

Christmas Concert

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Members of the SCCC Show Choir group together portrait-style to perform the sentimental modern classic “Home on Christmas Day,” made popular by Broadway singer Kristen Chenoweth. The Show Choir is one of three SCCC groups that will perform in the Dec. 5 holiday concert in the Showcase Theater. L&T photos/Rachel Coleman

Christmas Concert offers variety of entertainment for all ages

By RACHEL COLEMAN

• Leader & Times

With finals just around the corner, music students at Seward County Community College spent the days before Thanksgiving in rehearsal for their department’s end-of-semester project: the Christmas concert. The annual event is set for 7 p.m. Dec. 5, exactly one week after Thanksgiving, and directors said they’re excited about the program.

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“Every year, the group I have in the vocal department is different, and each one has its strengths,” said vocal director Magda Silva.

This year, she said, more than half of the 25 students who enrolled in choir arrived not knowing how to read music, “and they’ve just amazed me.”

“They’re very interested in being here, in wanting to be here, and that, more than anything, makes a strong choir,” she said. “They work hard. With so many first-timers, we have an amazing choir.”



Band instructor Darin Workman said his department retained enough musicians to structure the band with many returning first-chair players.

“We’re not what’s called huge, but I have a lot of very talented players,” he said. “I’m liking the way we wound this year. They’re a great bunch of kids.”

The holiday concert will offer the audience a mixture of traditional and “adventurous” music, said Silva.

“My show choir this year is tiny, but we’re doing some fun stuff,” she said. “One is a Barnum & Bailey song, ‘Anything is Possible,’ which is not something you think of as a Christmas song, but the words are pretty cool for this time of year. We’re also singing a very sentimental song,

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'Home on Christmas Day,' which was performed by Kristen Chenowith, who made it very popular."

The choir will perform more traditional pieces, including a Christmas lullaby, a piece in Latin with eight-part harmony and a medley of carols featuring the word "joy," which allows accompanist Becky Robison to "rock out," Silva said. "She loves that medley!"

The choir's favorite is the contemporary Christian Christmas song, "Mary, Did You Know?"

Workman, meanwhile, selected a variety of music to get the audience in the mood for Christmas.

"We're doing a jazz number with kind of a gospel feel," he said. "That's fun for my kids, who are, a lot of them, veterans of the program at Liberal High School, where they love jazz." The SCCC band will also perform some Renaissance Christmas music, a favorite of Workman's, and a Russian-flavored piece titled "Russian Triptych."

"I always try to do something a little bit different," Workman said.

Because Thanksgiving fell late in the month of November this year, the timing posed a challenge for the music department instructors.

"The kids come back from their Thanksgiving break, and they have finals the next week," Workman said. "That's tough for the kids, and we hate trying to squeeze the concert in that way. But we're hoping the kids will be nice and fresh."

Workman and Silva are also hoping for a good turnout from the community.

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“It gets so busy this time of year, you never know what all is going on,” Workman said. He hopes the Thursday date so early in the month will be an advantage. Tickets are available ahead of time and at the door, and while “we never have a low show audience, there have been years we sold out ahead of time,” he said.

The purchase price of \$3 per person goes entirely to the SCCC music scholarship fund, a tradition Workman started “years ago,” he said, when he came to the department. “The fund has really increased, so that we do offer more scholarships to the kids,” he said. “It’s kind of neat.”