

CHINA TOUR 2008 NEWS – Volume 2a (January 2008)

Happy New Year! We hope this newsletter finds you happy and healthy in 2008. Due to the holidays (and the flu), this newsletter will be divided into two parts, with travel planning information coming later this month. (Kindly note: if you've sent me email and I haven't responded yet, I'll be in touch this week.)

PLEASE read this entire message carefully. This newsletter is the primary means that we will use to answer frequently asked questions and communicate important information to tour participants, so that everyone is getting the same message. If you know someone without an email address, please "adopt" them and print a copy for them.

ACTION ITEMS

1. **Submit your tour payment no later than Tuesday, January 15, 2008.** Instructions and deposit amounts can be found on the tour website at <http://www.stanford.edu/group/sso/tour08/tour08.htm>
2. **Get a passport photo taken, to include with your visa application.** The instructions on the China visa application ask for "one recent passport style color photo, with full face, front view, no hat, and against a plain light background."
3. **Complete a visa application and bring it when you submit your passport next month.** We will be providing a special visa application form with certain sections already completed in accordance with our travel agency's instructions. The form will be available for download from the tour website (see address above) shortly.
4. **If you are submitting your passport for early visa processing, please bring it to rehearsal this week – and plan on filling out (and signing) a visa application form at rehearsal.**
5. **Instrumentalists: Please make sure you have told us the dimensions of your instrument *in its case* (LxWxH).** If you didn't put this information on your tour participant form, please email the dimensions as soon as possible to Mario Champagne at marioch@stanford.edu. We will use this to calculate the required cargo space on buses.
6. **Instrumentalists: If you have not already done so, submit your detailed instrument information** to Mario Champagne at marioch@stanford.edu. This information will be compiled on the tour carnet. The information needed: **(a)** Instrument Maker (including country of origin) and Year; **(b)** Serial #; **(c)** Exact weight; **(d)** Appraised value; and **(e)** Insurance carrier, and Policy #. The description you provide should be specific enough to distinguish your instrument from any other as it goes through customs, so provide other identifying marks for those without serial numbers.

HEADS UP

1. **We will be closing registration for the tour on Friday, January 25.** We've been thrilled with the response to the tour – it's the largest tour the music department has ever organized, with more than 300 travelers. At this point we are near capacity. For the remaining spaces we will be giving priority to performers, particularly those who fill an important ensemble need (e.g., certain instrumentalists, tenors, and the like).
2. **We are making a change to the payment schedule – after the January 15 installment, the balance will be due on April 15** (the total cost of the tour does not change). Our intention in making the change from 4 payments to 3 is to streamline the payment process for everyone. However, if this poses a financial difficulty for you, you will still have the option of making a final payment two weeks later on May 1. The new payment schedules will be posted to the website shortly.
3. **On January 15, the cancellation refund amount drops from 80% to 60%.** Note: This also applies to the amount of airfare credit for anyone who decides to book their own flight.

4. **The last day to request a travel deviation is Friday, February 1.** You will need to complete a visa application when you turn in your passport at the first rehearsal in February – and you'll need to have finalized your travel dates in order to complete the visa application, which will ask you to indicate your date of entry, intended length of stay, and itinerary. *Note: the only travel deviation we can accommodate is changing the return date from Beijing to SFO.*

IMPORTANT DATES

- January 7, 14, 21, 28: Combined rehearsals for EMS, MCC singers
- January 15: Last day to submit 2nd deposit
- January 25: Final tour participant form submission deadline
- February 1: Last day to request a travel deviation
- First week of February: Passports collected at rehearsal for visa processing (they will be returned no later than the end of March – sooner if everyone turns their passports in on time!)

Questions? Please email Kim at kimiko@stanford.edu, or leave a message at 650.725.2685. Kindly include your name in the subject line of emails, and in your message be sure to include names of all travelers to whom you refer (especially spouses or relatives who don't share the same last name!).