

'A Prayer for the Dead'

New Hampshire composer Lawrence Siegel unveils work that honors Holocaust victims, celebrates survivors

By **NANCY BEAN FOSTER**
Union Leader Correspondent

ANew Hampshire composer has captured memories of the Holocaust as well as the beauty of hope in a new concert piece called "Kaddish."

Though Lawrence Siegel was scheduled to premier his newest work in an 8 p.m. concert Saturday, May 3, at Keene State College's Redfern Arts Center on Brickyard Pond, the quick sell-out of the show prompted program planners to open to the public a free working dress rehearsal at 7 p.m. Friday, May 2. In addition, a simulcast of the concert, which was commissioned by Keene State College's Cohen Center for Holocaust Studies, will be aired May 3 in the Recital Hall of the Redfern Arts Center. Cost to attend is \$5 for students and \$10 for adults, and includes a chance to meet the composer and Holocaust survivors at a post-per-

The Westmoreland composer was asked by the Cohen Center for Holocaust Studies to create a piece called "Kaddish," a term that refers to a Jewish prayer recited as part of the mourning rituals at funerals and on the anniversary of the death of a loved one.

formance reception.

Siegel, 56, who lives in Westmoreland, was asked by the Cohen Center, one of the nation's oldest Holocaust resource centers, to create "Kaddish" in honor of the center's 25th anniversary, which is being celebrated this year.

"Kaddish" is a term that refers to the traditional Jewish prayer for the dead. The prayer is recited as part of the mourning rituals at funerals and on the anniversary of the death of a loved one, according to the Cohen Center.

But Siegel, who relied on the first-person testimony of Holocaust survivors and was inspired in part by his own personal journey to Poland and Czechoslovakia, said

the choral and instrumental music is not meant to be somber and serious.

"It's about celebrating life and all the details," Siegel said in a recent interview. "All of the text comes from the voices of the survivors and how they learned to find hope in their daily lives."

Siegel, who was born in Boston, has been taking words from the mouths of ordinary — and extraordinary — people and converting them into music for more than 20 years. Called "Verbatim Projects," Siegel has transformed conversations into works of art.

"I have done 25 Verbatim Projects over the years," said Siegel. "The stories come from people, or-

ganizations, communities, schools."

Taking on the subject of the Holocaust meant reaching out to those who survived Nazi death camps in Eastern Europe, hearing their voices and listening intently for the messages of hope that are often buried in the depths of pain.

The journey became clear for Siegel when he heard a woman named Naomi talk about her trip back to Poland after having lived in the United States since after World War II.

"She went with her family to Poland — to Auschwitz — and walked through the gate that said 'Arbeit Macht Frei' (Work Makes One Free)," Siegel said. "Then she turned, looked back and saw her

family, and at that moment, she had an epiphany. She realized that she had survived."

The purpose of Siegel's latest piece, which includes 15 songs for chorus, soloists and a chamber orchestra, is to move people through music to become participants in the healing of old wounds and the prevention of new ones.

"The Cohen Center has just embarked on an expansion to include genocide studies," said Siegel. "Part of what we're doing with 'Kaddish' is to involve the audience, to make them feel empathy for the survivors, but also to cause them to be stirred in a way that speeches or lectures can't."

"Kaddish" will feature solos by soprano Peggio Horstmann-Hodes, mezzo-soprano Pamela Stevens, tenor Ryan Turner and baritone David Ripley as well as a chorus of 50 voices and a chamber orchestra.

For more information, visit www.kaddish-project.org or contact the Redfern Arts Center box office at 358-2168.



Concert band honors center's mission to 'remember and teach'

KEENE — The Keene State College Concert Band will perform "To Remember ... and to Teach," a concert dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the Cohen Center for Holocaust Studies, at 7:30 p.m. today, April 24, at the Redfern Arts Center on Brickyard Pond.

The ensemble will perform "March" from the "Symphonic Metamorphosis" by Paul Hindemith, "Eine Kleine Yiddische Ragmusik" by Adam Gorb and Frank Ticheli's powerful arrangement of "Amazing Grace."

In addition, "Pie Jesu" from Requiem in D Minor op. 48 by Gabriel Faure will feature Keene State senior and mezzo-soprano Shannon Ward of Sutton, Vt. "Kol Nidrei op. 47," by Max Bruch will be performed by Keene State faculty member and tenor saxophonist Craig Sylvern. Compositions by W. Francis McBeth and John P. Zdechlik also will be performed.

The program's title is the motto of the Cohen Center for Holocaust Studies, one of the oldest Holocaust resource centers in the United States. Founded in 1983 by Charles Hildebrandt, the center is located on the Keene State College campus, where its endeavors to raise awareness of genocide through its collection of historical materials and outreach programs.

Admission is \$10 for the general public and \$5 for KSC students, senior citizens, and youth ages 17 and younger. Tickets are available through the box office at 358-2168 or online at www.keene.edu/racpb.

Hanson takes walk across the U.S. — and steps to aid Africa

Hanson, on the road in support of its fourth studio album, "The Walk," will visit the Hampton Beach Casino Ballroom Saturday, April 26.

The group, which features siblings Zack, Isaac and Taylor, is on the third leg of a tour meant to draw attention to Hanson's latest music as well as cause, fighting poverty and AIDS in Africa, an effort that began with their trip to Africa to record the charity single, "Great Divide."

"We want to inspire others to look for simple tangible ways to make a difference," said Taylor Hanson. "It is easy to be halted by the great hurdles of poverty and AIDS, but making an impact can begin as simply as giving someone a pair of shoes, or buying a song."

Hanson recently joined TOMS Shoes, which has donated 58,000 pairs of shoes to children in Africa, on its second shoe drop. Hanson launched its own TOMS "Great Divide" Shoe, through which anyone purchasing a pair of shoes is given a download card for "Great Divide," as well as a second acoustic recording. The proceeds from the downloads will go to help HIVSA, an HIV research hospital in Soweto, South Africa.

Hanson also is continuing its 1-mile barefoot walks with fans



Hanson — siblings Isaac, Zack and Taylor — will perform at the Hampton Beach Casino Ballroom Saturday night.

across the United States. Location of each day's walk are announced on www.hanson.net three hours in advance.

"The Walk" follows the 2004 debut release on the trio's 3CG label, "Underneath," which went to No. 1 on the Billboard Independent chart, producing the No. 2 single, "Penny and Me," a Top 10 hit in England as well. The band's 1997

debut, "Middle of Nowhere," sold more than 4 million albums in the United States, thanks to the chart-topping hit, "MmmBop." The group received three Grammy nominations that year, including best new artist and record of the year.

Tickets to the 8 p.m. show are \$25-\$28. For more details, log onto www.casinoballroom.com or call 929-4100.