



Falmouth orchestra celebrates with Beethoven's Ninth

By Keith Powers / Contributing Writer

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The Falmouth Chamber Players Orchestra will present the Ninth in performances Saturday and Sunday at Falmouth Academy's Simon Center for the Arts.

"The whole work is daunting," says conductor John Yankee. "The formal elements of the first movement. The rhythmic challenges are really striking. There is an intimidation factor about any performance.

"But we break it down, so it becomes less daunting. We have done other Beethoven symphonies, and I keep telling them, 'Just let me play my part, and don't miss out on the joy of it.'"

Yankee is talking about Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the summit of symphonic achievement not only for musicians like his **Falmouth Chamber Players Orchestra**, but likely for every composer who has come after Beethoven during the past 200 years.

The Falmouth orchestra will present the Ninth in performances Saturday and Sunday at Falmouth Academy's Simon Center for the Arts. At its largest-ever size of 45 musicians, including guest artists, the orchestra will be joined by another of Yankee's ensembles, the Falmouth Chorale.

"We've had this great synergy," Yankee says. The chorale will be augmented by singers from all over the Cape, bringing the total number of singers to 85 or 90. In addition, the ensembles will be joined by four soloists.

Any performance of the Ninth would be a test for an amateur orchestra like the FPCO; this one has taken quite a bit of preparation.

"I generally work on transitions in rehearsal. And most important in my process is to get them to listen to each other," Yankee says. "For the strings: Be aware of what the second bassoon is doing. If we have to substitute a 16th note for two 32nd notes, that's fine. Just play with a little more transparency.

"The orchestra has really come along. It seems to me we made a turn, just in the last week or two of rehearsals."

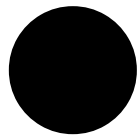
The orchestra and chorale will be joined by four well-known soloists: David Kravitz (bass), Deborah Selig (soprano), Jason McStoots (tenor) and Stephanie Kacoyanis (contralto).

Because “it’s not a massive orchestra by any means,” Yankee says, “the soloists won’t have to push their voices. I really wanted to keep a chamber feel to the performance.”

The special scale of the concerts has another purpose -- to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the founding of the FCPO. It was begun modestly in 2008 by Joyce Gindra, Fritz Sonnichsen and Laura Tutino Sonnichsen to make more ambitious repertory available to area amateur musicians, and the orchestra has been led by Yankee since its inception.

“I can’t believe it’s been this long,” Yankee says. “It’s the longest I’ve been in one place since I left home. We’ve come quite a way since we started.”

Of the Ninth symphony, he says, “I’m proud to be able to do this,” as well as performing with the FPCO in general. “There’s something really wonderful about wanting to be an ensemble. Look what we get to do, when intelligent people will work hard, and they care. There’s a beauty in amateur energy, in trying to play and sing well. It’s a privilege for me to get to be a part of it.”



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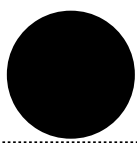
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