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Waimea Consort's "Light!" brightens the holiday spirit

By Catherine Tarleton, Special to North Hawaii News



Waimea Consort members prepare for Dec. 6 concert. (COURTESY PHOTO)

Since 1999, a group or consort of Hawaii Island sopranos, altos, tenors and basses have been singing together a capella, without instrumental accompaniment. On Sunday, Dec. 6, the Waimea Consort will perform at Hawaii Preparatory Academy's Davies Chapel at 4 p.m., presenting "Light!" — a free a capella concert that pays tribute to 2015 as UNESCO'S International Year of Light.

"We are trying to look at different aspects of light, from physical light to metaphorical light to spiritual light," says Pat Perez, president of Waimea Consort and a member of the group since its beginning. "It's also about what light we can bring with music to the world, especially with recent events."

Perez says that "Light!" will include early music, i.e. medieval and renaissance music from pre-Baroque, as well as 20th and 21st century composers such as Morten Lauridsen, who composed one of Perez' favorites, "O Nata Lux," drawn from a 10th Century hymn in Latin.

"Morten Lauridsen visited us in Waimea a few years ago and we got to hear him speak and learn about his composition process. It was fascinating," says Perez, who enjoys her work with the Consort. "I love it," she says. "The Consort is my ohana. It keeps me going every week."

Peter Gregg, co-conductor and a pediatrician with Paniolo Pediatrics, feels the same way. "It's one of the things I look forward to" he says. "I always come out of rehearsal feeling energized."

Gregg, like Perez, is a longtime Waimea Consort member. When their original conductor Christian Veillet left the island in 2013, he and another member, Edith Kawai, a Waimea attorney and former music director at Imiola Church, stepped up and teamed up to lead the singers.

"It's interesting," says Gregg. "I'm 54 years old and I'm one of the younger ones. We need to get kids interested in singing this kind of music."

For more information about the Dec. 6 concert, call 238-5978 or visit <http://waimeaconsort.weebly.com>.

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