

Che-Yung, and Mindy's friend Jen, a Korean girl with connections to the group unknown to me at this time. At least, I think she was Mindy's friend. Anyway, we hit the subway. All twelve of us.

"So these twelve people walk into a subway." — Sounds like a joke

"OUCH." — A tough crowd

The plan: Get tickets to see Spider-man. It was around 1:30pm. The next available showing at Mega Box (Seoul biggest movie theatre—I think) 9:25pm. It was a forty minute journey all told to get to the mall where Mega Box hides. It was busier than an ant hill on a sugar high. (Insert picture of "Evan" here, and Bonnie's "How much is that Pooh in the window?") Very insane. Mega Box is on the other side of the mall. The lines when we got to Mega Box were totally insane. Just masses of people.

Fact: Spider-man made \$40 million it's opening day in North America alone. Most movies would be lucky to do that on an entire opening weekend.

Mindy and Jen lined up to buy all our tickets, while the rest of us ducked into some sort of high tech looking internet cafeteria (not café, those are small. This was HUGE.) Unfortunately, the demo computers we were trying to use were a big no-no for us, so we got shut down pretty fast. Seems you have to pay for internet use over there. Crazy. Also going on in another part of this internet place was a starcraft tournament. It was just one match we saw, with rows of people seated, watching two guys play on computers. A giant screen flipped through both their computer screens, as well as shots of the guys concentration, and sometimes the crowd. They had three TV cameras there. It was very quiet until some obnoxious Canadians showed up and started whispering to each other. Stupid white people. They got kicked out of there pretty quickly. So we sat outside the uber-internet place to collect our scattered selves (Evan had gone to the "Evan" store to buy something), and we waited for Johnny, who was oddly enough the one guy who didn't get kicked out of the internet place.

We left for the subway to the Body Worlds exhibit. Enroute we lost JK's friend, and Jen. The busy day was taking a toll. We valiantly carried on through the attrition. Since the palace is next door to the museum and was closing in an hour, we went there first, to appease some less blood thirsty appetites. The palace was very big, wide-open, and mostly boring. We started to get a little hungry at this point, but popular opinion was to eat after we see the dead people, as opposed to before. So we left, and went to the crazy German Doctor's exhibit.

"Anybody who speaks German couldn't be a bad person." — The Simpsons

"I see dead people." — Daniel

Wow. Dead people are cool. Okay, trying not to sound too enthusiastic, the exhibit was really interesting. Good for biological studies. There were organs, slices of organs, and all sorts of exposed tissue. The bodies were usually in poses, like defending a soccer net, or skiing. One of my favourites featured a flayed guy sitting playing chess. If you went around behind him, his brain was exposed, thinking about the move. Other really interesting parts that didn't make make gag were the various hearts, and complete freestanding arterial systems. With the arterial systems, only the arteries and blood vessels were preserved, the rest of the portion of body dissolved with acid. Both educational and gruesome. Anyway. We couldn't spend too much time here. We had to get to Spider-man.

So we hustled back to the Megabox mall for a food court dinner, and Che-yung went to meet Yuni, his girlfriend before the movie. Time was running out. Some of us opted for a quick dinner (KFC, yuck, and yes, I ate there), while others went for some of the local fast food, which looked really good, but took waay too long to eat and get, so half was left behind. Anyway, we made it to the theatre (at the other end of this HUGE mall) just in time (aha! 9:25pm, we made it, and movie seats over there are reserved a la plays here) to see the sweet previews for Korean movies, and of course we didn't understand a damn word. They looked cool anyway. Then the movie started.

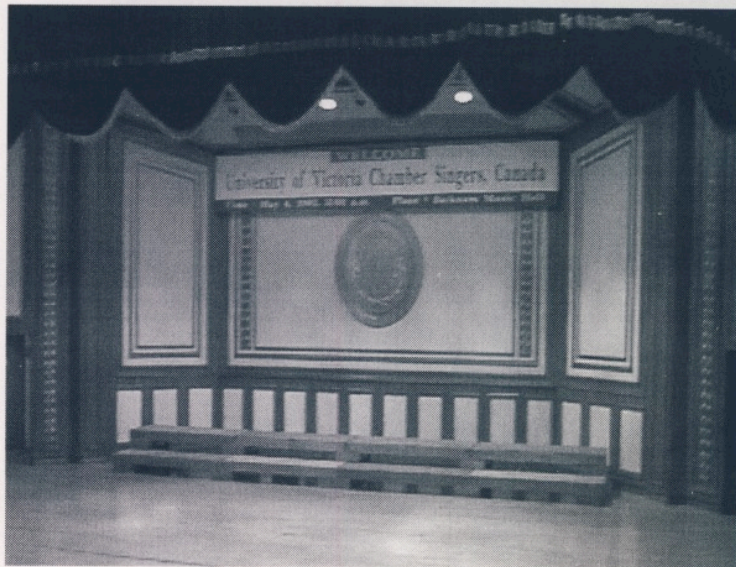
Two hours later (with only minor interruptions from a helium balloon

loose in the theatre, which always blew down from the air conditioning when you least expected) we came out of the theatre as better people. Well, maybe not better, but more entertained. Okay, well-rested. We had been walking around all day until that point. Then came the inevitable good-byes. We all headed our separate ways home, except that Evan, who couldn't co-ordinate an easy way home, came with Lucas, Che-yung, Yuni, and I. Little did he know. Upon leaving the mall, we hailed a yellow-light taxi (those ones speak English) for Nicole, who was going it alone, and then caught a bus for the rest of us for half an hour. Then a taxi. To my amazement, close to home Che-yung stopped at the local late-night market for several bottles of soju and some snacks. We picked up some of the congealed cow-blood curried soup for Evan to try (muah ha ha) and then headed up to Che-yung's apartment. His roommate was home. Shortly after, his roommate's friend Joh Yoon Seong came by to talk to us.

"The days are just packed." — Calvin & Hobbes

So the seven of us sat around the table, Evan forgetting Korean drinking etiquette rules as quickly as he learned them. He also couldn't handle the cow-blood too well. You see, Evan's strategy was to put giant pieces in his mouth. Lucas and I knew to take small pieces and swallow, not chew. Personally, I found it easier to eat knowing what it was, and I did so just to astound the poor boy. Man, we drank soju (rice liquor) for a loooong time. Evan didn't realize how quickly the kombays were going to hit him. Then they broke out the mekju (beer). Yuni passed out, then Evan. Lucas started to play Starcraft around 4 or 5am when the makali was brought out. It's sort of a milky orange tasting liquor. About then, Seong left. Just after 6am, I decided it was about time for a nap. I figured 45 minutes or so of sleep would be perfect. Plus, I had to pack a little. So I did that, got my stuff ready for our departure. Needless to say, it's a good thing Lucas didn't go to sleep. Good man. Lucas claims to have woken me up no less than seven times. In retrospect, this is fully plausible, however neither one of us can be fully accountable for details like that given the circumstances. Example: Lucas can't remember how his Starcraft game went, but he does remember playing well, and ultimately winning. No I showered in the cool Korean shower/bathroom, but I couldn't find my underwear coming out. I was certain I had brought it in there with me. Oh well. I came out with a ridiculously small Korean towel (weren't they all). Turns out I had cleverly put my underwear in one of the cupboards so it wouldn't get wet. Good thinking. It's okay, I got it back during our return to Seoul, cause I forgot my book and Spider-man poster there anyway.

Riding that Subway back to Hanyang University, all of us struggling to stay awake, vaguely aware of the torment we would inevitably suffer at the hands of our peers and our wind-y bus trip, I vainly tried to pronounce the Korean words on their subway ads. Then it occurred to me, the past 24 hours...were my journal entry. "Oh well," I thought, "at least I'll have something to write about."



May
the
fourth
be
with
you.

Sunday, May 5 - Andrew Sly

The ride to Sokcho

My host Woo Hyeok and I woke up early and had a Korean breakfast which seemed very similar to other meals I had had in the last few days. (A bowl of rice and small dishes of various things.) The kimchi was a bit much for me first thing in the morning though.

We then had an hour-long subway ride to get to the Hanyang University campus. On arriving we joined many half-asleep choir members who were slowly gathering to leave for the next leg of our journey.

I was sad to say good-bye to Woo Hyeok. I had been lucky enough to be paired with someone who had a similar character to myself. We and got along very well. We promised to stay in touch by email and then it was time to leave.

On the bus we practiced our special method of counting from one to thirty-five then waved good-bye as we left the parking lot. Those of us who were awake got to see some beautiful scenery as we drove over to the other side of the Korean peninsula. It was somehow reminiscent of the west coast of Canada. One particular stretch of road stays in my memory. There was a curvy road with some very sharp turns that wound along the side of a tall hill. Out the window you could see down into a valley and then more hills on the other side. There were no buildings visible, just lots of trees and other greenery. Looking at this scene, it could be hard to believe that 48 million people live in South Korea.

For another scenic view, we had Lucas and Nicole sprawled among the luggage at the back of the bus. Lucas had apparently stayed with hosts who thought it would be fun to keep him up drinking all night so I can understand that he would need some rest.

After a heated debate and rigged voting process (just kidding) we decided to go to Soraksan National park instead of Naksan temple. At the park, after a little initial confusion, I ended up walking along a trail with Evan and Christine. There were beautiful waterfalls. I would have liked to spend all day there but we had to turn around and head back to the bus. Despite the rush to get back on time, Evan still decided to stop for something to eat.

I've forgotten to mention someone. We had some native guide from Sokcho who had been with us all the way from Seoul sitting up at the front of the bus telling us a bit about the area and plans for our time in Sokcho. But hold on a minute, he doesn't look native. I suspect he's from North America. Hey! It's Felipe. What a surprise. Imagine running into him here. What's that you say? He lives here now? He's the person behind organizing our whole visit to Sokcho? Ok, I'll take your word for it.

I was billeted with Andrew Scambler in what was a good-sized apartment by Korean standards. Compared to my other experiences, we didn't connect with our hosts here very much. Watching television made me sleepy and I lay down for a nap. When I woke, dinner was ready and Lucas and Kathleen were there. (They were staying close by.) We had a traditional Korean meal sitting on the floor. (The only time I did so on this trip.) And then happily, I had a chance to catch up on my email before going to bed.



Tuesday, May 7
- Kevin Vogt

From Sokcho to
Duksung

It's raining for the first time on the trip. I didn't sleep too well because the pillows in the condo were too hard and small. Most people in my condo seem a little grumpy, probably because they were up late last night. Sokcho had really good food. I'll miss that.

I felt special when I arrived at Duksung University because of the boardroom style meeting room, in which we met our hosts. My host is a fourth-year psychology student. Her name is Kwon Kyong Hyun, and I call her by her last name (Kwon). She is very nice, like my other Korean hosts. She lives approximately fifteen minutes from the University, at a quite edge of Seoul. It kind of reminds me of Victoria.

Two of Kwon's friends came with Kwon and I to her house, and they made a light dinner for us. We talked after dinner for several hours, and then her friends left.

Her father came home pretty late; apparently he works long hours. He works at Seoul city hall and helped develop the world's tallest fountain (227m), which is in the river that flows through Seoul. I will probably visit that fountain tomorrow with Kwon and her friends.





Wednesday, May 8 - Neil Cuthbert

Concert at Duksung

This diary entry is dedicated to the women of Duksung University for being the sweetest, most hospitable billets. Even though I started the morning off with a two hour train ride and twenty minute walk. My billets were kind enough to wake me up and get me where I needed to go. Rehearsal went well, followed by a lovely lunch and a bus ride to the local Buddhist monastery. The monastery was culturally interesting though the bald lady was really boring.

After the monastery, we headed back to the university to prepare for what was to be the greatest concert I have ever done. A room filled with beautiful Korean Women (Score!!!). The concert went well—especially when you blow kisses into the crowd and the women start screaming.

The concert was followed by a fantastic reception which consisted of a little food and drink, and a whole lot of autographs and pictures with adoring fans. That was one of the sweetest feelings in the world. When most of the people died off, a group of partiers and die-hard fans headed for the bar and nurebon. The bar was a little slow, but the nurebons in Korea are sweet! The night ended well and all-in-all, this was one of the greatest days on the tour.



Thursday, May 9 - Nina Lidkea

On the plane to Bangkok (kok not Cock you dirty, [Image] mustard-sucking motherfathers) ... Rosa you are such a slut...

Host families in Seoul were faaaabulous; we're just hoping that we can take our armfuls of flowers all the way back to Vic.

So much bussing, so much airplaning...

Rochelle and Nicole have turned into Spanish Slizuts, and Johnny has forgotten to put the can of beer to his mouth before trying to drink it, and everybody shudders whenever the "Monaco? Las Vegas? Surprise! It's Seoul!" ad invades our tv screens.

I think by this point we can all relate to little miss fridge from Lucas' um, interesting joke on the bus to the airport. No comment on bricklaying.

Kristen misses her sugar (even though I'm more than willing to give her a little sugar *wink*) Katie says "Yawn." Tim wants to see girly-men in Bangkok (guys, look for adam's apples!), and Nicole, Rochelle and I have developed a "mountain" fetish. The flight attendants like to talk about booty (beauty?) items... This is risky news for Tim's new stewardess fetish. Airplane make Prima Crazy.

"Stewart, tell Mommy what you think a fudgsicle looks like."

The plane ride from Hong Kong to Bangkok made Prima even crazier. Condensation buildup in the air conditioner rained on passengers while they shrieked and held up pillows above their heads.

Liz: That isn't water...

Tim: What is this airplane juice?

Bruce: Do you charge extra for the shower?

Turbulence caused more girly shrieks (guys, fess up), and a worm in Tim's food almost pissed him off enough to vent at his precious stewardess (Almost.)

It was a relief to shuffle off the plane out of the airport and to feel the humid, thick heat of night-time Bangkok briefly before scrambling into yet another bus.

Crowded sidewalks, market stands of colourful clothes, curious dark eyes, and hardly believing how hot it was outside the bus when blasted with the air conditioning inside.

The hotel lobby was classy as hell. We were the bumbling, rumpassing Canadians in the midst of murmuring conversations and graceful hotel workers. After getting together our roomies and listening to our plans for the next day or so, we scattered to our rooms, the pool, and the night market.

Those who went night-marketing found the cheapest prices yet, streets of strip bars, aggressively clingy girly-boys, and shop keepers who told us "no, no, you too big, too fat!" Jamie found herself protecting her boy buds from Thailand's famous "lady-men" more often than she clung onto them as shields from horny Thai guys. (Apparently they like bumpers...right Rochelle?) Others went on shopping rampages, gleaning the good clothing picks out of the slew of tiny Thai tops, and spending all leftover \$ on watches, lanterns, and miscellaneous gifts for those at home. Just one more day to go..





Friday, May 10 - Celia Brownrigg

I really liked sleeping on yos in Korea. There is something [Image] tantalizingly luxurious, however, about lying on a fairly expensive mattress in Bangkok after sleeping on the floor in Korea.

Christine and I slept peacefully in the natural nude, Awoke with bleary eyes and rushed to get some food. We barely made it down in time but (yay) we were in luck, The hotel guys were super nice - we had a jolly tuck.

We didn't have the main entres but what we ate was great. Fruit and buns and juice and tea were piled on my plate. After food we went upstairs to ballroom for sound check, Behind the curtain the women stood, heads out, cut off at the neck.

We soon left our nice hotel to head out on the town, The group was one man short today for Tim was lying down. We got to the river and met our boat; most people were just sopping wet with sweat, but that's okay: there was a breeze up on the top.

We floated lazily up the chuck looking side to side, Some structures were just little shacks, some were many feet wide. We ate a lovely buffet lunch; excellent Thai cuisine, Being catered to in this way was like being some sort of Queen.

Our yacht deposited us at a dock from where we walked a bit. Here we were at the Grand Palace; there was no time to sit. I had to rent a skirt, you see, in order to get in. Any white tourist, such as myself, had to cover up the skin.

When the palace closed on us, we went back to the hotel. Christine and I went swimming then- boy, the water felt swell. After swim we started to dress: our last concert was tonight!

While dressing, rehearsing our "thank you Bruce", my schedule sure was tight.

Then down to shmooze with cocktails; the embassy's fancy do, I got my picture with his ambassador-ness, my collection is now at two.

Our "Magical Voices" filled the room, around the gold-covered seats, The concert went over quite well, I was told, for a Bangkok audience.

They liked the comedy and dance, and when it all was done, They bought up every last CD! Our goal, it had been won! We went downstairs for supper then, and mark my words, my friends, SWEET MOTHER, it was good, I said, I wished it not to end.

The sushi was my favourite and the ice cream too. I was full much, much too soon and I cried out "boo!" From supper we went back up stairs, to the place where we had sung. It was the last night of our tour, and so began the fun.

The tour awards were had in jest, everyone shared the jokes. Lucas and Heather did a great job (they're two of my favourite blokes). Bruce liked his thank you song- which is good 'cause we liked the trip. Others liked our tribute too, I heard many echos of the "70's pants" bit.

As the singers packed and prepared to move on, towards home- or not-as it were, We partied and drank, in true choir form, and played "I have, I never". People dropped off and went to bed, (some passed out on their bathroom floor), Christine, Tim and I discussed attributes of bamboo wives, and went to bed around four.

As the last day of Tour, it was a triumph. There's no one could say our group lacked oomph. I had a great time, I love you all! I hope to see everyone out next fall.

Saturday, May 11 - April Griffin

The last sad day of our Prima Trip

Getting up unreasonably early from our luxurious beds at the Siam City Hotel in Bangkok was a shock to many of us. Could it be that 15 or so wonderful had already gone by. The early risers enjoyed a delicious early morning buffet, yes the made-for-you-in-front-of-your-eyes omelettes must have been delicious, but I don't like omelettes so I don't know. There were all kinds of delicious pastries and fruit and oh the bottomless pineapple juice cannot be beaten anywhere! Pancakes, waffles, yummy meat, and the list goes on! We hung around the lobby and said goodbye to the lucky primates who were travelling on. Yes there was a little jealousy by myself included who were regrettably thinking "why did we have to leave Thailand so soon?"

After getting on the bus and arriving at the airport I believe we just did the regular airport thing. We said the inevitable goodbyes to Bruce, Celia, and Heather. Flights Flights Flights. Were there any highlights??? Elizabeth and I bought some tasty toblerone chocolate by scrounging together the remaining of our "hong kong dollah". In Hong Kong we waited sat on the floor, played cards, shopped, and

thankfully all made it onto the plane. This flight was interesting. Poor Tim got dreadfully sick, and the poor guy had to leave us and sit in business class, we feel for ya! Otherwise Rochelle got a snazzy new Cathay Pacific matching pant and sweater set after spilling some food on herself. I don't remember anyone being incredibly drunk (although there is the possibility). We had some musical seats going on, as I kept switching with Len, who wanted to sit beside the cute redhead.

Back in Canada we faced aggravating line ups at customs or whatever that is. After that we took the Limo (yes high class) and sped to the ferries five minutes before leaving. Well some of us did. And some people even got to use the vehicle entrance after putting their foot down (way to go Nicole and Lucas) so luckily we all made it onto the ferry. The ferry ride was beautiful for those of us who didn't doze off. It made me happy to have been overseas singing up a storm but also thankful back to be on Canadian soil, or er... ferry boat, whatever. The trip was adventurous, delicious and just plain worth remembering. Go team! Yay Prima!

