



THE MONMOUTH CIVIC CHORUS
MARK SHAPIRO, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



ECHOES



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Welcome to the "March 2007" issue of ECHOES, designed for fans and audience of the Monmouth Civic Chorus. Look for an issue of ECHOES in your e-mail before each of our upcoming concerts.

Monmouth Civic Chorus Sings for Freedom

Ludwig Van Beethoven Ode to "Freedom" "An die Freiheit"

The beloved finale of Beethoven's 9th Symphony
As performed by Leonard Bernstein after the fall of the Berlin Wall

Randall Thompson Testament of Freedom

A stirring rendition of Thomas Jefferson's immortal words

Jorge Martín Stronger than Darkness

A world premiere created for MCC by Cuban-American composer Jorge Martín
Celebrating the heart-pounding courage of the Mariel boatlift
Based on the memoir *Before Night Falls* by the Cuban dissident Reinaldo Arenas

Sunday, March 18, 2007, 3:00 pm
Count Basie Theatre, 99 Monmouth Street, Red Bank, New Jersey

Premium seating: \$30 regular; \$27 seniors; \$25 groups (10+); \$10 students
Regular seating: \$25; \$22 seniors, \$20 groups (10+), \$5 students

FREE pre-concert talk by composer Jorge Martín at 2:00 pm

Trinity Episcopal Church, 50 White Street, Red Bank

Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Barbara Dever joins the Monmouth Civic Chorus and orchestra for *Let Freedom Sing*, featuring three major choral works on the theme of freedom. The highlight is the world premiere of *Stronger Than Darkness* by the Cuban-American composer Jorge Martín. The music comes from Martín's new opera, *Before Night Falls*, based on the thrilling memoir by the late Cuban dissident Reinaldo Arenas. As an outspoken anti-Castro intellectual and gay activist, Arenas lost his job and was imprisoned and tortured for a crime he did not commit. He managed to smuggle his writings out of Cuba for publication abroad until his escape to New York in 1980. His final book became Julian Schnabel's film *Before Night Falls*, starring Javier Bardem and Johnny Depp, which won the Grand Jury Prize at the Venice International Film Festival in 2000.

Under the baton of award-winning Artistic Director, Dr. Mark Shapiro, the concert also features Beethoven's famed *Ode to Joy* as an *Ode to Freedom*, as performed by Leonard Bernstein after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and *Testament of Freedom* by the American composer Randall Thompson, setting the immortal words of Thomas Jefferson to inspiring music.

Write a Review!

We'd love to know what you think about this concert. Why not write a review? You can send it in, share it with your friends, and see what other listeners have to say. Visit monmouthcivicchorus.org after the concert for this new interactive feature.

Notes on the Program

At a time when freedom is endangered around the world, MCC presents three major choral works on the theme of freedom. As an organization with a 58-year history of civic engagement, we know that the emotional power of music can engage the community in the great causes of our era.

The Testament of Freedom by American composer Randall Thompson is a stirring rendition of the immortal words of Thomas Jefferson. Written in honor of Jefferson's 200th birthday in 1943, Thompson's work conveyed a hopeful message to listeners during a discouraging period in World War II. As Americans in the 21st century, we hear it in the context of war and oppression in the Middle East. Mark Shapiro has chosen three of the work's four movements to open the first and second halves of our March 18 concert.

We are proud to present the world premiere of *Stronger Than Darkness*, a cantata written for us by Jorge Martín at Dr. Shapiro's request. The music comes from Martín's new opera *Before Night Falls*, based on the memoir of that title by the late Cuban dissident Reinaldo Arenas, whose theme was "the truth is stronger than tyrants, stronger than darkness." Arenas described the cruelty of Castro's regime and the persecution and repression suffered by Cuban society: "Since 1970 Fidel had been proclaiming that all those who wanted to leave had done so. Thus the Island became a maximum-security jail, where everybody, according to Castro, was happy to stay." [translated by Dolores M. Koch]

For his anti-Castro activities and his gay identity, Arenas lost his job and was imprisoned for a crime he did not commit, enduring two years of torture, isolation, forced labor and suicide attempts. He confessed in writing to avoid further torture and jail, but he had to smuggle his writings out of Cuba. He escaped in the Mariel boatlift in 1980 by falsifying his passport to avoid the list of those forbidden to leave the country. His adjustment to American culture was difficult, and he committed suicide in New York on December 7, 1990. His memoir became the film *Before Night Falls*, starring Javier Bardem and Johnny Depp, which won the Grand Jury Prize at the Venice International Film Festival in 2000.

Composer Jorge Martín emigrated from Cuba to the United States in 1965, grew up in New Jersey and attended Yale with MCC Artistic Director Mark Shapiro. Martín received a generous Cintas Fellowship in 1999 for creative artists of Cuban descent, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters' Academy Award in Music in 1998. In 2001 he was a featured composer in New York City Opera's "Vox: Showcasing American Composers." In 2005 he was awarded a fellowship by the Bogliasco Foundation for a month-long residence at the villa near Genoa on Italy's Ligurian coast. After acquiring the closely guarded adaptation rights to Reinaldo Arenas's memoir in 1995, Martín began work on the opera in earnest in 2003, writing the libretto himself with the help of the translator of the book, Dolores M. Koch, who knew Arenas personally. American Opera Projects presented piano readings from Act One in New York, conducted by Mark Shapiro, as part of the Cuban Arts Festival. The *New York Times* published a very favorable review in 2005, most unusual for a partial reading of a work-in-progress, calling it "tonal and shapely" with "Cuban rhythms and strong, active bass lines." The composer's pre-concert talk at 2:00 pm on March 18 will be "podcast" on our web site at monmouthcivicchorus.org to promote interest in the cantata and opera.

Beethoven's famed *Ode to Joy* has become a familiar tune in everything from movie trailers to cell phone ring tones. Although in danger of becoming trivialized by inane repetition, the music and text have inspired humanistic causes for more than two centuries. The poem by Friedrich Schiller dates from 1785, when the American and French revolutions were at the leading edge of political and cultural advances in Europe. By the time Beethoven completed his Ninth Symphony in 1824, Schiller was dead, Beethoven was deaf, and Robespierre and Napoleon had reduced the idealism of the French revolution to a spectacular defeat. Nevertheless, Beethoven retained his faith in brotherhood and universal harmony, choosing Schiller's well-known text to close his last symphony.

Approaching the end of his artistic career, Beethoven achieved his long-cherished goal of integrating a chorus into an orchestral work, first attempted in his 1808 *Choral Fantasy* (performed by MCC in 2003). The last movement of the Ninth stands alone as a miniature symphony, with a grandiose introduction, rousing march, pensive slow section, and racing finale. As a theme of world unity, it has been heard at protest marches in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games, and official occasions of the United Nations and the European Union. In a landmark international broadcast after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, conductor Leonard Bernstein changed the text from "*Freude*" ("joy") to "*Freiheit*" ("freedom") to create an *Ode to Freedom*, as MCC will be performing it on March 18.

Program notes prepared by Susan Metz

It's Not Too Late to Subscribe – Mini Subscriptions Are Still Available

Order a mini-subscription before March 16 and attend our final two concerts of the season for only \$35. Order at www.monmouthcivicchorus.org or call 732-933-9333

LET FREEDOM SING

Sunday March 18, 2007, 3:00 pm, Count Basie Theatre, 99 Monmouth Street, Red Bank, NJ

SOUNDS LIKE SHAKESPEARE - Act II

Another delightful sampler of the Bard in Song from Broadway to Opera

Saturday, June 9, 2007, 8:00 pm, Two River Theater, 21 Bridge Avenue, Red Bank

Monmouth Civic Chorus Recruiting New Members

Experienced singers are invited to audition for the Monmouth Civic Chorus by appointment on Tuesday evenings and join us in our celebration of Shakespeare, a performance to be held at the Two River Theater in June. Auditions and chorus rehearsals are held at Trinity Episcopal Church, 65 West Front Street, Red Bank. The chorus rehearses September through June each Tuesday from 7:30 to 10:00 pm. Interested singers are invited to attend a rehearsal prior to auditioning. For an audition appointment or further information, call 732-933-9333 or visit www.monmouthcivicchorus.org.

Under our award-winning Artistic Director, Dr. Mark Shapiro, the Chorus has been acclaimed as “one of the state’s best” and “a crack area ensemble” (*Asbury Park Press*). The Chorus has sung at the cathedrals of Vienna, Florence, and the Vatican, and by invitation at Carnegie Hall, the PNC Bank Arts Center, and with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark.

Monmouth Civic Chorus Announces Scholarship Auditions

The Monmouth Civic Chorus will hold our annual vocal scholarship auditions for New Jersey high school seniors planning to pursue higher education. A total of \$2,500 is available to be awarded to students of outstanding vocal promise. Auditions will be held by appointment on Saturday, April 14 in Red Bank. The application deadline is April 7. Contestants must be prepared to perform two selections from the standard vocal repertoire (opera, operetta, art songs, oratorio or Gilbert and Sullivan), with at least one selection in Italian, French, or German. Contestants will be judged on technique, choice of material, poise, and musicianship. An accompanist will be provided if needed. For information or an audition appointment, call 732-933-9333, visit monmouthcivicchorus.org, or e-mail scholarships@monmouthcivicchorus.org.

“Over the years, the Chorus has contributed more than \$50,000 to talented students throughout the state,” says MCC President Teri Lindstrom, Tinton Falls. In 2006, scholarships were awarded to Christine Papania, Middletown North High School; Chelsea Friedlander, West Morris Central High School; and James Brandon, Neptune High School, with honorable mention to Matthew Krenz, Red Bank Regional High School.

Fun Stuff: Match Up

Match up the following phrases with the correct piece:

- A) Beethoven's Ode to Freedom
- B) Jorge Martin's Stronger Than Darkness
- C) Randall Thompson's The Testament of Freedom

Phrase:	From: A, B, C
Freedom and justice for all	
The hand of force may destroy but cannot disjoin them	
Oh friends, not these notes, rather let us sing more cheerful and more joyful ones	
Our cause is just	
All people become brothers	
Let us go	
This kiss for the whole world	
Trust in the return of hope. Hope is always present, always fresh	
I shall not die without a hope that light and liberty are on steady advance	
We're on our way to new life	
Joy, thou glorious spark of heaven	
We fight not for glory or for conquest	
Whoever succeeds in the great attempt to be a friend of a friend...	
This is our chance	
...Being with one mind resolved to die freemen rather than to live slaves	

Puzzle Answers

MATCH UP:

Jorge Martin's Stronger than Darkness

Freedom and justice for all
Let us go
Trust in the return of hope. Hope is always present, always fresh
We're on our way to new life
This is our chance

Randall Thompson's Testament of Freedom

The hand of force may destroy but cannot disjoin them
Our cause is just
I shall not die without a hope that light and liberty are on steady advance
We fight not for glory or for conquest
...Being with one mind resolved to die freemen rather than to live slaves

Beethoven's Ode to Joy

Oh friends, not these notes, rather let us sing more cheerful and more joyful ones
All people become brothers
This kiss for the whole world
Joy, thou glorious spark of heaven
Whoever succeeds in the great attempt to be a friend of a friend...

We hope you've enjoyed the "March 2007" issue of The Monmouth Civic Chorus' *ECHOES!*
We welcome your comments, suggestions, and ideas for the future.

Send comments or questions to: newsletter@monmouthcivicchorus.org

Send address changes or unsubscribe requests: mailinglist@monmouthcivicchorus.org

Monmouth Civic Chorus

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