

Tour to Canada – July, 2014

Report by Rebecca Coombs

The college choir spent the first three weeks of July 2014 on tour in the Quebec and Ontario provinces of Canada. Starting in Quebec City, we travelled south and finished in Toronto, having had a very successful tour.



Delayed flight connections on the way to Quebec City meant that several members of the choir had been travelling for twenty-four hours by the time we reached our first hostel just outside the walls of the old city. However, we had a day to recover and rehearse, moving to a hostel in the

centre of the old city. We loved exploring the beautiful city, particularly on a walking tour which was brilliantly led by Marie Legroulx, the wife of a Christ's alumnus. Our first concert, at Notre Dame Basilica Cathedral, was extremely well received, and left us wishing we were staying in the city for longer!



We reached Montreal on 3rd July, coinciding with the international jazz festival which, whilst sapping some of our audience numbers, provided several evenings of great entertainment. (On one evening, we were competing with Michael Buble!) We also discovered that the Notre Dame Basilica, whilst very impressive, was very difficult to sing in! Nevertheless, we enjoyed a very successful concert in Westmount and it was a really fun time of year to be in Montreal. A highlight was listening to members of choir and



the organists play one of the outdoor pianos at the viewpoint overlooking the city.

Canada's capital was our next stop, where we really enjoyed being hosted for the first time on the tour. We sang services at Christ Church Cathedral, and concerts at First Baptist Church and St Barnabas. The ByWard market was a particular highlight of our time in Ottawa, as was the tour of the Parliament buildings. We were treated to a Pimms reception by the Cambridge Society of Ottawa where we enjoyed generous hospitality and meeting



Cambridge alumni in the area.



We then left big cities behind us for a while as we moved on to Brockville. Many of the choir walked along the St Lawrence river which looks very impressive from the town harbour. We were extremely well looked after by Jeff Reusing at St Lawrence

Anglican Church, who let us all pile into his house to watch the World Cup semi-final with pizza! We really enjoyed our concert at St Lawrence which very warmly received.

We were incredibly well looked after in Kingston, Canada's old capital. The city lies where the St Lawrence river meets Lake Ontario, so many of the choir enjoyed kayaking on the lake and visits to Wolfe Island. We performed in St James Anglican Church and sang a service in St George's Cathedral.



Our trip also coincided with Kingston Buskers festival which we enjoyed encountering.



Having been assured that there was not much to do in Brampton, we were pleasantly surprised! The annual choir football match was held and we also had our busiest day of tour with a service in the morning at Christ Church, Brampton followed by evensong and then a concert at St

Bride's, Mississauga! The choir bore up very well!

Our concert at St Luke's, Burlington, was completely sold out, and we very much enjoyed a generous reception event after the concert. We stayed with our hosts in Burlington for two nights but on the second day travelled to St Catherine's to perform in St Thomas' and to visit the Niagara Falls. It was fantastic to see the Falls both from above and from below on boats which travel right into the spray. Despite spectacularly ugly tourist attractions next door, the beauty of the Falls was a highlight of the tour. St Thomas' church had one of the best acoustics of the churches on tour and we performed Lauridsen's *O Magnum Mysterium* in the round.

At this point, we reached a hard-earned day off in Toronto. People travelled into downtown Toronto, visited the Art Gallery of Ontario, and enjoyed time off in the hostel. Over the next few days in Toronto we sang in Grace Church on the Hill, St Cuthbert's, and St Martin in the Field and visited the Toronto Islands, the beach, the waterfront and St Lawrence market. It was good to spend a longer amount of time in one city and get to know it a bit better.



We are incredibly grateful to all of the churches and alumni who facilitated the organisation of much of the tour this year. We had a brilliant time and hope that we will be able to return at some point in the future.