

A Weekend Of Music In Greenville Features Gu's Jazz Band And A Performance Of Handel's Messiah

November 27 2021 7:15 AM





GREENVILLE - A weekend of music will be kicking off the month of December in Greenville, Illinois. The Greenville University Jazz Band performs on Saturday, December 4, and the Greenville Choral Union presents its 91st annual performance of George Frideric Handel's *Messiah* on Sunday, December 5.

The jazz band, under the direction of Greenville University's Director of Bands Alex Kirby, will perform a variety of pieces and ring in the season in style with several holiday selections. The performance is free and open to the public and begins at 7 pm on Saturday, December 4. It takes place at Toastiez Restaurant located on the first floor of the SMART Center on the town square in Greenville.

Greenville Choral Union members look forward to presenting an in-person performance of Handel's *Messiah* and Vivaldi's *Gloria*.

"I have always loved Vivaldi's setting of Gloria," says Don Frazure, director of choral activities at Greenville University. "The music expresses effervescent joy... the text of the first two movements includes direct quotes from Luke, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests,' which is fitting for the season of Christmas."

Soloists for the *Messiah* include:

Rachel Frazure, soprano, is the principal soprano soloist with the Christ Church Chamber Choir in Fairview Heights, Illinois. She holds a degree in music education from William Carey University, and a master of music in vocal performance from the University of Southern Mississippi.

Grace Denton, mezzo soprano, is the instructor of commercial voice and director of vocal studies at Greenville University. Grace recently completed her doctoral degree in voice performance and pedagogy at the University of Mobile. Credits include Madame Giry (Phantom of the Opera), Featured Soloist (Songs for a New World), and Sister Mary Robert (Sister Act, the Musical), for which she received a Miss Annie Award nomination.

Marissa Horning, mezzo soprano, is a junior attending Greenville University, double majoring in Worship Arts and Ministry. Marissa co-leads a student worship band, sings in the GU Choir and Choral Union, and is a music office student worker and administrative assistant for the choral program. Marissa has performed as the alto soloist

in the 2020 performance of Handel's *Messiah*, Maria in *The Sound of Music*, and was a member of the ensemble in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Meet Me* in St. Louis.

Don Frazure, tenor, is director of choral activities at GU as well as founder and music director for the Christ Church Chamber Choir and Orchestra at Christ Church in Fairview Heights, Illinois, where he also serves as Pastor of Worship Arts.

A graduate of the Juilliard Opera Center, Don holds a bachelor of music and master of music degree in vocal performance from William Carey University and the University of Southern Mississippi, respectively. Don has performed with many opera companies and orchestras throughout the United States. In 2001, he made his New York City Opera debut as Tamino in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and debuted with the Metropolitan Opera in Wagner's *Parsifal* in 2003. He has garnered critical acclaim with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Boston Baroque, and symphonies orchestras of Alabama, Atlanta, Baltimore, Nashville, National (Washington D.C) and New Jersey. Dr. Frazure has appeared as tenor soloist with the Bach Society of St. Louis in performances of Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, Beethoven's *Mass in C*, Bach's *Mass in bminor*, Goodall's *Eternal Light*, along with Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and Handel's *Messiah* at their annual Christmas concert at Powell Hall.

Christopher Stanfill, bass, received his bachelor of music degree in vocal performance from the University of Missouri-St. Louis and has completed graduate work at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Guest conductor, Alex Kirby, serves as the director of bands for Greenville University. Alex holds his bachelor's degree in music education from Central Methodist University, his master of music education from Kansas State University, and is currently pursuing his doctorate in music education from Liberty University. When not directing one of his own ensembles, Alex is an active performer and clinician.

The orchestra includes 18 musicians playing strings, woodwinds, brass, percussion, and harpsichord.

The Greenville Choral Union's performance begins at 4 pm on Sunday, December 5, in the Whitlock Music Center on the campus of Greenville University. Event organizers ask that attendees wear masks while in the concert venue. For those unable to attend, a livestream will be available to view.

Greenville University is an accredited Christian liberal arts university with more than 1,100 students, including traditional undergraduate, graduate, and adult degree completion students. Founded in 1892 and affiliated with the Free Methodist Church,

the University is located in Greenville, Illinois, 45 miles east of St. Louis, Missouri. Visit www.greenville.edu.