

AKRON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
CHRISTOPHER WILKINS, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

GOSPEL MEETS SYMPHONY

E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall

Saturday, February 25, 2012

Akron Symphony Orchestra / Akron Symphony Gospel Choir
Christopher Wilkins, conductor Jennifer Mekel Jones, chorus master

Rhythm Section

Ralston Purkiss, piano • Jonathon Turner, organ • William "Bubba" Watkins, bass • Tiras Allen, drums

HARRIS/KEMPERS

Blessing and Honor

Charles Benford, baritone

NORFUL/KEMPERS

No One Else

Jonathon Turner, tenor
Brandon Scarborough, organ

TRAD./LEGRAIR

Lord, I Want to Be a Christian

COPLAND

The Promise of Living

LAWRENCE/KEMPERS

God's Favor

Durrell LeGrair, Emmanuel LeGrair, Jaron LeGrair

DILLARD/KEMPERS

God is Great

Phyllis Ford, alto

Intermission

BRUNSON /KEMPERS

It's Gonna Rain

Tiffini Campbell, alto

FRANKLIN/KEMPERS

Melodies from Heaven

ROSSINI

William Tell Overture

WEBB/KEMPERS

We Fill This Sanctuary

JONES/KEMPERS

Help Is On the Way (Psalm 46)

Carla Davis, alto
Esterline Jones, piano

DENNIS-JONES-PARKER/HANSON

Psalm 34

Carol Bloom, director
Jennifer Mekel Jones, soprano
Brandon Scarborough, organ

LEWIS/KEMPERS

Oh Happy Day

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JENNIFER MEKEL JONES

CHORUS MASTER

Jennifer Mekel Jones has been involved in music since age three and performed her first concert at age 17 with all original compositions. She formed a singing group called “Bread of Heaven” in 1989. Their signature sound consisted of tight intricate harmonies sung a cappella. Mekel has written, composed and arranged over 50 songs. As a performer, Mekel has appeared: at the dedication of the new Harold K. Stubbs Justice Center (1991); at Akron’s First Night Celebration (1999); as a background vocalist for the Millennium Clock Tower Celebration Commercial (2000) with Mr. Charles Myricks, Director and Writer of “PAUL – A Musical Journey;” as a guest soloist for the Akron Symphony Orchestra’s Christmas Pops (2009); as a guest conductor and soloist for the 2010 and 2011 *Gospel Meets Symphony* concerts; as a Choral Master for the Balcony Chorus for Akron Symphony orchestra’s production of *Porgy & Bess* (2011).



Mekel recently completed a live recording project entitled “*Destiny Live*,” with guest artists, H. Doobie Powell, Jonathan Dubose, Jr., Denise Powell, Eddie Brown and Kevin Powell, which is scheduled for national release in March 2012. It was produced by H. Doobie Powell, gospel recording artist, producer, singer, songwriter, composer and multi-faceted musician.

Mekel is a member of the Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Akron, where she serves in the area of pastoral care, worship, and administration. As a licensed and ordained minister, she leads the worship services, teaches Bible Study and conducts worship and music workshops for church and community members. Mekel is the Pastor of Worship at Heart for the City Church in Akron. She also serves as a coordinator of the Pastors’ Project, a community initiative that focuses on raising awareness and education within the clergy community and the community regarding drug abuse, chemical dependency and mental illness.

Mekel is a graduate of The University of Akron and Ashland Theological Seminary where she is currently pursuing her Masters of Divinity degree.

BRENDA L. JUSTICE

CO-CHAIR

Brenda Justice is a native of Akron and mother of two sons. She is a graduate of St. Vincent-St. Mary High School and has a bachelor’s degree in Business Communication with a tag degree in voice performance from The University of Akron. She has worked at the Akron Symphony Orchestra as the administrative assistant and the coordinator of choral programs for 13 years. She is a member of First Apostolic Faith Church in Akron.



Brenda has performed with the Akron Symphony Orchestra’s Picnic Pops concerts. She has also performed in New York, Nassau, Miami, Florida, South Carolina and Washington, D.C. In April 2011, Brenda performed in the Akron Symphony Orchestra production of *Porgy & Bess* as the Strawberry Woman.

Brenda is passionate about her music ministry, which she uses in prison ministries outreach throughout Ohio. She is a Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority Alumna. She is also the Founding President of Power of a Dream Sisters Helping Sisters Ministries, Inc., whose vision is to create, nurture and support women’s awareness spiritually, mentally, educationally and physically. She also serves her community through the Akron Branch NAACP and as the Co-Chair of Gospel Meets Symphony for the fourth year.

Her recent awards include the 2007 Akron Branch NAACP Community Service Award (2007); the Dr. Martin Luther King Drum Major Award for coordinating *Gospel Meets Symphony* from Mothers on a Mission (2008); the Dr. Martin Luther King Drum Major Award for Power of a Dream *Sisters Helping Sisters Ministries* for promoting community service and providing assistance to under served communities from Mothers on a Mission (2009); the 2010 honoree of the Black Women’s Caucus Scholarship Luncheon; and the 2011 Outstanding and Valuable Community Service Award from Congresswoman Betty Sutton. Brenda is a firm believer that God has “ordinary people do extraordinary things.”

EDRA MARIE FRAZIER

CO-CHAIR



Originally from Pittsburgh, PA, Edra M. Frazier has been an Akron resident for the past 25 years. She serves on the Community Outreach Committee for the Akron Symphony Orchestra and as co-chair of the Akron Symphony Orchestra's *Gospel Meets Symphony* for the third consecutive year.

She has been singing and recording Gospel music since age eleven. She has a sweet anointing and a signature soft gospel, but jazzy style. She has been a featured soloist with the Annual *Gospel Meets Symphony* concerts several times and current-

ly sings with Jennifer Mekel and friends on special projects in her home church, Mount Calvary Baptist in Akron, under the leadership of her Senior Pastor, Jeffrey A. Dennis.

Edra serves as the Director of the Bethlehem House of Bread, a McCreary Center collaborative and local extension of the Ashland Theological Seminary of Ashland, Ohio; and on the Development Team for a new charter school coming to the Akron area in 2012, for children ages K through 3rd grade. For over 17 years, she has served as Administrator, Office Manager and Project Coordinator for Mount Calvary Baptist Church and its collaborative ministries: Project AGAPE, The Mother to Son Program, The Akron Unity Partnership, Minority Behavioral Health Group and the Pastors Project. She has over 20 of experience in corporate and non-profit administration; and as a former business owner, she lends her savvy to other small businesses and non-profits as a development consultant. She also launched her own marketing and design company, *eglow.com*, which caters to small businesses and recording artists.

THE LEGRAIR BROTHERS

SPECIAL GUESTS



Durrell (30), Emmanuel (27), and Jaron (23), are extremely versatile musicians and singers born and raised in Akron. Throughout their childhood and adult lives, they have sung together on stages and won numerous talent showcases. Recently, all three brothers were involved with the Akron Symphony Orchestra production of George Gershwin's *Porgy & Bess*. They have also been featured soloists and

contributors in other productions, concerts, and organizations such as Akron Symphony's *Opera's Greatest Moments*, The Summit Choral Society, The Tuscarawas Philharmonic Orchestra, and various other concerts and recordings. They play various instruments ranging from the piano to the saxophone.

Durrell is currently a Music Composition Major at The University of Akron, Emmanuel is a teacher at the Arlington Christian Academy and Jaron is pursuing a graduate degree in Vocal Pedagogy.

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GOSPEL MEETS SYMPHONY 2012 CHOIR ROSTER

Christopher Wilkins, Music Director
Jennifer Mekel Jones, Chorus Master

Sopranos

Patricia Bent
 Carol Bloom
- Section Leader
 Pamela Bray
 Jeniece LaTrece
 Brock
 Joanne Brown
 Marlene Brown
 Vera Carrell
 Ruby Chaney
 Rose Marie Clunk
 Na'Tosha Covington
 Stella Cupp
 Sherrell Davidson
 Charlene DeJournett
 LaToya E. Evans
- Section Leader
 Alyce Fambro
 Annette Foster
 Miyoshi A. Gibson
 Barbara Gillespie
 Betty Hale
 Katrina Henry
 Pansy Hill
 Faye Hubbard
 Betty Jones
 Donna Joseph
 Carolyn Brooks Joyce
- Section Leader
 Gail Keller
 Patricia A. Kennard
- Section Leader
 Natausha Kight
 Lois Lumsden
 Yvette Mahone
 Angela McCoy
 Cheryl McHan
 Kathy McKee
 Charnaë Morrison
 Kathy Natalino
 Dianna Orsburn

Valecia Pickett
 Nancy Plavan
 Annette Powell
 Linda Ridgeway
 Sundra Rumph
 Kerri Runion
 Annie B. Stills
 Jolen Swann
 Shomala Tambyraja
 Sheri Thornburg
 Eloise Turner
 Angeliëna T.
 Valentine
 Brenda Wallace
 Julie Walter-White
 Stephanie Weddle
 Arlett White
- Section Leader
 Doretha Williams
- Section Leader
 Felicia Williams
 Brenda Worthy
 Evelyn Yareff

Altos

June Adams
 Natalie Addison-Turner
 Evelyn Marie Bailey
 Rebecca Baird
 Alice Bell
 Francine Blake
 Naomi Blake
 Carolyn Boykin
 Charlotte Buzzelli
 Grace Cahill
 Tiffini Campbell
 Doretha Clark
 Brenda S. Collier
 Angela Tucker
 Cooper
 Christine L. Daley

Wendy Deters-Grant
 Jacqueline Elliott
 Sylvia English
 Deborah Eshun
 Christine Flakes
 Evangelist Phyllis Ford
- Section Leader
 Emma Garrett
 Kelly Garrett
 Michelle Garrett
 Heather Grant
 Lory Harris
 Sandra Harris
 Charlotte Hays
 Ruth Jerels
 Debra L. Jones
 Esterline Loretta Jones
- Section Leader
Coordinator
 Vanessa Karim
 Mary Kelly
 Linda Lee-Johnson
 Polly Kordinak
 Lenecia Mason
 Camille McGowan
 Judy Lynn Mervine
 Martha Montgomery
 Veronica Moore
 Amy Nenadov
 Denise Newman
 Patricia Nichols
- Section Leader
 Marie Parmis
 Kathy Patton
 Wendy Pavesich
 Liz Piatt
 Carla D. Portis
 Khrystal Pratt
 Thelma Ricks
 Kyra Riddle

Barbara J. Salak
- Section Leader
 Patricia Sales
 Carolyn J. Davidson
 Suddieth
 Sylvia Thompson
 Anne Tolbert
 Lauren Vaughn
 Rachel Weingart
 Marty Wendell
 Wanda Williams
 Jane Wright
 Anita Young

Tenors

Patricia A. Allen
 Brian Ames
- Section Leader
 Thelma Baldwin
 Kelley Beverly
 Ricky Brock
 Karen D. Bryant
 DeShawn Craig
 Russell Davis
 Marna Engram
 Michael Farmer
 Steve Francis
 Adrienne Glover
 James R. Hill
 Peggy Hill
 Beverly Houston
 William G. Humbert
 III
 Deborah Ingersoll
 Dave Jones
 Allen H. Maxwell
 Damiko M. Miles
 Millicent N. Nelson
 Ann Pleasant
 Cynthia Reynolds
 Tony Ridgeway
 Joyce Rowland

Carole Bragg Starks
 Claudester Stephens
 Montrey Suddeth
 Celeste Tolbert-Johnson
 Deborah F. Vaughn
 Minister Tony Virden
- Section Leader
 DeShon Walker-Craig
 Howard Williams
 Timothy M. Williams
- Section Leader

Basses

Will Arnold
 Antwan J. Benford
- Section Leader
 Charles Benford
 Dennis Bradley
 Stan Bunch
 Steven Cupp
 Rick Dailey
 Patrick M. Daley
 Eugene Fubler
 Levy Giovanni
 Randall Hall
- Section Leader
 Blair Lias
 Bob Marx
 Carl N. Motley
 John Quinn
 Henry Sanders
 Ron Shultz
 Robert Thomas
 Ted Thompson
 James Yareff

GOSPEL MEETS SYMPHONY COMMITTEE

The *Gospel Meets Symphony* Committee originated from the Community Outreach & Minority Engagement Committee (COMEC) in 1991 under the leadership of Ann Lane Gates, the first *Gospel Meets Symphony* Chair. The purpose of the committee is “to study the need and develop strategies to improve and increase the interest and services of the Akron Symphony Orchestra, Akron Symphony Chorus, and the Akron Youth Symphony, within the minority community of Greater Akron.” This committee is part of the Greater Akron Musical Association’s overall outreach effort to make symphonic and choral music accessible to all.

The *Gospel Meets Symphony* Committee is a dedicated group of individuals who share the same vision and created reality of bringing together the two cultural expressions. Since its inception, this incredible partnership has continued to develop, bringing guest artists into schools, new programming concepts to the orchestra, and the *Gospel Meets Symphony* concert, which celebrates 19 years of music making in the Akron community.

Gospel Meets Symphony Committee members are: Carolyn Boykin, Brenda Collier, Johnette Curry, Russell Davis, Christine Stone Flakes, Edra Frazier, *co-chair*, Jennifer Mekel Jones, *chorus master*, Brenda L. Justice, *co-chair*, Ann Lane Godes, Carolyn Suddieth, Sylvia Thompson and Angeliene Valentine.

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Believers Christian Fellowship
Chapel on Fir Hill
Christ is the Answer Ministries
Community Fellowship Chapel
Cornerstone Free Methodist
Covenant Worship Center
Crossroads Bible Fellowship
Crossroads Community Church
Eve Light Church of God
Faith Temple
Falls Creek Community Church
Family of Faith United Methodist Church
First Apostolic Faith Church
First Congregational Church
First Grace United Church of Christ
First United Methodist Church –
Cuyahoga Falls
Ghent Christian Church
Greater Bethel Baptist Church
Greater Peace Missionary Baptist Church
Harvest House Christian Center
Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church
Lakeside Christian Church
Livingstone Baptist Church, Barberton
Macedonia Baptist Church
Maranatha Bible Church
Mount Calvary Baptist Church
Mountain of the Lord
Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church
Mt. Olive Baptist Church
Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Mt. Zion of Oakwood Village Church
Nativity of the Lord Jesus Catholic Church
New and Living Way International Ministries
New Covenant Community Church
New Hope Baptist Church
New Trinity Missionary Baptist Church
Northwest Church of Christ
Oak Hill Presbyterian Church
One Family Under Guard
S. Arlington United Methodist Church
Saints' Temple United Pentecostal Church
Second Baptist Church

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