

SummitLife

Practice, practice, practice



Summit Choral Society heads to Carnegie Hall for third year

By Jefferson Geiger
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Some artists wait their whole lives to go to Carnegie Hall. The Summit Choral Society, however, is fortunate enough to be returning to the prestigious stage in New York City for a third time.

"It's a huge venue with a storied past," said Cathie Hill, president of the Summit Choral Society. "It's the grand dame of performance venues in the country. It's somewhat intimidating frankly."

Hill is no stranger to legendary music locations. As the choir teacher at Summit High School for 13 years, she has taken her students to sing in places like the Sydney Opera House, the Vatican, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Halle, Germany, the birthplace of composer George Frideric Handel.

"They're all really great venues and have a different feel," she said. "I would say maybe Carnegie feels warmer to me as a venue than does the Sydney Opera House, for example. It's just such an honor to be able to join that long line of great concerts and contribute a bit. So many great performers have been on that stage."

Their spring performances usually feature more traditional music and the last time the



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The Summit Choral Society rehearses on Monday at the Christ Lutheran Church in Breckenridge.

group went to New York was to sing one of John Rutter's requiem masses under the English composer's own baton. Summit Choral Society's director, Jill Schroeder-Dorn, served as his rehearsal assistant and according to Hill, organizer Mid-America Productions was so impressed that she was invited back to conduct. June's concert in New York will be the first time Summit Choral Society will be a headliner.

Summit's choir will perform Ralph Vaughan Williams' "Dona Nobis Pacem" at Carnegie Hall while the rest of the program will feature Kevin T. Padworski's world premiere of "Wanderlust" along with John Rutter's "Magnificat" and "Mass of the Children."

Joining them in New York will be the New England Symphonic Ensemble, special soloists hired by MidAmerica, conductors David R. Thye,

Padworski and Bruce Southard, and other choirs from around the country such as Schroeder-Dorn's own students from Colorado Christian University. The special occasion will even be an opportunity for Hill, an alto, to sing with her sister, who lives in their native Oklahoma.

"She and I both have degrees in music but she and I have never sung together because she's younger than I am," Hill said.

If people can't make it

the East Coast, they'll be relieved to know that local performances of "Dona Nobis Pacem" will happen next month on Monday, April 8, and Tuesday, April 9. Instead of MidAmerica performers, the evenings will highlight four different bass and baritone soloists and two women sharing the high soprano solos.

The cantata was written in 1936 and is an anti-war piece — the title translates to "grant us

IF YOU GO

What: 'Dona Nobis Pacem'

When: Monday, April 8, and Tuesday, April 9, at 7 p.m.

Where: The Monday performance is at Christ Lutheran Church 16072 Highway 9, Breckenridge. Tuesday's concert is Lord of the Mountains Lutheran Church, 65 Highway 6, Dillon.

Cost: Both performances are free but donations are encouraged.

THE BIG APPLE

What: New England Symphonic Ensemble presented by MidAmerica Productions

When: Saturday, June 1, at 7 p.m. with a prelude concert at 6.

Where: Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium, 881 Seventh Ave., New York City.

Cost: Tickets are \$135. Visit CarnegieHall.org to purchase or contact the Summit Choral Society for limited discounted tickets.

peace" — that is based off of Walt Whitman's poetry and biblical texts. "This is a very ambitious and difficult piece for our choir," Hill said. "It's all about the heartfelt desire for peace rather than war. It's a very dramatic piece and it almost sounds cinematic."

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CHORAL

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Given the nature of the material, it is at times a somber performance. The fourth section, titled “Dirge for Two Veterans,” is an emotional tune about a father and son dying together in war and being buried in the same grave.

“On Monday nights I have sometimes a hard time sleeping after rehearsal because it just gets into your head so much,” said Hill.

Yet, there will be a brief respite with an upbeat, gospel spiritual song called “I Sing Because I’m Happy.” April 9’s concert will also feature a performance from Summit Choral Society’s two scholarship winners, Summer Krueger and Jorie Benson, and end with a small reception.

Shortly after the group touches down in Colorado, they start rehearsal for the August performances of contemporary songs. Though material has yet to be finalized, the choir usually sings a handful of Broadway show tunes such as ones from “The Lion King” or “Jersey Boys.” Then their final event of the year is centered around the holidays. Each winter the Summit Choral Society performs Handel’s “Messiah,” a community sing-along and a joint concert



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The Summit Choral Society rehearses on Monday at the Christ Lutheran Church in Breckenridge.

with the Summit Concert band and Summit County Orchestra at the Riverwalk Center.

Anyone interested in singing is welcome to join the Summit Choral Society. No auditions are required, meaning people can pick from the trio of performances based on preference or county residency.

“It’s intimidating and a lot of people won’t come out and do auditions,” Hill said. “So you can say to your neighbor ‘Hey come and sing!’ It’s friendly, it’s fun, it’s challenging.”

“We have some people with advance degrees in music and years of experience, and some people who always wanted to sing but never learned to read music. We try to meet people where they are and move them along.”

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