

# Music Tour to Nashville Blog

## Thursday 20th October - Flight Day!

On the first day of the trip, we came into school, suitcase in tow, ready for an eight-hour flight! Everyone met in the library to get into the coach - we were off! We went to Heathrow for the flight and had to wait one hour for check-in and security which was all rather stressful, but once we got past security, everything got much calmer. We went around the airport shops to buy snacks for the flight, and anything else we required. During the flight, some started watching films on the TVs in front of us, and others decided to nap the entire flight! But, whatever they chose, we were all comfortable and had a great flight. When we disembarked the flight, we went straight to the hotel, feeling jet-lagged, and hungry, however we had pizza and soft drinks waiting for us! After everyone had finished, we got our keycards and headed up to our rooms and went to sleep.

## Friday 21st October - Farmer's Market and Ryman Tour

On our first official day on the trip, we were woken at 7:00, got breakfast and had a choir rehearsal for two hours and thirty minutes. This was filled with the dulcet tones of the choir singing their hearts out, getting ready for our first performance the next day! After the rehearsal was over, we boarded the coach to go to the Farmer's Market! Once there, everyone broke into groups and started going into shops and getting lunch. There was a botanical garden outside of the market that many people went to walk around and admire. After everyone bought their souvenirs, more notably a Harry Styles candle (bought by a Year 9), and everyone had finished their lunch, we all got back into the coach to go to the Ryman for a backstage tour. Once we got to the Ryman (not the stationery shop) we were led into a cinema to watch a film about the history of the Ryman and how it became a national phenomenon in such a dark time.

After the film we were led to the stage of the Ryman where we took a photo on the stage where many great Country music stars have performed. Then everyone created a beeline to the gift shop and had a look around trying to find something to remember the trip by. After that we separated into KS3 and KS4/5 to go around Nashville Broadway. I was with KS4 and we went to a Music venue to hear a live band play, then to cowboy hat and boot shops, and Hard Rock Cafe of Nashville.

After everyone boarded the coach, we went to Franklin High School to watch American Football! When we got there we went to go get seats, and get some dinner, and everyone was a bit confused when it first started as we obviously aren't American, but, by halftime everyone started to understand what the rules were, so started to really get into the game! When halftime came around, we were wowed and dazzled by the amazing talent of the two marching bands as they did a whole theatrical production. Sadly, everyone was a tired, so we left after all the performances by the band were over, and when we got back to the hotel, everyone went to bed.

## Saturday 22nd October - Hermitage House and Grand Ole Opry

On Saturday, when we got up to get ready for the day, everyone was a little anxious as we were doing our first two performances on this day, but everyone was feeling rather

excited as we were performing outside an amazingly important theatre. When we got on the coach we went to Hermitage House, the home of president Andrew Jackson. Before we did our live performance by the entrance to the house, we had a private tour of the house and learnt many interesting things about Andrew Jackson and his family. After we had the tour, we were taken back to the front of the house, and we sang songs for the people coming in to enjoy the tour. Many people stopped to listen to us and they all cheered and clapped after we finished the songs. We were then let go to wander around the grounds, or to go into the museum that was connected to the grounds of the house, or (which was everyone's personal favourite thing to do) buy something from the gift shop.

We then went to Opry Mills (the local mall). This was a time for everyone to go clothes shopping, go to build-a-bear and to have lunch. This, I think was everyone's favourite time of the day, as everyone left the mall with a smile on their face, asking to go back again. After the mall, we went for our backstage tour of the Grand Ole Opry! This was really fun, as we got to go to the backstage rooms and stand where so many great Country music stars got to prepare, stand and sing. We then got to take a photo on the stage and got to visit the gift shop.

We then performed outside of the Grand Ole Opry and sang songs for the pedestrians and guests of the evening's performance. Many people stopped and listened to us singing and we were greeted with rapturous applause whenever we finished with a song. We then got to go to the Opry Backstage Grill, where we all had a lovely dinner, and we were treated to some live music which was sung by a man on stage, who sang some Country songs for us. We then get the immense privilege of going to see some famous Country singers singing live at the Grand Ole Opry. This was freaky-fun, as we got to listen to music that we would not normally listen to. We then went back to the hotel, and went to bed.

### Sunday 23rd October - Parthenon and Frist Art Museum

On this day we got the amazing opportunity to go to a recording studio, Studio B, where Elvis Presley and many of the greats used to record. We recorded ourselves singing a few of our songs. This was all really professional and a lot of fun as it was a new experience for everyone. After we finished our recordings, we boarded the coach to go to the Country Music Hall of Fame. This was very fun as we got to see the outfits, cars and guitars of some of the most famous Country singers and songwriters of the past and today.

We then walked to a place called the Assembly Food Hall, and we bought lunch, and many people (including me) found out that they couldn't handle medium spice on chicken! We then went to experience the Frist Art Museum, and this was an opportunity to see some famous paintings, and everyone brought out their artistic side, as they had a drawing station in the museum and almost everyone took part and many portraits of people were painted! After that, we went to the exact replica of the Parthenon and got a private tour of the building, after which we were free to wander around the area of the Parthenon, which some people took as an excuse to roll down a hill!

We then spent an hour there, we met up all together, boarded the coach, and took it to a restaurant called the Wild Horse Saloon. We had some delicious dinner, and we had the opportunity to try some Line Dancing, which almost everybody did, and ached! We then went back to the hotel, had some free time and then went to bed.

### Monday 24th October 2022 - School Collaboration and Nashville Zoo

On this day we went to an American High School called Ravenwood High School, for a collaboration. We got to sing for three different choir groups and they got to sing for us, and all three of the choirs were absolutely brilliant, and were immensely talented! We then all sang together, and ended with a quick Q and A session. We then boarded the bus to go to a trip-favourite - the Nashville Zoo! Once we arrived, everyone separated into their groups and went to look at the animals. Everyone's favourite part of the zoo was definitely the guinea pig enclosure and the red pandas!

We then got on the bus to go to a place called the Gaylord Opryland, which was a huge hotel filled with shops, cafes and an arcade, and even a river! We spent an hour browsing and enjoying the peace and quiet. Then for another hour, we went back to Opry Mills as everyone wanted to go back and browse some more, as they felt they did not have enough time to shop the first time. After an hour of shopping and browsing, we met outside a restaurant called the Aquarium Restaurant, and the teachers managed to trick most of the us into thinking we were catching our own dinner! We then went back to the hotel, and got ready for the Prize Giving celebration, where everyone received a card with a personal and original message, in addition to a beautiful marble bracelet that had some words of encouragement written on it! Then everyone went back to their rooms, packed their things, and went to bed.

### Tuesday 25th October 2022 - General Jackson Cruise and Flight Back

The next morning, we boarded the coach, suitcases with us and we went on a General Jackson cruise, where we were treated to lunch and entertainment where six very talented performers performed some Country classics and hits through the Country generations. We then got back on the coach after the cruise and went to the airport where we spent an hour in security and check in, but once again when we got through security everything got much calmer, and everyone went to buy food for the flight. We then met back at the meeting point and went to board the plane, where almost everyone slept for the full 8 hours.

This trip was an amazing experience and I'm really glad that I was able to be a part of it! A HUMONGOUS 'thank you' to Miss Calderwood, Mr Rodriguez, Dr James Miss Stojanovic, for putting-up with us and making this trip extremely fun!

By Ana G