

As a new resident in Brisbane and a new member of the Forum of Christians, Jews and Muslims, this was my first "One G_D Many Voices" concert. It was a delight on so many levels and I want to thank everyone who participated in organising, setting up, performing and catering this inspirational event.

Our MC, Reverend Heather Griffin set the tone of the night with her warm welcome and excitement about the performances to follow. The first act of the evening was a girls choir from the Australian International Islamic College, Durack. The girls were beautifully attired in their smart and modest school uniforms. They shared with us a recital from the Koran, both in Arabic and English. It was so appropriate for the night, being about G_D creating the world and valuing humans according to their piety and deeds. It was a message of inclusion of all humanity in G_D's care. The choir then sang in English. It was a beautiful song about us sharing the same sun, the same moon so why can't we love each other. The chorus called us all to hold hands.

The second act was a complete change of style and pace, with the Hope Gospel Choir sharing a range of songs with movement, in English, Swahili and Kirundi. The choir members, who come originally from Burundi in Africa, shared warmth, wonderful harmonies and their joy in their faith and music. They are members of the Logan Anglican Parish. They were dressed in matching shirts and matching traditional wraps. A lovely feature of the choir was the age range; from children to middle-aged people, girls, boys, men and women. At the end of each song, a man called Jeremiah explained the meaning of the song.

The third act of the evening was the music of "Trio in Song", three women from the Uniting Church, including Naomi, Heather Griffin's daughter. Trio in Song shared a variety of hymns, both modern and traditional from the Christian tradition. Their voices blended together in rich and seemingly effortless harmonies, that brought the words alive. They shared the role of accompaniment on the keyboard. For me, the highlight of their music was Naomi's explanation of the history and their rendition of "Amazing Grace", an absolute favourite of mine from the Christian tradition.

Our final act was from the Jewish faith. Our member, Ari Heber, introduced the audience to the "shofar", probably the first instrument of the Jewish faith and as Ari explained, one that plays a key role in Jewish services on Rosh Hashana, (Jewish New Year). It is a ram's horn that has been polished and it makes three notes, as Ari demonstrated to the audience. Ari explained that it is blown 100 times in the second service of Jewish New year, and the final blast goes for about 90 seconds. He ably demonstrated this piercing note.

Supper was a delicious and generous affair with two wonderful curries with rice supplied by Sultan Deen and the Islamic community, yummy fresh fruit platters and nuts supplied by Jela Virzi and the Christian Community, and beautiful cakes in abundance, supplied by Bluma Serabryanski and Ari Heber from the Jewish community. It was fun to hear people trying their lung power and skills on the shofar over supper. Sharing food is always and great way to facilitate communication, and many audience members stayed for ages to enjoy supper and to meet and mingle.

As Heather Griffin said, our concert displayed a wide variety of musical styles and religious faiths. What a treat! How lucky we are to live in Australia and at a time when we feel safe to be enriched by the diversity of cultures within our national culture.

Written by Heather Abramson – a member of The Qld Forum for Christians, Jews and Muslims