

Dear AYS members, families and alumni:

We very recently received a very exciting invitation! This summer the AYS has a rare opportunity to visit China through Forte International Exchange Association. Forte International is a nonprofit organization sanctioned by the U.S. State Department that facilitates student cultural exchanges as a way of promoting understanding between the U.S. and other nations. Forte International is offering AYS this opportunity to visit China and play music there in cooperation with the Chinese government. For more information about Forte International Exchange Association, you can visit their website at:
<http://www.forteexchange.org/index.asp>.

The tour dates are from July 5 through July 24, 2010. The itinerary, which is attached, is entirely arranged by Forte International. It consists of four (4) days of touring in Beijing (including hiking on the Great Wall, visiting 2008 Olympic sites, and touring Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City), followed by fourteen (14) days participating in a Culture Festival in Shenzhen, near Hong Kong. The AYS would perform at the Culture Festival both in the futuristic-looking Poly Theatre and in the Shenzhen Concert Hall. In addition, the AYS would visit theme parks and watch parades, visit and shop in Hong Kong, tour Guangzhou and, most importantly, would learn about Chinese language and culture by meeting with Chinese students and their families. Other activities offered at the Culture Festival include learning Kung Fu moves, Chinese calligraphy, learning about Chinese tea rituals and the Peking Opera. Additional information about the Culture Festival is available at: > <http://www.eact-china.org/index.html> and/or <http://www.eact-china.org/festival/events.html>.

The total cost for the entire trip is roughly \$2,000 per person, broken down as follows: \$1,500 estimated air fare from Anchorage to Beijing and back, \$130 for a Chinese visa, and \$300 for all tours, transportation and lodging in China. In addition, the AYS expects to pay part of the cost for AYS members, the amount depending upon the number of AYS members who go on the trip. It goes without saying that the total cost of this 19-day trip to China is very reasonable.

Significantly, parent chaperones, and siblings older than 11 years would be able to go along on the trip for the same, extremely low price as AYS members.

Time is short! We must make a decision about whether the AYS will be going to China within the next week to ten days. All AYS members please respond immediately to the following questions, either by returning a hard copy of this page at the AYS rehearsal on January 25, 2010, or by responding by email within the same time frame. Please email your responses to Traci Caves at lupinus.arcticus@gmail.com.

For additional information, please contact either:

AYS Tour Director, Traci Caves: lupinus.arcticus@gmail.com,
(tel.) 903-8214; or
AYS Tour Committee Chair, Debra Fitzgerald: fitzmodio@acsalaska.net,
(tel.) 258-1720.

Kind regards,

Robert Harris, President
Anchorage Youth Symphony

Please fill out this form and return to AYS by January 25, 2010.

1. I plan to go on the AYS trip to China July 5-24, 2010.

_____ (Please provide your name in the space below
Yes No even if you do not plan on going to China)

AYS member _____(print name).

If you answered "No" above, please do not answer the rest of the questions.

2. AYS member plays _____(instrument).

3. ____ (how many?) family members plan to travel to China with the AYS?

4. Names and ages of all family members who plan to travel to China with the AYS?

_____, _____, _____.

5. Adult family member(s) who would be willing to chaperone the AYS on the China trip: _____ (names and ages)?