

**Fall Concert Dates:**

**December 2011 Concert Dates - Times - and Locations:**

**FRIDAY December 9, 8 p.m. Wyomissing**—Atonement Lutheran Church / 5 Wyomissing Boulevard

**December 10, 8 p.m. York**—Zion Lutheran 2215 Brandywine Lane

**December 11, 4 p.m. Lancaster**—First Presbyterian Church / 136 East Orange St.

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## *Wheatland Celebrates Its 25th Anniversary Season*

### J.S. Bach's *Magnificat* Highlights the December Holiday Program

The **Wheatland Chorale** proudly announces that it will inaugurate its 25th Anniversary Season with a performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's beloved work for Christmas Eve, *Magnificat*. Director Robert J. Upton, who has announced his retirement at the end of the current program year, has chosen his final year with the Chorale to perform Bach's baroque masterpiece that is well-known among choral leaders and artistic directors as a demanding and challenging piece that few community or regional choral groups will attempt and even fewer will do well.

**Although Bach and many** of his German contemporaries often wrote in their native language for their protestant patrons and employers it was usually a matter of choice on the part of the patron or the composer rather than a mandate. Consequently Bach stepped somewhat out of char-

acter when he composed his version of the *Magnificat* in Latin. Bach wrote his masterpiece for the resident adult choir at the St. Thomas Church at Leipzig (as distinguished from the renowned boys choir school dating back to the 13th century) where he served as Cantor. Hence it is a decidedly adult composition that celebrates the mysteries and joys of impending motherhood as well as the promise of God.

**Please refer to the overview** of Bach's *Magnificat* in the special feature by our guest contributor and former Wheatland baritone, Rändel L. Wolfe, D.M.A., on page 2 of this newsletter.

**The Chorale will be** accompanied by an instrumental ensemble that was underwritten through the generous support of the family and friends of the Margaret Yeager Shoes for Kids program that was begun this year in Reading and Lancaster in

memory of the late Margaret J. Yeager of Wyomissing. Please refer to the box insert on page 3 of this newsletter for more details.

**Balancing out the baroque** offerings on the program is a wide variety of seasonal works



Portrait of Johann Sebastian Bach by Elias Gottlob Haussmann—1746

from contemporary composers and arrangers from the United Kingdom, (continued on page 3)

### Check, Charge or Cash - Wheatland Chorale Concert Tickets Your Way!

**The days of cutting out,** filling out and mailing ticket order forms with a stamped, self-addressed envelope are now in the past. Tickets to the Wheatland Chorale are now available by telephone or via the internet. What's even better is that you can now **charge** your tickets with the same ease that you find when ordering from a catalogue

or any department store website.

**Brown Paper Tickets - The first and only fair trading ticket service!** © is the popular and highly rated ticket service that we have selected for our audience and patrons. One can easily order Wheatland Chorale tickets for any date and

any venue simply by calling the toll free number (800)838-3006 or by visiting their website at [www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com) and selecting the concert date and venue of choice. Tickets can be mailed, printed out at home or picked up at the Will Call table at the concert. Credit cards are welcome and the service fee is only .99 per ticket.



**Rändel L. Wolfe** is a Wheatland Chorale baritone presently on leave. A native of Bakersfield, California, Rändel holds a bachelor of music degree from California Lutheran University, a master of sacred music degree from Wittenberg University and a doctor of musical arts degree in choral conducting and organ performance from the University of Kansas. While in Kansas he served as principal organist of the Kansas City Symphony and lecturer at the Institute of Liturgical Studies at Valparaiso University. He served as full time Director of Music at Trinity Lutheran Church in Reading for more than 10 years. In 2009 he was elected to a 3 year term as board member of the Royal School of Church Music America. He is an active member of the American Guild of Organists, the Guild of Carillonners in North America, the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians and Chorus America. He makes his home in Reading, Pennsylvania.

## *A LUTHERAN MUSICIAN'S OVERVIEW OF Bach's Magnificat*

**Johann Sebastian Bach's *Magnificat*** was written as a special composition for his first Christmas as Director of Music for the City of Leipzig in 1723. This was an important position with daunting responsibilities including supervision of music instruction and performance in the two large or principal churches and two smaller ones as well as the city's public music schools. Bach, who was the council's third choice for the position, placed himself under considerable pressure to set this ancient text in a memorable format worthy of his position and thereby convince the city fathers that the rejection of their offer by their first two choices was actually fortuitous.

**Leipzig was renowned as a** major cultural center in 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe and large churches wanted and expected major liturgical pieces specially composed for various liturgical events. This piece was written specifically for the late afternoon or evening service of the Lutheran Christmas Vespers. It's one of the Old Testament canticles quoted by Mary at the annunciation (the announcement that she was with child) as reported in Luke 1: 46-55. Historically, settings of the *Magnificat* written before Bach provided the Catholic church with one of its principal and best known canticles, largely because of the beloved text. Perhaps for that reason it was retained in the Lutheran service of Vespers, though usually

sung in German and frequently for the service of evening prayer. In the Lutheran Vespers the *Magnificat* was often sung by the choir alone but sometimes by the congregation as well. Some of the arrangements were not written for voice but for organ, with the most notable compositions written by Johann Pachelbel and Dietrich Buxtehude.

**What sets Bach's version of the *Magnificat*** apart from so many others is that it was a thoroughly original composition that abandoned the standard baroque structure of recitative-aria-chorus in favor of alternating arias and choruses. The other departure from standard or accepted form was his adroit employment of a five-part chorus and alternating use of chorus and soloists to establish contrasting moods, thereby providing the desired emphasis to the text. Similar techniques at creating mood and context are employed with the orchestra, a practice commonly adopted by many other composers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century such as Handel's *Messiah* and Mozart's *Requiem*.

**Contrary to the general** practice of German Lutheran worship in the native language, Bach composed the *Magnificat* using the Latin text intended for the high feast of Christmas Vespers, undoubtedly in the belief that the sophisticated audience in Leipzig would know and understand the Latin as

well as the native German. (The *Mass in B Minor*, was the only other major work that Bach composed in Latin.) Another departure from convention at the time was Bach's decision to compose the piece in E minor. We are left to wonder why he chose E minor but apparently it was a less than comfortable choice in the 18<sup>th</sup> century since in 1732 Bach revised the *Magnificat* in the brighter key of D major, the only original version that survives to date.

**Unlike the large works for** chorale and orchestra such as the monumental *Mass in B Minor*, the *St. John Passion* and the *St. Matthew Passion*, Bach clearly demonstrated that he was equally adept at doing more with less in the *Magnificat*.

**The range of emotion that** Bach exhibits by employing tender arias and powerful choral movements in striking contrast is nothing short of remarkable. He reveals both the tender and explosive elements of his style and the full range of the choral dynamic in 12 movements that are exquisitely performed in the space of approximately 30 minutes.

**Dr. Rändel L. Wolfe**

Editor's Note: Source material includes the Oxford Grove Music Encyclopedia; and recording notes, Clifford Bartlett, Polygram Classics, 1984.

## *IMPORTANT NOTICE TO OUR BERKS COUNTY AUDIENCE*

**Please take note that the** December concert at Atonement Lutheran Church in Wyomissing, usually held on the Saturday of our concert weekend, has been scheduled this year for **Friday**, December 9th in order to accommo-

date the several members of our Berks County audience who are season ticket holders of the Reading Symphony Orchestra. This year the RSO will be offering a special performance of Handel's *Messiah* on Saturday evening and rather

than force our loyal patrons to make a choice we chose instead to offer them a unique opportunity to enjoy both concerts in what one may call a Baroque in Berks weekend.

**We are especially grateful**

to the staff at Atonement Lutheran Church for its flexibility and consideration. This Spring the concert at Atonement will return to its usual Saturday night date. Thank you.

The Board of Directors

## J.S.Bach's *Magnificat* - continued from page 1

Canada and the United States. Mack Wilberg, Assistant Conductor of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Z. Randolph Stroop are representative of the best American contemporary composers, Eleanor Daley and Stephen Hatfield are outstanding examples of Canadian compositional talent and Peter Philips of Tallis Scholars fame along with the world-renowned John Rutter add the necessary British touch to any holiday choral celebration. A brand new commissioned arrangement of the 15th century plainchant "Veni Emmanuel" by the Wheatland Chorale's own composer/arranger, Doug Weaver, will open the program.

**Director Upton's final turn** as Conductor will occur next

Spring with a performance of one of his personal favorites, *A German Requiem* by Johannes Brahms. Instead of the usual orchestra or ensemble the instrumental accompaniment will be purposely limited to pianos in order to emphasize the chamber-like qualities of the work, the simplicity of the lush vocal harmonies and the "sing with one voice" sound that Mr. Upton has developed with the Chorale.

**The first stop on the farewell concert tour** will occur on April 13 at Zion Lutheran Church in York. It will be followed by the concert weekend of April 20-22. The weekend begins with the Friday evening concert at the acoustically renowned Leffler Chapel and Performance Center at

Elizabethtown College, it continues with the Saturday evening concert at Atonement Lutheran in Wyomissing and the finale on Sunday afternoon at the historic First Presbyterian Church in downtown Lancaster.

**Tickets, including season tickets** may now be purchased on-line or via telephone using a toll-free number from Brown Paper Tickets. Payment can be made via credit card or check and tickets may be delivered via email, U.S. Mail or will-call. Please see the announcement on page one for more detail. Advance sale and Season Ticket discounts apply. Naturally tickets will be sold at the door for the face value of \$20 and \$5 for students.

## Wheatland Chorale Founder and Director Announces Retirement

**Robert J. Upton, Artistic Director and Founder**, has announced his decision to retire from his role as leader of the Wheatland Chorale at the conclusion of the Spring Concert Series in April, 2012. In his announcement to the Chorale earlier this year Rob expressed his belief that the future of the Wheatland Chorale is "very bright indeed, and I have every confidence that you will all go on to even greater achievements as an ensemble."

Reaching a decision of such magnitude is undoubtedly more difficult for the founder of the organization but after 25 years of auditions, concert planning, rehearsals and performances a decision to pass the baton can only be made by the founder alone.

**Rob will move on to the next chapter** of his life, eventually in Arizona, where his escape from Pennsylvania winters will be well-deserved. In the meantime he will continue to

lead the group with the same skill, expectation and demand for excellence that has made the Wheatland Chorale what it is today.

**A search committee of well respected and independent music professionals** has been appointed by the Board of Directors and it is in the process of reviewing nearly 30 résumés from potential candidates across the United States. An announcement of a successor is planned for the Spring of 2012.

## ELIZABETHTOWN COLLEGE ANNOUNCES NEW "CHOIR IN RESIDENCE"

**On July 1st of this year** the new creative partnership of Elizabethtown College and The Wheatland Chorale became a reality. The partnership will provide the College with increased education and performance opportunities for students, additional musical resources and opportunities for collaborative efforts and pro-

jects including community outreach. The association with the College will enhance the ability of the Chorale to develop and implement a plan to further enhance its artistic quality, increase its performances and geographic reach, and build on its reputation toward becoming the premier choral ensemble of this region.

The College also will support and facilitate a partnership of the Chorale and Gretna Music, also affiliated with the College, and will provide professional fund-raising and marketing counsel to the Chorale.

**The value of the assistance** that our relationship with the College *Continued on page 4*

### Peg's Shoes for Children

Margaret "Peg" Yeager was a wife, a mother, and the proprietor of "Margaret's", an upscale ladies shoe store in Reading for over 15 years. She was also the co-founder with her husband, Ed, of *Yeager Supply, Inc.* in Reading and Lititz. Peg had an affinity for children and shoes throughout her life and after her death her family and friends created the Shoes for Kids project at the Children's Home of Reading and the Salvation Army in her memory. In the 6 months since the project began nearly \$5000 has been raised, and more than 100 needy children have been provided with shoes in time for school with more to be served. The great need identified by this project has led to its expansion into Lancaster through the Christ's Home for Children and the Salvation Army respectively. Donations for this program are made directly to the aforementioned programs and are tax-deductible. This year, when more people are out of work than at any time since the Great Depression, more children than ever are in need of basic things. Your gift to one of these organizations, designated for "Peg's Shoes for Children", will go directly to the effort to put shoes on the feet of deserving children in your area.

### TO OUR COMPUTER AND WEB-SAVVY FRIENDS:

You can receive our email updates of news and activities by joining our mailing list. If you have not already done so please send your email address to us at [wheatand.chorale@gmail.com](mailto:wheatand.chorale@gmail.com). Also, if you would add our address to your address book-- **Wheatland-Chorale-Announcements@googlegroups.com** -- it will prevent our announcements from being filtered from your in-box.

# Wheatland CHORALE

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[www.thewheatlandchorale.org](http://www.thewheatlandchorale.org)

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



The Wheatland Chorale receives state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

## Elizabethtown College “Choir in Residence” - *continued from page 3* **Page 4**

promises to a not-for-profit musical arts organization like the Chorale cannot be overstated. The brutal reality for many chorales and similar arts organizations across the nation is all too real and it is reflected in the number of organizations that have dissolved over the past 3 years due to declining support from communities now facing the hardships of a declining economic base, shrinking government support for the arts and changing priorities.

**Those of us in education and the musical arts** know first hand how important music is to the psyche and the soul. We know that the young people now in college and about to enter college will only receive a true education if they are exposed to and participate in some way in the arts. That is why this new collaboration was championed by President Ted Long in the last year of his administration and embraced wholeheartedly by new President

Carl J. Strikwerda. The Chorale is likewise committed to this new partnership with equal enthusiasm realizing that in Elizabethtown College we will have a cooperative and understanding partner that shares a vision of artistic growth and a commitment to excellence. Each party will be justified in expecting the best that the other has to offer.

**One of the ideas for community outreach** that is already in the preliminary planning stage is periodic weekend workshops with renowned composers and conductors hosted and sponsored by the College and the Chorale. The opportunities for learning and sharing with area choirs of all ages and levels are myriad and the idea now becomes much closer to reality than a mere wish or dream. This is but a single idea for community outreach and we expect it to be the first of many.

**Realizing that we don't have a**

corner on the market for new and good ideas we invite our patrons and community at large to submit to us their own ideas for other outreach projects. You may send an email to the attention of the Wheatland Chorale Board of Directors at [wheatland.chorale@gmail.com](mailto:wheatland.chorale@gmail.com) or by writing to us at P.O. Box 5354, Lancaster, PA 17606-5354. We can't promise that all ideas will be adopted or pursued but we can promise that all ideas and suggestions will be read, respectfully reviewed and considered. We can also promise that all written submissions will receive a thankful acknowledgement and perhaps a request for more.

**PLEASE DON'T FORGET**  
You can visit our website at:  
[www.thewheatlandchorale.org](http://www.thewheatlandchorale.org)  
You can now purchase tickets to our concerts by visiting  
[www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com)  
or calling 1-800-838-3006