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Rochester Oratorio Society to Perform at Cultural Festival Preceding 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics

ROCHESTER—Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks announced that the Rochester Oratorio Society will perform at the opening and closing ceremonies of the 9th China International Chorus Festival in Beijing in July 2008. The festival—China’s longest running and most prestigious music festival—is expected to become part of the Beijing Olympic Culture Festival preceding the 2008 Summer Olympic Games.

“This is a tremendous honor for the Rochester Oratorio Society and I congratulate them on this outstanding recognition,” said Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks. “Their performance at this international event will showcase not only their talents, but the many talents and assets of our culturally vibrant community. This will put Monroe County on the world stage.”

“Congratulations to the Rochester Oratorio Society for this prestigious honor and opportunity to act as cultural ambassadors for Rochester,” said Rochester Mayor Robert J. Duffy. “Rochester is home to cultural institutions like Garth Fagan, Geva Theatre, Hochstein and the Downstairs Cabaret Theatre. The arts have been engrained in the fabric of this community for well over a century and are an economic engine for our community. The Rochester Oratorio Society is an internationally known cultural landmark that makes the Greater Rochester community proud.”

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The Rochester Oratorio Society, our community's premier large chorus with over 160 singers, received the invitation to perform at the festival from the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China via the China Performing Arts Agency. The chorus festival, held every two years, attracts choirs from China and abroad. The opening ceremonies of the festival will be held at the Great Hall of the People in the capital city; the Great Wall of China will serve as the backdrop for the festival's closing ceremonies.

Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester President and CEO Sarah Lentini said, "Rochester has great strength, depth and richness in its cultural sector which is evident by its world-class artists and cultural institutions such as the Rochester Oratorio Society. Dr. Townell's vision has fostered cultural exchange while promoting Rochester's immense power in the arts."

"This festival will place the City of Rochester at the center of the world stage, in the single most exciting, highly visible cultural venue for 2008," said Maestro Eric Townell, music director of the Rochester Oratorio Society. "Our presence at the cultural festival will undoubtedly open doors of opportunity for local partners looking to tap into the Olympic experience and Chinese audiences."

While the official music program to be performed has yet to be determined, it is very likely that ROS will perform in Chinese along with Chinese performing groups. The chorus is planning a send-off concert prior to departing to China in July 2008.

Information on upcoming concerts and ways to give to the ROS is available at www.ROSSings.org or 585.473.2234.

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Rochester Oratorio Society's Upcoming Concert: Chestnuts and Old Favorites, 8 pm Saturday, May 5 at Hochstein Performance Hall, 50 North Plymouth Avenue, Rochester. Pre-concert Chat at 7:20 pm. Visit www.ROSSings.org or call 585.473.2234 for tickets and information.