

## جوقة الفرح الماشقية



Thirty year ago, Father Elias Zahlawi planted a small seed with ambitious dreams. He began a choir with fifty children representing all Christian denominations at his church in Damascus. The seed soon grew as boys and girls did and the choir became well known around the city. Fr. Zahlawi's dream was to have those voices celebrate in song the rights of all humans to life, dignity, freedom and joy. The choir was named Al-Farah Choir (*Choir of Joy*). Its objectives also included helping keep traditions and practices of the Byzantine church and conserve them.

The choir has since evolved to include 500 members of all age groups from 7 to 75 years old. It travelled carrying voices and dreams of peace and joy to countries around the Middle East, Europe and Australia. Their next stop is going to be here in the USA. About 150 boys and girls are going to visit us here at home. They are starting their tour on Feb 22, 2009 in Washington DC at the Kennedy Center. This is to be followed by two performances in Detroit and Cleveland, and finally culminate their trip with a performance here in Jacksonville, FL.

St Ephrem is involved in the process of organizing the last part of their trip and holding their performance on March 1<sup>st</sup> at the Ritz Theatre downtown.

We would like to ask for your kind support. Tickets to this event will be available starting January 2009. Come join us for a night of celebration of peace and joy.

بدعوة من مركز Kennedy للفنون في واشنطن ستزور جوقة الفرح أمريكا وللمرة الأولى منذ تأسيسها. قام بتأسيس وإطلاق هذه الجوقة الأب إلياس زحلاوي في بداية الثمانينات. بدأت بخمسين طفلاً سرعان ما نشأوا ونشأت معهم الجوقة وذاع صيتها. واليوم تضم الجوقة أكثر من ٥٠٠ عضو تتراوح اعمارهم ما بين ٧ و ٧٥ سنة. في خلال اعوامها الثلاثين زارت الجوقة بلدانا أوروبية عديدة كما أستراليا. وبعد اشهر قليلة ستزورنا هنا في جاكسونفيل حيث ستقيم ، بالتنسيق مع كنيستنا ، حفلة غنائية على مسرح ال-Ritz في الأول من اذار ٢٠٠٩. ترقبوا الاعلانات وبيع التذكر في كانون الثاني ٢٠٠٩. ترحب كنيستنا بهذه الزيارة وتدعو أعضائها لدعم الجوقة بحضورهم.

**For more information and details about the choir and the US tour you may visit <http://www.choirofjoy.org/>**