

MLC focus on Ukraine May 10, 2007

The World is Flat...and so We Dance! by Patricia Ann Burak

Thomas Friedman's 2005 best seller, *THE WORLD IS FLAT*, states that "Cultures are not wired into our human DNA. They are a product of the context - geography, education level, leadership, and historical experience - of any society." (328) As art strives to influence positive change in the world, the synergy of traditional cultural festivals and international education is recognized and exploited in a positive manner. Ethnic dance groups, summer camps, art institutes for both music and dance, and festivals attest to the powerful attraction of music and dance as an educational and historical framework for the transmission of culture from one nation to another, and from one generation to another. I will present a researched study enhanced with contemporary data on relevance and significance of cultural festivals.

This will be illustrated with dance instruction and performance by the Odesa Ukrainian Dance Ensemble of Syracuse.



BIO

Patricia Ann Burak <paburak@syr.edu>

Dr. Patricia Burak is the director of the Lillian and Emanuel Slutzker Center for International Services and assistant professor of literature at Syracuse University. She has served on the Board of the International Center of Syracuse, the board of Inter-Faith Works of Central New York, serves on the Pastoral Council of St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church and is very active in the cultural life of Syracuse. On the national level, Burak is an accomplished presenter at regional and national conferences of NAFSA: Association of International Educators, and has co-edited a book through NAFSA. She has traveled at the request of the State Department to Russia and Ukraine to train educational advisers. The work that Dr. Burak does in international education involves the translation of one culture to another. In this role, Dr. Burak also endeavors to create opportunities for students of all ages, from all parts of the world, to demonstrate their cultural traditions through music and dance, both in educational and festival formats. She is vested in the Odesa Ukrainian Dance Group of Central New York, and has facilitated hundreds of ethnic presentations of dozens of ethnic troupes within educational and cultural environments over the past 30 years.