

wayland_spain_82503

August 23, 2003

Posted: 8/22/03

Wayland
Baptist
University
students
perform a
concert in
Spain,
where they
debuted the
original
composition
of Wayland
professor
Gary
Belshaw.

SPANISH SERENADE: Wayland musicians on mission

By Jonathan Petty

Wayland Baptist University

PLAINVIEW-After being tucked away for more than 20 years, "A Espana" finally made its successful debut before a captivated Spanish crowd.

The piece was performed by a group of Wayland Baptist University students who participated in a mission trip to Spain this summer. The work, composed by Wayland Assistant Professor of Piano Gary Belshaw, was designed to combine Scripture readings with music for both band and choir.

It was the crowning achievement of the group's two main concerts while spending a week in Valencia, Madrid and the surrounding areas of Spain.

"I originally wrote it in 1981 in English," Belshaw said of the first piece. "I rearranged it for our group to sing in Spanish."

The composition was made up of three movements, which took about 15 minutes to perform. After dusting off the original piece, Belshaw added two other pieces, which were designed specifically for the members of the group traveling to Spain to perform in the native tongue.

"For some reason, we didn't have anything in Spanish in our repertoire," he said.

Belshaw, who received his doctorate from Texas Tech University, said it took about a month to complete the work, "stealing time from other activities." Not knowing any Spanish, he used a Spanish version of the New American Standard Bible, translated from original manuscripts, and his parallel Bible to set the Scriptures he wanted to use to music.

The piece begins with the first chapter of John—"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God"—and from there moves through Scriptures that focus on the importance of God's promises to humanity.

Being able to perform a piece written specifically for the trip was meaningful, especially for Belshaw, who wasn't sure how anyone would

react.

“Even the students and faculty were more receptive than I thought,” he said. “They liked doing something original.”

While the piece made its debut in Spain, Belshaw said it is far from finished. Even the title isn't set in stone. In Spanish, there are two words meaning “for.” Belshaw said the translator changed the name of the piece from “A Espana” to “Para Espana.”

“I'm thinking about changing it to 'Whenever I go to Spain,' or 'Songs for Spain,'" Belshaw said.

Wayland music professor Robert Black, who organized the trip, said the students were “unbelievably effective.”

“We made lots of good music, made friends and helped a lot of Baptist churches and ministries in Spain by giving them some credibility.”

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.