

# Eugene choir will visit Siberia

By Kristin Unwin  
Emerald Contributor

When James Miller, director of the Eugene Chamber Singers, says his group wanted to do something "a little out of the ordinary" this summer, it's a bit of an understatement.

The singers are going on tour to a place somewhat off the beaten path: Siberia.

The trip is in conjunction with the Sister City Program, an international organization that promotes cultural exchange between countries.

Miller played a large role in developing the exchange between the Eugene Chamber Singers and the Irkutsk Chamber Choir. A few years ago, when he found out that a few delegates from the mayor's office in Irkutsk would be arriving in Eugene, he decided to approach them with the idea. They liked it.

The arrival of the Irkutsk Chamber Choir during the summer of 1991 marked the beginning of the exchange. During its stay, the choir held a series of concerts in Eugene and toured Oregon.

"It was a marvelous experience for them — and for us," Miller said.

Eugene Chamber Singers member Tony Hernandez, a 1989 graduate of the University, said he remembers how two of the Russian women made him realize how similar all human beings are.

"They both had families and children back home. They were missing them," Hernandez said. "We kind of let them borrow our kids."

Hernandez said he also remembers their reaction to Americans' higher standard of living.

"We gave them some spending money," Hernandez said. "They found such joy in being able to buy things for their children that our children always have."

Miller has also noticed the effects of the Russian economy upon the poor availability of choral music.

"They sing Russian music, Russian music, Russian music, and two Negro spirituals," he said.

When the Eugene Chamber Singers go to Irkutsk for two weeks this August, Hernandez said he will worry about the possible effects of the choir's visit on the Russian hosts.

"I think the hardest thing will be the economic hardships imposed on them," Hernandez said.

Hernandez said he is afraid that after the Eugene choir leaves, their Russian hosts will be in debt from simply providing food for the choir, which has about 25 members. He said the Eugene

**'The curiosity factor is half the excitement. The unifying quality is the music.'**

— Tony Hernandez,  
Eugene Chamber Singers member

choir wanted to send the hosts some money ahead of time, but were told not to because of mail tampering and theft.

Even larger problems last year forced them to postpone the trip altogether. The choir members were originally invited to go to Irkutsk this past summer, but the Irkutsk government urged them not to.

"That was when things were still pretty crazy politically," Hernandez said.

Instead, Miller said, "we brought the director of the Irkutsk Chamber Choir here to attend the Bach Festival."

Now, however, the Irkutsk choir is again eagerly awaiting the Eugene choir's arrival.

So, the Eugene Chamber Singers are continuing to raise money for the trip, which will cost about \$50,000 for airfare and passport fees alone.

Miller said the choir is receiving some help from local sources.

One of these is Phi Beta, a fraternity for students in the arts. Two of the fraternity's members, vocalists Laural Workman and Mary Jo Simonds-Hunterger, put on a benefit concert.

Although the choir only has about \$6,500 saved so far, its members are determined not to let finances stand in their way. Miller said most of the members are even willing to pay their own way.

Hernandez, a substitute teacher in music, has been accepting jobs as far away as Eagle Point, near Medford, to try to earn enough money for his share of the cost.

Hernandez has never been to Russia, but he looks forward to going.

"The curiosity factor is half the excitement," he said. "The unifying quality is the music."

Miller's main goal for the trip is a true exchange in culture. He compares the exchange program to a giant puzzle, with the Irkutsk choir's visit composing only half of it.

"We need to complete it by going there," he said.

# Forensics finishes year 18th in nation

By Tiffany Woods  
Emerald Contributor

Arguing may not seem to be a great way to spend one's spare time, but some students dedicate themselves to it two or three times a week.

And they're good at it.

With first- and second-prize wins under their belt, the University team, ranked 18th out of 245 national teams, is now preparing for a new debate topic and some important tournaments.

The team finished this term by grabbing debate sweepstakes at the Linfield College tournament last month.

Trophy winners Lewil Shedd and Shawn Mac Donald argued this year's debate resolution that the welfare system exacerbates the problems of the urban poor.

The two argued that the welfare system provides housing with lead paint, therefore indirectly exposing children to high levels of lead poisoning.

They described the resolution as "an important, timely topic to the United States" because it addresses domestic needs.

Steve Stolp, assistant director of forensics, said he was pleasantly surprised by the results.

But Shedd, however, expected the good showing.

"I thought we were as prepared as any team in the Northwest," he said. "The coaching at Oregon is tops, which is why we can compete with teams that have more money."

The team competes in the Cross-Examination Debate Association (CEDA), the largest debate association in the nation.

Cross-examination is a debate style involving two two-person teams that argue affirmative and negative sides of a resolution.

But now the team is looking forward to next year's topic, which will be announced Thursday.

The debaters will once again spend countless hours researching and developing their cases in preparation for the upcoming Pacific Lutheran University Tournament in Tacoma Jan. 7-10.

"This is an important tournament because the first tournament of winter quarter sets the tone for the year," said David Frank, director of forensics.

Other significant tournaments include the University of Utah, the University of Kansas and the national tournament at Towson State in Maryland.

Looking ahead to the national championships, Frank predicted that the debate team will finish in the top 20 schools.

"We are a much younger program this year," he said, "but I think we will do relatively well."

**BACK TO SCHOOL SAVINGS**  
Frame plus foam core futon  
Single \$159 Double \$189  
Queen \$209

**ROCK SOFT FUTON** 686-5069  
1122 Alder  
M-F 11-5:30  
Sat & Sun 12-4

**JOHN HENRY'S**  
BEER • MUSIC • ARTS

136 E. 11th • (near Willamette)  
342-3358  
Must be 21 or Over

**Wednesday** Dec. 9 \$3  
Sowbelly plus guests

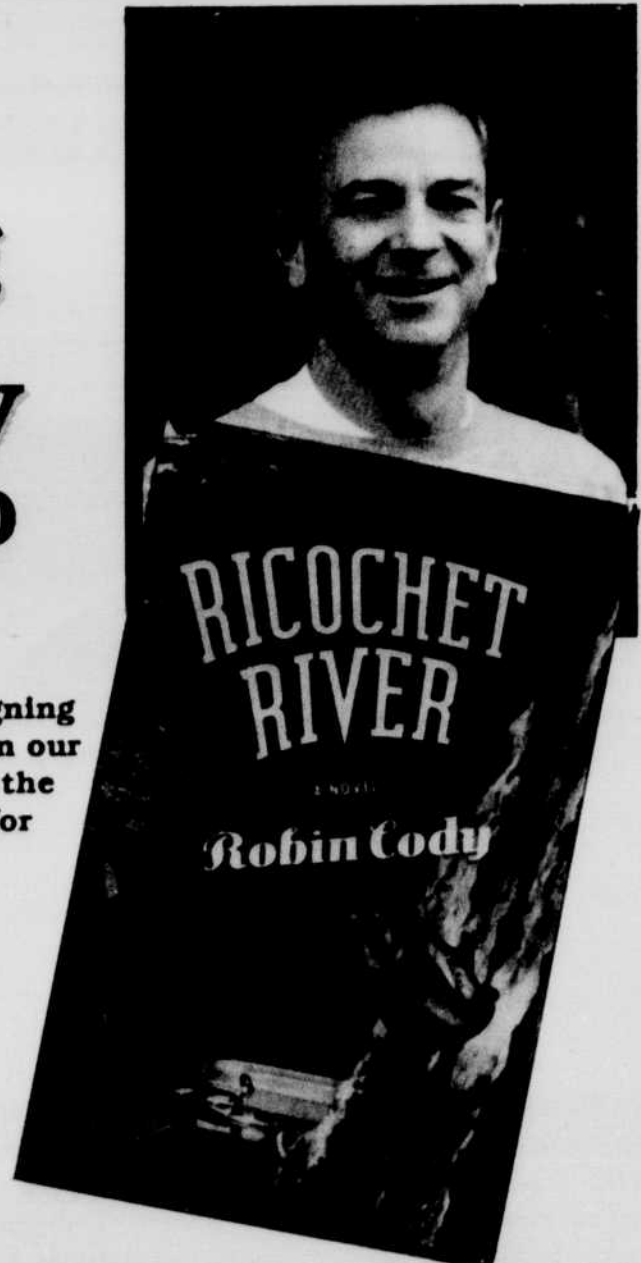
**Thursday** Dec. 10 \$3  
Black Roses

**Friday** Dec. 11 \$5  
The Daddies  
My Name

**Music Starts at 10pm**  
Mon-Sat  
Music starts at 8pm Sundays

**A Booksigning**  
**with Robin Cody**  
**Saturday, 1:30-2:30**

Portland free-lance writer, Robin Cody will be signing copies of his new novel *Ricochet River* upstairs in our General Books area. Cody is the 1986 winner of the Western Writers of America's Silver Spur Award for short nonfiction.



**UNIVERSITY OF OREGON BOOK STORE**  
13th & Kincaid • M-Sat • 346-4331