



Jones High School Foundation
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MEDIA RELEASE

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JONES HIGH SCHOOL CHOIRS & ORLANDO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA PRESENT "MESSIAH 50," THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT OF *MESSIAH*

With two Carnegie Hall appearances to its credit (2018 and 2020), the Jones High School Concert Choir (JHSCC), Andrea Hires Green, Director, joins forces with the Jones High School Alumni & Community Choir (JHSACC), Cicily Youngblood, Director, members of the University of Central Florida Singing Knights & Orlando Choral Society, both under the direction of Dr. Jeffery Redding, and the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, Eric Jacobsen, Music Director, to give the JHS 50th Anniversary Concert of Händel's *Messiah* with orchestra, Thursday, December 8, 2022, 7 pm, James W. "Chief" Wilson Auditorium, Jones High School (JHS), 801 S. Rio Grande Avenue, Orlando, FL 32805.

Of the forthcoming concert (MESSIAH 50) produced by Jones High School Foundation (JHSF), JHSF President, Adm. (Ret.) David L. Brewer III, says, "The Jones High School (JHS) music programs have achieved unprecedented success, with performances by JHSCC as well as the JHS Wind Ensemble at Carnegie Hall and by the JHS band in the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade, the National Memorial Day Parade in Washington, DC, etc. More importantly, MESSIAH 50 validates the historical legacy of the JHS music programs that have produced some of JHS's most successful graduates in not only music but also in other professional fields such as medicine, law and business."

HISTORY

The success of a musical collaboration between JHSCC and the Florida Symphony Orchestra (FSO) for the Walt Disney World's first Christmas Candlelight Service of 1971 inspired the groups' then leaders, Edna Sampson Hargrett (JHSCC Director, 1967-2000) and Herman Hertz (FSO) to plan a collaborative performance for the following season. The result was the 1972 JHSCC and FSO concert of Händel's *Messiah*. Subsequent collaborative annual

performances of *Messiah* followed. Thus began a tradition that Mrs. Hargrett continued after FSO disbanded in the 1990s and until she retired from Jones in 2000.

The annual *Messiah* performance continued in the community as a JHSCC tradition under Mrs. Hargrett's handpicked successor, protégé and JHS alumna, Ms. Darlean Coleman. From 2000-2007, Ms. Coleman also continued the choir's collaboration with the orchestral community and the FSO successor, Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra, notably under the baton of Christopher Wilkins.

However, with the sudden demise of Ms. Coleman in 2007 and of Ms. Hargrett in 2010, JHSCC went through a series of directors and left the annual community presentation of *Messiah* in limbo. A 2012 "Street Designation Unveiling Ceremony Honoring Mrs. Edna Sampson Hargrett," organized by Representative Geraldine Thompson, brought together a number of JHSCC alumni, including the newly appointed JHSCC Director (2011-present), Mrs. Green, as well as the MESSIAH 50 co-conductor and 2019 Grammy Music Educator Award recipient, Dr. Jeffery Redding. For the choristers, the event rekindled a flame for singing as a group.

Subsequently, in August of 2013, the Jones High School Alumni and Community Choir was formed as an ongoing tribute to Mrs. Hargrett and Ms. Coleman. Under the leadership of Cicily Youngblood, MESSIAH 50 co-conductor, the Jones High School annual tradition of the singing of *Messiah* in the community resumed and continues.

JHSCC began around 1922 under the musical leadership of Mattie Rigel followed by Ethel Wooden, Thomas C. Collier, Catherine Helms, Lessie Brayboy Weaver, Beverly McGowan Hicks, Roderick Williams, Helen Morrison, Roberta Bacon Manuel, Norman Choice, Edna Sampson Hargrett (a protégé of Mrs. Weaver), Darlean Coleman, Christopher Simms, Terrance Lane and the current director, Mrs. Green (another protégé of Mrs. Hargrett). Using the motto "Think Superior, Act Superior, Be Superior, Sing Superior Plus," the Jones High School Concert Choir under Mrs. Hargrett and continued by Mrs. Green developed a diverse repertoire from opera to standard choral works to gospel as well as a reputation of performing at the highest possible professional choral standard.

MESSIAH 50 is under the auspices of the Jones High School Foundation (JHSF), an IRS 501(c)(3) charitable not-for-profit corporation whose mission is to fund and support empowerment programs for the students, faculty, families and administration of Jones High School. JHSF is funded in part by UnitedArts of Central Florida; Arts & Cultural Affairs, Orange County Government Florida; and City of Orlando.

Proceeds from MESSIAH 50 will help defray expenses to send JHSCC to the National Museum of African American Music, Nashville, TN.

Tickets are \$10 and may be purchased at SupportJonesHigh.com or through Eventbrite online at bit.ly/JHSMessiah50. For more information about JHSF or to make a donation in support of MESSIAH 50, go to SupportJonesHigh.com or call 321-310-8346.