

POOL REPORT: President meets with Roumanian Choir...

They are concluding a tour of the US and sang a Carpathian folk tune when the President entered the cabinet room...The song was their equivalent of "For he's a jolly good fellow" except that it was "we wish you long life" and is sung on birthdays or when someone special enters a room...

THEY CAME TO DELIVER A PERSONAL MESSAGE TO PRES. FORD FROM PRESIDENT CEAUSECU.....

The President welcomed and thanked the group and regreted they couldn't sing in the rose garden....The president said "the friendship ambassador program can be a great bridge between Roumania and the US as well as other countries in the ambassador program...Will you express my gratitude to the President for letting this wonderful group of young people visit this country and give him my very best personal regards."(said to ambassador Bogdan..)

Ford then shook hands with all 50 or so members of the choir along with Roumanian student leaders and the Gypsy string group...Songsters and ~~musicians~~ musicians were dressed in Carpathian Folk outfits very colorful...

Then Roumanian Ambass Bogdan said... introduced the leader of the Choral group who delivered a letter to the President of the United States from Pres Ceausecu and the group leader ad libed this message: " Mr Pres, ..." We thank you for this great honor and attention you have given our group and when you come to Bucharest you will feel the warmth of the Roumanian People..." (laughter and applause..)"I have the pleasure duty from my President Ceausecu to give you this personal letter and once more say to you we are awaiting you in Bucharest with hope and warmth..."

Ford: "This is a wonderful expression of what we have expand, a 2 way exchange, young people as well as others because in the days ahead understanding as well as affection are both vitally important as we try to build a better world..."

~~"....."~~

Ford: " MR AMBASSADOR WILL YOU TELL THE PRESIDENT IA M MOST ANXIOUS TO VISIT ROUMANIA, I KNOW THE WARMTH OF THE RECEPTION THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO ON MANY MANY OCCASIONS AND I WOULD LOOK FORWARD TO THAT OPPORTUNITY AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME..."

Then there was more violin playing picture posing etc etc and some rather good vocal work with tongue twisting lyrics all of which brought a broad grin to t e Presidents face.

walt rogers  
AP Radio

FROM: Elliott Ritter, Press Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### ROMANIAN PERFORMING ENSEMBLES TOUR AMERICA AS FRIENDSHIP AMBASSADORS

The largest number of Romanian performing artists ever to visit America will conclude their twenty-five city goodwill tour on March 26th subsequent to performances at the Kennedy Center, Museum of Natural History, and United Nations. The performers are members of the Ciprian Porumbescu Choir and the Crown of the Carpathians Folk Ensemble.

#### TO MEET PRESIDENT

The Romanian cultural delegations will be greeted by President Ford at the White House on Monday, March 24 at 10:30 A.M. They will deliver a personal message from President Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania to President Ford. Harry Morgan, founder of Friendship Ambassadors, will introduce the Romanians to President Ford. Mr. Morgan was the first American to be awarded the "Order of Cultural Merit" from President Ceausescu for his work in developing friendship and expanding cultural relations with Romania

#### NATIONWIDE TOUR

The visit to the White House follows a nationwide tour by the two Romanian ensembles. Each group has pursued a different route subsequent to their departure from New York City on March 5, a day designated "Friendship Ambassador Day" by Mayor Beame.

The Porumbescu Choir conducted by Gheorghe Oprea were guests of honor at the five thousand member A.C.D.A. (American Choral Directors Association) Convention at St. Louis. The choir has received international recognition as the result of their European tours. The Carpathian Folk Ensemble was awarded numerous prizes as the winner of several international competitions.

#### FAMILIES HOST ROMANIANS

Over four hundred American families have hosted the two Romanian ensembles during their separate 3000 mile tours. Concerts by the Romanians have been presented without charge in each of the twenty-five communities where they have been guests. The communities have ranged in size from cities such as

New York, Washington and St. Louis to communities as small as Knox, Pennsylvania, Arkadelphia, Arkansas, and Houston, Mississippi.

#### REASON FOR VISIT IS TO SAY THANK YOU TO AMERICANS

The reason the Romanians are here is to say thank you to the thousands of Americans who have travelled to Romania as American Friendship Ambassadors. Nearly 150 performing arts groups from forty States have performed throughout Romania during the past few years. Current estimates of the number of Romanians who have attended American Friendship Ambassador programs run as high as two million.

#### MORGANS ACCOMPANY ROMANIANS

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Morgan have accompanied the Romanians on their crosscountry American tours. Mr. Morgan is President of Friendship Ambassadors. Mrs. Morgan serves as Executive Director.

#### ROMANIAN YOUTH LEADERS PRESENT

Twenty nine of the seventy five Romanian Friendship Ambassadors are youth leaders. Eugene Florescu, Editor of Romania's largest youth daily, Josef Urs and Ioan Popa, Vice Presidents of Romanian youth organizations, are also accompanying the Romanian delegations.

#### ROMANIAN FRIENDSHIP AMBASSADORS GAIN BROAD EXPOSURE TO AMERICAN LIFE

The Romanian Friendship Ambassadors have experienced everything from trips to Governor's mansions to the preparation of hamburgers at a fast food chain. They have gone bowling, visited hospitals, examined factories, shopped at supermarkets, toured a Southern plantation, appeared on Radio and Television, and sampled apple pie. While they will be appearing at several of America's most renown cultural institutions, they will have experienced America at the grass roots people to people level.

#### PHILANTHROPIC, BUSINESS, AND EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Philanthropists including DeWitt Wallace of Readers Digest; corporations such as PepsiCo Colgate-Palmolive International, Continental Trailways, R.C.A. Victor International, MacDonalds; cultural and educational agencies such as the Friends of the Kennedy Center the Alliance For Arts Education, the American Museum of Natural History, and the American Choral Directors Association have assisted the Friendship Ambassador tour through provision of direct financial contributions or by provision of goods and services.

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## FUTURE TIES

Future American cultural ties with Romania are expected to broaden as the result of the Romanian Friendship Ambassador visit to the United States and the growth of mutual feelings of friendship between Americans and Romanians. What has now become a reciprocal program will again be in evidence this summer as numerous American Friendship Ambassador groups visit Romania

## FRIENDSHIP AMBASSADOR PROGRAM WIDESPREAD

The Friendship Ambassador program is widespread with concentration in Eastern Europe. Over 6000 Americans have participated in the program and have travelled to Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia as Friendship Ambassadors. Several other countries have approached Friendship Ambassadors for inclusion in its activities.

PHOTOS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST