

Choirs to sing Messiah this weekend

Written By CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD

The New Tecumseth Singers and the Dufferin Concert Singers are singing Handel's Messiah in Orangeville and Alliston over the next two weekend. Conductor, John Wervers sat down with us recently to talk about music and Messiah.

'The longevity of people staying in choirs is understandable,' Mr. Wervers commented. 'It may be the way certain want to use their leisure time. When people are raising their families, living their self-imposed busyness, they forget to feed their hearts and souls,' he opined. 'Singing can bring people together. Music is very good for cognitive health. People have come to realize how important it is to participate in music, both as a singer or player or audience.'

'We have a full range of ages from 16 to the 'golden years.' Music can heal a lot of wounds in our life. In time of tensions and conflict, singing is bonding but very essential; people can always have it in their lives, in spite of what else is going on.'

As a part of a whole, one member amongst many in a choir, his remark was, 'Singing also can give most people a sense of accomplishment, reasonably quickly: we accomplish singing this piece well, together. People come together from all walks of life.'

He saw that, 'by and large the vast number of singers are amateurs in our country. The creative spirit is not as regimented as we think it can be.'

Handel wrote the Messiah in 1741 and the question of such great works is what makes it so enduring?

To Mr. Wervers, 'Its universal appeal, meaning a certain energy, music combining with text can enter a spiritual realm.'

Even now?

'Absolutely. It's the fire major works do have.'

Joining the two choirs as soloists are soprano, Hanna Spencer, tenor, Blair Spry, a music graduate of Wilfred Laurier University; mezzo soprano, Cara Cameron; and bass, Lorne Derraugh.

The Waterloo Chambers Players Orchestra, 18 musicians, is accompanying them, along with Ben Brisby, on tympani a local student and Dr. Mark Lane-Smith, playing the violin.

'It's important to use local performers as much as possible. People need to hear music; they need to participate in it,' said he, commenting, 'Messiah can run three hours. We did here and in Alliston a few years ago. I give an intermission part way through and, of course, it's very exciting ' very big in places and dark in others. The vitality and rhythm make it so special. We are not doing that this year.'

'Handel really brings you, the listener into the sadness as much as he does the joy.'

'It's got the universal message.'

The Tecumseth Singers and the Dufferin Concert Singers, along with the Waterloo Chamber Players Orchestra are performing the Christmas Messiah at the Broadway Pentecostal Tabernacle at 556 Broadway West on Saturday, December 15, at 7:30 pm. In Alliston, Banting Memorial High School, 203 Victoria Street East, at on Sunday, Dec. 16, at 3:00 pm.

For tickets, BookLore, 121 First Street, Lloyds Papermoon, 47 Victoria Street West. South Simcoe Arts, 14r Victoria Street, East,

Alliston. Or call Keith at 705-435-7374 or Kathy on 647-483-2117.