

Porter Center Concerts in Review: Brevard College Choral Groups

Special to *The Clarion*
Jason DeCristofaro

The Brevard College Chamber Chorale and Concert Choir put on an excellent performance on Saturday, Nov. 4. Both groups featured the talents of many Brevard students and faculty.

The Brevard College Chamber Chorale opened with a powerful polyphonic fanfare from the Late Renaissance: Orlandino di Lasso's *Domine, labia mea aperies*. Even though it was short, it was a fitting introduction in that it displayed the talents of all four sections of the group. The second piece, also a selection from the Late Renaissance, was *Dixit Maria* by Hans Leo Hassler. The lyrical content tells of the Virgin Mary describing a prophecy which is "musically" fulfilled when the entire group ends on a beautiful and sonorous chord.

One of my personal favorite pieces was the "Morning Trumpet," a traditional American hymn. This piece was actually sung twice during the concert in two different styles. The first version was performed as it would have been by the shape note singers of the early American South. In this style, solfege syllables were replaced with pictorial symbols—such as triangles, diamonds, and circles. The traditional version sounded analogous to a Church Chant in many regards, with its open harmonies and modal texture. The more contemporary version of "Morning Trumpet," was played immediately afterward, and featured the voice talents of Stephanie Belcher. She did an excellent job, enunciating each syllable with meaning, and maintaining the beauty and projection of her voice. Her powerful projection also blended well with the choir, instead of being overpowered by the entire group.

The piece that the audience seemed to enjoy the most, and was certainly the most unique selec-



Photo by BC Media

tion of the evening, was Stephen Chatman's "Due North." The piece used various musical textures to evoke visual images of the Pacific Northwest's majestic beauty. The first movement, "Mountains," utilized very open harmonies and a grandiose texture. "Trees," the second movement, had what Conductor Michael Porter described as a quasi-minimalist sound. This was an accurate explanation, as each singer entered with repeating monophonic lines, creating an ethereal effect reminiscent of walking through the lush flora of Oregon or Washington. The final, and most amusing, movement was "Mosquitoes;" the entire group used vocables which imitated mosquitoes to great effect.

After intermission, the Concert Choir, also directed by Michael Porter, opened with a powerful fanfare, *Sanctus*, by Alessandro Scarlatti. The piece featured Kyle Ritter acting as accompanist on the Porter Center's magnificent-sounding organ. Alto Kelly Bone was featured in, "Herr, wir traun auf deine Gute," by Mendelssohn and Bartholdy. Her projection and quality of intonation were sublime. She was able to make difficult interval changes with seamless effort and beautiful vocal timbre. The piece itself was an excellent selection in that the sound of the organ, soloist, and concert choir blended well together.

Overall, the concert was very enjoyable and of an extremely high caliber. Not only were the Chamber Chorale, Concert Choir, and accompanists Janice Murray and Kyle Ritter superb, but Michael Porter did a great job acting as conductor of both groups that evening. He had a very distinct, yet subtle and appropriate, ictus when he conducted. His ability to bring out each voice and section in the choirs, control dynamics effectively, and select pieces that fit both groups well made for an enjoyable concert.

The surprise hit of the evening, however, was not listed on the program, and acted as pre-show entertainment. The female acappella group Sireny performed "Such Great Heights," by the Postal Service, and "Demons," by Guster; the latter featured Brevard College Piano Major Megan Murphy on lead vocals. Brevard College Voice Major Dorothea Berry not only directed the group and sang lead on "Such Great Heights," but wrote the arrangement for the song. Sireny used many unique methods found in acappella, creating the sounds of percussion and covering bass, harmony, and melody only using the human voice. This pre-show performance, combined with the superb quality of the Brevard College Chamber Chorale and Brevard College Concert Choir, made for a sublime concert.

HOROSCOPE

Aries: Suffering from itchy feet? Need to travel? Well now isn't a good time, try next week. Lucky color: Globe blue.

Taurus: In exactly 8 days you will meet your lover in a beautiful city. Lucky color: Land Ursula.

Gemini: So chatty Charlie's and Kathy's, the Moon is full and you need to shut up if you want get to know your deeper feelings. Lucky color: Void.

Cancer: It's time to find out more about yourself. A genealogy is order, the oracle doth believe. Lucky color: Asparagus.

Leo: It's about time the wet cat dried off. The Sun is your ruler this day—too bad you're in dreary-ass Brevard. Lucky color: Golden Fleece.

Virgo: You know, relaxation is great, but you need to get up 'cause your bed sores are looking kind of gross! Lucky color: Bed Bug brown.

Libra: One of your scales falls off this morning. You just can't seem to get it together, but never fear: you'll be back to normal in 487 days. Lucky color: Ju Ju Bee red.

Scorpio: You're in an argumentative mood today. Miss. K would tell you to put that away and smile instead. Lucky color: Plum.

Sagittarius: It is not a good idea to mix the old and the new, especially when it comes to car parts. Get real. Lucky color: Used Oil.

Capricorn: You probably need to go buy some expensive jeans right now. This is the only time in your life that you will be able to afford them. Lucky color: Black Peruvian Rose.

Aquarius: Don't panic, none of those lumpy people are looming over you. Besides, your reading choice is much better and less pretentious. Lucky color: Pinecone.

Pisces: Fish, fighting fish. Fighting Japanese fish. That is what you are. No biting: just look pretty and you'll succeed in your wonderful day. Lucky color: Male Betta.