

Squeak & Squawk

Spring 2006

The YPC: Taking the Mojo to Kyoto

I don't remember ever having seen Francisco Nuñez nervous. But there he was, on a night in Japan last summer, clearly quaking in his patent leathers. His Young People's Chorus had been chosen, among adult professional as well as children's choruses, to represent the United States at a symposium in Kyoto for choruses from around the world.

Up to this moment in the five-day event, the YPC seemed the clear favorite. But at this final concert, in which they were given the honor of singing last, the second to last slot went to the People's Republic of China. They were spectacular: The silks alone, the juggling, the choreography (not exactly what Francisco asks of us)—not to mention the excellent singing.

How to follow THAT! The now glum American kids took the stage followed by nervous Nuñez. I don't know how this happened, but once on the podium, he paused, raised his arms, nodded, smiled, paused again, and the energy transferred. Magic.

The YPC singers outdid even themselves. At the end, after a poised, beautiful 14-year-old (who could take the New York stage on her own tomorrow) boomed out ". . . saved a wretch like meeeeeee," the audience went wild—and actually stood.

They don't give standing ovations in Japan.

— *Hoc Noble*