



The Friendship Ambassador

A tradition of service to the field

Volume 31, Issue 3 - Winter, 2003

Travel with FAF on your next cultural group travel program

As 'leaders in the field', we have the global connections to ensure that *Your* next trip will be: *memorable, cost-efficient, and the experience of a lifetime!*

FAF is proud of its many global affiliations. The company is either a member or affiliate of the following organizations:

United Nations Department of Public Information:
Board Member, Executive Planning Committee

WorldTourism Organization, Madrid, Spain

UNA/USA (United Nations Association of the United States of America)
Member- Council of Organizations

American Choral Directors Association
Member in good standing for over a decade

ASTA
The American Association of Travel Agents

IATA: International Association of Travel Agents
Executive Director is a professional IATA agent

National Band Association

Hungarian Culture Foundation

Budapest is FAF's European headquarters; FAF office (pictured, right)



Destinations 2003

Bulgaria: Festival of Light, June. Dance & Choral focus, subsidies available

Hungary: Great choral concert tours that are fully customized

Hawaii: Ohau and Maui concert opportunities abound

Belize: Great concerts, great People! (*Also Guatemala, Peru, and more!*)

USA: For those who will not travel abroad in 2003-04. Visit New York, Atlanta, and ask us about other destinations on the mainland-CANADA, too!

Finland, St. Petersburg, Tallin: Great destinations for many years

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

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

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.*

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NOTE OUR NEW EMAIL!! Friendlyam@faf.org

HOST-A-GROUP

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 ZPÍVU JIŘINY MARKOVÉ - PRAGUE A DĚTSKÝ OPERA) has hosted several FAF concert tours in Prague since 1999.



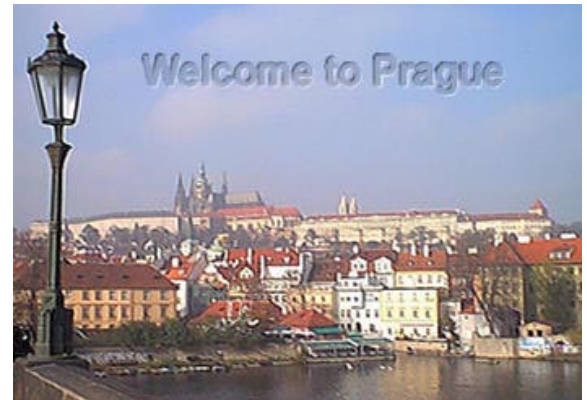
Ms. Markova (right, in concert with the Czech Philharmonic in Prague) writes: *"This unique musical cooperation yields mutual cultural and experiential benefit. Our School, which has the youngest members at 4-year and the oldest is a 71-year old, are looking forward to future cooperation with FAF groups. 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 2003 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** (Pevecké sdružení pražských učitelek) 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 in 2003.*

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

The Rhodope Mountains and Plovdiv

**A winter concert tour, après ski!
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 or 2004 • 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



"The experience our singers had in Bulgaria thanks to Friendship Ambassadors Foundation was unique and life-changing. We returned as a better choir, as closer friends, and enlightened people! Especially enjoyable was our time in Veliko Turnavo when we had an extremely moving musical experience in the Church on the Castle Hill. We will travel with FAF on our next YPC tour ... as it has proven itself an excellent guide and clearly the expert in less-explored areas." - Cara Tasher, Conductor, Young People's Chorus of New York City, Chamber Singers, June 2002

Note: watch for the YPC on the Today Show, December 22 and the choir will open NASDAQ on New Year's Eve, December 31, 2002!!

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, WEAS, Women's Monthly, Spotlight, Band & Orchestra Product News, DW Radio (Germany), and media outlets worldwide*

A BRAVE NEW WORLD: BUILDING TOMORROWS FUTURE

A Special Youth Conference and Arts Festival

The conference will include a roundtable and arts presentations by the young people present - **Admission is available to students of both genders and performing groups ... ONLY through Friendship Ambassadors Foundation**



Students and student groups will be admitted by completing the following essay question: Critical world issues keeps escalating on a daily basis. It seems as if the international political arena is making no headway in devising solutions. With culture assuming a larger role in public policy worldwide, it is contingent on creative, artistic youth to actively take up the mantle and make a difference in the world in which we live. In 500 words or less, how have you (or your group) or how do you (or your group) plan to make a difference eliminating violence, , bridging cultural differences, and working with diversity issues? Specifically, how will you use your art or intercultural exchange to achieve these noble goals?

Essay submission deadline: February 7, 2003. Send essays to:

friendlyam@faf.org; or fax to: 1-914-328-8578; mail to: FAF, 110 Mamaroneck Avenue, White plains, NY 10601

Program Goals:

- To assemble from diverse backgrounds who are socially, culturally and intellectually conscious of the world and their surroundings
- To bring students together to reflect and discuss the possibilities of social enhancement and change.
- To connect future leaders of the world in a creative, social, warm, comforting atmosphere
- To bridge and link generational gaps in order to affect education and change via the speakers.
Speakers will include members of the United nations staff, faculty, and practicing artists who promote art and public policy concerns through their work.
- Presentations by the participants themselves throughout the day.

Program lineup

- 9.30am: Check-in/ Name tags
- 10.00am Opening remarks
- 10.15am Choral Presentation - Agnes Scott College
- 11.00am Roundtable 1
- 12.00am Roundtable 2

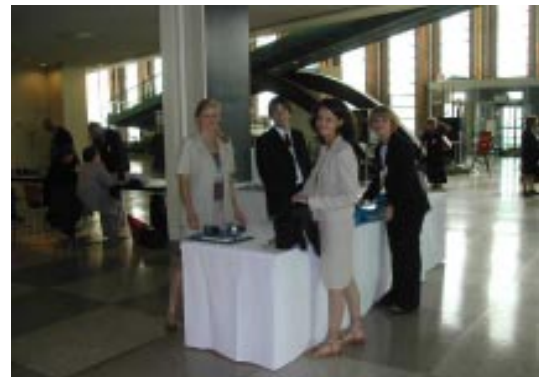
Lunch Break 1.00 – 2.00pm (Luncheon at the United Nations)

- 2.15pm Presentations in the United Nations, Agnes Scott College Choir, Movement Laboratory, others
- 4.00pm Roundtable 3
- 4.45pm United nations tour for all

Venues:

The conference room at the Church Center of the UN, and The United Nations Main Building, various locations

See itinerary for out-of-town groups, next page ...



The FAF youth staff prepares indoors while the Arts Academy in the Woods, performs at the UN in an outdoor concert attendant to the 55th Annual NGO/DPI Conference (4,000 attendees)September, 2002

National Council of Women/United Nations Itinerary for out-of-town groups or individuals:

- Thursday, April 10, 2003 - Arrival for out of town participants. Late afternoon pickup at the airport by FAF. Transfer to the YMCA hotel, across the street from the United Nations. Orientation and welcome.
- Friday, April 11 – Conference and luncheon, approximate time for the conference is 9AM – 5PM. Evening Reception to get to know other youth leaders: 7 – 9PM
- Saturday, April 12 - A Day of Touring The Big Apple!
Travel with other conference participants and professional guide to: Ground Zero, Chinatown and Little Italy, take part in a special event at Ground Zero, and be part of a private pizza/pool party on Saturday night.
- Sunday, December 8 – Morning transfer to airport

Cost: 1) \$50 per person, Conference and luncheon only (add \$35 for reception, too)

2) \$350pp, doubles & \$375pp singles, Conference and luncheon, housing, transfers, special activities listed above

3) \$225pp, Conference and all activities with no housing included.

Air travel to New York: Call for air arrangements from your destination. 1-800-526-2908. Mention 'UN Youth Conference' for special air travel rates.

For all inquiries, please email FAF directly, at: friendlyam@faf.org, or call us at: 1-800-526-2908.

HUNGARY: FAF's Home in Europe

Experience the best of Central Europe

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

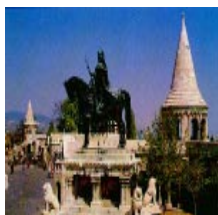
Location: Kecskemét

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

To ensure your travel experience is an enjoyable one, please consider the following "crawl" from Northwest Airlines as a courtesy to all passengers:

... Allow for extra time at the airport. Domestic travelers should arrive at the airport 75 minutes prior to departure. International travelers should arrive 2 hours in advance ... Bring photo identification with you. All passengers age 18 and older must carry government-issued photo identification at all times and may be asked to show identification at check-in, security checkpoints and during boarding... In cooperation with the Transportation Security Administration, gate screening of passengers is being eliminated. Passenger identification checks and screening that was formerly done at the gates will now be done at the security checkpoint. As a result, a boarding pass is now required to get through security checkpoints. An E-Ticket receipt or itinerary is no longer adequate ... all passengers should obtain a boarding pass prior to the security checkpoint ... Northwest Airlines' Checked Luggage Policy has changed. For travel within the United States, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean, checked luggage weighing over 50 pounds up to 70 pounds will be assessed \$25 USD / \$39 CAD and luggage weighing over 70 pounds up to 100 pounds will be assessed \$50 USD / \$77 CAD. Luggage weighing over 100 pounds will not be accepted as checked luggage. The free luggage quantity allowance policy remains the same, two pieces of checked luggage each not exceeding 62 linear inches (length plus width plus height) and one carry-on that fits in the overhead bin or under the seat in front of you ... other airlines have other rules, check their websites for their details ... Avoid wrapping your gifts prior to travel. Due to airport security measure, passengers will likely be asked by airport security to unwrap and open all packages ... As a final reminder, changes to nonrefundable tickets must be made prior to originally scheduled flight departure and an administrative fee may apply ... For more information on travel preparation, permitted items and the latest airport security procedures, visit the U.S. Transportation Security Administration web site at www.tsatraveltips.us.

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.

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.

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

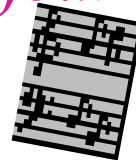
"We are writing to express our gratitude and appreciation for the invaluable assistance provided by Friendship Ambassadors Foundation to the 3rd International Festival of Movement and Dance on the Volga, held in Yaroslavl, Russia. FAF offered both professional and high-quality assistance and truly made 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

The Hawaiian International Dance Festival 2003 Late June - Early July



Now in its fourth year, the festival attracts thousands of young dancers worldwide for concerts, workshops, and demos. Let FAF secure your ensemble's invitation before it's too late!



MAUI FESTIVALS BECKON

New to FAF: Performance tour opportunities now exist through our new contacts in Maui. Call for details on a spectacular week concertizing in one of the world's most desirable destinations!



Maui's black sand beaches ... *and rich culture* ... are both spectacular

NEW!

BELIZE: Concert & Cultural Exchange

Due to popular demand, the foundation has created new relations in the safest harbour of the Caribbean, Belize. Our tours include concerts in several community settings during a swim-filled, adventure-filled week of exchange and fun.

MORE CONCERT OPPORTUNITIES IN HUNGARY...**38TH SUMMER AT GYOR, INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL FESTIVAL***Location:* Győr

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***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...

An FAF group
preparing to sing at
the Matthais
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, 2004

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.

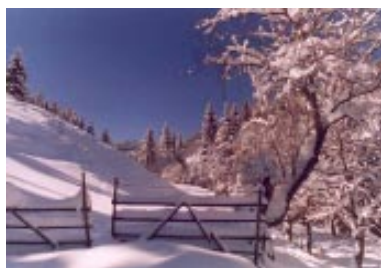
Day 6:

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 or 2004 • 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.



This year - It's time for a Latin America Concert Tour!

MUSIC OR DANCE CONCERT TOUR TO PERU

Day One:

Arrival in Lima, Peru; transfer by air to Pucallpa later in the afternoon. There will be a dance welcome for the group at the airport upon arrival. Board a private bus to the Hotel-Resort **Divina Montaña**. After dinner and cultural reception this evening in your honor.



Day Two:

After breakfast at the hotel, travel by land to the Shipibo Community of San Francisco. Tour of community and partake in a conversation with a local spiritual leader, Antonio Burga. In the afternoon there will be a **concert** arranged for the group followed by a communal Lunch with locals; later in the day will be a presentation of folk arts and crafts for the groups to share and enjoy. At the end of the day there, we will have the opportunity for a joint **concert** with others in the community's Spiritual Center. Return travel to Port of Yarinacocha and to the hotel for dinner and a cultural presentation that evening.

Day Three:

After breakfast, travel by water to the port of Hoyada Pucallpillo and by land from the port to the community of Shambo. There will be a communal reception (spiritual ceremony) and communal traditional Lunch (Asado de pescado; humado; patarashca). After the lunch we have the opportunity to choose between hiking in the forest with local guide, artesanal fishing with local fisherman, or joining in a talk with the local female Shaman. Travel by boat back to the hotel. Stopping for dinner and **concertizing** in small islands in the way. Dinner and the hotel

Day Four:

After breakfast, visit to the studio of renowned local painter Pablo Amaringo and then enjoy lunch with various artists at the Hotel. **Concert** at the Cathedral of Pucallpa, followed by dinner and cultural presentation at the hotel.

Day Five:

After breakfast, transfer to the Port of Pucallpa and by boat to the village of Callerias. There the group will be invited to **participate** in a popular feast and reception with Interactive music, Dance, arts and crafts, ceremonies, traditional games. Communal lunch to follow; then travel from Callerias to Pucallpa. Afternoon arrival at Hotel. Meetings with Local Choir or Dance leaders; in the late afternoon we will visit arts and craft sites in Pucallpa until dinner in the hotel

Day Six:

After breakfast, the group will have time for shopping in Pucallpa; travel to the airport- Airport of Pucallpa. There will be a farewell ceremony in the group's honor and then we all travel to Lima for our departure. Overnight near the airport.

Day Seven:

After breakfast at the transit hotel, we will have an optional tour of the capital city, then a transfer to the airport for our journey back from Lima back to the United States.

THE ULTIMATE GUATEMALAN EXPERIENCE FOR MUSIC & DANCE GROUPS

Departing on the **THIRD SATURDAY** of every month to GUATEMALA.

Day 1, SATURDAY

Arrival at Guatemala City International Airport

Departure to Antigua, an exquisite colonial city surrounded by imposing volcanoes, declared a "resource of humanity" by UNESCO. La Antigua is home to centuries old original colonial churches and convents, museums, Spanish-colonial mansions, art collections, and a vibrant commercial and cultural life. Accommodations at the "Posada de Don Rodrigo," a Spanish architectural treasure declared a national historic monument. Folkloric reception with authentic cuisine. Private dinner with local Antiguanian artists tonight as a welcome.

... more ...

Day 2, SUNDAY

Tour of Antigua and its colonial historic treasures: **Concert** in the Cathedral, Plaza Mayor of Antigua. Visits to the Palace del Ayuntamiento, the University of San Carlos, as well as local religious institutions of historic and cultural value. A noted, local architectural historian will lead us on a visit of private colonial houses. Dining at leading local restaurants.

Day 3, MONDAY

Flight from Guatemala City Airport – to fascinating Tikal National Park, “The Capital of the Mayan Empire,” home to spectacular and prominent Mayan temples, ruins and natural wonders. Lodging at the ecological “Villa Maya.” **Concert** at the foot of the Piramida Central. Sailing through beautiful Rio La Pasion, and lake Petexguatun, unique visit and lunch with the hidden and little known Indigenous community “Los Escarbados.” Jungle tour and presentations on the history, culture and beliefs of the Mayas. Dinner at the hotel.

Day 4, TUESDAY

Visit to the Tikal National Park, its monuments and surrounding areas. Authentic Mayan cultural activities, performances and participatory demonstrations by the Mayas Cofradia (Mayan brotherhood). Late afternoon return flight from Tikal to La Antigua. Dinner and Marimba music at the Posada. Evening free for shopping and sightseeing.

Day 5, WEDNESDAY

Departure from Antigua by land to the fabled and mysterious Lago Atitlan, an historic lake surrounded by 3 volcanoes and 12 fascinating indigenous villages. Lodging at the “Posada de Don Rodrigo – Atitlan.” Tour by boat to visit the native communities of Santiago Atitlan, San Antonio Palopo and Sta. Catarina. In each community we will explore their artisan, textile and musical handiworks. Tour through the open market in quaint Panajachel. In the late afternoon we will travel to the nearby Mayan Sanctuary of Solola to partake in a private Mayan religious and musical ceremony to bid farewell to the sunset over the lake Atitlan. A group of Mayan spiritual guides will lead us in celebration culminating with a group meal and the opportunity to engage in stimulating conversation.

Day 6, THURSDAY

We travel to Chichicastenango to visit the largest outdoor indigenous market. After lunch we will visit the monolith ruins of IXIMCHE at Tecpa. The evening and night are reserved for a private, authentic and elaborate street Cultural Fiesta organized to greet us by CEDIG, a local rural community in the city of Parramos, an authentic Guatemalan peasant community. **Concert** at the Cathedral of Parramos. The entire Parramos community is invited and we will enjoy regional folk music, performances and delectable local food. Departure to the Posada in Antigua.

Day 7, FRIDAY

A visit to “La Azotea”, a complex of three museums exhibiting the variety of traditional Guatemalan clothing styles and the evolution of folkloric Guatemalan musical instruments. We will enjoy a series of cultural activities, including sharing a meal with local dancers and musicians, as well as a field visit with a renowned Shaman. We will visit your choice of either the CIRMA center for pre-Columbian research or the Universidad Landivar for an introduction to higher education in Guatemala. **Concert** at the famous Capuccina Ruins in Antigua. Free time for shopping and sightseeing in Antigua. Dinner and farewell activities in Antigua.

Day 8, SATURDAY

Departure from Antigua- Guatemala to the Guatemala City International Airport for the journey back home.



Guatemala: A fountain in Antigua, and a masked pagaent, below



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"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



"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



FAF is also very grateful to have received considerable support from the Lions Club International in 2002 for translating its international youth reconciliation programs into healing projects for children who lost parents on 9/11.

Contact us today!

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110 Mamaroneck Avenue
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