Overall, the tour was a great success. As always, there were things that worked well, and other things that could use some improvement. However, it was a wonderful opportunity to build social relationships within the band and make the students better musicians as a whole.