



The Friendship Ambassador

A tradition of service to the field

Volume 31, Issue 1 - Fall, 2002

Touring Groups Return With Renewed Vigor

After a difficult year for concert tours and cultural exchange in general, groups are beginning to travel again. Many want new, safer destinations, assurances of increased coverage, and more assistance with development and pre-tour contact.

These are the services which have set FAF apart for years - and we are busier than ever with a full range of exciting new programs!

Details inside on customized programs based on long-standing relations with:

HUNGARY

CHINA

VENEZUELA

EASTERN EUROPE

FINLAND

RUSSIA

USA, Including Hawaii

ITALY

SPAIN and

AUSTRALIA

This is the year to travel with FAF and take full advantage of our nonprofit contacts, deep cultural roots, educational services, fund and diplomatic development, and affiliation with the United Nations.

These days, you need more than a 'tour operator', your group deserves full service representation across the globe. Choose FAF to provide for all your group travel needs, at home and abroad: 1-800-526-2908.

TALKS SET BEFORE YOU TRAVEL - EXCHANGES PLANNED FOR WHEN YOU GO

The 6th World Symposium on Choral Music August 4 - 10, 2002 - Minneapolis, Minnesota

Last month FAF's Executive Director, Patrick Sciaratta, spoke on issues of fund development and the meaning and purpose of cultural tours post 9/11 during the World Symposium on the main stage to many of the gathered delegates and even some tour operators seeking new ideas and support for their groups, too. These kinds of talks are useful in helping groups get travel started again - should you wish us to visit your location, please call us for more details!

FAF Comes to YOU!

Planning a tour but feeling the need for some hand holding first? Are there nervous parents or participants who want a world view from our perspective before the make their decisions? Just want to review it all face-to-face? Call FAF and arrange for a meeting at your location nationwide. Our travel fee can be rolled into the cost of your tour and our nonprofit status means you will not only learn about a good tour, but how to make good relations abroad, how to make fund development a priority, and how to get the most out of the exchange and tour experience overall. *Cont'd page 6*

Familiarize yourself with the Baltics or Central Europe

FINNAIR is offering up to 20 discounted familiarization trips in the late Fall and early winter of 2002-2003. Come discover this wonderful destination! Only \$550pp COMPLETE for group leaders from New York (including R/T on Finnair, hotel, breakfasts daily, all transfers, guide to show you venues and meet choral leaders; companions welcome @\$200pp extra.) **GROUP LEADER COSTS WILL BE REFUNDED** when the group travels with Finnair and FAF in the coming year. *See page 4 for complete details on this offer.*

CSA Czech Airlines is offering two subsidized familiarization trips also in the Fall to Prague and Budapest for \$350pp, refundable if the group travels with FAF/CSA in the coming year. Call for details: 800-526-2908.

Highlights in This Issue

Choirs seeking contact with choirs	Page 2
Bulgaria's Festival of Light Dance and Music Festival.....	Page 3
Travel Subsidy Abroad	Page 4
Festivals, Festival, Festivals.....	Pages 5, 9, 10
Travel Tips.....	Pages 6, 8, 9
Recent Quotes and Notes of Support	Back Cover

NOTE OUR NEW EMAIL!! friendlyam@faf.org

Before you decide:

More FAF host groups interested in your concert tour!

Exclusive news for FAF participant groups: this is what sets us apart. We do not fit your group into a manufactured event but invite you to discover other people's cultures through a musical experience that will last a lifetime. Share time with these three groups in '03!

Note: Similar opportunities exist in the Czech Republic for dance groups, womens organizations, and active, educational tours of all kinds.

The Prague Children's Opera Company and Music Conservatory

Ms. Jirina Markova, Director

(SKOLA HUDBY a ZPĪVU JIŘINY MARKOVÉ - PRAGUE A DĚTSKÝ OPERA) has hosted several FAF concert tours in Prague since 1999.



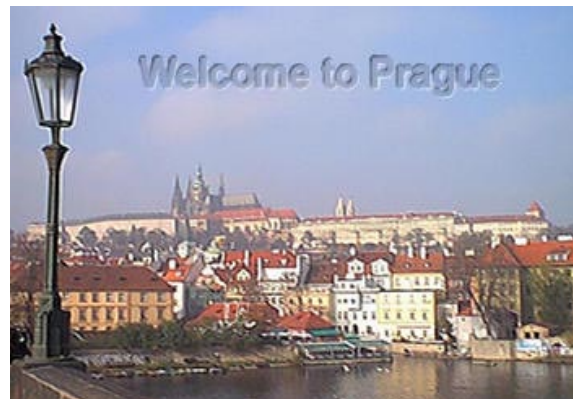
Ms. Markova (right, in concert with the Czech Philharmonic in Prague) writes: *"This unique musical cooperation yields mutual cultural and experiential benefit. Our School, which has the youngest members at 4-year and the oldest is a 71-year old, are looking forward to future cooperation with FAF groups. We are also looking forward to meeting you and to sharing with American Choirs our music and experiences during forthcoming trip to USA, later in 2002 through friendship Ambassadors Foundation!."*

The GESHEM CHOIR

The 24 member Choir, conducted by Marek Slechta, cordially invites a similar U.S. CHOIR to visit the Czech Republic - the most beautiful country in Central Europe - and to spend some days with us in Golden Prague, the wonderful, historical city of Europe. We would like to share our enthusiasm for singing spiritual songs, especially Negro Spirituals and Songs from Taize, with you during concerts and workshops. We would be happy to share with you a unique cultural understanding through Music.

We are looking forward to our mutual cooperation; please contact FAF for more details and our available dates for cultural exchange in 2003!

GESHEM Choir
MAREK Slechta, Conductor



**FAF Concert
Tours: real contact
with local arts
organizations; never
a fabricated program
or a wasted moment!**

The Prague-based **Lady Teachers' Choir** (Pevecke sdruzeni prazskych ucitelek) is an amateur, female community choir from the Czech Republic would like to offer our friendship to any choir from USA interested in cultural cooperation coming to us through Friendship Ambassadors Foundation.

Ivan Zelenka
Conductor



BULGARIA 2003: Choirs, dance companies, even skiers are invited



Imagine performing in a 3,000 year old Roman Amphitheatre!

Visit exotic, emerging Bulgaria in January, May, or June (extensions available) with your choir, orchestra or dance company and perform with other ensembles and solo artists from around the world! Professional and educational companies invited. Performances to take place in Sofia and Plovdiv (a 7,000+ year old city with strong cultural as well as historical perspective).

FESTIVAL OF LIGHT • June, 2003

Now in its third year, the music and dance festival features concerts in Plovdiv, Sofia, and other cities around the country. The Sofia performance takes place at the highly respected Palace of Culture. Call for itineraries, all costs and subsidy information. *Perform with the Plovdiv Philharmonic.*

NEW CONCERT TOUR IDEAS!! Concertize and Ski! Hike and Sing!!

The Rhodope Mountains and Plovdiv

January, 2003

8 Days / 7 Nights of Folklore and Skiing

Day 1: Arrive in Sofia
Transfer to Chepelare and check into Hotel Tourist. Dinner.

Day 2: Take a tour of the beautiful Rhodope town and meet with the local youth art groups and the most famous Bulgarian folklore singer. Lunch, a joint concert together with your local counterparts, dinner.

Continued, page 11

The Rhodope Mountains and Plovdiv

May, 2003 10 Days / 9 Nights

Unique Mountain Culture and Nature Combined
with a Fine Choir Festival

Day 1: Arrive in Sofia and transfer to Chepelare, the Rhodope Mountains. Check into Hotel Tourist and have a dinner.

Day 2: Take a tour of the beautiful Rhodope town and meet with the local youth art groups and the most famous Bulgarian folklore singer. Lunch, a joint concert together with your local counterparts, dinner.

Continued, page 11

Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, Inc. 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

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



"Let the FAF Fringe Begin!"

- Prague Mayor Jan Kasl 1999

Everyone knows ...

about the Budapest and Prague Spring Festivals. But just try getting booked into these prestigious events! Well, FAF can make presentations for all groups during both festivals - as *fringe* events ... and you are invited to join in the festivities. Be one of the first performing groups to appear at the *Fringe!*

BUDAPEST: March, 2003

PRAGUE: May, 2003



Prague castle, left, and the Fishermen's Bastion over the Danube in Budapest

FAF CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS ABROAD have been seen or heard in *The Sunday New York Times, Travel World, Travel Weekly, CNN, NBC, BBC, CBS, PBS, Voice of America, ArtsNews, WFAS, Women's Monthly, Spotlight, Band & Orchestra Product News, DW Radio (Germany), and media outlets worldwide*

TRAVEL SUBSIDY GUIDELINES

RE: GROUP DIRECTOR SITE VISITS

20 (Twenty) Travel subsidies will be offered to performing arts group directors in 2002.

Through a special grant from Finnair Airlines, the cultural tourism airline, a series of travel subsidies will enable recipients to help familiarize themselves with an FAF program abroad. (Details: Departures in November 1 'til December 10; January 15 - February 28, 2003; \$550pp, from NY includes r/t from NY, transfers abroad, breakfasts daily, meetings, and site inspections. **Full amount refunded when your group travels with Finnair and FAF in 2003!**)

Complete and return to Friendship Ambassadors Foundation by mail or fax prior to September 10, 2002 (call for extension if necessary). The visit will highlight sites for the 2003 music and dance festival; other group leaders should contact FAF for eligibility. Awardees must sign a letter of agreement with FAF at time of notification stating that they are accepting this opportunity in the name of their arts organization or academic institution and that if they choose to travel with a group in 2003 it will be with FAF/FINNAIR. \$550 will be refunded if group travels in 2003 on the FINNAIR/FAF connection abroad.

Name/Title _____

Organization/Affiliation _____

Address _____

_____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____ Fax _____

Has your group ever traveled internationally? _____ When will it travel next? _____

Have *you* ever traveled on a concert tour or cultural exchange and if so, where? _____

Where/When has this choir/institution traveled? _____

Number of travelers in your group and where might your group travel in the coming year(s):

Total # in group _____ Potential destinations _____

Please use the remainder of this page (use additional sheets if necessary) to explain how this travel grant will help you and the organization you represent; also, tell us about your group's repertoire, age, and expectations:

Send this page to:

Friendship Ambassadors Foundation • 110 Mamaroneck Avenue, White Plains, NY 10601
FAX: 1-914-328-8578 • EMAIL: friendlyam@faf.org • PHONE: 1-914-328-8589

HUNGARY: FAF's Home in Europe

Get there on Finnair!

11TH BALATON FESTIVAL

Location: Keszthely

Description: May, when the lake is about to wake up but its environs are still calmer than in the peak summer season, is an ideal time for classical concerts and street theater programmes.

Date in 2003: May 1-31.



BORSODI FONÓ INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE FESTIVAL

Location: Miskolc

Description: Every generation can let their hair down at this festival, which has grown into a colorful popular carnival. Watch out for the breath-taking shows of eminent folk dance troupes in the gala performances!

Date in 2003: Children: first half of June (to be specified);
Adults: second half of June (to be specified)

8TH DANUBE CARNIVAL, INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL CONVENTION

Location: Budapest

Description: Staged at several venues throughout Budapest, the carnival features folk dance troupes, classical musicians and contemporary dancers. Ethnic Hungarian performers from neighbouring countries and guest artists from overseas are also expected.

Date in 2003: June 13-22

KODÁLY ARTISTIC FESTIVAL

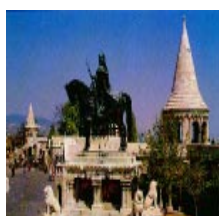
Location: Kecskemét

Description: This series of musical events, presented throughout the summer, will build upon the intellectual and musical heritage of the world-famous composer, folk music collector and musicologist, Zoltán Kodály. The festival is one of the most attractive cultural events in Hungary

Date in 2003: Mid-June to end of August

SUMMER EVENINGS AT THE KÁROLYI GARDENS

Location: Budapest



Description: In the heart of downtown Budapest, in the tree-lined courtyard of the Károlyi Palace, the Summer Evenings feature distinguished productions, including classical concerts, theater and dance performances.

Date in 2003: End of June, beginning of July

More, see page 9

Why travel with FAF when there are so many other good tour operators out there?

Because FAF is Different

Nonprofit: This means we care only for the tour and the communities we serve. This means your tour will be fully tax deductible as allowed by law to all participants or their families.



Recognition: FAF is recognized as an affiliate of the United Nations Department of Public Information and The World Tourism Organization in Madrid; FAF is a member in good standing of The American Choral Directors Association, Chorus America, National Band Association, IATA, ASTA, and is on the prestigious Council of Organizations of the United Nations Association of the United States of America, among others. Its tours are seen on BBC, NBC, CNN ...

Academic Affiliations: FAF is affiliated with high schools and universities throughout the United States, some with very active FAF clubs on campus. Our academic affiliations include development and alumni relations which help our groups better afford their tours!

A company that cares: We not only bring choirs and other arts and academic groups abroad to destinations they most prefer, but we also plan our own programming around issues that affect us all. FAF has made unique programs using music to promote peace and healing in emerging destinations, difficult regions, and even here at home with the first camp for children of the victims of 9/11 to be successful and focused on the arts and cultural exchange.

Continued from Page One FAF Talks as well as Concerts

FAF Prepares Exchange as Well as Concerts Abroad

In Bulgaria next May, an interesting concert tour will include music and dance concerts in the Rhodope Mountains, coupled with sport events, like hiking and tennis. Later on, the tour will travel to the 8,000 year old city of Plovdiv, where all the concerts will take place in the exquisite Old Town. At the end of the series, the foundation has been asked to conduct a mini conference bringing together all of the local and international artists to discuss the role of culture in healing a troubled world. Talks will include topics such as: Art and Public Policy, Culture and the Mending of Social Fabric, and Culture's Role in Reconciling the Clash of Civilizations.

FAF Clubs in *Your* Community

More and more FAF clubs are springing up around the country, at high schools, in universities, and communities just like yours. They help keep you in touch with cultural developments and opportunities worldwide.

"So Many Ways to Dial Home" ... from an article in the Sunday New York Times Practical Traveler by Betsy Wade

It is impossible to be comprehensive in a field that is changing so fast: on June 27, the Justice Department moved to block Worldcom, which absorbed MCI in 1998, from acquiring Sprint. Before picking any of the options below, be sure to ask how - and if - the service works in your destinations.

International Mobile Communications offers Worldcell for rent. The company ships Nokia and Motorola phones, which work in 100 countries, to clients by overnight courier. It costs \$75 for the first week, \$50 for extra weeks. Calls on these phones may be charged to calling cards. (888) 967-5323, www.worldcell.com.

Other phone companies with international phones or plans include: Nextel: (800) 639-8359; www.nextel.com/worldwide. Voicestream (formerly Omnipoint) (877) 666-4246; www.omnipoint.com.; Sprint: (800) 877-4646; www.youcallhome.com. MCI International Weekends (800) 759-1697; www.mci.com/international. AT&T Direct (800)331-1140, www.att.com/traveler. Kallback: (800) 959-5255; fax: (800)949-5255.

Ask yourself, what is most important to your tour in 2003?

Do you want to go with a package, off-the-shelf tour or do you want a customized experience that is recognized the world over as more than just a tour, but an unparalleled opportunity for growth, too?

"On the wonderful work that Friendship Ambassadors Foundation is accomplishing, I commend you on your leadership in promoting cultural exchange between people both young and old around the world."

- President Bill Clinton, December 11, 2000

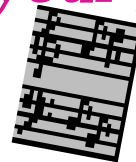
"We are writing to express our gratitude and appreciation for the invaluable assistance provided by Friendship Ambassadors Foundation to the 3rd International Festival of Movement and Dance on the Volga, held in Yaroslavl, Russia. FAF offered both professional and high-quality assistance and truly made a difference for all involved." - **Lisa First, U.S. Director, & Nadezhda Proshutinskaya, Russian Director, Link Vostok Company, August 1998** (FAF continues to facilitate Link Vostok's festivals - their last gathering in Russia was August, 2002!)

"I appreciate everything FAF has done for my group. Thanks to your involvement, our trip was excellent!"
- **Viera Lexova, Bratislava High School exchange tour, October 1998**

"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**

More, recent recommendations of support appear on the last page ...

Friendship Ambassadors can help *your* group become a Jazz Ambassador!



The Jazz Ambassadors Program of the U.S. Department of State sends a selected number of professional American jazz musicians on concert tours in countries where there is limited exposure to American culture.

The jazz ensembles selected for this program demonstrate the highest artistic and musical ability, and are conversant with broader aspects of contemporary American society and culture. Tours include workshops and master classes in addition to concerts. The program goals are to promote mutual understanding and crosscultural awareness. The tours accomplish this by providing an opportunity for international audiences to experience American life and traditions through a musical genre that highlights our country's cultural history, as well as allowing Americans to learn about life and culture in the foreign host countries.

Call for details and FAF will get your group the applications and all other information from the State Department

As seen in *Dance Spirit Magazine* . . .

Dance for the World!



Friendship Ambassadors Foundation and CSA Czech Airlines offer the *perfect* opportunity for the *perfect* concert tour.

Perform in Europe, Russia, China, *more!* All customized to your group's needs and all on CSA, one of the world's best airlines.

- Great performance sites
- Authentic cultural dance exchanges
- Fundraising and off-season 'culture' tours, too



"FAF provides one of the most important experiences young dancers can have".

Judy Williams, Movement Laboratory



"It was a wonderful tour!"
Cassandra Lacey, Swift Creek Academy

"What an extraordinary experience this tour was ... sensational!"
Mimi Wallace, Director of Dance, Northern Westchester Center for the Arts

1-800-526-2908

friendlyam@faf.org • www.faf.org

Hawaii's International Dance Festival - July 2003

Now in its fourth year, the festival attracts thousands of young dancers worldwide for **c o n c e r t s**, workshops, and demos. Let FAF secure *your* **e n s e m b l e ' s** invitation before it's too late!



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.

Is your group traveling this summer or next? Here are some tips to remember:

- Make three photocopies of passports, international and U.S. Drivers Permits, visas, and the itinerary. Leave one set at home, put one in the carry on luggage, and one in the stored luggage.
- Call and verify that your insurance company will cover medical care received in other countries. Medicare, generally, does not.



- Never at the time of a security check-in, nor at any time in the airport, should a passenger make jokes about guns, bombs, or hijacking.



- Take a brochure or business card from the hotel when you go off on your own, in case you get lost later on!
- Women traveling with handbags should only travel with those that zip completely shut and should carry them across their chest or under a coat or sweater. Men should always keep their wallets in their front pocket or use a money belt.
- The amount of duty free you can bring home ranges from \$200-\$1200, depending on the destination. Go to www.customs.gov/travel/travel.htm to know before you go!

MORE CONCERT OPPORTUNITIES IN HUNGARY ...

38TH SUMMER AT GYOR, INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Location: Gyor

Description: Building on a remarkable tradition, the exquisite Baroque city center, the town's intimate musical and theatrical courts and the water stage on the bank of the River Rába serve as venues for this annual festival featuring a variety of exciting art programmes.

Date in 2003: July 18 - August 18

6TH KECSKEMÉT SUMMER FESTIVAL

Location: Kecskemét

Description: Starting on Midsummer Night, the Summer Festival features programmes on Kecskemét's main square and its cultural institutions. The festivities conclude on the day of King St. Stephen, the first king of Hungary and the founder of the Christian state.

Date in 2003: End of June and mid-August

12TH GOLDEN SHELL INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE FESTIVAL

Location: Siófok

Description: Dancers from several countries will introduce their authentic native costumes and the folklore treasury of their homeland. The procession dance, the presentations and the dance halls will give an opportunity to the spectators to join in and dance. The arts and crafts fair, the hospitality, the excellent wines of Lake Balaton and the delicious dishes combine to offer an unforgettable experience.

Date in 2003: Beginning of July, 5 days (to be specified)

„WEEK OF THE WINGED DRAGON” INTERNATIONAL STREET THEATER FESTIVAL

Location: Nyírbátor

Description: The shows given by the artist groups from all over the world have enchanted audiences year after year. Several shows will be held simultaneously on the 17 acre grounds, including morality plays, puppet shows and operettas.

Date in 2003: July 3-6

More, page 10

And how's the weather, anyway??

CNN.Com has a good weather site and if you click on the Business link to the left, you can get into the currency exchange area, too. This is especially helpful when traveling through several countries on one tour. They provide the weather for the next four days.



Weather.com, an on-line source for weather reports and the official website of the Weather Channel, announced it added information on flight arrivals and delays to the travel section of its site at: www.weather.com/travel.

MORE CONCERT OPPORTUNITIES IN HUNGARY ...

An FAF group preparing to sing at the Matthaïs Church, Budapest's finest choral venue



VESZPRÉM SUMMER FESTIVAL

Location: Veszprém

Description: A festival that encompasses folklore shows, classical and modern music concerts, film screening, dance performances, theater nights and folk art fairs, offering superb entertainment to every generation.

Date in 2003: August 1-20

19TH INTERNATIONAL DIXIELAND FESTIVAL

Location: Miskolc

Description: One of the most prestigious events among the Miskolc summer programmes and noted even outside of Europe, the Festival is a meeting place of excellent Hungarian and foreign musicians, performing in the Diósgyőr Castle, to the great delight of Dixie fans. The host of the festival is the world-famous Benkó Dixiland Band. During the festival Dixie will be played on the town squares, in pubs and on the open-air stages.

Date in 2003: First weekend of July - Fri-Sat

12TH INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE AND FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL

Location: Győr

Description: This event, which has a long tradition, serves the preservation, conservation and propagation of the rich heritage of Hungarian folk culture, and offers an opportunity to get acquainted with the colorful folklore of other nations.

Date in 2003: July 5-6

THEALTER INTERNATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF FREE AND ALTERNATIVE THEATERS

Location: Szeged

Description: Every year, the best productions of Hungarian fringe theater is paraded at this festival, which also gives an opportunity to foreign artists and troupes from various theatrical genres to introduce themselves to the Hungarian audience. The wide range of programmes includes open-air performances, exhibitions, concerts and film screenings.

Date in 2003: July 19-25

18TH MATYÓFÖLD INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL

Location: Mezőkövesd

Description: Foreign and Hungarian folk dance troupes will present their shows at several venues at this event. Participating ensembles arrive on Friday and make performances in the area on Saturday. To conclude the festival, the troupes will go down the main street of the town with a spectacular procession dance before giving a gala show.

Date in 2003: August 1-3

6TH JEWISH SUMMER FESTIVAL

Location: Budapest

Description: This festival offers an insight into the rich Jewish culture. The range of programmes offered include cantor singing contests, orchestral concerts, theater and ballet performances, exhibitions, as well as film and book days. The events will be held in Budapest, Debrecen, Győr, Kaposvár, Nagykanizsa, Pécs, Szeged and Veszprém.

Date in 2003: August 24-31



The Rhodope Mountains and Plovdiv

January, 2003

8 Days / 7 Nights of
Folklore and Skiing

Continued from page 3

Day 3:

A ski day in the resort of Pamporovo, 20 min outside Chepelare. Professional instructors, good equipment and facilities, wide-range of ski slopes. A welcome reception hosted by the Mayor of Chepelare.

Day 4:

Depart for the unique architectural reserve of Shiroka Luka, a walking tour and a visit to the ethnographic museum. Meet with the students from the Professional Musical School there, one of the best in Bulgaria, enjoy a presentation of the typical musical instruments for the region. After lunch transfer to Smolayn, the regional administrative center and have a joint concert with a local cultural group. Dinner in Chepelare.

Day 5:

A ski day in Pamporovo, entertainment and skiing all day long. Those who want to relax in the afternoon can enjoy the indoor pools, sauna and shopping centers in the resort. A farewell dinner in a typical Rhodopian restaurant in Pamporovo.

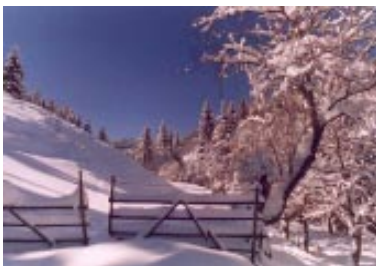
Day 6:

Visit to the only ski factory on the Balkans, see how ski and snowboards are produced in front of you. Depart for Plovdiv, the cultural "capital" of Bulgaria via Bachkovo. Visit the second largest monastery in Bulgaria and have lunch in Bachkovo. In the evening have a solo performance in a Renaissance art gallery in the Old Town of Plovdiv.

NOTE: (Depending on the flight schedule, they either have a free morning to shop in the Old Town and go to SF in the afternoon to catch their plane or if have a morning flight the next day have a free day in Plovdiv and depart early for SF the next morning. I think it would be better if they have a free day in Plovdiv to do their shopping.)

Day 7:

Take a walking tour of the UNESCO's protected Old Town in Plovdiv and enjoy the afternoon on your own. Dinner. (OR transfer to SF in the afternoon and fly back.)



Day 8:

Early morning transfer to Sofia

and fly back home.

The Rhodope Mountains and Plovdiv

May, 2003 10 Days / 9 Nights

Unique Mountain Culture and Nature Combined
with a Fine Choir Festival

Continued from page 3

Day 3:

After breakfast, depart for the Trigrad George, a naturally rich and beautiful area, famous with its cave phenomena. Visit one of the most beautiful caves on the Balkans and enjoy a barbecue amidst the picturesque meadows for lunch. In the early afternoon visit the cave where Orpheus went down to hell to find his beloved Euridyce. Transfer back and have a special reception hosted by the Mayor of Chepelare.

Day 4:

Depart for the unique architectural reserve of Shiroka Luka, a walking tour and a visit to the ethnographic museum. Meet with the students from the Professional Musical School there, one of the best in Bulgaria, enjoy a presentation of the typical musical instruments for the region. After lunch transfer back to Chepelare and take a hiking tour to the National Astronomy Observatory. A transfer to Chepelare followed by a dinner at your hotel.

Day 5:

After breakfast, depart for the natural phenomenon - The Bridges of Wonder; a magnificent rock formation - once big caves whose floors were destroyed by the water, now unique enormous bridges. Have lunch in a traditional Rhodopian restaurant on the way back. Rehearse and have a joint concert in the evening with local choir groups in Chepelare. Dinner.

Day 6:

Depart for Plovdiv, the cultural "capital" of Bulgaria via Bachkovo. Visit the second largest monastery in Bulgaria and have lunch in Bachkovo. In the evening check into your hotel and enjoy some time on your own. Dinner.

Day 7:

Take a walking tour of the UNESCO's protected Old Town in Plovdiv in the morning. The Festival starts! Have a solo performance in a Renaissance art gallery in the Old Town. Dinner.

Day 8:

After breakfast have a meeting with a local cultural group. The festival continues, have a joint concert in one of the many beautiful venues in the Old Town (the ethnographic museum). Dinner.

Day 9:

Enjoy the morning for shopping and walk-around. In the afternoon all the participants in the Festival make an outdoor concert on the centuries-old Roman amphitheater. A farewell dinner.

Day 10:

Transfer to Sofia and fly back home.



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!" - *Rick Bushey, Kearsley Choir, March, 2001*

"Our wonderful trip to Romania and Bulgaria with Friendship Ambassadors Foundation was a positive, life changing cultural and social experience. I truly believe that the values, goals, and accomplishments of FAF are critical to world peace. We look forward to continuing a long relationship with your organization." - *Dr. Lyn Schenbeck, Director of Choral and Orchestral Activities, Agnes Scott College, Georgia - July 2001*



"Many thanks for all your help in making our tour a great success. Special thanks to Josephine - she was a great help! Many things have changed over the years at FAF, but your mission is going strong. Keep it up!" - *Dr. David Milburn, Jazz Band Director, West Virginia Wesleyan College - August 2001*

"What an extraordinary experience this tour was; both as an artistic and traveling endeavor. I must offer my sincere appreciation and thanks to you and to everyone at Friendship Ambassadors that help 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 FAF and hopefully do more of these marvelous tours ... This was the BEST!" - *Mimi Wallace, Dance Director, NWCA, July 2000*

"Thank you for you and your colleagues' precious help in organizing the stay of the Fidelissima Choir in New York ... let me express our gratitude and readiness to give the same help to those who need ours in the future." - *Conductor, Fidelissima Choir, Sopron, Hungary, 4/00 upon their return from a U.S. tour aided in part by FAF*



"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 University, February 2000*

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