



SINGING CITY Behind the Scenes

On April 20, 2013, the Pittsburgh Symphony will open the inaugural Music for the Spirit Festival in grand fashion with "Singing City," a large-scale, historic concert event at the University of Pittsburgh's Petersen Events Center. Joining Music Director Manfred Honeck and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra will be an ensemble of over 2,500 voices comprised of over 65 choirs from the Pittsburgh region and surrounding areas. We'd like to introduce you to some of our participants:

MEGAN JONES

Recent graduate of Duquesne University
St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin Adult Choir
10 years in choir



What is your earliest musical memory?

Listening to my mom sing "You are My Sunshine"

What is your favorite piece to perform?

"Home" from *Beauty and the Beast*

How are you preparing to sing with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Maestro Honeck and a choir of over 2,500 voices?

Listening to the rehearsal tracks and working sectionals at choir practice.

What are you most looking forward to about Singing City on April 20th?

The amazing experience of singing with the PSO! I love working with Dr. Page and Chris Hestwood and look forward to bringing everyone together to create a musical memory!

What does singing mean to you? Singing is life. I couldn't imagine a world without music.

What would you say to someone who is thinking of joining a choir? It's a great way to meet new people, and share your talents with others!

DAN FINKEL

Student, Grade 12 at Upper St. Clair High School
Pantheon Choir, Bass
Member of choir for one year



What is your earliest musical memory?

A Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra Fiddlesticks concert!

What is your favorite piece to perform?

"O Fortuna" from *Carmina Burana*

How are you preparing to sing with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Maestro Honeck and a choir of over 2,500 voices?

Rehearsing at school, at home, and in my car!

What are you most looking forward to about Singing City on April 20th?

It's fun and exciting to be able to sing and perform and share music with any amount of people.

What does singing mean to you? Singing is the answer to the question "How do you make someone feel a wide range of emotions with as few words as possible?"

What would you say to someone who is thinking of joining a choir?

A choir is a tight-knit group of people that look out for each other. It's hard to be the new person and be afraid of messing up, but in the end, you have a enormous group of people backing you up and supporting you.

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JACOB RYAVE

Student, Grade 12 at
Upper St. Clair High School
Pantheon Choir, Bass
Singing for nine years

What is your earliest musical memory? My dad teaching me how to sing "Tombstone Blues" by Bob Dylan at age 2

What is your favorite piece to perform? *Cantique de Jean Racine*, Op. 11 by Gabriel Faure, or *Twa Tanbou* by Sydney Guillaume

Do you have a memorable or funny story about your own participation in your choir? I was the Tenor One in the barbershop quartet in the Music Man my sophomore year, and my voice cracked on my solo during "It's You." How embarrassing.

How are you preparing to sing with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Maestro Honeck and a choir of over 2,500 voices? Practice makes perfect.

What are you most looking forward to about Singing City on April 20th?

Making friends through music and singing under such fantastic mentors.

What does singing mean to you? I have made some of my best friends through singing, so it's very important to my life.

What would you say to someone who is thinking of joining a choir? Just do it.



JENNIFER HENSCHEL

Business student at the University of Pittsburgh
University of Pittsburgh's Women's Choral
Ensemble, Alto 2
Singing since age six



What is your earliest musical memory? I grew up attending a traditional Polish Catholic Church and I remember always being mesmerized by the choir that sang. Since I was young I always wanted to sing in a choir and make beautiful music with people that were as passionate about it as me.

What is your favorite piece to perform? Any selection from Mozart's Requiem. It always gives me chills.

Do you have a memorable or funny story about your own participation your choir? My best memories revolve around the fact that the people I meet in choir aren't just my friends in choir. We always manage to make time for each other outside of rehearsals to laugh and have a good time. In the past, this is how I've met some of my best friends.

How are you preparing to sing with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Maestro Honeck and a choir of over 2,500 voices? Practice, practice, practice. No one will ever be perfect, but the goal is to be pretty close. That'll involve slaving over music, practicing on my own and practicing with other singers.

What are you most looking forward to about Singing City on April 20th? There are some girls in my choir who will be graduating after the end of this semester, so being able to sing with them for one more time will be a memorable experience.

What does singing mean to you? Singing for me is a break from all my school work, the stress of the day, work, etc. I haven't done anything that is as much fun as performing beautiful music with people who share your passion. I have been singing for so many years, it's a part of my life I don't really plan on giving up no matter what my future occupation may be.

What would you say to someone who is thinking of joining a choir? Do it. Even if you are hesitant, if you have the opportunity to join the choir, do it. You learn so much about music and performing it, but most importantly you learn so many other things from the people you meet. It is hard work, but the ability to put on a stunning performance is a feeling that is unmatched.

MARY RITA ROSSETTI

Organist and Director of Music at Saint Alexis
Roman Catholic Church in Wexford, PA

I sing alto (when I get a chance to sing!)



What is your earliest musical memory?

My father was a musician and there was always beautiful music playing in our home. I remember listening to WQED as a child. When WQED extended their broadcast hours,

there was much rejoicing in my house! Dad was a flautist and gave me my first experience accompanying. From a loving and patient teacher I learned to play piano while listening to the soloist and found that I had to count like my life depended on it!

What is your favorite piece to perform? Some of our favorite pieces were the Bach and Handel flute sonatas. I especially loved the slow movements but liked the excitement of the gigas too!

Do you have a memorable or funny story about your own participation in your choir? When I was a music student at WVU, the PSO came and performed the Brahms *Requiem* with our Choral Union. That was an unforgettable moment!

What are you most looking forward to about Singing City on April 20th? I feel a real kinship with Maestro Honeck. He often brings a spiritual element to his music making which I find inspiring.

What does singing mean to you? Taking part in the Singing City Concert under the baton of Maestro Honeck is a once in a lifetime event. Now I will be able to say that I sang under his direction with the world acclaimed PSO! Thank you for giving so many this opportunity.

What would you say to someone who is thinking of joining a choir? There are so many reasons to join a choir but perhaps the most important is that one joins with others who share the same passion. I have heard it said that most don't have a budget for "therapy" but that making music soothes the savage soul. There truly is peace and contentment when singing together.

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