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## Go With Joy

Eric F. Spina  
*University of Dayton*, [efspina@udayton.edu](mailto:efspina@udayton.edu)

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# Go With Joy : University of Dayton, Ohio

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Wednesday April 12, 2017

## Go With Joy

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By Eric F. Spina

When the curtain closed on “Celebration of the Arts” last spring, I thought, “Wow, that was magical. These students can’t possibly put on that kind of show-stopping performance every year.”

I was wrong.

This year’s “Celebration of the Arts,” featuring more than a dozen music, dance and theatre ensembles in the magnificent Schuster Center downtown, pulsated with joyous energy — and served as one of many exclamation points during the four-day presidential inauguration festivities. I am so grateful for the countless hours our faculty worked with student performers and artists to bring out their best on this remarkable evening.

As I stopped in the lobby to view senior Alexandria Morrisette's large, abstract paintings and an exhibit of art and design student work, I felt the transformative power of the arts to transport us to a land of imagination and beauty.

Inside the 2,300-seat Mead Theatre, our students transformed the stage and beyond into a visual and musical smorgasbord. From the balcony, the cast of *Live on Air: Three 1950s Radio Plays* performed lively vignettes before they introduced each of the performances.

Karen and I felt honored to be among the first to hear the inaugural Dayton performance of *Go With Joy* sung by the University Chorale under the expert guidance of Robert Jones, a gifted teacher, director and soloist who is retiring this spring.

We were moved by the grace and spirit of *About Being*, a collaboration between the UD Dance Ensemble and DCDC2. The World Music Choir's powerful performance of Arirang, a Korean folk song, featured a lovely solo by faculty member Ryu-Kyung Kim in national dress.

Every performance soared, whether a Franz Schubert symphony or a selection from Johann Strauss' comic operetta *Die Fledermaus*.

Bravo to our thespian emcees, soloists, University Orchestra, University Chorale, Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Dayton Jazz Ensemble, the World Music Choir, Ebony Heritage Singers, the Horn Ensemble, UD Dance Ensemble, DCDC2, Percussion Ensemble and Remedy for such stellar performances.

I'm especially grateful to Jason Pierce, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; the Celebration of the Arts Committee; and Sharon Gratto, Judith Huacuja and Michelle Hayford, chairs, respectively, of music; art and design, and theatre, dance and performance technology. They brought out the talents and creativity of hundreds of students from disciplines across campus.

Near the end of the evening, music professor Donna Cox and the Ebony Heritage Singers brought down the house in an exuberant, soulful Gospel song, *Great God Great Praise*. The entire theatre swayed and clapped along.

I'm still clapping — and can't wait for next spring's encore.