

Singers slick, showy, glittery on stage

By IFAN PAYNE
Music Critic

Whatever doubts I might have about the quality of music or of the arrangements used, and I do have reservations, there can be no disputing that the K-State Singers are one of the slickest and best trained performing groups in these parts.

Which is strange in a way, because the members of this group are musical amateurs, though you would never know it to hear them.

And if the audience in McCain Auditorium on Friday evening is anything to go by, the group, under the direction of Gerry Polich really know how to put on a show.

It's a matter, it seems to me, of knowing the limits of the talent available—and there is clearly lots of it on the KSU campus—and using that talent to its best advantage; polish it

up so that you get the greatest glitter from the least gold.

The thing that strikes me about the K-State Singers' show is how well constructed the program is: tempo, contrast, rhythm, dance, pacing, vocals, instrumentals...all these are brought together in a coherent and well formed whole so that even for a kill-joy like myself—who finds it hard to be frivolous at a time of such asinine but seemingly inevitable and unstoppable build-up to war in South America—can appreciate a touch of class, even if it is applied to music that is often ephemeral and inconsequential.

But enough grumbling; these young people work hard and put on a good show with choreography, by Sharron Washington, that skilfully hides the limitations of the performers while providing a slick, if

seemingly unceasing, stage movement.

The singing is sweet and accurate, even in difficult a-capella numbers like the Manhattan Transfer's version of *A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square*, and always disciplined and well controlled.

Scot Schulte sang *On The Wings of Love* pleasantly, Kevin Chase displayed his vocal, compositional and instrumental talents when he sang two of his compositions to his own guitar accompaniment, and Gerry Polich used the microphone to great effect during his own solo.

All the elements came together in an entertaining, amusing and well thought out selection from *A Chorus Line*.

A great job by all concerned.

A few additional random notes, though.

I thought the women's dresses ill-fitting, and thought that we had all got beyond the need for the sexist remarks of the singers introductions during which two of the men made inviting comments to women in the audience but none of the female singers got to make any similar remarks. And I suppose that I will never understand the rationale that takes a concert grand piano with all its lovely, rich tone, pushes it upstage away from the audience, sticks a microphone up its entrails, feeds the signal out into the auditorium through a PA system that reproduces its sound with a greatly limited frequency range, dynamic range and harmonic richness so that it comes out sounding like an old acoustic 78 recording of a honkey-tonk piano. Obviously, I just do not understand the joys that technology brings.

But it was fun.

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