



December
2014

HERITAGE ENSEMBLE
REFLECTIONS

Notes from the Artistic Director

On January 10, 2015, the Heritage Ensemble will share with the community a Post Holiday Treat when they present the **Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Choral Celebration**. The annual choral celebration honors the life and achievements of Dr.

King. The halls of The Performing Arts Center at Illinois Central College will be filled with the exuberant sounds of the All American reinvention of Handel's "Messiah"!

"Too Hot to Handel", commissioned in the early 1990's is a gospel/jazz adaptation of Handel's "Messiah". Marin Alsop, in collaboration with Gary Anderson and Bob Christianson, envisioned **"The Messiah"** in a way that captures a fresh feel and thrill, while still retaining Handel's original musical intent. Alsop wanted to relax the perception of quiet, polite, classical audiences. She wanted to turn these performances into a participatory one--one that would "break the classical sound barrier". This adaptation infuses jazz, gospel, rock, and funk. Christianson states that "When audiences hear **"Too Hot to Handel"**, they do more than rise to their feet during the **Hallelujah Chorus**". They bob their heads, and they groove their bodies in time with the music. They dance!"

The Youth Heritage Ensemble will also be featured during this celebration with selections by Sounds of Blackness and the Winans!

Tickets may be purchased by contacting the Illinois Central College Performing Arts Center Box Office at 694-5136 or by contacting any member of the Heritage Ensemble.

Adults \$15 Senior Citizens \$12 Students \$8

Visit our website at www.heritageensemble.com

Section Highlight: The Altos

The complexity and strength of sound from the Alto section of the Heritage Ensemble clearly reflects the importance of the alto sound in the richness and intensity of our music. It is the alto section that brings depth to the chord structure of the spirituals, jazz, gospel, and contemporary music that we sing. It is the quality of the lowness of tones from the alto section that creates a sense of steadfast commitment in the song, *Song of Freedom*, and a sense of support in the song, *Bridge Over Troubled Waters*. The contribution of the Alto section is a tapestry of sound characterized by subtly,

tangible presence, and power. As the Heritage Ensemble continues to present a diversity of selections, the alto section remains an invaluable component of our unified sound!

It is our pleasure to introduce you to the Heritage Ensemble Alto section: **Gretchen Amick, Rene Andrews, Vivian Garrietts, Rachel Hearn, Kellie Lester, Sharon Mindock, Tena Nicholson, Xaviera Portales, Keesha Pelmore, Jannette Simms, Edith Thomas, Deborah Totten and Jacqueline Watkins.**

DOCUMENTARY:

LEGACY CONTINUES...

The mission of the Heritage Ensemble is "tearing down walls and building bridges between all people." It is a mission that continues to be reflected in all of the programs and performances of the Heritage Ensemble. It is both interesting and divine how this mission and legacy evolved.

In the book, *Maestra-the Legacy of Fiora Corradetti Contino*, author Joan Whittemore, has related a series of reflections and conversations that occurred between the internationally renowned, Fiora Contino and Artistic Director Sharon Samuels Reed. Charged with the creative responsibility of the 2000 production of "Porgy and Bess," Maestra Contino approached Mrs. Reed in 1999 to serve as Chorus Master of the production. Through the previous musical accomplishments of Mrs. Reed, connections with vocalists who had sung under her direction were gathered. As Mrs. Reed assembled this group, she and Maestra Contino reflected upon the name and mission of this diverse collection of singers. The name, "Heritage Ensemble," was given and the mission stated.

This "Heritage Ensemble" group, even in its infancy, was both magnetic and inclusive. Each rehearsal began with prayer in which all persons present participated; stage persons, New York lead vocalists, and concert masters. There was a genuine warmth and sincerity of purpose as our efforts focused upon the "Porgy and Bess" opera production. And from this production, an Ensemble has grown. The Heritage Ensemble continues to flourish based upon a legacy that was reflected in the respect, collegiality, and integrity between two diverse "giants in the music industry." And because the Ensemble addresses an undeniable need, we shall continue to:

"Tear Down Walls and Build Bridges Between All People"



KEY DATES:

- 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

"Give Because You Believe"

As we enter this "Season of Giving" it is important to reflect upon the various reasons associated with our giving. It is our pleasure to share with you several reflections that we would like for you to associate with a decision to make The Heritage Ensemble an organization that you will choose to support. First and foremost, the Heritage Ensemble is a non-profit organization that is fully driven by our mission, "Tearing down walls and Building bridges between all people." This means that through our music we continue to share a program of historical authenticity and enjoyment that appeals to persons from all socioeconomic, educational, and ethnic backgrounds. What an enormous task; but consider these facts:

Because of our desire to reach as many persons as possible, the price of concert tickets has not been raised in over 10 years.

The Heritage Ensemble Board of Directors has made an intentional commitment to lead by example and continues to financially support the Ensemble whenever needed.

Members of the Heritage Ensemble are personally responsible for the purchase of costumes for select concert performances

The transparency with which we share this information is important to your understanding our need. In an effort to further the outreach of our mission, The Heritage Ensemble has launched a major effort to include and strengthen our Youth Heritage Ensemble. Our commitment is to the youth of our Peoria Metro Area. **There are no expenses charged to the youth who participate in the Youth Heritage Ensemble.** We are not only making a commitment to the present, but also to the future of our Youth. We are not only teaching and sharing music, but also life/survival skills.

We ask you to "Give Because You Believe" in the mission and work of the Heritage Ensemble. Your contribution is tax deductible. Address checks or money orders to: The Heritage Ensemble.

Send to:

The Heritage Ensemble
P.O. Box 9467
Peoria, IL 61612-9467

Thank you and

See you in January!!

