

# A European Masterclass: Meriden's 2025 Music Tour

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It is wonderful to start the new year refreshed and renewed and to hear the reflections of our amazing European Music Tour at the end of last year. As we begin with new ensembles and new repertoire, we look forward to making more music this year.

From 10 until 24 December 2025, over 70 Meriden musicians took part in a music Tour to Europe, combining high-level music education experiences with rich cultural exploration across Hungary, Slovakia, Austria, and the Czech Republic.

In Budapest, students participated in an orchestral workshop with Máté Hátori, Conductor and Artistic Director of the Óbuda Danubia Orchestra, before travelling to the small town of Kecskemét to attend a choral workshop at the prestigious Kodály Institute of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music. The girls enjoyed the first of many Christmas markets starting at the square of St Stephen's before visiting the UNESCO-listed Buda Castle District, where medieval architecture, museums, and panoramic city views provided a breathtaking introduction to Hungary's history. A visit to Fisherman's Bastion and St Matthias Church further immersed students in Budapest's Gothic beauty.



The girls enjoyed a memorable final evening in Budapest at a traditional Hungarian restaurant, where traditional beef goulash, live Gypsy folk music, and warm hospitality created a lasting impression. The tour continued to Bratislava, where students sang during Sunday Mass at the historic St Martin's Cathedral, before travelling on to Vienna. This city lived up to expectation, with highlights including attending a performance of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* by Concentus Musicus Wien at the world-famous Musikverein, as well as participating in an instrumental workshop with Tobias Lea, Principal Violist of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra in the rehearsal room of the Musikverein.

The girls were then treated to an outstanding choral workshop with Erasmus Baumgartner, Artistic Director of the Vienna Boys' Choir, whose energy and passion were inspirational. Students performed a lunchtime concert at the famous St Stephen's Cathedral to a huge audience, followed by the most beautiful Christmas markets. Our final concert was to a full house at the Vienna Minorite Church. The audience loved hearing Strauss, Mozart, and the Tour Choir singing a whimsical arrangement of *Waltzing Matilda*.

The next stop, Salzburg, was filled with the "Sound of Music," from a tour of Mozart's birthplace, to an outstanding lunchtime concert in Salzburg Cathedral, a wonderful workshop with Scott Styles, violinist with the Mozarteum Orchestra, in the most stunning rehearsal space, and of course, more Christmas markets in Salzburg. Our final destination, Prague, with a stopover at the quaint medieval town of Český-Krumlov, was well worth the experience. The Chamber Choir and quartet provided the music for a very well-attended mass at St Vitus Cathedral, and Cynthia Bui, Year 11, enjoyed performing on the most spectacular organ in the choir loft.

A night at the opera attending *The Barber of Seville* at the National Theatre was enjoyed by all. The evening concluded with a walk along the famous Charles Bridge and through Prague's Old Town, followed by another inspirational workshop with Ondřej Vrabec, the Solo Horn in the Czech Philharmonic and Chief Conductor of the Carlsbad Symphony Orchestra. This workshop really enhanced our final concert of the tour with another full audience at Saints Simon and Jude Church.

Sincere thanks to all the staff involved, the parents for their support, and of course, the amazing musicians who made this a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The memories, musical growth, and friendships formed on this tour will be treasured for years to come.

[Click here](#) to view a wrap-up video of the tour or continue scrolling for a collage of photos.

**Ms Jodie Spooner-Ryan**

Dean of Music (P-12)

# European Music Tour



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