

Irish Tenors trio member Anthony Kearns to perform in Steamboat

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By Nicole Inglis Thursday, August 26, 2010

Steamboat Springs — Exactly 301 guests will have the chance to see one of the world's most famous tenors Friday night.

Anthony Kearns, a founding member of the famed Irish Tenors trio that formed in 1998, will travel to Steamboat Springs to provide dinner entertainment at the second annual Freedom Conference, which sold out just before noon Wednesday.

Those who have tickets to the event will have the chance to see Kearns perform in the Champagne Powder Room at Thunderhead, a setting that's intimate by comparison with the Irish Tenors' five PBS specials, 10 recorded albums and worldwide performances with symphony orchestras.

Kearns, who said he spends several months of the year touring in the United States, sees an inextricable link between the Irish and American cultures and plans to bring music from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

In a recital format, he will sing to piano accompaniment by Marie Carmichael.

"Because it's a dinner entertainment, it's always difficult, and you have to hit them with all the guns blazing," Kearns said. "I'll have to be firing on all cylinders."

He said he would perform well-known works such as those of Luciano Pavarotti, a selection from "South Pacific," "God Bless America" and "Danny Boy," a tune he said often is requested of Irish singers.

Kearns will sing before and after the keynote speech by Karl Rove, former deputy chief of staff to President George W. Bush.

Rick Akin, director of the Steamboat Institute, which is organizing the event, said those who have tickets would be treated to a special evening.

"The idea on that is to provide an evening that the people will not forget," Akin said. "You don't have an Irish Tenor coming to Steamboat every day. It's something that's going to be interesting for folks, and of course, Karl Rove, there's all sorts of interest in him.

Kearns "adds an entertainment element to our more educational element that is going on throughout the weekend," Akin said.

But singing at the Freedom Conference has more than just entertainment value to Kearns.

"Apart from my good self performing, there's a conference taking place," Kearns said. "It's to educate people, I suppose, on the values of the Constitution."

Kearns said even in Ireland, people are reminded daily of the freedoms in America, where he said almost 40 million people can claim Irish ancestry.

“People shouldn’t take for granted freedoms we have,” he said. “And for the most part, the American nation has given us that. You’re constantly reminded of it on television (in Ireland). There are some strong ties between American and Ireland starting with the mere fact that millions came to the shores through Ellis Island.”

Aside from performing in operas and with fellow Irish Tenors Karl Scully and Finbar Wright, Kearns has performed solo at events such as a Memorial Day celebration in Washington.

After growing up in the foothills of Wexford, Ireland, Kearns said performing in an honorable capacity in America is important to him, as the country has provided him with career opportunities.

“I think it’s a great opportunity to sing, to stand up there and remember those who have fallen and those who have made sacrifices for the freedom we enjoy today,” he said. “You can’t lose sight of that no matter where you’re from.”