



# Jednota

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Fr. Stephen Furedek  
Our Founder

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PAS Dancers in Goral Costumes.

## PÁS's Drotár Concert

Michael J. Kopanic, Jr., Ph.D.

What a concert! On Sunday, November 23, 2008, "PÁS," the Pittsburgh Area Slovak Folk Ensemble treated its audience to a fabulous and very unique performance entitled "*Drotár*," at the Antonian Theatre at Carlow University. The enthusiastic crowd would concur that the troupe put on quite a show of traditional songs and dances that was both entertaining and educational.

### BACKGROUND – A LITTLE HISTORY

The concert centered on the theme of the *Drotár*, or tinker. As portrayed in the concert program, many Slovak *staré baby* (old grandmothers) remembered when the tinkers used to come to their villages and would announce their arrival with the words:

"*Hrce misky, drotovat!* (Pots and bowls to tinker!)"

Life as a Tinker was a common occupation of men in Slovakia during the Early Modern Era of European history. This portrayal of the life of the *drotár* dated from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the time of Maria Teresa, the beloved Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary.

Many of these Tinkers came from the relatively poor areas of Kysuce and Trenčín in northwest Slovakia. Because times were tough in their homeland, these Slovak Tinkers roamed not only in Slovakia and other parts of Hungary, but throughout Europe, in search of work. They traveled from place to place, carrying everything they needed in a toolbox on their backs, which they wore like a knapsack. They repaired items with wire, and mended dishes and other ceramic and tin objects, which were held together with wire at this time. The Tinkers also sold objects made of tin and wire such as pots and pans, whisks, sieves, strainers, trays, ladles, skewers, cake and cookie tins, cutters, trivets, mousetraps, and other useful household goods. The *drotár* also was a source of information about distant places;

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### From the Desk of the Executive Secretary:

## March for Life

January 22, 2009 is the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Right to Life March in Washington DC. FCSU along with FCSLA are offering free transportation for this very important event. Our goal for this March is to fill two buses with individuals who will march along side the many Pro-Life Organizations and American citizens who support this mission.

With a new administration taking over in January it is most important for us to support the position of the Pro Life Movement. The theme for the 2009 March is: REMEMBER – the *Life Principles* mean "Equal Care" with No Exceptions!

Please join us in supporting this very important March. If you wish to reserve a seat please contact Kenneth Arendt, Executive Secretary of FCSU at 1-800-533-6682 or Sue Ann Seich, Fraternal & Youth Director of FCSLA at 1-800-464-4642, EXT 1051 before December 20, 2008.



### From the Desk of the Executive Secretary:

## An Important Message to Our Members

Due to the recent news concerning our nation's financial crisis and economic conditions, the Society's Investment Committee wants to reassure you that the FCSU remains in strong financial condition.

If you have been reviewing the various financial reports that have appeared in our publication reflecting the reports filed with the various Insurance Departments of the states in which the Society is licensed, you will note that in addition to our overall strong surplus we have

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# PÁS's Drotár Concert

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he shared interesting and exciting stories, no doubt, some of which may have been exaggerated to tell a good tale.

Slovaks considered the life of a *drotár* to be a worthy occupation, and the special skills were usually passed down the generations, from father (*otec*) and grandfather (*dedo*) to one's son or grandson. Fathers and son often worked or even traveled together.

The concert program noted the special custom associated with the birth of a son to a family of Tinkers. The family put the newborn infant on a "long-handled board," and then put the baby through an open window of the home. The family then collectively recited the Slovak expression, "*Svetom moje svetom*" (Set out on a journey to the world). The family anticipated that the child would one day make his way in the world, and make it his own.

The Slovak Tinkers could be found throughout Europe, everywhere from Russia to France and Italy. Their humble profession continued until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and during their heyday, as many as 5-10,000 Slovak *drotári* roamed around Europe.

## THE OPENING – Act One

The concert itself was a story of the life of the *drotár*, but it was also a portrayal of the different songs and dances of the various regions of Slovakia where the *drotár* journeyed. Done in four acts, each portrayed a particular region or theme, and also the various customs done during holidays and various celebrations.

The opening scene depicted a *drotár* learning his craft. Played by Juraj Staško (George Stasko), the *drotár* formed a heart out of wire and boldly sang out his song, "*Ja som dobrý remeselník*" (I am a good craftsman). Following this was the *Drotáriček Tanec*, the quaint Tinker's Dance. Dressed in colorful regional costumes, the Senior Ensemble performed a series of intricate step dances from the mountainous *Gorale* region of northern Slovakia, near the Polish border. The children's Junior Ensemble then put on a cute little play. Finally, the *drotár* was on his way.



## A Christmas and New Year Message



George F. Matta  
National Treasurer

As we prepared for Christmas Day, the birthday of our Lord, Jesus Christ, most of us were reminded of the old saying "Peace on Earth and Good Will to All." It's too bad, that saying is practiced only during the birthday of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and not throughout the entire year.

I must admit, that during the Christmas season, most people have a nicer disposition towards others and appear to be happier.

During Christmas and New Years Day, it is so gratifying to see the churches crowded, just like the old times. With all the difficulties we face in these days, perhaps more people will find comfort and return to church more frequently.

On behalf of my wife Florence, my family and myself we wish all of you the blessings of the Holy Infant, Jesus Christ, and a Blessed and Healthy New Year.

George F. Matta, National Treasurer



PAS Girls singing.

## EARLY SPRING – Act Two

The Second Act was set during the early spring, and featured the customs of *Fašiangy* (Shrovetide or Mardi Gras). The men performed a Stick Dance (*Palickový Tanec*) from the town of Dobré Nive, and they recited the refrain: "Jump men! Leap high as the ceiling so the hemp will grow tall in the fields."

The women followed with the loud Girls' Stamping Dance (*Dievčenský Tanec*) and stomped their feet to the delight of the crowd. The Children then enacted a series of *Hry a Riekanky* (plays and sayings, complete with riddles, rhyme and dances). The Couples' Tossing Dance (*Vyhadzivaňa*) followed, depicting the custom of the Trenčín area, where the men would toss their female partners as high as possible so as to ensure a bountiful harvest. Songs and dances from central Slovakia followed, such as *Ked ja na Toryse* (When I was on the Torysa River), the *Tota Helpa Csardás* ( ) from the Horehronie region, the song *Pridi ty Šuhajko* (Come You Young Man), and the ancient ritual dance of Spring – *Jar*.

## EASTERN SLOVAKIA – Act Three

After a brief intermission, the program continued with a rendition called *Hviezdnata Noc* (Starry Night), which represented traditional Eastern Slovak dance. It included a men's slapping dance (*čapaš*), a *czardaš*, and a *kručena*, a whirling dance.

The dances were a prelude to a traditional wedding ceremony, one of the most important of customs which cemented family life in Slovakia. The portrayal included the moving scene where the bride and groom knelt before their parents to bid their farewells and beckon forgiveness for any transgressions they committed. The climax of the ceremony was the *parta*, when the ladies of the family remove the bride's elaborately decorated headdress and replace it with the *čepec* (a matron's bonnet). The traditional bridal dance (*Redovy*) followed, with all who dance with the bride throwing in a coin to help the young couple get started in life.

The wedding ceremony then concluded with the energetic and fast-paced *Šarišská Polka*, from that eastern Slovak region of Šariš.

## THE QUEEN'S GIFT – Act IV

The final act portrayed the celebration of the birth of the child Joseph II to Maria Teresa. First, PÁS performed several lively dances from the Detva region of central Slovakia, where the troupe will be performing in the summer of 2009. The child's birth was announced, and a great cheer of joy echoed. Then the *drotári* (Tinkers) presented the newborn babe with the gift of a heart made of wire, and the Queen declared that henceforth, all Tinkers would be free of any form of serfdom.

The program concluded with an array of dances of jubilation, folk songs, and the always popular *Zbojnický Odzemok* (The Robbers' Leaping Dance, famous from the time of the Slovak Robin Hood, *Juraj Jánošík*), which featured a dance with the long-handled wooden axe known as a *valaška*.

## CONCLUSION

The performance ended in a storm of applause that was well-deserved. PÁS chose to stage this wonderful drama to celebrate its thirty-fifth year as one of Pittsburgh's premier ethnic song and dance groups.

PÁS owes much of its success to the devoted work of all its members and their families, as especially, John and Angela Lipchick, who direct the Ensemble. The members all deserve mention as well, and are listed here alphabetically.

### Senior Ensemble

Milenka (formerly Kopanic) Feighner, Maggie Fero, Nancy Hart, Adrienne Jumba, Zach Jumba, John Lipchik, Jr., Joe Lipchick, Kristin Miara, Anna Miskis-Neilson, Anna Nowak, Joe Pacacha, Dee Pacacha, Michael Pacacha, Mary Ann Parana, Francis Parana, Marge Rose, Jeremy Samek, John Samek, George Stasko, Alissa Tilger, Jessica Wolf, and Mike Wolf

### Junior Ensemble

Bella Fero, Emily Fero, Rozie Fero, Becky Korinko, Emily Miara, Lily Miara, Christina Pacacha, Allie Samek, Alana Samek, Christopher Samek, Noah Samek, Toby Samek, Martina Stasko, Marissa Ann Tilger, and Xavier Michael Wolf.

With its performance of *Drotár*, PÁS hoped to raise some money to help fund its trip to Detva, Slovakia, where they will perform with some of the best folk groups from across the country. Despite making some progress through fund-raisers over the last few months, they can only sell so many hoagies. PÁS still needs more donations to help make their trip to Slovakia possible. If you would like to help support their most worthy cause, please keep them in mind when you think about whom you would wish to assist.

Any one interested in supporting this well-deserved cause may send a check to help defray the expenses. Please send your donations to:

### PÁS Folk ensemble

1254 Old Concord Road Monroeville, PA 15146 Tel. (412) 373-3873

For more information about PÁS please visit and explore its new website at [www.pasfolkensemble.weebly.com](http://www.pasfolkensemble.weebly.com)

## NEWSPAPER DEADLINES

All copy is due by 4:30 P.M., THE MONDAY BEFORE THE ISSUE DATE, unless otherwise stated below because of special holiday scheduling. Copy that is not received by this deadline will not necessarily appear in the following Wednesday's issue.

Issue Date	Copy Date
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21	MONDAY, JANUARY 12
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4	MONDAY, JANUARY 26
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18	MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Correspondents who are announcing upcoming events should remember that the JEDNOTA is printed EVERY OTHER WEDNESDAY, and should take into account the extra time lost in the postal system. Therefore, please plan to have your announcements to us in ample time for them to be printed and received by the readership.

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