



City of
OAKLAND
California

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News from: The City of Oakland

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 4, 2015

Oakland Chorus continues 75-year tradition of spreading Holiday cheer

Oakland, CA – For three-quarters of a century, the City and Port of Oakland Employees’ Chorus has spread cheer and good will with concerts every holiday season. Three free, noontime concerts marking the group’s 75th Season will be held on Wednesday, December 9; Thursday, December 10 and Friday, December 11. These concerts are open to the public.

The concerts on Wednesday and Thursday will be held in the lobby of the Dalziel Building at 250 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, while Friday’s concert will be on the grand staircase of historic Oakland City Hall at 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza. Beginning at noon, each of the concerts is expected to last about an hour.

The chorus will also perform at noon on Saturday, December 19, at the festive “A Holiday Tradition” event at the Dunsmuir-Hellman Historic Estate, 2960 Peralta Oaks Court. The chorus’ performance is part of the festive programming at the estate which is transformed into a turn-of-the-20th-century holiday wonderland. For hours and admission rates, visit dunsmuir-hellman.com or call (510) 615-5555.

One of the best kept secrets in town, the City and Port of Oakland Employees’ Chorus was founded in 1940 by Elsie Giani. Inspired by a group of carolers in a large Oakland department store, she thought it would be grand if the City had its own choir. The first concert featured five singers, including Elsie and her sister Albina. Today, the chorus totals two dozen members including employees of the City of Oakland and Port of Oakland as well retirees and Oakland citizens. Elsie continued to sing with the choir through the 2012 season. While she died in 2013 at the age of 99, Elsie’s legacy lives on today as the chorus brightens the holidays and enriches the Oakland community.

Resident conductor Jacqueline Hairston, a nationally renowned ASCAP published composer-arranger, will lead the chorus through a diverse repertoire for the 2015 season. Audience favorites such as “African Noel;” “Od Yavoh Shalom Aleinu,” an Israeli folk song; and the classic “Hallelujah Chorus” are part of the traditional holiday standards and audience sing-alongs included in the concerts. Several of the musical arrangements sung by the chorus are original compositions by Ms. Hairston. Jerry Donaldson, an accomplished Bay Area concert pianist, will accompany the chorus.

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