

# Messiah chorus wows New York

That's the impression  
one observer made of  
Carnegie Hall show

By **DAVID CLOUSTON**  
*The Salina Journal*

Their Carnegie Hall debut was a smash hit.

Or so members of the Messiah Festival chorus guessed, judging from the applause and standing ovation they received at the conclusion of their performance Monday night in New York City.

"They clapped well for the (conductor) and the orchestra and the soloists. But you really felt the hands coming together when he bowed to the choir. I felt they really had appreciated that group of people," said Elsie Richmond, Plainville.

The chorus, which sings "The Messiah" each year at Easter at Bethany College in Lindsborg, traveled to New York for a special performance Monday night at Carnegie Hall, one of the most famous orchestral and performing venues in the world.

More than 200 singers and their guests made the trip. The choir is conducted by Joel Panciera of Bethany College, who arranged for the performance.

Richmond went as a guest of her friend and chorus member Dorothy Reed. From her seat in the audience, she was able to watch the audience of New Yorkers react to the performance.

"They were very receptive. It was noticeable," she said.

For chorus members, the trip was a once-in-a-lifetime experi-

ence. Singer DeVere Blomberg, 216 W. Bond, judged the audience at about 2,000 people, and Reed said the hall was about two-thirds full.

Overall, Blomberg said, the hall is not terribly larger than Presser Hall on the Bethany campus where the chorus performs annually. But Carnegie is more ornate, and the ceiling is much higher, with multiple balconies arranged in a horseshoe configuration around the stage.

"It's different because of the height of the ceiling," he said, of the acoustics. "We got quite a bit of reverberation. But it does project very well."

For some of the singers, the famous hall was a bit intimidating. Backstage, for instance, there were a lot of stairways and hallways, said Betty Schmitt, 826 Mellinger.

"You didn't want to get lost backstage," Schmitt said. "It's big and it's round and I think it had seven balconies. And a circle of lights in the ceiling."

Schmitt said the crowd's applause was thrilling.

"We got a standing ovation at the end. They really applauded and applauded. We felt we were well accepted," she said.

There was more to the group's trip than their performance, however. The Kansas visitors got to take in a bit of the city as well, including visits to Broadway shows and, following the concert, a special cruise around the point of Manhattan past the Statue of Liberty that ended at 2 a.m.

Reed and Richmond also went for a tour aboard the former aircraft carrier Intrepid, now a naval museum. They also walked through Macy's department store.

Salina Journal, Salina, Kansas, US

April 13, 1997, Page 3

<https://newspaperarchive.com/entertainment-clipping-apr-13-1997-1576184/>