

The Cantoria – House Blend Exchange: Two Sister Chorales / Deux Chorales Jumelées

Cantoria



This chorus, based out of the town of Villaines-les-Rochers near Tours, France, was formed in the 1980s. Originally based out of the local “Club des Jeunes,” a cultural organization, the group originally consisted of just a dozen members. Since then, under the direction of several leaders, they have grown to their current forty members.

Over the years, they have upheld a tradition of exchanges and shared musicianship, including twinning (or *jumelage*) relationships with choruses in France, Belgium, Portugal, England and the United States (Vermont). In the summer of 2008, Cantoria hosted House Blend in their home region of Touraine; the two chorales performed together

in four concerts. As the exchange relationship continues to thrive, with strong bonds of friendship and shared joy in music, House Blend will host Cantoria in July of 2010.

Now under the leadership of their director, Fabienne Goupille, the group continues to expand its repertoire, which now includes a wide variety of music, including, among others, sacred music, gospel and contemporary songs.

House Blend

Formed in 2006, House Blend is an assembly of 23 veteran singers from Vermont and New Hampshire devoted to the collective exploration of *a cappella* songs drawn through the ages from around the world.



Coming together from differing walks of life undoubtedly influences the creative energy of this ensemble; their occupations range from teachers to a web designer, and an airline pilot to a carpenter. Together they share a profound love of music and an abundance of talent. A democratically governed party of singing addicts, House Blend creates a harmonious brew that draws its richness from their diverse musical backgrounds.

Their repertoire includes precisely blended early music, contemporary arrangements by local composers, songs from American folk traditions such as spirituals, soulful gospel numbers, hill songs of Appalachia and jazz, as well as lush Italian and Spanish ballads, South African freedom songs, village music of Italy, France, Québec and the Republic of Georgia, Renaissance madrigals, songs from the Jewish choral tradition, contemporary Latin chant and Bach, along with anything else the singers choose to add to the mix.

The Next Phase of the Exchange: July 15 - 27, 2010

Cantoria will join House Blend this summer for another two-week visit and musical tour, their shared concert schedule including performances in three states: Keene, NH, Westminster West, VT, Ashfield, MA, Rutland, VT, Rockingham, VT, and the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish, NH. Between concerts, host families will introduce their French guests to the area, with a focus on all things local: our history, government, products, environment and agriculture. The groups will continue to explore a shared passion for singing, developing and extending their international musical ties across language and culture.