

RHEINLAND-PFALZ

INTERNATIONAL CHOIR

BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH SONG

The sound coming from the choir is impressive. It's a four-part mixed choir that sings everything from classical to medieval to Stevie Wonder in multiple languages just for the fun of it.

The choir is the *Rheinland-Pfalz* International Choir, a group of mostly Germans and Americans who have been performing in the area for 25 years and just recently won the "Best Choir" award in the "Folk/World Music" category at the 150th anniversary celebration of the Rhineland-Palatinate Choir Association (*Chorverband der Pfalz*).

"Our uniqueness really lies in our membership," said Dr. Patrick Casey, the choir's director. "Our roster is nearly half German and half American but we have some members from Poland and Britain, as well. This social mix is quite special."

"A lot of Germans join to experience the American way of life but through the Germans, the Americans have a chance to get into our culture, as well," said Florian Deumeland, who joined the group last year. "The intercultural dimension is not only within the choir, though. It's also in the repertoire," he added. "At our last concert, we sang 13 songs in five different languages, including Chinese," laughed choir president Sharon Franklin.

Succeeding takes a lot of practice, both at home and as a group. "Together, we focus on matching vowel sounds – a constant challenge with our diversity of languages – and on blending our voices, whether the music suggests a warm, dark sound or other, lighter expressions,"

explained Casey, who has degrees in music education and conducting and has taught instrumental music at the Indiana University, Jacobs School of Music, Virginia Tech, Oregon State University, the University of Oregon, the Ohio State University and the University of Dayton.

"Mostly, we love to sing," Franklin stressed. "We're always looking for new members and you don't have to be able to read music to join. However, you do need to invest time in practicing on your own." In spite of the linguistic diversity of the group's repertoire, a degree in linguistics isn't required, either. Rehearsals are conducted in English with immediate German translation and take place on Tuesdays from 7-9 p.m. in the Protestant parish hall in Kaiserslautern-Erzhütten.



The group will join the USAFE Band for the traditional Christmas Concert in Kaiserslautern's *Fruchthalle* on Dec. 10 at 8 p.m. Other performances of their winter program will be at the *Christuskirche* in Kaiserslautern on Dec. 5 at 5 p.m. and during and after mass at the Catholic church in Bann on Dec. 12, starting at 9:30 a.m.

For more information about the RPIC, visit their website at: www.sing-rpic.de.

