

Allentown Symphony Orchestra and Camerata Singers Present a Delightful Night of Italian Opera

For the opera lovers in the Lehigh Valley, if you did not attend the April concert series of the ASO you missed an absolute treat. The ASO presented a superb program of selections from many of the most famous Italian operas such as "The Barber of Seville," "Turandot," "La Traviata," "Aida," "La Bohème," and more. There were so many highlights it is difficult to narrow the scope, however, suffice it to say that the beautiful sounds of the orchestra were wonderfully complemented by the voices of the Camerata Singers and soloists Cristina Castaldi, Ray Bauwens and Jordan Shanahan. The combined expressiveness of the vocalists and orchestra truly related the story of each selection. In addition, ASO Conductor Diane Wittry explained each selection within the context of the opera and a strategically placed screen provided song subtitles. Bravo! For more information on ASO concerts and offerings visit www.allentownsymphony.org.

Attention Dieruff Band Alumni

Remember the "good old days" in the Dieruff Band? Well, gather with friends or make some new ones by participating in the Dieruff High School Band Alumni Concert. For additional information please contact Dieruff Band Director Frank DiSimoni at disimonif@allentownsd.org or phone 484-765-5623.

Rehearsals: May 16 from 12-4 p.m., May 22 from 5-9 p.m., May 23 from 12-4 p.m.

Concert: May 23 @ 7:00 p.m. Report time is 6:00 p.m.

Marine Band Steps into Spring

With passage into spring...begins the band "concert season." While the weather has been truly unpredictable, the Marine Band managed to conjure up a beautiful warm and sunny day for its spring concert. The musical program was quite diverse, ranging from Shostakovich's "Festive Overture" to "Quincy Jones Sounds" and Bizet's "Carmen" to "Dixieland Clambake." Conductor Tom Heinick highlighted several instrumental sections, such as the french horns in a great 1948 piece entitled "The Four Hornsmen" by David Bennett. The horns blended beautifully and one could envision a charming countryside estate replete with fox, hound, horsemen and hunting horns. Along with marches and other musical favorites, the ensemble performed a more contemporary selection, "Into the Raging River," which was a true pleasure. Musicians honored their recently retired colleague Bert Swayze for his 46 years of service to the band and the latter half of the program featured the Youth Choir of the First Presbyterian Church of Allentown under the direction of Laura Rabenold. The children were phenomenal. The final song, "Battle Hymn of the Republic," was a rousing combination of instrumental excellence and vocal perfection. Bravo! (www.allentownmarinebandinc.com or 610-435-0628)

"Arts at St. John's" Features the Allentown Band

Picture a beautiful spring day, a gorgeous church in Gothic style and an exceptional musical program. St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church on Fifth Street (near Allentown's Post Office) presents a musical series entitled "Arts at St. John's" which

recently featured the Allentown Band, Ronald Demkee conductor. Imagine sitting in a Gothic church with magnificent stained glass windows, a cathedral ceiling and the resonance of music from such great works as Rossini's "Barber of Seville Overture," Verdi's "March from 'Aida'," "Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral from 'Lohengrin'" and Mussorgsky's entire "Pictures at an Exhibition." Superb! St. John's very accomplished organist Stephen Williams joined the band on several selections including Richard Strauss' "Festival Entrada - Feierlicher Einzug" featuring brass, percussion and organ. (www.allentownband.com)

Allentown Band Spring Concert

With a holy season upon us, the theme of this year's Allentown Band spring concert was "Russian-Easter" highlighting selections by Russian composers. The audience at Muhlenberg College's Empie Theatre was captivated by works of Vasily Agapkin (Soviet military orchestra conductor and composer), Rimsky-Korsakov and Shostakovich abounded (including the ever popular "Flight of the Bumblebee" which featured the band's clarinet section). Accordionist Beverly Curnow entranced the audience during the multi-movement Shostakovich piece "Jazz Suite No. 2." And, as is true of all Allentown Band concerts, no concert is complete without something by John Philip Sousa and what could have been appropriate than "Easter Monday on the White House Lawn." (www.allentownband.com)