

National Presidents' Day Choral Festival

A Special Choral Salute Commemorating

AMERICA'S GREATEST PRESIDENTS

Presidents' Day Weekend, 2011

in the

JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER

for the

PERFORMING ARTS



featuring

Dr. William Skoog

Artistic Director

Saluting “America’s Greatest Presidents”

Surely God would not have created such a being as man, with an ability to grasp the infinite, to exist only for a day! No, no, man was made for immortality.

~ Abraham Lincoln

Music Celebrations International is pleased to present the first-annual *National Presidents’ Day Choral Festival*, a major national event in Washington, D.C. designed to salute “America’s Greatest Presidents.” The festival will feature a combined force of mature mixed voices singing en masse in the Concert Hall of the *John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts*—a fitting setting for this important commemoration.

Presidents’ Day (or Presidents Day) is the colloquial name for the American holiday designated as George Washington’s Birthday. As the first federal holiday to honor an American citizen, the holiday was celebrated on Washington’s actual birthday in 1796 (the last full year of his presidency) on February 22.

While the holiday is still officially known as Washington’s Birthday, it has become popularly known as “Presidents’ Day”, honoring both Washington and Abraham Lincoln, as well as all the other men who have served as president.

George Washington

1732—1799

George Washington was the commander of the Continental Army in the American Revolutionary War and the first President of the United States of America. For his central role in the formation of the United States, he is often referred to as “the father of his country.”

Washington was born in 1732 to a wealthy Virginian planter family. The most lingering story from his childhood includes the myth that Washington chopped down his father’s cherry tree, without permission, and admitted the deed when questioned, saying “I cannot tell a lie.”

In the 1750’s, he fought the first skirmishes of the French and Indian War. In 1755, he escaped injury although bullets tore through his coat and two horses were shot from underneath him. Following the war, Washington returned to his wife Martha at Mount Vernon. Like his fellow Virginia planters, Washington felt exploited by British merchants and hampered by excessive regulations. As the quarrel with Britain grew, he began voicing his resistance to the restrictions.

When the Second Continental Congress assembled in May 1775, Washington was elected Commander in Chief of the Continental Army. In July 1775 he took command of his ill-trained troops and embarked upon a war that lasted six grueling years. After the war, he became a leader in the steps leading to the Constitutional Convention in 1787, and when it was ratified, the Electoral College unanimously elected Washington as President. Following eight years of service, he returned to Mount Vernon. Washington died of a throat infection December 14, 1799.

Abraham Lincoln

1809—1865

As President, he built the newly-formed Republican Party into a strong national organization. Further, he rallied most of the northern Democrats to the Union cause. On January 1, 1863, he issued the Emancipation Proclamation that declared forever free those slaves within the Confederacy.

Lincoln never let the world forget that the Civil War involved an even larger issue. This he stated most movingly in dedicating the military cemetery at Gettysburg: “that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

The spirit that guided him was clearly that of his Second Inaugural Address, now inscribed on one wall of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.: “With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds....”

On Good Friday, April 14, 1865, during a coordinated attack on several members of his administration, Lincoln was assassinated at Ford’s Theatre in Washington, D.C. by John Wilkes Booth—an actor, who somehow thought he was aiding the South by committing the assassination. The opposite was the result, for with Lincoln’s death, the possibility of peace with magnanimity died.

Festival Tour Itinerary



Saturday, February 19th, 2011

Arrive in Washington, D.C.

Meet your Tour Manager(s), who will escort you through the duration of your activities

Take a panoramic motorcoach tour of the Capitol Hill area, the Supreme Court Building, and the Library of Congress

Check into your hotel

4:30pm

Welcome Dinner and Festival Introductions

7:00pm—10:00pm

Evening Festival Chorus Rehearsal

Sunday, February 20th, 2011

Breakfast at the hotel

9:00am—12:00pm

Morning Festival Chorus Rehearsal

Enjoy a box lunch en route to Arlington National Cemetery

Take a tour of Arlington National Cemetery to participate in the special U.S. Military Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns (*time to be confirmed*)

Visit Ford's Theater, where Lincoln was shot, and the Peterson House, where Lincoln passed away

Dinner at a local restaurant

7:00pm—10:00pm

Evening Festival Chorus Rehearsal

Monday, February 21st, 2011

Breakfast at the hotel

10:00am

Festival Chorus Dress Rehearsal in the Kennedy Center

Lunch at the KC Café

2:00pm

National Presidents' Day Choral Festival Performance in the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

Dinner at a local restaurant

Take an evening walking tour of the Lincoln,

Korean, Vietnam, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and National World War II Memorials, as well as the Washington Monument



Tuesday, February 22nd, 2011

Breakfast at the hotel

Hotel check-out and board motorcoach

Morning visit to George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens

Afternoon departure for home

Let your heart feel for the afflictions and distress of everyone, and let your hand give in proportion to your purse.

~George Washington



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