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Sample Tour Program

featuring Volendam, Marken, Haarlem, Amsterdam,
Bruges, Ypres, Delft, Rotterdam, and Utrecht

day 1 – Overnight flight

Begin your 9-day European Performance Tour with today's overnight trans-Atlantic flight.

day 2 – Haarlem

The Netherlands welcomes you! Arrive in Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, and meet your **full-time bilingual tour manager**. Time permitting, witness the famous **Aalsmere Flower Auction**. Today's sightseeing includes a half-day tour of the scenic Dutch countryside, and the quaint fishing villages of Volendam and Marken. Visit a **cheese farm** to sample local dairy products, and a **shoemaker**, fashioning wooden clogs using traditional methods of carving and painting. A short **ferry ride** is included between the two towns, and free time for lunch is provided. Continue to nearby Haarlem, with its famous medieval character of cobblestone streets and gabled houses. Check-in to your accommodations, relax and refresh from your travels. Feast on an elaborate **Rijsttafel dinner** "rice table", reflecting centuries of Indonesian history, with many small portions, and a wide array of flavors, colors, and textures.

day 3 – Haarlem

Breakfast is served at the hotel, and each morning for the remainder of your trip. Meet your **local guide** for a walking tour of one of the most photogenic destinations in the Netherlands. Take a stroll to discover hofjes, hidden courtyards dating to medieval times. Visit the **Corrie Ten Boom House**, dedicated to the 'hiding place' where Jews were sheltered during World War II. Experience the acoustics of **St. Bavo Church** with a tour and demonstration of the impressive **Christian Muller organ**, dating from 1738. One of the world's most historically important, it has been played by Mendelssohn, Handel, and 10-year old Mozart. Saturdays provide one of the area's finest street markets. Soak up the atmosphere of the picturesque and entertaining Saturday Grote Markt, while shopping for crafts and souvenirs, and enjoy time for lunch in the square's many cafes. **There is the opportunity to provide an informal performance!** The remainder of the day is at leisure, on your own or with your tour manager. **Dinner** is served at a local restaurant.

day 4 – Haarlem

Breakfast at the hotel. Enjoy a day of sightseeing in nearby Amsterdam with a **local guide**. Make your way around the city during a relaxing **canal cruise**. Afterward, visit the **Rijksmuseum*** and their collection of Old Master paintings, including the works of Rembrandt and Vermeer, among others. Visit the prestigious **Concertgebouw** for a tour of this marvelous venue, and perhaps attend their weekly lunch time program in the Recital Hall. There is free time for snacking and shopping this afternoon in the popular nine streets neighborhood, and you may wish to visit the Anne Frank House for a better appreciation of her life and autobiography. **Present an area concert this evening at a local**

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venue custom selected for your ensemble! There is the opportunity to make this a joint performance and exchange with a local ensemble. A warm-up rehearsal is provided prior to your performance. Dinner at a local restaurant.

Alternatively, the group may prefer entrance to the **Van Gogh Museum, the largest collection of work in the world of this famous and unique Dutch artist, including paintings, drawings, and letters.*

day 5 – Ypres

Breakfast at the hotel. Continue your journey as you travel toward the distinctive region of Dutch-speaking Flanders in nearby Belgium; known as the headquarters of the European Union and NATO. Along the way, explore the **Neeltje Jans Delta Works**, for a **guided tour** of the Dutch water defense system and storm surge barrier. More than half of the Netherlands lies below sea level, and this experience will explain the history of the Dutch struggle against water in a way that is innovative and accessible. Visit Bruges this afternoon, and its fairy-tale center with a **local guide**. The West Flanders capital is famous for its impeccably preserved medieval center and port history. Visit **Church of Our Lady**, home to Michelangelo's marble sculpture of Madonna and Child. There is free time to explore the indulgent chocolate, Flemish Fries, and characteristic swans; you may wish to visit the Belfort's carillon with 47 silver-toned bells, and climb the 366 steps for breathtaking views. The Chocolate Museum is another possible option during your leisure hours. Continue to the town of Ypres and enjoy **dinner** at a local restaurant and the overnight.

day 6 – Ypres

Breakfast at the hotel. Learn about Flanders' turbulent and poignant past, with a guided sightseeing tour with **local guide**. See area battlegrounds and visit the **Essex Farm Cemetery**, a nearby WWI burial site to see Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae's grave. McCrae fought as a soldier in the Ypres Salient battlegrounds, and wrote a poem called "In Flanders Fields" after a friend was killed; his moving reflection has become well known, and because of his work the poppy has become a symbol of remembrance. Visit the **In Flanders Fields Museum**, and exhibitions dedicated to the study of the first world war. The museum faces the market square, next to the town hall and hosts a Saturday morning market. There is free time this afternoon for further reflection. **Participate in the Last Post Ceremony under the Menin Gate, and share music and a wreath laying to mark this solemn occasion and ceremony! The Last Post and Reveille are performed by the buglers from the Last Post Association, and pipers are often invited to play a lament.** A **dinner** of Flemish specialties is provided this evening at a local restaurant.

day 7 – Rotterdam

Breakfast at the hotel. Return to Holland for a full day's excursion to visit several highlights. Begin with the UNESCO Dutch windmills of **Kinderdijk** and their museum, with a short hike, boat ride, windmill visit, and photo opportunities. Sightseeing continues in the picturesque city center of Delft for a stroll and free time for lunch. Visit **Royal Delft** with a guided tour of the famous Dutch pottery factory. Continue to the intriguing city of Rotterdam. See the iconic Market Hall, and tour the **Pilgrim's Church**, referencing the community of English Christians who fled in the early 17th century, and eventually made their way to the "New World". Check-in to your hotel, and share **dinner** at a local restaurant.

day 8 – Rotterdam

Breakfast at the hotel. Enjoy sightseeing in the nearby Utrecht area, with a visit of **Castle De Haar**, the largest and most luxurious castle of The Netherlands, with its garden, towers, turrets, moats, gates, suspension bridges, old kitchen, and special halls. Continue to bohemian Utrecht, for an introduction to the city with **local guide**. Begin with the **DOM Under** tour which will reveal the secrets of Utrecht's Dom Square, uncovering 2000 years of history, dating to the Romans building of the castellum Trajectum around 45 A.D. Visit the **Speelklok Museum**, dedicated to self-playing instruments and music machines that predate the gramophone, covering the period from 1750-1950, while focusing on the Victorian and Edwardian periods. **Return to Rotterdam and present your concert finale at a local venue custom selected for your ensemble! A warm-up rehearsal is provided prior to your performance.** Afterward, celebrate your last evening with a special **dinner** and share memories and experiences with your fellow travelers.

day 9 – Departure

A final **breakfast** is served at the hotel before transferring to the airport for your return flights home. Your tour manager will assist with airport check-in, and there is time for one last *vaarwel*!