

The International One World Choir Sings in Major European Cathedrals

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The International One World Crusade was invited to sing during the Sunday Midday Mass in St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome

The International One World Choir, consisting of 30 young people from 12 different nations of the world, were well received in many of the major European cathedrals during their recent European tour with the International One World Crusade. The choir is sponsored by the International Cultural Foundation, under whose auspices they perform with an aim to bring a message of peace and unification through their music and song.

The choir was formed in England in June 1975, when young people from 25 nations came together to form the International One World Crusade, European Team, to crusade the message of the God-centered family and community in an increasingly materialistic society. The International Cultural Foundation then arranged for the choir to be able to sing in a variety of places, from hospitals and old-age homes to factories and schools. Showing a living example of the unity they sing about, the choir lives in community and is self-supporting, having to overcome the many barriers of language and culture. They come from such diverse countries as Uruguay, Guyana, Jamaica, Rhodesia, the United States and most of the European nations. The choir performed in numerous concerts in Bath, Glasgow and London, before moving on to Germany, where they underwent training in the classics. The peak of their stay in Germany was a concert in Munich, where the choir was able to perform pieces from Beethoven, Schubert, and many traditional German songs.



At the Pope's request, they also sang for a meeting of cardinals from all over Europe

Upon this foundation of training, the choir travelled with the Crusade to France, and in Paris the International Cultural Foundation arranged for them to sing in many churches and hospitals, as well as give concerts in Paris, Lyon and Bordeaux. Perhaps the highlight of their stay in France was the opportunity to sing in the three major cathedrals, Notre Dame, Sacre Coeur and Invalides. These great cathedrals, which have hosted many of the greatest choirs in Europe's long history, provided magnificent acoustics for the fresh, meaningful songs and hymns, many of which were written by members of the Crusade themselves. The performances also aimed at a unity among the churches, the young people having come from many religious backgrounds to sing of their belief in one God for all mankind.

Also in France, a folk-group was formed comprising four of the choir members from different nations, to sing the traditional and modern folk-ballads of the different European nations. With guitars, recorders and light percussion instruments, the folk-group was able to reach a different level of people, and provide light accompaniment to the deeper songs of the choir's repertoire.



The choir prepares for a recorded broadcast by Radio Vatican

When the choir moved on to Italy they were quickly received with warmth by the Italian people after their successes in France. Shortly after their arrival they accompanied the Easter Sunday Mass service in the famous Duomo Cathedral of Milan. The congregation pressed forward to the altar rail after the service and asked to hear more songs, and the usual reserve of a Catholic Mass was dispensed with when members of the congregation burst out in applause. The next step could only be the Vatican, and sure enough in Rome the choir was received three times to sing in Vatican City.

The first performance was for a recorded broadcast by Radio Vatican, the most powerful radio station in the world, and in fact the first radio station in history, for that was where Marconi discovered and developed radio. The recording was later given to the choir and is being made into a long-playing album. This was the second performance sponsored by the International Cultural Foundation for Radio Vatican, who also broadcast the famous "Little Angels" folk singing troupe from Korea.

From there, the choir was invited to sing during the Sunday Midday Mass in St. Peter's Cathedral, after the Pope gave his weekly blessing to the people from his window. This could only be succeeded by a personal audience with the Pope, which took place three days later when the choir sang at the Pope's personal request, to a meeting of cardinals from all over Europe. The choir sang "Aimons Dieu Notre Pere" ("We love God our Father"), a French rendition of a traditional Korean song, "Sarangay."

Following this unexpected performance, the choir could not expect to go any higher in the direction that it was going, and so a change took place. The choir was increased in number from 30 to 44, and divided in two parts for their return to Germany. In this way one section of the choir will be able to perform, while the other section is able to support the whole choir and do more crusading and missionary work.

Whatever may be in store for the International One World Choir, if their second year is as exciting as their first they should have a very interesting future!



In France, they performed in Notre Dame Cathedral