

GMCHORALE

Haydn and Bernstein Concert Features Sonic Splendor Sunday, May 1, in Middletown by GMChorale

GMChorale invites you to experience sonic splendor on Sunday, May 1, at 5 PM during the performance of two stirring masterpieces, Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* and Joseph Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, at The Performing Arts Center, 200 LaRosa Lane, Middletown, CT.

Under the baton of Artistic Director Joseph D'Eugenio, the Chorale will be accompanied by the New Haven Symphony Orchestra. For this music, the orchestra's percussion section will be greatly expanded.

Boy soprano Rory Latham will be featured in the *Chichester Psalms*, which will be sung in the original Hebrew as Bernstein insisted. Soloists for the *Lord Nelson Mass* are Sheri Hammerstrom, Soprano; Caroline O'Dwyer, Mezzo Soprano; Terrence Fay, Tenor; and Ryan Burns, Bass. All are professional singers of note whose careers span Connecticut and New York City.

"Many of us would be very delighted if there was a hint of *West Side Story* about the music," said the Dean of Chichester Cathedral when he commissioned the extraordinary work in 1965. Featuring text from selected Psalms that are common to both Christian and Judaic tradition, and with echoes of Broadway in the melodies, the composer blended Biblical Hebrew text and Christian choral tradition. According to Director D'Eugenio, "Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* presents a glimpse into his unique ability to orchestrate and integrate traditional religious content with a Broadway-esque flair."

Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass* was written in 1798 during a terrifying time for Austria because of Napoleon's threat to the country. It is perhaps the composer's greatest single composition, evoking emotions ranging from solemnity to joy. "The Haydn mass is essentially a vocal symphony that is filled with dramatic musical swells, powerful military influences featuring trumpets and timpani, and glorious soaring vocal lines that rise above the complex string writing," according to Director D'Eugenio.

Originally named *Missa in Angustiis* ("Mass for times of distress") by Haydn, the title *Lord Nelson Mass* was given by others after 1800, apparently because the work was among those performed for Lord Nelson when he visited Prince Esterhazy in September of 1800. Although it has been suggested that this work may reflect personal or national political stresses, it was written to celebrate with joy the name-day of Princess Esterhazy, whose family employed the composer.

D'Eugenio concludes, "The juxtaposition of these two great works will present a listening experience for the audience like no other because of their exuberance and drama. The performance, just over an hour in duration without intermission, will be a wonderful musical experience for all!"

GMChorale (Greater Middletown Chorale), an 80-member auditioned symphonic chorus, is widely known for its fine performances of the world's great classical music and contemporary works, many commissioned by the ensemble. The group is supported in part by the Connecticut Arts Endowment Fund, Middletown Commission on the Arts, Aetna Foundation and Pfizer Foundation. Visit <http://www.gmchorale.org> for further information and tickets.

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