 Choir has ‘intricate, intimate approach

By Caroline Leong

With the 26-member Chamber Choir selected, preparations for this year’s musical performances are currently in progress.

Music director Carole Bean held auditions Sept. 17 and 18. The days drew a combined 27 students.

The Chamber Choir is a “small group of more advanced singers whose music is more intricate and intimate in its approach,” Bean said. The choir consists of six sopranos, six altos, four tenors and four basses.

The Chamber Choir is also an alternative to those with busy schedules interested in singing.

Some experience

“We work it around the kids’ schedules,” Bean said.

Most students trying out have had some musical experience in high school, with the University Chorus or with the St. John’s choirs, Bean said.

Of those selected for the Chamber Choir, most have participated in honor choirs, earned top scores in musical competitions or play musical instruments, Bean said.

When selecting her choir members, Bean said she looks for voices that blend well and singers who can read music fairly well.

A good singer is “enthusiastic, open to suggestions and tries things I give them,” she said.

‘Intimidating’

Bean said she can best see these qualities in students by conducting a low-keyed audition. Unlike “some auditions which are meant to be intimidating to make them perform better,” Bean’s auditions are informal with just the student and herself present, she said.

With the choir members selected, Bean is looking ahead at the year’s performances. Besides singing their usual Madrigals, Bean said the members will sing a variety of Christmas carols from different languages and time periods.

While performing is their main goal, many students enjoy the opportunity to sing.

“I sing for enjoyment,” said Arts junior Jason Ako. But music is “something to blow off steam when otherwise you would usually yell.”

“I find it a challenge but at the same time enjoyable,” Arts Junior Maureen McGurr said. “When performing with a group I feel like I’ve accomplished something.”

Other students enjoy singing with a choir because of the added dimension to their curriculum. Business sophomore Justin Wray said singing is an “extracurricular activity that gets my mind off school.”

Bean enjoys her involvement as the Chamber Choir director. Having the “freedom to determine what the choir will do next” is what she likes most about her job, she said.

“All conductors have something in mind that they want to do,” Bean said. By not having any predecessors, she is not forced to follow a certain pattern, she said.

Bean’s job of selecting the choir members is one drawback to her position.

“I procrastinate making the selection,” she said. “It’s very difficult for me to reject anyone.”

‘Come back’

Although Bean said she gives preference to the upperclassmen, she “always hopes that those who don’t make it the first time will come back.”

Although the number of students auditioning reflects a great musical interest, “music is fun for them but it’s not a profession,” Bean said.

“I wish I could keep the singers in their freshman to senior year,” she said. “Then, their voices would be ‘vocally mature and ready to sing things they do now,’” she said.

Because Creighton doesn’t offer a major or minor degree in music, Bean said, it doesn’t expect the students to put as much time in singing as their other studies.

What draws students to the Choir auditions despite the lack of a degree?

“Music is an adrenaline goer,” freshman Linda Woolf said. “Any kind of music is like putting an electric shock to your body. I love to sing and it just comes naturally.”

Pharmacy freshman Mark Glouder said, “Music is something in the heart and a tool to have fun with. It’s something you do to find the excitement within you.”