



**March 4, 2016**

***Con Brio's Simply Dazzling Spring***

**Con Brio**, the shoreline's all-auditioned chorus, offers its spring concert on Sunday, April 17, at 4pm at Christ the King Church in Old Lyme, Ct. Directed by Dr. Stephen Bruce, assisted by Associate Music Director Susan Saltus and accompanied by the Con Brio Festival Orchestra, the chorus will be joined this year by world-renowned pianist, Mihae Lee, known to many in the area as the artistic director of the Essex Winter Series. Critics have described her playing as "simply dazzling." Vocal soloists include Danielle Munsell Howard and Laura Gladd, soprano, Donna Bishop-Seaton, contralto, Ransom Bruce and Bill Sorensen, tenor, and John Dominick III, bass. Come for inspiration!

The concert opens with two well-paired pieces: Dvorak's *Te Deum* and Beethoven's *Choral Fantasia*. Commissioned to write a piece in 1891 in celebration of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of America, Dvorak composed the *Te Deum* and performed it at his first concert in New York as Director of the National Conservatory of Music. This liturgical hymn to God has been described as one of the most "spectacular" of Dvorak's compositions, "ceremonial," "uplifting," and "subtly festive."

Con Brio has been waiting to perform Beethoven's action-packed *Choral Fantasia* for just the right combination of chorus, orchestra and virtuoso piano soloist! Often considered a precursor to his Ninth Symphony, the *Fantasia* premiered in 1808 at what might be considered the greatest of classical concerts ever performed, an hours-long concert that included the premiers of Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*, *Sixth Symphony* (The Pastoral), and the first public performance of the *Fourth Piano Concerto*. The *Fantasia* develops as a series of variations on a theme which prefigures that of the last movement of the Ninth Symphony, composed some years later. As the voices gradually take over--pairs of solo female and male voices at first, then the full chorus, the piece becomes an exultant ode to "the sounds of harmony in our life."

For the second half of the concert, Con Brio will sing pieces that it will share with local choruses in Portugal and Spain during its sixth European tour in

May. Pieces include: Alice Parker's great traditional arrangement of a fine early American hymn, *Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal*; Rachmaninoff's beloved setting of the Ave Maria, *Bogoroditse Devo*; the Portuguese song, *Eu vou, eu vou* and the Spanish song, *Te Quiero*. As is now customary, the chorus will sing in the round, Gabrieli's eight-part *Jubilate Deo*. Two love songs follow: *Long Time Ago* and Lauridsen's *Dirait-on*. The concert ends with two rousing pieces for audience participation: *Praise His Holy Name* and *When the Saints Go Marching In*.

Come, bring your friends, celebrate this dazzling season!

Tickets: \$30 adults, \$15 students, available at [www.conbrio.org](http://www.conbrio.org), from any Con Brio member, or by calling 860 526-5399.

Christ the King Church, 1 McCurdy Road, Old Lyme, Connecticut.