

## Rotary International District 5340 7<sup>th</sup> Annual MusiCamp

16 July-7 August, San Diego, California 2011

With the help of Steyning and Henfield Rotary I successfully auditioned for an orchestral summer school run by the San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory. Flying out the day before the course began, was my first experience of a transatlantic flight. I had a connecting flight at Chicago where I had a minor delay when an immigration and customs official said that I needed a visa to enter the country. However, I was soon on my way again after a group of officials decided that I didn't require this authorisation. When I landed at San Diego I was met by Ron Hunt, the local representative of San Diego Rotary. Ron and his wife were extremely kind and welcoming and Ron would check on my welfare every day, eventually becoming a good friend. The plane journey was long and tiring but it was all worth it for the beach party that lay ahead immediately after I arrived and I was excited to meet the people I would be spending 3 weeks with.



I also experienced kindness and hospitality from my host family, Jenny and Hank Goodman. I immediately settled in and quickly became good friends with their daughter Dakota. They made me feel part of their family. At their house I shared a room with another international student, Isabel Salzmann. She is a clarinettist from Berlin and we became best friends, the first of many friends that I made during my time there. I made friends with all of the international students and many of the American students. We keep in contact daily via Facebook and Skype. Another kindness was shown to me by Doug Hall, a horn player in the San Diego Symphony Orchestra, who loaned me one of his horns for free for the duration of my stay.

The first two weeks were taken up with intensive orchestral and chamber music rehearsals. I had a rehearsal every day of the week starting at 8:30am till 3:15pm which consisted of orchestral and chamber rehearsals. The conductor, Jeff Edmonds, led us through Capriccio Espagnol, Symphonie Espagnol, Egmont Overture and The Ritual Fire Dance. This was all great fun and I also played in a wind ensemble playing Serenade by Strauss. This was a wonderful experience to play with new people and of such high calibre. At the end of the two weeks we gave a number of concerts in some striking locations one of which was outside, by the sea at La Jolla.



The third week consisted of less rehearsals but performances and day trips out to attractions in Southern California. Notably, Universal Studios near LA, Sea World and Hollywood Boulevard. During this week there were also many beach and pool parties which were great fun and strengthened friendships. Understandably, as the course came to an end it was very sad to say goodbye to all my new found friends but I knew I would see them again sometime soon. It was lucky that my good friend Isabel was on the same flight home as me as she was changing at Heathrow for a connecting flight to Berlin. This made the flight home great fun and we had a whole row to ourselves! Isabel has promised to come to England next year for my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

I'd like to thank all those in Rotary for making this wonderful and unforgettable experience, in particular Peter Firth for all his hard work, in making it all possible.

Bryony Prior