

The Little Angels in the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations

Bo Hi Pak
December 27, 1973



Reverend Sun Myung Moon, founder of the Little Angels, receives standing ovation

Even the hardest heart was softened and lightened as the Little Angels danced and sang 11 an unforgettable holiday performance in the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations.

Never before opened to the public for cultural events, the General Assembly Hall unexpectedly became available for a benefit for UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund on the evening of December 27.

Stunning as ever on the conclusion of their eighth world tour, the Little Angels, National Folk Ballet of Korea, gave 13 traditional Korean dances a spectacular modern interpretation. Ranging in age from eight to 12, the Little Angels display a genius probably unmatched by any other children's dance troupe; despite their youth, the Little Angels are acclaimed as one of the world's greatest companies.



Mr. Bo Hi Pak (left), president of the Little Angels, and Mrs. Guido Pantaleoni, chairman of the United States Committee for UNICEF

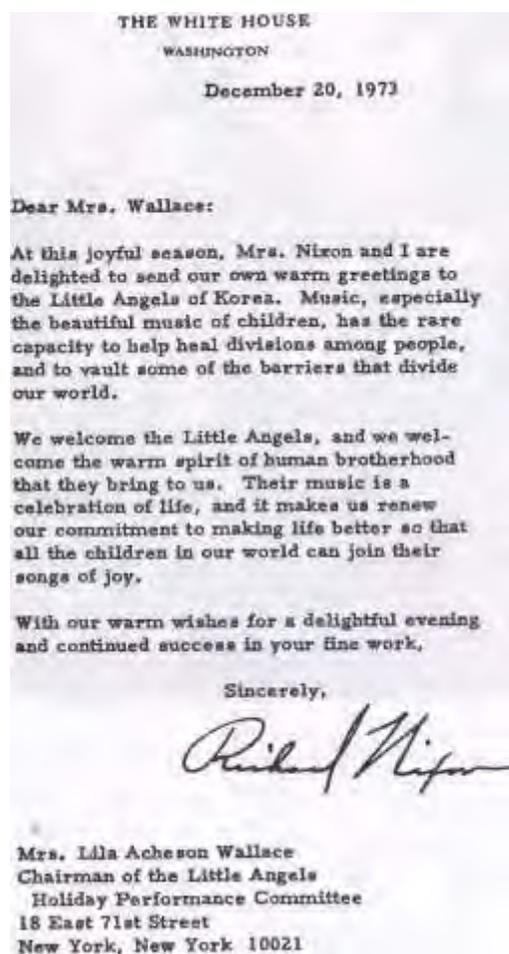
"A little child shall lead them," Mr. Bo Hi Pak, president of the Little Angels, reminded the audience at the opening of the evening. If the adults of our age have not been able to bring a lasting unity and peace to mankind, the children renewed that hope this Christmas season.

The Little Angels Holiday Performance Committee was chaired by Mrs. Lila Acheson Wallace, with Mrs. Kurt Waldheim, wife of the secretary general of the United Nations, as honorary chairman. The Honorary Committee included the mayor and mayor-elect of New York City; the current and previous governors of New York; the executive director of UNICEF; an undersecretary of the U.N.; the U.S. ambassador to the U.N.; and the Reverend Sun Myung Moon.

Republic of Korea committee members included the permanent observer to the U.N., Park Tong-Jin, and the Minister of Culture and Information, Yoong Chu-Yung. U.S. President Richard M. Nixon sent his greetings on the occasion, as well as the Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea, Kim Jong-Pil.

Mrs. Guido Pantaleoni, Jr., president of the United States Committee for UNICEF, gave her welcome to the audience at intermission. "Art unifies the minds of people," she said. "Our young friends combine art and youth. It inspires us to renew our efforts for what one magazine publisher has called 'the greatest child-welfare work of all time-UNICEF.' "

Surrounded by flowers and leis after the two-hour program, the still-radiant Little Angels closed with "Children of the World Unite," their international theme song. The enthusiastic audience gave the Little Angels and their founder, the Reverend Sun Myung Moon, standing ovations. A large percentage of the audience remained for a reception in the Delegates' Dining Room at the U.N., honoring the Little Angels, Mr. Pak, Reverend Moon, director Miss Soon Shim Shin, and choreographer Miss Hye Ja Chang.



The entire performance was recorded on videotape, 16- and 35-millimeter film. The three nationwide television networks televised portions of the dances on their news programs, and on January 1 and 5, 1974, two-hour shows of the event were televised throughout the Republic of Korea. The *New York Times* review was favorable. The *New York Daily News* printed a full page of photographs of the performance, and the *Chicago Tribune* also carried a photograph.

There was an attempt by the Korean Permanent Mission to the U.N. to prevent a performance by a South Korean group. (Neither North or South Korea is a member of the U.N., both firmly believing that the Koreans should have a united government. In 1950, a 16-member U.N. force did, in fact, help South Korea repel an invasion by Communist North Korea.) But after such an enthusiastic reception of the Little Angels' interpretation of Korea's centuries-old tradition, no official protest was made.

UNICEF received a generous sum to advance its worldwide aid programs, and men, women, and children of many nations returned to their homes with new inspiration. Spokesmen for the United States Committee for UNICEF expressed their gratitude to the scores of young volunteers from the Unification Church, whose tireless work made the performance an unforgettable event in the hearts of all who came.

Annabel Farjeon of *The London Evening Standard* wrote of an earlier tour, "Here is a company of Koreans between the ages of eight and 15 which comprises the finest corps de ballet in the world." Unhampered by the forms of classical Western ballet, the Koreans have developed a superb variety of dances, ranging from the fierce "Buk Chum" (Penitent Monk) to the lyrical "Kang Kang Suwolae" (Moon Festival) and from the exquisite floral patterns of the "Buchae Chum" (Fan Dance) to the dazzling, swirling finale of "Nong Oak" (Farm Dance).



The Fan Dance opens with a lone dancer kneeling and joined by red and white gowned dancers, each carrying two intricate red and white fans. In the Orient the opening and closing of fans indicates joy, and the dance alternates between kneeling and bowing and then gracefully twirling in circles, forming and dispersing like flowers opening and closing their petals.

As moods change from peaceful to gay ecstasy, the intensity builds until a grand climax of one dazzling flower with a gaily twirling center. Their Penitent Monk dance won international acclaim at last year's UNICEF festival in Holland. Eight dancers portray the inner conflicts of a Buddhist monk, torn between the lures of the world of flesh and the lofty principles and strict commandments of Buddha. Oscillating between sets of six drums each, the dancers transfixed the audience with their incredible dexterity and perfectly synchronized rotations while bending over backwards.

The Moon Festival celebrates the first harvest of new crops. The Koreans gather in their prettiest festival dress and celebrate with a huge bonfire and dancing around the fire under the light of the full moon. The dance interpretation is accompanied by a hauntingly beautiful melody, expressing Korea's deepest historic tradition.



The universal language of music and dance transcended language and culture, and the audience cried with the young shepherd who lost his angel love in "Chunsa Chum" (Dance of the Angels) and laughed at the wild antics of the lions in "Tai Chum" (Mask Dance). For intricacy of movement and synchronized music and motion, few dances can excel the opening "Janggo Chum" (Hourglass Drum Dance). And an audience favorite, "Gokdoo Kaksi" (Doll Dance) portrays the traditional New Year puppet doll entertainment. The littlest angels simulated the movements and gestures of manipulated puppets with unbelievable charm.

The Grand Finale Farm Dance assembled, group by group, all 30 dancers celebrating the traditional end-of-harvest festival. Opening with rice cutting and fruit picking, the dance interweaves the roles of the boys and girls with the joy of the entire village in a successful season. The only three boys among the Little Angels beat their tiny gongs and twirled the long sashes attached to their hats at a dizzying rate.

Dazzled by the intricate simplicity and joy of the dances, the audience was surprised to hear the additional musical talents of the Little Angels. They accompanied themselves singing "Arirang" with Kayakum, twelve stringed violin-like instruments plucked with the fingers. A five-member "Aak" (Little Angels Court Music Orchestra) provided the accompaniment for the dances. For encores they sang a variety of Western music.