

Getting Exactly What Was Advertised

A group of friends and I attended an area talent showcase of extremely gifted teenagers. Who says that tomorrow's leaders are destined for failure? Sponsored by a local church, many of the acts were religious in theme from very powerful interpretive dance/signing to an intriguing dramatic presentation. However, there were a few pianists, a very talented violinist, and some EXCEPTIONAL female vocalists. One of the worship bands who performed, Exclamation, featured a friend who is a regular member of our game night and has been on stage several times. I sat beside her father and I could tell that [j](#) was as proud as can be of his youngest as was I. One of the critiques made by the judges was that their diction was TOO crisp?! That caused me to raise an eyebrow. I cannot tell you how many times I have been told to ENUNCIATE almost to the point at which I was over enunciating. I can see instances where dialect in a song would cause diction to be stressed differently, but the song Exclamation sang definitely was not one. I wonder if the group's mentor had been sitting in the audience and what her reaction was.

One of the solo vocalists I have had the pleasure of performing in ensembles with previously. She sang a glorious rendition of "Think of Me" from *Phantom of the Opera*. This junior in high school is already a three-year member of an area city's opera. She definitely has a very bright future ahead of her.

I was also greatly impressed by an 11th grader who chose to perform an aria, [Amarilli, mia bella](#). I did not begin singing Italian art pieces until after high school with a trained vocalist. This young lady commented that she had received a LITTLE(?) training.

There were other performers who played an instrument that in my opinion must be learned from birth. I greatly admire anyone who can come close to mastering ANY stringed instrument. A junior in high school performed her violin solo seemingly flawlessly.

I must say that some of the interpretive dances were perhaps some of my favorite segments... even if one of the groups seemed to be toted higher than the others as they were formed from young members of the evening's sponsoring church. Another of the groups performed to "You Raise Me Up." This song is very special to me as it was the last song that I worked on under Emily's tutelage and I don't think I gave it it's true potential. This is definitely a song that I would like to revisit, I think I am ready to.

So, our little corner of the world does indeed possess some exceptional talent in our youth. What a blessing to have evenings such as this to showcase it. Although I knew going in that the evening would contain some religious flavor, I for one think that it had just a smidgen too much for my taste. Not enough to totally turn me off but I am sure that there were some in the audience who may have been a bit uncomfortable. I also grew weary of the panel of judges giving their critiques which did not always make sense although they were all three trained professionals in the field. Seventeen acts with critiques for each seemed to drag at times and the comments and the "stars" awarded did not always match up. Just give the critique and move on. And above all, eat the microphone. Plus, be sure to enunciate but not too much.