



The Friendship Ambassador

A tradition of service to the field

Volume 29, Issue 2 - Summer, 2001

Cultural Group Travel: *The Major New Force*

Travel is the largest business in the world. (1 out of every 9 people work in travel worldwide, according to the World Tourism Organization).

Cultural group tourism is the fastest growing market within travel. \$8 Billion was spent by more than 10 million cultural group travelers in 2000.

Concert tours, education programs, and cultural, homestay exchanges are fast becoming the way smart travelers get *'edu-tained'*!



FAF's travelers are young and old, musicians, dancers, educators ... in short, culturally minded people aware that the globe is being reconfigured along cultural lines. They appreciate and experience the best that cultural group travel has to offer, and at nonprofit, discounted rates.

Travel with Friendship Ambassadors Foundation provides a unique perspective on performance, cultural exchange, and the development of mutual understanding and global cooperation.

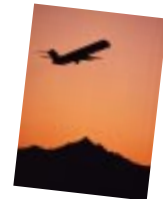
"I am a long-standing faculty member at Purchase College of the State University of New York and a founding member of the world recognized Bond Street Theater Coalition; for me, traveling abroad on a cultural mission, especially with students, is very important. I have been a teacher and an artist all my life. Now, as a professional travel agent (IATA, ASTA recognized) in a nonprofit tour operation, I am proud to lead a staff that brings cultural group travel to a new level of education, participation, and exchange.



Patrick, during a cultural exchange program in Bulgaria, 8/00

"You may have seen our ads, always chock full of glowing reviews. You may know we have worked with UNESCO to make cultural exchange programs on the 'fault lines' between civilizations where culture has become the central indicator of social fabric. Our tours are to magnificent places, emerging regions, and challenging destinations worldwide.

"Our participants affect the cultural landscape, they don't just watch it from a bus!"



Patrick Sciaratta
Executive Director, FAF
- Lead Faculty, Arts Management
Certificate Program, Purchase (SUNY)

Call now to learn more about our entire staff and the many destinations and groups we serve.

1-800-526-2908

Highlights in This Issue

UNESCO-Affiliated Seminar Number 3 (Transylvania).....	Page 2
Helpful Hints for Traveling Groups	Page 3
Events in Europe: A Roundup	Page 3
Recent Quotes and Notes of Support	Back Cover

Host a Group - Save \$\$ on *Your* next tour

Groups will be arriving in the USA and seeking host communities while they sing or dance in America throughout 2001. These are always academic or community organizations eager to meet *our* traveling groups. Why not host one or two next year and gain from the exchange?

AND: help reduce *your* tour costs, too! Host groups become hosted groups when they travel abroad; your students save money and benefit from authentic, cultural exchange experiences in the bargain!

What's a Companion Tour; an Off-Year Culture Tour??

The secret to the fund-raising success of a concert tour is the Companion, or Booster, Tour. These are run by FAF with separate guides, often in different hotels, and with a parallel yet shorter itinerary. The Companions meet the performance tour for certain concerts and receptions, only. They never interfere with the mission or logistics of the main tour. And they are *very* lucrative.

- Companion/Booster tours net between \$150-300 per person for the main tour, bring extra free places to the program, and create excellent public relations for the main tour, too, from the general community. A recent FAF Companion tour to Austria and the Czech Republic netted 60 Companions. Each were charged \$300 over the cost of the actual tour. The group netted \$18,000 and three extra free places. They raffled off one of those 'frees' and found even more funds. They 'gave away' one of the frees to that year's largest annual donor and received even more from the donor in the following year: talk about strategy!

How do performance tours that occur every other year become annual travel opportunities for group leaders?

- The off-year Culture Tour, prepared by FAF travels to the destination that the leader will bring the group to in the following year. The choir, dance company or educational group does NOT travel with the leader: this is a tour for alumni, friends, and organizational boosters. It is prepared as a fun, fund-raiser and provides the group leader with donations (see above) and a free place for themselves. This creates the dual opportunity to excite the community a year in advance of the concert tour about upcoming events while simultaneously creating a working, familiarization tour for the leader.

Group leaders get to see the destination, meet cultural leaders, see venues and hotels: all for free and while helping to raise funds to defray next year's group travel. No matter where the destination, FAF makes it possible. Usually for 9 days / 7 nights, departing on a Saturday and returning on a Sunday; they only take one vacation week away from the working supporters of the main group. FAF prepares these regularly: inexpensively, fully insured, *and* fully tax deductible to all!

State Department Travel Alerts

How safe is it to travel around places like Indonesia, Kenya, Cuba, Iran, and Peru?

Prerecorded travel advisories for all areas of the world can be obtained on a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week basis by phoning:

U.S. State Department's Office of Overseas Citizen Services at (202) 647-5225.

JOIN US:

Balkan Youth Reconciliation Seminars: Phase 3 *American Involvement Welcome*

Music, Dance, and Theatre
Groups interact with artistic
young people from the
region: *using the arts to
reconcile differences.*

TIMISOARA, ROMANIA
August 5 - 12, 2001

"I commend you for your efforts and leadership in this vital endeavour!" - President Clinton, 1/01

"The United Nations applauds and supports such efforts." - Office of the Secretary General, U.N.

The schedule of events

Sunday, 8/5: Departure nonstop to Timisoara
Monday, 8/6: Arrive, settle in afternoon, registration, reception, orientation
Tuesday, 8/7 - Friday, 8/10 : UNESCO program: call for details
Saturday, 8/11: Performances in the main square as part of a major presentation series
Sunday, 8/12: Departure nonstop to USA

A rare opportunity to use the arts and cultural exchange to promote peace and cross-border conflict resolution. Students ages 16-22 and arts faculty welcome. International diplomatic and media interest, UN Affiliation, excellent venues.

\$1,506 per person - All Inclusive - for a tour that will change their lives for the better ... forever.

Deadline: 6/25/01

Friendship Ambassadors Foundation is a 501(c)(3), nonprofit, tax exempt organization dedicated to promoting peace through cultural exchange. Founded as a project of *Readers Digest* in 1973 and re-established in its current format in New Jersey in 1985, FAF has affected millions by facilitating travel for tens of thousands of active, global participants. For more information, visit our website:

**www.faf.org
or call 1-800-526-2908**



Logo of UNESCO's Int. Yr or Culture of Peace; FAF is a Flagship Partner

*Individuals
or groups
may join: so
spread the word!*

Tips for Travelers

Feeling Secure in Your Hotel

- Don't answer the door in a hotel without verifying who it is. If a person claims to be an employee, call the front desk first and confirm that this is true and why the person has been sent.
 - When returning to a hotel late in the evening, always enter the main entrance. Be observant and look before entering parking lots or adjacent areas.
 - Close room doors securely and use all the locking devices provided.
 - Don't display guest room keys in public, leave them on restaurant tables, at the swimming pool or anyplace they can be easily stolen.
 - Don't draw attention to yourself by displaying large amounts of cash or expensive jewelry.
 - Don't invite strangers into your room.
 - Place all valuables in the hotel's safe deposit box if one is provided in the room or at the front desk.
 - Check to see that sliding glass doors, windows and connecting room doors are locked.
 - See anything suspicious? Report observations to the front desk.
- (Source: American Hotel and Motel Association and Travel Weekly)

Staying Healthy on the Road

The following may help travelers stay healthy while on the road:

- 1) Plan ahead. A well planned trip (like one from Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, for example) can significantly reduce stress.
 - 2) Protect yourself. Consult your travel medical specialist or doctor to discuss your health issues and determine which vaccinations, if any, are required and/or recommended for the countries you are visiting. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Website, at www.cdc.gov/travel, for destination specific health risks and up-to-date information on disease outbreaks worldwide.
 - 3) Stay connected. Using the internet or short phone calls and faxes, one can stay in touch with family, friends, and even (gulp!) the office which can minimize anxiety about 'things' piling up back home.
 - 4) Pack well. A small medicine kit that includes a pain reliever; antacids; antidiarrheals; cough drops, and any prescription medication being taken can offer relief from the some travel related ailments and prevent minor problems from becoming more serious.
 - 5) Wash your hands, often and with hot water and soap.
 - 6) Eat well-balanced meals, in moderation, and avoid overdoing the alcohol both on the flight (especially) and before major projects.
 - 7) Exercise regularly and do stretches on the plane and in your room.
- (Source: Travel Weekly)

Events in Europe: A Roundup

Bulgaria

Tour the 75-mile "Valley of the Roses" around Kazanluk through the end of June and whiff millions of roses and see the boiling of petals to make the rose attar for which the region is famous. Local pageants and folk dancing celebrate the harvest.

Croatia

With drama, music, ballet, opera and folklore from around the world, Dubrovnik's Summer Festival (July 10 - August 25) marks its fiftieth anniversary.

Czech Republic

With 2001 as the Year of Architecture here, an exhibit in Prague Castle, "Ten Centuries of Architecture, traces the different styles represented in the area's cities and towns over the past millennium.

Finland

Each year, the Savonlinna Opera Festival (July 7 - Aug 5) turns Olavinlinna Castle into its stage. This time around, the centenary of Verdi's death is observed by productions of *Rigoletto*, *Aida*, *Macbeth*, and *Requiem*. In addition, the LA Opera presents Strauss' *Salome* and Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

Hungary

The 10th addition of the Budapest Summer Opera & Ballet Festival (Aug 4 - 19) opens at the State Opera House with Gounod's *Romeo and Julliet* and Verdi's *Aida*, an international opera gala, and more.

Spain

Semana Grande or Big Week (Aug 20-27) in Bilbao has posted over 300 events to be seen!

For more, visit: www.visiteurope.com

From: The Stamford Advocate and Greenwich Times

FAF CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS ABROAD: As seen or heard in *The Sunday New York Times*, *Travel World*, *Travel Weekly*, *BBC*, *CBS*, *Voice of America*, *ArtsNews*, *WFAS*, *Women's Monthly*, *Journal News*, *Band & Orchestra Product News*, *DW Radio (Germany)*, and in the recent book "*CPR for Nonprofits*", by Alan Reiss (Jossey-Bass, 2000)

FAF is an Allied affiliate of the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), with sponsorship in part from National Rent a Car, USA



International Cultural Exchange

Performance & other speciality tours...where cultural exchange comes first

Friendship Ambassadors Foundation

Low-cost, Development/Travel Opportunities • Authentic, Educational/Artistic Peer Exchange
Tax Exemption Available to Most Participants



"I must tell you how much we enjoyed our trip. My students and I cannot stop talking about it. This is a trip I would do again and certainly recommend to my choral colleagues. I give all of you glowing reports; it has been a pleasure working with you!" - Choral Director, Kearsley Choir, March, 2001

"What an extraordinary experience this tour was; both as an artistic and traveling endeavor. I must offer my sincere appreciation and thanks to everyone at Friendship Ambassadors that helped make this trip a huge success ... our experiences in the Czech Republic and Hungary were sensational. I think the experience for the girls will be one they will carry with them always, and one we will all grow from. ... the dancing was magnificent ... It is my sincere hope that we at the NWCA continue our relationship with Friendship Ambassadors and hopefully do more of these marvelous tours ... This was the BEST!" - Mimi Wallace, Director of Dance, Northern Westchester Center for the Arts, July 11, 2000



"We are very pro-FAF. In today's 'make a buck at all costs' world, they are more concerned with service and furthering positive cultural exchanges as a means of creating a better world. Sounds kind of corny, but it's the truth." Kathy Shannon, West Virginia Univ., 2/00

"Thank you for all of your help in getting our trip planned and accomplished. It was a wonderful experience for us, and the concert venues and arrangements were the best we have ever had." - Director and Group Leader, University of Nebraska at Kearney, June 13, 2000

"The tour was fantastic. The concert venues ... were exceptional and we had much better audiences than I expected. ... an experience I know none of us will ever forget ... Thank you so much for all of your hard work on this tour. Things went very smoothly. Our guides were wonderful and I know that you ordered the incredible weather just for us." - Choral Faculty, Alfred University, May 30, 2000



"It was a marvelous tour, smooth, brilliant with daily wonders ... we were really happy with it ... in fact ALL of the accommodations were incredible; quite beyond the beyonds, as the Irish say." - English Faculty, West Virginia Wesleyan College, June 1, 2000

"As in the past, FAF has provided excellent tour management. I really appreciate what FAF has done for me and my students over the past two decades." - Dr. Marvin Robertson, Southern Adventist University Choir, 1997

Contact us today!

1-800-526-2908

Friendlyam@aol.com • www.faf.org

Visa and Mastercard



Accepted



Friendship Ambassadors Foundation
110 Mamaroneck Avenue
White Plains, New York 10601

Member: Westchester Council on the Arts
ACDA, ASTA, IATAN, Chorus America,
National Band Association

a 501(c)3 not-for-profit, tax-exempt, global arts services agency