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Friday December 21, 2007

Operafest does Malaysia proud again

PETROLIA (California): Malaysia's Operafest Children's Choir has done it again – this time in northern California, where it held the audience spellbound with its range of folk songs and Christmas carols.

Led by director Kam Sun Yoke, the choir's 16 children and nine adults sang their hearts out at the Mattole Grange Hall here last week.

Operafest was formed in 1986 to promote the arts and to provide a sound education through music.

Josie Brown, the coordinator for gifted and talented children in the Mattole Unified School District, said Operafest came to this rural community to strengthen world peace and understanding through music.

"The true bridge between nations is built by the people communicating and getting to know one another and realising that we share far more similarities than differences," she said.

Ever since Operafest became the first Malaysian choir to win second place in the famous Llangollen International Eisteddfod competition in Wales and third place in the choir Olympics of Koorsfestival of Arnheim in the Netherlands in 1991, it has been propelled into the international circuit with invitations to perform at various choral festivals.

To date, Operafest, which is modelled along the lines of the famous Vienna Boys' Choir in Austria, has performed in the Netherlands, Wales, Spain, Argentina, India, Greece, Macedonia, Australia, Singapore, and in Indiana, New York and Montana in the United States.

Brown said it was not all about singing as the choir members spent three days hiking around northern California, home to the famous redwood forests.

"They also picked apples, made cider from apples and looked for salmon as part of efforts to enable the Malaysians to get a better understanding of life in a rural community in the United States," she said. – Bernama

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