

THE *VIRGINIA* GAZETTE

Kearns earns \$25,000 for animals

March 31, 2010

WILLIAMSBURG

By John Shulson

The Heritage Humane Society Auxiliary's benefit program, "Puttin' on the Tenor: A Concert to Benefit the Animals," featured celebrated tenor Anthony Kearns and was, by all standards, worthy of the enthusiastic "a-paws" it got. On several levels, it found substantial success, most appropriately by raising approximately \$25,000 for the organization. And, because of the generous sponsorship, the costs of the event were covered, allowing the full profits to go directly to the shelter.

The event was also of special note to Kearns, who was just named Best Irish Tenor in Ireland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union by the Irish Music Association. He was presented his award prior to the concert.

Not the least in the way of successful outcomes was the program itself, which delighted the nearly full house. Kearns, a founding member of the renowned Irish Tenors, proved to be quite a solo act of warmth and appeal.

IN CONCERT

The Heritage Humane Society Auxiliary presents tenor Anthony Kearns and pianist Patrick Healy in concert, in Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall, March 28.

The inviting sound found versatile display in a program that literally covered the musical waterfront, offering some 20 or so songs, arias, and ballads. Other finely sung highpoints included an exemplary rendering of Schumann's "Widmung"; an expansive "Vienna, City of My Dreams" and equally expansive "Because You're Mine," made famous by Mario Lanza.

Kearns was given superb support by accompanist Patrick Healy, a pianist of considerable note. His playing was sensitive, solid, and musically sound.

Self-named "the comic relief for the evening... with no entertainment value," he easily proved otherwise, generously regaling us with charming banter while Kearns took a breather off stage. A cross between Victor Borge and Garrison Keillor.

Healy's commentary, stories and anecdotes were enhanced by his timing and dry sense of humor. Great fun. He also did a bit of solo singing as heard in the sincerely intended "Galway Bay" and "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning."

Kearns and Healy even doubled up for a couple of duets, "The Bould Gendarmes" and "Friendship," both done with charm, wit, and obvious affection and appreciation for each other.

Needless to say, in a program so genuinely sung, encores were in order. Kearns honored the spontaneous standing applause with two: the touching "Danny Boy" and a rather rousing "Granada."

Thanks to Kearns and Healy for a delightful afternoon of song, the warmth of which will find value in memory and, most important, in the Heritage Humane Society.