

THE DRESDNER KREUZCHOR

The Dresdner Kreuzchor is one of Germany's oldest and best known boys choirs. Composed of 150 singers between the ages of 10 and 18, the choir makes its Toronto debut at Holy Blossom Temple on October 5 with a performance of Felix Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. They are also performing Joseph Haydn's *Creation* at Roy Thomson Hall the next night and Johann Sebastian Bach's *Mass in B Minor* on October 7.

Feature soloists are tenor, Ralph Eschrig; soprano, Ute Selbig; alto, Annette Markert; and baritone, Andreas Scheibner; with conductor Gothart Stier. Cantor Benjamin Maissner of Holy Blossom Temple will be the tenor solo at the October 5 concert.

Founded by Dresden's Church of the Cross in 1216, the Kreuzchor performs on average 140 times a year. The choir has toured recently in Japan, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Finland, Sweden, and the Soviet Union. The Dresdner Philharmonie which itself dates from 1870 is accompanying the Kreuzchor.

Originally the German Democratic Republic had invested considerable resources in the choir as a symbol of the socialist state. Its home, the Church of the Cross – built in Dresden's medieval market square in 1216 – was reconstructed in 1955. The Kreuzschule – a prestigious boarding school in nearby Georgplatz – was rebuilt two decades later. Both buildings had been destroyed in the Allied attack on Dresden on February 13, 1945. At the time, Dresden was swollen with refugees who considered the non-strategic city to be a safe haven. An estimated 50,000 Germans died in the attack – including 11 members of the choir. The voices of the Kreuzianers, banned in 1944 as part of Hitler's total war, rang out again on July 1, 1945 thus proclaiming Dresden's will to rebuild.

Impressario Claus Kirchhof says this North American concert tour is a tribute to his father, a Wehrmacht officer assassinated in Warsaw on April 28, 1943 for secretly abetting the uprising in the city's Jewish quarter.

The Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany is sponsoring the Kreuzchor's North American tour, and is making this concert available as a gesture of goodwill toward the Jewish community.