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Choir of the Sound finale a bell ringer

Audience goes wild for the choir's annual Spring Pops Concert show

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For the Enterprise*

REVIEW

Their Spring Pops was late. But late, late spring or pre-summer; who cares? Shorecrest Performing Arts Center went wild last Saturday for Choir of the Sound's "Songs for the Open Road."

The psychology was simple. Springtime comes. Young men's fancies turn to thoughts of love. Families plan vacations. Seniors bounce out of bed. Kids drag to school. Birds sing.

Who doesn't feel like taking composer Sammy Cahn's offer to "Come Fly with Me?" Or Bobby Troup's, to "Get your kicks on 'Route 66'?"

But let's be practical. How advisable is it to forget all your troubles, forget all your woes, pack your bags and pick up and go?

To the rescue, the absolute loveliness of The Choir's Spring Pops. It was just what the doctor ordered: bright, breezy and easy on the nerves.

Sixty-plus voices ringing like one bell, textured with Ron Runyon's lazy, laid-back harmonica, that was the inner peace of "Home on the Range," on the Great Plains. Who couldn't do with some?

Hear it a hundred times, it doesn't matter. "Oh, Susanna's" lyrics still speak. "It rained all day the night I left/The weather it was dry/The sun so hot I froze to death/Susanna, don't you cry." Songwriters, beat that if you can.

The alto and bass of Amy Brown and Peter Brulla; put a good, strong scolding into Hank Williams' "Your Cheating Heart." Be warned, guys with roving eyes; "It'll tell on you."

Karen Ward's alto made "Walking in Memphis" like "walkin' in Heaven: hand-clappin', knee-slappin,' Gospel jubilant.

"This Joint is Jumpin'" rocked. Solo alto Jennifer Rusch and solo bass David Horiuchi saw to it.

"Blue Skies" swayed. "Steam Heat" sizzled.

Amanda Greenfield's soprano glamorized "Roxie" from the Chicago medley. Tenor Larry Rosemeyer added extra tenderness to "All I Care About." "All That Jazz's" big-city sophistication culminated in Vicki Olafson's high-ringing soprano.

Soloists spotted moments. Choreography by Janet Segur added square dance, swing, soft shoe and tap. Set designs by Debbie Taber, Robert Hope and Janet Segur pretty much envisioned life on the open road from Illinois to San Bernardino in the 1950's.

The Burma Shave signs motorists saw on Route 66 at the time applied a dated but special, funny touch. For example: (sign) In this vale of trial and sin ...; (sign) your head goes bald ...; (sign) but not your chin ...; (sign) Burma Shave.

Music Director Judy Filibeck pulled the show together and had a good time doing it.

But the star was the Choir.

How so many manage so meticulously to blend and articulate never ceases to astound and amaze.

By the way, Choir of the Sound sang Vivaldi's "Gloria" with other choirs in 2005 at Carnegie Hall and will sing at St. Mark's in Venice and other churches in northern Italy this summer.

That and their philanthropic work, is there no end to the community service these folks do?

Reactions? Comments? E-mail Dale Burrows at grayghost7@comcast.net.

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