



## **‘Make ‘em Laugh’ does that and much more**

**By Keith Powers / Contributing writer**

Posted May 6, 2018 at 9:18 PM

FALMOUTH — Anytime you take yourself too seriously, someone is bound to make fun of you.

Take that, classical music.

Could there be anything easier to make fun of than classical music? Seriously: Don’t clap until you’re supposed to — and when is that, exactly? No talking — absolutely no talking. Sit up straight, and by all means wear your best clothes. You know, the uncomfortable ones.

Enough already. That’s what the Falmouth Chorale and friends decided with “Make ‘Em Laugh,” Saturday afternoon’s performance at the John Wesley United Methodist Church in Falmouth. Singing and cavorting with the utmost irreverence, music director John Yankee’s ensembles offered a decidedly un-serious side of serious music.

And not the inside-joke type of funny, either. You know, where someone says, “And then it resolved in B-flat — can you believe that?,” and a bunch of conservatory geeks fall over laughing, while everyone else looks at them like they’ve lost their marbles.

This was comedy, with songs like “Poisoning Pigeons in the Park” and a Latin-language version of “Old MacDonald Had a Farm.” P.D.Q. Bach, in all his not-quite-family-friendly glory.

The estimable baritone Mark McGrath joined in the fun, as did the Cape Youth Chorale and singers from Falmouth Academy. Stephanie Weaver accompanied on the piano — stepping out into the spotlight on her own now and then — and Yankee conducted, cajoled, sang along and generally marshaled the amusement.

After successive programs this spring that featured Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony and Gabriel Fauré’s “Requiem,” it was time for the chorale do some light lifting. Selections from Gilbert and Sullivan, Johann Strauss Jr., and Gioachino Rossini added a measure of “classical” to the ingredients, but only a teaspoonful or so.

For the most part it was parody. Or silliness. Or just plain tomfoolery. Like Weaver's "Instrumental Diversion," stolen from Camille Saint-Saëns' "Carnival of the Animals." (Turning the score upside-down midway through was a nice touch.) Or P.D.Q.'s singalong rounds, like "Please, Kind Sir" and "Nellie Is a Nice Girl," both with unprintable overlapping lyrics. Or the chorus "singing" the instruments (mostly do-do-do's and br-br-br's) in the "Barber of Seville" overture.

The clear audience favorite (apart from the young chorister who wandered around saying "Don't Worry. Be Happy") was Steve Martin's "Atheists Don't Have No Songs," with lyrics like "They've got Sundays free, to watch football in their underwear."

Humor can be hard, but not when the target is such an easy one. You can clap now. And loosen your tie, will ya?

This weekend's performances wrapped up the Falmouth Chorale's 2017–18 subscription season. For tickets and information about next season's performances, visit [falmouthchorale.org](http://falmouthchorale.org) or call 774-392-2383.

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