

Messiah To Be Performed

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Community Chorus ready for Messiah Performance

The Galion Community Chorus and Orchestra under the direction of John Sikora is ready for the 54th annual performance of Handel's "Messiah". The performance will be at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 7, 2008 at the First United Church of Christ, 248 Harding Way West in Galion. The performance is open to the public; a freewill donation will be collected.

The Galion Community Chorus and Orchestra has performed works from "Messiah" since 1955. This year over 60 area singers will join the orchestra for the performance.

Directing the Community Chorus and Orchestra is Mr. John Sikora. Sikora is the Director of Opera/Assistant Professor of Music at Kent State University. He is a graduate of The Ohio State University School of Music. He studied voice with McHenry Boatwright, Mario Aich, and John Alexander. This marks Sikora's fifteenth year of directing the Galion Community Chorus and Orchestra.

Tenor soloist for this year's performance will be Galion's own Richard Walker. Rick is a graduate of Ashland University. He currently is the Galion High School band and choral director. He serves as the Director of Choirs for the Peace Lutheran Church in Galion. He has performed as guest soloist for the Ashland Symphony Orchestra and the Medina Community Chorus and Orchestra.

Rachel Velarde is this year's mezzo-soprano soloist. Ms Velarde is internationally known, recently returning from a tour of Italy. She earned her BA from Smith College in Northampton, MA, and two master's degrees from Arizona State University. She teaches an active studio of young singers and is active in the Arizona Central-Northern chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing.

Soprano solos will be performed by Rebecca Stadler of Shelby, Ohio. She began studying voice at age 13 at the Richland Academy of the Arts, and continued her vocal studies at Bowling Green State University. Most recently she performed the role of Aline in Gilbert & Sullivan's The Sorcerer. Her role as a member of the 179th Airlift Wing Chorus in Mansfield has taken her overseas where she has provide church music for deployed locations in Kuwait and Qatar.

She currently teaches in Columbus, Ohio.

Dalton Derr performs the bass solos with the chorus. Derr currently resides in Mansfield where he has served as director of music for several churches. He presently is directing the bell choir at First Congregational Church in Mansfield. He has performed with the Metropolitan Opera in New York, as well as the Winged Victory Singers, and John Weaver's Bach Chorale. With the Mansfield Symphony he has performed Die Fledermaus, Messiah, Voices of Light and other works.

Mrs. James (Patty) Neff will serve as harpsichordist for this performance. Mrs. Neff is well known in the area as outstanding pianist. She currently resides in Bucyrus.

The Galion business community and individuals have loyally supported the chorus and orchestra since its inception. This year over \$6,000 is needed to produce the annual production. The Galion Community Chorus and Orchestra hopes to continue well into the future.