

Day Nine – Wednesday, May 20, 2015

After the excitement of La Sagrada, this was a day featuring a long bus ride from Barcelona back into France and on to Arles.

One of the features of the bus rides has been the lack of rehearsal (if you can have a negative feature). The music does seem to be going rather well. Gerry always seems to have a smile on his face though that was modified to a sickly grin when he had a short spell of tummy trouble!

Apart from Day Zero, we have only had one scheduled practice session. You can tell by the smiles and intense concentration that it was a good one. And, except when Gerry found an organ to accompany a soloist, all



the programmes were entirely *a cappella* – and we had half the programme memorized, i.e. books on the floor! At this stage, even the basses knew the words (well, mostly!)

This bus ride was broken by a stop for lunch in a resort area of France on the Mediterranean not far from Perpignan. A magnificent stretch of sun drenched beach made memorable by the cool, strong wind blowing stinging sand in your face. The place was deserted, and when 50 people descended on one of the restaurants which had minimum staffing (i.e. 2!), lunch was somewhat elongated. It was the first time that anyone was late for the scheduled bus departure time – but so many were late that the Director was forced to waive the euro a minute late fee!



And on to Arles. A town steeped in history and dominated by the Roman arena (90 AD) and smaller theatre situated on the Rhone and home to about 50,000 people though back in Roman times it was much, much bigger. But its narrow streets, and lack of cars makes it very popular with tourists.

But for us, the evening arrival gave us time to unpack and have dinner at the Hotel Arles Plaza. And so to bed. On the morrow, for some, the highlight will be a tour of Arles. For others, the gleam in the eye foretells a full day shopping binge, for, after all, Barcelona was two days ago.