

hitting the high Notes.

A Newsletter From  WILLIAMSPORT
CIVIC CHORUS

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Barbara Hemmendinger, editor

The solace of “O Holy Night” during quarantine

Music Director Michael Connor along with tenor Eric Albert, an engineer by training, capably guided the Chorus in producing an online holiday gift for the community. We hope you will point your smart phone’s camera over the adjacent QR code to view our music video of “O Holy Night”, that has already been seen nearly 600 times.



Below is Eric’s description of how he created such a seamlessly enjoyable virtual performance. 🎵



Singers’ Corner: Virtual production, by Eric Albert

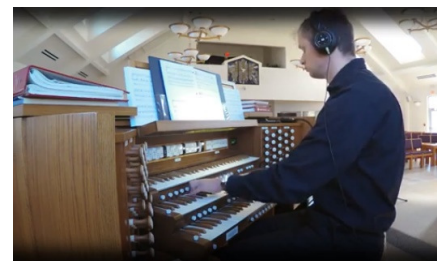


Making any virtual performance is truly a team effort. This could not have happened without the talented direction of Mike Connor and our singers’ willingness to learn and adapt to a wholly new performance situation. Mike provided clear instruction on how each part needed to be sung in order to enable assembly into the complete piece. Good articulation and a consistent tempo were essential, and Mike’s success in teaching and achieving precision truly made my job easy.



My technical production work was to create a visual design and to record video and audio of the sectionals that blended with the organ “master” performance by our accompanist, Christian Humcke. Once the song was selected, I first considered the text and tried to visualize a distraction-free video setting without fancy effects. In post-production, most of the effort became focused on the audio. The actual recorded part you hear was done *a cappella* and

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Know the Score



Michael Connor

“My Part”

And what part is this? When singing in a chorus we stick to our voice parts. Sometimes it’s fun to see how some choose to do it. But, all said, we go in completely divided, and we come out in perfect harmony.

Most members of the chorus prefer to be next to their own part’s singers. The comfort of hearing a similar note, a matching tone, and an old friend are more than enough to lift one’s own confidence in any rehearsal or concert.

There are some who prefer to shove a finger in an ear to help shield their mind from another section or sometimes from someone in their own section, even if only to hear oneself briefly.

As a singer, I never understood the finger shovers. It’s easy to take offense at someone when they are so obviously trying to block out another. But, being a


director has brought a different perspective. I see now that the need to hear oneself is just as important to some, as it is for some to hear others.

I always preferred a mixed experience, as a singer. For me it was the magical moment in the rehearsal process, some time from the initial reading, when we would mix it up and sit by those who didn’t sing our part. Ears opened and voices exposed, it was then that we heard what others were doing. Only then was it that I could truly become one with others.

There was no division in a mixed setting, even though we all maintained our own parts. There was no individuality. No invincibility. No protection. It was both the most difficult and easiest way to make music together.

Nowadays my time is mostly spent directing choirs, which entails making adjustments in their ways and getting creative with the “how.” Still, I continue to ask myself this question. “What is my part?”

My part is to gather and to bring together. Divided individuals come together for one sole purpose. Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, by design, we are a divided ensemble. We are separated and stand in our ranks amongst similar voices. We are divided, yet still equal. Melody and harmony, we are one unit. Ultimately we are all just one part.

God bless us all. 

“Know the Score” is provided for the enjoyment of our readers by Michael Connor. Currently in his sixth 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 High 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.



pennsylvania
COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

"In times of strife, we have our imagination, we have our creative impulse, which are things that are more important than material things. They are the things we should magnify."

~Patti Smith, singer/songwriter

Clip and mail, or donate online

Your financial support will help the Williamsport Civic Chorus amplify our still smaller pandemic voices as we prepare to bring choral music back to the stage in the second half of 2021. Contributions in any amount are welcomed, so don't throw away your shot for musical education, participation, and inspiration.

Buy Easter candy online at <https://www.gardnerscandiesfundraising.com>
Enter group 10-2413 now through March 29th; the Chorus will receive 25% profit.

Please also participate in the annual Raise the Region campaign, March 10th and 11th, and designate your contribution to the Civic Chorus. We thank you!



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(per concert)

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☐ I prefer to receive the Civic Chorus NEWSLETTER by email at:

The Williamsport Civic Chorus is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization, and contributions, in excess of the value of tickets received, are tax deductible.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Singers and patrons,
take your shot at keeping
choral music live—
support and donate today
on page 3.



“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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without the singers hearing anything but their own parts. In fact, the very first time that the singers heard themselves blended with the other sections and the organ accompaniment was in the finished performance video!

Today’s digital audio tools are really quite amazing. There are some tricks that help tweak even good performance recordings. They include pitch and time correction, doubling tracks, and creating spatial mixes that approach what a live performance would be like to an audi-

ence. These techniques must be used sparingly lest their effects seem artificial, and I’m keeping those “secret herbs and spices” secret for now.

It was so rewarding for me to hear the first full assembly of the voice parts and to unite all the many production pieces so that our choral performance could be enjoyed virtually. I only wish I could have seen our singers’ faces as they experienced it for the first time. 🎵

Eric Albert

As We Move Safely Forward...

Completely virtual *online* ensemble—Susquehanna Valley Chorale’s “Candlelight Christmas”

Hybrid ensemble with masked and distanced singers for *online* release—Civic Chorus’ “O Holy Night”

Completely in-person ensemble, live concert *without audience*—Vienna Philharmonic’s New Year’s Day broadcast

Completely in-person ensemble, *with live audience, outdoors*—New York Philharmonic’s holiday brass concert

Completely in-person ensemble, *with live audience, indoors*—TBA!