

Seiko Lee Gives Concert in the Netherlands

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Bergen aan Zee, Netherlands - The Japanese singer Seiko Hatano Lee gave a “Spring Concert” in Huize Glory, North Holland on April 11. It was the last concert of her 2013 visit to Europe, which had been mainly in Germany and Austria; this concert was arranged at very short notice.

Seiko Hatano Lee has established herself as a singer of note, of exceptional technical and musical ability, but also fulfilling her desire to be a “bridge of peace,” one might say, internally by the profound natural, unforced spirituality and depth of heart that she communicates in her singing, and externally by her broad choice of material and by her choice of venues and events, including fundraisers and visits to hospitals and similar venues. She has enthusiastic followers in Korea and Japan and the USA and has sung in a number of European countries, but this was her first visit to the Netherlands; it was only decided at the last moment, when a space opened up in her schedule, that she was able to be welcomed here.

Some UPF activists had met her in Germany; she was also recommended by UPF-Germany, so it was still possible in less than a week, even far from a major city, to assemble an audience in excess of 60, including four prominent UPF Ambassadors for Peace.

The concert was held in the main downstairs hall of the Huize Glory conference and retreat center, and in the first part, Ms. Lee included "Lascia ch'io pianga" by Händel; "Ave Maria" by Caccini; "Song to the Moon" from Rusalka by Dvořák; "O mio babbino caro" from Gianni Schicchi by Puccini; "Je veux vivre" from Romeo et Juliette by Gounod; and "Frühlingsstimmen" by Johann Strauss. She brought her own recorded accompaniment and planned her program so well that the last song brought the audience to their feet in applause. One could feel the “internal warming and healing” of her voice, and the multilingual nature of her repertoire was a witness to how the arts can bring together cultures and peoples in a way that eludes politicians.

After an intermission, the audience was treated to a video in which Ms. Lee spoke about her humanitarian concern and how she seeks to be of service through her art.

The second part of her program included the Judy Garland Wizard of Oz song “Somewhere over the Rainbow,” an art song “Nightingale,” and a medley which included "Night and Day," "Girl from Ipanema," "Hamabe no Uta," "La vie en rose," "Core'n grato," "Wien, Du Stadt meiner Träume," and "Tulpen uit Amsterdam," which of course had everyone on their feet applauding; again, the international element was present, and also refreshing was her disregard as to whether a song was “classical” or “popular.” Ms. Lee then sang her own “A Song of Peace”: her text in Japanese - “Sakura Yamato” – put to the music of “Jupiter” in Holst’s “Planet Suite,” which she created in particular to comfort and raise

funds for the victims of the 2011 tsunami in Japan. She then closed with the song “Make Me a Channel of Your Peace,” which was inspired by the words of St. Francis of Assisi.



The delight of all present was obvious: everyone wanted to have their photo taken with her, her collection of CDs was almost sold out, and one felt that nobody wanted to leave!

The next day, Ms. Lee, a UPF Ambassador for Peace, took some time to do a little sightseeing in Amsterdam. She mentioned that she is very sensitive to what she feels from an audience, that it affects her performance, certainly to how much effort she has to make. She said she felt very comfortable with the audience in Huize Glory, so she could freely enjoy sharing her heart, and thus looked forward to returning.

Back in her home, she emailed: "It was such a beautiful and joyful concert at the Glory House. Because the concert in Netherlands was just decided about 10 days before, I didn't expect many guests to come, but I was surprised when I saw a large audience in a joyful atmosphere. Thank you for your decision to have my concert in spite of short period and thank you for your incredible effort to mobilize those fine guests. I was moved. I had only a little idea about Holland before, but now Holland became one of my best favorite countries. It was nice to spend time in Amsterdam."

Note: Seiko Hatano Lee has traveled the world with her songs and now lives in the USA, where she is a soloist with the New York City Symphony Orchestra. She has appeared with them in such prestigious venues as Lincoln Center and Madison Square Garden. While Ms. Lee has devoted her life to music, she is also passionate about using her gifts to help others: promoting peace and charitable fundraising are just two examples.