



BENEDICTINE SISTERS OF PERPETUAL ADORATION

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sister Ramona Varela, (520) 325-6401 or varela@bspa.us

Concert flyer: <http://bit.ly/17IBJa>

Preserving Our Heritage page: <http://bit.ly/8tCix>

Sept. 24, 2009

Tucson Boys Chorus to present benefit concerts for Benedictine Monastery

TUCSON, Ariz. – The Tucson Boys Chorus will perform two concerts on Saturday, Nov. 21, with proceeds benefiting the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration’s Preserving Our Heritage campaign.

The popular chorus will present the world premiere of “Prayers from the Ark” at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. in the Benedictine Sister’s historic monastery chapel at 800 N. Country Club Rd., Tucson. Tickets are \$50 and available by calling (520) 325-6401.

Composed by renowned conductor and former musical director of the Tucson Symphony Frederic Balazs, the piece was inspired by a work by French Benedictine nun Carmen Bernos de Gasztold. Her book, “Prayers from the Ark,” includes 27 poems written from the point of view of the animals on Noah’s Ark, each saying a simple prayer to God in its own voice.

In 1966, Balazs received the book as a gift, and it quickly became a wonderful resource. After attending a concert by the Tucson Boys Chorus years later and being impressed with the singers’ professionalism and artistry, he sat down to write “Prayers from the Ark” as a fund raiser for the Benedictine Sisters. It only took two months to complete.

“The ‘Ark’ music is depictive of the character of each animal portrayed in the poetry, attempting to match the underlying warmth and wit. Interwoven are chanting, reminiscent of early church music,” Balazs said. “It requires a sensitive and virtuoso delivery for both singers and the piano in equal partnership, a challenge by which I meant to honor the talented performers.”

Danish pianist Torsten Juul-Borre will join the chorus as a featured performer and will play selections of works by Chopin, Grieg and Liszt. The Tucson Boys Chorus, which will celebrate its 70th anniversary in 2010, is directed by Dr. Julian Ackerley.

Proceeds from the premiere concert will benefit the Benedictine Sisters’ heritage fund, which is raising \$1 million for repair and restoration of their 70-year-old monastery. They have currently raised more than \$350,000 with the help of friends, community organizations and benefactors.

“Mr. Balazs told me he would like to help us raise funds for our monastery project. His works have been performed internationally, and he specifically composed ‘Prayers from the Ark’ for our benefit,” Prioress Sister Ramona Varela, OSB said. “It has been humbling to have such a variety of people wanting to help us in so many different ways. We are truly blessed.”

For more information about the concert, please contact Sister Ramona at (520) 325-6401 or varela@bspa.us.

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