



Civic Orchestra of Tucson

PO Box 42764, Tucson, AZ 85733 | www.cotmusic.org
Contact: Dorothy Fitch | media@cotmusic.org | 520-730-3371

Civic Orchestra of Tucson Presents “Variations Plus” in Free Concerts

TUCSON, AZ (November 18, 2019) — Music Director Charles Bontrager leads the Civic Orchestra of Tucson in a pair of free afternoon concerts in early December. The same concert will be performed in Green Valley and Tucson.

“VARIATIONS PLUS”

Free Concerts, No tickets required.

- ♪ **Saturday, December 7 at 3:00 pm**
Valley Presbyterian Church, 2800 S Camino Del Sol, Green Valley, AZ
- ♪ **Sunday, December 8 at 3:00 pm**
Christ Church United Methodist, 655 N Craycroft Rd, Tucson, AZ

Opening the program will be “Variations on a Gregorian Hymn” by John E. Cheetham, Professor Emeritus of Music Theory and Composition at the University of Missouri-Columbia. This set of variations offers the noted Gregorian chant “Pange, lingua, gloriosi” in many harmonious styles and rhythms, creating a set of fascinating and complex evocations of the original simple tune. Charles Bontrager, COT’s Music Director, played a large role in bringing this piece to life, as he was Music Director of the Springfield (Missouri) Symphony Orchestra when it commissioned this piece, and he conducted its premiere in 1989. Composers as diverse as Anton Bruckner and Dave Brubeck have also written variations on the same Gregorian chant, composed by St. Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century.

The next piece on the program, “Five Variants of *Dives and Lazarus*” by Ralph Vaughan Williams, is an incredibly lush work for harp and string orchestra. The strings, at times, are divided into eighteen different parts, creating a wash of sumptuous sound. The work is inspired by English folk songs. Vaughan Williams noted in the score, “These variants are not exactly replicas of traditional tunes, but rather reminiscences of various versions in my own collection and those of others.”

The program concludes with Tchaikovsky’s massive Symphony No. 5, composed in 1888. One of his most popular works, this symphony is perhaps best known for the beautiful horn solo in the second movement. A recurring main theme unifies the symphony’s four movements.

Open seating is available at both locations; no tickets are needed for these free concerts.

The Civic Orchestra of Tucson is a 75-member orchestra, performing free concerts throughout the greater Tucson area since 1975.

For more information about these concerts, visit www.COTmusic.org or call 520-730-3371.

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