

Tower Chorale presents haunting 'Voice of Anne Frank'



The Tower Chorale will perform "Annelies: The Voice of Anne Frank" in Western Springs and River Forest. (The Tower Chorale)

Dorothy Andries Pioneer Press

We know the story of Anne Frank, the young German girl whose Jewish family went into hiding in an attic room in Amsterdam, only to be betrayed and to perish in a concentration camp a few months before the camp was liberated in May of 1945.

Anne began writing her diary in 1942 describing their years in hiding. It was found by a friend and kept until Anne's father, Otto, the family's only survivor, returned at the end of World War II in Europe. He had it published and it

became an international best-seller, a Hollywood movie, an opera, and has been presented in numerous forms on stage and television.

British composer James Whitbourn wrote a 14-movement oratorio, "Annelies: The Voice of Anne Frank," which had its world premiere in April 2005 in London, with the Choir of Clare College Cambridge and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Leonard Slatkin.

The Tower Chorale will give perform the choral piece on March 5 in Western Springs and March 12 in River Forest. About 80-plus members of the chorale will be conducted by Patrick Godon, music director since 2011.

"("Annelies") is new to me," Godon said, "but I fell in love with it when I first heard it on James Whitbourn's website. I encountered the piece over the summer when I was planning the season looking at various websites of other choral ensembles.

"I knew this was a perfect piece for the singers of the Tower Chorale," he continued. "They are able to meet the vocal challenges of the work and are enjoying singing a work of such quality that they've never sung before."

"Patrick is challenging us, stretching us," said Craig Fisher, chairman of the board of the Tower Chorale and a bass with the chorus. "We have spent many years singing choral pieces from the Western European classical repertoire. He wants to expand our horizons." Fisher describes the music as "haunting. It is the most moving piece I've ever sung," he said.

"Those who attend this performance will feel Anne's feelings for themselves in a powerfully direct way," Godon concluded. "I highly encourage everyone to attend. You will be glad you did."

The Tower Chorale, established in Chicago's western suburbs in 1986, is a 100-voice community chorus comprised of amateur and professional singers, including former members of the Chicago Symphony Chorus, Grant Park

Symphony Chorus, Light Opera Works, Chicago Opera Theater, plus various community theater and music organizations as well as singers from many church choirs.

Children 10 and under are admitted free to Tower Chorale concerts, but need a ticket, due to the seating capacity of the venues. However Those bringing children are encouraged to arrive early when doors open at 2:30 p.m. to obtain a free ticket for children.

'Annelies: The Voice of Anne Frank'

What: Tower Chorale concerts

When and where: 3 p.m. March 5 at Western Springs Christian Reformed Church, 5140 Wolf Road, Western Springs; and 3 p.m. March 12 at Concordia University Chapel, 7400 Augusta St., River Forest

Tickets: \$20; \$17 for seniors and students in advance; \$23, \$20 for students and seniors at the door.

Contact L 708- 580-0997; www.towerchorale.org

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