

Marriage

Concert to feature nuptial tunes

By Kathleen Schwar
Staff writer

The difference between "Here Comes the Bride" and "Trumpet Tune in D Major" for a wedding processional is ... well, come hear for yourself. The Sacred Heart Cathedral is holding its eighth annual wedding music concert Sunday, Feb. 9, at 2:30 p.m.

Don't count on actually hearing Wagner's "Bridal Chorus" (also known as "Here Comes the Bride"). But do count on hearing music selections "explicitly or implicitly religious" — and on gaining a better appreciation of why church musicians recommend what they do.

"There is so much music out there for weddings," said J. William Greene, Ph.D., organist-choirmaster for the cathedral and organizer of the concert. His point in the hour-long presentations is to demonstrate, with help from soloists and the choir, music that is available — and appropriate.

Apparently such concerts are not common across the country.

"Whoa," responded Gordon E. Truitt, editor of *Pastoral Music* magazine, surprised upon hearing that even the 30-member cathedral choir will sing Feb. 9. "The idea of a concert is unusual. The idea of meeting with couples is not unusual. A concert is an interesting ap-

proach to exposing couples to different kinds of music."

Truitt said his wife, a soloist, insists on meeting with engaged couples to discuss wedding music. She invites them home and "plays through the music in our living room."

Greene, too, meets with the individual couples. But first, by attending the Sacred Heart concert, they will receive a program of the 21 selections performed, a music planning sheet with blank lines to fill in, and a guide for planning wedding music, with specific information about the cathedral and its fees.

"I encourage people when they come to take notes," Greene said. "When they come to talk to me, because I do have to talk with all these couples, they have a little more of a focus."

Greene said the cathedral hosts 50 to 90 weddings a year (for members or children of members), and finds that half to two-thirds of the couples planning the weddings either attend the concert or send a relative or other observer. Occasionally outside musicians have been among the 75-150 people attending, he said. Anyone is welcome, and the concert is free of charge.

"It is a little extra work on our part," he said. "On the other hand, it seems to help people so much."

Cathedral cantor Richard Healey said he finds that couples do like the religious music once they hear it.

"They say, 'Wow, that's beautiful; I want that,'" he said.

Prior to hearing the kinds of religious music available, he added, many a couple has requested, instead, such music as the theme from "Ice Castles" or the love song from "Phantom of the Opera."

"All I tell people is the music should be somehow appropriate for a wedding and church. In other words, it needs to be a little bit religious," Greene advised.

"I definitely say we won't sing 'The Rose' or 'Evergreen' or those kind of things," Greene said. The music must have at least a "religious tinge," he said, such as Leonard Bernstein's "One Hand, One Heart." That song "would ride on the edge," he said, but added, "We can assume it's addressing God."

As for the "Bridal Chorus," the cathedral's wedding guide explains. "In spite of its title, however, this work is not appropriate for wedding usage and never has been. While there is nothing wrong with it musically, the part of the opera ("Lohengrin") from which it is drawn is very sad indeed, with the bride being delivered to her groom against her will, setting up the tragic events to come."

"It is a mock against the



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

Church musicians will present Sacred Heart Cathedral's eighth-annual wedding concert on Feb. 9.

church in general," Healey explained.

The music he and others will present in the Feb. 9 concert at Sacred Heart, 296 Flower City Park, Rochester, includes four samples each of a processional, responsorial psalm, Gospel acclamation, vocal solo, choral anthem and recessional. The concert is expected to last about an hour.

On the program are J.S. Bach, George Frederick Handel, Henry Purcell, and more recent composers' songs such as "The Unity Candle Song" by Raymond Haan, and a favorite of Healey's, "When There's

Love at Home," by James Denton.

In addition to the concert, individuals planning a wedding can turn to a wedding music guide issued by the diocesan Office of Liturgy, at 716/428-3210, or 1-800-388-7177. There is no universal list of songs that are acceptable or unacceptable, it notes, and each parish has its own policies about wedding music. But the guide does answer common questions and is sent out with a list of optional music, including Taize community and Gregorian chants, "Celtic Alleluia," classical pieces, and Marty Haugen songs.

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