

THE WOODLANDS CHORALE

Community Enrichment through Exceptional Music

BY ANITA STEVENS



The Woodlands Chorale, previously The Woodlands Symphony Chorus, founded in 2009, began when The Woodlands Symphony ceased performing and the core chorus members and artistic director chose to continue performing classical and contemporary music for the community of The Woodlands. No longer under the umbrella of The Woodlands Symphony, Dr. J. David Faber modeled the newly created chorale by the example set by the well established Kingwood Chorale, working closely with the local college. "By working with North Harris County College, now Lone Star College-North Harris, we were able to organize and keep going," Dr. Faber said. Chorale members enrolled in a choral class taught by Dr. Faber, either for college credit or community education. "The college was very supportive. The rehearsals became part of my teaching load so the accompanist and I were paid and the college benefitted by having additional revenue from the chorale members' tuition," Faber said. It was a win-win for all parties. As the chorale was able to support itself, it became independent of the college. "Of those initial 20-25 beginning core members, nearly half of them still sing with The Woodlands Chorale," said Faber. "We owe a great deal to the core members who persevered to lay a good foundation for what we do now," said Rick Ray, The Woodlands Chorale president.

With focus on the community, The Woodlands Chorale practices a two-prong outreach program. Twice a year, in the spring and fall, singers are recruited from within the community to join the Chorale. "We rely on chorale members, area churches, and Facebook to reach out and find new, potential members," said Ray. Through its performances, the Chorale provides an opportunity for all vocalists to give back to the community in concert and, in turn, provides the community with an opportunity to experience the finest in classical and contemporary music. When the need arose recently, in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, The Woodlands Chorale joined with The Kingwood Chorale and performed in concert with all proceeds earmarked for those devastated by the hurricane.

Now, 60+ members strong, the Chorale is diligently rehearsing for the spring performance of Mozart's Requiem on April 28. "The rehearsal process is most important. It's delightful to make

such wonderful music with people that I have grown to love," Faber said. "For me, it's more about the relationships with the singers than about the music. Being together on Tuesday evenings is special," he added. "The fact that the music is going so well for this performance is the icing on the cake and when the concert goes well, it's the cherry on top." He continued, "To think that these volunteers put so much into singing and running the organization...it is humbling."

J. David Faber, founder and current director of The Woodlands Chorale, is the youngest of four children who grew up in a family where all the children studied music, sang and played an instrument. "I can't remember a time when I didn't sing," Faber said. He started piano at the age of 9 and studied organ as an undergraduate and graduate student, playing regularly in area churches until he came to Houston in 1996.

Dr. Faber graduated from Shepherd College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in music and holds a Masters Degree and Doctorate in music education and voice from West Virginia University. In addition to his responsibilities as Director of The Woodlands Chorale, Dr. Faber is the organist for The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church and, for the past 22 years, is the choral director at Lone Star College-North Harris where he directs the concert and jazz choirs, teaches piano, music appreciation and ear training.

The Woodlands Chorale dedicates itself to bringing performances of classical and contemporary choral repertoire of the highest standard to our community. Most vocalists in the chorale are adults; however, several high school and college students have also participated in recent years. Director Faber describes The Woodlands Chorale as "a quality organization of fine people. A chorale that will grow in number and in quality."

The Woodlands Chorale is a 501(C)(3) non-profit, tax-exempt organization and, as such, is dependent on individual and corporate donors, sponsors and fundraisers to offset operating expenses. Contributions are accepted through the chorale's website, amazonSmile or by postal mail.

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