

Arts & Entertainment

Marching Off To Europe — Hopefully Prepared

By FRED T. ROSSI
Specially Written for The Summer Travel Series

We dropped our son off at Newark Liberty Airport last Saturday. Six weeks after getting his high school diploma, he flew to Lisbon—his first stop on a three-and-a-half month trek through Europe that will take him to at least 22 cities in 17 countries.

When he first proposed this idea during his freshman year in high school, I gave the OK as long as he came up with a plausible and specific itinerary and also earned some of his own money to finance part of the journey. In the meantime, he and I traveled. We got the bizarre world of Disney out of the way early, when my son was seven. And thankfully, he did not find the Magic Kingdom all that magical so there were no photos with Mickey or Goofy. Instead, we mostly hung out at our kid-themed resort and at Disney's fake beach and wave pool.

It is usually parents who take their kids to interesting places and open their eyes to the world. For me, it was the reverse: my son took me to places I never would have imagined seeing. One year, we ended up in the Dominican Republic, where, en route to our fancy walled-off beach resort, we drove through some of the most depressing poverty he had ever seen—a far cry from comfortable and bubbled Westfield—and I could see in his face an appreciation for what he had at home and an acknowledgement of what too much of the rest of the world endures daily.

A few years ago, the two of us went to Arizona and did some hiking in the mountains. At one point, we were alone near the top of the highest point and I told him to go it alone for the final 50 feet to the summit. From below, I snapped a picture of him sitting alone at the top of the mountain as he looked out over Phoenix and the surrounding area — a 14-year-old who was higher than anyone else for miles and miles.

Later that year, we visited Italy

during a whirlwind 72-hour trip that took us to Rome and Florence, during which we saw the Colosseum, the Vatican, Michelangelo's statue of David and a very pretty Tuscan sunset.

Scotland had never been on my travel radar but in 2012, my son chose it — and our first day took us from Newark Airport to Edinburgh to the northern English countryside where we hiked Hadrian's Wall, the remnants of a 2,000-year-old fortification marking the northernmost border of the Roman Empire. Then we caught two trains that took us back to Edinburgh where we collapsed at our hotel after a 40-hour sleepless adventure involving two continents, three countries and 3,500 miles worth of plane and train travel.

The following day, we headed up to Inverness, in northern Scotland, for some hiking in the mountains 30 miles out of town. We ended up stranded when our taxi cab failed to show up as promised. So, with darkness setting in, we walked a few miles to a village comprised of several small buildings—and a pub, of course, where the locals cheerfully pointed us to the last bus of the day headed back to Inverness, which we caught with barely a minute to spare.

Last summer was our magical visit to Iceland, with its glaciers, stunning waterfalls, black sand beaches, hot water springs, hikes in the mountains and sunsets at 3 in the morning.

Amidst our travels together, my son also explored on his own. When he was 11 years old, he flew solo to Paris where he met up with cousins and spent 10 days in the French countryside. Two years later, he flew over to spend three weeks in small French villages. It was on that 2010 trip that he first got the idea for a post-high school journey throughout the Continent.

Early this year, I wondered how much actual trip planning he had been doing; as it turned out, he had done quite a bit. Thanks to his incessant research and talking with

others who had backpacked through Europe, he found the most useful Eurorail train pass and bought the most highly-recommended backpack for a European excursion and a few pairs of the most comfortable shoes to wear. My son — unlike dear old dad — did not overpack for the trip; his fully-stocked backpack weighed a mere 17 pounds at the airport last week. Nor was he clueless about where the best and most affordable hostels were located, what there is to see in each country and how he could best get to them, places to eat and neighborhoods to avoid. He also knew of the 90-day limit on tourist visits to EU countries, something I had never heard of.

In June, he presented me with his ambitious itinerary, starting with his August 3 arrival in Lisbon. From there, he heads eastward, first to Madrid and then on to Nice. Then it

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Lulu

Lost Dog

WESTFIELD — Lulu, a 1-year old mini goldendoodle has been missing for over a week. She was last seen on Embree Crescent in Westfield on July 31 at 6 p.m. Lulu weighs 14 pounds and is spayed with tags and a microchip.

She had on a red harness and a white bandana around her neck. A reward is being offered for her return. Contact ginaanp@gmail.com.



Continuo Arts Foundation

Continuo Arts Foundation Hosts Open Auditions for Singers

Members selected for the Continuo Symphonic Chorus will take part in the U.S. premiere of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* at Paper Mill Playhouse

MILLBURN — Continuo Arts Foundation, (Candace Wicke, President and Executive Director) New Jersey's most comprehensive intergenerational choral program and Paper Mill Playhouse, (Mark S. Hoebee-Producing Artistic Director, Todd Schmidt-Managing Director) one of the country's premier not-for-profit theaters, will partner for Paper Mill Playhouse's production of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

Selected members of Continuo Arts Symphonic Chorus will be featured as the on-stage choir in the musical's United States premiere from March 4 – April 5, 2015 at the Millburn Theater. Individuals interested in being considered for the Continuo Arts Symphonic Chorus can schedule an audition by calling Continuo Arts Foundation at (908) 264-5324.

Paper Mill Playhouse will once again partner with Disney Theatrical Productions with which it has previously partnered on *Newsies* and *High School Musical*, to present the U.S. premiere of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, inspired by the classic Victor Hugo novel and created for the stage by two masters of stage and screen, composer Alan Menken (*The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Newsies*, *Pocahontas*) and lyricist Stephen Schwartz (*Wicked*, *Godspell*, *Pippin*).

An intimate retelling of the fa-

mous love story scripted by Peter Parnell, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is produced in association with La Jolla Playhouse (Christopher Ashley, Artistic Director/ Michael Rosenberg, Managing Director).

"After an extensive search of choirs throughout the tri-state area, we are thrilled that Paper Mill Playhouse and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* music team have selected the Continuo Arts Foundation," commented Mark S. Hoebee, Producing Artistic Director at Paper Mill Playhouse. "It is always a thrill to partner with neighboring not-for-profit arts organizations that share a similar mission to Paper Mill Playhouse."

"Our collaboration with The Paper Mill Playhouse and Disney will offer Continuo Arts Members a unique and once in a lifetime opportunity," said Candace Wicke, President and Executive Director of Continuo Arts. "Continuo is honored to have been selected to be a part of the US Premiere musical at one of our nation's leading regional theaters."

In addition to the collaboration with Paper Mill Playhouse, singers from Continuo Arts will also partner with the Crescent Choral Society and the Plainfield Symphony for the world premiere of renowned Italian Composer Marco Frisina's *Sinfonia Mysterium Paschale* in

October and with Hometowne TV and Central Presbyterian Church for "The Wisdom of Broadway" live broadcast in November.

The Continuo Arts Foundation offers choral programs for children, intermediate and advanced girls, advanced boys, adults, seniors, and a professional ensemble. Auditions for the many vocal ensembles of Continuo Arts Foundation will be scheduled throughout the day on Wednesday and Thursday, August 13 and 14.

For the audition, prepare 32 bars of an a capella selection that best highlight the singer's vocal range and versatility. All auditions will be held at Historic Twin Maples, 216 Springfield Ave, Summit.

Individuals interested in being considered for the Continuo Arts Chorus can schedule an audition by calling Continuo Arts Foundation at (908) 264-5324. Singers will be called or e-mailed if they are selected for a callback. The Continuo Arts Chorus will begin rehearsals on Tuesday, September 2. Rehearsals for *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* will take place as scheduled and continue through the beginning of March 2015.

A 501 (c) 3 charitable organization, more information can be found at www.continuoarts.com.

www.goleader.com

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