

Stockton's 'Messiah' Brings Together Generations, Forms Community Family

Tickets on Sale for Dec. 8 Event at Xanadu Theater in Trump Taj Mahal

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, November 27, 2013

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Galloway, NJ – Generations of families are coming together to perform in “The Messiah” at the Xanadu Theater at Trump Taj Mahal in Atlantic City on **Sunday, Dec. 8.**

Beverly Vaughn, professor of Music at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, said that scores of singers from places such as New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware have joined together with Stockton students, faculty and staff to form a musical family of almost 200.

“It’s a great family thing,” said Marven Hill, a fifth grade teacher at Atlantic City’s Martin Luther King Jr. Complex who gets together with his father, Marven Hill, and son Kyle, an eighth grader, for rehearsals and the show. “At least one night a week for three months we are together.”

The elder Hill, a retired teacher at the New Jersey Avenue School and former president of the Atlantic City Board of Education, said, “We look forward to it. It’s therapy for me because the telephone doesn’t ring, I’m with my family and it’s just a good feeling.”

Asked how long he’s been part of “The Messiah,” he said he learned it at his wife’s church more than 50 years ago and has been part of Stockton’s production for more than 10 years. His son has been doing it for about five years, and Kyle, 13, is in his third year.

The Hills are just one of many families drawn to the event, which is held every other year. This year marks Stockton’s 12th performance of “The Messiah,” and is one of the biggest to date, Vaughn said.

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Billy and Desiree Jones, a brother and sister from Galloway, don't drive, so they arrange days in advance to get the Access Link bus provided by NJ Transit to bring them to rehearsals and get them home.

Billy, a 2008 Stockton graduate with a B.F.A. in Visual Arts, has been part of "The Messiah" for four years. He said he got Desiree, a student at Atlantic Cape Community College, involved last year.

Jones said this year's production is bigger than ever, with "a lot of people from other years coming together with new faces."

Both the Hills and Jones credit Professor Vaughn with pulling together people with different levels of talent and experience, and melding the choir into a cohesive force.

"She's great – she's an inspiration to me," said Billy Jones. "She helped me with getting more confidence as far singing in front of people."

"Beverly has really built a family – a big relationship," said the younger Marven Hill. He noted that one woman drives up from Cape May to be part of the group, while another drives to Atlantic County from King of Prussia, PA – a 3.5-hour round-trip – to play the piano.

"That's dedication," he said.

Other participants include several churches in Atlantic City, the Hammonton Community Chorus and the Absecon's Holy Spirit High School Choir.

"This is Stockton's biggest musical event that joins the community and the college in performing," Vaughn said. "The Messiah always brings out the largest number of singers for the pure joy of performing Handel's masterpiece."

Tickets are \$8-\$12 and are available at Stockton's Performing Arts Center Box Office at (609) 652-9000 or online at the [PAC](#). The Box Office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the M-Wing of the college's main campus at 101 Vera King Farris Drive, Galloway, NJ

Tickets will also be available at the door of the Xanadu Theater in Trump Taj Mahal on the night of the performance. A portion of the proceeds will benefit scholarships for Stockton students.

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