

## The Room and The Heart, Lexington

Steve McIntosh, 4/8/2023

In a room below the stage, our choral gathering of mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, all bursting with pride and wide-eyed anticipation, prepares to share the music in our soul with the world in two languages, that of mother land and adopted land. The room, packed with singers, vibrates imperceptibly with the energy slowly welling up within each of us as the Director calls the group to attention. Quickly, all eyes are on Director Guo Ling as the nervous chatter quickly dissipates. All are anxious to hear and follow Ling's direction. She is our supreme leader now.

With her cue, the piano and violin release their familiar prelude followed by an unexpectedly beautiful harmony that saturates the space. Hearts accelerate as the song instantaneously flows through the ear to the brain, amazed at what it is hearing. The warmth and power of the sound convinces me that this small shoe-box shaped rehearsal room mimics the shape and amazing acoustics of Boston's Symphony Hall. No, I think, this room and this chorus are better; they are perfect companions to fuse and generate a sound that, for this moment, overshadows Symphony Hall.

Even though our powerful sound may well be penetrating through to the main hall above, we can't possibly squelch our joyous singing. Director Ling attempts to temper our tone but, unexpectedly and joyously, this pre-performance session is now our own private concert, and we are great!

But the private event ends. Time to silently climb to the stage and take our stations.

Our warm and powerful song continues in the main hall and, as confessed by some attendees, we bring tears to eyes and shivers to spines. We are a family of white and blue stripes across the stage. As our song develops, a new color flows onto the stage as members in red penetrate our stripes to form a bright, red heart at center stage. A final touch of red then flows out as Director Ling, in a beautiful red silk gown, steps front and center, and takes control. She is the heart's

She is the heart's sinus node, simultaneously directing the atrial song of white and blue singers and the ventricular motions of the red sign language students. The power of our song grows as we shift seamlessly between languages to the beat of violin and piano and accompanied by the heart's dancing hands.

We have risen up and climbed a new mountain. May we continue to find new mountains to climb.

Thank you all for donating your amazing effort and beautiful music in support of organizations committed to helping injured children from poor regions of China raise up and overcome their trauma, such as A Life A Time, Boston Trauma Fund, and HandReach.