Southwest Minnesota State Band Performance Tour
Spain: including Madrid and environs
May 11 – 20, 2016 (8 nights/10 days)

Proposed Itinerary

Your itinerary will be filled with activities enabling you to see the great cultural and historical highlights of each city, perform in concert and meet new friends. The centerpiece of your tour will be the concerts, which will be arranged in venues appropriate for a band where a concert-going public can be gathered. Some performances may be hosted by local groups, providing the opportunity for further musical and social exchange.

Wednesday, May 11
Departure US
Arrive at Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport for check in at least 2 1/2 hours in advance of your overnight flights to Madrid, Spain.

Thursday, May 12
Madrid
Bienvenidos a España! Early evening arrival at Madrid Barajas International Airport. After clearing customs and claiming your luggage, you will be met by your English speaking tour escort, who will be with you throughout your tour. Transfer to the capital of Spain, Madrid. With a population of about 4 million, this is a major European cultural center and a surprisingly modern city. Madrid is also compact for a national capital, especially when compared to other capital cities in Europe. Panoramic guided orientation tour on the way to your hotel. Check in, group dinner and overnight.

Friday, May 13
Toledo/Madrid
Your guided city tour will highlight some of Madrid’s most interesting features: the plazas with their lovely statues, the pleasing architecture and the delightful parks. You will visit the opulent Palacio Real (Royal Palace) located high on a bluff overlooking the Castilian plain. Now used only for state functions, this immense palace is filled with art treasures and antiques. Marvel at the 2-ton chandelier, the diamond clock and Tiepolo ceiling among the gilt, bronze, damask and mosaics found in its 2,000+ rooms. During leisure time, stroll through some of the city’s well manicured public parks, including the lovely Royal Botanical Gardens. You’ll also visit the world-famous Prado Museum. One of the world’s finest art galleries, the Prado began as a royal collection, was enlarged by the Hapsburgs, and now includes more than...
7,000 paintings by such masters as Goya, El Greco, Velasquez, Raphael, Botticelli and Rubens.

This afternoon travel to **Toledo**, a medieval city as spectacular as it is rich in history, architecture and art. Within the city walls are many beautiful sights, including winding alleys and impressive churches. Among the treasures not to be missed are Toledo Antiguo with its ancient Cathedral (one of the finest in Spain) and the Synagogue.

Return to Madrid for group dinner and overnight.

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<th>Saturday, May 14</th>
<th>Segovia/El Espinar/Madrid</th>
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<td>This morning you’ll have an excursion to the UNESCO World Heritage City <strong>Segovia</strong> for a guided tour. The golden age of Old Castile can be seen in the architecture and in the engineering of the 2,000 year old Roman Aqueducts, still used to carry water. The city walls (dating from the 11th century) enclose the historic center and some wonderful architecture, including one of Spain’s last, and finest, Gothic buildings, the Cathedral. You’ll visit the Alcazar, a spectacular Moorish fortress/palace from the 16th century. Transfer to El Espinar, a village known as the gate between Castillian and Leon regions of Spain, to prepare for your 1st concert. Group dinner at a local restaurant.</td>
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<td><strong>Concert</strong> in El Espinar. After the concert, return to Madrid and overnight.</td>
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<th>Sunday, May 15</th>
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<td>Check out of your Madrid hotel and head north. You’ll stop in Aranda de Duero for a guided tour. In the province of Burgos, the town’s heritage is primarily from the 15th to 16th century. The Isabelline-Gothic Church of Santa Maria is a highlight. Continue to Burgos. Like many Castilian towns, Burgos began as a fortress, circa 884. Grouped around the fortress were a number of small villages (burgos), which eventually melted together to form a new vibrant city. Group dinner and overnight in Burgos.</td>
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<th>Monday, May 16</th>
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<td>Morning guided tour of Burgos. The old town center is dominated by Spain’s greatest Gothic Cathedral, a UNESCO World Heritage site. El Cid is buried here. After lunch on your own, transfer to Covarrubias. The village in a typical example of Castilian layout with arcaded streets and 16th century Gothic architecture. <strong>Concert</strong> in Covarrubias. Group dinner before returning to Burgos and overnight.</td>
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<th>Tuesday, May 17</th>
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<td>Free time this morning to explore Burgos on your own. This afternoon, transfer to Lerma to prepare for your 3rd concert. The town sits atop a hill overlooking the Arlanza River Valley. Founded in pre-Roman times, Lerma’s most</td>
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prominent period was in the early 17th century, reflected in many of the buildings in the historic quarter with Ducal Square and Ducal Palace. Group dinner in a local restaurant. Concert in Lerma. Following the concert, return to Burgos and overnight.

Wednesday, May 18 Salamanca
After breakfast, check out and transfer to Salamanca. The city, which boasts the oldest university in Spain, is called "La Dorada" (Golden City) for the beautiful color of the sandstone used in its buildings. Its streets and plazas are brimming with history and vibrant with life thanks to the large student population, including many foreigners who come here to study the “purest” Spanish, Castilian. Spain prides itself on a great variety of architecture. Salamanca is spectacular! The entire city is a UNESCO World Heritage site. You’ll have a guided tour, including visit to the “old” University.

Group dinner and overnight.

Thursday, May 19 Avila/Madrid
After breakfast, check out and board coach for your return to Madrid. First stop is Avila for a guided tour. Spain’s highest city at an elevation of 3,700 feet, Avila is also the finest preserved walled city in the world. This “City of Saints and Stones” is the birthplace of St. Teresa and the burial place of the Grand Inquisitor Torquemada. The 11th century, 36 foot high walls are reinforced by some nine gates and ninety turrets, the most important of the latter being the Cimorro (Cathedral apse). Avila Cathedral, an early Gothic masterpiece with Romanesque alterations, is uniquely incorporated into the city’s defensive wall. Venture outside the fortified walls to tour some of the finest religious sites in the city, including the 12th century Romanesque Church of San Vicente, with its colonnaded gallery and magnificent sculptures adorning the west entrance, and the Church of San Pedro, a gem of medieval purist architecture. Late afternoon arrival and check in in Madrid. Tonight you will have a Flamenco show with your special Tapas farewell dinner to celebrate the conclusion of your tour!

Friday, May 20 Return flight
Morning airport transfer to check in for your return flight(s) to the U.S.
Welcome home!!
Your tour includes:

- Arrangements and publicity for 3 concerts. Exchanges with local musical groups will be considered where possible.
- A full-time English-speaking tour escort throughout the tour.
- Private, deluxe coach transportation for all scheduled group transfers and activities in Spain.
- 8 nights: 4 total in Madrid, 3 Burgos, 1 Salamanca, in centrally located 4-star level hotels with private W/C and shower/bath based on double occupancy. A limited number of single rooms are available at a surcharge.
- Buffet breakfast and dinner daily.
- Local city guides as needed in itinerary.
- Group entrances as noted in the itinerary.
- All group meals, coach and hotel taxes. Airline fuel surcharges are guaranteed in the air quote. Air taxes are included at the rate current at the time of the quote ($121.75) and, per airline industry policy, are subject to change by the airline until ticketing. Increases will be passed on to the group.