



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MONMOUTH CIVIC CHORUS ANNOUNCES 60TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Messiah, Lincoln Bicentennial and Choral Diamonds

The award-winning Monmouth Civic Chorus announced its 2008-2009 season of superb choral music under the baton of Dr. Mark Shapiro, with three concerts at the historic Count Basie Theatre, 99 Monmouth Street, Red Bank.

A holiday classic starts the season with *Messiah* on Sunday, December 21, at 3:00 p.m. Handel's beloved oratorio will be performed in its entirety, with soloists and chamber orchestra. For many music lovers, it won't be Christmas without it. Single tickets are \$40 for premium seating (\$35 seniors, \$30 groups, \$10 students), \$25 regular (\$22 seniors, \$20 groups, \$5 students) and \$15 economy (\$5 students).

The chorus returns to the Count Basie Theatre in a celebration of Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday. Through music, dramatic readings, and visual enhancements, the program will evoke Lincoln's life, legacy and love of music. The Chorus will perform selections from operas Lincoln liked, spirituals and ballads of the time, a choral setting of the Gettysburg Address and the stirring *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. The performance is on Sunday, February 8, 2009, at 3:00 p.m. All tickets are free of charge for this unique event; advance reservations are recommended.

In honor of the Chorus's diamond anniversary, Maestro Shapiro has chosen Three Choral Diamonds for the closing concert of the season, on Sunday, May 3, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. at the Count Basie Theatre. A full orchestra will join the Chorus for Mendelssohn's bewitching *The First Walpurgis-night*; Polish composer Szymanowski's haunting *Stabat Mater*; and the U.S. premiere of the cosmic *Sphaera* by French composer Guillaume Connesson. Single tickets are \$30 and \$25 regular, \$27 and \$22 for seniors, \$25 and \$20 for groups, \$10 and \$5 for students.

The performance of *Sphaera* is funded in part by The French-American Fund for Contemporary Music, a program of the French American Cultural Exchange (FACE) with support from Cultural Services of the French Embassy, CulturesFrance, Société des Auteurs, Compositeurs et Éditeurs de Musique (SACEM) and the Florence Gould Foundation. The Chorus joins such illustrious FACE grant recipients as the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln

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Center, Miller Theatre at Columbia University, and the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris.

The season is also made possible in part by the Monmouth County Arts Council through funding from the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders, through the County Historical Commission, and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Monmouth Civic Chorus recently received the 2008 ASCAP/Chorus America Alice Parker Award, which recognizes a chorus for programming significant recently composed music that expands the mission of the chorus and challenges the chorus's audience in a new way. Under Artistic Director, Dr. Mark Shapiro, the Chorus has been acclaimed as "close to perfect" (*Asbury Park Press*), "sonorously impressive" (*The Star-Ledger*) and "exceptional" (*Red Bank Green*).

Subscriptions are \$60 for the December, February and May concerts. Student subscriptions are only \$20. Subscribers get premium seating for *Messiah* and the Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration. Call (732) 933-9333 or visit www.monmouthcivicchorus.org.

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Event summary follows

Monmouth Civic Chorus 2008-2009 Season Summary

Event title: *Handel's Messiah*

Event sponsor: The Monmouth Civic Chorus

Date and time: Sunday, December 21, 2008, 3:00 p.m.

Location: Count Basie Theatre, 99 Monmouth Street, Red Bank NJ 07701

Ticket prices: \$40/\$25/\$15 regular, \$35/\$22 seniors, \$30/\$20 groups, \$10/\$5 students

Event title: *Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration*

Event sponsor: The Monmouth Civic Chorus

Date and time: Sunday, February 8, 2009, 3:00 p.m.

Location: Count Basie Theatre, 99 Monmouth Street, Red Bank NJ 07701

Tickets free of charge, reservations recommended

Event title: *Three Choral Diamonds*

Event sponsor: The Monmouth Civic Chorus

Date and time: Sunday, May 3, 2009, 4:00 p.m.

Location: Count Basie Theatre, 99 Monmouth Street, Red Bank NJ 07701

Ticket prices: \$30/\$25 regular, \$27/\$22 seniors, \$25/\$20 groups, \$10/\$5 students

Subscription prices: \$60 regular, \$20 students

Tickets and subscriptions: 732-933-9333 or www.monmouthcivicchorus.org

Photos that accompany this release can be found at www.monmouthcivicchorus.org/pressroom.php