

music

Six and a half million see USO group

in concert

A small group of Eugeneans were treated to a selection of sacred and secular music last Friday. A performance by the Bowling Green State University A Cappella Choir was very well-received by the Eugene audience.

The choir, consisting of 45 members (only 16 of which are music majors) was so obviously enthusiastic, any flaws in their presentation were quickly forgiven. And, considering the circumstances, there were very few flaws, indeed.

The group is covering 23 states and two Canadian Provinces during their 46-day tour. According to the choir's director, Richard Mathey, the group had suffered many injuries, some illnesses, but was "still eager to sing."

There is an incredible vocal range within the group, with bass soloist Paul Zeit and tenor soloist Dan Clark each doing remarkable jobs. A few times throughout the performance it became difficult to understand the lyrics—the sound was still nice, but it is rather frustrating to listen to a song and not be able to hear the words. This, however, was more a problem of changing performance halls night after night, and not having a chance to adjust to the acoustical differences, than it was of the singers themselves.

Director Mathey indicated that the writers and arrangers of all the songs being performed were American. This deliberate, he said. "We're doing an American tour, so we want to do American music." The sacred selections on the program were very typical arrangements of some very beautiful pieces, and the choir did them justice without exception. One particular piece, "Praise to God," was extremely well done with the use of point and counter-point harmonizing in the background giving some very nice effects.

The secular repertoire was a little more on the light side, with not quite so many outstanding moments. "In Wonder, Love, And Praise" was written by Rebecca Griffin, a sophomore member of the choir. It was an excellent piece, but again, the inability to clearly understand the lyrics hindered it somewhat. Most of the secular music was

(Editor's Note: Glen Bushey is part of a 15-member University dramatic group which is touring the Orient for the USO. The group calls itself "The Celebrities" and their variety show is called "A Summer Celebration." The tour began June 22 and will end August 15. This is the first in a series of reports Bushey will write for the Emerald this summer.)

JULY 2, 1973, KOREA — It is very difficult for me to describe fully the sights, cities, stores, and even the smells that we have met so far.

Our flight from Eugene to Oran, Korea, on June 22 was our first big adventure. We spent 15 hours in the air, and most of it was over the ocean. The view, therefore, was not continually captivating.

When we arrived in Korea, we could hardly wait to kick off our shoes and begin to sample the native food. Unfortunately, on the bus ride from the airport to our hotel, we were informed that we must wear shoes at all times, or run the risk of getting worms. We were also told not to eat any food that wasn't purchased in a high-quality restaurant.

For the first two weeks of our tour, we are staying in Seoul, Korea. This is the 11th largest city in the world and has a population of almost seven million.

On our first evening in Seoul, we went to a night club. We were all excited to see live Korean entertainment. The show consisted of a group of seven Koreans singing country-western music in English.

inocuous, and although well done, simply did not give the choir the chance to show the ability they obviously have. One particular number, "Ballad for Americans," was not part of the regular program—and should remain as such. The song praised American liberty, which is okay, but is somewhat hard to swallow in face of Watergate. The song was reminiscent of something I use to sing in the third grade, even down to the part where every one calls out their "profession" and the men are all engineers, doctors and lawyers and the women are nurses, stenographers and housewives. It was the only uninteresting portion of the evening.

The choir is undoubtedly one of the most talented college choirs

in the nation—and the audience obviously appreciated it. An almost spontaneous standing ovation followed the concert. Director Mathey then added two encores—two of the high points of the evening. The first encore, "Amen," ended in the entire audience joining in the hand clapping on the chorus. The second encore, a humorous piece, was called "No One's Perfect," a funny but unnecessary apology to the audience for any mistakes the group had made.

If you ever get a chance to hear the Bowling Green State A Cappella Choir you may at first think, as I did, "This is going to have to be boring." But you will probably be standing along with everyone else in a standing ovation at the end of the concert.

Rita Thomas

Most of the singers did not know English, but were able to sing it quite well with even a little Nashville accent.

The driving custom is unbelievable here. The main streets are usually four lanes, but they seem to carry seven lanes of traffic. The great amount of cutting in and out of traffic, and the number of near accidents would cause most of us to give up driving.

If anyone ever tells you that things are much less expensive in Korea, believe them. One of the members of the group bought a tailor-made pantsuit, and the entire deal, including material and tailoring, was \$12.

For \$2.50 a night, we are staying at a very modern hotel. The rooms have shag carpeting and even piped-in music. They're even better than dorm rooms.

Our variety show performances are going great. Our second show had probably our largest attendance, about six and a half million people. This may seem exciting, but we were disappointed, because there was almost no audience reaction. After we taped our show, it was broadcast over country-wide television.

The city of Seoul has modernized greatly in the last 10 years, but still a great many of the old buildings and customs are here. This beautiful blend of the old and new makes this an incredible city.

Coming up: Japan.

Glen Bushey

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