

hitting the high Notes.

A Newsletter From  WILLIAMSPORT CIVIC CHORUS

Volume 21, No. 2 April 2019
Barbara Hemmendinger, editor

Sunday, May 5th treats you to “American Choral Classics”

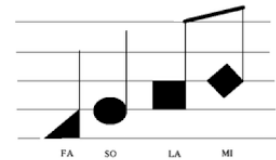


Come celebrate the red-white-and-blue breadth of American choral music on Sunday, May 5th, 3 pm, at Faith Wesleyan Church in Williamsport. From shape notes to pop and jazz, the selections to be performed include pieces by Billings, Copeland,

Randall Thompson, the Beach Boys, and others. They evoke a predominant sense of intense optimism about our American experiment. And who doesn't need several doses of home-grown optimism?

The 30-voice Faith Wesleyan choir, directed by Kerri Girton, will join the Chorus for the program's rousing finale and for several pieces on its own. You will hear America singing, and you won't want to miss this concert!

Tickets for our performance may be purchased for \$8 (students and seniors) and \$10 (general admission) at the Otto Book Store, R.M. Sides Family Music Center, and [online](#). Tickets purchased at the door will cost \$10 and \$12, respectively, and all children under 12 years old will be admitted without charge. 🎵



Singers' Corner: beyond Williamsport's concert halls in 2019

CONCERT TOUR OF IRELAND

In addition to our regular programming that entails three concerts per season, the Chorus undertakes outreach far and wide.

Far—in the Chorus' first European tour since 2001, 46 of us will go to Ireland this summer, performing in five secular and sacred settings. Our informal send-off concert is on June 24th.



Wide—as has become our tradition, we will perform an arrangement of “The Star Spangled Banner” with trumpet solo at area baseball games, including the Crosscutters' 7 pm home game on August 3rd and at the American Cancer Society's

Relay For Life at Williamsport Area Middle School on May 17th. Opening ceremonies there begin at 6 pm, and we hope you will remain for awhile as we will also salute cancer survivors who walk their lap at 7 pm that evening. 🎵

Know the Score



Michael Connor

American music is the soundtrack of American history. When Revolutionary War soldiers went off to war, they did so to the tune of "Yankee Doodle." Abolitionist songs, sung by groups like the Hutchinson Family Singers, brought the anti-slavery message to hundreds if not thousands. As Americans faced each other in battle, the army in blue took heart from the strains of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" while soldiers in grey rallied to "Dixie." Nineteenth-century men courted their sweethearts to the tunes of Stephen Foster, while slaves in the cotton fields found solace in spirituals. Union organizers led working-class men and women in choruses of "Union Maid," Doughboys went off to war humming "It's a Long Way to Tipperary," and Depression-era optimists as well as cynics could be heard to sing "Happy Days Are Here Again."

In every era, music has reflected—and shaped—social and cultural change, political choices,

mass protest, and support for government policies. Each of us knows that a familiar song from the past can produce a vivid memory of an event, a person, or a belief to which we hold firm. The musical progression of American singing is a vital part of understanding American history.

We find it a great privilege to offer an Americana narrative concert. We will be presenting a historical look at American music from colonial and shape note singing traditions to the Andrews Sisters and the Beach Boys.

It is only fitting to quote a renowned American choral conductor, "In these days of political, personal and economic disintegration, music is not a luxury, it's a necessity; not simply because it is therapeutic, nor because it is the universal language, but because it is the persistent focus of our intelligence, aspiration and goodwill."

-Robert Shaw
(1916-99) 🎵

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"Know the Score" is provided for the enjoyment of our readers by Michael Connor. Currently in his fourth year as music director of the Williamsport Civic Chorus, Michael holds a master's degree in education with music specialization from Bucknell University, having served as a graduate as-

stant 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 also the proud father of Aidan, Gabrielle, and Liam.



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.

Visit us:
williamsportcivicchorus.org

Find us on
Facebook

76th SEASON

"75 Years in Review"

Sunday, Nov. 3, 2019

3 pm

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

146 Market Street

Williamsport

"Popular Music with special guests"

Sunday, Feb. 9, 2020

3 pm

Location TBA

"Lux et Veritas", works of Ola Gjeilo

Sunday, May 3, 2020

3 pm

St. John's United Methodist Church

2101 Newberry Street

Williamsport

Hear us in the community:

- May 17, 6-7:30 pm, Relay For Life, Williamsport Area Middle School
- Jun. 24, 7 pm, informal send-off concert, St. Mark's Lutheran Church
- Aug. 3, 7 pm, Crosscutters' game
- Jan. 5, 3 pm, *Messiah* Sing, Pine Street United Methodist Church, co-sponsored with Williamsport Music Club

Pennsylvania Proud

For everyone who is an armchair Quizzo player, please name at least three Pennsylvania-born composers who have achieved international recognition. (No electronic devices are permitted, as the answers may be found on the next page).

With Pennsylvania's having been colonized by many of the Quaker faith who eschewed music as a fanciful distraction from God's work, musical development might have begun more slowly here than elsewhere in the New World. That said, by the eighteenth century, Lutherans, Moravians, and others had begun to perform European-inspired instrumental and choral works. The nineteenth century saw the flourishing of original hymns, work songs,

and spirituals that guided "passengers" on the Underground Railroad north toward Canada. Toward the end of that century, Theodore Presser opened a music publishing house in Bryn Mawr that, having moved recently to King of Prussia, remains the oldest, continuous publisher of its kind in the nation. By 1939, Fred Waring, also a Pennsylvania native who had become well known as a choral master for his distinctive arranging skills, began his music publishing endeavor, first in New York City, and then relocating the press to Shawnee-on-Delaware.

Over the past 100 years, Pennsylvanians distinguished themselves as performers across many musical

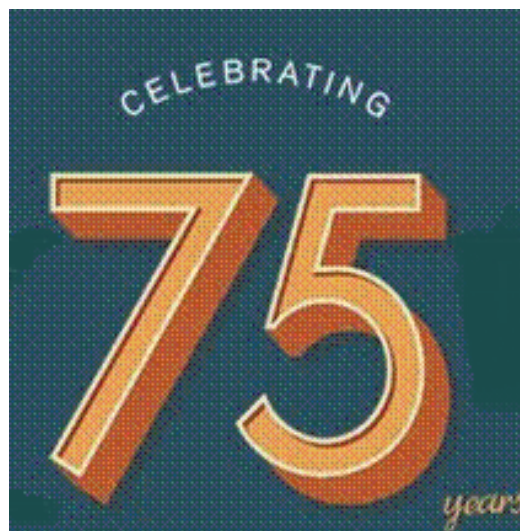
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SAVE THE DATE!

Gala dinner soirée—Saturday, November 2nd

at the Genetti

For more information, please contact us: wccmail@yahoo.com



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**"American Choral
Classics"**

Sunday, May 5, 2019

3 pm

Faith Wesleyan Church

1033 Tucker Street

Williamsport

Reception will follow.

williamsportcivicchorus.org

“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)

fields and genres, with some breaking barriers and others gaining phenomenal popularity. We provide a limited sampling of names and birthplaces for your awareness:

Born in Philadelphia:

Nina Simone, Billie Holiday, Marian Anderson, Mario Lanza, Chubby Checker, Frankie Avalon, Bobby Rydell, Stan Getz, and Sarah Chang.

Born elsewhere in Pennsylvania:

Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey

(Schuylkill County), Christina Aguilera (Pittsburgh), Pink (Doylestown), and Taylor Swift (Reading)

By now, some readers have correctly identified Pennsylvania's well-known composers as: Stephen Foster (born 1826, Pittsburgh); Samuel Barber (born 1910, West Chester); and Vincent Persichetti (born 1915, Philadelphia). Foster, of course, wrote the minstrel song, "Camptown Races," describing his experiences in that very town in neighboring Bradford County, having himself attended

schools in Athens and Towanda. Barber, on the other hand, was born into a musical family and would become a celebrated composer of the twentieth century, with his evocative "Serenade for Strings" being aptly termed by Toscanini as "*semplice et bella*" (simple and beautiful). Persichetti attended art school in Philadelphia, creating sculptures all his life. He also studied composition and conducting with Fritz Reiner at the Curtis Institute and mentored his own students at Julliard, among them the composers Phillip Glass, Bruce Adolphe, and Peter Schickele. 