



HERITAGE ENSEMBLE REFLECTIONS

October 2014
Volume 3
Issue 1

Notes from the Artistic Director

Welcome to the latest edition of **Reflections!** As we begin another year with the Heritage Ensemble, I cannot help but reflect upon our beautiful musical journey--one that has enhanced the cultural fabric of this community.

The Heritage Ensemble has been pivotal in "...tearing down walls and building bridges between all people." Whether we have been on the stages in Peoria with other performance arts organizations, at Carnegie Hall with John Rutter and other choirs from across the country, on the trip to my birthplace of Paris, Texas, or the many other places that we have been honored to perform, our mission is constant. The Heritage Ensemble exists to celebrate African American history and culture through music. The sharing of music born out of the African American Experience in this country is indeed an honor, as well as a necessity for an inclusive American history.

We look forward to continuing the journey with you during the 2014-15 concert year!



Section Highlight: The Bases

When we think about describing the sound produced by our Heritage Ensemble Bass section, words like *smooth, rich, sonorous, mellow, and relaxing* come to mind. Together, they blend their voices in "one melodic sound" that not only provides the foundation from which spirituals, jazz, and a variety of music arises, but it is the sound of the bass section that anchors our various music moves and movements. It has been said that the Bass section is to the rich sound of the Heritage Ensemble

as the Negro Spiritual is to the legacy of America's music!

It is our pleasure to introduce you to the Heritage Ensemble Bass section: **Charlie Burke, Alando Burnside, Tommy Cayson, Donald R. Jackson, Allen Kilgore, Larry Betzelberger and Erik Norman.**



SAVE THESE DATES:

- October 21, 2014--Bethel United Methodist Church's 103rd Anniversary and Revival at 7:00pm
- October 25, 2014--"Soloists Workshop" (directed by Sharon Reed)
- November 15, 2014--"Carver Center Benefit Concert" at 7:00pm
- November 18, 2014--Heritage Ensemble "Preview Night," Bethel UME Church at 7:00pm
- January 10, 2015--Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Concert at ICC Performing Arts Center at 7:30pm
- June 13, 2015--Annual Juneteenth Freedom Concert at ICC Performing Arts Center at 7:30pm

About the Heritage Ensemble Summer Youth Program

With a view to the activities of summer, the Heritage Ensemble successfully submitted a grant to the Illinois Arts Council that would allow interested youth to apply for an opportunity to learn, work, and earn money during the summer. Students from the Youth Heritage Ensemble applied and four were selected to participate in the Heritage Ensemble Summer Youth Program. The four youth participants were Anaya Burke, Marissa Jones, Noah Tyler, and Cierra Younger.

The Heritage Ensemble Youth Summer Program was based upon three central pillars: Education, Empowerment, and Encouragement.

Education: The focus of our educational effort was the discussion of the book, *No Man Can Hinder Me: The Journey from Slavery to Emancipation through Song*, by Velma Maia Thomas. In this text, the author blended a pictorial history of the experience of capture in Africa, transportation via slave ships to the Americas, slavery in the United States, the Civil War, and Emancipation with the songs of each era. Guest newsperson and expert percussionist, Garry Moore, guided the Youth in the ways of communication that are a part of the African American experience in the United States of America.

Empowerment: Personal responsibility and accountability were the hallmarks of emphasis as the program continued. The cultivation of this personal responsibility allowed youth to have an initial glimpse of expectations associated with employment and a sound work ethic.

Encouragement: As the youth program continued, the focus of encouragement was achieved in both a formal and informal manner. The participants developed a program that was presented to the children of the Proctor Summer Youth Program. The presentation from the Heritage Youth was clearly an encouragement, as evidenced by the attentiveness and participation from the Proctor group.

In addition to the presentation of the Heritage Youth to the Proctor Summer Youth Program, the culminating event of the Program was a presentation to the Heritage Ensemble Board of Directors. The Youth created a 20-minute presentation that incorporated narration, choreography, and the use of percussion instruments in an informative and very entertaining manner.

Congratulations to our Youth!

DOCUMENTARY:

Heritage Ensemble: Tearing Down Walls and Building Bridges Through Music

Through the efforts of Dr. Bob Jacobs, Bradley University Communications Department Professor, the spirit and mission of the Heritage Ensemble has been captured in a compelling, challenging, and yet stirring documentary. Through the lens of Dr. Jacobs, we are taken on a journey that not only affirms the strength of the human spirit, but affirms the impact found within a unified organization. The Heritage Ensemble mission, to tear down walls and build bridges between all people, is reflected within the richly diverse Ensemble membership and is echoed with the richly diverse music performed by the Ensemble. With the Negro Spiritual as its music foundational base, the Heritage Ensemble has given invited performances in the theaters of Iowa, churches of Texas, and the halls of Carnegie Hall, New York. Dr. Jacobs has skillfully blended the music of the Ensemble with interviews from several different Ensemble members. The Heritage Ensemble was founded by Mrs. Sharon Samuels Reed, who serves as the Artistic Director. The message of the Ensemble is a consistent one and the responses from performance attendees attest to the ongoing fulfillment of that mission!

Well done, Dr. Jacobs!!