

'All-Night Vigil' awakens the senses

Review » Thrilling performance opens festival in Madeleine.

By Catherine Reese Newton

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The annual Madeleine Festival of the Arts and Humanities opened on Sunday with a soaring performance of Rachmaninoff's "All-Night Vigil." Brady Allred brought together four choirs -- two from the University of Utah and two from his community-based Salt Lake Choral Artists -- to fill Salt Lake City's Roman Catholic cathedral with glorious sound.

Allred had the groups sing together and separately during the a cappella choral masterwork's 15 movements to create a wide range of musical textures and dynamics. The array of aural effects was stunning; the singers would produce a warm, pastel sound in one movement, followed by the sonic equivalent of bold primary colors in the next.

Adding to the musical kaleidoscope were two guest octavists -- men who sing well below the usual bass range. The sturdy foundation built by these bassos profundos, Glenn Miller and Cameron Beauchamp, hit the capacity audience squarely in the heart, especially in the descending line that closed the fifth movement.

Mezzo-soprano Stina Eberhardt, with a rich, chocolatey tone, and tenor Todd Miller, with silky sweetness, also made memorable contributions.

Allred's choirs produced a keenly focused, well-polished sound, with precise entrances and cutoffs and beautifully sculpted dynamics.

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'Vigil' is just the beginning

Conductor Brady Allred and his choirs -- the University of Utah Singers and A Cappella Choir and the

Salt Lake Choral Artists' chamber and concert choirs, with tenor Todd Miller, mezzo-soprano Stina Eberhardt and octavists Glenn Miller and Cameron Beauchamp -- opened the annual Madeleine Festival of the Arts and Humanities on Sunday with a stirring performance of Rachmaninoff's "All-Night Vigil."

The festival continues over the next five weeks with free 8 p.m. performances in the Cathedral of the Madeleine, 331 E. South Temple, Salt Lake City.