THE CHORAL TRADITIONS OF THE BALKAN EAST
ROMANIA-BULGARIA-TURKEY
With 2 Historic Cities & the Jewel of Eastern Europe
BUCHAREST- VARNA - ISTANBUL
SINAIA or BRASOV-TURKEY IN EUROPE & ASIA
The Carpathian Mts.- Danube & Bosphorus
Bran and Peles Castles-The Tomb of Dracula (Snagov Monastery)-
Topkapi Palace, Museum & Harem-Golden Horn-Bosphorus
Aya Sofia --Blue and Sulamein Mosques-Galata Tower

Below the Mosque of Eternal Wisdom (Aya Sofia)
Overlooking the Bosphorus (Right) & the Golden Horn
Behind the Mosque erected by the Roman Emperor Justinian in the Sixth Century as the Orthodox Christian Basilica of Hagia Sofia
lies the glorious Topkapi Museum, location of a possible final concert
Concert Tour of the Balkan East

GRINNELL COLLEGE CHORUS

Two Performances With Chamber Orchestra in Romania

JOHN ROMMEREIM, CONDUCTOR

CONCERT REPertoire TO BE SELECTED FROM CHORAL MASTERWORKS WITH ORCHESTRA

5 PERFORMANCES & 1 RADIO TAPEING FOR BROADCAST

• 2 Performances with Professional Orchestra in Bucharest & Sinaia (or Brasov)
• 2 Joint People to People Choral Performances with Bulgarian & Turkish choruses

1 solo concert performances by Grinnell College in Istanbul

• 1 expected (solo) radio broadcast performance (Bucharest or Istanbul)

ADDITIONAL CONCERT TOUR ACTIVITIES

• Live Concert Digital DAT taping for possible conversion to CD
• Educational interaction with Romanian, Bulgarian & Turkish Choruses & Composers
• Introduction to methods of identification of Balkan folk & ethnic Music expected to be arranged at the Ciprian Porumbescu Conservatory, Bucharest
CONCEPT

1. ITINERARY: Perform America, in continuation of the international tour covering Finland, Estonia, Russian Federation, and the Czech Republic, will organize a fascinating concert tour of The Balkan East. Given proposed interaction with two composers from two of the three nationalities visited in the cities of Bucharest, Varna and Istanbul with intermediate locations including a Bucharest outrun to Sinaia or, alternatively, Brasov, Bran Castle, as well as a brief crossing of the Bosphorus to Turkey in Asia.

Transfers and touring are expected to be made by deluxe motor coach although it is possible that the transfer between Bucharest and Varna will be made by train.

2. ITINERARY CONTENT combines a diversified but balanced series of concerts presented at significant locations in 3 countries. Concerts with orchestra, joint concerts without orchestra but with other choirs from 2 of the 3 countries visited, solo concert without orchestra, and one media (radio taping for broadcast.) A professional live performance DAT taping of one of the performances will be arranged as part of the tour inclusions with possible option of conversion to CD.

The tour provides a stimulating introduction to 3 significant societies with 3 distinctive languages. Romanians who consider themselves an offspring of the ancient Romans, speak a Romance language which, when spoken well, sound something like cultivated Italian. Bulgaria is a Slavic language and Bulgarians feel a deep affinity with Russia. Both Romanian and Bulgaria are predominantly Eastern Orthodox Christianity and this is reflected in their religious music Turks speak a Turkic tongue and for several hundred years under the Ottoman Sultanate controlled an enormous Empire stretching not far from Vienna on the North to the Yemen on the south facing the Indian Ocean and Red Sea while the East West Borders stretched from Persia to the Atlantic off North Africa. The long decline of the ‘Sick Man of Europe’ lead to final collapse after World War I and the establishment of modern secular predominantly Muslim Turkey under Attaturk (Mustafa Kemal Pasha, father of the Turks.) All 3 societies may ultimately join the European community and while differences are readily apparent and strong local prejudices exist, similarities exist in shared Balkan characteristics.

2. EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES: Concerts are the alpha but not the omega of the tour. Other activities will include an interaction with a composer from two of the 3 societies visited and establishment of broadened cultural relations and exchange. It is expected that the respective U.S. Embassy in Romania will be involved together with the U.S. Consulate in Istanbul. People to people interaction with choirs will include some form of informal social interaction. Exchanges of repertoire will be encouraged although it will be necessary for the Grinnell leadership to help advance these objectives. Perform America is able to open
the door but cannot conduct an exchange by itself.

Elements of informal supplementary educational activities will be included through live performance presentations dealing with methods to identify and analyze the varied ethnic and folk music of the Eastern Balkans. Perform America will involve educational institutions in Bucharest and Istanbul.

3. SIGHTSEEING will provide in depth commentary into the societies from a contemporary standpoint. Standard sightseeing jargon can’t be eliminated but guides are primed to offer candid insights into their respective cultures. These 3 societies need much more time that a few short days jam packed with concerts but participants will be given an introduction somewhat more thorough and candid than normally the case.

4. SUMMARY: This tour is of special interest to Perform America since it can broaden cultural contact in choral performance and exchanges of repertoire between East Balkan countries with their varied cultural traditions and the USA.

We believe that John Rommereim has the credentials to implement what contributes to the tour by also advancing these cultural and musical objectives of broadened musical contact. Consequently, Perform America is prepared to work hard to create an outstanding multi-faceted program that will include an array of diversified performances integrated into exceptional experiences to be gained by insightful sightseeing, educational activities, and tour organization. Perform America can be relied on to add those little details that simply are unavailable elsewhere. This amounts to more than individual customizing since Perform America’s implementation results from broad background about the locations visited. Concert tours with added educational proclivity result in memorable experiences fulfilling several objectives. Perform America has the connections, ambition, and energy to achieve these objectives!

**ITINERARY SUMMARY**

Please note that departure is arbitrary and may be changed according to the preference of the Grinnell College Chorus and/or flight availability as determined by Perform America.

Please note that Perform America normally commits itself to an hour by hour form of itinerary organization which will be subsequently developed.

Day 1 Saturday  Depart Chicago via New York to Bucharest. Dinner provided together with Breakfast with overnight on board

March 18

ROMANIA

Day 2 Sunday  Arrive Otopeni International Airport, Bucharest, collect luggage, March 19

exchange money from USD into Romanian Lei or, alternatively, use the ATM machines. Meet your guide and transfer to hotel. Check in (Maps Distributed) Rest, adjust to the 9
hours difference between Bucharest and Des Moines Undertake mid afternoon walking tour of Bucharest, a city of over 2 million with large area. Founded by Vlad Tepes (Vlad the Impaler or Dracula who was later popularized in a negative sense through the popular horror classic by novelist Bram Stoker which has served to enhanced revenue for Hollywood.

Familiarize yourself with the city passing along broad tree lined boulevards, several lakes and pompous public buildings. At leisure

OVERNIGHT BUCHAREST (#1)

Day 3 Monday  March 20

Professor Rommereim rehearses the Ars Coro Chamber Orchestra. The chorus undertakes Bucharest sightseeing of a fair number of Orthodox churches, Museums, and the ponderous architectural achievements of Ceaucescu’s Bucharest (communist dictator who ruled the country with his wife Elena (phony chemical engineering Ph D from Columbia U.) in autocratic Stalinist fashion and who was overthrown and brutally executed in an outpouring of violence and hate.

Bucharest formerly took its cultural cues from Paris and was known as the ‘little Paris’ because of its wide boulevards and increasingly cosmopolitan outlook. In the late 19th Century it was re-modeled by French architects and even sports a Triumphant Arch on the elegant Soseaua Boulevard which is itself longer than Paris’ famed Champs Elysees. The revived Kingdom collapsed and communist rule ended Bucharest’s cosmopolitan tendencies and a drab but monumental architecture was composed by the Romanian dictator Nicolai Ceaucescu. Bucharest’s ‘House of the People’ is the second largest building in the world after the Pentagon and is a stark reminder of communist rule although today has been renamed the Palace of Parliament. Today Bucharest is resuming its vigorous lifestyle although corruption is rampant. So is gambling and if you have obtained your ‘loot’ one can gamble, feast on gourmet delicacies and dance the night through dawn to live music. Cultural attractions are numerous with 37 museums, 22 theaters, 18 art galleries. Opera House and concert halls highlighted by the Bucharest Athenaeum. Those captivated by the Dracula syndrome may visit Snagov Monastery (there just may be time on the way to Sinaia tomorrow) where Wallachia’s fabled ruler, Vlad the Impaler (Dracula of literary hype) is buried

AFTERNOON REHEARSAL OF CHORUS ALONE

EVENING REHEARSAL OF CHORUS, ORCHESTRA & SOLOISTS (Tutti)

OVERNIGHT BUCHAREST (#2)

Day 4 Tuesday  March 21

CONCERT TONIGHT IN SINAIA or BRASOV (ALTERNATIVE)

MORNING GENERAL REHEARSAL OF CHOIR, ORCHESTRA & SOLOISTS (tutti)
Afternoon transfer to Sinaia, a beautiful resort in the Carpathian Mountains. Depending on time and preference, possible visit to the Snagov Monastery where Vlad the Impaler (Dracula of legend is buried. Brief visit (½ hour) followed by continuation of transfer to Sinaia 2 hours north of Bucharest which at 3000 feet elevation lies in a valley between the Bucegi Carpathian Mountains. A Royal residence during the Monarchy which preceded the communist dictatorship, Romanian wealth nested here and there are charming homes scattered along the mountain slopes. The Sinaia Monastery (named for Mt. Sinai), the Peles Castle was a royal residence later used by the Romanian communist dictator Nicolas Ceaucesco, and smaller Pelisor Palace (in mock medieval style.)

Note that depending on the first concert location with Orchestra, the Medieval and highly interesting city of Brasov may be substituted for Sinaia.

OPENING CONCERT TOUR PERFORMANCE WITH GRINELL COLLEGE CHORUS AND ROMANIAN ORCHESTRA CONDUCTED BY JOHN ROMMEREIM

The Peles Castle has a large assembly room, which Perform America will attempt to obtain for the opening concert. Note that the alternative location for the concert may be at the extraordinary Black Church of Brasov one hour further. 

OVERNIGHT SINAIA OR BRASOV DEPENDING ON CONCERT LOCATION

Day 5 Wednesday  CONCERT TONIGHT IN BUCHAREST
March 22 Following breakfast depart for the Bran Castle dating from 1378 the traditional location for Count Dracula. But – in fact – it isn’t. There is no evidence that Vlad Tepes (Dracula) ever stayed here. Still the Castle is imposing and worth a visit. Should the concert have been performed at Brasov, the Chorus would spend the morning there and see what was former Kronstadt in the days of the Austro-Hungarian Hapsburg empire prior to the peace settlement of World War I.

Following early lunch, return to Bucharest to prepare for concert

SECOND CONCERT TOUR PERFORMANCE WITH GRINELL COLLEGE CHORUS AND ROMANIAN ORCHESTRA CONDUCTED BY JOHN ROMMEREIM EXPECTED TO BE PRESENTED EITHER AT THE CIPRIAN PORUMBESCU CONSERVATORY OR AT BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY

OVERNIGHT BUCHAREST (#3)

Day 6 Thursday  Following hotel check out proceed to Conservatory to meet a Romanian composer (either Ciprian Porumbescu Conservatory or the National Conservatory)

ROMANIAN COMPOSERS . * INDICATES COMPOSITIONS FOR CHORUS
Transfer across South Wallachia (which together with Moldavia and Transylvania form the three principal parts of the Romanian State.

**BULGARIA**

Cross the Danube passing the Romanian-Bulgarian frontier and continue to **Varna**.

*Lunch on route (on your own)*

Late afternoon arrival in Varna, Bulgaria's second city and principal port. Check into hotel. At leisure with familiarizing walking tour in the town center. Varna is a pleasant city to stroll in combining Baroque, turn of Century (1900) and modern architecture blend into an almost harmonious whole. As Bargaria's largest port lying on the Black Sea, Varna has become the unofficial 'summer capital' of Bulgaria. Varna's long history dates from 585 BC when Miletian Greeks founded it as Odessus. Varna subsequently flourished under the Romans, then alternated between the Bulgarians who had migrated south during the Slavic invasions and Byzantines ultimately falling to the Ottoman Turks in 1393 until Bulgaria obtained independence from Turkey in the 19th Century. Today it has evolved into a summer resort. 

Dinner on your own with a large choice of restaurants along **Slivnitsa Boulevard**

Evening: Social life revolves around the (square) **ploshtad Nezavisim** where the Opera House and theatre provide a background for the ensemble of restaurants and cafes which is the starting of Varna's evening promenade which flows along from here to the Seaside Gardens Park.

**OVERNIGHT VARNA (#1)**

**Day 7 Friday March 24**

Following breakfast undertake Varna city sightseeing. Street signs are in Cyrillic and Latin scripts. Scenic views alternate with industrial installations. There are two sets of Roman Baths of which the **Roman Thermae** dating from the 2nd Century on **ulitsa Han Krum** ranks far and away the more important. An interesting historical museum lies next to the smaller bath. The impressive **St. Anastasius Orthodox Church** dates from 1602. The **Seaside Gardens** is an attractive park containing the city's **Maritime Museum**. The **Museum History and Art** is Varna's largest Museum. Not far from here is the **Assumption Cathedral** and **Opera House**. It's too cold to swim in the Black Sea but in the summer it's strictly body to body on the city's large beaches.
People to people interaction with a Bulgarian Choir is planned beginning in the mid-afternoon. Meeting with Bulgarian Choir from Varna for a 3 hour joint Workshop and Rehearsal of pieces to be performed together
Possible performance of one Bulgarian work. Possible meeting with a Bulgarian composer

BULGARIAN COMPOSERS (* INDICATES COMPOSITIONS FOR CHORUS)
Composer **Mihail Goleminov (1956 - )** is the son of composer **Marin Goleminov* (1908-2000)** whose career spanned the 20th Century (he lived to age 92) Mihail is into electro-acoustic and computer generated composition while his father composed in traditional idioms including compositions for chorus. **Alexander Raychev* (1922-2003)*** wrote in idioms including 600 choral and children’s songs and recently died. **Emanuil Monolov* (1860-1902)** work spanned the second half of the 19th Century and wrote operas and songs and is credited to be one of the founders of professional musical life in Bulgaria. **Dimitar Hadjigeoriev* (1873-1932)** spanning the later 19th and early 20th Centuries was closely associated with the development of orchestral, operatic and choral art in Bulgaria. **Dobri Hristov* (1875-1941)** is one of the major Bulgarian composers during the last century who wrote orchestral, choral and church music. **Dimitar Tapkoff* (1929 - )** composed works for chorus and orchestra, **Krasimir Taskov (1955 - )** is a composer, pianist and pedagogue. (**Georgi Tutev** (German-Bulgarian origin) is also the source of some songs. Perhaps the best known Bulgarian composer is **Pancho Vladigerov*** (1899-1978) who is a founder of the Union of Bulgarian composers and has written opera, ballet, symphonic, piano and violin concertos, chamber music, and 50 folksong arrangements for voice, piano and orchestra as well as 20 works for voice and piano and 10 choral songs with piano or orchestra.

EVENING JOINT AMERICAN – BULGARIAN CHORAL CONCERT PERFORMANCE (#3) IN VARNA AT A FORMER CULTURE HOUSE DURING THE COMMUNIST DICTATORSHIP.
PROGRAM WILL COMPRISE THE TWO CHORUSES PERFORMING TOGETHER AND INDIVIDUALLY. HOWEVER, APPROXIMATELY HALF THE CONCERT WILL BE PERFORMED BY GRINNELL COLLEGE CHORUS DIRECTED BY PROFESSOR JOHN ROMMEREIM POST CONCERT FRATERNIZATION AND SOCIAL GATHERING

OVERNIGHT VARNA (2)

**Day 8 Saturday** Early morning departure from Varna for the Bulgarian-Turkish frontier. **March 25** Passports needed for inspection. Box lunch provided to facilitate transfer to Istanbul.

TURKEY

Continue across **Turkey in Europe**, the remnant of the vast Ottoman Turkish domain, the successor state to the Byzantine Empire that at its height had absorbed all the Balkans and stretched from Central Poland and near Vienna to the Mediterranean and included far vaster regions in Asia and North Africa. Opportunity arranged to exchange money. Check in at hotel where you will meet your Turkish Guide.
Late Afternoon sightseeing of Istanbul. What an incredible city awaits you! Founded in the early days of pre-classical Greece, it evolved into Byzantium. During the Later Roman Empire, the Emperor Constantine turned Byzantium into the “New Rome” at an unassailably defensible location. Later to be called Constantinople, the city withstood numerous sieges which would have been impossible elsewhere since only one side is land and was witness to revivals and declines over a thousand year history over an Empire that began with Rome but whose language became Greek and its rulers drawn from various locations not necessarily Roman or Greek. The city is at the juncture of Europe and Asia and divided by the Bosphorus which connects the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmora which in turn leads to the Mediterranean. The larger European side is divided by the Golden Horn, a body of water separating the old imperial Ottoman (and Roman-Byzantine) center of Sultanahmet and Galata and Pera more Levantine sections across the Golden Horn.

The highlight of Istanbul is probably Western side of the Golden Horn or Sultanahmet where Topkapi Place and Museum is located in front of which is the former church of Aya Sophia (Holy Wisdom) erected by the Roman Emperor Justinian in the 6th Century and under the Ottomans (who added the Minarets,) it became a mosque and after 1934 became a museum. For centuries it was the largest enclosed space in the world and the structural architectural principles became the guiding light of much of European (and near Eastern) architecture. Topkapi Palace and Museum was the center of the Ottoman Empire for nearly four centuries and arguably the most important location in Europe. Imperial Halls, Throne Room, Palace Schools, Pavilion of the Conqueror (filled with jewels,) Hall of the Treasury with a superb art collection and of course the Harem, the question about which still is unresolved. How much did this center of sensual excess contribute to the decline of the once all powerful Ottoman Sultanate and the irrevocable weakening of the Ottoman Empire remains a matter of conjecture. The earlier Ottoman Sultans were often brilliant, some were poets and aesthetically cultivated, all were hard working and ambitious, etc. The later Sultans often were mediocre and sometimes near idiots utterly addicted to the physical delights of the Harem. Just North of the Palace lies Gulhane Park and excellent Archaeological Museum. There are several other superb museums in the area. The Hippodrome section (the actual Hippodrome was constructed by the Roman Emperor Septimius Severus in AD 200 and became under the Byzantines the location of near brutal intercity civil wars favoring various charioteers but also serving various political parties and hidden agendas. The indredible Sultanahmet Camii (Blue mosque) dominates the Golden Horn and rivals Aya Sophia as the most monumental creation in Istanbul. The Palace of Ibrahim Pasa has become the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art. Not far is the Yerabatan or ‘sunken Palace’ or series
of underground cisterns probably built by the Roman Emperor Constantine which supplied water to the Roman and Byzantine Emperors.

The **Covered Bazaar** is one of the largest in the world and covers four thousand shops all actively plying their wares. When you need a break, it is a great place to drink some strong tea. Nearby lies the **Sulaymaniye camii (Suleiman Mosque)** which also rivals any other structure in Istanbul for grace, beauty and magnificence.

The **City Land Walls** which defended Constantinople for eight hundred years and would have continued to do so had they not suffered from neglect by the later Byzantine Emperors. They are in part monumental and should be seen probably representing the most fascinating land remains of the Byzantine Empire.

Across the **Golden Horn** lies **Galata**, a section of the city probably older than any other part of the city. Modern hotels, excellent restaurants vie with entertainment that is not always centered. The **Galata Tower** is its principal landmark and provides a superb view of the city. The bustling **Taksim Square** reflects cosmopolitan, European and Levantine influences.

Interaction with Turkish Choir.

**EVENING JOINT AMERICAN – TURKISH CHORUS CONCERT PERFORMANCE (#3) IN ISTANBUL POSSIBLY ACROSS THE BOSPHORUS IN ASIA. PROGRAM WILL COMPRIZE EACH CHORUS PERFORMING TOGETHER AND INDIVIDUALLY. HOWEVER, APPROXIMATELY HALF THE CONCERT WILL BE PERFORMED BY GRINNELL COLLEGE CHORUS DIRECTED BY PROFESSOR JOHN ROMMEREIM**

**OVERNIGHT ISTANBUL (#1)**

**Day 9 Sunday March 26**

Morning at leisure in Istanbul.

Visit to the City Walls and outlying districts. Early afternoon crossing of the Bosphorus (separating Europe and Asia) to Turkey in Asia

Expected afternoon expected meeting with Turkish composer

**TURKISH COMPOSERS**(* INDICATES COMPOSITIONS FOR CHORUS*)

**Ulvi Cemal Erkin** (1906-1972) composed mostly orchestral and instrumental pieces,

**Ahmed Adnan Saygun** *(1907-1991)* Most important Turkish composers who wrote Oratorio’s and hymns and was founder of the “Voice and String Union of Turkey.” His compositions are in modal structure and reflect the influence of traditional Turkish modes with Persian and Greek. Other composers possibly of interest are **Necil Kazim Ackses** (1908-1999) and **Hasan Ferit Alnor, Ilhan Mimaroglu** (spelling probably incorrect) was comparatively well known in the west in electronic music and as the founder of Atlantic Records and lived in New York for much of his life

**EXPECTED AFTERNOON RADIO TAPEING FOR BROADCAST Details to be worked out)** **THE ASSISTANCE TURK AMERICAN KULTUR DERNEGI (TURKISH AMERICAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION BASED PRIMARILY IN ANKARA BUT WITH**
EVENING CONCERT PERFORMANCE BY THE GRINNELL COLLEGE CHORUS CONDUCTED BY JOHN ROMMEREIM 
EXPECTED TO BE PRESENTED AT A UNIVERSITY AUDITORIUM LOCATION HOSTED BY A TURKISH CHORUS. 
ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE SOUGHT AT THE HACETTEPE UNIVERSITESI KULTUR MERKEZI (HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY CULTURAL CENTER. THE US CONSULATE IS EXPECTED TO ASSIST

Late final Festive Dinner follows Concert with student Turkish folk presentation

OVERNIGHT ISTANBUL (#2)

Day 10 Monday RETURN TO USA
March 27 Check out of hotel and transfer to Istanbul International Airport about 15 miles SW of the city
Check in to flight returning from Istanbul to the USA.
Expect connecting flights
Arrive Chicago.
WELCOME HOME!
DAT tape will arrive in approximately two weeks

◉ ITINERARY IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND MODIFICATION ACCORDING TO PREVALENT CIRCUMSTANCES EFFECTING CONCERTS, PEOPLE TO PEOPLE INTERACTION, SIGHTSEEING, AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

◉ DATE OF FLIGHT DEPARTURE SUBJECT TO ADJUSTMENT BASED ON AVAILABILITY AT TIME OF EXECUTION OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN PERFORM AMERICA (PA) & THE GRINNELL COLLEGE CHORUS (GCC)