



gospel notes

TWIN CITIES COMMUNITY GOSPEL CHOIR NEWSLETTER

Collaborations Past and Future

The year has started out to be a year of collaborations for the Gospel Choir. It's just the first quarter of the year and already we have collaborated on two concert performances in celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., with One Voice Mixed Chorus, directed by Jane Ramsey Miller.

One Voice Mixed Chorus' mission of "building community and creating social change by raising [their] voices in song," fits well with the Gospel Choir's mission of "modeling community and reconciliation." The first collaborative concert was held Saturday, January 31st at North High School in north Minneapolis. The theme for the concert was "Keep Hope Alive! Continuing the Dream, a celebration in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." Each choir performed 20 minutes of music from their own repertoire and then performed five selections jointly, with a very impressive group of over 100 singers. Talk about diversity!



CitySongs. Choir and audience members alike were extremely enthusiastic about the collaboration and both choirs hope to work together again in the future.

Future Collaboration Project

Mark your calendars! On Sunday, May 23, 2004, TCC will join forces again, this time with The Plymouth Rockers – a senior's chorus. The Plymouth Rockers were organized in 1991 by a group of eight people who loved to sing. Today, it boasts more than 65 men and women, all 55+ years old. The Rockers is also a nonprofit organization, providing musical enjoyment for groups throughout the Twin Cities area, as well as fun and fellowship for its members. The "Rockers" have performed for senior community clubs and residences, nursing homes, schools, churches, parks and local community centers. Since September, 2002, the Plymouth Rockers have been directed by Camilla J. Horne. Bright red jackets are part of the Rockers' signature. Their repertoire includes an eclectic array of musical styles. Stay tuned to the Choir's website for more information about this event.



The second concert was held the following day, Sunday, February 1st at Ted Mann Concert Hall, on the campus of the University of Minnesota. The theme of the concert was: "From Every Voice: The 23rd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Concert." Both the Gospel Choir and One Voice Mixed Chorus each performed a 12-minute set of music from their own repertoire. Other performers featured at the concert were 7 Days, the Reginald Buckner Memorial Ensemble and

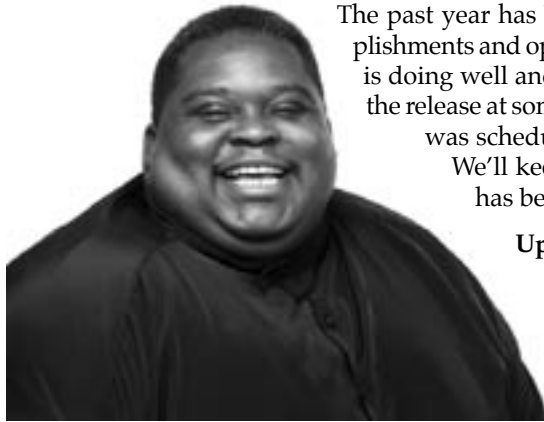
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Director's Corner



The past year has been rewarding and challenging with new accomplishments and opportunities. Our new recording, "Love Brings Unity" is doing well and we're looking forward to performing music from the release at some of our upcoming performances. A release concert was scheduled for March, but we're postponing it for awhile. We'll keep you updated and let you know when the event has been rescheduled.

Upcoming changes:

As a nonprofit organization, we're used to financial challenges. But with the decrease of grants and other arts funding over the past few years, we've been seeking creative solutions and have been accepting more corporate and paid performances in order to meet our expenses. We are currently

facing a change in structure, which we hope will enable us to grow professionally, become more financially stable, and provide enhanced opportunities for community participation -- an integral part of our mission. **In order to achieve all those goals, we're envisioning two groups: a smaller ensemble, and a larger chorus.**

TCC Ensemble: In order to better achieve some of our professional development goals and be available for a wider variety of performing opportunities, we're creating a smaller, 30-voice ensemble, which will be drawn from current members of the Gospel Choir by audition.

Community Chorus: Many of you who have participated in our community workshops over the past several years have voiced an interest in becoming a member of the Gospel Choir. But the choir was so large we were unable to accept more members. So, for you who have been asking, here's your opportunity. We are creating a non-audition community chorus, beginning next fall. My sister, Sandy Hodges and I will direct the chorus, and we'll occasionally have guest conductors. Current members of the Gospel Choir who choose not to audition for the ensemble will become members of the community chorus.

Here are some preliminary details:

1. **No auditions** are required for community chorus membership.
2. Rehearsals will be held twice a month on Saturday mornings from 10am-12 noon beginning September 18, 2004.
3. Community chorus members are asked to make a one-year commitment, renewable annually.
4. Membership fees for one year is \$125 (nonrefundable).
5. There will be approximately four to five performances per year.
6. The chorus will be limited to 100 members.
7. Registration for membership will begin September 7. Membership forms will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Forms will be available by mail (call the office) and from our website – www.tccgospel.org beginning September 7th.

Please remember that current members of the Gospel Choir will be given first consideration for membership in the community chorus. New applicants who make a one-year commitment will then fill remaining membership openings.

While we're excited about these upcoming opportunities, change is hard. We've gone through many wonderful spiritual and musical experiences together, have developed close friendships, and prayed for and supported one another during difficult times. Please pray for us during this transition time, and know that we deeply appreciate your ongoing support as we move forward.

TCC Gospel Choir

Founded and directed by Robert Robinson, the Twin Cities Community Gospel Choir gathers more than 65 singers of various degrees of musical experience, ethnic backgrounds and religious creeds to celebrate the rich tradition of African American gospel music. Backed by a talented ensemble of musicians, the choir strives to share the joy and the power of praise music, ranging from inspirational spirituals to cutting edge contemporary gospel.

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Are There Angels in Our Midst?

The Twin Cities Community Gospel Choir is now recruiting volunteers to assist with special events and projects. If you would like to help usher at events, distribute flyers, help call our fan base to tell them about upcoming concerts, help sell CDs, assist in the office, or help with other special projects, we'd love to hear from you! If you would like to discuss your availability and interests, please call our Board Vice President, Darolyn Gray, at 612-554-1314 or e-mail darolyngray@aol.com. She will add your name and phone number to the Volunteer Resource list. We look forward to your participation!

Choir releases "Love Brings Unity" CD

Is the third time the charm, as the old saying goes? Clearly, the TCC Gospel's recently-released "Love Brings Unity" is a stellar production, and achieves new heights for the choir. This, the choir's 3rd CD, features eleven moving, upbeat, and inspirational songs performed in a wide variety of styles and rhythms, with excellent production quality.

Featuring traditional gospel, spirituals, music with a Caribbean feel and some reggae style music, all of the selections were written by local artists. The messages of the songs speak to personal issues and situations that nearly everyone can relate to if you're hurting, lonely and ready to give up, or unsure of God's presence in your life -- the songs acknowledge those painful realities, while providing a vision of a better world and faith that there is a better world to come.

This is the first CD the choir has produced entirely on its own, and the first without using guest vocalists. With several original songs and arrangements by keyboardist and band director Sam Reeves, powerful lead vocals by choir director Robert Robinson and lead assistant director Sandy Hodges, and the contributions of a dozen soloists, the CD is a testimony to the range and depth of talent within the choir itself.

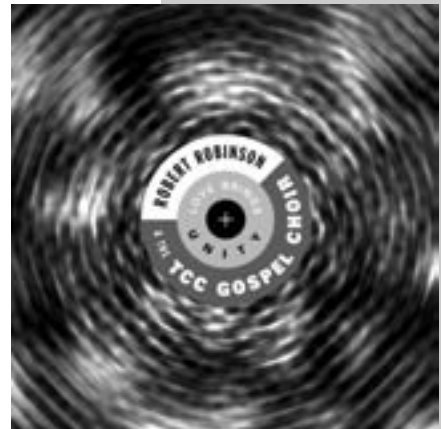
The CD features traditional gospel themes with new arrangements, such as "I Know it Was the Blood" "They That Wait" and "I'm a Soldier in the Army of the Lord" that ring with conviction and power. The original compositions include: "We Seek the City" -- a rousing tune with Caribbean rhythms by choir member Patricia McKernon Runkle, "Lord, You Were With Me" and "Son of Righteousness" slower, melodic inspirational numbers by Sam Reeves, and the gentle harmonies of "Like a Shepherd, Lead Us" by Tanabe Gatlin.

The songs were recorded in September 2003, then mixed and edited throughout the fall and released to choir members just before the holidays.

Throughout the past year, choir members have worked hard on vocal development, which clearly has paid off in enhanced emotionalism, dynamics and blending throughout the choir's background vocals. Those same vocal development efforts have resulted in several first-time soloists stepping up to the challenge of recording, helping contribute to the overall depth and variety of the recording.

The choir is promoting and marketing this CD project, and we urge you to get a copy, and give some as gifts to friends who can use a message of hope and inspiration. We are so grateful for the financial contributions of our supporters, which helps us take our work forward on an independent basis.

Audio clips from the CD, and ordering information for the CD, are available on our website, www.tccgospel.org, along with details about upcoming live events. Thanks for all your past support; we look forward to "making a joyful noise" for you and with you in the future.



**Public Events
Calendar**



**Benefit for Ann
Bancroft Foundation
Wednesday,
April 7, 2004**

*Minneapolis Hilton and
Towers
1101 Marquette Avenue
Minneapolis, MN
Event begins: 6 pm*

**Collaborative Concert
with "The Plymouth
Rockers"
Sunday,
May 23, 2004**

*Plymouth Creek Center
14800-34th Avenue No.
Plymouth, MN
Concert begins: 6 pm*



Guest Vocalist Patty Peterson warms the hearts of the audience at the Gospel Choir's 2003 Silent Auction and Benefit Concert.

The Twin Cities Gospel Choir gratefully acknowledges the Minnesota State Arts Board Institutional Support Program.



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