

World famous tenor visits Cambridge

Greg MacDonald, Special To The Times

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Tenor Ben Heppner has performed in some of the globe's most famous opera houses and entertained audiences in cities such as Paris, Berlin and New York City.

Add Cambridge to that list.

The Grammy and Juno award-winning artist will put on a special performance Feb. 13 at Forward Baptist Church on Myers Road. The show, titled *Opera and Oratorio* with Ben Heppner and Friends, will be in benefit of Heritage College and Seminary in Cambridge.

Heppner's son attended the college for a few years and the school's brass asked the elder Heppner to put on a show.

"It's always good to do these little charitable things so I said I'd be delighted," said Heppner, who just returned from a tour of Europe.

The Cambridge show will be a little different than the performances he put on in London and Paris, but Heppner said he is used to playing in smaller venues.

"I do concerts in small towns across Canada every so often and I even work in smaller concert halls in Berlin," he said. "It's something I do on a semi-regular basis."

Last year he toured the Prairies, playing in towns such as Yellowknife, Prince Albert, Sask., and Medicine Hat, Alta.

He relishes his chances to play in these kinds of venues.

"When you're performing an opera, you're always in character. You never get to break from that and get a chance to interact," Heppner said.

"In these kind of shows I often get a chance to talk with people a little bit. The audience starts to relate to you as person rather than a character on stage."

He's hoping for that kind of show in Cambridge. Heppner will make the show accessible so that it appeals to a wider range of audiences.

He promises that the show will have something for both opera buffs and the less-experienced opera fans out there.

He'll begin with a set of pieces by the Italian composer Paolo Tosti, which will be sung in English and Italian.

"Those ones will sound highfalutin and opera-like," Heppner promised.

But he'll also perform selections from his CD *My Secret Heart*, which features songs of parlours shops and the silver screen.



Ben Heppner, who has performed in some of the most famous opera houses in the world, comes to Cambridge tomorrow for a special show.

Those pieces will appeal to the part of the audience less familiar with opera.

“Even if people don’t know the pieces they’ll still enjoy them. It’s very easy to relate to them and understand the melodies,” Heppner said.

Heppner’s next big performance will take place at the Metropolitan Opera’s 125th anniversary performance in New York City.

He’ll be performing a duet, but the seasoned tenor admits that despite the grandiose venue and prestige of the event, he’s not sweating it too much.

“There are going to be 25 or 30 people singing and I just have one piece. I’m not thinking about it too much, I’ve got other fish to fry,” Heppner said.

Tickets for the Cambridge performance are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door.

They’re available by calling 519-651-2869 or visiting www.yourticketzone.com.

Doors open at 7 p. m. and the performance begins at 8 p. m.

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