



Lenard Whiting

## **Barrie Concert Review – Saturday November 11, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. - Lenard Whiting conducts the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus Choir**

### **“We Will Remember”-**

Submitted by Katie Pergau

"Music we could understand" and "Meaningful" were just some of the comments overheard after the Barrie Concert Association's presentation of "We Will Remember" on Saturday, November 11. Written and conceived by Edward Franco, featuring memorable tunes from World War I & II and other "peace-filled" songs, the presenting choir from University of Toronto-Scarborough Campus was led by Conductor Lenard Whiting. Any concert that features songs from the Great Wars and is held on November 11 is sure to tug at the heart strings of its audience and Saturday's event was no exception.

The repertoire played perfectly to the age range of the audience, taking members back in time with sing-along numbers such as, "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" and "Keep the Home Fires Burning". A particular favourite was "K-K-K-Katy" as it brought back memories of sitting on my Grandfather's knee.

The evening opened with Soprano Wendy Dobson delighting the audience with her leading of a sing along "We'll Meet Again". Her excellent storytelling continued as she led the verses of other familiar wartime tunes.

As the choir backed her up in these sing-alongs, this reviewer missed harmonies that could have been introduced. However, when the choir moved into a verse of "Eternal Father Strong to Save", a beautiful and rich sound emerged. The choir was an interesting blend of voices with the male contingent of tenors and basses at least equalling, if not outnumbering the sopranos and altos. The men are definitely the strength of the group as pitch problems plagued the upper sopranos throughout the evening.

However, setting this challenge aside, the presentation of "Let There Be Peace on Earth" showed a beautiful dynamic range and emotional connection to the text.

As the concert continued, the evening was enhanced by a PowerPoint presentation, showing images from the Great War and being narrated by every member of the 56 voice choir. Near the end of the evening, to highlight the sheer magnitude of lives lost, each student added their voice to a cumulative total report of each country's causality list, creating a very moving tableau of the toll of the Great War.

A moment of silence, along with a flawless playing of The Last Post and Reveille by Dr. Michael Barth, were included in the concert. It was a perfectly fitting tribute as we stood together and remembered the fallen, wounded, and all who are affected by war.

The evening concluded with a final sing-along reprise of "We'll Meet Again" and audience members left the building humming those beloved tunes.