

HOTS 2007 TOUR TO NEW ZEALAND
Letter to Participants

(Status update as of January 21, 2007)

This letter is intended to let all those going with us know all there is to know at this time about our trip, and to solicit any questions or suggestions that anyone might have. Please check out a New Zealand guidebook from the library and read it. Please think our trip through and be sure we have covered everything that concerns you, and provided for everything you might want to do. Another good source of travel advice is www.RickSteves.com. You will waste your own time if you read your guide book for the first time en route. You'll need to know in advance what you want to see and do.

1. Our itinerary is not yet firmly established (as shown on the trip flyer), but will ultimately depend upon the performance opportunities we develop - even as we go along. The itinerary described is what we would like to do and what we will try to do, time and opportunity permitting. Our concert schedule takes priority.

2. The base cost for our trip will be approximately \$3500.00 per participant. This is an estimate which assumes at least 24 persons will be making the trip, and that no more than 6 rental vans will be needed, and that the exchange rate will not change substantially. Any additional costs encountered will be levied proportionately among all participants.

3. Those who are making their own travel arrangements using frequent flyer miles or other discount tickets may meet us in Los Angeles for only \$3000.00 or in Auckland for only \$2500.00 for the full two weeks. Other arrangements can be negotiated. If you need to come late or go home early, we will make the appropriate arrangements, but any additional cost over the standard prices will be at your own expense.

4. Airline tickets are non-refundable and non-transferable once issued. Airline reservations must be finalized by 1 December 2006. Hotel and rental vehicle deposits are subject to a variety of fines and fees if changes are made after the initial commitments. Deposits are refundable when, and only to the extent that HOTS actually recovers them.

5. An initial deposit of \$500.00 is due not later than 1 June 2006. Additional deposits of \$500.00 per month are due on the first of each month thereafter until the full amount is paid. The entire amount is due on 1 January 2007.

6. The \$3500.00 estimated cost covers:

a. round trip air fare, customs and excess baggage charges for our instruments and other musical equipment, etc. (See below for personal baggage limits.)

b. hotel accommodations in air-conditioned (not always) double Brooms with complete bathroom in the room at several different 'Best Western Blue' or equivalent three-star motels. These motels are relatively new, clean, small and spartan, but adequately comfortable. You can pair off with roommates of your own choosing, or I will pair you off with a person of like gender.

c. ground transportation - a seat in one of the (Toyota Previa?)

eight-passenger self-drive vans (plus one 2 passenger cargo van) that we will rent (approximately one van per five persons.) These vans will be as fully insured as is possible and will be rented with the understanding that any member of our group may drive any one of them (automatic transmission, air-conditioned, right-hand drive). We must take the time to make sure each possible driver is signed up to drive every vehicle at the time we rent them.□□□z (I will ask each potential driver to tell me what his own personal auto insurance policy will cover if he has an accident while driving a rental vehicle in New Zealand.) We will rotate the driving of our cargo van.

d. These vans will be used for daily sight seeing excursions from the hotels according to the proposed itinerary, and to take the orchestra to and from its concerts. If you want to go where we're going, you must catch a van. If there are enough who want to go somewhere not on the itinerary, you can use one of the vans. If you don't want to go, or want to go somewhere else, you are free to go on your own. Rent a car or bike, or hike, or sleep in. It's up to you. (Tell me your plans before you go to bed, however, and be punctual. If you are late, we may assume you have elected to get to the next hotel on your own.)

e. Certain miscellaneous common expenses (to be determined) - we have built in a small allowance for some miscellaneous common expenses. We expect that fuel for our vans at \$2.50 US per gallon, and similar common expenses will be paid from that allowance plus any money the band earns on the trip. We plan to rent a cell phone for each vehicle for local communications so we can stay in touch with each other. (Buy your own phone card to call home.) We plan to provide you with a 'trip tee shirt' and baseball cap. We will also use these funds to donate commemorative gifts to our hosts. We will provide a steno pad or notebook per vehicle for you to record these common expenses as they occur. We will reimburse them whenever it is practical.

4. The \$3500.00 estimated cost does not cover:

a. Breakfast, lunch or supper meals or drinks and snacks. We will arrange to have breakfast available in or near our hotels at about \$4.00-8.00 US. We may buy 'Chilly Bins' (coolers) to carry cokes and wine, hampers of bread, cheese, fruit, lunch meat, etc., for picnic snacks in each van. Snacks, soft drinks and wine are available for purchase in a local supermarkets or convenience 'dairy' stores near the hotels. Some, but not all, of our suppers may be provided free by our concert hosts. Sometimes these meals are provided only for those who actually play with the band. We will stop at good, but inexpensive restaurants whenever we want. Persons who have special dietary requirements (vegetarians, keeping kosher, etc.) are on their own, but can usually find what they need if they are reasonably flexible. You can eat very well in New Zealand for less than \$15.00 a meal, and you can easily spend a whole lot more.

b. Sightseeing expenses such as admissions to museums, bike rental, boat tickets, beach admission fees, bungee jumping, jet boating, hiring professional tour guides, etc. (Some group tours such as the Tranz-Alpine Express train trip□Milford Sound cruise, Glow Worm Caves, Discover Rotorua, and 'Hangi' tours may eventually be included in the trip assessment. We will announce these prior to collecting the final deposits.)

c. personal expenses like laundry, hair care, shopping for presents, clothing, etc. Buy a phone card locally from the hotel or dairy store to call home. Share your card with others. Phone numbers included on the itinerary are for dialing within New Zealand. To dial them from the United

States, first dial the International access code 011, then the country code for New Zealand 64, then the number supplied, but without the leading 000. To call a number in the United States from New Zealand, dial the International access code 011, then the US area code, then the number.

5. You need to bring with you:

(1) Your current US tourist passport. Your passport must be valid until at least August 2007 - 6 months after our planned departure from New Zealand. No tourist visa is required as they will be stamped into our passports upon arrival. (Take a photocopy of the first page of your passport and stick it in your wallet in case of loss. I will need a second copy right away to send to our travel agent.) Band members will need to apply for 'work visas'. I have the necessary forms. I'll need a separate 'passport' photo for your visa application and a copy of a current credit card statement which shows you have at least \$400 in available credit. You'll also have to fill out a 'roommate' form for our travel agent. I'll collect band members passports and deliver them directly to the New Zealand Embassy to get our visas.

(2) Your valid state driver's license. We will be driving our rental vans ourselves. Everyone who can drive needs to take a turn. We will rotate the driving of the cargo van. All drivers must obtain an International Drivers License, which is easily done at the Tyson's or Fair Oaks offices of AAA for \$15.00 plus two passport photos. They'll take the photos for an extra \$10.00.) While these are not strictly required, they are preferred by the car rental companies, expected by the police, and may be a good idea to save an argument. You will be driving automatic transmission vehicles on the 'wrong' (left) side of the road.

(3) Any personal drug prescriptions plus common over-the-counter medical/hygiene items you are comfortable with. (It is normal to suffer brief constipation, diarrhea, and sniffles when you visit a new environment.) There is nothing available in the US for which you cannot buy either an identical brand item or a closely comparable and equivalent item in New Zealand, but why bother if you don't have to? Bring sufficient toothpaste and makeup, etc., to last you for the three weeks. Bring an extra pair of prescription glasses. No immunizations are needed, but bring along your shot record - it's not really needed, but a good idea- also any notification of allergies to medicines, etc. Bring along some insect repellent bug spray in your day bag. Bring some suntan lotion and sun screen. There is great danger of sunburn in New Zealand. If you have trouble sleeping, consider bringing ear plugs. If you are taken sick or injured while on the trip, we will arrange for you to be seen by a local doctor. Our previous experience with New Zealand doctors and pharmacies has been very good.

(4) Your personal clothing and toiletries, cameras, etc. Pack light! You are authorized a total of 44 lbs of personal baggage packed in one suitcase in the hold and 12 lbs in one piece of carry-on hand baggage to be stored under the airplane seats or in the overhead bins (no more than 22" x 14" x 9"). These are in addition to your instrument cases which will be paid for as excess baggage by the band. (The airline may be willing to allow you more baggage, but there will not be room for it in our rental vehicles.)

(a) The orchestra will carry four uniforms - tuxedos/black cocktail dresses, vintage - black trousers, white long sleeve shirt with red suspenders, red bow ties, red socks, white logo polo shirts, and colored trip

tee-shirts with baseball caps for the parade in Napier. Bring along your various colored tee-shirts from previous trips. Take an Art Deco costume to better enjoy our Napier weekend.

(b) We expect that the weather will be warm and mostly dry and that we will be wearing shorts or slacks and soft tops most of the time. Carry a sweater and light weight 'parka' with hood in case there's an evening breeze or a light rain. Buy an umbrella there if you really need it. Carry a shawl to wrap up in case no bare shoulders are allowed (as in churches in Italy.) Bring a good pair of walking shoes (Don't forget black shoes to wear with your uniforms.) Bring sandals or beach/shower shoes. While there may be some restaurants where informal clothing would be inappropriate, I do not anticipate dining there.

(c) There may be opportunities to visit self-service laundromats along the way and hotels may offer coin-operated washers and dryers (although doing the laundry may be inconvenient - you may have to stay up late to use them.) Bring 'per load' amounts of dry detergent in well-sealed plastic zip-loc bags. Consider a stretchy clothesline to hang things to dry overnight. Electric current in New Zealand is 220 volt/50 cycles. New Zealand uses a unique electric plug style. Plan to buy an adapter there. Hair dryers, irons, etc., must have a transformer. Hotels often furnish only minimal bath towels (dish rags) and no wash cloths. Bring what you need for the beach or buy it there, you may want to bring two swim suits so only one is wet.

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(d) Our luggage and our instruments will have to travel to and from the airport and between hotels and concerts in our eight-passenger vans and cargo van. The middle seats of our vans will not have been removed when they are delivered to accommodate our baggage. When our instruments, etc., are with us, we will have to take turns guarding our vans - we will not leave them unattended. Most transfers between hotels will be four to six hour trips, not counting sight-seeing activities en route. Please plan to carry a day bag for your swim suit and toilet articles or whatever you need to clean up and change after your swim. Carry plastic bags for your wet clothes. Be prepared to take turns changing clothes in the vans.

(e) You should also anticipate the space you will need for whatever shopping you intend to do along the way, although it may be better to have large or delicate items shipped home. (You can bring back up to □□□□\$400.00 worth of goods including one bottle of wine duty free, and of course you can bring back more if you pay the duty.) If you purchase more than \$100.00 worth of goods in New Zealand, it will save you 10-15% general sales/value added tax if you have the items mailed or shipped home rather than carry them with you.

(5) Your musical instruments and supplies in their cases. Your instruments should be insured at replacement cost on your own home owners-renters - household goods policy against loss or theft in New Zealand. Call your insurance company and make sure there are no exclusions. We will carry theft insurance against loss from the vans, but it may be difficult to collect.

(a) We will bring all our large instruments (piano, bass, drum set), music stands and lights, and sound equipment. We will take four footlockers into which we will pack our props and other band equipment including any tuners, wire music stands and your instrument stands and other similar loose items which do not fit inside your instrument cases. I'll collect these items at our last rehearsal. (We'll rent a cargo van to transport them, and you can put

as much of your personal luggage into the cargo van as will fit.)

(b) I need to know the manufacture, country of origin, actual value, case dimensions, and approximate weight for each instrument in its case, so that I can arrange for them to be carried as "excess baggage" in the airplane's baggage compartment at minimum cost.

(c) Each individual will have to carry his own instrument through customs as "personal professional equipment". I do not anticipate any problems, but - if you have it, bring the original bill of sale and proof of insurance to prove you owned your instrument prior to this trip. This may avoid customs problems.

(6) Money - change about \$100.00 upon departure, and keep some dollars for your return. For security, you may carry traveler's checks in US dollars, but the local shopkeepers hate to pay the premiums on them and may refuse them. Credit cards work very well in New Zealand. Bring two. Call your banks to be sure you have international access. Use your bank credit cards to pay for groceries, gasoline and other substantial purchase, and use it with your PIN number for ATM cash machines in New Zealand.

(7) Travel insurance, if you want it, is available from Travel Guard International 1 (800) 826-1300 or from Access America 1 (800) 284-8300.