

# hitting the high Notes

A Newsletter From  WILLIAMSPORT  
CIVIC CHORUS

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Barbara Hemmendinger, editor

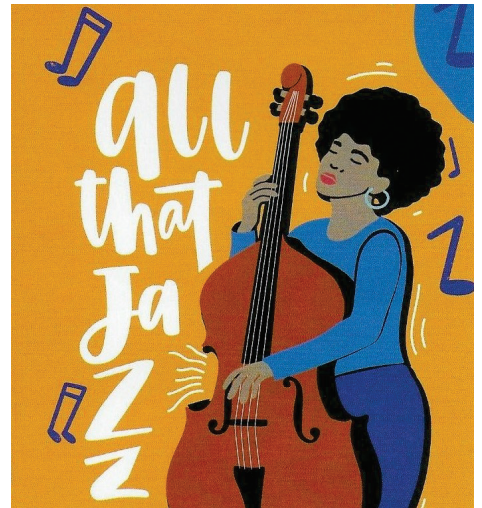
## Be just in time for *Jazzing with the WCC* on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

We invite you to our season's finale on Sunday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, at 3 pm. Called *Jazzing with the WCC*, the Civic Chorus will perform a lively repertoire of familiar vocal jazz pieces. We are overjoyed to be returning to The Pajama Factory where we will partner with The Dave Miller Jazz Trio (see page 3.)

The "A Train" won't get you to the venue, and we pray that you won't be deterred by "Stormy Weather," because Music Director Michael Connor has prepared

singers and musicians for a veritable tour of mid-twentieth century jazz.

Concert tickets may be purchased in advance for \$8 (students and seniors) and \$10 (general admission) at the Otto Bookstore, R.M. Sides Family Music Center, and [online](#). Seats sold at the door will cost \$10 and \$12. Children under 12 as well as patron ticket holders will be admitted without charge. 🎵



## Singers' Corner: The PJ Factory, an eclectic arts venue



As the WCC prepares to perform in the Clerestory Ballroom at The Pajama Factory, we hope to be inspired by the accompanying 1954 photo in which models display the Joseph Smith Pajama Company's products made there. Those folks are tipping their hats to American progress right here in River City, just as we will tap our toes to American jazz in that same building.

A factory for most of its 140 years, The Pajama Factory is listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. The Lycoming Rubber Company began building the complex in 1883, and by the mid-1920s, the company report-

edly produced more than 12,000 pairs of rubber footwear daily, including iconic Keds sneakers. Over the ensuing decades, ownership changed hands several times, and locals may remember the building as home to Franklin Hosiery Mills, the Equinox Company (for fleece and outdoor gear), Wundies, and the Weldon Manufacturing Company, the latter becoming the world's largest shirt and pajama manufacturer by 1951.

People may also recall that Broadway and Hollywood producers relied on photos and visits to the factory as they developed

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## Know the Score



**Michael Connor**

Every concert is a different journey for the WCC. Every piece of music is a new map on our quest. Sometimes we navigate through the seasons, and the course we chart is familiar. That old map gets us to the same place that we traveled to ever so long ago, but this time with a new crew at our sides. Other times, that map is foreign to us and may require additional attention. Over time, with focused practice and due diligence, we improve. Huddled together, we set aside one night a week to travel, as one.

Our jazz concert is coming along nicely! There is so much in this musical style that lends itself to learning and singing differently. We have enjoyed ourselves greatly, but when learning something new, the process of learning the music remains the same.

My addition to our newsletter is a compilation of important things we keep in mind when learning to sing a specific song. This process leads to flexibility and vocal freedom.

### Mike's Super Awesome Guide to Learning Vocal Music

The following guide is designed to help the choral singer

who wants to learn music more efficiently.

#### Part 1...Prepare, don't sing.

A. Number the measures by following the piece through from beginning to end and marking every measure.

B. Label the form/similar sections in the song (A, B, A<sup>1</sup>, Coda, etc.)

C. Mark your music more fully.

- Show changes in tempo, time signature, key, volume, timbre, repeats, endings, etc. (use a color-coded system to assist you; i.e., Red=*forte*, Blue=*piano*, Green=*accelerando*, etc.)
- Follow the music through, marking instructions (write definitions for things you don't understand.)

D. Write out the lyrics as if you were rewriting the poem. (Speak the words and make sense of them.)

#### Part 2...Listen, don't sing.

A. Listen and imitate. One of the most important things you can do is listen to great recordings of the charts that you are working on as part of your rehearsal process.

Singing is an aural tradition; for many years our craft was passed down by ear. Copy others that you look up to!

B. Rhythm is key. Speak the lyrics in rhythm with good style and timing before you ever worry about notes or chords. Again, listen and imitate. Speak the words in time. Once your rhythm is going fine, then branch out to get the notes.

C. Learn to love listening. Music, for most, is something that we need to work at when we listen. Musicians take years of ear training to do what we do. Listen to those around you. Most of what you do as a singer in a choir is listening.

#### Part 3...Sing!

A. Find a safe spot. Maybe you have a family, or animals or neighbors who really aren't going to enjoy hearing you sing that same two-measure section in (insert title of song here) 30+ times to get it right...

(Honestly, they aren't going to enjoy it so much after the 10<sup>th</sup> time, probably.)

- If you have a safe spot to make noise (lucky you), practice there.
- If you don't have a safe spot to make noise, find one, if you can.
- If you can't find one, try to practice in the best place you find.
- If you're fortunate enough to be able to plunk out your part at a piano, please do.
- If you're not able to do that, find a recording possibly on YouTube for the song, composer, and the voice part you sing!
- If your director is kind enough to record parts for you, use them.

B. Warm up. Take a moment to get yourself warm. A warm-up is your chance to get mentally and physically ready to go after the music. Clear your mind and make healthy and thoughtful music production your main goal.

C. Match pitch, timbre, rhythm, tempo, etc. Many singers worry about just getting sound out. Speaking from the podium, and for myself, I enjoy good listeners. Even if you aren't singing, but you are only listening to the music with focus, you will find that singing the next time may be easier. Good observers make better choirs and singers.

I could write a book about this, or perhaps a guide to singing Vivaldi?

Come out for our *Jazzing* concert that will also be our final performance with longstanding member and local music legend, Lucy Henry. I look forward to sharing the stage with that amazing person one final time. Love you, you sassy alto, Lucy. I will accept your airmail cheesecake deliveries anytime. 🎵

*"Know the Score" is provided for the enjoyment of our readers by Michael Connor who is in his eighth year as music director of the Williamsport Civic Chorus. With a master's degree from Bucknell University, he is a frequent vocal soloist and conductor who teaches choral music at Central Mountain High School in Clinton County.*



Announcing our

**80<sup>th</sup> SEASON**

**Sunday, Nov. 12, 2023**

3 pm

**An All-Vivaldi Holiday**

Trinity Episcopal Pro-Cathedral  
844 W. Fourth Street  
Williamsport

and

**Sunday, Apr. 21, 2024**

3 pm

**Songs for the Soul**

St. Mark's Lutheran Church  
142 Market Street  
Williamsport

*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.*



## Jazz, The Dave Miller Trio, and the Chorus

Jazz began during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in New Orleans, a city with the greatest cultural diversity in the American south at the time. By the 1930s, African-American rhythms had mixed with Caribbean and other styles to become America's greatest export to the world. Known for improvisation, highly unique bent or blue notes, and intricate harmonies and rhythms, jazz has evolved from its origins in dance milieus to be heard in purely instrumental and vocal settings. It often expresses the longings and frustrations experienced by people who cling to hope despite difficult circumstances.

The Dave Miller Jazz Trio, one of the finest interpreters of instrumental jazz in our region, will partner with the Civic Chorus for April's concert. Each member of the trio has decades of experience performing far and near.

Dave Miller, keyboard leader and arranger, is an experienced lead vocalist with versatility on piano, the Hammond B-3 organ, keyboards, synthesizers, drums, and other percussion instruments. With over 4-1/2 decades as a private instructor locally, his performance credits are too numerous to list. They include several tours abroad in the U.S. military appearing before British and Luxembourg royalty, as well as before notables like Dwight D. Eisenhower's son, John Eisenhower (former Ambassador to Belgium), and David and Julie Nixon Eisenhower.

Bobby Leidhecker, a concert and jazz percussionist, co-leads



the Williamsport City Jazz Orchestra and has enthralled Williamsport Symphony Orchestra audiences for 32 years as principal timpanist. Appearing with the world-renowned Empire Brass Quintet from 1986 to 1994, he has also performed at Carnegie Hall and on the stages of major concert halls and live jazz venues across the nation.

Bruce Bozyk, bass, has also performed lead vocals and on trombone for over five decades. A member of area rock, R&B, and big band ensembles, you will find Bruce appearing at the Stonehouse Pizza Jazz nights on Thursdays. He has toured widely and was formerly stationed with the U.S. Navy Band in Hawaii.

Area audiences are in for a musical treat performed by jazz aficionados. We guarantee that you'll be humming and thrumming more than a few uniquely American tunes. 🎵

Visit us:

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



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**Facebook**



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### **JAZZING WITH THE WCC**

Sunday, April 30, 2023  
3 pm  
(an audience reception follows)

The Pajama Factory  
Clerestory Ballroom  
1307 Park Avenue, 2nd floor  
Williamsport

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

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. Our diverse and inclusive membership welcomes all singers and listeners as we perform music from a wide range of cultures, ethnicities, and traditions.”

*(Continued from page 1)*

backdrops for the stage and film versions of “The Pajama Game.”

When corporate owners, enticed by cheap labor costs, began to out-source clothing and other manufacturing abroad, Weldon’s shut down operations here in November 1979, just four years short of the building’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Since that time, various retail establishments, such as the Weldon’s and Cobbler’s factory outlets, occupied the complex, which was re-

named “Raytown.” In 2007, Mark and Susie Winkelman purchased the factory building from its namesake, Ray Smith.

Mark, an architect, envisioned a now well-executed plan to repurpose an industrial space so that an exciting and diverse community of creative people could set up shop. Today, The Pajama Factory contains over 150 spaces with studios leased to artists and craftspeople, as well as sites rented to area businesses,

cafés, non-profits, and for residential lofts and large events.

The Winkelmans’ future plans include a new parking lot (hooray!), a rooftop brewery, a farm-to-table restaurant, and more office and residential spaces. So, while the whirring of sewing machines at The Pajama Factory is gone, that buzz has been replaced by the joyful sounds of twenty-first century residents, creators, and singers at work. 🎵

