Music Department awards vocal scholarship

Sean Goodwin, Staff Writer | Posted: Monday, October 30, 2017 4:49 pm

The music department held a fundraiser Wednesday night to award a scholarship to single vocal performer Morgan Semrau.

This annual event, called the “Charles Lindsley Memorial Vocal Scholarship Fundraiser,” was directed by music department professor Susan Ali.

“Every year, we award a student the ‘Charles Lindsley Memorial Scholarship’ to support them,” Ali said. “The criteria is someone who makes a significant contribution to the department.”

The 2017 fundraiser marks the second time Semrau has won the award.

She was previously awarded the scholarship in 2015.

Other performers at the event ranged from vocal performers currently enrolled in the program to alumni who were awarded the scholarship in the past.

The Kellogg Chamber Singers, Polytonix Vocal Jazz Ensemble and even Ali, herself, performed a variety of pieces that included unique renditions of modern pop and operatic performances of classics.

“I send out a general e-mail to all of the alumni on my list as people that have participated in the past,” Ali said. “Then I announce it to all of the students here currently. This year I got a lot of enthusiastic responses, and it just fell into place.”

Some 49 singers ended up taking the stage that night, while showcasing the piano talents of Janet Noll and Kevin Garnica.

Since the theme of the event was “Around the World in 90 Minutes,” the concert was divided up into different areas of the world.

Some countries included within the theme were the Caribbean, South America and central Europe.

There was even a section called “Our World and Beyond,” which featured songs like “Save the World/Don’t You Worry Child” by John Martin and arranged by Pentatonix.
Highlights of the night included the amusing performance of “Glitter and Be Gay” by Leonard Bernstein and performed by Laura Pluth, and the vocally demanding “Klänge der Heimat” by Johann Strauss Junior, which was performed by Semrau.

The rhythmically impressive “Yakko’s World” by Randy Rogel and the humorous performance of “I Still Call Australia Home” by Peter Allen, arranged by L. Abbott and performed by Sean Gibson, Matthew Macias, Nicholas Bratcher and David Tkach were also great additions.

Not only was the program impressive to watch and listen to, but the shifts in genres made sure that the concert never lost its flow.

The whole concert was dedicated to the memory of Charles Lindsley whose influence continues to drive the music department today.

Teresa Kelly, the publicist of the music department, shared a few words about what made him important.

“Charles Lindsley was a faculty member here, and he actually started a lot of our core programs that we have today,” Kelly said. “Everybody loved him, so they developed this concert that was in his memory.”

One of the pianists, Noll, was involved in the department when Lindsley was alive.

During the concert, she gave a quick speech emphasizing how great it was for the department to have such a proactive member.

Tkach, a seventh-year performance student, was enthusiastic about Lindsley’s contributions.

“Charles Lindsley started this music department, essentially. It’s impossible to find a bad word about him. All the people that we admire here in the music department all looked up to him. He’s a bit of a legend among us,” Tkach said. “We’re celebrating what he did, and we’re celebrating the fact that we can continue in his legacy of teaching music.”

This isn’t the only event the music department puts together in order to help its students.

Another fundraiser is scheduled for Nov. 15 to honor of Phillip Clarke.

All proceeds of the event will go toward aiding another student of the music department.

“All of our performing ensembles that we charge money for are really scholarship fundraisers,” Kelly said. “We award close to $40,000 every year in scholarships.”

Going to performances planned by the music department is a very simple act that can help a lot of people.

Keep a lookout for a performance you might want to attend because going could be an educational experience for you and a helpful act to another.