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Southern Chorale takes highest score at international competition

December 4, 2013



The 34 members of the Georgia Southern Chorale returned triumphant from their second international competition. Southern Chorale received a Gold Diploma – Level VI and first place in the Spirituals Division, where it also earned the highest score awarded in the inaugural Sing'n'Joy Louisville international choir competition in Louisville, Ky, and won a Gold Diploma – Level V in the Mixed Choirs: Difficulty Level 1 category; only a half point separated the Chorale from category winners Coro San Ben Benildo of the Philippines.

“Two days later, I am still blown away by our Georgia Southern students’ performance – earning the highest score given in the competition! I am thrilled not only with the choir’s performances and victory but with how much we grew as musicians and as an ensemble,” said Shannon Jeffreys, D.A., director of choral activities. “We made new International friends with fellow performers and with the jurors. ”

Southern Chorale had been invited to perform along with local favorites the Lafayette High School Madrigal Singers and the University of Louisville Cardinal Singers on the festival’s Celebration Concert in the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts. After hearing Chorale in a preliminary session with the judges, Dr. William Caldwell asked that they serve as the demonstration choir for his clinic session “The African American Spiritual Songs of Life and Death.” Southern Chorale was also asked to perform *Sakkijarven Polka*, a favorite of Artistic Director Christian Ljunggren of Sweden, at the Awards Ceremony on Sunday afternoon.

Interkultur, the sponsor organization of Sing'n'Joy Louisville, is “dedicated to the goal of bringing people of all nations, cultures and ideologies together in peaceful competitions and songs.”

Several students in Southern Chorale compared Sing'n'Joy with their participation in last summer’s Anton Bruckner Choir Competition, in Linz, Austria.

“Knowing how things worked in the competition environment took a huge load of pressure off of us, and when it comes to things like this, any sort of relief is great,” said junior journalism major William Peebles. “However, having a few months to learn repertoire is far more strenuous and tiresome when you compare it to having the entire year to prepare like we did for Europe. The fact that our scores were higher this year shows the dedication and talent levels are rising, and that’s very exciting for the program.”

“I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to observe choirs and directors from around the world,” said Kirstin Willard, a junior music education major. “It was both a learning experience and a reminder of the passion that is so necessary to inspire our future careers.”

On Sunday, December 8, Southern Chorale will combine with University Singers, Women’s Chorale and the First United Methodist Chancel Choir to present “How Far is it to Bethlehem?” The concert is at 3 p.m. with an encore performance at 7 p.m., both at Statesboro First United Methodist Church on South Main Street. Admission is free, but an offering will be taken to support Chorale’s future participation in international competition.

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