

Mississippi Mass Choir to Perform in Godfrey

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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GODFREY - The Mississippi Mass Choir once sang for Pope John Paul II. Now, for the first time, they'll sing for the Riverbend.

On April 5, 2024, the choir will perform at Hatheway Hall at Lewis and Clark Community College. Doors open at 5 p.m. and the concert begins at 6 p.m. Willie Franklin, Alton native and spiritual advisor to the choir, said it's exciting to welcome the group to his hometown.

“It’s just great to have this opportunity for the choir to come here,” Franklin said. “This is a great project. I’ve only run into minor obstacles, and when you do that in life, you have found out that what you’re doing is what God wants you to do. That’s what He wants you to do. If He was trying to find a way, you stay in something that’s being successful and you’ll find that God will continue to bless you in that.”

Tickets are on sale until March 17, and you can find them at Deliverance Temple, LaMay’s Catering, B&B Custom Gifts and Apparel and In Marilyn’s Care Beauty and Barber Salon. Franklin warns that tickets are going fast, and he expects the show to sell out.

The Mississippi Mass Choir promises a great concert with a powerful message, complete with prayer and fellowship. For Franklin, who has been with the choir for over 30 years, it’s always exciting to see that connection between the singers and the audience and to share the word of God with the community.

“I pray with the choir before they go out and do the concert. And we don’t even call it a concert. We call it magnifying God,” he explained. “That’s what it is. We’re magnifying God through song. And then I pray with the audience and the choir.”

Over the years, the choir has traveled around the globe to spread their message to communities in Italy, Spain, Japan and more. They once performed for a Japanese emperor, and Franklin will always remember the night they sang at Pope John Paul II’s private villa.

But coming home means a lot to Franklin, who also expressed his sadness at the [recent passing of Alton’s 13-year-old Ra’niya Steward](#). He hopes to connect with Steward’s family and honor them at the concert. A [GoFundMe](#) has been organized for Steward’s family; you can learn more about it at [this article](#) on [RiverBender.com](#).

In the meantime, Franklin will continue working with the choir and helping them prepare for their trip to the Riverbend. He noted that he can’t wait to show the singers his hometown, and he is excited to share the message of the Mississippi Mass Choir with Godfrey.

“We’re a family and we look out for each other,” Franklin added. “God protects His own. That’s a fact. He’s going to protect us. As long as we serve Him, honor Him, respect Him and give Him all the praise, He’s going to protect us.”

For more information about the Mississippi Mass Choir, visit their [official website at MississippiMassChoir.org](#). Tickets for the April 5 show are available until March 17, 2024.

