Belarus: U.S. Embassy Hosts "Ambasovishcha" Music Festival

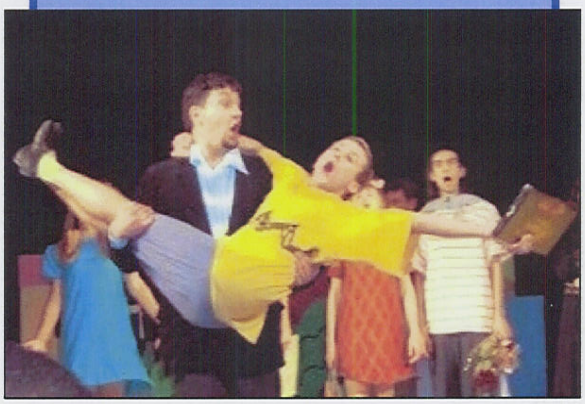
Novopolotsk punk-group Flaus and Klein perform at the U.S. Embassy open-air music festival Ambasovishcha, September 12, 2007. [Yuri Dudinski, U.S. Embassy Minsk]

For the third consecutive year, the U.S. Embassy in Minsk hosted an open-air concert of Belarusian rock and folk bands, which provided an opportunity for musicians of diverse genres to perform in front of fellow Belarusian musicians, journalists, foreign diplomats, and the U.S. government alumni community. This year's concert, held at the U.S. Ambassador to Belarus Karen B. Stewart's residence on September 12, capitalized on its growing reputation as a prestigious venue for bands to perform and for a broad segment of Belarusian musicians to mix—a privilege quite a few Belarusian performers do not enjoy given various bans placed on them by authorities. This year's festival, known locally as "Ambasovishcha," lasted over seven hours and featured twenty-one bands and solo artists, each performing a set of three songs. Along with well-established and revered Belarusian performers, the U.S. Embassy invited several young and up-and-coming bands, including those from other Belarusian cities. The event demonstrated support for the freedom to express one's artistic and political beliefs.

Ukraine: "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" Debuts for Ukraine's Youth

Loveable Charlie Brown and his friends, well known throughout the U.S., have for the first time been introduced to Ukrainian audiences. Supported by the U.S. Embassy in Kiev, a Lviv Theatre group staged a Ukrainian language production of the Broadway musical "You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown" on September 15. The crowd of 200 children and their parents were delighted by the music and charmed by the characters of Charles Schulz in their debut in Ukraine. Attended by Lviv's Deputy Mayor Kosiv and U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission James Pettit, the performance was brilliant in its ability to make accessible the humor and humanity of Charlie Brown and his friends to their new Ukrainian hosts. The play's run will continue until November 18, with hopes of an extension for the players.

The cast and crew of "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" at their first curtain call, September 15, 2007. [Michelle Logsdon, U.S. Embassy Kiev]

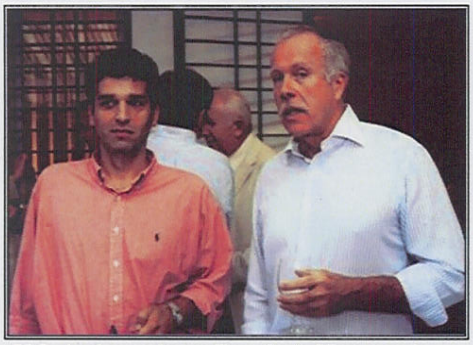


Armenia: U.S.-Funded School Renovation Project Completed

Ambassador Perina and Governor of Lori cut ribbon at opening of new American Corner, September 12, 2007. [Andranik Hovhannisyan, Head of the Lori Regional Library Computers]

U.S. Ambassador to Armenia Rudolf Perina opened a renovated cafeteria and kitchen at Yerevan Special School #16 for vision impaired children. The U.S. Embassy in Yerevan funded the renovation which was Administered by non-governmental organization (NGO) IRD Armenia.

Bosnia-Herzegovina: U.S. Embassy Sarajevo Supports Film Festival



U.S. Ambassador to Bosnia & Herzegovina Douglas McElhaney chats with Bosnia's Academy Award winner Danis Tanovic, director of the film "No Man's Land," August 20-25, 2007. [Adnan Bujak, U.S. Embassy Sarajevo]

The U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo supported the first-ever Sarajevo Talent Campus program bringing together 77 of the leading young directors, actors, and producers from throughout the Balkans. The Sarajevo Talent Campus program, held August 20-25, was designed to encourage the development of the regional film industry and to foster cooperation and reconciliation among many of the leading artists/critics in southeastern Europe. The U.S. Embassy-supported program featured American director and screenwriter Alexander Payne, winner of an Academy Award for his film" Sideways." The Sarajevo Talent Campus was held in con junction with the Sarajevo Film Festival that featured more than 180 international films and drew nearly 100,000 spectators.

Turkey: U.S.-Turkish Diplomatic History Exhibit Draws Crowds

84 years of bilateral relations between the U.S. and Turkey were on display with the formal opening of a photographic exhibit created by the U.S. Embassy in Ankara. U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Ross Wilson and Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP) Deputy Chairman Egemen Bagis walked through the exhibit and discussed individual photos which were displayed at a local mega-mall in downtown Ankara. The photos and accompanying captions in English and Turkish were placed on panels extending the lengths of two ground-floor bridges over the basement level of the mall. Managers of the ANKA Mall estimated that mall traffic reached 75,000-100,000 shoppers each weekend, providing a broad cross-section of Ankara's population with an opportunity to view the exhibit.

Photo exhibit in Turkish mall displaying 84 years of U.S.-Turkish bilateral relations, September 4, 2007. [Hakan Yurdadogan, U.S. Embassy Ankara]

Russia: Russian-Born NBA Star Leads Basketball Clinic

Andrey Kirilenko conducts basketball clinic with youth, September 2007. [Valeriy Yevseyev, U.S. Embassy Moscow]

Celebrating an afternoon of sports diplomacy, 75 students attended a basketball workshop and VIP game at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow's commemoration of the 200th Anniversary of U.S.-Russia diplomatic relations. The youth basketball clinic was organized in cooperation with the Kirilenko Kids Foundation, founded by Andrey Kirilenko, Utah Jazz star forward and member of the Russian National Basketball Team. Russian-born NBA star, Viktor Khryapa of the Chicago Bulls, also participated in the event. U.S. Chargé D'Affaires Dan Russell hailed Kirilenko, Khryapa and the students as "sports diplomats" whose participation bridged people from different countries and cultures together in a spirit of friendship and fair play.

Romania: U.S. Embassy Bucharest Participates in First International Romani Art Festival

With support from the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest, U.S. band Kultur Shock joined forces with the Romani Art Festival to combat discrimination against the Roma. The band, from Seattle, Washington, opened the outdoor festival with a mix of styles and genres that wowed the audience of several hundred young people. The band's energy kept the crowd moving and dancing, despite a drenching thunderstorm during the middle of the performance. The first Romani Art Festival, organized by a young group of Roma students included exhibits, concerts and other cultural performances, and was sponsored by the Romanian Council to Combat Discrimination and the National Council on the Roma.

Kultur Shock rocks at the Romani Art Festival, August 31, 2007. [Kathy Kavalec, U.S. Embassy Bucharest]

Denmark: English Language Fellow Trains Teachers

English Language Fellow Charles Kinney arrived in Greenland's capitol Nuuk to begin his stint as the first "traveling English teacher" in Greenland. Traveling to the villages by boat and small plane Kinney will train Greenlandic teachers in three small villages in Maniitsoq (located just south of the Arctic Circle) for 10 months. Funding was provided by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen, Inerisaavik (the center for educational development and in-service teacher training in Greenland), and Denmark's' Municipality of Maniitsoq. Assigning an English Language Fellow to Greenland is part of the U.S.-Denmark-Greenland Joint Committee mandate to complement missile defense cooperation at the Thule Air Force Base with expanded educational, scientific and commercial cooperation.

Left: (L-R) Charles Kinney, Lone Hindby, Richard Johannsen in Nuuk, Greenland, September 5, 2007. [Søren Porsbøl, Inerisaavik]

Cyprus: USAID and University Students Preserve History

Practicing what others merely preach, Archaeology and Art History Club students from Eastern Mediterranean University extended their cultural heritage clean-up campaign to four additional sites in the old city of Famagusta. With a grant from the Supporting Activities that Value the Environment (SAVE) project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), students cleared debris and cleaned up trash at and around four of Famagusta's most beautiful and historically significant sites, Othello's Tower, St. George of the Latins Church, and the ruins of St. Antoine and Ayia Zoni churches. Dedicated to improving the state of Cyprus' cultural heritage, the students have undertaken to clean fifteen sites in old Famagusta by the end of October 2007. Their efforts have attracted the attention and support of several local leaders and residents. In addition to improving the state of these sites for visitors and residents alike, the students' clean-up campaign raises public awareness and demonstrates a respect for Cyprus' multicultural past.

Students hard at work preserving Cyprus' rich cultural heritage with the support of a grant from the USAID-funded SAVE program, September, 2007. [SAVE]

Russia: U.S. Sailors visit Orphans

The U.S. Consulate in Vladivostok and Russian Pacific Fleet headquarters jointly organized a number of social, cultural, and commemorative events during the U.S. Seventh Fleet's third visit to Vladivostok this year. The ships commanding officers and U.S. Consul General Tom Armbruster hosted a reception aboard the DDG-82 Lassen for Russian Pacific Fleet officers, city dignitaries, cultural and educational activists. Forty-five U.S. sailors visited a Vladivostok orphanage and engaged the children in outdoor activities. The sailors brought gifts for the children and gave them a glimpse of American naval life as well.

Right: Family portrait at Mayak orphanage, September 2007. [Evghenia Diamantidi, U.S. Consulate Vladivostok]

Ukraine: Cultural Preservation Grants Support Museums

U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine William B. Taylor Jr. with Lviv History Museum Director Bohdan Chaikovsky, September 25, 2007. [Lesia Shkurat, U.S. Embassy Kiev]

The Lviv History Museum received a grant from the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation, for the digitization, conservation and restoration of the 12th century manuscript Khrystynopilsky Apostol. The Ethnographic Museum of Crimea in Simferopol also received a grant from the U.S. Embassy in Kiev for the creation of a secure exhibit space in order to display an existing collection of national costumes, jewelry, and carpets. Present at the signing were Deputy Minister of Culture Olha Bench, Lviv History Museum Director Bohdan Chaikovsky, Crimean Museum of Ethnography Director Yuriy Laptev, 50 students and faculty from the State Academy of Senior Specialists of Culture and Arts, and members of the press.

Sweden: Visiting Minneapolis Delegation Discusses Somali Integration

Two American Somalis and a city council member from Minneapolis visited Sweden's three largest cities to explain how Somali refugees have succeeded in Minneapolis and discuss ways in which the experience of American Somalis can be applied to Somali Swedes. The U.S. Embassy in Stockholm sponsored the visit in cooperation with the think-tank Zufi and a Swedish professor who conducted research comparing the two groups of refugees. Speaking to crowds sometimes numbering more than 100 people, the American Somalis argued that entrepreneurship, education and willingness to assimilate are keys to success in a new land. Most of the Swedish guests came from the Somali community, but audience members also included Sweden's State Secretary for the Integration Ministry and business leaders.

Left-Right: Executive Director, African Development Center of Minnesota (ADC) Hussein Samatar; ADC Project Coordinator Nimo Farah; Minneapolis City Council Member Robert Lilligren, August 27, 2007. [Paula Keller, African Development Center of Minnesota]

"Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Peace Concert" in University of Vienna music hall, September 6, 2007. [Halley Brunster, U.S. Embassy Vienna]

Austria: First Christian-Jewish-Muslim Peace Concert

The first ever "Christian-Jewish-Muslim Peace Concert" took place at the University of Vienna using music as an instrument to bring people and their religions together. The U.S Embassy in Vienna and the Initiative "Future through Language" organized the event which was an especially fitting effort just before the Pope's visit to Austria. Green wrist-bands, especially designed for this concert, were distributed at the event to establish a sign of solidarity and commitment to world peace and representatives of all three religions gave speeches about the importance of language. Approximately 100 guests listened to four different musical performances, from pop to classical. The musicians all have different religious backgrounds; they performed for free in order to show their support for bringing religions and young people together.

Poland: Polish Student Wins Journalist Competition and an Internship in the U.S.

For the 10th year the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw cosponsored a journalism competition to promote a free and professional press. This year's theme was "What Destroys Freedom of the Press?" Seven winners were selected by a judging panel from *Wprost* and U.S. Embassy Warsaw; each of the top three finalists was awarded a laptop computer, and the grand prize winner, Marcela Szych of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, also received a three-week expense-paid internship at the University of Missouri School of Journalism donated by U.S. Embassy Warsaw.

Right: Wprost Editor-in-Chief Stanslaw Janecki, winner of 2007 Embassy-Wprost Young Journalists Competition Marcela Szych, U.S. Ambassador to Poland Victor Ashe and President of Wprost Marek Krol, September 20, 2007. [Wojciech Mandal, U.S. Embassy Warsaw]

Serbia: U.S. Ambassador Signs Grant to Help Preserve Serbian Treasures

Dr. Miomir Korac, Assistant Minister for Culture and Viminacium Project Director and Ambassador Munter tour the Viminacium, September 13, 2007. [© FONET]

U.S Ambassador to Serbia Cameron Munter signed a grant of $31,200 to help preserve the Roman amphitheater at the Viminacium Archaeological Site through the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation on September 13. Dr. Miomir Korac, Serbia's Assistant Minister of Culture and the Viminacium Project Director accepted the grant. Funds for the project will be used to define the physical extent of the site, where the amphitheater is located, and evaluate the current state of the structure in order to place it under the protection of law as a cultural monument. The project will also plan for the conservation and presentation of the archaeological means and artifacts associated with the site. The project is a strong and tangible sign of the U.S. government's continued commitment to preserve ancient archeological treasures in Serbia and beyond.

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