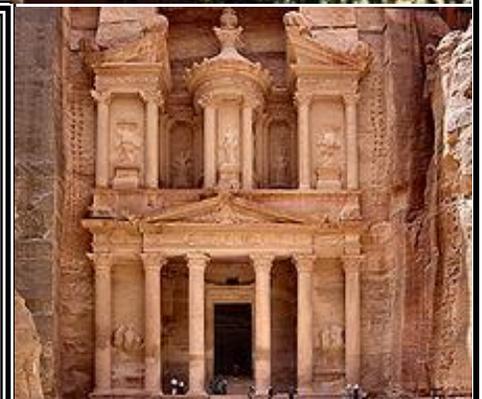





Classical Movements

ORCHESTRA, CHOIR AND
BAND TOURS TO:
MIDDLE EAST





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Travel Specialists for Music and Performing Groups

WHY THE MIDDLE EAST WITH CLASSICAL MOVEMENTS

Many of the countries in the Middle East have been issued Travel Warnings by the State Department. Travel Warnings are issued when long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable lead the State Department to recommend that Americans avoid or consider the risk of travel to that country. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government's ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff. Please contact Classical Movements for up to date information on travel to this region and specific countries.

Bahrain: Travelers can enjoy Bahrain's traditional attractions—such as sailing a dhow or bargaining in a souk (marketplace). Bahrain's chief attractions are beaches, souks, Middle Eastern culture, camels and ancient history.

Cyprus: Cyprus' main attractions are ancient Greek and Roman historical sites, Byzantine art and architecture, modern Turkish and Greek culture, beaches, mountain scenery and spa resorts.

Egypt: Egypt's main attractions include the pyramids and the Sphinx at Giza, the Valley of the Kings and Valley of the Queens near Luxor, Cairo, ancient temples, the Egyptian Antiquities Museum, Nile cruises, St. Catherine's monastery, Coptic churches, shopping, desert culture and scuba diving on the Red Sea. Egypt is a country that deserves an entire tour on its own, but for a concert performance tour it should be combined with Israel or Jordan.

Iran: The chief attractions of Iran are Persian culture, archaeological ruins, teahouses, beautiful architecture, fabulous rugs and mountain climbing. Once it is safe for Americans to tour there, it is an ancient country with important arts and monuments and much to see and enjoy. Whilst many Iranian artists are well known, now is not the time to tour there, especially for western classical music.

Iraq: Prior to a series of recent wars (with Iran, the Gulf War and the latest military action), Iraq was one of the most developed countries in the region, blessed with a rich assortment of archaeological treasures. Baghdad was once home to one of the world's oldest Jewish communities, and Christians and Druze communities can still be found there. Unfortunately, today most of this diverse population is impoverished and inaccessible to all but those visiting in an official capacity. It is however home of the most developed of the ancient civilizations in the world in the Tigris-Euphrates River Valley. It has a thriving musical scene despite the odds. Classical Movements has helped plan the tour of the Iraqi National Symphony Orchestra to Washington DC and NY in 2003.

Israel: Everywhere you turn, you'll see reminders of the three religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—that have shaped this part of the world. Among Israel's main attractions are religious shrines, beaches, historical sites, archaeological digs, Dead Sea spas, souks (markets), nature reserves, fascinating cultures and great food. Israel is blessed with many brilliant musicians, fine choruses and orchestras in every corner. Many concert halls, churches and schools and outreach possible. Classical Movements has



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undertaken important projects there and is in close contact with choirs, orchestras, universities and schools to collaborate with.

Jordan: Set on the ancient crossroads between Arabia and the Mediterranean Sea, Jordan is full of historic sites. Crusaders' forts along old trade routes and ancient cities carved from stone will captivate anyone in search of the past. The main attractions of Jordan are the ancient city of Petra, Roman ruins, Bedouin culture, Wadi Rum, Byzantine mosaics, Crusader fortresses, desert oases and nature reserves, shopping, beaches, scuba diving and snorkeling, the Dead Sea, spas and historical sites. The country served as a transit and visa point for the Iraqi National Symphony Orchestras on their way to USA and Classical Movements handled the stay and plans. Some years ago, we planned a long and interesting tour for George Washington University to Syria and Jordan. We planned many school, hospital, university and farm visits as well as arts organizations.

Kuwait: Kuwait not only has a generous supply of oil but also an intriguing assortment of tourist attractions—dramatic desert scenery, beaches, markets, museums, ruins and other sites relating to traditional Arab and Islamic culture.

Lebanon: Lebanon's main attractions are historic sites, fine dining and people-watching in Beirut, diverse cultural attractions, Baalbek, Middle Eastern cuisine, archaeological ruins, pleasant Mediterranean climate, skiing and mountain scenery. Ancient Roman sites and vistas, gorgeous Mediterranean back drop, there is also a very, very fine music festival there.

Oman: Oman's foremost attractions are desert sand dunes, 400-year-old forts, ancient ruins, beaches, mountains, oases, traditional bazaars, scuba diving, camel treks and Arab culture. Muscat has a brand new opera house that has played host already to many famous orchestras.

Qatar: Qatar gives tourists a fascinating glimpse of the way the Gulf States are spending their oil revenues. The dozens of designer high-rise offices and hotels along Doha's waterfront and the unending stream of luxury cars on the roads exemplify the dramatic changes of the past 30 years. Qatar opened a new Opera House to great acclaim recently and many of the Gulf States are becoming arts centers attracting top artists.

Saudi Arabia: The chief attractions of Saudi Arabia are religious shrines (open only to Muslims), Arabic culture, desert scenery, markets, ruins and archaeological sites, and petroleum-related business opportunities. Not a great concert touring destination for now.

Syria: Syria's highlights include Palmyra; the medieval architecture in the Old Cities of Damascus and Aleppo; archaeological sites from the Iron Age, and Roman and Byzantine times; Crusade-era castles, in particular the Krac Des Chevaliers; cultural attractions; and desert scenery. Syria is also like most of the Middle East, full of interesting markets and foods. There are Roman and Greek influences. Some years ago, we planned a long and interesting tour for George Washington University to Syria and Jordan. We planned many school, hospital, university and farm visits as well as arts organizations.

Turkey: Turkey has exoticism to spare, with its covered bazaars, whirling dervishes, sultans' treasures



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and Byzantine mosaics. Turkey offers beaches, historical sites, museums, shopping, palaces, mosques, architecture, good food, spas, beautiful and varied scenery, and watersports. Turkey has numerous fine orchestras and choirs and its own Turkish music as well as western classical music. Very fine concert tours are possible in major venues and ancient churches, schools and universities and 2000 year old Roman and Greek amphitheaters with perfect acoustics. See our page on Turkey for more details. We have done over 40 different tours to Turkey and started tours there in 1994.

United Arab Emirates: The constituent emirates are **Abu Dhabi**, Ajman, **Dubai**, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah, Sharjah, and Umm al-Quwain. The capital is Abu Dhabi, which is also the state's center of political, industrial, and cultural activities. The main attractions in the U.A.E. include beaches, Arab culture, desert scenery, watersports, sand sports, horse and camel racing, shopping, mosques and historical sites. Rich, buyer's paradise, unparalleled growth in recent years till an economic slowdown, markets, shops, beaches, etc. Top concert halls and musicians, new opera houses and festivals, growing audiences of locals as well as tourists and diplomats especially in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Yemen: Historical and archaeological sites, beaches, folkloric displays, mineral baths, architecture, camel caravans, a casino, interesting people, rugged mountain and desert scenery will be Yemen's main draws when the country gets a handle on its kidnapping problem.

PERFORMANCES AND CULTURAL IMMERSION

Venues include **concert halls, culture and art centers, museums, ancient Roman amphitheaters, university halls, churches** and others.

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Classical Movements starting traveling to the Middle East in 1994, first with its brochure program under Blue Heart Tours with over 50 different trips and in recent years to mainly countries like Turkey, Egypt, Israel and Jordan for the **Collegiate Chorale, Yale Symphony Orchestra, Yale Alumni Chorus, George Washington University, Yale Glee Club** and the **Yale Institute of Music**. Classical Movements arranged the historical tour of the **Iraqi International Symphony** to the US in 2003.



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TESTIMONIALS

James Undercofler, President [Philadelphia Orchestra]

“Through these many visits, we have developed rich friendships with many wonderful people, who share our belief that the transformational power of music bridges cultural differences and brings people together.”

Jeffrey Smith, Music Director [Philadelphia Boys Choir and Chorale]

“As always, Classical Movements created a fantastic tour for our choir. We were booked in excellent venues with great audiences, and the boys were exposed to some amazing culture experience. Having worked with the top professional musical ensembles in the world, the staff members of Classical Movements care a great deal about the logistics of performing, and they never miss a beat.”

Bill Weber [Yale Alumni Chorus]

“Just a note to say what a terrific job I think you did on the recent YAC tour. Quiet, unassuming, dependable, thorough and consistently effective. All of that and a real pleasure to deal with, too. Congratulations and thank you for all that you did to make the tour such a success. It was a real pleasure to meet you.”

Ed Greenberg [Yale Alumni Chorus]

“We thought you did a wonderful job steering our large group of singers and non-singers through three countries during two jam-packed weeks.”

L. Clancy [Virginia]

“Culturally and historically Turkey was a delight and your tour offered value and enjoyment...All in all, I thoroughly enjoyed myself.”

Bill Pollard [North Carolina]

“Guides were exceptional! Every request was noted and done! Can’t express or say how wonderful the people were. Of all trips I have taken, I have never received better value, more courteous guides or more concern for my wishes – why not have a longer tour – too short.”

Miriam Da Costa-Willis [Washington, DC]

“I was very impressed with the staff and the organization of the tour. The value and cost of the tour were tremendous”.

Eric Conway, Music Director [Morgan State University]

“Thank you for Classical Movements’ attention to making this tour so memorable... I would definitely use Classical Movements again! Thank you for your part in making this tour so very successful!”

Timothy Lynch, Production Manager [Dallas Symphony Orchestra]

“The great thing about Classical Movements is that they seem to be one step ahead of the unexpected. It’s difficult to think of how they could have been more prepared.... Hats off to Classical Movements.”



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PRESS

A Limited Selection

“Classical Movements founder Neeta Helms delivers musicians and singers all over the world with the precision of a Steinway piano tuner.”

The Washington Post, Tom Heath, September 15, 2013

“Classical Movements is the go-to company for ensembles planning concert tours. The firm's who's-who list of clients includes the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Morgan State University Choir and National Symphony Orchestra, not to mention the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra and Vienna Philharmonic.”

Baltimore Sun, Tim Smith, June 29, 2012

“Classical Movements is based in Alexandria but works mainly overseas, arranging tours by American orchestras and choruses and running music festivals in [all over the world]. ‘In the process of taking American groups around the world, we have had so many exchanges and collaborations, and we’ve had a great number of groups that wanted to come to the States,’ Helms says. ‘Choral music is becoming so international,’ Helms says. ‘There was a time when it was all Handel, Bach, Mozart and such. But now there are so many fantastic composers. And in the course of their tours, so many American groups have started learning Maori, Chinese, South African and Brazilian songs.’”

The Washington Post, Mark Jenkins, June 22, 2011

“The Iraqi National Symphony Orchestra visit involved a human element that transcended the usual business of arranging orchestra tours for Neeta Helms, executive vice president of Classical Movements. She (Helms) ushered the musicians from their first nerve-wracking security checks at New York’s JFK Airport to their last tourist stop at Rockefeller Center on the way out of the country. “It was very hard to say goodbye. Usually when a tour ends we say, ‘See you next time.’ That’s not true in this case,” she says.”

Symphony Magazine, Rebecca Winzenried, March – April 2004

“With almost a year of meticulous planning by the Choral Arts staff, Blue Heart Tours and Classical Movements Inc. it was the society’s third overseas trip in three years. The Choral Arts Society toured Russia with the National Symphony Orchestra and Rostropovich in October of 1993 and 10 weeks prior traveled through Italy with performances at the Vatican and Spoleto Festival.

Peabody News, September/October 1996

“All the Excuses you have for not visiting- it is too far, too expensive, too complicated to arrange- are just excuses.”

Travel Holiday Magazine, 1995/1996

“It is difficult to classify Blue Heart Tours(Classical Movement formal name), a wholesaler that started with one destination and one itinerary but now offers programs in Europe, Africa, and Asia. If there are defining characteristics, they would be ability to keep prices low by watching costs and to provide value for clients.”

Travel Agent, December 18, 1995