

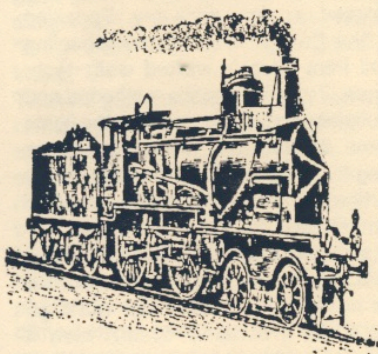
accelerator foot to the floor. If he missed his mark, he'd stop, swear loudly, cross himself, and then slam his foot back down on the gas pedal. I swear this is true; the story came first hand from a sick chamber singer as I waited outside a bathroom door during the dinner hour.

The reception and send off at the Kiev train station was a better party than the pissup. Our rowdy rocking and rolling Ukrainian street band met us ready to party in the parking lot with champagne and jazz. Meanwhile the tour manager was almost left behind in the madness of the train station as the rest of us loaded baggage into the sleepers and passed the bottle on the loading dock. He later gave up his chance to bunk with a Polish woman and her daughter, complete with maid service and a breakfast of cucumber and tomato salad, cheese and ham sandwich, and coffee and vodka.

The real party was unreal, ending at 11 PM, not AM. By the time Doug was ready to roll and the cognac was lightening up the reality of saying goodbye to Russia, the walls of the centre compartment were reverberating with syn-copated three part snoring and the rest of the choir was asleep. Here's to Poland.

*John Doughty*

#### MAY 6 - KIEV TO KRAKOW (Train from Hell!)



After a rather tame evening of grapefruit surprise and Christmas Carols in the Good Karma cabin, we all awoke around 7am to the smell of freshly unflushed toilets.

A panic spread through the group as we

realized we hadn't gone through the border that we should have passed at 1am. Oops!

Surprise! We weren't even in Poland yet! Thank you ACFEA for your accurate and up to the minute schedule!

Well we finally arrived in Przemysl around 9am trying to figure out what to do and where to go. Having no guide and no one who

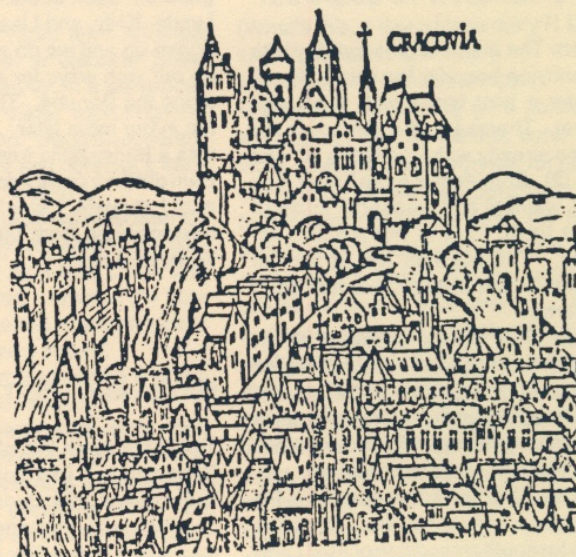
spoke Polish, hand gestures were very useful.

After finally figuring out that the conductor wouldn't let us cross the train tracks because there was an underground pedway for us to use, we got to our proper destination; we thought. We embarked the train and had a rather uneventful day, until Caroline discovered that something was amiss.

Thinking quickly, she bravely asked the conductor in perfect Polish "Where in hellski are weeski?" He assured her that yes indeed we were going to Krakow, but we were arriving 3 hrs later than planned. Simply grand!

The train ride was relatively uneventful but the arrival was certainly interesting. Having been on the wrong train, there was nobody there to meet us, and we had no phone number to get in touch with anyone. Lost in Poland. Yee hah! Finally some brave souls ventured out carrying Canadian Flags and found the professor (later to be known as the Pied Piper of Hamlin). Not long after that, we found our guide Atta, as well as our hosts. After having straightened everything out, we were hoping to go to our hosts houses to wash the Polish train off of ourselves, but we were in for yet another surprise. We had a concert in half an hour, Yippee!

Next it was climb into cabs and rush to the church. Lisa's cab driver was in such a hurry that he wanted to leave her leg behind. She bravely fought for her leg, but poor John was nearly rushed to



the hospital and treated for shock as he watched the incident in horror.

Exhausted and smelling like skunk cabbage, we arrived at the church and sang a concert. We thought about handing gas masks out to the audience, but there was no time. They were very kind and suffered silently.

After the concert our hosts provided us with the first real food we had had in over a day and a half. After having descended upon it like vultures, we went home with our hosts to fumigate ourselves and get a good night's sleep. The end of our train ride from hell!

*Lynda Rajna*

#### MAY 7 - KRAKOW

Look, we toured the king's palace, church and grounds. They were nice. We saw St. Anne's. It was spectacular. We tried to change money. It was a pain. We had free time. It was busy. We bought stuff. It was bulky. We had lunch. It was Polish. We sang a concert at the Collegium. It was our best and our worst. We went to a reception. It was salty. We sang old Canadian songs. They were strophic. Mark lounged out. It was frighteningly real. We went to our billets homes. It was over. Any questions?

*Avery Gietz*



## MAY 8 - KRAKOW TO BUDAPEST

6:20am The alarm begins our day with its annoying beep far too soon. Thank God for a host family with a tub and shower. Theresa and Josef are in the kitchen already with little Marie (4) and Anya (2). Breakfast is more bread, egg salad, weiners and wonderful mustard from a tube. Lots of hot tea and espresso. Theresa has fed us almost continually; her cheesecake has been wonderful!

7:40am The Professor arrives to escort us to the meeting place, Josef has stayed late from work to assist with the taxi, and tiny Theresa insists on carrying Lynda's big suitcase and my shoulder bag down the 2 flights of stairs to the street.

At the bus, the Professor continues his helpfulness and insists that we all link hands for another rendition of Auld Lang Syne before we leave. Many fond farewells and we are on our way.

The countryside is rural and becomes gradually more hilly. Beautiful greenness with neat little fields, blooming fruit trees and farm houses mainly of brick - 2 or 3 stories with steeply pitched roofs.

10:40am Border crossing into Czechoslovakia. The guards seem rather humourless. Atta, our courier, manages things efficiently and we are soon on our way. Our road winds through little Czech towns along a river. We often see little fir trees festooned with ribbons, but don't know the significance. Along the river, some kind of stork(?) with red/orange bill and legs and a black body. The buildings are a mixture of 20th C. plaster and old hewn logs. A castle appears suddenly on a high rock promontory on the left, which we are told is 14th C.

As we approach the Czech/Hungary border we climb ever higher. The houses look like tiny chalets. Can't find a bathroom anywhere! Back down the other side of the Carpathians and through the border to Hungary around 3:30. We nearly leave without Bryn, but he eventually appears.

4:50 We arrive in Budapest. Our first sight of the Danube inspired an odd rendition of the Danube Waltz. Met by Bela and friend, Bruce's friends, at Gyorgy Street and escorted to the hotel. What a great location, right on the Danube! The rooms are nice and clean with sun decks. Hurrah! We have dinner at a restaurant down the street. It tastes so good, I think we are all truly

grateful. Back at our 4 bed room with Lynda, Kelly, and Lisa, a clothesline is rigged up and we do some wash, then go our won ways for an evening stroll along the Danube. There was riotous fun in our room later. Apparently Troy was a transvestite from hell. Mark and Pam did their upside down chin face act and I thought I would have a brain haemorrhage from laughing so hard. Wonderful day!

*Ann Barber*

## MAY 9 - BUDAPEST

Today we spent lots of money, honey. Consumerism (not communism) lives in Budapest (not Budapesht). Budapest has real consumer goods at real prices and only a few people asking if we want to change money (only 5 - funf - cinco - cinq - American dollars!)

Shall we begin at the start of the day (boring). A pound of butter and two slabs of mystery meat on a bun for breakfast. A soccer game broke out as we were waiting for our missing bus and tourguide - then we were away on our 5 - funf - cinco - cinq - hour tour of Buda (Buddha?) and Pest.

So we toured all around the city and saw many important things, the most impressive of which was the fisherman's citadel (?) monument (no?) um, thing - large building up many stairs which had many touristy type sales persons; a hotel that didn't want our money, a classical guitarist, a Hungarian country and wester guitarist, a bewhiskered Hungarian autoharp player and a suit of armour which came to life with the appropriate coinage. And the shopping stalls! 'Twas in the Year of our Lord One Thousand, Nine Hundred and Ninety-One that we first visited the markets of Buda (Buddha?) and Pest. Yea verily did the choir ascend (descend?) upon the unsuspecting minions of that most picturesque berg (mount). One of the cities is hilly and one isn't. (Brilliant, Mark).

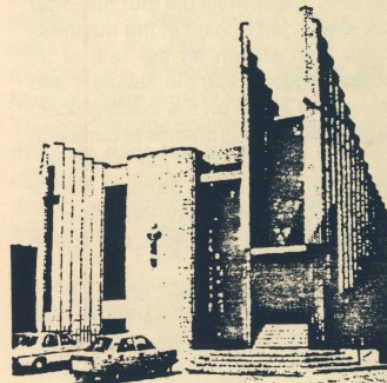
On the bus we saw many more buildings but these ones seem to be spread out better so you can see them. Budapest is built on several levels (that's nice, Mark).

Lisa says she has to say something about the guy at the memorial who shows her his hoo-hoo (who - who) - right in front of the big statue of the lady

with the Olive branch. (Hey Mark, lends a whole new meaning to Hungarian sausage!)

Our tour guide managed, yet again, to lose us, misdirect us, misplace us. We arrived back at the resort after Franz and Bruce did much map perusal with only five - funf - cinco - cinq minutes to change into concert attire prior to our departure for yet another deepfried meat dinner sans veg. before we were off to our gig at the church.

So like we sang for a mass of people in



this modern catholic church and one of Bruce's teachers showed up. She knew Kodaly personalment and she said that the ladies, girls, chicks, etc. sung the Kodaly piece real good. We got a standing ovation from the octogenarian audience. Someone should tell Pam not to lust after priests.

Let the party begin! A cruise on the Danube at sunset. The Danube is beautiful but it's not blue and it's very polluted - so don't drink any. Speaking of Blue Danube, Lisa's cheek is healing well from Bruce's wicked waltz technique. To see the castle, cathedral and parliament buildings again as the lights came on from our private boat was magic - a warm spring evening, nasty Hungarian wine - this is an evening to remember.

After a menstrual lull, TOURMONES raged again - yes, runaway tourmones. It's not sex that makes the world go round but it certainly doesn't slow it down. After our cruise some went back to the resort to continue the heavy drinking while many experienced the delights of a Hungarian disco which we'll find out about tomorrow.

*Lisa Timney & Mark Wark, B. Mus...  
B. Ed., B. Fuddled.*



## MAY 10 - BUDAPEST

It's a free day, so we get dropped off downtown in the shopping district - the roads are closed to traffic. We walk along gawking gawking at the shops - the selection is incredible after Russia and Poland. We converge at the music stores buying up records and cheap sheet music. A group of us "mature ladies" (Ann, Kelly, Lisa et moi) walk down the tree-lined streets to the central square where we investigate the supposedly famous Gundel Restaurant. We try to order the chocolate crepe dessert, but we are carefully ignored by the stuffy waiter. Obviously he is not impressed with our jeans and general smelly-tourist aura. Fine.

We rise up in a huff and take our business elsewhere, namely a charming little restaurant across the street overlooking a small man-made lake. They're much friendlier here, and we order fruit salad with whipped cream and Grand Marnier, fresh squeezed orange juice and cappuccino. Heaven! Take a taxi back to the tour bus and then to the hostel. Back downtown at 4:30 for supper downtown, then we participate in a Mass in the choir loft. We give a short concert afterwards to a small but, needless-to-say appreciative audience. One lady dissolves into tears after "Balm in Gilead." Then we go off to a reception with our host choir. Bela Palos, the conductor, invites us to partake - tons of food and two special bottles, one containing "folksongs" and the other "classical Music." (wink, wink) So, we all got very hearty and friendly (what is that red stuff anyway?) and we sang songs for each other. They sang us a drinking song about coquettish girls. We sang "Well, Well, Well" and "Log Driver's Waltz."

Then we got together for a most stirring rendition of Mozart's Requiem (our apologies Wolfy). By this time the host choir had no idea what to make of us, drunken rowdies that we are. We pile back onto the bus and go back to the hostel where the party continues. Doug offers us a lovely rendition of the "Alphabet Song." Just as we reach the climax of our booze soaked revelleries we stagger down the road to a pub for beer and chicken cordon bleu and pork, etc. The "A - Team" piss off the waiter (surprise, surprise). Beer is chugged and many crude jokes cracked. A typical evening with the Chamber Singers.

*Eleanor Jones (alias Greta)*

## MAY 11 - BUDAPEST TO VIENNA

At approximately 12:30 am I returned towards our hostel to discover Doug Green and Jen Harvey, in a somewhat less than sober state, exploring the caretaker's building. Doug discovered, to his great delight and Jennifer's endless amusement, a child's bicycle, which he proceeded to attempt to ride. A brief sojourn around the corner was followed by a loud crash and uproarious laughter. I entered the hostel to discover others in various states of unsobriety, and went to bed. I awakened at 7am and used one of the decidedly unprivate shower stalls in the women's washroom, then went downstairs to greet the many smiling and cheerful morning faces assembled around the breakfast table. By 9am, somehow everyone had managed to drag themselves onto the bus, and we set forth on a long and arduous trek towards Vienna (the arduousness was somewhat alleviated by a bottle of port and a stop at a store which sold fine European chocolate!)



We arrive in Vienna in a state of some confusion about the actual location of the hostel we were to stay in, but finally discovered it: a beautiful place on the side of a hill, bordered by a heritage building, a vineyard, and a small woods. The rooms were relatively spacious and clean! Chris and I went to see a 19th C French operetta performed by the Wiener Volksopera, which was quite well-done. We returned to the hostel and everyone turned in fairly early that night.

*Tammy Schwartztruber*

## MAY 12 - Vienna

(What's this, a day with no diary?! Let's see what I can remember:

Last stop, last concert tonight.

We had an interesting (and politically stimulating) tour of Vienna, outer and inner, giving a good overview for future exploration. As we were concluding the tour, driving up the Rennweg, my heart soared as our guide pointed out a huge dome as the Polish Church which we are to perform in this evening. Alas, suddenly, we hear "Oh, that's it there" and we see a smallish church with what appear to be thousands of people squeezing up to the doors to see inside. These are the Polish refugees of Vienna, lined up to attend mass in what turns out to be a lovely single-domed baroque church which seats about 500 and has standing room for another 500. Our rehearsals tells us that the space is acoustically impossible, but we muddle through. That night, after a more substantial meal than the "plastic bar" pizza of the night before (and with a little clam chowder before), we sing mass for close to a thousand sitting and standing people in the "Polnische Kirche". Suddenly the acoustics have gone from impossibly live to completely dead. After the mass, people stream out, yet the pews are still filled for our post-mass concert. Of all the wonderful artistic things which have happened to the Chamber Singers during this tour, this is the best for me. Nothing is worse than the dénouement at the end of a tour with that last concert, which "wasn't our best". Gotte sei dank, this night was right at the top! With the centre floor of the church vacated, the acoustics became close to ideal and having struggled in the rehearsal and mass to deal with them earlier, now performed at our best for a wonderful space and a superb audience. Afterwards, having only 20 minutes or so until the departure of the bus, we walked to a hot dog stand, met a really neat guy and had dinner "auf füsse". I'm really going to enjoy tomorrow!

*Bruce More*

## MAY 13 - VIENNA

A completely free day in Vienna beginning with breakfast (so to speak) at



Schloss Herberge Am Wilhelminenberg. I will never be able to stare down another white bun without thinking of Chamber Singers '91. Immediately afterwards we pile onto the coach for a ride downtown. We don't quite make it due to yet another vehicle accident blocking the way. I really enjoyed the driving style in Europe but it is not without consequences. I believe this was the fourth accident I had come across. Not deterred, I got out the walkman and danced along the streets of Vienna to Take 6. You can do that when you're in a foreign city.

Shopping in Vienna is mighty expensive, so it was mostly looking. I managed to find a triple CD of Mozart's Die Zauberflöte and a T-shirt commemorating Mozart's Bi-Centennial. Appropriate memorabilia I thought. I ran into John at one point. He had just come from a music store where he had discovered some works not available

in Canada. He was so excited his feet didn't touch the ground. Little did we know that this was his last day of being 36. As usual John had just met someone new and was off to have coffee. Lunch was at a pizza and pasta spot. It was a reminder that we would all soon be home eating recognizable food again. After lunch a little more sight seeing and sitting in the park just soaking up the Vienna atmosphere. 6pm - Time to cab it back to the hostel and change for dinner. A Mercedes cab if you don't mind as opposed to a Len-

ingrad Lada. Dinner was a new experience for me in that it was at a vegetarian restaurant called Siddhartha. Besides the obvious reason, I decided on this place because of its "locally specific interior." In other words, it was a typical

## MAY 14 - THE TRIP HOME

Today we are returning to Victoria! We ate two buns, butter, marmalade and tea or coffee (at least those of us who didn't "accidentally" cash in on the Kontiki tour meal which included orange juice and a "pizza" bun). We departed from the youth hostel at 08:00, dropped off the "A-team" at the train station and proceeded to the Vienna airport. The flight from Vienna to Frankfurt was about 1 1/2 hours long. We were served another breakfast - which included red wine for Ann and no doubt Cognac for John. Oh! Happy Birthday John!

There was a bit of a wait at the airport for the next flight to Victoria which held such memories as; Mr. and Mrs. Lufthansa Barfbag who have our safety instructions), The "motion-picture sickness bags" -

Thank you Mark Ward, and the Lufthansa pillowhead chorus (to the amusement of all the other passengers.) Sitting in alphabetical order was interesting. The landing was a little bumpy, but not as helicopter-like as Aeroflop, and everyone is happy to be home.

Marion Newman

*You are "cordial"ly invited to a gourmet dinner and award ceremony in the director's palatial quarters at 8 pm.*

Viennese tavern. So, just imagine a wonderful waiter "Michelle," a bottle of fine Austrian wine, then a cheese butter spread. Next onto cream spinach soup and the entree. Dessert was the largest serving of chocolate mousse with COFFEE. Oh God! Real coffee. Oh, the entree. Pepper corn Tofu steak. It really was excellent. I'm not converted, but it really was good. I'll never forget Vienna.

Chris Thompson