

Seiko Lee, Japanese soprano, gives two concerts in June in Holland on behalf of charity

Den Haag, The Netherlands, 18. June 2014



Important Note: Seiko Lee appears as an independent artist, mentioning no religious or other affiliation, except for her own "Seiko Lee Project"; but she touches the heart, feeds the soul, awakens / invigorates one's original mind, so theological concepts become irrelevant.

As expected, the evening was utterly delightful, from Giulio Caccini's intense madrigal "Amarilli mia bella": *Amaryllis, my lovely one, do you not believe, o my heart's sweet desire, That you are my love? Believe it thus: and if fear assails you, Doubt not its truth. Open my breast and see written on my heart: Amaryllis, Amaryllis, Amaryllis (English translation)* - which might have been sung as a statement of her commitment to her art and her audience, probably also to God - as was sensed in the moving spirituality of Mascagni's Ave Maria, these being the two pieces with which she opened; to the eventual rollicking of Johann Strauss' Die Flerdemaus aria "Klänge der Heimat" (Sounds of my Homeland), the change of style with the Sound of Music medley, a change again with a song from North Korea, all accompanied by Hans Campman on piano; and the soulful message of her Song of Peace and Eternal Life, with visual scenes of her humanitarian work.

The second half opened with the Seiko Lee Project promotional video, then there was a whirlwind yet always graceful tour of songs from seven countries, including Tulpen uit Amsterdam which was accompanied by enthusiastic audience participation. Finally, her deep version of Holst's Jupiter, Sakura Yamato, written to comfort those who suffered the last great tsunami in Japan.

A standing ovation called for an encore, which turned unexpectedly into possibly the most engaging part of the evening. While she was singing "Time to say goodbye", made world famous by Andrea Bocelli, the playback accompaniment, fed through wifi, cut out; but Hans Campman stepped in, seemingly effortlessly gliding into an accompaniment, which drew Seiko Lee over to the piano to lead a mid song applause for him before she ended literally and figuratively on a flawless high note.

I understand that Muslim artists will make a deliberate mistake since they believe that only Allah / God is perfect, but whatever one's theology this technical glitch (I suspect due to the limitations of the church's technology rather than of the artist's team) enabled a complete breakthrough of any barrier that might be remaining between the soul of this beautiful

artist and her audience and doubly ensured that everyone could "say goodbye" and leave the hall with their hearts enriched.



Seiko Lee concert, June 20, Alkmaar

In contrast with the large raised stage in the high ceilinged Christus Triumphator church in The Hague, Seiko Lee's concert on Friday June 20, in Alkmaar, Nord Holland was in a carpeted Piano Gallery, with performers, herself and pianist Hans Campman, on the same level as the audience.

Possibly it was these somewhat more intimate surroundings that led her to give more introductions to her songs and to speak some of the song text (repeating what she had already sung) while

accompanist Hans Campman took a solo during the Sound of Music's "Climb every mountain".

The audience, predominantly from a local somewhat conservative Protestant Christian church, seemed to some to be slow to respond at first, but by the end of the first half it was obvious that Seiko Lee had them "eating out of her hand" and the warmth of feeling was emphasized in the interval when the gallery owner, acting as MC, spoke fulsomely of the blessing of having Seiko Lee come to Alkmaar and expressing his gratitude to UPF activist Olga Hammett, "a very special woman", for making the connection (unfortunately Olga was ill and not able to attend – she has now made a full recovery).

The concert continued well through the second half, a technical / human problem (I think possibly someone not of her team pressing a wrong button) with playback for the Sakura Yamato song for Japanese tsunami survivors (to the music of Holst's Jupiter) delayed its start, but Seiko Lee's connection with the audience was further increased as she smiled and calmly reassured them all would be well – and it was!

There was no pressure to vacate the premises and Seiko Lee met with members of the audience, posed with them for photos and signed CDs until all were satisfied. A very fulfilling evening for everyone.

By Christopher Davies