

UNH Choirs Excel in Prestigious European Competitions

First Prize in Ireland

Monday, June 3, 2013

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In the last two weeks of May, two different choral ensembles drawn from the UNH Concert Choir, under the direction of Professor William Kempster, travelled to Germany and Ireland to compete in prestigious international Choral Competitions and in choral festivals held in conjunction with both.

The first event was the 13th Marktoberdorf International Choral Competition in Bavaria, Germany. Held every two years since 1989, the Competition and Festival ran from May 16 to 22. Just ten choirs were selected to take part, via competitive audition. The UNH Chamber Singers were successful in gaining an invitation to this year's competition. A major part of the Festival consisted of concert performances in the Allgäu region of Bavaria. The Chamber Singers gave wonderfully received performances in Sondhofen, Marktoberdorf, Kaufbeuren and Leutkirch, in addition to the competition itself. Some of the Chamber Singer's performances are already available on YouTube:

Ralph Vaughan Williams: Valiant for Truth

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UtJl_PluQxE

Johann Michael Bach: Sei lieber Gott, willkommen

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gzr5A699HD4>

Ross Edwards: Gloria from Mass of the Dreaming

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUifiJRGjIM>

The day after the completion of the German competition, Professor Kempster and 12 members of the 22 Chamber Singers travelled from Germany to Castlebar, County Mayo, in the Republic of Ireland to join 11 other UNH singers from the UNH Concert Choir in order to compete in the 2nd annual Mayo International Choral Competition held from May 23 - 27.

The UNH contingent competed in two categories, one in which the whole ensemble performed, and another designated for smaller forces, in which the reduced Chamber Singers ensemble competed. In a desperately close competition, the Chamber Singers came 2nd in their section, with the same score as the winning choir, and received a prize of €150. The full ensemble, representing the Concert Choir, won their section, along with a beautiful hand-made trophy and a prize of €300. By winning their section, however, the Concert Choir ensemble became eligible to be included in the "sing-off", comprised of all the section winners, for the premier prize of the competition: a wonderful commissioned trophy and a grand prize of €700. The group performed superbly in this pressure-packed finale, and were fortunate enough to be named overall competition winners at the Grand Gala Concert with which the Festival closed.

Here is a photo of the group the morning after their big win, on the steps of Breaffy House, just outside of Castlebar, Ireland. Sloane Schuchman, a long term Concert Choir member, is seen with the trophy on the right.

This makes the third European festival out of three in the last 4 years (Czech Republic/2009 and Austria/2011) in which UNH choirs have received trophies and/or medals. All of the students in both ensembles featured in the 2013 tours are to be congratulated on their wonderful performances, and for their representation of the University, the state of New Hampshire, and the U.S.A.

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