

ENTERTAINMENT ::

Print Article Email Article Share / Bookmark Buzz up!

Choral society marks 75 years of making music

Comments

November 10, 2010

By **DOROTHY ANDRIES** Contributing Columnist

When the North Shore Choral Society rings in the season Nov. 21 at Glenview Community Church, the singers will also be ringing in the society's 75th anniversary year. Begun in 1935 in the midst of the country's great depression, the chorus has endured through wars, peace and economic downturns, including the current recession.

"The members of the choral society are people who love music," said Julia Davids, who is beginning her second year as music director and conductor of the esteemed group. "We strive to produce an exciting live performances, not only with the standard choral repertoire, but also with new pieces that push us and the audience a little."



Julia Davids



North Shore Choral Society

There are currently 140 members in the group, give or take a dozen depending upon the works being sung. "We started rehearsing the Tuesday after Labor Day," she continued, "and our first concert is unapologetically Christmas music."

But Davids, who lives in Skokie, recently became a full time member of the music faculty at North Park University, so the program has more than beloved carols. The chorus will sing "There Shall a Star" from Mendelssohn's "Christus," the "Ave Maria" by Biebl and the American premiere of "Creator of the Stars of Night" by Canadian composer Jeff Enns.

Organist will be Gary Wendt, who is also director of the bell choir at Glenview Community Church.

February gala

The group's official 75th Anniversary Gala Concert will be held at 7 p.m. Saturday Feb. 12 at the Unitarian Church of Evanston. Davids searched the archives to choose a significant piece of music from each decade of the society's history. The program includes excerpts from the Faure "Requiem," Mendelssohn's "Elijah," "Haydn's "Creation," and Copland's "Old American Songs" to mention a few.

The final concert will be J. S. Bach's Mass in B Minor, held at 3 p.m. Sunday, June 12 at Pick-Staiger Concert Hall. The North Shore Choral Society will also join the Evanston Symphony Orchestra at 2:30 p.m. March 13 at Pick-Staiger for the performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 ("Choral").

Baritone Anthony Green of Wilmette has been with the chorus since 1974 and is particularly pleased with Davids' leadership. "Julia was assistant conductor at Northwestern when I was in the chorus there and I was very impressed with her," he explained. "She was one of the first persons we contacted when Donald Chen announced he was leaving." Chen became music director in 1984 and remained for 24 years, directing the chorus in outstanding performances of such choral classics as Bach's "St. Matthew Passion" and Mendelssohn's "Elijah."

Green, who is now retired, joined the North Shore Choral Society after he and his wife moved from the Boston area. "I wanted to sing classical music," he said, "and it has been a wonderful group."

Veteran chorister

One of the newest member of the ensemble is alto Julia Brueck of Evanston, who arrived on the North Shore in June, after receiving her doctorate in organ performance from the University of Iowa. She recently was hired as minister of music at St. David's Episcopal Church in Glenview, where she is choir master and organist.

"My mother was the choir director of the United Methodist Church in Philadelphia," she began, "so I started singing in the choir when I was four years old. I've been in choirs all my life. It is a passion with me."

She was particularly glad to find the North Shore Choral Society. "Someone mentioned the group to me and then I did my own search," she explained. "There is a big age range and people are very friendly, but also very serious about music."

"Julia is wonderful," she added. "She knows how to combine fun and humor for us, but she also has high expectations. She wants us to be the best we can be, and I like that."

"Ring in the Season"

Holiday music by the North Shore Choral Society and the Joyful Ringers handbell choir of the Glenview Community Church. 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 21 at Glenview Community Church, 1000 Elm St., Glenview. \$25, \$22 for seniors and \$15 for students

Call (773) 956-8400 or visit www.northshorechoral.org.

Note: the links and functions from the site are not operational; this is a PDF of the online article for archive purposes.