

hitting the high Notes.

A Newsletter From  WILLIAMSPORT
CIVIC CHORUS

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Barbara Hemmendinger, editor

Music Fit for a Prince on Sunday, April 29th

Imagine traveling back to the nineteenth century as the Williamsport Civic Chorus takes you to the Austrian town of Eisenstadt. Located near Vienna some ten miles from the eastern border with Hungary, Eisenstadt was the seat of the Eszterházy Hungarian noble family and is distinguished by its eponymously named castle. The composer Franz Joseph Haydn lived there as *Hofkapellmeister* under Eszterházy patronage, initiating what would become a period of extensive artistic development during the Hapsburg monarchy.

Our April 29th performance at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Williamsport is actually a 3 PM matinee during which you will enjoy a musical surprise as well as the Chorus' rendition of two masses commissioned by the Eszterházy family, one written by Haydn, and the other by Beethoven. These delightful pieces feature full orchestral accompaniment with **Dr. Kenneth Sarch** as concertmaster, and five renowned vocal soloists.



Faith Dunkleberger (soprano) from Danville, graduated from the Crane School of Music with a BA in music where she played the part of Lucy in Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Telephone*, and then from Bloomsburg University with BS in Elementary Education. She is pursuing a graduate degree for reading specialist certification and currently is a substitute teacher in Williamsport and works as projectionist for the Cinema Center and as a Zumba fitness instructor. Faith sings with the Christ Episcopal Church Choir and the Civic Chorus. She also enjoys

fitting in traveling and herb gardening to her busy schedule.

Sarah Decker (soprano) graduated from Greatbatch School of Music at Houghton College with a degree in vocal performance. She has studied opera with the former stage director of the Metropolitan Opera and has worked with opera singer/recitalist Benita Valente at the Eastman School of Music. Currently, Sarah teaches voice lessons at Saint John's School of the Arts and maintains a private home studio. She also sings with the praise band at First Church in Williamsport and in an all-female quartet there, "Spoken For".

Amanda Silliker (mezzo soprano) studied vocal performance at Penn State and is an active local and more recently, international, performer. Amanda sang the Verdi *Requiem* with the combined Penn State choirs and orchestra, Mozart's *Regina Coeli* with the Williamsport Symphony Orchestra, and Vivaldi's *Gloria* with the Williamsport Cham-

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Singers' Corner



Stooped and frail, he arose with the audience to applaud Emanuel Ax, who had just performed Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto* with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Within three months of that evening, your editor's father could no longer

walk or swallow, and in two more months, he would be gone, succumbing to late stage Alzheimer's disease. Fine classical music had been Dad's lifelong companion; he listened to WQXR in the earlier years and to WQED in advanced age. At the end,

those melodies and his loving connection to family were all that was left of his former self.

In *Musicophilia* (2007), Dr. Oliver Sacks, Professor of Neuro-

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Ned's Notes...



A while back I was reading an article about Franz Joseph Haydn and his long career with the Eszterházy family. The article had pictures of the grand, rococo hall (called *Haydnsaal* or Haydn Hall) where Haydn's musicians performed. I started to daydream about how wonderful it must have been to have Joseph Haydn directing some of the best musicians in Europe with famous visiting composers, musicians, and wealthy and powerful men and women in the audience. Wow! Just imagine. Since I wanted to give the Williamsport Civic Chorus and our audience a similar experience, we are presenting a concert of two masterpieces written by two of the best composers in history for one of the most influential noble families of the era.

Mass in the Time of War is Haydn's own title. It was written in 1796 when Vienna was under the threat of invasion by Napoleon's

forces. It is also known as *Paukenmesse* or *Kettledrum Mass* because of the ominous shadows of war provided by the timpani in the "Agnus Dei" movement. Small kettledrums were carried into battle to encourage and inspire the troops. This mass was probably the first in a series of six masses commissioned by Prince Nicholas II to celebrate the name day of his wife, Princess Maria Hermenegild. "Mass in the Time of War" has become one of the most popular of Haydn's fourteen masses. Historians think that Haydn was anti-war based on his musical treatment of this mass, especially the lively "Dona Nobis Pacem" section at the end.

Haydn wrote six masses for Prince Nicholas II between 1796 and 1802. By 1802, Haydn was in poor health and not able to compose. Prince Nicholas commissioned another composer who was establishing himself as the premier composer of his time – Ludwig van Beethoven. Beethoven wrote to the Prince: "I shall deliver the Mass to you with timidity, since you are accustomed to having the inimitable masterpieces of the great Haydn performed for you." Beethoven had never composed a mass, and he procrastinated in writing the new work. During preparations, he survived a sort of singer rebellion and ended up producing a mass that was not satisfactory to his patron or the audience. It is said that at the reception after the performance, Prince Nicholas said to Beethoven, "My dear Beethoven, what is it [that] you have done here?", and he later remarked that that he found the mass "unbearably ridiculous and detestable." Beetho-

ven took offense and refused to dedicate the mass to the Prince, never even giving him a manuscript. Yet the mass went on to become one of his favorite works -- prized for its elegant balance, lovely melodies, and idiomatic vocal writing.

As you listen to this concert with your friends and neighbors in the handsome sanctuary of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, please close your eyes during some of the movements and imagine that you are sitting in the *Haydnsaal*. (If you Google *Haydnsaal* you'll see many beautiful pictures to help your imagination!) Perhaps even pretend that your neighbors are dressed in satin and brocade with powdered wigs, and let the music take you back to a different time. 🎵



"Ned's Notes" is provided for the enjoyment of our readers by Ned Wetherald. Currently in his fifteenth year as music director of the Williamsport Civic Chorus, Ned is minister of music at State College Presbyterian Church. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in music and choral conducting from Shenandoah University.

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Thank you!

Music Fit for a Prince, continued

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ber Choir & Orchestra. She also teaches voice/piano in her Bellefonte home and directs "The Accidental Chorists", a women's choir specializing in experiential singing.

Michael Connor (tenor) holds a master's degree in education from Bucknell University and served there as Dr. William Payn's graduate assistant conductor. In cooperation with the New England Conservatory, he participated in the Sarteano Chamber Choral Conducting workshop in Sarteano, Italy, under the direction of Simon Carrington. He has also worked with Moses Hogan, Alice Parker, Charles Bruffy, Bronislaw Falinska, Alberto Grau, and Rodney Eichenberger. Michael teaches music at Central Mountain Middle School and directs the choir at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Montoursville.

Dr. Todd Griffith (bass) is the founder and chief technical officer of Discovery Machine, Inc., a software company headquartered in Williamsport. Todd's vocal career began as a student section leader in Bucknell University's Rooke Chapel Choir. As one of the founding members of the Bucknell Opera Company, he performed many leading roles. With degrees from that institution in computer science and philosophy, Todd entered graduate school at Georgia Tech where he

received his PhD in computer science and studied voice with Elizabeth Colson. While in Atlanta, he was highly sought as a baritone soloist. Locally, Todd has performed with the Williamsport Symphony Orchestra, the Williamsport Civic Chorus, and the Williamsport Chamber Choir & Orchestra.

Dr. Gary Boerckel, professor and chairman of music at Lycoming College, will deliver a pre-concert lecture at 2:30 PM. As he so masterfully does at Williamsport Symphony concerts, Dr. Boerckel will describe the historical and artistic context of the works to be performed. There is no additional fee, so we encourage you to attend the lecture as well as to join singers and musicians at a reception to be held in the church's Fellowship Hall immediately following the concert.

Tickets are available at Robert M. Sides Family Music Center, the Otto Book Store, and from Chorus members. Advance purchases include a \$2 discount off the box office prices of \$12 for general admission and \$10 for seniors and students. Children under 12 are free. 🎵

"This performance is supported in part by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency."

**WOODCOCK
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68th SEASON

"An Evening at Eisenstadt"

music of Haydn & Beethoven

Sunday, April 29th, 2012

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

142 Market St., Williamsport

2:30 PM, pre-concert lecture

3 PM, concert

Fundraisers

April, 2012: Purchase coupons redeemable for delicious Mr. Sticky's sticky buns.

April 30, 2012: 20% of your Hoss's bill goes to the Chorus!

Looking ahead

Music Director Ned Wetherald is busy planning the Chorus' repertoire for 2012-13. He hopes that you will enjoy a great variety of musical styles. We open on **October 14th** with a program encompassing traditional folk music that features Black Bear Crossing as well as the Chorus. Next, we invite you to our "December Revels" for First Friday (**December 7th**) that month to include dance, song, humor, and tasty treats of the season. Lastly, be sure to mark your calendars for our **April 28th, 2013** performance of Handel's oratorio, "Athalia", and its high drama. 🎵



**WILLIAMSPORT
CIVIC CHORUS**

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WILLIAMSPORT CIVIC CHORUS NEWSLETTER

“The Williamsport Civic Chorus is an open community of singers dedicated to making fine music accessible to all through education, participation, and inspiration.”

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ogy & Psychiatry at Columbia University, writes about how music can animate people with Parkinson’s disease who cannot otherwise move, give words to stroke patients who cannot otherwise speak, engage people of all ages with autism spectrum disorders, and calm and organize people whose memories are ravaged by Alzheimer’s or amnesia. Validating those observations, researchers at the Boston University School of Medicine have found that music processing involves a complex neural network that recruits circuits from all areas of our brains. Because of

that, the loss of musical ability has been shown to decline more slowly in Alzheimer’s compared to typical memory abilities.

Caregivers, too, find music to be uplifting and a means to connect more easily to their affected loved ones. An inspiring example is to be found in “The Unforgettables”, a 22-member chorus in New York City that consists of pairs of dementia patients and caregivers (friends, spouses, or children) who rehearse weekly. Researchers are presently assessing those members before, midway, and after the group’s con-

certs to determine the benefits of participating.

Sing on, folks! Music making and appreciation might just be good for your brain. 🎵

**Visit our new website:
www.williamsportcivicchorus.org**

