

## CHAPTER 7: CROSSING THE CULTURE BARRIER

Yes, all those Americans coming as Continental Singers, wonderful. But already soon Leen and Ria started to dream about whether it is possible to have European Continentals and Dutch Continentals??? Leen started to ask around to check possibilities and needs.....Yes, it should be possible. After finishing the Come Together project Leen did a try-out, but this pre-Conti-group totally failed and Leen feared that something like Continentals would never be possible. Leen had to learn the hard way, that imitation does not work. So after a few weeks of trying hard with this group of very willing persons, he changed course. Maybe it was better to learn while you go, till finally the cross-cultural concepts of the Continentals were discovered. And so it happened. The group was renamed in DISCIPEL(Disciple), as they needed to show a lot of discipline as they were used as a kind of guinea-pigs. This group started in 1977 and Discipel has performed in every possible and impossible situation, many forms of training have been experimented, every style of repertoire has been tried, all types of technical systems have been tested, all forms of training, logistics and transport done.....After 10 years(!) this huge experiment brought all the elements to the table to design and create the complete system of how to do the European Continentals. Till in small details we had learnt how to cross-cultural what Continentals is. And all these discoveries and this long time of learning laid the foundation for the tremendous success of todays Continentals in Europe as there are in 2004 on tour: 28(!!!) groups with complete offices in Italy, Slovakia, Hungary and even Romania.....

If you look back to all this learning...how many times we were almost desparate as it did not work, sound, acted as it should.....but we had the courage to hold on and to move on. Yes, it is true - there are NO shortcuts to excellence. And if you really want to arise to greatness you also need an awful lot of discipline and to be ready to invest a load of blood, sweat and tears.....

Today we are thankful for this long time of experimentation with one group as it prevented many problems that would have given trouble to many other groups in the future.