

Robert Dale Chorale Presents 25th ANNUAL BACH FESTIVAL

The Robert Dale Chorale will present the 25th Annual NEPA Bach Festival Thursday through Sunday, March 18-21. To mark the 25th year, the Festival has been expanded from three to four days of exceptional music. The Festival begins on Thursday with a Piano Concert, continues with an Organ Concert on Friday and a Chamber Music Concert on Saturday, and celebrates Bach's birthday with a Choral Concert on Sunday.

The Festival opens on Thursday, March 18 at 8:00 pm at Marywood University's Marian Chapel with a Piano Concert given by Father Seán Duggan, professor of piano at SUNY Fredonia. This special addition to this year's Bach Festival is presented in conjunction with the Marywood University Department of Music, Theatre and Dance. Father Duggan will be performing two works for solo keyboard, J. S. Bach's Partita No. 4 in D Major, BWV 828 and the Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 903. He will also be joined by the Marywood University Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of Dr. Nathaniel Parker, in a performance of Bach's Concerto in D Minor, BWV 1052. Father Duggan has a special affinity for the music of J. S. Bach, and has performed the complete cycle of Bach's keyboard works. Before he joined the Benedictine order he was pianist and assistant chorus master for the Pittsburgh Opera Company, and has performed with many orchestras including the Louisiana Philharmonic, the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the Leipzig Baroque Soloists, The Prague Chamber Orchestra, The American Chamber Orchestra and the Pennsylvania Sinfonia.

The Festival continues on Friday, March 19 at 8:00 pm with a performance by Ryan Enright, who is pursuing the DMA degree in organ performance and literature at the Eastman School of Music. This free concert will be given at a new venue this year: Covenant Presbyterian Church in Scranton. Mr. Enright took first prizes at the RCCO National Organ Playing Competition, Quebec Organ Competition, and the Canadian Music Competition, and competed in the international competitions of Dublin and Kotka, Finland. He has served as Organ Scholar and Assistant Organist of Christ Church Cathedral in Montreal, Director of Music and Organist of St. Philip's Church in Montreal and currently serves as organist of Gates Presbyterian Church. Known for his skills as an organ improviser, Mr. Enright will include an improvisation as part of his program, and will perform works by J. S. Bach, Georg Böhm, Dieterich Buxtehude, Nicolas de Grigny, and Robert Schumann.

On Saturday, March 20 at 8:00 pm members of the Bach Festival Orchestra will present a Chamber Music Concert at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Scranton. The first half of the program will focus on chamber music for flute and oboe by J. S. Bach, C. P. E. Bach, and Georg Philipp Telemann. In celebration of the 200th birthday of Robert Schumann, the second half of the program will feature Schumann's Piano Quintet in E flat Major. Performing on the program will be a number of guest artists as well as some of NEPA's best performers, including Tom Heinze, oboe, Ed Wargo, flute, Sophie Till and Lisa Burrell, violin, Eddy Malave, viola, Christiane Appenheimer-Vaida and Gayle Klaber, cello, and Tsukasa Waltich, harpsichord and piano.

The Bach Festival concludes with "A Bach Birthday Bash" on Sunday, March 21 at 3:00 pm in St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Scranton. March 21 is J. S. Bach's 325th birthday, and to mark the occasion the Robert Dale Chorale and the Bach Festival Orchestra will perform Cantata 36 "Schwingt freudig euch empor" (Soar joyfully upwards), Cantata 66 "Erfreut euch, ihr Herzen" (Rejoice, you hearts), and the famous "Sheep May Safely Graze" aria from Cantata 208. Bach wrote each of these works to celebrate the birthday of someone important to him, and the Chorale now returns the favor. Featured soloists are Kathy Brink, Larry Hickernell, Kathleen Shucosky, Janet Thatcher, Carol Tome, and Larry Vojtko.

The Bach Festival is supported by a Lackawanna County Arts and Cultural grant, a program of the Lackawanna County Commissioners and the Lackawanna County Council on the Arts, and by grants from the Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts and the MetLife Foundation Volunteer Ventures program.

Admission for the Piano, Chamber Music and Choral Concerts is \$15, \$12 for seniors and WVIA members, and \$7 for students. For more information about the Robert Dale Chorale, to reserve tickets, or to order a

copy of the Chorale's CD, please contact the Chorale office at (570) 586-3921 or visit www.robertdalechorale.org. Parking information and directions are also available on the website, as is information about the Chorale's spring Pops concert on April 16: *An Evening of Rodgers & Hammerstein*.

Founded in 1977, the Robert Dale Chorale serves Northeastern Pennsylvania with public appearances, concerts, and other community functions. The Chorale has received critical acclaim for performances of works ranging from the Renaissance to the present. They have appeared on local television, on WVIA-FM, and on many regional performing arts series. Dr. Steven Thomas has served as Music Director of the ensemble since the 2004-2005 season.