

Artscene

Choir celebrates 50 years with opera music

By Dominik Kurek
OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF

The Oakville Choral Society is celebrating its 50th season and it wants the community to be a part of it.

To celebrate, the choir is performing its golden anniversary concert at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts, Saturday, May 7.

“What’s important from our perspective is that people who have been a part of the choir for any part of its long history join us and become renewed friends, and if they don’t know us, they might come out and consider joining even,” said music director David Bowser, who will conduct the concert. “If we can inspire any of that joy of music, then I’ll be very happy.”

The concert, titled *Opera Extravaganza*, will feature choruses and arias from famous operas and by famous composers. Furthermore, the choir will be accompanied by a professional orchestra of nearly 50 handpicked musicians and a guest soloist, soprano Bethany Horst.

“We’ve got a full orchestra so it will be quite a beautiful sound and we’re 80-strong in the chorus so they’ll make a nice sound as well,” Bowser said.

Some of the music in the concert will include pieces from the French opera *Carmen*, by Georges Bizet; the Italian *Madame Butterfly* by Giacomo Puccini; and *Dido and*



GRAHAM PAINE / OAKVILLE BEAVER FILE PHOTO

IN REHEARSAL: Pictured are members of the Oakville Choral Society, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary season in concert on Saturday, May 7 at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts.

Aeneas by the English Baroque composer Henry Purcell. Other operatic pieces included in the show will be by great composers such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Giuseppe Verdi, among others.

“It’s repertoire that is bold, approachable, fun and gives a lot of variety,” Bowser said of the music.

The chorus will be the main attraction in the concert, while Horst will do several solos throughout the show, backed by the choir.

The director said that the music will be recognizable to its audience and will be varied in styles.

“Even if you don’t know what the music piece is called, there’s some music people will recognize

“Even if you don’t know what the music piece is called, there’s some music people will recognize because it’s really part of our popular culture, whether it’s through advertising or otherwise.”

David Bowser, music director
Oakville Choral Society

made the program for the concert he kept the choir’s long history in mind.

“When you look back at the 50 years of the Oakville Choral Society, a lot of its roots are things like Gilbert and Sullivan and some show tunes, as well as more serious music by the great masters,” he said. “I wanted to find a way of combining all of those characteristics in a program that’s not too heavy, that’s light and is still a good celebration.”

To start the evening, the choir will have a short presentation with MPP Kevin Flynn and representatives from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, which had given a grant to the group to stage this anniversary concert at the venue and to hire an orchestra.

The show starts at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25 and running out fast. For tickets, visit www.oakvillecentre.ca or for more information, visit www.oakvillechoral.com.

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