



VA-National Medical Musical Group



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Dear Friends:

As the year 2010 waltzes into people's lives, the word to our Medical Musical Group is "Happy Anniversary" – Happy 20th Anniversary to be precise! It was in 1990 when a small group of us launched the VA-National Medical Musical Group. . .

OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY: 1990 – 2010. Many of you know the story of our beginnings in 1990. I'll briefly recap it here for the benefit of our new members. This, while saluting those of you who were with us from the start. I also shed a tear in memory of our dear Nevert Haley – who passed on two years ago. Nevert was the mother hen of our then fledgling group and she shepherded it into what some now consider to be the largest Medical Musical Group in the world (see <http://www.doctorshobbies.com/OrchestraDocs.htm>, scroll down to USA).

Our nucleus was health professionals from the Veterans Administration. We, however, quickly grew and by the time we officially incorporated 2 years later, we opened our ranks to medical professionals from all sources. We became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, completely separate from the VA. Eventually, we welcomed friends and family. As we "matured", the qualification went from "You have *to be a doctor* to join us!" to "You have *to have seen a doctor* to join us!"

In honor of this 20th anniversary milestone, we plan a grand program. It includes 3 major events in November. These are our 2010 National Veterans Day Concert in Washington, DC, and our much anticipated grand trip "Vive la France 2010!" that immediately follows the concert. It is to Paris, France, with an extension to Brussels and Amsterdam. The trip includes the third November event – a "Healing for the Nations" concert in Paris.

A LOOK BACK AT 2009. Not only banks and corporations but, even more so, chorales and orchestras had a challenging 2009! And yet, by some miracle, we were able to perform 2 major international concerts, plus a trip to England and Wales. This, without a single penny spent on a salaried employee, and with a membership that is dispersed all over the continental USA. More significantly, this membership has expanded in 2009 – by 58 new members (see below)! Amazing feat?! Yes! But how? The simple answer is: *You! You have done it, every single one!!* I tip my hat to you for that, and offer a resounding and heartfelt: "Thank you!" Noteworthy is that, even those of you who do not participate in our activities every year, overwhelmingly keep in touch with us. Many rejoin us after some absence, and participate in our concerts and tours. We all, and I personally, are gratified and ever grateful for this steadfast dedication.

REPORT ON THE 2009 VETERANS DAY CONCERT, WASHINGTON, DC. Soaring music bathed the air at the magnificent Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception last November 4. The audience was most responsive. Veterans in wheelchairs were given front seats. Diplomatic corps and military attachés joined enthusiastically in the Stars and Stripes sing-along. At the end of the concert the audience joined hands and actually swayed as they sang "Let There Be Peace", in line with the theme "Healing for the Nations." A diplomat from Jamaica summed it up as the award-winning Melodee Mercer interviewed him on VA News "*All around the world right now we need healing, and I think healing started this evening with this*

**Recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society Bob Hope Award
VA-National Medical Musical Group is not a Government Agency**

Watch our PBS Broadcast from the Pentagon streamed at www.medicalmusical.com/wmv/pentagon.wax.
Watch a newsclip about "Healing for the Nations" on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsqMYhkVQUc>



NATIONAL SHRINE, WASHINGTON, DC
NOVEMBER 4, 2009 Courtesy J. Stuart Harris

music” – see www.medicalmusical.org, click on “Videos”.

REMEMBRANCE DAY CONCERT, LONDON, NOVEMBER 11, 2009. It was a great success. Hosts were British broadcaster Andrew Neil – considered their Larry King with a nightly TV broadcast on BBC; and popular British screen actor Robert Powell – best known for playing the role of Christ in Franco Zeffirelli’s “Jesus of Nazareth”. Members of Parliament David Heath and Ann Clwyd participated as Narrators in the program of music and readings. Several distinguished London choirs and orchestras reinforced our ranks.

Andrew Neil concluded the concert with glowing spontaneous remarks about it.

Hail Britannia 2009. Was a trip for the books! Memories were made at Central Hall, the London Hilton, the romantic Thames River Cruise, and at a thousand other moments. The spectacular photo at right, courtesy of Doug Gonzales, captures our joint ensemble at Central Hall. The nice one below shows Les and Pat Foster with the honored Royal Chelsea Pensioners, again at the concert. *Thank you Gonzaleses and Fosters.*



LONDON CENTRAL HALL, NOV. 11, 2009
Courtesy Doug Gonzales



LES AND PAT FOSTER WITH ROYAL
CHELSEA PENSIONERS Courtesy Pat Foster

NEW MEMBERS 2009. As I mentioned, 2009 was a year with one of our highest gains in new members – 58 new members. I take this opportunity to warmly welcome them, one and all! For those who traveled to DC or London, I hope that you enjoyed the fun, friendship and fulfilling mission. I have talked personally to several of you and am astounded with the rich talent you bring in. To those who could not travel, we understand your schedule limitations. To all, I hope that you will participate in our activities this year. They promise to be even more fabulous than the last.

2010 NATIONAL VETERANS DAY CONCERT. It is again at the National Shrine in Washington, DC, on Wednesday, November 10, 2010 – the eve of Veterans Day. The next day, Thursday, November 11, is a Federal Holiday, so hopefully more audience will attend the performance. We also may be able to include the concert in the official Veterans Day calendar of events, increasing the likelihood that President Obama may attend. Our good friend, Cokie Roberts of ABC News, is the first guest to sign on as an MC-Narrator, with more to come. Theme: “Welcome Home Veterans!” I’ll be sharing the repertoire later.



COKIE ROBERTS

DC HOTEL. The **Hilton Crystal City at Reagan National Airport**, Arlington, VA. Our rate is \$126/room double occupancy plus tax. The Hilton offers a complimentary shuttle from Reagan National Airport. **For reservations:** Call **1-800-HILTONS (1-800-445-8667)** and identify yourself as a member of VA-National Medical Musical Group. Online reservations: www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/DCANAHF-MMG-20101105/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG, use MMG as Group/Convention Code. Our rate applies November 5 through 12, 2010. **Reservations deadline is October 6 but the rooms fly fast – so make your reservation soon!** Once our room block is filled, the rate reverts to non-discounted. If you need a hotel roommate, please contact **Elizabeth Nunan** at vanmmg@hotmail.com. She will try to connect you with others who have requested a roommate. **Remember, you must be duly registered with VA-NMMG in order to qualify for our group rate.** See “VA-NMMG 2010 Registration” below.

DC REHEARSAL SCHEDULE.

Saturday, November 6 : 2:00 – 5:00; 7:00 - 10:00 pm at the **Hilton Crystal City**, 2399 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA 22202, Tel: 703-418-6800.

Sunday, November 7: 2:00 - 5:00 pm and 7:00 - 10:00 pm at the **Hilton Crystal City.**

Monday, November 8: Town Hall Meeting 5:30 pm. Rehearsal **7:00 - 10:00 pm** at the **Hilton**.
Tuesday, November 9: 7:00 pm. Dress Rehearsal (casual dress) at the **National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception**, 400 Michigan Ave., NE, Washington, DC, 202-526-8300. Free parking at the Basilica, or you may use our group bus transportation departing the Hilton at **5:30 pm**. The Basilica stop is **Brookland-Catholic University on the Red line on the Metro**.
Wednesday, November 10: 6:30 pm PRECONCERT, and **7:30 pm CONCERT** at the **National Shrine**. Buses depart the Hilton 5:00 pm.

OVERSEAS TOUR “Vive la France 2010!” We will be based in Paris with day excursions to other locations, e.g. Normandy Beach. Dates are November 11 – 18, 2010, for the **Main Trip in Paris**, and November 18 -21 for the **Optional Extension in Brussels**. Incidentally, one of the secondary “Optional Excursions” from Brussels is a day excursion to neighboring **Amsterdam, Holland** – a third country in the same trip, making it a Trifecta! By all accounts *“Vive la France 2010!”* promises to be a mega-hit and I am enclosing its brochure. ***The tour is now open for registration. Note that the deadline for the Early Bird discount is March 15!***

“Vive la France 2010!” is in 2 parts:

- 1. Basic Trip (Paris): November 11 - 18, 2010. Includes:** 6 nights at the 4-star new and strategically located Concorde Montparnasse Hotel, hot buffet breakfast every morning, 3 dinners including a banquet, ground transportation in Paris by deluxe coach, half-day city guided tour of Paris, hotel portorage, all service charges and taxes, gratuities to guides and bus drivers except on optional tours. The half day Paris tour by coach includes: Champs-Elysees, Arc de Triomphe, Les Invalides, Concorde Square, Trocadero, Bastille, Notre Dame Cathedral, Luxembourg gardens, Saint-Germain des Pres, and panoramic views of the city from the 2nd floor of **Eiffel Tower**. There are multiple optional excursions – to Versailles Palace, the Louvre Museum, Montmartre, Reims and Champagne Region, Normandy, and a night on the town to the famous Moulin Rouge in Paris.
- 2. Optional Extension (Brussels, Belgium): November 18 - 21, 2010. Includes:** 3 nights at the centrally located 4-star Brussels Marriott, hot buffet breakfast every morning, ground transportation from and back to Paris in deluxe coach, guided tours of Waterloo and Brussels, and one dinner. There are also optional excursions to Ghent and Bruges, Belgium, and Amsterdam, Holland.

In addition to the great itinerary, all your reservations and arrangements will be made in advance. You will have the peace of mind, comfort and security of being part of a large tour group. As the saying goes: money can purchase all the above. What is priceless, however, is the wonderful spirit of camaraderie, friendship, fellowship, unforgettable fond memories, and innumerable Kodak moments that our Group trips famously provide.

This is a very attractive tour! It is a package of the utmost competitive value – securing the best amenities at the most effective cost. If you have never traveled with us before, this is the year to do it. I don’t know if we will ever have a similar *tres magnifique* opportunity for a Paris visit.

“Vive la France 2010!” – TOUR COST. Cost of the Basic Trip, with all the outstanding components described above, including roundtrip airfare DC/Paris/DC on Air France, is only **\$2,670**, and the Brussels Extension is **\$725**. See enclosed brochure for detailed information. ***Check the significant Early Bird discounts below.***

“Vive la France 2010!” – REGISTRATION. Use the attached trip registration form. You may also register on line at our secure website www.medicalmusical.org, click on *“Vive la France 2010!”*. The website accepts up to \$750 with a 3% service charge (\$23). The remainder may be paid by check to VA-NMMG and mailed to **VA-NMMG, Attn: Robert Wisleder, 197 Juniper Lane, Hanover, MA 02339-1247**. We have opted *against* paying the full registration via the Web. The reason is this 3% surcharge by the credit card companies. This would amount to well over \$80 –

much more expensive than US Mail or FedEx! Therefore, please use US mail or similar couriers.

EARLY BIRD TRIP REGISTRATION. Save \$165 per traveler on the Basic Trip plus \$50 on the Brussels Extension, if you send your \$750 deposit postmarked by March 15 AND final payment postmarked by May 15. Send it to the Hanover, MA, address above.

REWARD FOR RECRUITING NEW TRAVELERS. If you register a new traveler who has never traveled with us previously, you earn a free optional excursion (except *Moulin Rouge and Normandy*) per new traveler, as long as space is available. This, as well as the regular reservations for Optional Excursions, is on a first come, first served basis. Also, requests for roommates on the trip in general are on a first come, first served basis. Late registration may result in no availability of a roommate and the need to pay a single supplement fee.



GRANDE SALLE, UNESCO
HEADQUARTERS, PARIS, FRANCE

PARIS CONCERT. It is at the Grande Salle de l'UNESCO on Monday, November 15, 2010, 7:30 PM. The US Embassy in Paris will sponsor (publicity, etc. but no funds). Theme of the concert: "Vive l'Amitié!" We are privileged to serve as goodwill ambassadors for America, promoting amity and friendship between our own and the great French people.

VA-NMMG 2010 REGISTRATION. Registration is \$100 per calendar year, and you must be registered in order to

qualify for the concerts, hotels, trips, etc. More importantly, your membership will be a symbol of your partaking in the noble mission of this nationwide musical family. It is a mission of healing through music, that transcends many boundaries and also – oceans! You may register on-line at www.medicalmusical.org, click on "**Join**" or use the attached form. If you can, please make a financial contribution – every little bit helps in this economy. We have posted the names of 2009 contributors: see www.medicalmusical.org, click on "**Honor Roll**". *Thank you all who made contributions already!*

PHOTOS, VIDEOS. See photos from our DC and London concerts on (www.medicalmusical.org, click on "**Photos**"). A couple of newsclips are also posted under "**Videos**", or on YouTube:

1. WJLA-7 News, 11/4/09: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wx2o8J3rGqM> (1 minute).
2. VA News, 11/16/09: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIF5dQyXa9I> (5 minutes).
3. Newschannel 8, 11/3/09: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwD7yPdF848> (5 minutes).

I encourage you to review the "Vive la France 2010!" Brochure enclosed, and hope that you will travel with us this year to the City of Lights. A trip registration form and a VA-NMMG Membership form are also attached for your convenience.

Warm regards to all,

Victor S. Wahby, MD
Founder and Director

Enclosures: 2010 Registration Form, "Vive la France 2010!" Brochure and Registration Form