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The Chorus Newsletter

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Debbie Peetz in Opera

Debbie Peetz is appearing in the production by the Victorian Lyric Opera Company of "America's First Comic Opera" *Désirée*.

The opera was written by John Philip Sousa and Edward M. Tabor. Performances will be at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theater, 603 Edmonston Drive, Rockville, MD on Sept 14 at 8 PM, and Sept 16 at 2 PM. Adult tickets: \$20. Students and Seniors: \$15.

Debbie says that she will be singing in the chorus behind the orchestra so you might not see her at first.

As they say in the Theater, "Break a Leg."

Newsletter On-Line!

Soon, in addition to the hard copy that you are receiving each month, you may be able to access the Chorus Newsletter on the Chorus Website!

20th Century Music

A revolution occurred in 20th century music listening as the radio gained popularity worldwide, and new media and technologies were developed to record, capture, reproduce and distribute music. Because music was no longer limited to concerts and clubs, it became possible for music artists to quickly gain fame nationwide and sometimes worldwide. Conversely, audiences were able to be exposed to a wider range of music than ever before, giving rise to the phenomenon of world music. Music performances became increasingly visual with the broadcast and recording of music videos and concerts. Music of all kinds also became increasingly portable. Headphones allowed people sitting next to each other to listen to entirely different performances or share the same performance. Copyright laws were strengthened, but new technologies also made it easier to record and reproduce copyrighted music illegally.

20th century music brought new freedom and wide experimentation with new musical styles and forms that challenged the accepted rules of music of earlier periods. The invention of electronic instruments and the synthesizer in the mid-20th century revolutionized popular music and accelerated the development of new forms of music. Eastern, Middle-Eastern, Latin and Western sounds began to mix in some forms. Faster modes of transportation allowed musicians and fans to travel more widely to perform or listen. Amplification permitted giant concerts to be heard by those with the least expensive tickets, and the inexpensive reproduction and transmission or broadcast of music gave rich and poor alike nearly equal access to high quality music performances.

From: The web, Wikipedia

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**Testament of
Freedom**

Music Humor

MUSIC HUMOR

Adagio Formaggio: To play in a slow and cheesy manner.

AnDante: A musical composition that is infernally slow.

Angus Dei: To play with a divine, beefy tone.

A Patella: Unaccompanied knee-slapping.

Approximonto: A musical entrance that is somewhere in the vicinity of the correct pitch.

Bar Line: What musicians form after a concert.

Concerto Grossissimo: A really bad performance.

Coral Symphony: (see Beethoven-Caribbean period).

Dill Piccolino: A wind instrument that plays only sour notes.

Fermantra: A note that is held over and over and over and...

Fog Hornoso: A sound that is heard when the conductor's intentions are not clear.

Frugalhorn: A sensible, inexpensive brass instrument.

Gaul Blatter: A French horn player.

Gregorian Champ: Monk who can hold a note the longest.

Kvetchendo: Gradually getting annoyingly louder.

Mallade: A romantic song that's pretty awful.

Molto bolto: Head straight for the ending.

Poochini Musical: performance, accompanied by a dog.

Pre-Classical Conservatism: School of thought which fostered the idea, "if it ain't baroque, don't fix it."

Spritzicato: Plucking of a stringed instrument to produce a bright, bubbly sound, usually accompanied by sparkling water with lemon (wine optional).

Tincanabulation: The annoying or irritating sounds made by extremely cheap bells.

Vesuvioso: A gradual buildup to a fiery conclusion.

From <http://www.keller.com/bass/musician-jokes.html>

Thanks to Ellie Briscoe

Testament of Freedom

The text that fronts the score which we are using to sing from provides information about the circumstances of the origin of the composition and performance of the premier. In this paragraph, we provide a bit more insight into the composition itself.

Randall Thompson treats the first part like a hymn, and he harmonizes it in a very straightforward manner. The second part, according to composer and critic Virgil Thomson, sounds as though it was derived from an accompanied chant of the Russian Orthodox church. The martial spirit comes to the fore in section three, which includes some melodies that might have been inspired by Revolutionary War songs.

Thompson casts a contemplative, meditative mood in the final section before concluding with a reprise of the opening, which is not all that surprising in that the words are from Thomas Jefferson's letter to John Adams. September 12, 1821.

Randall Thompson wrote several other works that are familiar to choruses: Alleluia, for one. Here is what Berger had to say about Alleluia.

"Some may argue whether the very short Alleluia, with a text of only that words, should be considered a choral masterpiece, but none can doubt its position as one of the most exciting, noble, and frequently performed pieces in the entire choral repertoire."

Just three weeks before the July 8, 1940 opening of the Berkshire Music Center in Lenox, Massachusetts, Serg Koussevitzky, conductor of the Boston Symphony commissioned Thompson to compose a brief choral work for the opening ceremonies. In that short time, Thompson had not only to compose the music but to allow time for copies to be printed for the 250 voice Tanglewood Choir.

The copies of Alleluia were sent out from Philadelphia on Saturday morning July 6th and arrived at Tanglewood at five minutes before two on Monday afternoon. The choir, under G. Wallace Davison, had about forty-five minutes to rehearse, then went on to give the very successful premiere at three-thirty that very afternoon! Davison later commented, 'So sure was Thompson's technique, so expert his craftsmanship, as so masterly his grasp of the true genius of choral singing' that the choir was able quickly to master the music and the work was of such exceptional quality that it has become a favorite of both choirs and audiences."

Source: Guide to Choral Masterpieces, a Listener's Guide by Melvin Berger,

The Chorus Newsletter contains information about and for members of the NOVA Community Chorus. It is privately published monthly except during June and July. The College has no responsibility for its content. Members are encouraged to contribute articles and news about musical offerings and musical topics to Robert Trexler, editor and publisher, at Rtrex@aol.com