

CCC Choir travels to Estonia



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Singers from Clackamas made history this summer by traveling to Estonia and singing in the Estonian World Song and Dance Festival. This was the first time an American group had been asked to and had performed in the all Estonian Festival.

Singers from CCC raised almost \$1,500 each to take a seven day trip Aug. 3-10 to Estonia to be a part of the Festival. After a ten and a half hour flight, the 31 singers reached Estonia. They traveled that far to sing in a festival consisting of almost 8,000 singers and more than 450 dancers. The audience for this monumental yearly festival numbered around 150,000 people.

Among the many students who traveled to Estonia was Genevieve Wiitanen who summed up the Estonians as "having few material things but what they had they gave wholly to us." The trip was not only a first for the CCC choir but it was in the words of Wiitanen "an experience that you can't put into words. It is definitely an experience that everyone should have."

Even after almost two months the choir members are still excited about their Estonia experience.

In Estonia, you are not someone unless you are a singer. In fact, 85 percent of the people in Estonia sing in a choir.

"The people (of Estonia) are proud of their country and their heritage and it is reflected in their music," said CCC Director Lonnie Cline who accompanied the Clackamas group to Estonia. "You can't separate the music and the Estonians; the music is representative of their culture. It was a revelation to finally meet the people the music was about because the music and the culture are one and the same."

This is the start of a good relationship for Clackamas with the

people of Estonia. CCC's choir was asked to return to the Estonian World Song and Dance festival next year.

While in Estonia the choir was asked to sing for many important events in Estonia, not only for the World Festival. The CCC choir was to sing at a ceremony with the mayor of the city of Tallinn Jaak Tamm. That was supposed to be the signing of the Portland/Tallinn friendship agreement, which fell through, but the choir sang anyway.

The choir was also asked to sing on the city of Tallinn's famous yacht, the Kalev. This is also a great honor for the choir, explained Cline, because this is a ship that only famous or powerful people get to ride on. "The type of people usually asked to ride aboard this ship are people like emperors, queens, kings and presidents," said Cline.

Another first for the Clackamas choir, was they were the first American choir to sing in the renowned Castle Kurresarre on the island of Saaremaa.

The relationships between the Estonians and the CCC choir have stayed strong. Several choirs from Estonia will be coming to visit the United States. The National Male Choir of Estonia will be visiting the Portland Symphonic Choir as part of the Nov. 16 and 17 season opener.

On Dec. 8, at 8 p.m. the CCC chamber singers and the Clackamas Chorale will combine for the first concert of the year. Admission is a can of food which will be donated to the needy. The concert will be held at the First United Methodist Church and will feature sacred and secular music on the Christmas season along with music from the world-famous Estonian conductor Veljo Tormis. This is the first time this year that Clackamas students will be able to see the choir that wowed the Estonians.



Photos contributed by Lonnie Cline and Christine Taylor.

The choir gather in front of the Karli Church in Tallinn.

Director Lonnie Cline leads the choir as they perform for world famous conductor Veljo Tormis (left, with beard).



The CCC Choir performing in the Castle Kurresarre on the island of Saaremaa.

Left: Old Town Tallinn. Right: Christine Taylor giving Mayor of Tallinn, Jaak Tamm, gifts from Clackamas.

