

## MTSC Italy Tour 2026

### Basic Itinerary - 20 Nights

*Details of Concerts, Accommodations & Activities will be filled in as the tour becomes nearer.*

**Saturday, June 13** Flight Los Angeles to Rome

**Sunday, June 14- June 18** Arrive Rome Fiumicino Airport, meet our AMAZING Tour Leader **Francesca D'Angola**. Welcome Dinner at an authentic *Roman Trattoria*. Spend the Next 4 nights in our centrally located hotel in Rome. Take in the incredible ancient Roman sites and the FOUNTAINS of ROME all sparkly for the Jubilee Year (not boarded up – YAAY!) Optional Bike Tour of All the Sites! *Start Concertizing! Get over that Jet Lag!*



**Thursday, June 18 – June 25** Hop aboard our air-conditioned motorcoach and head for the Tuscan Countryside where we will spend the next 7 nights in a Tuscan Farmhouse- *Fattoria* or *Agriturismo* as the Italians call it! Here we will have apartments, a pool and a restaurant. Relax & walk among the vineyards. Rehearsals on the farm to brush up on our music and just play for fun. Daytrips and concert possibilities in Vinci, (the home of the worlds greatest genius, artist and inventor, *Leonardo da Vinci*), Pisa, Lucca, Siena. Perhaps an optional Bike Ride through the Tuscan Countryside.



**Thursday, June 25- June 29** 4 Nights Montecatini (Still part of Tuscany) – a beautiful small Italian Spa Town, lots of shops and cafes. On the train line. Perhaps take a ride on the regional train to Florence. Concerts TBD in this area.



**Monday, June 29 – July 2** Head North to the VIOLIN MAKING CAPITAL OF THE WORLD! Spend the next 3 nights in the small village of CREMONA! You will have time to buy that ROSIN you missed out on in 2024 and visit the violin making shops. Maybe you want to buy a new Violin, Viola or Cello 😊 We will most likely be a part of the *Cremona Summer Festival again*, a favorite in this music town. Possible day trip to Parma, famous for *Parmigiano Reggiano Cheese* and *Prosciutto di Parma*!



**Thursday, July 2 – July 4** We will leave Cremona and head for Venice with a possible lunch stop in Mantua or Padua - remember ROMEO was banned to Mantua for pursuing Juliet! (this depends on when our Venice Concert will be, and what route the driver will take). Spend our final 2 nights in our centrally located hotel in Venice. Cross your fingers we can get our concert at VIVALDI's CHURCH for a third time! MTSC will sponsor a *Gondola Ride* through the Canals for travelers and a Farewell Dinner.

**Saturday, July 4** Ciao Italia! Wave goodbye as this Incredible Tour of a Lifetime comes to an end.

😞 Flight - Venice to Los Angeles.

# MountainTop Strings – Italy Concert Tour 2026

## Eligibility, Criteria, Rehearsal & Performance Commitment

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- Current strings musicians in Big Bear Lighthouse and Arrowhead Arts YAE
- Current strings musicians in Big Bear Lighthouse Chamber Strings (minimum must have completed 7th grade at time of travel)
- College strings musicians/alum who are still involved in music and play at a high level
- Young Professional Strings Musicians
- Piano Accompanist by Audition
- Parent Chaperones and guests by approval
- **Musicians under 14** must have their own chaperone. (If the parent is not going, another parent or adult must agree to be responsible the entire time)

### CRITERIA & EXPECTATIONS FOR MUSICIANS:

- Private lessons required with a professional, degreed, teacher on your instrument.
- Mountain string players in middle & high school must be a participant in good standing in either LYO or Arrowhead Arts programs.
- If there are any players from other areas, alternate arrangements will be made.
- Must be committed to learning the music, following all instructions of preparation
- There will be several performance assessments for orchestral players
- Players will be held to high standards and treated like young adults
- Must have a squeaky clean behavior record in all areas of life. The highest level of maturity and responsibility is expected throughout the process and on tour.

### Rehearsal & Pre-Tour Concert Expectations:

- 2- 3 additional rehearsals/workshops per month outside of your weekly LYO or AAA ensemble, and more as the tour becomes nearer. Includes mostly Sundays, but may also utilize Fridays or Saturdays depending on personnel.
- Rehearsal locations vary depending on availability and where our musicians are from.
- We perform a number of “pre-tour concerts” tour to gain experience and polish music.

**Our Music:** Tour Music consist of many styles including Baroque, Classical, Sacred, Latin, Jazz, American and light rock, and pieces are assigned at an appropriate level for the different levels of players for a **“multi-level”** ensemble. Music selections are tailored to each of the diverse venues to make wonderful concerts to share with audiences from all over the world.

# MountainTop Strings of California - ITALY TOUR 2026

## APPLICATION for MUSICIANS

To Join the Tour, please return to Director Rizzo with \$1,000.00 Deposit to MTSC by

**March 15, 2025**

**Cash, Check to MTSC or Zelle 909-744-7598 (LYO)**

**CREDIT CARD OPTION: [www.mountaintopstrings.org/shop](http://www.mountaintopstrings.org/shop)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name as it appears on your passport- full legal name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Passport # - Due by September 1<sup>st</sup>

Age at time of travel (6/13/26) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gender

\_\_\_\_\_  
Musician's E-mail Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Musician's Cell Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Legal Guardian Name - if under 21

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian **Mailing** Address during the school year

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (Home)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (Cell / Work)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Additional parent/guardian contact

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail

\_\_\_\_\_  
Main Instrument -Years of Study

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secondary Instrument - Years of Study

\_\_\_\_\_  
Current Private Teacher (you must be studying privately with weekly lessons in order to participate)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Private Teacher's E-mail Address and Phone

**EXPERIENCE – Please use an additional sheet if necessary.**

Solo repertoire studied: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Solo repertoire performed and in what context.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Orchestral experience - list the highest level pieces studied/performed and in what context:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Chamber Music/Small Ensemble experience – list the highest level pieces studied/performed and in what context:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List any honors, competitions or awards you have received:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Summer or honors music programs previously attended:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**GENERAL CONDITIONS OF ATTENDANCE – Please initial each.**

\_\_\_\_\_ As a participant of the MountainTop Strings Italy Tour, I will abide by policies and regulations set forth by the director. I understand that a violation of these policies and regulations may be grounds for dismissal without a return of fees.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will commit to the rehearsal and concert schedule, preparing the music with home practice and private teacher.

\_\_\_\_\_ Once I turn in deposit and application, I will fully follow through with the project until June 2026.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that all placement, musical assignments & decisions are at the sole discretion of the director.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of applicant Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent (if applicant is under 18) Date





**MTSC Italy Concert Tour 2026**  
**CHAPERONE & ADDITIONAL TRAVELERS APPLICATION**  
**Return to Director Rizzo with deposit by June 1, 2025**

We encourage qualified parents to join the tour as chaperones to be part of the “team”. Chaperones share in the magic and take part in all aspects of the tour, and this is a very rewarding experience. We also welcome approved guests if they are mature enough and physically able to handle the pace of the tour. **We do not recommend that elderly or very young children accompany you on this fast paced tour. *The pace will be that of active teenagers.***

**SOME THINGS TO KNOW FOR ADDITIONAL TRAVELERS**  
**(NON- MUSICIANS)**

- Parent Chaperones are responsible for the whereabouts and safety of a small group of students. This includes your own child, and you may be asked to look after another whose parent is not present.
- We ask that all members of the tour take part in our activities, and that you support the educational cause of the tour and the hard work of the musicians at all times.
- Be aware that this trip is not a vacation, but a music, cultural and educational experience. **BUT WE DO HAVE FUN!**
- Parents & Additional Travelers’ Tour Fees are the same price as musicians.
- All adult travelers must be able to work well as a team with other adults and be calm, positive and flexible. Must have a good rapport with kids/teenagers.
- Chaperones/Guests stay in the same hotels as musicians, and generally share a room usually with one to two other adults. Singles/Doubles are available for an extra fee. Musicians generally share a room with other musicians.
- We ask that additional travelers help with certain aspects of the tour (luggage, greeters at concerts etc.) and assist with non-musical tasks.
- Chaperones will get some free time 😊
- Chaperone trip and all expenses are tax deductible 😊

**Please contact Sharon Rizzo at 909-744-7598 if you have any concerns or questions about traveling with MTSC as a non-musician.**

**Please fill out the Chaperone & Additional Traveler Registration Form and return with deposit.**



## CHAPERONE & ADDITIONAL TRAVELER REGISTRATION

### MTSC-ITALY 2026

***This form is for NON-MUSICIANS. Please read "Some Things to Know" before registering. Please submit this page with \$1,500 Deposit by June 1, 2025***

**Musician(s) you are Supporting if a family Member** \_\_\_\_\_

**I am registering as a** \_\_\_\_\_ **Parent Chaperone** \_\_\_\_\_ **Guest** \_\_\_\_\_ **Sibling**

**Legal Name as it appears on Passport** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Birth** \_\_\_\_\_ **Passport #** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **Mailing Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact back in the U.S.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone #** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Read and Sign:**

***I have read "Some Things to Know" on the previous page and I understand that the main purpose of traveling with the MountainTop Strings is to support the musicians and the concert tour, and will conduct myself accordingly.***

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## Acquiring Personal Sponsors

### TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS ACCEPTED ON MUSICIANS' BEHALF

Raising the funds to make the trip to Italy may seem impossible at first, but many musicians have done it! The most common way participants raise money is by seeking tax-deductible donations from friends, family and other supporters. People love to support students who are working hard, educating themselves and doing good things in the world. As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, Friends of MTSC can accept tax-deductible donations up to the cost of Italy Tour 2026 plus airfare.

- Send requests to many sources: Friends, family and personal contacts. Many participants have raised up to several thousand dollars for their tour through \$50 and \$100 donations.
- Tax Deductible Donations on behalf musicians should be accompanied by the Sponsorship Form.
- Feel free to use parts of the letter below as a sample to create your own. Make it personal!

### SAMPLE LETTER OF SPONSORSHIP

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I have been playing the violin for about eight years and have participated in various orchestras, including the Lighthouse Youth Orchestra, Redlands Youth Symphony, and San Bernardino County Honors Orchestra. As an integral part of the Lighthouse Youth Orchestras, I have been able to attend multiple musical festivals, where my orchestra has won first place in our division as well as many gold ratings. Individually, I have also received an Outstanding Musicianship Award for my musical contribution to my ensemble. In addition to my experience as an orchestra member, I have also had the privilege of participating in a few chamber groups as well as performing repertoire for solo competitions.

I am very excited to announce an amazing opportunity that I have the chance to be part of next summer. The Mountaintop Strings of California, directed by Sharon Rizzo, is planning a 3 week Italian Performance Tour that will take place from June 14th to July 4th, 2026. We will be performing in Rome, Tuscany, Cremona, and Venice. This is a chance for me to grow as a musician and perform and rehearse in some wonderful historic venues, such as Vivaldi's own Church, the Chiesa della Pietà in Venice. While we will perform mostly Baroque and Classical music, we will also be putting together a Jazz & Pop program to play in more casual venues and town squares. While this is a musical program, there are also a number of opportunities to explore and experience the abundance of culture that Italy has to offer such as.....**FILL IN HERE**

The tuition for this program costs \$6,375 plus airfare. Participation in a program like this would not be possible without the generosity of people such as yourself, which is why I am reaching out to you. If you are willing and able, I would greatly appreciate any monetary donation that you could provide as I work to raise the money needed to participate in this wonderful program. As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, Mountaintop Strings is able to accept donations, which are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by the law, up to the cost of the Italy Concert Tour, plus airfare, on my behalf.

Checks made payable to "Friends of MTSC" should be sent to me directly, and I will submit them as payment for my tour. Tax ID is 26-147-7846 (The Lighthouse Project of Big Bear). Requests for Tax Letters for donations over \$250 may be made by emailing our Director, Sharon Rizzo, srizzo.mtsc@gmail.com.

Feel free to contact me with any questions that you may have! You can reach me directly at (your email address & phone number). I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Thank you for your support,  
*Your name & Contact Info*



# Sponsor a Musician!

Please complete this form and return to your musician with your donation. Tax can letters be provided on request for donations of \$250 or more. Thank you for your support of the MountainTop Strings Italy Concert Tour 2026!

Musician's name you are sponsoring: \_\_\_\_\_

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to "Friends of MTSC" and write "Italy Tour 26" in the memo.

Please send donations directly to your musician, and they will turn in as payment for the tour.

TAX ID for deduction: 26-1477846

Friends of MountainTop Strings is a non-profit 501(c)3 under the Lighthouse Project of Big Bear. Tax can letters be provided on request for donations of \$250 or more.

Please email [srizzo.mtsc@gmail.com](mailto:srizzo.mtsc@gmail.com) for a tax letter.

# MountainTop Strings of California - Italy Concert Tour 2026

June 14-July 4, 2026



## 3 Week Land Package ~ Pricing & Payment Plan

- Triples or quadruple rooms: \$6,375 *with 26 or more travelers*
- Double Room – add \$850 pp    Single Room to yourself – add \$1,900

*Musicians will be placed in a triple or quad room with other musicians; Parents/non-musicians share a room with other adults/non-musicians.*

### **INCLUDED:**

- Charming, centrally located Italian accommodations throughout
- A Farmhouse Stay in the Tuscan Countryside (with a pool and vineyards)
- Breakfast every day
- A Welcome and Farewell Dinner in Rome & Venice (provided by MTSC)
- Coach Bus Transportation throughout – in Rome we walk to venues in historic center
- Boat transportation to hotel & airport in Venice
- 8-10 CONCERTS in historic places with assistance from our Italian Tour Crew
- Music Stand Rental and Transport
- Rehearsals, instruction & facility use prior to departure and in Italy (provided by MTSC)
- Native Italian Tour Leader **Francesca from Roma** to accompany us! (provided by MTSC)
- Day Trips to different cities: **Possibilities may include** Pisa, Lucca, Florence, Siena, Parma
- 1 Cooking Class Experience
- 1 Food & Wine Tasting in Tuscany (alternative drink for those underage)
- A Gondola Ride through the Canals in Venice (Provided by MTSC)
- An Official MTSC Backpack for first time musicians (provided by MTSC)

### **NOT INCLUDED:**

- Round Trip Airfare (A Group Flight on JUNE 13 will be booked- details TBD)
- Overseas Medical Insurance (required of all travelers) & Instrument Insurance
- Optional add-on activities, such as bike tours, excursions etc (offered Spring 2026)
- Cello Airplane Seat: MTSC will contribute \$500 toward a seat if you are bringing your own cello & the value is \$3,500 or more. Others will rent a cello overseas. Price TBD
- Meals not listed above (It is possible to eat cheaply in Italy!)

## PAYMENT PLAN FOR MUSICIANS

- March 15, 2025 \$1,000 deposit
- May 1, 2025 \$500
- June 1, 2025 \$500
- July 1, 2025 \$500
- Aug 1, 2025 \$500
- Sep 1, 2025 \$500
- Oct 1, 2025 \$500
- Nov 1, 2025 \$500
- Dec 1, 2025 \$500
- Jan 1, 2026 \$500
- Feb 1, 2026 \$500
- Mar 15, 2026 GROUP FLIGHT  
Airfare due in Full – price TBA
- **May 1, 2026 Remaining Balance  
Due Including Optional Add-On  
Activities**

### Payment Methods:

1. Cash to Sharon in a marked envelope
2. Checks made payable to MTSC
3. Zelle 909.744.7598
4. Credit Card Option: Pay on website, adds 3.5 %

[www.mountaintopstrings.org/shop](http://www.mountaintopstrings.org/shop)

## PAYMENT PLAN FOR PARENTS

**AND NON-MUSICIANS:** If you KNOW you are going, please use the same plan as musicians. If you need a little more time to decide, please use payment plan below. **Must have all travelers registered by June 1<sup>st</sup> 2025.**

- June 1, 2025 \$1,500 deposit
- July 1, 2025 \$500
- Aug 1, 2025 \$500
- Sep 1, 2025 \$500
- Oct 1, 2025 \$500
- Nov 1, 2025 \$500
- Dec 1, 2025 \$500
- Jan 1, 2026 \$500
- Feb 1, 2026 \$500
- Mar 15, 2026 GROUP FLIGHT  
Airfare due in Full – price TBA
- **May 1, 2026 Remaining  
Balance Due Including Room  
Supplements & Add-On  
Activities**

**\*\*Payments are non-refundable. It is expected that everyone follows through with their commitment to the project. Travel Insurance can be purchased for emergency cancellations.**

