

## An All-Vivaldi Holiday



Allow the Williamsport Civic Chorus, Music Director Michael Connor, and an eight-piece orchestra to guide you on holiday. Off to Venice we'll go, the birthplace of Antonio Vivaldi, a.k.a. the Red Priest. You'll envision early Renaissance churches, gondoliers, and intricately colored art glass as you hear Vivaldi's vibrant music.

The itinerary includes the sacred works, *Gloria in D* and *Magnificat*, themselves iconic, performed at 3 pm on Sunday,

November 12, in the Trinity Episcopal Pro-Cathedral's sanctuary. A reception will follow.

To sail away on this Venetian holiday, you will only need concert tickets. They 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: New in Season 80

The Williamsport Civic Chorus was born on September 10, 1944, and our 80<sup>th</sup> season is under-way. Read on to learn what is new this year as we reach a milestone.

This summer, Steve Muthler, executive librarian, assembled a mighty crew to transport decades of our musical scores from the Community Arts Center's cellar to a first-floor storage room at an area church where sorting continues.

Singers also elected a new leadership team that took office in July. Those officers are: Diane Pelesh, president; Georgia Armstrong, vice-president; Diane Thomas, secretary; Irenay Weaver,

treasurer; and Meghan Hepler, historian. This all-female executive committee includes two individuals who are first-timers to the Board, a helpful development as we look toward the future.

Moreover, Michael Connor has engaged Ms. Ellen Boll as our rehearsal accompanist. From Williamsport, Ellen is well-accomplished, having earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Wheaton College and Florida State University in piano performance and piano accompanying, respectively. She also teaches piano, is an adjunct faculty member at Lycoming College, and serves the St. John's-

Newberry United Methodist Church.

And as we welcome people, we say "hello" to a strong group of 11 new singers this season. All this novelty lends energy as the Chorus prepares the "All-Vivaldi Holiday" concert. After all, the *Gloria in D*, one of the beloved works we'll be performing, was written in 1715 but was hidden away in Turin, Italy, for 200+ years until the descendants of a grand duke discovered it in 1930. The *Gloria* became a "hit," which Americans first heard performed on our shores only in modern times—1949! 🎵

## Know the Score



**Michael Connor**

### Why Vivaldi?

Like Mozart and Bach, “Vivaldi” is a household name these days. His *Gloria in D* is one of those pieces that many people get excited about. It was lost for many years and only discovered not too long ago. I’m incredibly familiar with it; however, Vivaldi’s *Magnificat* is a piece that I have only done once. I was so fond of it that I wanted to share it, and for me, it was “how can I put both of these pieces into one concert to kick off the holiday season?”

In the *Magnificat*, we’ve got the annunciation of the birth of Christ, and in the *Gloria*, the proclamation of the birth of Christ with the trumpeting of the angels. It’s the story of the Christmas season all wrapped up, a good concert for November.

How do Vivaldi’s choral works compare to his well-known instrumental pieces?

Vivaldi doesn’t stray too far from Vivaldi. He doesn’t branch too far from his own genre. In the choral works, he dabbles in his

love of opera, especially noticeable in the *Magnificat*’s operatic, unison choruses. They have tricky rhythms and interesting harmonies, creating a welcome challenge in preparing singers and audiences.

My first impressions of Vivaldi?

In high school and college, we sang and sight-read the *Gloria*. It was very singable by regular people—one of the first choral pieces I really got into, especially the “*Domine Fili unigenite...*” movement under the direction of Peggy Dettwiler. I just loved that. It was so very enjoyable, and I’m still teaching people the way that she taught it to me many years ago.

What is it like to be immersed in preparing this music for performance?

I plan to provide more assistance to the chorus, who are everyday singers, than to the formally trained instrumentalists. I balance who needs what cues at what times, while sometimes needing to cue contrary directions for the orchestra than for the chorus. It takes time and intuition during rehearsals to do this.

There are some trickier concepts in this music. The polyphony (or mixing different voice parts, each forming an individual melody and harmonizing with each other) can be challenging. Beyond that, masters like Bach and Mozart enjoyed writing in minor keys, as did Vivaldi in the *Magnificat*. Composers can express themselves so many more ways in a minor key; here Vivaldi is expressing himself to his fullest. The audience will feel the drama in the *Magnificat* and relief and jubilation in the *Gloria*. We’ll start with dramatic and emotive music, and we’ll then

### 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

just party for the rest of the concert with the *Gloria*.

This music was sparsely written. It was meant to be played and sung by small ensembles on a limited scale at a Catholic girls’ orphanage in Venice, where Vivaldi provided the youngsters with an incredible musical education. Although the young women’s contributions to religious services long ago were restricted by the choir loft’s being located behind a screen in the church’s balcony, their legacy survives. 🎵

“Know the Score” is provided for the enjoyment of our readers by Michael Connor who is in his ninth 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 in north central Pennsylvania.

## A VIVALDI-THEMED PUZZLE; SOLUTION AT THE CONCERT



### Across

1. Soprano Sarah Decker performs this in our *Gloria*
3. Vivaldi greatly influenced this composer
6. One of four movements in 5 down
7. Vivaldi epitomizes this musical style
8. The composer's father crafted these
10. The number of movements in 5 down
11. Where the *Gloria* was found in 1930 after 200 years
13. A woman attired for mourning, or a bride
15. WCC founded \_\_\_ years before the *Gloria*'s U.S. premiere
16. Vivaldi held this title at the Pietà orphanage
17. The color of Vivaldi's hair
19. Second note of the scale
20. A composer's body of work

### Down

2. A Vivaldi opera character, or Disney location
4. Composition form first perfected by Vivaldi, abbr.
5. The theme of Vivaldi's most popular work
6. Dynamic marking
8. Her words form the *Magnificat*'s text
9. Overseas, as in \_\_\_-mer, or other (Fr.)
12. Vivaldi's calling
13. Vivaldi's birthplace
14. We count some measures in \_\_\_
18. Comes before 19 across

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.



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COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

Visit us:

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



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**AN ALL-VIVALDI HOLIDAY**

Sunday, Nov. 12 2023

3 pm

(an audience reception follows)

Trinity Episcopal  
Pro-Cathedral844 West Fourth Street  
Williamsport[williamsportcivicchorus.org](http://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. Our diverse and inclusive membership welcomes all singers and listeners as we perform music from a wide range of cultures, ethnicities, and traditions.”

**Special Public Events***that include  
the Williamsport Civic Chorus***Friday, December 1,** 6 to 7 pm:  
Caroling at The Otto Bookstore,  
107 W. Fourth Street, Williamsport.**Friday, December 15,** 6 to 8 pm:  
Lantern Parade and Caroling with  
parishioners of Trinity Episcopal  
Pro-Cathedral, 844 W. Fourth  
Street, Williamsport, in support of  
Dwell Orphan Care.**Holiday Shopping?****Buy Chorus fundraiser items**

- Rada Cutlery
- Gardners Candies, Oct. 16-Nov. 13 from Chorus members, (or online until Dec. 15 with group ID# 10-2413 at [GardnersCandiesFundraising.com](http://GardnersCandiesFundraising.com))

**Patrons Reminder**

The Civic Chorus patron campaign is underway. You can now make those very important contributions by mail at PO Box 752, Williamsport, PA 17703, or on our [web-site](http://web-site) using [PayPal](http://PayPal). Thank you!