

Vivaldi's Gloria will highlight chamber choir concert April 23

By Constance Scrafield

In what promises to be an evening of wonders, a concert at Westminster United Church in Orangeville this month will feature Vivaldi's Gloria and include soloists, choral and instrumental chamber and Baroque music.

John Wervers, the director and coordinator of this concert and community choirs based in Orangeville and Alliston, has conducted five previous concerts in Orangeville. They have mainly featured classical music, most recently a choral Tribute to Canada by the Dufferin Concert Singers and New Tecumseth Singers.

'We wanted to do something a little different this year, leading us to assemble the chamber concert beginning with Vivaldi's Gloria,' Wervers commented.

The concert is headed by the Amaranth Chamber Choir and The Waterloo Chamber Players Orchestra, a 23-piece orchestra.

'I organize these concerts but, where I can, I use local musicians as soloists,' he said.

Certainly, that has been the case here, for Cara Cameron is the mezzo soprano and Hannah Shelton Campbell is the soprano. Both are from this area. Henry Janzen, who is soloist on the viola, is with Hart House Orchestra in Toronto.

As for the Amaranth Chamber Choir, its members come from 13 different communities.

'Our goal is to work with strong voices: seven of them are music teachers and the others have musical backgrounds, all people I've worked with,' Wervers explained.

The music comes from Vivaldi, J. S. Bach, Elgar, Rutter, Whitaker - a collection of small and major music and songs, duets and solos, full orchestra with choir, fabulous.

'We do segments of seven weeks,' Wervers explained about his circuit with the singers and musicians, 'in the fall and the spring.'

Although Wervers and his wife currently live in London, they were based in Dufferin for many years. Since the move west, he has had the use of an apartment in Schomberg which readily facilitated his continuing to work with the musicians and singers to perform in this region.

Over the years, the former head of music at two Dufferin high schools said, 'we did 150 concerts in Alliston. We had a good time.'

He went on to explain some differences between a choir and a chamber choir.

'The chamber choir is smaller; typically, everyone is responsible for their own parts - there must be clarity, precise singing.'

The style of chamber music differs as well.

'The energy, the rhythmic development and the repetitiveness are beautiful,' he said. 'There are slow and tense elements like the Bach that we are doing for this concert.'

Nancy Sicsic, organist and music director for Westminster United Church, is also in this upcoming concert, playing as accompanist and soloist. Sicsic has been with the church for about two years and has been instrumental in producing several concerts there during that time.

Naturally, people within and without the church are delighted about the renovations to the interior that took place over the summer last year. The balcony was taken down, the whole was brought to one level and a state-of-the-art sound system was installed.

Designed to reflect its historical look and to attract performers and musicians to produce their concerts in the church, the work done to the interior of the is a real boon for the community at large. Sources say there are plans to carry on with improvements to the building with a view to making it a more multi-use facility for the whole community.

So, the concert is April 23, at 7:30 p.m. at the church, 247 Broadway. Tickets are being sold at the church, BookLore, and by calling John Lemke at 519-216-2830.