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# Honoring Seniors and Welcoming Springtime In “Endless Song”

Keagen Brooks-Torres, Arts & Entertainment Editor

The excitement was palpable walking into the Seattle First Baptist Church, with the cheerful murmurs of the crowd perched in dark wooden pews, and stained glass glowing red, purple and blue in tandem with the warm lamplight. In the early evening of Friday, May 17, uproarious applause greeted each singer in the combined choirs, donning concert black as they filed evenly onto stage, beginning by rhythmically drumming over their hearts before leaping into the upbeat choral hymn “Blessed Be” by Melanie Demore.

“Endless Song,” the final concert of the Seattle University Choir’s 2023-2024 season, is bittersweet, honoring the graduating seniors and their hard work throughout their time in choir. Additionally, they welcomed springtime through a variety of both classical and contemporary choral pieces.

Jessica Chacko, a fourth-year nursing major and featured soloist, reflected fondly on memories of her time in the choir as she prepares to graduate.

“It’s been my safe space, and I feel like music is always going to be that way for me, and the friendships that I’ve made in that program are going to be long-lasting. It’s really hard to find people that you can just be creative, be yourself with, and this has been that community for me where I feel like I can leave all of my stresses at the door, come in and just make music, and it’s a very freeing and fun space to be in,” Chacko said.

The song selection focuses on new beginnings and growth, the joy of singing and the importance of community. This was done using pieces such as “How Can I Keep From Singing” arranged by Sarah Kortel, highlighting the healing power of song through turmoil, and “Flight Song” composed by Kim André Arnesen, describing the levity of music when emotions become too intense to be contained by the spoken word.

Leann Conley-Holcom, director of choral and vocal activities at Seattle U, spoke between songs, providing further context and welcoming the audience into each piece, at one point encouraging the crowd to reminisce on the warmth of lying in the grass on a spring afternoon with a loved one. She expressed her appreciation for each graduating choir member, honoring each senior with kind words and a tearful hug.

A strong sense of camaraderie between the performers was clear throughout the performance. As their voices aligned, so did their grins and high spirits. Giancarlo Agogliati, a fourth-year finance major, finds the power of choral singing to be in the connection



Chloe Platt



Chloe Platt

between vocalists.

“It’s a magical experience... it makes me feel distinctly human. I feel like there’s a deep connection that we try to avoid day to day. When everything locks in, you feel this community, like creating something so big and perfect sounding. It’s such a rare thing that I was like, you know, I have to keep doing this. This is so important spiritually,” Agogliati said.

Ginger Schreiber, a first-year photography and music double major, values the way choral performers work collaboratively and assist one another.

“It’s way different than singing alone because you’re listening to all these different parts and all these things that are happening and there is this sense of community. You always have someone to help you when you don’t know what’s going on,” Schreiber said.

Integral to the sense of community in Seattle U’s choirs are the variety of choral programs offered, providing opportunities for individuals from all walks of life to join choir and participate in their quarterly performances.

Cydnee Cook, a third-year Spanish and psychology double major, appreciates that the choir she is a part of, The University Singers, is not exclusively comprised of students.

“There’s community members, there’s alumni. We have people from the grad school and faculty and staff. As a first-year student, a few years ago, it was really cool to kind of have other people I could look up to and hear about their experiences,” Cook said.

As the sun sets on another year of Seattle U Choir, “Endless Song” reflects the new horizons for graduating seniors, elevated and supported by both the sonorous vocals and the heartfelt words of their choral community.