



New Hampshire Friendship Chorus

12th International Concert Tour

May 23 – June 5

2010

Songs and Friendship: Cultural Bridges

Morocco

Music Director: Dr. Dan Perkins, *Stevens-Bristow Professor of Music, Plymouth State University*

NHFC • PO Box 779 • Ashland, NH 03217 • philwei@roadrunner.com • www.nhfriendshipchorus.org

Welcome

The New Hampshire Friendship Chorus is pleased to announce its 2010 tour in the North African country of Morocco. The travel dates of the fourteen-day tour are May 22 to June 4, spring time in the region. *Experienced, energetic, and passionate choral singers, who enjoy active travel and exotic destinations, are invited to join the of 60-voice chorus.*

Morocco lies at the crossroads of Africa and Europe. It is a magical country, with a unique heritage due to influences by its indigenous Berbers, the Arabs and sub-Saharan peoples, by the religions of Islam, Judaism, Christianity and African animist beliefs, and by cultures from the Middle East, Europe and the heart of Africa. Everyday life is a rich mixture of diversity. This land of contrasts has ancient ruins and sacred mosques, majestic mountains and desert, imposing kasbahs and spirited souks. Traveling between the Imperial Cities of Marrakech and Fes, medieval towns and remote adobe hamlets, the High Atlas and vast Sahara, visitors open their eyes, minds, hearts, and ears to a blend of ancient and contemporary culture, diverse musical styles, and hospitable people.



Ramparts of Marrakech
with the High Atlas beyond



2008 New Hampshire Friendship Chorus

Musical direction for the Morocco tour will be under the passionate and talented baton of Dr. Dan Perkins, who also conducted in 2008 and three previous trips. Dr. Perkins is Stevens-Bristow Professor of Music at Plymouth State University, conducts the New Hampshire Master Chorale, Manchester Choral Society, and the Hanover Chamber Orchestra.

Since its inception in 1983, NHFC has undertaken eleven international tours; most recently in June and July of 2008 when the chorus sang often with host ensembles, in cities and festivals in Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The eighty-nine participants of the 2008 tour learned both heart-wrenching, and encouraging stories, of these culturally rich and proud countries.

The itinerary provided is an outline of an exciting and challenging program that will be modified as we learn more about the unique opportunities that await us in Morocco.

A 2009 spring pre-tour visit to Morocco will be undertaken by Conductor Dan Perkins and President Philip Wei. They will be accompanied by representatives from Cross Cultural Adventures and Plymouth Travel. Together, with their Moroccan contacts, they will arrange concerts and unique opportunities for the NHFC to participate and share in Moroccan music with an array of musicians and dancers: Sufi performers, Ahouach Berber dancers, Gnawa musicians, Rekba Ensemble and Choeur Polyphonique Zellige.



Gnawa Musicians

NHFC aims to make this tour highly educational and participatory, a small step in harmonizing our distinctive cultures.

Day 1, Sunday, May 23: **BOSTON — CASABLANCA** (*Air France via Paris*)

Day 2, Monday, May 24: **CASABLANCA AIRPORT — RABAT**

After a midday landing at Casablanca airport, we transfer 1½ hrs north to the stately capital city of Rabat. Depending on arrival time, we may begin city sightseeing this afternoon. Welcome dinner at the hotel. (D)

HOTEL: *Farah Rabat* (5*), downtown across from the old city and above the Bou Regreg river (2 nights).

Day 3, Tuesday, May 25: **RABAT**

A morning tour includes a walk in the cobblestone alleys of the picturesque Oudaïa casbah, a former lair of corsairs, with its Andalusian garden, as well as the Chellah fortress, with its gardens, Roman vestiges and the elaborate necropolis of the 14th-C. Merinid dynasty. Mid-day tea at the Center for Cross Cultural Learning is being planned. Afternoon time to prepare for today's performance, in collaboration with the Choeur de Joie and a children's chorus. (B)

Day 4, Wednesday, May 26: **RABAT—VOLUBILIS — MEKNES — FES**

A morning departure East 2½ hrs for the ruins of Volubilis, Rome's capital for northwestern Africa until the 3rd C., with well-preserved mosaics that are still in situ. Next, Imperial City Meknes, which 17th-C. Sultan Moulay Ismaïl built as his capital. There we see the immense granary Ismaïl built to feed Meknes's population and his 12,000(!) horses for up to a year-long siege. Lunch in the city (TBD). In mid-afternoon we reach fabled Fes, the country's spiritual capital. Depending on time of arrival, we can undertake a tour of the 14th-C. "New" city, its Bou Inania school, a jewel of Merinid-era art, and the famed Blue Gate, or have time for a rehearsal. Dinner TBD. (B, L, D)

HOTEL: *Les Merinides* (5*), on a hill overlooking the old city (2 nights).

Day 5, Thursday, May 27: **FES**

A morning walk through 9th-C. "Old" Fes, considered by scholars to be the last true example of a typical medieval Arab town. We see the mausoleum to city founder Idriss II, the 14th-C. Nejjarine caravansary, now a superb museum of wood arts, and the area of the world's oldest university, the Qaraouine, with its famed, colorful leather tanneries, specialty bazaars and craft workshops. Typical Fesi lunch during the walk at a converted home in the heart of the city. Mid-afternoon return to the hotel, with time for rehearsal prior to today's performance. Dinner TBA depending on performance schedule. (B, L, D)

Day 6, Friday, May 28: **FES — MIDDLE ATLAS — ARFOUD**

A day of fascinating landscapes as we cross the Atlas ranges South to the Sahara. We begin with the Middle Atlas and its last forests of the giant Mediterranean cedars (where we stop to spy the native Barbary macaques), passing mountain station Ifrane, site of a new international university. Lunch in Berber enclave Midelt. Then over the stark expanses of the Eastern High Atlas, with their nomadic encampments, and down the picturesque Ziz gorges until reaching Arfoud at the edge of the desert. Buffet dinner at the hotel. (B, L, D)

HOTEL: *Belere*, with bungalows in local adobe style (2 nights).

Day 7, Saturday, May 29: **ARFOUD—TAFILALET OASIS—SIJILMASSA—ERG CHEBBHI**

A mid-morning departure for the Tafilalet oasis, the Kingdom's largest, and the meager ruins of Sijilmassa, Africa's "City of Gold" until the 14th C., along with a fort of the early Alaouite dynasty, prior to a lunch of local specialties. The early afternoon is free to relax by the pool, followed by a departure by Land Rovers to see sunset over the great Erg Chebbhi dunes,* rising 600 ft above the desert's floor, stopping en route at a vast fossil quarry that supplies museum shops around the world. Dinner at hotel. (B, L, D)

***OPTION** (for group or individual): *Remain at the Erg Chebbhi dunes, with the night and dinner under walk-in Berber tents. After early breakfast on May 30, rejoin the group in Arfoud.*

Day 8, Sunday, May 30: ARFOUD — THE SAHARA — ZAGORA

A departure southwest into the vast Saharan landscape of multi-hued craggy hills interspersed with small oases and the castles that once guarded them. After lunch in N’koub hamlet,* we cross the seared Kissane range and then turn South down the Draa Valley, a 60-mile ribbon of date-palm oases guarded by ancient adobe casbahs. Late afternoon arrival in administrative center Zagora, with time to enjoy the activities of the annual Zagora Festival, highlighting local folklore. Buffet dinner at hotel. (B, L, D)

HOTEL: *Kasbah Tinsoulline* (4*), in local architecture, on the edge of the desert (2 nights).

For those adventurous, an optional 4WD excursion may be arranged from N’koub to Ait Ouazzik, one of Morocco’s largest fields of prehistoric art, with dozens of images of mystical symbols and eerie animal spirits etched into rocks. Those interested would rejoin the group in Zagora just in time for dinner. Cost TBA

Day 9, Monday, May 31: ZAGORA — TAMEGROUTE — MHAMID — ZAGORA

In the morning, an excursion to former learning center Tamegroute, the “Gateway to the Desert,” to see its library of ancient illuminated manuscripts and follow its sandy alleys until the primitive pottery works. Lunch in the oasis outside the 12th-C. Amazrou casbah. In the afternoon we visit with students studying English in a local high school. Then it’s time to prepare for the evening’s event, as we perform along groups of Saharan folklore as part of the Zagora Festival. (B, L, D)

Day 10, Tuesday, June 1: ZAGORA — OUARZAZATE — MARRAKECH

We retrace the Draa North, across the moonscape of the Saghro range, with midday arrival for lunch in Ouarzazate, an international film-shooting center ever since “*Lawrence of Arabia*.” Then still North, across the High Atlas on the spectacular road of the Tizi-N’Tichka pass, with deep green dales, and a stop en route by the Ait Ben Haddou casbah, a World Heritage Site. Early evening arrival in legendary Marrakech. (B, L, D)

HOTEL: *Ryad Mogador Kasbah* (4*) (4 nights)

Day 11, Wednesday, June 2: MARRAKECH

A morning tour covers the outside of the 12th-C. Koutoubia mosque, the symbol of the city; the exquisite Bahia palace, a treasure of Moorish-Andalusian architecture; and the 17th-C. Saadian necropolis. Lunch is on your own. In mid-afternoon we see the exotic Majorelle Garden, established by the French Orientalist in the 1930s, and Yves St. Laurent’s Museum of Islamic Art within. Dinner is on your own to explore the city’s vast variety of excellent eateries. (B)

Day 12, Thursday, June 3: MARRAKECH

This morning we penetrate the vast reed-covered bazaars, the country’s largest. There we stop at the Ben Youssef school, a gem of 14th-C. Merinid art. This afternoon is a joint rehearsal to prepare for our performance with the Choeur Polyphonique Zellige and an ensemble performing classical Arab poetry set to Music. (B)

Day 13, Friday, June 4: MARRAKECH

The day is free to do as you wish — relaxing, shopping, additional sightseeing (the Jewish quarter, the Dar Tiskwin private craft collection, the Menara garden and pavilion, etc.), golfing, etc. Those who wish may undertake one of the optional excursion being offered today. Farewell dinner at a former residence in the heart of the old city, converted to a traditional restaurant. (B, D)

Day 14, Saturday, June 5: MARRAKECH — HOME

Transfer early in the morning to Casablanca airport for flights home to Boston (via Paris).

General Information

Enrollment:

Enrollment is limited to 45 participants. Early enrollment is strongly advised. *(When a voice section is filled, late applications intended for that closed voice section will be returned with the deposit, or, if requested, placed on a wait-list.)* A non-refundable deposit of \$350 must accompany the enrollment form to complete registration. Make check payable to NHFC and mail with the enrollment form prior to May 1, 2009 to: NHFC, PO Box 779, Ashland, NH 03217.

Tour Cost:

The anticipated cost of the tour is \$4,650 per person, double occupancy. The single supplement is \$775. Every effort will be made to maintain the published tour price. Final number of participants, exchange rates, increased airline fuel surcharges and ticket taxes (currently \$314) and other factors beyond our control, may affect the final tour cost.

Tour Cost Includes:

- Roundtrip chartered coach from NH to Montreal
- Roundtrip transatlantic flights from Montreal Airport
- Airline ticket taxes and surcharges (*currently \$314*)
- Hotels and meals as specified in the itinerary
- Music, rehearsal and concert arrangements
- Prepaid gratuities to guides and drivers
- Excursions and admissions as published in the brochure
- Group Travel Assurance (*see details below*)

Not Included:

Passport fees, optional activities as listed in the tour brochure, personal expenses, tour cancellation insurance, (see statement regarding insurance below).

Payment Schedule:

- \$350 deposit at time of enrollment
- \$1,500 by September 15, 2009
- \$1,500 by November 15, 2009
- Balance due February 19, 2010

Note: Regrettably credit cards cannot be accepted. Please make checks payable to NHFC. Please save cancelled checks as your receipts.

Cancellation:

All payments are non-refundable after their due date.

Group Travel Assurance:

Most health insurance plans do not provide medical protection outside the United States. To insure basic coverage, NHFC has purchased a group policy based on the following limits:

- Emergency Medical and Dental - \$30,000
- Emergency Medical Transportation - \$100,000
- Travel Accident - \$25,000

Exclusions, conditions and limitations may apply. A complete description of coverage will be provided upon receipt of your deposit.

Trip Cancellation/Interruption Insurance:

Travel insurance is strongly recommended. Participants should consult with their local insurance agent or contact Plymouth Travel at 603-536-2403 or info@plymouth-travel.com for available plans and costs.

Health:

This tour involves full, often long, days of sightseeing and significant amount of walking, along with demands of late night performances and receptions. Participants should be in good physical condition to enjoy the tour to its fullest.

Full Legal Name:

Your enrollment form must provide the full legal name as it appears on your passport. In the event an airline ticket is issued with incorrect information you have provided, you will be responsible for changes associated with the ticket's reissue.

Travel Documentation:

U.S. citizens must have a passport valid for a minimum of six months after departure. Non-U.S. citizens are responsible for their compliance with entry requirements.

Rehearsal Schedule & Attendance Policy:

TO MAINTAIN SINGER STATUS IN NHFC 2010, or risk change to guest status, no more than 2 absences will be allowed. Requests for exceptions must be submitted in writing in advance of absences. The initial overnight rehearsal, a must attend event, is scheduled for October 23 and 24, 2009, commencing at 6 PM Friday through 4 PM Saturday. Rehearsal sites and other rehearsal dates are to be announced.

Responsibility:

New Hampshire Friendship Chorus (NHFC) and Plymouth Travel Inc. (PTI) act only as agents for the tour members in making arrangements for hotels, transportation, sightseeing, or any other services. NHFC and PTI are not responsible for deficiencies on the part of hotels, restaurants, concert venues, airlines or any other company providing tour inclusions. NHFC and PTI and their representatives shall not become liable or responsible in any way in connection with means of transportation or other services for any loss, injury, or damage to, or in respect of, person or property, however caused or arising. The right is reserved by NHFC and PTI to change any arrangements herein set forth should conditions necessitate, offering substitutes of equal value, or to cancel any scheduled tour. NHFC and PTI are not responsible for delays, extra expenses or any other inconveniences to participants due to weather conditions, mechanical breakdowns, terrorism, war, declared or not, or other "Acts of God". NHFC reserves the right to decline, to accept, or retain any person as a member of the tour.

The 2010 NHFC tour to Morocco is arranged and administered by *Plymouth Travel Tours* (Plymouth, NH) and *Cross Cultural Adventures* (Arlington, VA).

Please direct inquires to Philip Wei:

philwei@roadrunner.com

603/968-7516

Please visit our website: www.nhfriendshipchours.org

medieval towns

modern cities

the Sahara

Morocco

bustling markets

enormous palm oases

flower-filled valleys

snow-covered mountains

white sand beaches



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