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Belarus Choir Offers Exhilarating Evening Of Music

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By Annabeth Miller, SMT Editor

The Belarus National Christian Choir presented an exhilarating evening of music that was part concert, part worship experience at First Baptist Church in Dexter.

The evening proved the point that music is a universal language and be savored, cherished, and appreciated whether sung in English or Russian. The concert program included Belarusian, Russian and English selections; many Belarusian favorites, others that are favorites in churches in America. The choir's rich, full sound filled the FBC Worship Center with majestic, moving music.

The choir of 17 women and 14 men were accompanied during the evening by a wonderful string ensemble and three exceptional pianists, all of whom also sang in the choir. An ensemble from the choir also performed on traditional Russian instruments, including accordion, guitar, and balalaika.

Viktor Krutsko, President of the Evangelical Union of Belarus, was spokesman for the group and introduced the music selections and the choir.

From the very first selection of the evening, you heard the powerful, rich harmonies of the choir and traditional Russian music. The lavish harmonies blended with splendid melodies for an evening of incredible music, whispered prayers and moving worship.

Much of the evening's repertoire was in Russian or Belarusian, which only proved that music is an international form of expression and can be enjoyed and appreciated in any language. It was interesting to note one word sounded the name – whether in Belarusian, Russian or English. The word is “alleluia.”

During the evening the audience was also treated to selections from the talented string ensemble, a wonderful trumpet soloist who performed a moving medley of Maltbie Babcock's traditional hymn “This Is My Father's World” and the spiritual “He's Got The Whole World In His Hands.”

In addition, a trio of ladies performed traditional Belarusian folk tunes – what Krutsko called “Belarus Bible – Believing Bluegrass.” An ensemble of men on traditional Belarusian instruments accompanied the trio.

An ensemble of the men also came forth and performed a traditional American hymn – “Leaning On The Everlasting Arms” – by blowing across bottles. The number was popular with the audience, and the sound they were able to create from simple bottles filled with different levels of water was incredible.

The First Baptist Church choir joined the Belarusian guests for two selections, sung in Russian. FBC Music Minister Rich Lee, who has traveled to Belarus three times and accompanied Belarus choir on its tour, taught the church choir the selections earlier this fall. Lee directed the combined choir for the two selections.

“Please pray for your choir,” Krutsko said as the choir settled into the church’s choir loft. “They are going to sing perfect Russian!”

Lee also conducted the Belarus choir on a moving arrangement of “It Is Well With My Soul” that move the audience to its feet in applause.

The evening of music concluded “American music with Russian words” – a very thrilling arrangement of “Battle Hymn of the Republic.”

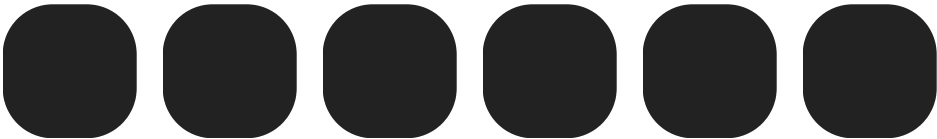
Formed in 1986, the choir has performed in Eastern Europe, France, Germany and Russia, and is currently making its 5th tour in the United States.

Belarus National Christian Choir
Dexter First Baptist Church, Oct. 13, 2011

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