

World Class Composer to Conduct Choral Festival

Written by Margaret Evans

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The Hilton Head Choral Society presents its first Choral Festival at 7 p.m. on Sunday, April 2 at Holy Family Catholic Church, on Hilton Head Island. The group's third concert of the season includes the 100 voices of the Choral Society in addition to 4 invited choruses, for a wall of sound that will feature over 175 voices.

The group will be conducted by world renowned composer Paul Basler. Basler is one of America's most popular and widely commissioned young composers of choral and instrumental music. His compositions have been performed at venues throughout the world including Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, The Spoleto Festival, the Sydney Opera House, and other high-profile venues. His music has been received with enthusiastic acclaim throughout the world, and the *New York Times* described it as "virtuosic and highly athletic."

The Choral Festival will feature 15 minute performances from each of five choruses - showcasing their unique talents and musical styles - under the direction of each group's conductor. As the grand finale for the evening, the choruses will combine with an orchestra to sing "Missa Brevis" and "Psalm 23," composed by Basler, who will direct the combined choruses.

The groups performing at the festival were not just selected at random – they have unique talents and connections to the Choral Society. They include a select choir of 30 singers from Avila University in Kansas City, MO, led by Dr. Amity Bryson. HHCS singers met this group in Italy in 2009, and were so impressed with their musicianship and dedication to choral singing that the HHCS wanted to include the group in their very first Choral Festival. Showcasing some

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of the top young voices in our area is a group of students from the new May River High School in Bluffton under the direction of Jason Snyder, Director of Choral/Orchestral Activities. The Charleston Southern University chorus, representing The Horton School of Music, will be conducted by Ricard Bordas, Assistant Professor of Music. With a variety of singers, both amateur and professionals of all ages, the Parish Choir of St. John's Episcopal Church in Savannah will also perform under the direction of Steve Branyon. This group is well known for the quality of their weekly performance in worship as well as their monthly Evensong services.

Of course, there will be selections performed by the Hilton Head Choral Society, under the direction of Tim Reynolds, Artist Director.

"This Festival will be a special evening for our audience and members of the Choral Society alike," says Reynolds. "We look forward to a memorable night of performances."

Enjoy all these talented voices at 7 p.m. on Sunday, April 2 at Holy Family Catholic Church, 24 Pope Avenue, Hilton Head Island. All seating is reserved, and tickets can be purchased through the Choral Society's website, www.hiltonheadchoralsociety.org, TICKETS, and follow the prompts. Tickets are also available by phone 843-341-3818.