

Chorus to visit Europe By David Simon, Times Staff Writer
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Next month, 12-year-old Amber Slater, of Westminster, and 23 other Carroll County middle school and high school students will be singing in front of international audiences in Estonia, Finland and Sweden.

Slater is one of 24 members of "Voce Viaggio" - Italian for "Traveling Voices" - who filled the lobby of the county office building with their songs on Tuesday.

"Traveling Voices" is a fitting name for the chorus because, in July, the singers will visit Estonia, Finland and Sweden as part of the Sister City Partnership program between Westminster and Paide, Estonia.

In 2002, the mayors of Westminster and Paide signed a declaration of understanding that would lead to a sharing of ideas about culture, economics, government, education and other subjects.

Roughly one-third of the European trip is being paid for through fund raising, said Diane Jones, executive director of the Children's Chorus of Carroll County. The children's parents are paying for the rest, she said. All the singers are members of the Children's Chorus.

Tuesday's performance helped the chorus - made up of 20 girls and four boys - prepare for its farewell concert on Saturday and for its European performances, Jones said.

The chorus leaves for Europe on July 10 and will spend roughly 10 days touring different countries and singing more than an hour of American-themed songs at several venues, Jones said. The songs will help give European audiences a better feel for America, as many elements of American history are incorporated in the music, she said.

But the trip will also help the chorus members learn about other cultures, Jones said. The children will be taking educational tours while on the trip and will have many opportunities to experience different aspects of the countries they visit.

"My personal goal is to help the children break out of their boxes," Jones said. "There's a whole world out there to see."

Chorus member Chad Will, 13, of Westminster, shares a similar goal for his trip.

"I'm hoping to see a whole different country with different architecture and different lifestyles," Will said. "I want to see what different parts of the world are all about."

Other chorus members had different reasons for participating.

"I'm excited to go to Estonia because they are a very musical culture," Slater said. "You can tell



KEN KOONS/STAFF PHOTO
Diane Jones directs the Children's Chorus of Carroll County during a performance at the Carroll County Office Building Tuesday.

by the way that they sing that they love it and I hope the trip will help me become more musical."

Learning about music and culture may have its merits, but for Moira Thompson, 11, of Westminster, the trip promises other benefits.

"I've heard that the chocolate over there is really good," Thompson said.

"Voce Viaggio" is scheduled to return to the United States on July 21.

Reach staff writer David Simon at 410-751-5902 or simond@lcniofd.com.

Chorus in Concert

Voce Viaggio Bon Voyage concert

Saturday at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the Carroll Arts Center at 91 W. Main St. in Westminster

For more information, call 410-871-3391 or check the Internet at www.c4notes.com.