



Couples of Les Sortileges in a French portrayal during their Turkish tour.

LES SORTILEGES IN TURKEY

The Montreal folk dance company Les Sortileges was on tour from July 5-23, 1983 in Turkey. The purpose of the tour was to promote Quebec folk arts and traditions through dance performances. In addition to Quebec dances, Les Sortileges performed dances from different regions of Turkey.

During this Turkish tour and while in Ankara, Turkey's young capital, Les Sortileges performed before this city's diplomatic corps and its residents. In Istanbul the group danced at the month-long Istanbul Festival; then ended their tour in Silifke, a small city on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, in the southern part of Turkey.

Is there a better way of learning about people, the way they live, think, react than by staying with them? Such was the luck of Les Sortileges who were greeted in Ankara by dancers of local folk dance groups Tufem and Hoy-Tur. The greetings were warm and the welcome in the families more than cordial. What an experience to live with a Turkish family!

While in Ankara, an hour-long show was taped for Turkish TV and moreover, was taped in color, something seldom seen in Turkey. Special equipment had to be sent over from Istanbul for the occasion. The special, shown in two parts, was broadcast nationally which allowed the Turkish people off the tour's itinerary a glimpse, if not a good view, of their North American visitors. The stay in Ankara ended with an official reception at the Canadian Ambassador's private residence.

Having been told by the Turkish organizers that Turkish people were hard to reach, if not to please, Les Sortileges were more than happy to witness the enthusiasm and genuine appreciation the Turks were showing for a folklore they had never seen before.

The Turkish people were mainly impressed by the vitality of the dances and the famous Quebec "joie de vivre." They were also touched by the quality of execution of their national folklore, sung and danced by North-Americans! The Turkish dances performed were from the villages of Silifke and Bitlis.

It is with great pride that Les Sortileges carried out their role as Canadian ambassadors in Turkey. Furthermore, the Turkish people consider them as their Turkish Cultural Ambassadors in Canada.