

## Get Ready to Swing with Chorus and Rock Band

Too much time spent in your cabin? Then step out and get those toes a-tappin'. In something of a misnomer, the Williamsport Civic Chorus' February 9<sup>th</sup> concert is called "An Evening at the Pops", although it begins at 3 pm that Sunday.

Should you think that all fine choral music was written by stodgy highbrows, Michael Connor has programmed arrangements of favorite contemporary songs, including "Satin Doll",

"Misty", and "Take Me Home Country Roads", to name a few. Singers are excited to be performing nostalgic selections from various genres that span jazz, Motown, rock, and show tunes.

Unusual in the Chorus' history, a rock band will provide accompaniment. Musicians in that ensemble are Brian Noaker on electric guitar, Conrad Mailleue on electric bass, Christian Humcke on keyboard, and Ian Nau on drums.

The concert venue at the Pajama Factory is also an unusual departure. Located in the Clear-story Room on the second floor of that building, the performance space is airy and modern, with convenient elevator access. Parking is available in a lot next to the bowling alley across Rose Street as well as on-street.

Concert tickets may be purchased for \$8 (students and seniors) and \$10 (general admission)

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## Singers' Corner: Celebrating the Chorus' 75 Years



The Williamsport Civic Chorus celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a gala dinner at the Genetti Hotel and Conference Center on November 2<sup>nd</sup> followed by a "75 Years in Review" concert the following day. Featured in the center photo are music directors Grace Muzzo (1987-97), Ned Wetherald (1997-2015), and Michael Connor (2015-present), who con-



ducted current and former singers in dinnertime entertainment with renditions of Mozart's "Ave Verum Corpus" and Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus". Other members sang solos before an appreciative audience of more than 100 people who enjoyed reconnecting and reminiscing. One of those individuals was William

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## Know the Score



**Michael Connor**

I have a very special “thank you” for my portion of our newsletter this time. This is to Christian Humcke. Christian will be enjoying his final concert as our accompanist with the Williamsport Civic Chorus. He’s taken a nice position at a church near his family in New Jersey and is ready to spread his wings a bit more.

If you’ve been to any of our concerts in the recent past, you know that he is a wonderfully skilled accompanist. But, if you’ve had the opportunity to meet and work with him you would know...he is far more than just a talented accompanist.

First off, to be a good accompanist is difficult enough! There is a difference between being a good pianist being a good accompanist. Yes, one must be able to play with great accuracy and technique, but one must become someone who betters the ensemble as an accompanist. There’s a bit of self sacrifice involved in being an amazing accompanist.

An excellent accompanist looks out for the ensemble. An excellent accompanist listens and adds, without being the spotlight, but all the

while helps to drive the ensemble. An excellent accompanist collaborates well and adapts to the situation presented. An excellent accompanist follows the director and blends in with the ensemble, always present, but rarely noticed. An excellent accompanist is Christian Humcke.

But the thing that separates Christian from many others is his personality. Wonderfully quirky, witty, and pleasant, Christian works hard at his music, and he provides a comforting smile when the moment arises in a song. Christian works for perfection and doesn’t criticize even those musicians who are untrained and trying. Christian could sit behind any piano or organ in any space, but he doesn’t hold himself highly and above others. Honestly, being a good accompanist is like being a good leader... one must be selfless and better those around oneself. Like so many good things, one doesn’t miss it until it’s gone.

I’m so glad to have had the opportunity to have worked with Christian. Typically, my slogan is this... “Give me a good person over a good musician.” We can do something with a good person. We can make a good choir out of many good people. In my experience, it is a challenge to get a group of musicians who are not good people to make good music. The music can be played flawlessly, but the feeling behind it is stale and void of actual emotion. We hit the jackpot with Christian. Not only is Christian one of the nicest and most positive people to have worked by my side, he is also equally skilled at his craft.

Thank you, Christian, for being with the Williamsport Civic Chorus. Your presence is uplifting, and you are destined for good things. We aren’t done hearing about your musi-

cal journey. We are just fortunate enough to have been near you during the beginning portion of your career.

Some day, in the future, we will have a very special guest come to join us. We will have a talented, well-mannered and well-liked specialist join us from New Jersey. Who knows what he will have done in that time? 🎵

*“Know the Score” is provided for the enjoyment of our readers by Michael Connor. Currently in his fifth 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 assistant to Dr. William Payn there. Professor Connor is director of choral activities at Lock Haven University and teaches choral music at Central Mountain Middle School in Clinton County. The proud father of Aidan, Gabrielle, and Liam, he has also appeared as a frequent vocal soloist with the Chorus and with numerous other performing organizations.*



*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](http://williamsportcivicchorus.org)**



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Christian Humcke and Michael Connor



## Pops Concert

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at the Otto Book Store, R.M. Sides Family Music Center, and [online](#). Tickets bought at the door will cost \$10 and \$12, respectively, and all children under 12 years old as well as supporters with patron tickets will be admitted without charge.

We look forward to seeing you on Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup>. You will enjoy a rocking good time as we beat the winter doldrums. 🎵



### 76<sup>th</sup> SEASON

(All venues are in Williamsport)

#### "An Evening at the Pops"

Sunday, Feb. 9, 2020

3 pm

Pajama Factory, Clearstory

1307 Park Avenue

*An audience reception honoring Christian Humcke, accompanist, will follow*

#### "Sunrise Mass" and more by Ola Gjeilo

*with orchestra*

Sunday, May 3, 2020

3 pm

St. John's United Methodist Church

2101 Newberry Street





RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**"Evening at the Pops"**

Sunday, Feb. 9, 2020

3 pm



**Pajama Factory, Clearstory**

**1307 Park Avenue**

**Williamsport**

Reception will follow



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



**William Nichols**

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Nichols, who joined what was then called the Williamsport Civic Choir in the late 1940's. Then a young adult, he flourished under the mentorship of Walter McIver, the group's first music director. Bill added that he took voice lessons from Beulah McIver, an excellent soprano and Walter's wife.

Concert-goers on Sunday praised the Chorus for its "best of" performance, drawn from decades of Civic Chorus concerts and collaborations. YouTube video links to several of

the pieces included in that November 3<sup>rd</sup> concert are posted on our website's opening page, [williamsport-civicchorus.org](http://williamsport-civicchorus.org). 

