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Fox Valley organizations unite to honor local veterans in Fox Valley Rep's 'Letters Home'



By Audra Sybert Tuesday at 11:23 a.m.



Fox Valley Concert Band and Coductor Dr. Colin Holman. Photo provided by FVCB.

Fox Valley Repertory, in partnership with The Fox Valley Concert Band, presents a one-a-kind tribute to the armed forces called "Letters Home: A Memorial Day Remembrance", a dedication to America's soldiers, past and present on May 28 and 29, 2011 at the Pheasant Run Resort Mainstage (4051 E. Main St., St. Charles, IL; box office 630-584-6342).

"Letters Home: A Memorial Day Remembrance" was uniquely created by Fox Valley Rep Artistic Director John Gawlik specifically for the Fox Valley community. Actors from Fox Valley Rep will recite soldiers' letters written to friends and family during their time of service – including letter submissions from the Fox Valley area. Beautiful music by the Fox Valley Concert Band, under the direction of Dr. Colin Holman, will accompany these letters.

Among the letters to be featured are several World War II love letters from the parents of Sarah Giachino, co-founder of Fox Valley Troop Support Inc. Sarah's father, Purple Heart recipient Charles Hardman, was a Lieutenant in the Army, 117th Infantry, 30th Division.

"He arrived on Omaha Beach D-Day plus 7 and fought the Nazi's all the way through the Battle of the Bulge," says Giachino of St. Charles. "During his deployment, my Mother was pregnant with their first son. They wrote to each other every single day, signing all of their letters to each other exactly the same way – 'Sleep on it Darling, I love you Honey, Sweetest of Dreams and Goodnight Sweetheart. I believe these powerful messages of hope and support kept my father alive during his long deployment."

With help from the St. Charles Heritage Center and the Geneva History Center, Gawlik was able to research other local letters from various conflicts.

Reading these letters will be Fox Valley Rep actors Chris Daley (previously in FVR's It's a Wonderful Life Radio Play), Jack Sweeney (The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, It's a Wonderful Life Radio Play), and former FVR Performing Arts Academy student and St. Charles Resident Rachel Whiteside.

And together with music, letters, and storytelling, this powerful concert will form an event of remembrance and celebration. Performances are scheduled for Saturday, May 28, 2011 @ 8pm and Sunday, May 29, 2011 at 2pm. Tickets are \$20 with a portion of ticket proceeds benefitting the Fox Valley Troop Support Inc. and Illinois Wounded Warriors Program. Veterans will receive 50% off the regular ticket price by presenting their ID.

Pheasant Run Resort is located at 4051 E. Main St., St. Charles, IL. For tickets, call the Pheasant Run Box Office at 630-584-6342, or visit www.ticketmaster.com. Additional performance information may be obtained at www.foxvalleyrep.org.