

## **Historical view of Yale Russian Chorus activities 1960 - 1969**

**January 20, 1960** YRC hosts reception and sings for Moscow State Symphony Orchestra at the Hall of Graduate Studies after MSSO concert in the New Haven Arena.

**April 24, 1960** YRC serenaded French President Charles de Gaulle outside Blair House in Washington DC during a chance meeting while Chorus was in Washington for a concert. De Gaulle came over, shook hands with a few singers and said in English "Good luck, Yale!"

**May 6-8, 1960** YRC organized and led the Inter-University Conference on Cultural Exchange at Yale with students and faculty from several dozen universities attending. Speakers included professors from Yale and Bryn Mawr and Foreign Affairs Officers from the East - West Contacts Staff of the Department of State. Chorus members led seminars. YRC concert in Sprague Hall with Mitchell - Ruff jazz duo.

**Summer 1960** Third tour to USSR and Eastern Europe. YRC drove from Frankfurt to Moscow via Ukraine and back in VW Microbuses.

**November 11, 1960** Concert at the University of Rochester during their 3-day Festival of Russian Art.

**November 20, 1960** Concert at George Washington University was taped and became part of the first American broadcast on Soviet radio under a new broadcast exchange agreement.

**March 1961** First spring-break tour of American universities (by bus to California and back).

**November 11, 1961** YRC invited to sing in A Program of Tribute to UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, killed in the Congo on September 17, 1961.

**November 18, 1961** YRC concert for Peace Corps rally with Yale Chaplain William Sloane Coffin at University of Connecticut

**Spring 1962** Tour to Ohio, Colorado and California universities, 11 concerts in 11 days, with seminars on cultural exchange

**Summer 1962** Fourth tour to USSR and Western Europe (3 months). YRC gave formal concerts (arranged through European impresarios: Dandelot, Adler, Caballero) in Western Europe (Cambridge, Paris, Toulon, Geneva, Zurich, Munich, Berlin, Stockholm, Helsinki). Tour included:

**June 11, 1962** YRC won first prize at the Lille Festival international de chant choral. Prize included recording an LP with Philips (2nd YRC record).

**July-August 1962** Members of YRC attended the Helsinki World Youth Festival as part of a US "counter-delegation".

**August 23, 1962** YRC sang Mozart's Ave Verum Corpus at the Berlin Wall after a young East German, Peter Fechter, had been shot a few days before, trying to cross into West Berlin.

**October 21, 1962** Concert with Nicolai Gedda in Town Hall in New York

**March 1963** Spring tour included universities in Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, California.

**Summer 1963** Fifth tour to USSR and Western Europe (Madrid, Frankfurt, Berlin, Moscow, Warsaw, Luxembourg, London). Invited again by the same European impresarios, YRC sang again at Salle Pleyel in Paris, represented the USA at the celebrations for the 1000th anniversary of Luxembourg and participated in the Rouen XIe Festival culturel international étudiant. TV broadcasts of concerts in Paris and Madrid.

**November 11-18, 1963** YRC initiative formed the Yale Committee for Barghoorn (Frederick Barghoorn: senior Yale political science professor arrested by USSR on November 11, 1963). YRC and Yale Glee Club sing a concert in Woolsey Hall on November 18th to welcome Barghoorn back after his release by the USSR.

**January 31, 1964** YRC sang for the New York Herald Tribune's World Youth Forum in Dwight Hall at Yale.

**March - May 1964** YRC members Jan Dauman and Roberto Meinrath carry out research during spring tour and submit a paper "The Yale Russian Chorus, A Study of Group Behaviour in an Unorthodox Organisation" for the Dept. of Industrial Administration.

**May 4, 1964** YRC sang anthems in Battell Chapel Sunday service. That Sunday was also Russian Easter.

**May 10, 1964** 10th Anniversary concert in Woolsey Hall and first YRC banquet.

**Fall 1964** Dan Gsovski became co-conductor with Denis.

**Fall 1964** First spin-off group: Denis Mickiewicz, teaching at Connecticut College in New London, created and directed a Russian Chorus there (1964-67)

**Spring 1965** Spring tour to the West (Las Vegas)

**May 1, 1965** First of a series of benefit concerts to assist kidney research at Yale.

**May 8-9, 1965** Performances at Connecticut College and in Woolsey Hall of the concert version of Act I of Glinka's A Life for the Czar (Ivan Susanin).

**Fall 1965** Dan Gsovski became conductor.

**Spring 1967** Spring tour to West coast

**April 23, 1967** First annual Slavic Festival of music and dance in Woolsey Hall.

**Fall 1967** Second spin-off group: Denis, teaching at Michigan State University, created and directed a Russian Chorus there (1967-80)

**October 21-22, 1967** YRC represented US, singing at Expo-67, the Montreal World's Fair, followed by a spectacular smorgasbord and reception on a Norwegian ship in Montreal harbor, thanks to ALCAN and the Montreal Yale Club. YRC invited Russians from the Alexander Pushkin berthed next door to join the party.

**Spring 1968** Bruce Lieberman became conductor. Spring tour to Midwest and West coast included a stop to visit Denis Mickiewicz at Michigan State University.

**May 5, 1968** Second annual Festival of Slavic music and dance in Sprague Hall.

**Summer 1968** Tour to Eastern Europe (Bucharest). Performance at the Nis International Choral Festival and elsewhere in Serbia. Members of the YRC attended the Sofia World Youth Festival. This tour led to the learning of a number of Balkan songs and the first Georgian songs (Morbis Aragvi and Shen Khar Venakhi) after a chance meeting with the Georgian State Choir in Budapest. Some YRC members visited monks on Mt. Athos on the northern coast of the Aegean.

**October 7, 1968** YRC sang for UN We Believe fundraiser dinner at New York Waldorf Astoria Hotel.

**March 1969** Spring bus tour to Texas, Arizona, California, and Wisconsin, including performances at the Russian Center and Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

**April 17, 1969** YRC organized and performed a benefit concert with Theodore Bikel and Yale's Augmented 7 in Woolsey Hall to raise money for the William Sloan Coffin Defense Fund. Coffin was Yale Chaplain from 1958-1975 and was indicted along with 6 others for anti-war activities in January 1968. He had sung with the YRC intermittently in 1958 and 1959.

**Fall 1969** Next spin-off group formed: Yale Slavic Chorus (women's group performing Eastern European and Balkan music). Bill Robbins (YRC '70; later known as Celo V'ec) was the first conductor.