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Battle of the Choirs

By Sophie Braccini



Choirs from Lamorinda's three high schools all sing together Photo Andy Chang

voices, and required from the students and their director a different type of musicianship. The precision of Perdue's direction came out beautifully, showcasing some lovely voices such as that of soprano Lindsay Ford.

Newcomer Mark Roberts made his first formal appearance as conductor of the Campolindo team. Neither timid nor overly cautious, Roberts did not hesitate to take the Campolindo Concert Choir off the beaten path. He surprised the audience with soloist Katie Marino starting an African Processional arranged by D.V. Montoya, alone on stage—marching to the rhythm of her song and of a powerful drum, the rest of the choir gradually joined her on stage. Roberts then offered the audience two modern pieces that took full advantage of the large pool of talent among his group of singers. He did not shy away from pushing the sound volume and increasing the auditory contrasts in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and had the singers interpret The Battle of Jericho in a very modern arrangement by Moses Hogan.

The Miramonte Choir, directed by Bruce Lengacher, presented two classical and perfectly executed songs. Amor de mi Alma, by Randall Stroope, was especially exquisite, and very finely tuned in all of its nuances by Lengacher.

The third piece by the Acalanes Choir, Vamuvamba ("They Crucified Him") is a traditional Tiriki melody from Kenya that was adapted and arranged by Boniface Mganga, the founder and director of the Kenyan Muungano National Choir. The young Lafayette students, with the help of a drum, interpreted joyfully the energetic African music.

Guest conductor Lori Marie Rios conducted the finale, appropriately called the Mass Choir. The result of the day's work was impressive, not only because of the sheer number of singers, but because they memorized and sang everything perfectly. As Rios put it, "Music is more than notes and rhythm; it is a way to self discovery, to better understanding of others' culture and ways of life."

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