

hitting the high Notes

A Newsletter From  WILLIAMSPORT
CIVIC CHORUS

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Barbara Hemmendinger, editor

Are Mozart and Poulenc twin sons of different fathers?

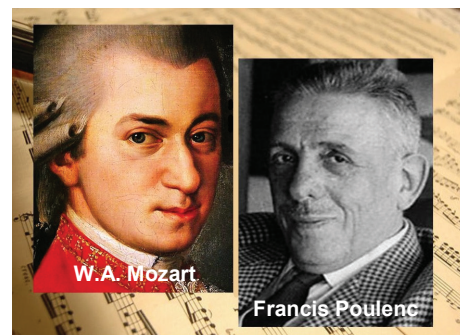
Getting back to our classical roots, the Williamsport Civic Chorus concludes its 74th season on **Sunday, April 29th, at 3 pm**, with a performance of W.A. Mozart's *Coronation Mass*, K.317 and Francis Poulenc's *Gloria*.

The St. John's-Newberry United Methodist Church sanctuary will enhance the beauty of these differently uplifting choral pieces, and you will be treated to orchestral accompaniment plus four fabulous vocal soloists--

Emily Wertz, Brooke Spicer, Nathan Fulkerson, and Patrick Intallura--whose many credits are described in the following pages.

Following the program, the Chorus will host an audience reception in the Church's fellowship hall.

Tickets for the performance may be obtained at The Otto Book Store, R.M. Sides Family Music Center, [online](#), and at the door. There is a \$2/ticket dis-



count for advance purchases. As always, children ages 12 and under receive free admission. We look forward to seeing you! 🎵

Singers' Corner:

Post-season

Although the Chorus will not be concertizing between April 29th and the fall, many of us will gather for social and community events to which we hope singers and friends will come.

First, we invite anyone interested to attend a no-obligation informational meeting about our June 2019 performance tour to Ireland. That meeting with Mindy Alexander from Witte Travel will take place on **Monday, April 30th, at 7 pm** in the Fellowship Hall of St. Mark's

Lutheran Church in Williamsport. Ms. Alexander will give a PowerPoint presentation about the itinerary and distribute detailed brochures. Singers, their friends, and family members may inquire about costs and deposit information. We will also serve typical beverages and Irish snacks to whet your travel appetite.

On **Friday, June 1st**, the Civic Chorus will again perform at the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life at the South Williamsport Park Complex. Our rendition of "This Little Light of Mine" will call upon attendees to

remember those who died from cancer and to honor survivors who continue the fight—all as the luminaria candles are lighted at approximately 9 pm.

The next month, with area minor league baseball in full swing, Chorus members will open the **Saturday, July 21st** Crosscutters' game at BB&T park by singing Robert Edgerton's arrangement of "The Star Spangled Banner". Afterwards, we will relax and enjoy Cracker Jacks, hotdogs, and our national pastime. For all three events' details, please email us at wccmail@yahoo.com. 🎵

Know the Score



Michael Connor

Musical genius can be enigmatic, and the two composers whose works are featured in our April concert fit that label.

Much mystery surrounds Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, principally regarding the manner of his death in 1791 at the early age of 35, as portrayed in popular movies and music texts. Still subject to debate, rumors persist about poisoning, and no fewer than 140 different causes of death have been proposed.

His father promoted him as a child prodigy, touring him around Europe for over three years before Mozart developed into an adult pianist and composer of breathtaking ability. One wonders what would have become of his legacy had the senior Mozart not been so invested in his son's future. Jane Glover, the conductor and Mozart biographer, explained that the composer would appear for a time to be distracted before sitting at his desk and scribbling "as if he was pressing the print button in his head," accounting for the amazing neatness of his manuscripts. But just because the writing seemed effortless doesn't mean that the music was dictated effortlessly


by God. Mozart was capable of working it all out in his mind, holding it there until it was perfect, and all that remained was the mechanical business of getting it down on paper.

We like to feel that the creator's life is in some way mirrored by his work, and the ordinariness of Mozart's life in other respects doesn't satisfy our need. Jane Glover adds that Mozart wrote some of his most joyous works when he was going through the most difficult times, as if composing offered a release from emotional pain instead of a way of working it through, rather the reverse of what we expect. Ultimately the mystery is...How is it possible for anyone, regardless of background, to be able to create what he did?

Born in 1899 more than 100 years after Mozart's death, Francis Poulenc was a Frenchman of complex character. According to Poulenc, the two sides of his nature are based in his father's pious Catholicism and his mother's worldly and musical bent. She was a fine pianist who filled their home with music. His wealthy parents nonetheless intended him to inherit the family's pharmaceutical business, and they did not permit him to enroll at a music conservatory as Francis had wished. Self-educated musically, Poulenc only came under the tutelage of a tenured professional after his parents had died. Poulenc became mesmerized by the poetry of the time and the music written by Satie, Stravinsky, Schubert, and Debussy.

By the 1920's despite Poulenc's then inherited wealth, comfortable circumstances, and acclaim as a somewhat whimsical composer, he remained dissatisfied. Grieving the loss of several friends whom he loved dearly, he suffered from epi-

sodes of depression, which resulted in diminished musical output. By the mid 1930's, the death of an incredibly close friend-colleague in a tragic car crash resulted in his seeking refuge at the oldest sanctuary in France. There, he experienced a spiritual reawakening. From this point, Poulenc began to compose more serious liturgical works. More than twenty years after the catalyst for writing the *Gloria*, his friend's vehicle accident, Boston's Symphony Hall would host the 1961 world premiere of his *Gloria*. Poulenc was said to have been pleased with its religious sentiments—exuberant, joyful, and yet serene and mystical. One can hear Poulenc's struggle to cope with this death by his sometimes sudden and stark changes from happiness with fast tempi and major chords to sheer depression in the dark, slow, and haunting melodies at other points.

Unlike Mozart, the circumstances of Poulenc's death in 1963 are certain. He died of natural causes at home. At the funeral, in respect to Poulenc's wishes, none of his compositions were played; rather, Marcel Dupré performed selections from Bach. 

Know the Score" is provided for the enjoyment of our readers by Michael Connor. Currently in his third year as music director of the Williamsport Civic Chorus, Michael holds a master's degree in music education from Bucknell University, having served as a graduate assistant to Dr. William Payn there. Connor teaches choral music at Central Mountain Middle School in Clinton County and has also appeared as a frequent vocal soloist with the Chorus and with numerous other performing organizations. He is the proud parent of Aidan, Gabrielle, and Liam.

Visit us:
williamsportcivicchorus.org

Our vocal soloists share their talents regionally and beyond

There is an abundance of musical talent in Lycoming County. Showcasing that assertion, Music Director Michael Connor invited four outstanding vocal soloists to appear in the Chorus' upcoming performance of Mozart's *Coronation Mass* and Poulenc's *Gloria*.

Nathan Fulkerson, tenor:



Nathan is a graduate of Mansfield University with a bachelor's degree in music education, specializing in vocal music.

At Mansfield, Nathan performed with many ensembles including the Mansfield University Concert Choir, the Mansfieldians (vocal jazz/madrigal *a capella* group), the MU Festival Chorus, the MU Opera Department, and various musical theater productions in which he starred in both lead and supporting roles. Nathan is a vocal instructor at Robert M. Sides Family Music Centers, and he is actively involved in musical theater, choral, and solo performance.

Patrick Intallura, bass/baritone: Patrick is a senior at Lycoming College where he is pursuing a B.A. in music. In his short career, Patrick has performed in many parts of the world. With the Lycoming College Tour Choir, he sang in New York, Florida, China, and Montreal. Patrick also spent the fall

semester in Seville, Spain, where he performed as the bass soloist in the University of Seville's Choir's performance of Handel's

Messiah. Recently, Patrick gave a joint recital with fellow soloist Brooke Spicer, and he also participated in Lycoming College's Opera Scenes program as Dr. Pangloss from *Candide*. Patrick has sung in the Lycoming Baroque Choir and Orchestra and the Williamsport Chamber Choir and has held professional choral positions at St. Boniface Catholic Church, Christ Episcopal Church, and Trinity Episcopal Church in Williamsport.



Brooke Spicer, mezzo-soprano:



Brooke is a 2017 graduate of Lycoming College from which she received her bachelor of music degree with a concentration in voice.

During her time at Lycoming, Brooke sang in the College Choir, Chamber Choir, and Tour Choir, appearing as a soloist at the Conservatory of Shanghai and the National Library of Beijing on the Choir's 2016 tour to China, as well as singing on tours to Montreal and

Florida, and serving as student tour manager. She studied voice for four years with Emily Wertz, under whose guidance she won first place in the senior women's division of the Allegheny Mountain Region NATS Competition. Recent stage credits include Mother in Lycoming College's production of *Hansel und Gretel*, and Countess from *Le Nozze di Figaro* in the College's Opera Scenes Program. Additionally, Brooke sang for three seasons with the Lycoming Baroque Choir and Orchestra, the Williamsport Chamber Choir for two seasons, and has held professional section leader positions at St. Boniface Catholic Church and Christ Episcopal Church, both in Williamsport.

Emily Wertz, soprano:

Emily is a versatile teacher, choral conductor, and singer who has been a member of the voice faculty at Lycoming College since 2011. As a voice teacher and singer, she specializes in classical and musical theatre repertoire. Emily has performed many leading roles, including both Gretel and the Witch in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, Lucy in *The Telephone*, and Laetitia in *The Old Maid and the Thief* by Menotti, as well as Amalia in *She Loves Me* by Bock and Harnick.



(continued on page 4)

74th SEASON**"Mozart's *Coronation*
Mass and
Poulenc's *Gloria*"**

Sunday, April 29, 2018

3 pm

St. John's-Newberry
United Methodist Church
2101 Newberry Street
Williamsport

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

(continued from page 3)

She has been heard as a soloist across Pennsylvania and has served as a vocal coach for the Student Summer Stock productions of *Oklahoma* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* at Williamsport's Community Arts Center. Emily is the artistic director of the Williamsport Youth Choir and has guest conducted middle school and elementary choir festivals. She resides in Williamsport with her husband and two young children. 🎵



Dr. Anthony Leach directing part of our joint ensemble with the Essence of Joy Alumni Singers.

*February 18, 2018**photo courtesy of J.J. Boettcher*

The Williamsport Civic Chorus receives state arts funding support through a grant from 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.

 **pennsylvania**
COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

Stay tuned for details about our 75th anniversary season.