



HERITAGE ENSEMBLE
REFLECTIONS

"...tearing down walls and building bridges between all people."



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Notes from the Artistic Director

Welcome to the first edition of *Reflections!* This newsletter is another step in our journey to connect and share with our community, heighten awareness of the impact of music born out of the African American experience, and celebrate the mission of the Heritage Ensemble... "tearing down walls and building bridges between all people." The Heritage Ensemble is unique in this community as we have collaborated with other arts and civic organizations and invested in Peoria's future with the Youth Heritage Ensemble. You will hear more about our Youth Heritage Ensemble in later *Reflections*.

The history of The Heritage Ensemble is a rich one. With each edition of *Reflections*, we shall broaden your scope and understanding of the Heritage Ensemble. So let us begin with a historical introduction.

The Heritage Ensemble held its inaugural concert in August, 1999, at Dingledine Music Center on the campus of Bradley University. This marked the beginning of a choral gem in this community that has withstood the test of time. Our mission statement serves as a constant reminder of the important work that still lays ahead for this

ensemble. The Heritage Ensemble is unique in this community as we have collaborated with other community arts and civic organizations, awarded the Annual Bridge Builder Award, invested in Peoria's future with the Youth Heritage Ensemble, all filling cultural voids. We study, preserve, and perform from an historical perspective the beautiful melodies that have sustained a people, inspired a movement, and been a balm in Gilead.

SAVE THESE DATES:

- January 18, 2014—Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Concert at ICC Performing Arts Center (E. Peoria, IL)
- March 4, 2014—Performance at Blessed Sacrament Church in Morton, IL
- May 6, 2014—Performance at Liturgical Arts Festival in Springfield, IL
- June 14, 2014—Annual Juneteenth Freedom Concert at ICC Performing Arts Center (E. Peoria, IL)

About the Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Choral Celebration

The Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Choral Celebration will feature *Born to Die* by Glenn E. Burleigh. *Born to Die* is a celebration of life...Eternal Life that is born out of despair, pain, suffering, grief, and even death! Burleigh states, "It is a celebration of GOD, who allowed a part of himself to die in order to redeem a 'fallen man'." This cantata is a fusion of music of the Black Church with styles of great classical composers. It is a means to a spiritual end. The composer has encouraged, through his notes, that the performers improvise during the Gospel selections, especially the vocalists and the keyboard player. "Freedom with structure" is the desired goal. "The highest praise possible is to

be achieved, yet under the ever guiding hand of THE HOLY SPIRIT. In short, Worship!"

Born to Die has proven to be yet another challenge for the Heritage Ensemble. The challenge begins with finding the music of many African American composers. Acquiring the scores to much of the music that we perform is rarely an easy task. Securing the score for *Born to Die* was a collaborative experience with colleagues across the nation. Much of the music born out of the African American experience is passed down through an oral tradition. The search is well worth the effort and time! The music is beautiful and remains relevant to today's times. Additionally, if we did not take the time to research and bring



these works to Central Illinois, they would not be heard. We are convinced that the community is richer because of the performances of this beautiful music.

Please join the Heritage Ensemble family for the *Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Choral Celebration* where we will also perform music that sustained and inspired activists during the Civil Rights Movement.

