



PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

A Member of The Texas A&M University System

April 21, 2008

Students Raise Their Voices to Commemorate Hurricane Katrina, In Hands Across Houston Concert, May 2

HOUSTON--The Prairie View A&M University Concert Chorale will join the Houston Choral Society as it celebrates its 20th anniversary with a powerful and historic musical gift to the city of Houston in the "Hands Across Houston" musical concert May 2 at 7:30p.m. at the Wortham Theater Center.

PVAMU Chorale singers, under the direction of A. Jan Taylor, will raise their voices in a commissioned composition by Dr. Adolphus Hailstork of Old Dominion University. The work, *Set Me On A Rock* is the first classical piece written to commemorate the Hurricane Katrina disaster and to honor Houston and Harris County for opening its doors to provide sanctuary to the thousands left homeless by the disaster.

The Hands Across Houston concert will benefit Neighborhood Centers Inc., (www.neighborhood-center.org) which provides services to families in need in the Houston area. The concert spotlight will be on children, with performances of *Mass of the Children* by John Rutter and *For the Sake of the Children* by Jeffrey Ames.

The Houston Choral Society, is a 90-member professional-quality choir that performs classic and contemporary music.

The University Concert Chorale has performed to critical acclaim throughout the United States and abroad. In 2002, the Chorale participated in the International Festival *Wratislavia Cantans*, a prestigious music festival for choirs and orchestras in Poland.

Prairie View A&M University voice instructor Leon Turner heads a talented list of soloists who will perform the musical piece. Other soloists include soprano Melissa Givens, mezzo-soprano Levone Tobin-Scott and tenor Richard Heard. Along with the university Chorale, The Houston Choral Society will be joined by the Children's Choir of Houston.

Turner has performed such roles as, *Bonze, in Puccini's Madam Butterfly*, Sarastro in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Grandpa Moss in Copeland's *The Tenderland*, Frank in Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, King Balthazar in Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, Mikado in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*, and bass soloist in Handel's *Messiah* and Paul McCartney's *Liverpool Oratorio*.

Hailstork, the Cultural Laureate for the State of Virginia, is a music professor at Old Dominion University. He has written orchestral pieces for the Detroit Symphony, along with orchestras in Philadelphia, Chicago and New York. He has written operas for the Opera Theatre of St. Louis and the Kansas City Lyric Opera, as well as a number of choral works for other nationally recognized musical groups.

Titled *Set Me On A Rock (Songs of Sanctuary from the Great Flood)*, the music tells of the struggles and plight of the people of New Orleans who were evacuated from the Superdome in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and arrived in Houston to find compassion and hope.

Dr. Betty Devine, conductor for The Houston Choral Society since its beginning, said the concert will be a powerful evening of music. "The audience will be moved by *Set Me On A Rock*, in particular, because of the way Dr. Hailstork tells the story," she said. "I am so pleased with this music, and I think the audience will be awed by it."

Former Harris County Judge Robert Eckels, who was instrumental in offering Houston as a sanctuary to the people of New Orleans left homeless by the flood, will offer the official welcome at the concert. A representative from Mayor Bill White's office will be on hand to present a proclamation to The Houston Choral Society to honor the choir for its 20 year of performance.

Concert tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for children, students and senior adults. A small number of reserved seats are available for \$45. For tickets, call (713) 627-3609 or visit the Houston Choral Society Web site at www.houstonchoral.org.

WHO: Prairie View A&M University
WHAT: "Hands Across Houston"- Musical Concert
WHEN: May 2, 7:30p.m.
WHERE: Wortham Theater Center
501 Texas, Houston, Texas 77002
Tickets: Adults \$20 (per ticket)
Children/Students/Seniors \$15 (per ticket)
Reserved seating \$45

Media are welcome.

About Prairie View A&M University:

Ranked the only Texas school on Black Enterprise magazine's 2006 list of "Top 50 Colleges and Universities for African-Americans", Prairie View A&M University was founded in 1876 and is the second-oldest public institution of higher education in Texas. With an established reputation for producing engineers, nurses and educators, PVAMU offers baccalaureate degrees in 50 academic majors, 41 master's degrees and four doctoral degree programs through nine colleges and schools. A member of The Texas A&M University System, the university is dedicated to fulfilling its land-grant mission of achieving excellence in teaching, research and service. During the university's 132-year history, more than 50,000 academic degrees have been awarded. For more information regarding PVAMU, visit www.pvamu.edu.

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