

This I Believe

Hey guys! So I've always wanted to do one of these, but I could never decide what I would talk about. It was never a problem of finding something I'm passionate about, because there are plenty of things. I could stand up here and go on and on about how important I think biology is, or how much I respect nature and pretty much refuse to kill even a bug, but some of you would definitely get bored. Nothing seemed to fit. But then I went abroad. And although being in Wales was full of some of the greatest experiences of my life, being part of a choir was not included in those.

I had tried to contact the all student choir, but they never responded, so I decided to join one that is similar to the community choir here. I left the first rehearsal feeling pretty sad. When I walked into the rehearsal hall, no one introduced themselves or greeted me, and that made me feel very unimportant to the choir as a whole. And it didn't get any better once we started singing. No one was concerned about blend or about being just one fraction of the choir. I could hear a tenor clear as day across the room, and he wasn't even singing the right thing most of the time. They didn't listen to the director very well, and overall we sounded mediocre at best. It was one of the few times that I felt very homesick because I wanted to be back here making music with all of you. But don't worry, my little sob story is over because although those rehearsals really frustrated me, I also took something really important away from them.

As a senior, I can say that after being in this choir for so long it's easy to think that this is something that could happen anywhere, but that couldn't be more wrong. I remember coming to my first rehearsal and being completely taken aback and amazed by the sound we produced, and while I still get that feeling occasionally I wish that it

would've stuck harder. It's easy to get comfortable and complacent in our sound because it's consistently great, but it's special. In my lifetime, I doubt I will ever get to sing with a choir of this caliber again, and that makes me very sad. Not only because I'll miss a lot of the people in this room, but also because I didn't fully appreciate every moment that I had. We say we're a family and some people may doubt that or think it's weird, but it's true. I've met some really great and interesting characters in this choir and hope to stay in contact with them for life. So my advice to everyone, especially underclassman, is to not take for granted what we do here, because it's truly phenomenal. Make the best of every rehearsal, every concert, and every tour. Get to know the people next to you and talk to them when you're outside of choir too. Remember that it's an honor to be part of such an exceptional and unique group. Like Babcock says, it's a special thing to get 60 people together in one place and have such a beautiful result. My name is Ashley Oblander and I believe in this choir.