



 *Classical Movements*

CHOIR, ORCHESTRA
AND BAND TOURS TO

**Burma
(Myanmar)**





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Travel Specialists for Music and Performing Groups

WHY MYANMAR WITH CLASSICAL MOVEMENTS

Highlights: Myanmar's attractions lie largely in the area of the spiritual. **Temples, pagodas** and historical sites abound with some areas such as **Bagan** boasting so many attractions that it would be impossible to take them in during a single visit. With landscapes, a tropical climate, **beaches**, and truly awesome sights, Myanmar is a fascinating and bewitching destination.

History: Myanmar was ruled with an iron fist long before the current regime came to power. Long before even the British, there were the kings of old, who rose to power by eliminating rivals with claims to the throne. Then, Western countries who sought to colonize Burma started to invade. First it was the Portuguese, in the 16th century, and then the British, who had already colonized India and were looking for more territory in the East. In three moves (1824, 1852 and 1885), the British took over all of Myanmar. The British built railways and ports, and many British companies grew wealthy trading in teak and rice. Many Burmese were unhappy with the colonial status quo. A nationalist movement developed, and there were demonstrations, often led, in true Burmese fashion, by Buddhist monks.

Myanmar is also home to **Aung San Suu Kyi**, the famous politician, human-rights icon and Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

Shopping: A popular purchase in Myanmar is **lacquer-ware**, which is made into bowls, cups, vases, tables and various items, and is available almost anywhere. One can also buy **precious stones** such as **jade, rubies, and sapphires**, which are mined throughout the country. There is a long tradition of weaving **tapestries** in Burma. **Textiles** in Myanmar are also stunning. Each region and each ethnic group has its own style. There is also a wide variety of beautiful **silverware** and **jewelry**, handcrafts such as **wooden carvings, silk paintings** and **stonework**.

Food and Drink: Burmese food is a blend of Chinese, Indian and Mon influences. Rice is at the core of most Burmese food, and good vegetarian food is widely available. **Mohinga** is a dish of rice vermicelli with fish gravy and is usually accompanied by coriander and with chili powder. **Onnokauswe** is a dish of thicker noodles in a thick soup of coconut milk added with chicken. **Laphet thote** is a salad of fermented tea leaves and a variety of nuts. **Nan Gyi Thoke** is a special dish of rice noodle salad with chicken sauce. **Yenwejan** is the most popular tea served in Myanmar, and is similar to Chinese jasmine tea. Another popular tea drink is **milk tea** which can be found in Burmese cafes. **Alcohol** is frowned upon by conservative Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims, but consumed widely, mostly among men. Myanmar Beer is most popular in the country.

Cities:

Yangon (formerly Rangoon) was the capital of Myanmar until 2005. The city is an amalgamation of British, Burmese, Chinese and Indian influences, and is known for its colonial architecture, which although decaying and beyond appreciation, remains an almost unique example of a 19th-century British colonial capital. The **Shwedagon Pagoda**, which stands on the top of **Singuttara Hill**, is the single most important religious site in all of Myanmar. There are also many beautiful lakes, gardens, museums and Buddhist temples to visit throughout the city.

Naypyidaw officially replaced Yangon as the capital of Myanmar in November of 2005. Some tourist sites include: the huge and impressive **parliament building** with an 11-lane highway leading up to it. Three enormous **sculptures** depicting Burmese kings, **and the Uppatasanti Pagoda** ("Peace Pagoda"), which houses a Buddha tooth relic from China. It is a replica of Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon and stands 100 metres high.

Mandalay is the second largest city in Burma (after Yangon), and a former capital of Myanmar. The city is the economic and religious hub of upper Myanmar and is centered around the Royal Palace. Mandalay was created by King Mingdon Min of Burma in 1857 as the new capital of the kingdom of Ava. Visit the **Maha Myat Muni Paya**, which is Myanmar's second holiest pilgrimage site; a 4-metre high Buddha statue, made of gold and decorated with



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precious jewels. Also see the **Myanan San Kyaw Golden Palace**, inside the Mandalay Palace City, and **Shwenandaw Monastery** at the foot of Mandalay Hill.

Neighboring Countries: Bangladesh, India, China, Laos, and Thailand

PERFORMANCES AND CULTURAL IMMERSION

Venues include **St. Francis Church, St. Mary's Cathedral, the United States Embassy and Consulate**, and the **Gitameit Music Center**.

Symphony orchestras and choirs in Myanmar include the **Attachment of Clouds (AOC) Orchesta**, the **Gitamet Choir, Gitamet Trio**, and the **Myanmar Institute of Theology Orchestra**.

Also available are: **cultural and musical exchanges with local ensembles, workshops and master classes with expert clinicians and outreach concerts to local schools and non-profit organizations.**

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Classical Movements has been putting together tours to Myanmar since 2012 when the United States reestablished top diplomatic relations with the Burmese government.

TESTIMONIALS

Steve Ramsey, Head of Men's Glee Clun Alumni Association [University of Michigan]

“Thank you for making this trip to Burma possible for us. It was a lifelong dream of ours. Burma was absolutely fascinating, we always felt safe there, the Rangoon (Yangon) hotel was one of the best we ever stayed in with a fantastic breakfast, our guide Moe was fascinating and one of the finest we ever had with a great sense of humor and candor. What a fascinating experience we had in Rangoon, Bagan and Mandalay. What a special effort you made for us especially after the superb China concerts and tour for our students. This was unforgettable trip.”

Martin Jean, Director [Yale Institute of Sacred Music]

“Our tour to Japan, Singapore, and Myanmar was a revelation. Our students performed the *B Minor Mass* to sold-out houses in some of the top concert halls in these countries. We owe Classical Movements our great debt not only for attending so well to the practical details, but for understanding and being sensitive to our mission of using Sacred Music to reach out to the cultures of the world. Maestro Suzuki joins me in congratulating Classical Movements!”

Amy Wagliardo, Director of Operations [Dallas Symphony Orchestra]

“I wanted to send a note of thanks to you for all your work and guidance on the DSO's recent triumphant return to Europe. There were so many details, many of them a moving target, that you were able to effortlessly handle on our behalf. For this we are very grateful and thankful. Beyond the obvious, you got us through missing train cars, an averted train and plane strike, the maestro's changing needs, and an unplanned layover in Miami. And, not to be overlooked, we had seamless airplane travel and hotel check-ins. Given we were hitting these hotels, especially, sometimes before check-in time, with a large group, on sold out days, with a few people changing their preferences as we went, it was really quite revelatory to watch. Always a pleasure, and very much noted. Thank you, thank you, thank you. We very much appreciate your expertise and your efforts”

Cynthia Pickett Steele, Orchestra Manager [National Symphony Orchestra]

“We greatly value our relationship with Classical Movements, and the high quality of work that you provide for the National Symphony Orchestra. We know that you have worked intensively on this tour and it is certainly going to be an asset to have [you] execute the international tour.”



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Joan Gregoryk, Music Director [Children's Chorus of Washington]

"...Once again, the trip exceeded our expectations. All of the travel details were handled perfectly. The concert venues were stellar with huge audiences. Thank you for another extraordinary and memorable tour!"

PRESS

A Limited Selection

"It is difficult to classify Blue Heart Tours (Classical Movements), a wholesaler that started with one destination and one itinerary but now offers programs in Europe, Africa, and Asia. If there are defining characteristics, they would be ability to keep prices low by watching costs and to provide value for clients."

Travel Agent, December 18, 1995

"Classical Movements is based in Alexandria but works mainly overseas, arranging tours by American orchestras and choruses and running music festivals in [all over the world]. 'Choral music is becoming so international,' Helms says. 'There was a time when it was all Handel, Bach, Mozart and such. But now there are so many fantastic composers. And in the course of their tours, so many American groups have started learning Maori, Chinese, South African and Brazilian songs.'" 'In the process of taking American groups around the world, we have had so many exchanges and collaborations, and we've had a great number of groups that wanted to come to the States,' Helms says.

The Washington Post, Mark Jenkins, June 22, 2011

"Classical Movements is the go-to company for ensembles planning concert tours."

Baltimore Sun, Tim Smith, June 29, 2012

"Classical Movements, Inc. is a concert touring company dedicated to arranging tours for choirs and ensembles all over the world. Helms calls the group a one-stop shop; booking hotels and meals for the touring ensembles and connecting them with performance venues. In addition, the group also produces four international music festivals every year (in Argentina and Brazil, Austria, South Africa, and Washington DC)."

Bethesda Gazette, Cara Hedgepeth, June 25, 2012

"Singing together is one of the great and unifying pleasures we humans enjoy, and in so many ways, Saturday's program at the Church of the Epiphany downtown, part of the Serenade! Washington, D.C. Choral Festival, was a celebration of these pleasures...but the afternoon's emotional high and strongest affirmation of singing's power came when the men and women of the Imilonji KaNtu Choral Society from South Africa (not even listed on the program) and members of the Voices of Namibia Choir came up front to jam with the Boston kids. And what a jam it was. Led by Imilonji KaNtu conductor Gobingca George Mxadana, drum in hand, the whole bunch sang, danced, clapped and whooped it up in a joyful noise that brought the audience to its feet cheering"

The Washington Post, Joan Reinthaler, June 5, 2012

"Neeta Helms, president of Classical Movements, which works with major orchestras as well as tours by youth orchestras and choirs, says 2009 looks to be its busiest year ever. But Helms works hard for that business. The Wednesday flight from Barcelona to Lisbon had the most stringent bag restrictions yet, with hefty fines for those deemed too heavy. But the loaded-down musicians were allowed to board unimpeded. 'Neeta worked her magic,' murmured one."

Philadelphia Inquirer, David P. Stearns, 2009