

SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL

“Peace, love, and the land of country music!”

May 2021

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the entire Visual and Performing Arts Department, I am thrilled to announce a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the Saint Mary's School Chorale. We have been invited to Nashville, TN, to participate in the **National Festival of the States Concert Series**, with the culminating performance held at the GRAND OLE OPRY where we will walk in the footsteps of country music's superstars and get an exclusive look at what happens behind the scenes of the show that made country music famous! I know you join with me, beaming with pride, for their commitment to their art because we all know it was their singing, in a recorded submission, that earned them this opportunity.



Before stepping into the world-famous venue, the Chorale will participate in a choral singing clinic at Belmont University or Vanderbilt University. The Chorale will also gather around the legendary microphone at Nashville's **RCA Studio B** (used by artists from Elvis Presley to Carrie Underwood) for a recording session with a professional sound engineer.

We are excited to announce that **we are expanding the Chorale trip to include any Saint Mary's student to join us**; you do not need to be a member of Chorale to participate. All students who participate will get to learn all about America's music, visit Nashville's famed **Music Row**, and participate in a tour of the historic RCA Studio B, Nashville's oldest remaining recording studio, and tour the **Ryman Auditorium**. A National Historic Landmark and revered by many as the "Mother Church of Country Music," the Ryman Auditorium was the home of the Grand Ole Opry from 1943 to 1974. Ryman is famous for hosting performances by legendary greats as Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, George Strait, Brooks & Dunn, Garth Brooks, Alan Jackson, Carrie Underwood, Neil Young, W.C. Fields, and Booker T. Washington, to name a few. The "Ryman" continues to be a popular entertainment venue for performances of all genres.

We'll also take a trip down to the **Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum**, an endlessly entertaining and informative experience that will help us grasp Nashville's importance as a songwriting and recording mecca. The tour also includes a visit and tour of the **National Museum of African American Music (NMAAM)**. As the only museum in the nation with a dedicated focus on the impact of African American music, the NMAAM strengthens and diversifies the "Music City" with compelling connections to both local and national musical highlights. Additionally, Nashville is a place where significant African American music events and artists thrived – The Fisk University Jubilee Singers, Jimi Hendrix, Ray Charles, and Little Richard are just a few of the pioneering artists who were a part of Nashville's music scene in the early stages of their career. The museum's interactive galleries play along with the American soundtrack, illuminate Nashville's significant influence, and share how African American music inspires others around the world.

The trip also includes stops at the full-scale replica of Greece's Parthenon and Centennial Park. And no trip to Nashville would be complete without line **dancing lessons at The Wild Horse Saloon!**

The trip will take place **March 9-14, 2022**, culminating with the Chorale's concert performance at the Grand Ole Opry on March 12. **Registration with a deposit of \$500 is due by October 1, 2021, to secure a spot for this adventure.** Girls need not be enrolled in Chorale to be part of the Nashville tour.

Participation in the Country Music experience will **cost approximately \$1,400 per student** and covers:

- One night in Asheville at a Hilton Garden Inn on the way to Nashville
- Three-night stay at the Inn at Opryland
- Stops at the Parthenon replica and Centennial Park
- Tickets and tours at the Ryman Auditorium, the Country Music Hall of Fame, and the National Museum of African American Music

- Tour guides to shepherd us throughout Nashville
- Ticket to the Grand Ole Opry
- Three (3) group meals
- Chartered Bus

Students will be responsible for one small meal a day plus snacks and souvenirs.

Final cost, additional payment information, and deadlines will be finalized once the group number and means of travel have been confirmed. **Payment of the final balance will be due by Monday, February 14, 2022.** Costs of the trip are the responsibility of each girl and her family.

Families are also welcomed to join us for the Chorale's performance in front of the Grand Ole Opry on March 12. We ask families to respect the need for the girls to fully participate in all aspects of Saint Mary's-sponsored activities while in Nashville, and we know in advance that there will be very little time to spend outside of activities. All students must travel to and from Nashville with Saint Mary's School.

Art gives life meaning, and our girls enrich the lives of everyone fortunate enough to know them. Please contact us with any questions.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Moran
Chair, Visual and Performing Arts Department
Director of Music
Direct: 919.424.4036
Email: jsmoran@sms.edu