

# Choral Festival at Brookhaven

Our Twenty-second Year!

7/29/2016

Edition 1, Volume 5

## *Location, location, location*

Our rehearsal site this year is Christ Church, the Episcopal church in Bellport. It is one of the oldest churches in our area, with a proud history.

From the church's website: In 1885 Nathaniel C MacLean brought his family to Bellport, and it was immediately after their arrival that the question of an Episcopal Church in Bellport became the topic of conversation and many meetings. Present at those meetings were Mrs James Otis, Mr Pepper and his wife, and Mr Joseph Shaw. They held their first service in the Old Temperance Hall on July 1, 1886 with General McLean, a Lay Reader, officiating. (editor's note: there is a General McLean Drive near here, intersecting with South Country Road.) Beginning in May 1887 the Rev Allan Ritchey, rector of St Paul's in Patchogue, came every other Sunday to officiate. This arrangement lasted over a year, then, owing to the illness of the General and his inability to assist, the services were discontinued and parishioners returned to worship at St James' Church in Brookhaven. But never was the hope of a Church of our own in Bellport ever abandoned.

In 1892 the determined General MacLean rented the upper story of the new drug store on Bellport Lane and services began being held there in June. Construction of the Church began in 1897 and the first service was held in 1898.

If you get a moment during the rehearsal breaks, talk a walk down the hall and see the sanctuary. It is beautiful.

**Important Note: South Country Road will be closed tomorrow at Station Road. You can approach the church from the west – go to Route 112 to its southern end, that's Main Street, Patchogue. Go east to the fork in the road, take the right fork. That is South Country Road. The church will be on your right before you reach the village.**

## Schedule

### Festival Chorus

Monday through Friday nights – 6:30 to 9:30p, Christ Episcopal Church, South Country Road, Bellport. (Keep Friday night free for our Conductors' reception after rehearsal)

Saturday 12 to 4pm at Christ Church

Sunday Dress Rehearsal 2 - 5p at the Gateway Playhouse, South Country Road, Bellport

Dinner at Gateway at 5p

Choral Festival Performance 7pm, Gateway Playhouse

Reception to follow at the Playhouse

## The Opera Choruses

The two choruses we are performing are familiar to classical music lovers everywhere. But all good tunes have a back story, and thanks to some internet research, we've unearthed some interesting pieces of information.

As we raise our goblets in song, it is good to know whose reception we celebrate! *Chorus of Wedding Guests* was composed by Domenico Gaetano Maria Donizetti. Along with Rossini and Bellini he was a leading composer of the bel canto opera style that developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in Lombardi, and composed his first opera at the age of 19, although it wasn't performed until years later. Over the course of his career, he composed nearly 70 operas, the most popular being his comic operas. Moving to Paris, he found greater freedom in the choice of subject matter, better fees and more prestige. He traveled throughout Europe until, suffering from severe illness, he returned to Bergamo where he died in April of 1848.

Not many would nominate Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi as the first punk rock composer. But here's a guy who, over a century before The Sex Pistols et al were embracing a DIY ethic, decided to use an anvil as the primary percussion on this chorus. "The Anvil Chorus" is from Verdi's opera *Il Trovatore* and it depicts Spanish Gypsies striking their anvils at dawn – hence its English name – and singing the praises of hard work, good wine, and their gypsy women. You may also know it by its proper title of "Vedi! Le Fosche Notturme Spoglie."

During the early twentieth century, the Anvil Chorus was commonly sung by American spectators attending sporting events, or played by a band, when an opponent committed an error.

A big band jazz version of this chorus by Glenn Miller and his orchestra can be found on the track listing of many of the American musician's compilation albums.

Much beloved by the Marx Brothers, "The Anvil Chorus" features in several of their films. In *The Cocoanuts*, Harpo and Chico play the piece on a hotel's cash register. In *Animal Crackers*, Chico plays a segment on the piano while Harpo clangs two horse shoes together. Meanwhile in *A Night at the Opera* the chorus is sung as part of a performance of *Il Trovatore* as Harpo and Chico get chased by the police backstage and onstage.

Who knew?!?!?

## Updates

- Tonight is ice cream night! Hang out with us for a bit and enjoy some refreshing treats.
- Concert dress for Sunday is white blouses, black long skirts or slacks for women, white shirts, black slacks for men.
- Still struggling with some of the music? Visit [cyberbass.com](http://cyberbass.com) for some electronic sectionals!