



VA-National Medical Musical Group



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Dear Friends:

How many times have you heard this remark recently: "We are going through a very unusual time"?! And how true! So many challenges!! And yet, despite the trials and tribulations, we believe that our resilient organization will have a fabulous 2009! My reason for this conviction is twofold. First and foremost is the extraordinary commitment that our members show, and have shown in the past. Even those of you who do not participate in our activities every year, overwhelmingly keep in touch with us. Indeed, many of you rejoin us after some absence, and attend our concerts at home and our tours overseas. We all, and I personally, are ever grateful for, and gratified by, this steadfast dedication.

The second reason for my confidence is the grand "Healing for the Nations" activities we have planned for 2009 – *read on to see for yourself!*

"HEALING FOR THE NATIONS" SERIES. Our first "Healing for the Nations" concert was last May in Washington, DC. That program was sponsored by House Majority Leader Congressman Steny Hoyer, Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Senator (now Vice President) Joseph Biden, Chairs of the Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committees Senator Daniel Akaka and Congressman Bob Filner respectively, and Chair of the House Ethics Committee the late Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones. That event combined honoring the US military and veterans, with a call for peace in the Middle East. Notably, 21 foreign ambassadors to the USA also sponsored. This, in addition to numerous US veterans and other organizations. A brief newsclip by Melodee Mercer, that beautifully encapsulates the event is posted on www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsqMYhkVQUc.

As sequels, we will perform two "Healing for the Nations" concerts in 2009. The twin events – #2 and 3 in the series – will be given on *both shores of the Atlantic* in November 2009.

Theme of *both* these concerts is "Hands Across the Sea – for Humanity!". They are:

1. **Wednesday, November 4, 2009, 7:30 pm.** At the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC (www.nationalshrine.com). We hope that Vice President Joseph Biden will sponsor and possibly participate in it.
2. **Wednesday, November 11, 2009, 7:30 pm.** At the Central Hall of London in Westminster, London, England (www.c-h-w.com).

The London "Healing for the Nations" Concert. Highlights how the friendship that binds America and Britain across the Atlantic "pond" serves humanity. It will be given on the British Remembrance Day, and honors veterans and military servicemen and women of both nations. The event is sponsored by us, the British-American Parliamentary Group and the Royal British Legion. Other organizations involved are: the British Parliament Choir Group, the British Parliament Opera Group, London City Choir, and the European Doctors Orchestra. Our British partners have invited Prince Charles to say a word.

Recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society Bob Hope Award

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Watch our PBS Broadcast from the Pentagon streamed at www.medicalmusical.com/wm/pentagon.wax.

The London event has an international healing focus, which is again peace in the explosive Middle East. Audience will be asked to pause for one minute each day to ponder, pray, or send positive thoughts for Middle East Peace. Ambassadors in London will be invited to serve on the program's committee, as we did in Washington last May. The concert will also spotlight and raise funds for Malaria Eradication, an international health problem that our two nations lead in relief efforts.

LONDON TRIP. This year's overseas trip "Hail Britannia 2009" promises to be superb! It is now open for registration, and I am enclosing its brochure. Please note the Early Bird discount date of February 17. "Hail Britannia 2009" is in 2 parts:

1. **Basic Trip (London): November 5 - 12, 2009.** *It includes the following components:* 6 nights at the 4-star London Hilton Kensington, hot English buffet breakfast every morning, 3 dinners including a banquet, ground transportation in London by deluxe coach, half-day city guided tour of London, portage at the hotel, all service charges and taxes, gratuities to guides and bus drivers except on optional tours, a complimentary bus/underground starter pass, and a complimentary theater ticket probably to the Royal Albert Hall. There are also multiple optional excursions – to Windsor Castle and Runnymede, Oxford and Shakespeare Country, Stonehenge and Salisbury, and a romantic Thames River Dinner Cruise.
2. **Optional Extension (Cardiff, Wales): November 12 - 15, 2009.** *Includes:* 3 nights at the 4-star Mercure Holland House Hotel, hot English buffet breakfast every morning, ground transportation from and back to London in deluxe coach, guided tours of Bath and Cardiff and one dinner. There are also optional excursions to South Wales Valley and Historic Wye Valley.

All of this, plus, of course, the peace of mind, comfort and security of being a part of a large tour group, and having your reservations and arrangements made for you in advance. Not to mention the wonderful spirit of camaraderie, friendship, fellowship and unforgettable memories that our Group trips famously provide. ***See enclosed brochure for detailed information. Cost of the Basic Trip, with all the outstanding components described above including roundtrip airfare DC/London/ DC on United Airlines is only \$2,528 and the Cardiff Extension is \$650. Check the Early Bird discounts below.***

This is a very attractive tour – people have already started booking it! As usual, no effort was spared in getting the best amenities at the most effective cost. It is a package of the utmost competitive value! Those of you who travel with us year in and year out will vouch for it. Check the Web for comparison and you will see for yourself!

- **"Hail Britannia 2009" REGISTRATION.** Use the attached trip registration form. You may also register on line at our secure website www.medicalmusical.org, click on "Hail Britannia". 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 the 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.** *You save \$110 per traveler on the Basic Trip plus \$40 on the Cardiff Extension if you send your \$750 deposit postmarked by*

February 17 AND final payment postmarked by May 1. Send it to **VA-NMMG, Attn: Robert Wisleder, 197 Juniper Lane, Hanover, MA 02339-1247.**

- **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 the Thames River Dinner Cruise*) of your choice per new traveler, as long as space is available on that particular excursion.
- Space is limited on the trip and on the optional extension, and is allocated on a first come first served basis!

NOVEMBER WASHINGTON HOTEL. Will be announced soon.

NOVEMBER WASHINGTON REHEARSAL SCHEDULE.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31: 2:00 – 5:00; 7:00 - 10:00 pm at hotel.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1: 2:00 - 5:00 pm and 7:00 - 10:00 pm at hotel.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2: 7:00 - 10:00 pm at hotel.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3: 7:00 pm. Dress Rehearsal (casual dress) at the **Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception**, 400 Michigan Ave., NE, Washington, DC, 202-526-8300, www.nationalshrine.com. Free parking at the Basilica, or you may use our group bus transportation from the hotel (*There is a charge!*) If you wish to use Metro transportation, the Basilica stop is Brookland-Catholic University on the Red line.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4: 6:30 pm **PRECONCERT**, and 7:30 pm **CONCERT** at the **National Shrine**. Buses depart the hotel **5:00 pm**. Bus charge: \$20 – it is subsidized by VA-NMMG and covers both round trips Tuesday and Wednesday.

SPRING CONCERT. I am sure you may be wondering about it by now! We are looking carefully into suggestions from some members to drop the spring concert this year. This is because of the economy. The thought is that we'd channel our individual and collective resources to the magnum opus of the DC and London concerts in November. We are weighing options in this regard and I'd appreciate hearing from you on it!

PHOTOS. Photos and videos from the National Shrine and Denver concerts are now posted at www.medicalmusical.org, click on "**Photos**".

DVDS. Three of our concert DVDs have been released and are available for purchase.

1. "**Once to Every Man and Nation**": Our 2007 Veterans Day Concert in Denver featuring Art Linkletter and former Miss America Rebecca Dreman. The DVD carries separate chapters for the concert's first half, the Intermission and second half – the latter in PBS format.
2. "**Thus Spake America**": Our 2007 Patriot Day (9/11) Memorial Concert, and our "debut" at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC, featuring Bill Kurtis, Larnelle Harris, Adrian Cronauer, former Miss America Heather French Henry and the late Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones. Incidentally, we are dedicating that DVD to the memory of our dear Congresswoman friend.

3. **“O What a Beautiful . . .Country!”**: Our 2006 Veterans Day Concert in Oklahoma City, featuring Bill Kurtis, former Miss Americas Jane Jayroe and Jackie Mayer, and then Oklahoma Lt. Governor (now Congresswoman) Mary Fallin. Having overcome various difficulties in post-production, we are happy to finally have this DVD available for purchase.

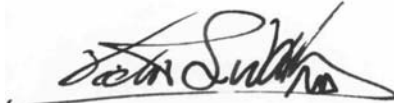
Each of these DVDs costs \$10.00, plus \$5.00 shipping *for up to 3 DVDs*. The DVDs will conjure up beautiful memories of our concerts for those who participated. They’d also offer those of you who did not attend an opportunity to vicariously live these wonderful experiences with us. Furthermore, these DVDs make ideal and incredibly affordable gifts to family and friends. And, if one of your friends or family members is serving in the military, these DVDs can be great morale boosters for them. Of course, they are the perfect gift to the veterans in your workplace, family, church, synagogue, or neighborhood. I am enclosing an Order Form that you can send with your check to **VA-NMMG, Attn: Robert Wisleder, 197 Juniper Lane, Hanover, MA 02339-1247**. You can also order on our website (**www.medicalmusical.org**, click on **“Order DVDs”**).

2009 REGISTRATIONS. Registrations are good for one calendar year, and you must be duly registered in order to qualify for the concerts, hotels, trips, etc. During our Town Hall Meeting in Denver, some members raised the issue of our membership dues. These have remained flat and fixed at \$75 annually for quite a number of years. This, whereas most organizations have raised their dues, sometimes two or three times over. A modest increase of \$25 per year was proposed, in order to help with the constant escalation in costs. Also, there was an urgent call by Bob Wisleder, our Treasurer, to increase our personal contributions to the Group – last year was financially difficult. What has really helped us is that all our workers are 100% volunteers – a proud testimony to the commitment and loyalty that our group rouses.

At the Town Hall Meeting, there was a consensus on this increase of \$25 per year. Accordingly, our Board has approved an increase in our annual dues to \$100, effective January 1, 2009. Also, I would encourage all to generously contribute to VA-NMMG, over and above that Registration fee. Contributions are tax deductible – see the updated categories on the Registration Form. **For registrations, you may use the enclosed form or go to our secure website www.medicalmusical.org, and use a credit card.** Click on **“Join”** and **“Donate”**. You may also print the form posted on the website and mail it with your check payable to **VA-NMMG**, to: **VA-NMMG, Attn: Robert Wisleder, 197 Juniper Lane, Hanover, MA 02339-1247**.

Thank you very much for your dedication to VA-NMMG! Let us cheerfully waltz together into a 2009 with brighter horizons to behold, deeper oceans to cross, and higher mountaintops to conquer!

With best regards,



Victor S. Wahby, MD
Founder and Director

Enclosures: 2009 Registration Form, **“Hail Britannia 2009”** Brochure, **“Hail Britannia 2009”** Registration Form, Product Order Form