



'The Most Happy Fella'

Rogue Valley Chorale presents concert version of the Broadway musical

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Ellie Holt-Murray, left, and Neil Wilson will be featured singers in Rogue Valley Chorale's concert performance of "The Most Happy Fella."

Rogue Valley Chorale

April 18, 2008

For its last performance of the current season the Rogue Valley Chorale will present a different kind of musical evening. Under the direction of Lynn Sjolund the chorale will perform a concert version of songs from the Tony Award winning Broadway musical, "The Most Happy Fella" at 8 p.m. Saturday, April 26; and 3 p.m. Sunday, April 27, at Craterian Ginger Rogers Theater, 23 S. Central Ave., Medford.

"Most Happy Fella" opened on Broadway in 1956 with book, lyrics, and music by Frank Loesser and based on the play "They Knew What They Wanted" by Sidney Howard. In the play, Amy (Ellie Holt-Murray), a waitress in 1927 San Francisco, is wooed through letters by lonely middle-aged bachelor, Tony Esposito (Neil Wilson), from his vineyard in California's Napa Valley. Tony proposes to Amy (whom he calls "Rosabella"), enclosing a photograph of his handsome ranch hand, Joe, rather than one of himself. Despite this deception, Tony and Rosabella find love and, eventually, forgiveness and acceptance.

Against this serious story is the funny tale of Herman (Andrew Brock), Tony's gentle-natured employee and Cleo (Livia Genise), Rosabella's smart, tart-tongued friend. The two play out a romance as playful as Tony and Rosabella's is passionate and painful. All of this is set to a musical score of almost operatic dimensions.

Also in the cast are Jennifer Jacobs as Marie; Kenne Horton as Joey; Philip Koenig as Doc and Robert Begg as the Poatman. Other chorale members will sing the parts of the various townspeople.

Genise provided the stage direction. Andrea Brock and Doris Sjolun will provide keyboard accompaniment.

Baritone Neil has sung throughout the United States and Germany. He has sung leading and supporting roles in more than 40 opera and musical theatre productions with Portland Opera Association, Opera Southwest, Opera Roanoke, Eugene Opera, and Oregon Repertory Theater. Wilson's academic career spanned over 40 years teaching at universities in Oregon, Texas and Virginia.

Soprano Holt-Murray has performed leading roles for Rogue Opera, Sacramento Opera, Oakland Opera, Eugene Opera, Opera Theater of San Antonio, Marin Opera, West Coast Opera, West Bay Opera and Berkeley Opera. Locally she has performed with Rogue Music Theater, Rogue Opera, Britt, Southern Oregon Repertory Singers and the Oregon Cabaret Theatre.

Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$5 for students. Call 779-3000.

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