

Letter from Italy, 1944

A soldier's story told in music

BECOME AN ADVERTISER – REACH A NEW AUDIENCE!

- Here is your opportunity to promote your business at the Hartford premiere of – *Letter from Italy, 1944* – a joint collaboration between the Hartford Chorale and the GMChorale, accompanied by the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, on May 4, 2017 at The Bushnell's magnificent nearly 3,000 seat Mortensen Hall.
- *Letter from Italy, 1944* – is a dramatic musical that was originally commissioned and premiered by the GMChorale to great acclaim in 2013. It is based on the true story of Dr. John K. Meneely, a highly decorated regimental surgeon in the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division, who suffered from what we now know to be PTSD upon his return to the States.
- Based on the letters Major Meneely wrote home to his wife during World War II, his daughters recently adapted them into the poetry and music that has further evolved into *Letter from Italy, 1944*. A documentary about this project, narrated by Meryl Streep, won a 2016 Emmy Award.
- Because this performance is a magnificent choral/orchestral and visual experience for the audience, and is a very moving and powerful project, we would like to have as many Veterans as possible to attend the Hartford Premiere free of charge with the support from our Advertisers.

“For every soldier killed in combat, 25 veterans are dying by suicide. It’s time to broaden efforts against PTSD.” Robert M. Morgenthau, Op Ed, Wall Street Journal, 9/24/12.

“We send whole, beautiful, perfect children to war. Some come home missing arms and legs. Others come home with invisible wounds that are the result of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), [or] traumatic brain injury (TBI)... it is clear, as we look at the alarming numbers of soldier’s suicides and lives torn apart by substance abuse, violence, and emotional instability, that we need a war on brain injury and emotional trauma.”

Elaine Lowry Brye—Be Safe, Love Mom, Public Affairs, 2015

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Artistic Director, GMChorale

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Richard Coffey

Music Director, Hartford Chorale

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MUCH MORE THAN A SINGLE PERFORMANCE

The 2017 Hartford Premiere Performance –

On May 4, 2017, the GMChorale and Hartford Chorale, with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, will present the Hartford Premiere of *Letter from Italy, 1944*. The performance will feature a combined 200 voices onstage, orchestral accompaniment, and stage projections of photos of the family and the 10th Mountain Division's heroic efforts in World War II that sync with the lyrics being performed. This remarkable work – a soldier's story told in music – is quite timely as we still strive to understand and address our veterans' struggles with PTSD.

Veterans Engagement Program –

We are joining forces with Veteran Organizations to offer as many complimentary tickets as we can to veterans – made possible through the generous support of our sponsors. Many who have served in the military suffer from PTSD. We offer *Letter from Italy, 1944*, a story of both struggle and hope, as a way toward understanding and a better future for those who have served all of us so bravely.

Community Conversations Series –

A series of eight community events will be featured between January and April of 2017 to further promote *Letter from Italy, 1944* and our sponsors including: three screenings of the documentary with discussion, four educational lectures on PTSD, poetry readings created from Dr. Meneely's letters and an exhibition of original sources, including photos and letters.

The Honorary Board –

To increase exposure, publicity and recognition of this project, we have secured commitments from many prominent individuals to participate on our Honorary Board whose titles include: U.S. Senator, Connecticut State Senator, Mayor, University Professor, and a national official from Veterans' Affairs.

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THE CHORALES

GMChorale

The GMChorale has become one of New England's finest and most engaging choruses since its founding in 1977 as The Greater Middletown Chorale. Today, GMChorale is celebrated for its innovative symphonic choral presentations, and often performs with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra and other ensembles.

Under the inspired leadership of Artistic Director Joseph D'Eugenio, the 80-voice Chorale performs beloved masterworks and newly commissioned pieces. The 20-voice GMChorale Chamber Singers, also directed by Joseph D'Eugenio, presents concerts of early to contemporary music, both *a cappella* and accompanied, in a variety of settings. GMChorale crowned its two European concert tours as the only choir providing music for the Sunday noon mass at Venice's extraordinary Basilica San Marco.

The GMChorale commissioned *Letter from Italy, 1944* from American composer Sarah Meneely-Kyder in 2011. Two years later, the GMChorale premiered the new oratorio, with music by Meneely-Kyder, lyrics by poet Nancy Meneely and book by Joseph D'Eugenio, at the Performing Arts Center in Middletown, Connecticut. Conducted by Joseph D'Eugenio, this semi-staged performance with professional soloists, professional orchestra, chorus of 100, visual projections and dramatic lighting was greeted with great acclaim.

Hartford Chorale

Celebrating its 45th season, the Hartford Chorale, a volunteer nonprofit, presents, on a symphonic scale, masterpieces of great choral art to listeners throughout southern New England and beyond. Hartford Chorale is the primary symphonic chorus of central Connecticut, with critically acclaimed collaborations with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, and the New Haven, New Britain, and Hartt School Symphony Orchestras.

Established in 1972, and under the direction of Maestro Richard Coffey since 2005, the Hartford Chorale is composed of 160 men and women from central Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. The Chorale offers opportunities to study and perform at a professional level, with internship programs for gifted high school and college musicians. Competitive auditions for new members are conducted annually.

The Chorale performs in the Greater Hartford area, but has also been heard at Carnegie Hall and several halls in the Northeast. The Chorale has performed in China and in several European countries, recently completing a performance tour of Paris. In 2017 the Chorale will perform in Prague, Vienna, and Budapest.

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Advertising Deadline: Friday, April 14, 2017

For questions or for more information, contact: Joe Evangelista 203-530-8836

Please submit all artwork as a PDF or JPG to: Joe.Evangelista@GMChorale.org

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NARRATIVE

We are happy and excited to extend your invitation to be a Hartford Premiere sponsor of *Letter from Italy, 1944*, an unforgettable soldier's story and a profoundly moving love story, set during and after World War II. This collaboration between the Hartford Chorale and the GMChorale, accompanied by the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, will take place on May 4, 2017, at The Bushnell's magnificent (nearly 3,000-seat) Mortensen Hall.

Letter from Italy, 1944 is a dramatic oratorio (a musical play, with orchestra, singers and actors but without scenery), a true story about Doctor John Meneely, a Yale Medical School graduate and a regimental surgeon and combat medic in the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division. Commissioned by the GMChorale, with music by American composer Sarah Meneely-Kyder, lyrics by poet Nancy Meneely and book by Joseph D'Eugenio, *Letter from Italy, 1944* brings to the stage the story of the Meneely family as their husband and father is trying to cope with his wartime psychological wounds. The story, in brief:

John Meneely is born during a Vermont snowstorm as his loving father, "Jake" Meneely, sings to his newborn son ("Oh, the sweetie man, / . . . God is sleeping now, / The sweet little sweetie man. / Sleep thee, too, little man."). As he grows into young manhood, John feels the sweetness of falling in love with his wife-to-be, Delia ("I know a land where roses bloom / and bluets mark their compass points / . . . This land I know within my heart / is lost unless you bring the chart.").

At the outbreak of the war, John Meneely, now married with two daughters and newly graduated from Yale Medical School, is recruited into the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division. He experiences the brutality of combat in the Aleutian Islands and in the mountains of central Italy, and suffers the devastation of losing friends and comrades to enemy gunfire ("What God (if God) / would leave me / with the wretched / thrill of gratitude / they died and I / persist.").

When John returns to his family he brings with him the pain of his experiences, what is now known as "post-traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD). His family, recognizing the ache of his loss and confusion, are determined that what happened to him will not lessen the love and support they mutually share. Ultimately, John ends his own life, and *Letter from Italy, 1944* concludes with Delia, his wife, singing of her undying love for him ("Sleep thee, too, little man. / And as we live, your one and three, / your world of love resides in me.").

This moving and powerful performance is a magnificent choral, orchestral and visual experience for the audience. Our goal, with support from our Sponsors, is to have as many veterans as possible attending the Hartford Premiere free of charge.

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