

Wind Symphony & Chorale Will Perform 'European Treasures'

Written by Editor
Tuesday, 16 April 2019 09:31



The Lowcountry Wind Symphony, under the direction of Donald F. Jemella, will partner with the Mary Green Chorale, led by Mary Woodmansee Green for the LWS Spring Concert, entitled 'European Treasures.'

The dates for the concert are Friday, April 26th, 7 pm, at Sea Island Presbyterian Church, 81 Lady's Island Dr. in Beaufort. And Sunday, April 28th at 7:30 pm on Hilton Head Island at Holy Family Catholic Church. Tickets for that concert may be purchased on line at marygreenchorale.org. This concert is free and open to the public. The concert is free and open to the public, but donations are gratefully received.

'European Treasures,' the final program on the LWS 2018-2019 Season, offers a combined band and choral concert of well-known compositions with some interesting twists. The familiar 'Finlandia' by Jean Sibelius, Tchaikovsky's popular '1812 Overture', and Psalm 150 by Cesar Franck have been arranged for concert band and full chorus. J. S. Bach's 'Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring,' sung by the Chorale, will be accompanied by the LWS Brass Quintet.

Also on the program are selections by each of the two individual groups, including Overture to Rienzi, Florentiner March, Tango from Espana and more. Maestro Jemella and Maestra Green will share the podium during 'European Treasures' in this first ever pairing of the two musical groups.

Donald F. Jemella, a graduate of the Boston Conservatory of Music, is a founding member of the Lowcountry Wind Symphony. He is also the leader of the Odyssey Jazz and Swing Orchestra. Before moving to Sun City his career in music spanned more than forty years as a music educator, clinician, and guest conductor.

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Maestra Mary Woodmansee Green brings a wealth of musical experience to the greater Beaufort area. She began her vocal leadership in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, founding several men's and women's choral ensembles there. Upon arriving on Hilton Head Island she led the Hilton Head Orchestra as its conductor for more than a decade. Following that she established the Mary Green Chorale, which presents concerts of men's, women's, and mixed voices on Hilton Head Island throughout the year.

The Spring Concert program is comprised of beloved and well known-selections from the rich and varied musical history of Europe. Richard Wagner's first popular opera 'Rienzi' was composed during the mid 1800's and its overture was considered the greatest success of his career. Although the opera itself is rarely produced today, the 'Overture to Rienzi,' survives as a favored composition on modern orchestral programs. It begins with a call to arms and ends with a dazzling military march capturing both the orchestral brilliance and melodic splendor of grand opera.

Gustav Holst, born in the United Kingdom in 1874, was an English composer, arranger, and teacher. He is considered one of the most important composers of music for the wind band. LWS is such a group, made up of local amateur and professional brass, wind, and percussion players. Holst is chiefly remembered for his First and Second Suites along with his longer orchestral work, 'The Planets,' which LWS included in its Winter Concert. Holst's 'Second Suite in F for Military Band' consists of four movements and his keen interest in English folk tunes is evident throughout. The melodies are at times sprightly and then slow and serious, giving ample opportunities for showcasing the three different instrumental groups in the band. The arrangement on this program includes the rarely performed choral section created by the U.S. Army Band.

'Finlandia,' a tone poem, was written by Jean Sibelius in 1899. Its nationalist feeling, so dear to the Finnish people, was a covert protest against increasing censorship from the Russian Empire, which shares its border. Much of the composition is taken up with rousing and turbulent music, however the melody, which appears throughout the work, is one of the most widely recognized and compellingly beautiful in all orchestral literature. The premier of Finlandia took place on July 2, 1900 in Helsinki. Sibelius later reworked this melody as a stand-alone piece. It remains one of the most important national songs of Finland and is frequently performed as a solo or hymn tune with many different texts.

'European Treasures' will conclude with the Russian composer Pytor Ilyich

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Tchaikovsky's ever-popular '1812 Overture,' arranged for band and chorus. It was written in 1880 to commemorate the defense of the Russian fatherland against Napoleon's invading army some six decades before. American audiences have come to expect hearing this stirring work at July 4th Independence Day celebrations. The LWS' performance of the '1812 Overture' will be complete with chorus, ringing chimes and the sound of cannons.

The Lowcountry Wind Symphony welcomes new members to play with us, depending on the needs of the section. Those interested in joining may contact Don Jemella at 917-439-0244 or Bobbi Logan, 843-705-3289 for more information.