



Celebration in One Voice

The University of Hong Kong Law Alumni Choir Concert 2nd December 2012

The Year of 2012 was filled with celebrations for the University's Centenary. With the opening of the University's Centennial Campus, the Faculty of Law finally had a building exclusive to its faculty and students and proudly moved to its new home at Cheng Yu Tung Tower. The University of Hong Kong Law Alumni Choir also stepped into its third year since its inauguration in 2010 and held its third annual concert on 2nd December 2012 at the Loke Yew Hall.

As part of the "HKU 100" celebrations and also in celebration of the opening of the Centennial Campus, the Choir's third annual concert was named "Celebration in One Voice". This time, apart from performing choral pieces, we embarked upon the production of an operetta *Trial by Jury*. This was a new venture and experience for the Choir Sub-committee.

It was no easy decision to make when the Choir Sub-committee decided to take up the task to produce an operetta for the Choir's third annual concert. The Chinese saying of "台上一分鐘，台下十年功 (one minute on stage takes ten years of practice)" is undoubtedly true. Preparation work was kicked off with recruitment of the main cast, the chorus and the orchestra; stage, sound and lighting design followed soon afterwards; sourcing for suitable costumes, props and the like was the important final touch. Practice sessions conducted by our Conductor Mr Raymond Cheng started in August. Music could be heard ringing around Room 319 of Cheng Yu Tung Tower every Saturday and sometimes even on Sundays. We were most fortunate to have Mr Dominic Cheung and Mr Matchy Choi as the Directors for the operetta; they gave valuable guidance to the main cast and the chorus on their acting role. The main cast and the chorus put in a lot of hard work too: managing and memorizing the tongue-twister like lyrics in the operetta was a real challenge but they all managed the task beautifully. And whilst rehearsals were going on, the orchestra was tirelessly working on the accompanying music to make sure that every tune would come out just as it should be. Every practice session was precious time squeezed from busy study or work schedules but it was filled with joy and laughter. As part of the team, I was deeply moved by the passion shown by everyone involved in the production.

The Choir spent no less time or effort in practising the choral pieces. Practices for the Choir also started in August every Monday night under the guidance of our Conductor Mr Jeffrey Sham, with piano accompaniment by Ms Eugenia Ip and Ms Natalie Chan. Ms Winnie Tam who performed with the Choir helped polish our singing techniques and management of the lyrics during some of the practice sessions. Most Choir members came straightly from the office or classroom. Occasionally Choir members needed to work late or attend a tutorial or

lecture and yet they still tried to come to the practices as soon as they had finished their work or lesson. Though there were a number of occasions when the practice schedule was disturbed by bad weather or typhoon, still members attended the practices so long as the practice venue remained open. For me, attending Choir practices became a must-go routine after work every Monday during the few months before the concert. Music is a common language and a powerful tool for building up friendship among people. I enjoyed the practice sessions singing with other Choir members and treasured the bond of friendship built with fellow alumni.

The weather was rather cloudy on the day of the concert, with sudden showers just before the concert opened. However, Loke Yew Hall was packed with a full house and we were all overwhelmed. Our MC Mr Edwin Choi, who impressed the audience with his creative and funny prologue in the Choir's last two concerts, once again showed his talent. It was a proud moment when everyone stood up for the Law Anthem. It was even more memorable this time as we were honored with the presence of Professor Michael Wilkinson, Ms Juliana Doe and Ms Winnie Tam, the composer and lyricist of the Law Anthem, and Ms Cleresa Wong, the Choir Sub-committee's Chairlady, on stage leading the Law Anthem.

With the orchestra playing the prelude, the performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's famous comic operetta Trial by Jury began under the baton of our Conductor Raymond. The story is about a court case for breach of promise of marriage. The story was unveiled when a crowd of curious members of the Public and Gentlemen of the Jury (played by various members of the Choir) entered the courtroom wondering what the case was about. The appearance of the Defendant Edwin (played by Mr Jonathan Chan) stirred the crowd and Jonathan's charming voice telling the past of Edwin as a love-sick boy captured not only the ladies in the Public but also the audience. Then there came the Usher (played by Jeffrey) who tried to silence the crowd with his resounding voice every now and then but in vain. When the Learned Judge (played by Mr David Yam) entered the courtroom recounting hilariously how he strived to attain his respectable position, the audience laughed heartily. The Bridesmaids then came in singing a beautiful melody and dancing gracefully. The glamorous entrance of the pretty Plaintiff Angelina (played by Ms Rayne Chai) caught everyone's eye and Rayne's enchanting voice captivated the audience. Her Counsel (played by Ms May Chan) then stood up to make submissions for her poor client. May's powerful voice delivered a persuasive submission and the Judge was left in a dilemma. The performance reached a climax with the main cast joined by the chorus singing the powerful sextet all wondering how the Judge would rule. The audience was really caught by surprise when the Learned Judge, who was eager to get away, decided to marry the Plaintiff himself at the end to close the case. The grand finale sung by the chorus ended the performance. Applause rang through the Hall at curtain call.

The second half of the concert started with a beautiful harp solo by Mr Kevin Ho. Our "Tri Divos", Jeffrey, Edwin and Jonathan, appeared on stage with the Choir after Kevin's performance singing the theme song One Voice. The music continued when the Choir, conducted by Jeffrey, singing the all-time favorite, Greatest Love of All. Fans of Winnie (who was not able to perform in last year's concert) were not disappointed this time as she sang the solo part of the piece. Lovely voices brought beautiful melodies to an eager audience song after song. The audience demanded more when the Choir finished the last song Christmas Pops Trio. The encore piece, Time to Say Goodbye sung in Italian, brought the concert to a successful close.

Being a very “young” choir, the Choir has grown in the number of its members and also widened its repertoire within a short of period of three years. Compliments and encouragements poured in from friends after the concert. Indeed, the Choir members all deserved a big applause after all the hard work. However, we are speechlessly grateful to people who have supported the Choir and rendered unconditional help. Their support was fundamental to the success of our concert. Special thanks must be given to: members of the Orchestra who played the music for the operetta; Ms Rachel Li of the Faculty of Law Development Office who has been helping us on all fronts since the Choir’s first concert in 2010; Mr Aric Hung who has been designing our posters, tickets and house program for all our concerts so far; our honorable guests, Professor Lap-chee Tsui, Vice Chancellor of the University, Professor Johannes Chan and Professor Michael Wilkinson of the Faculty of Law, who graced the event and student helpers and the Executive Committee of The University of Hong Kong Law Alumni Association who have been most supportive of the Choir. I would also like to thank the Choir Sub-committee’s Chairlady Cleresa and my fellow Sub-committee members; I enjoyed organizing the concert with them in the past year and they made the experience a most pleasant one.

Last but not least, this memorable concert has been recorded on DVDs and the DVDs are now available for purchase by members of the Choir and interested alumni. We hope to bring more good music to fellow alumni and our friends in the years to come and meet more new faces in the Choir’s annual concert in 2013.

Christina Ng
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The University of Hong Kong Law Alumni Association
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Finale of the *Trial by Jury*



Orchestra



Harp performance by Mr Kevin Ho



Choir Performance