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The Chorus Newsletter

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Berkshire Choral Festival

I wanted to alert the NOVA chorus members that the Berkshire Choral Festival has published their summer 2008 schedule and is taking applications as of a week or two ago. This is a great summer vacation for anyone who enjoys choral singing. I've attended 3 times now - twice in Massachusetts (which is lovely) and once to Canterbury, which was wonderful. Their web site is www.choralfest.org. They offer 7 one week programs to choose from - four weeks in Massachusetts, and one each in Canterbury, Vancouver and Salzburg. Singers receive music and rehearsal CD's in advance, then spend the week working on the nuances with leading choral conductors, finishing the week with a performance with orchestra. Rehearsals are morning and evenings leaving afternoons free to explore the local area, including the option of organized trips to local attractions. If you have any interest, check it out. Singers under the age of 40 are offered a reduced tuition, and there is also an apprentice program for those who aspire to make a career in music. (Apprentices attend all four weeks in Massachusetts, and get the opportunity to work in small groups with the conductors.) Tuition includes room and board with the exception of only one or two meals for the week. It's summer camp for singers!

By Grace White

Poulenc Gloria

On December 2, 2007, The Northern Virginia Community Chorus performed the first of two performances of Francis Poulenc's Gloria. The chorus entered the Schlesinger Concert Hall following intermission and mounted the risers behind the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic. As usual, Dr. Mark Whitmire conducted.

Tiffany Bostic, soprano, provided the angelic voice required in three of the six movements.

Poulenc's Gloria has been criticized by some purists as too light-hearted or "modern" and too highly influenced by the moods of Paris nightclubs. Yet, the text and the interplay between the soloist and chorus lend a solemn flavor to the music in three of the movements.

Also on the program were the Nielsen Clarinet Concerto, Op 57, and Gerber's Seenade for String Orchestra. The Washington Post published an admirable review of the concert.

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The Conductor

Music Humor

Newsletter On-Line!

If you didn't get a copy of the Newsletter when you arrived, please go to novachorus.org where you can read it on line, thanks to Kate.



Seasons Greetings

MUSIC HUMOR

"I write [music] as a sow piddles." -- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

"My sole inspiration is a telephone call from a producer." -- Cole Porter

"I would rather play Chiquita Banana and have my swimming pool than play

Bach and starve." -- Xavier Cugat

"[Musicians] talk of nothing but money and jobs. Give me businessmen every time. They really are interested in music and art." -- Jean Sibelius,

"The amount of money one needs is terrifying..." -- Ludwig van Beethoven

"Only become a musician if there is absolutely no other way you can make a living." -- Kirke Mechem, on his life as a composer

"Chaos is a friend of mine." -- Bob Dylan

"I am not handsome, but when women hear me play, they come crawling to my feet." -- Niccolò Paganini

"Of course I'm ambitious. What's wrong with that? Otherwise you sleep all day." -- Ringo Starr

"What is the voice of song, when the world lacks the ear of taste?" --

Nathaniel Hawthorne

"Flint must be an extremely wealthy town: I see that each of you bought two or three seats." -- Victor Borge, playing to a half-filled house in Flint, Michigan.

"Critics can't even make music by rubbing their back legs together." --

Mel Brooks

"Life can't be all bad when for ten dollars you can buy all the Beethoven sonatas and listen to them for ten years." -- William F. Buckley, Jr.

"You can't possibly hear the last movement of Beethoven's Seventh and go slow." -- Oscar Levant, explaining his way out of a speeding ticket.

"Wagner's music is better than it sounds." -- Mark Twain

From the Web

The Conductor

Ray Lipari has given us the following extracts from a reliable source about the role and function of a conductor. This is the second of a series on the subject__ed.

Responsibilities of the Conductor, continued:

A good conductor must be at ease facing large and complex forces and coordinating their efforts, and he must know how to run an efficient and well organized rehearsal. It may seem a simplistic thing to say, but with a good conductor, both the music and orchestra playing it should sound better after the rehearsal than they did before. Like all good musicians, a good conductor must have a flair for performance, the ability to remain in control and yet bring a little something extra when it counts the most.

And bad conductors? Some are unimaginative or uninteresting, even if they are technically competent. Others are not very gifted — they have difficulty in communicating musical ideas, either physically, verbally or both. Some may even put on quite an extravagant physical show (complete with rapturous facial expressions that look great on TV), but without necessarily communicating much that's musically relevant or useful to the members of the orchestra. Other conductors are unprepared or undependable, and in fact they get in the way. They are uncertain in their gestures and cues, and they mistakes.

To be continued excerpts from The NPR Music Listener's Guide, by Miles Hoffman, Houghton Mifflin, 1997.

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 Rctrex@aol.com