



# *The Joy*, a community newsletter

July 2011

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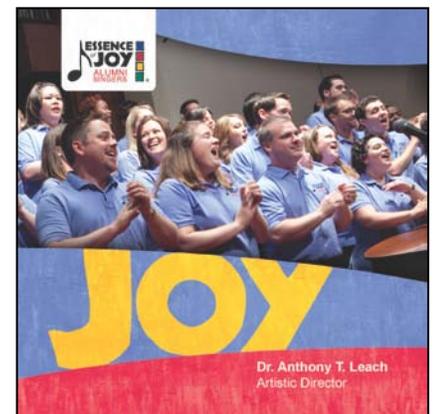
## Welcome to Issue #4 of The Joy!

Welcome to the fourth issue of The Joy, the Essence of Joy Alumni Singers (EOJAS) community newsletter. Founded in 2005 and comprised of alumni from Pennsylvania State University's Essence of Joy Choir, the Essence of Joy Alumni Singers® perform sacred and secular music from the African and African-American tradition in an effort to entertain, inspire, affirm and unify the worldwide community.

This newsletter is publically available on our website, [www.eojas.org](http://www.eojas.org), and via email subscription to our 'Friends of Essence' email list. We welcome your comments on what you'd like to see included in this newsletter. In the meantime, this issue includes a review of the choir's activities in the first six months of 2011 and some information about our plans for the next six months. We are also pleased to announce the release of our first CD project.

## Joy – Our First CD

After years of recording and fundraising, EOJAS is releasing our first CD entitled "Joy" this July. Physical copies of the CD will be available for purchase starting at the July 15<sup>th</sup> Arts Fest concert. CDs will be available for purchase that evening for \$20 cash/check (incl. PA sales tax). For those of you interested in a digital version of the album, we will be selling Download Cards for \$15. These cards allow anyone to download one copy of the album for enjoyment on their computer or MP3 device. We plan to offer both of these sales options at all future EOJAS live performances.



For those who can't join us in person at Arts Fest, we will have a store front at [www.eojas.org/audio](http://www.eojas.org/audio) that will also launch on the 15th. From this storefront, friends, family, and fans will have the opportunity to order CDs for home delivery or order and then download digital copies of the album - at the same prices above.

## About EOJAS

- Founded in 2005 and comprised of alumni from Pennsylvania State University's Essence of Joy Choir, the Essence of Joy Alumni Singers perform sacred and secular music from the African and African-American tradition in an effort to entertain, inspire, affirm and unify the worldwide community. Under the artistic direction of Dr. Anthony T. Leach, the group has performed extensively in the United States, Europe, and the Caribbean. The choir is a non-profit corporation registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and a 501 (c)(3) tax exempt organization.

## Recent Performances



Things are as busy as ever for EOJAS. We hope you will enjoy a short summary of some of our engagements from the first half of 2011. The photo to the left shows EOJAS performing in January 2011 at Trinity Lutheran Church in State College, PA. Photo courtesy of Michael McKinney.

### Performances

- **State College, PA – Jan. 22-23.** EOJAS presented a concert on Sat., Jan. 22 at Trinity Lutheran Church showcasing Trinity's new piano. On Sun., Jan. 23, EOJAS provided music at Zion Community Church in Bellefonte, PA.
- **New York, NY - Feb. 12.** EOJAS presented our first concert in New York City at Holy Name School, 202 W. 97th St., New York City, NY.
- **Mobile, AL – March 18-20.** EOJAS had a wonderful time down South performing at Dauphin Way United Methodist Church and Tuskegee University. The choir presented a workshop on Saturday the 19th at Dauphin UMC and a concert that evening at Tuskegee University. On Sunday the 20th the choir sang the morning services and then presented a free concert at Dauphin UMC.
- **Ithaca, NY – May 12-13.** Members of EOJAS joined the VOICES Multicultural Choir and professional soloists to present excerpts from the Gershwin classic 'Porgy and Bess' at Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY.

### Recording Project

- EOJAS came together twice this season to rehearse 'Hallelujah to the King,' a new 19-movement cantata by composer Stanley Spotswood. EOJAS has been contracted by N-Time Music Productions of Charlotte, NC to record this piece.

## Bureau of Charitable Organizations

EOJAS is now registered with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Charitable Organizations (BCO). The BCO administers PA's charitable solicitation law, The Solicitation of Funds for Charitable Purposes Act. It also maintains registration and financial information on over 11,000 charities soliciting in the Commonwealth. You can find EOJAS in their database by going here: [http://web.dos.state.pa.us/cgi-bin/Charities/char\\_form.cgi](http://web.dos.state.pa.us/cgi-bin/Charities/char_form.cgi)



## Our Mission

- The Essence of Joy Alumni Singers is a family of singers whose purpose is to learn, present, and promote African and African-American sacred and secular music in an effort to entertain, inspire, affirm and unify the worldwide community.

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## EOJAS Elections

Congratulations to our latest additions to the EOJAS Board, taking office on July 1, 2011, for a two year term. Thank you for stepping up to volunteer your time and talents for us all!

Brandon Miller – President  
Kristen Mowery – Secretary  
Alan Honig – Treasurer

These three individuals join the EOJAS VPs, whose terms end on June 30, 2012:

Justin Fyala – VP Business Management  
Christie McKinney – VP Development and Fundraising  
Tom Bonsaint – VP Advertising, Marketing, and Public Relations  
Brent Wilson – VP Production and Operations

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## The Business of the Choir

As many of you know, the EOJAS Board is always busy with the business side of the choir. In the past six months the EOJAS Board has passed five new policies. Many of these policies are based on guidance issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the Pennsylvania Bureau of Charitable Organizations, Chorus America, and most importantly the Pennsylvania Association of Non-profit Organizations (PANO). As a non-profit organization committed to openness, the following policies are available for inspection by members of the public through requests made to [secretary@eojas.org](mailto:secretary@eojas.org).

- Policy 1.5 – EOJ Scholarship Policy
- Policy 1.6 – Confidentiality Policy
- Policy 1.7 – Board Agreement Policy
- Policy 1.8 – Political Advocacy Policy
- Policy 4.1 – Performer Conduct Policy

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## Chorus Management Institute

Four members of the EOJAS Board recently attended Chorus America's Chorus Management Institute. Now on our third year of membership with Chorus America, this was the first time we attended their training program for choir officers. The three-day session focused on four main topics: Strategic Planning, Governance, Communications, and Fundraising. These sessions, led by professionals in their respective fields, provided EOJAS with an excellent opportunity to learn best practices and begin to incorporate them into our organization. This event provided excellent networking opportunities for EOJAS with the course leaders and also with other participants. The Board is working now to implement ideas from this session and continue to improve the operations of the choir.



## The Joy

- The Joy is published twice a year. Its mission is to inform and to entertain. Contributions are always welcome. Please note that contributions become the property of EOJAS and may be edited for length or clarity.

## Welcome New Members!

Please join The Joy and the EOJAS Board in welcoming the 21 individuals who have registered with EOJAS since the first of the year. These additions bring our number of registered users to 194 out of 298 eligible Essence of Joy alums. We've worked hard this year to reach out to many who were not yet registered on the EOJAS Members' site and this recruiting effort has led to a 20% increase since January. Despite more than doubling our registered membership, we still have only 65% of our eligible membership, so the recruiting efforts will continue in earnest. If you are an Essence of Joy alum who has not yet registered with EOJAS, please register at <https://members.eojas.org>.

## Upcoming EOJAS Performances



EOJAS has some big plans for the second half of 2011 and beginning of 2012. Please understand that the information below should be considered tentative. Please watch our [www.eojas.org/performances](http://www.eojas.org/performances) for official EOJAS performance details. The photo on the left, courtesy of Michael McKinney, shows EOJAS performing at Messiah College.

### October

16 – Rehearsal, University Park, PA 11 a.m.

Concert with EOJ, 2 p.m. Homecoming

22/23 – Zion UMC, York, PA. State Street Academy of Music, Harrisburg, PA

### November

19 – ACDA Urban Coalition Event, Washington, DC

20 – New Bethel Baptist Church, Washington, DC, 10 a.m.

### January, 2012

21 – Rehearsal/Performance, New York City, TBA

22 – Sunday Worship, New York City, TBA

### February

24 – 26, Residency, Montoursville, PA

### March

24 – ACDA Urban Coalition Event, Philadelphia, PA, TBA

25 – Sunday Worship, Philadelphia, PA, TBA

### April

13/15– EOJ 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Weekend

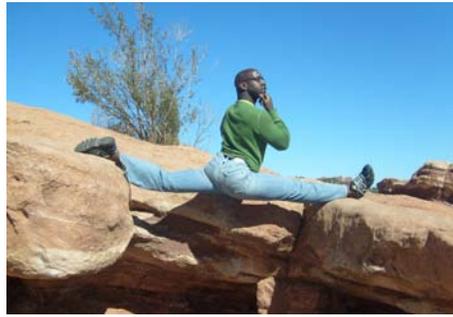
### May

18/19 – At the Theatre Project, TBA

## From EOJAS - Alfonso Parker Jr.

### The Big Caveat

- The views expressed in this newsletter are the views of the authors alone and not necessarily those of the Essence of Joy Alumni Singers Board, its membership, or the Pennsylvania State University Alumni Association. Please don't sue us!



This issue we feature an interview with Mr. Alfonso Parker, Jr. aka ALFIE! (left in photo). Alfie took some time from his busy schedule to chat with The Joy.

**1. *What drew you to PSU?*** Well my hope was to not go to Penn State since I grew up in State College, and it would be 13th grade, I also wanted to get away from my family, but in the end Penn State was the place for me!

**2. *What did you study and what have you done since graduation?*** got into PSU under DUS, and then through talking to one of the theatre professors who saw me in a play I did on main campus my senior yr in high school, I was in the School of Theatre. But I ended up graduating under Integrative Arts, Theatre and Dance. Since then I have danced all over the world with Pilobolus, and with world renown choreographers Bill T Jones, David Bolger, and Sean Curran, Performed on Broadway in the revival of South Pacific at Lincoln Center, Been on Nat'l tours, and Regional theatres all over the country, been in movies, posters, TV, the Web, the NY Times, and this fall will be heading out with the Nat'l tour of Memphis.

**3. *What made you decide to audition for EOJ? Tell us about your audition and/or when you found out you were in the group.*** I honestly don't remember why I auditioned for EOJ; I have to admit I wasn't planning on being in the group. I had watched EOJ perform my whole High School career, and had a lot of prejudgments on the group. I really don't know why I did, I had just finished doing a show at the Boal Barn Playhouse, and didn't even have the voice to be auditioning, but God had a plan for me to be in this choir so somehow I did, and got in.

**4. *You've performed frequently at home and on the road with Essence and with other groups. Can you share a memorable experience with our readers?*** I can never forget the American Choral Director's Association (ACDA) concert in Pittsburgh. The whole event was life changing. I had just decided that my look was going to be bald, I had gotten my ears pierced during the convention, and had gotten to one of the biggest fights in my life with another member over, I don't even know what. And we were not ready to sing in front of this audience, Dr Leach gave us this speech, and the concert we produced I think was a turning point and life changing for the choir itself. That and shopping with Roy in LA!

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## EOJAS fan?

Join us on Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/EssenceofJoyAlumniSingers](http://www.facebook.com/EssenceofJoyAlumniSingers)

**5. Many members of the choir have mentioned a favorite Tony Leach quote and/or bit of advice. Can you share a particular anecdote?** Well I've had lots of talks with the Dr. and I wouldn't say I've earned the right, but I call him 'Papa Leach.' It's interesting how often the phrase young and dumb enters my mind when I'm in the world, but the thing that I constantly think about, prescribe to, and encourage myself, is being Present!

**6. Do you have a favorite EOJ song?** It might be "Wanting Memories," or maybe one of the 'light' pieces, or possibly one of the Hogan selections, though I can't forget the Gospel.

**7. Why is that one of your favorites?** I have been in this choir for so long. One of my favorites is definitely "Hear my Prayer." It's beautiful and I use it in my life when I'm talking to God.

**8. I've often felt that Essence is like a family. Can you share a time when you felt the family dynamic?** The whole year of Fall '04 to Spring '05. That's when we started having big sleepovers, and themed potluck parties. Also that was when I decided to be real and open, and really nonjudgmental, and for the first time felt what it was like to be accepted for who I am, so I was able to be open to what was being presented to me in terms of close relationships, which lead to me being a groomsman, and singer in an EOJ wedding.

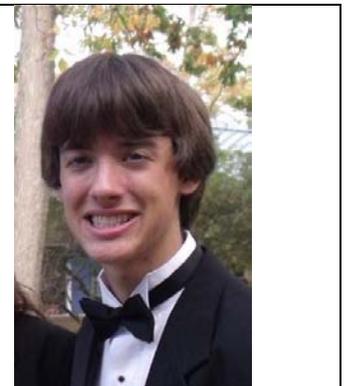
**9. What does it mean to Write the Vision? And why should we make it plain?** You know, I always wondered that myself. Maybe it simply means to write it out, see it in front of you, make it a practical thing, so you can see how you will obtain what it is you want.

**10. Anything else we should know about you?** I've never been as close as I am right now! God's about to break it loose! I like chocolate, lasagna, and I'm single!

## From the EOJ - Matthew Neal

This issue we speak with Matthew Neal, Tenor in the EOJ Resident Choir. Matthew is the recipient of the 2011 EOJAS Scholarship.

Matthew took some time from his busy schedule to chat with The Joy – thanks Matthew!



**1. What made you choose PSU?** When looking at colleges, Penn State offered a very good program in Engineering, and it was not too far from home, so that made it a pretty clear choice for me. Also, my older sister was still going to Penn State, so it was nice to be at the same school as her, and my other two brothers were headed here too.

**2. What is your Major? When do you graduate?** My major is Architectural Engineering, and I will graduate in the spring of 2014. The five-year program makes it seem far away, but I know it will come much sooner than I expect!

## Contact the Board

Brandon Miller (President)  
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Dr. Anthony T. Leach  
(Artistic Director)  
artisticdirector@eojas.org

EOJAS Board  
board@eojas.org

**3. What made you decide to audition for EOJ? Tell us about your audition and/or when you found out you were in the group.** I decided to audition for EOJ because my older sister Jessica had been in the choir. I had been to concerts for about two years, and it seemed like it would be a lot of fun, so I came out and auditioned. For my audition, I actually decided to sit in the bass section because my voice didn't fully drop till my later high school years. When Dr. Leach heard me sing, he gave me some look, made some comment about it, and sent me over to the tenor section. It all worked out when I made the choir, so I was happy about that.

**4. You've performed frequently at home and on the road. Can you share a memorable experience with our readers?** One of the funniest trips I remember was to the church in Reading this year. At this concert, after the choir announced our names and majors, Dr. Leach commented that yes the choir did have triplets, probably because of the many confused faces with so many Neals in the choir. Afterwards, we were eating a meal from the church and in the middle of the meal, the group of church moms all asked if the three triplets would stand up because they were eager to know who they were. All three of us stood up, and cries of "Wow, three boys!", "Oh my," and "Bless your mother!" all came from the church moms. My favorite comment was "Bless your mother." We couldn't have been that troublesome...

**5. Many members of the choir have mentioned a favorite Dr. Leach quote and/or bit of advice. Can you share a particular favorite?** Last year, there was a song called "Dubala" in our repertoire, and translated, the song was basically a conversation about a fly that had flown into a baby's milk and what they would have to do about it. Normally, Dr. Leach would give a nice explanation of that before we started the song, but one time, before we sang, he turned to the audience as said, "There's a fly in the baby's milk. What are we gonna do?", and then we started to sing. I can only imagine what that audience thought, because I didn't even know what to think at that point.

**6. Do you have a favorite EOJ song? Why is that one of your favorites?** My favorite song, if I only had to choose one, would have to be "Hallowed be Thy Name" by Kenneth Knight & Kurt Lykes. This song always seemed to reach our audiences very well at every performance, and I felt that the choir loved singing it. I always enjoyed just listening to the words of the song, for they mean a great deal to me, and I could never sing this song without bringing a big smile to my face.

**7. EOJ (and now EOJAS) have a history of siblings in the choir, but I think the Neals are the first example of four siblings in EOJ - let alone at one time. What is it like to share that experience with so many members of your family?** It is great to be able to sing with my siblings in the choir. One of the best things about it is just getting to see them three days at least each week. It is just a good way too keep connected, and what better way than to sing in such a fun choir together.

**8. I've often felt that Essence is like a family. Can you share a time when you felt the family dynamic?** One of my favorite parts about Essence is that everyone is there for the same goal and purpose and we all want each other to do our best. I can remember a few concerts, when someone is either singing a solo out front, or we are all just rockin' out to a piece, I can just see that everyone is supporting each other, and having some fun together. Someone is always willing to help you if you are having any trouble what-so-ever. These are ways I see Essence as a family because that is what families

## Do you Tweet?

Follow us on Twitter:  
<http://www.twitter.com/EOJAlumni>

## Life News

Got married? New baby on the way? Just graduated? The Joy would be happy to include your news and a photo in an upcoming issue. Just email [vpampr@eojas.org](mailto:vpampr@eojas.org).

do. They support each other, help when another is in need, and we have a blast when we are together.

**9. If you had the opportunity to meet with any of the composers in the EOJ repertoire, who would you select and why?** I would want to meet with Moses Hogan because of how much he was able to accomplish in his lifetime. I would love to know what his strong motivations were behind all of the arrangements and new pieces he created. He clearly helped make spirituals and other music of the sort into a more accessible place in the choral world and accomplish so much in one lifetime.

**10. Aside from joining EOJAS, what are your plans after graduation?** That all is still a ways away, but as I get closer, I believe I will continue my education and pursue a masters degree within the field of Architectural Engineering. Wherever that takes me, I guess I'll have to wait and see.

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## Congrats to EOJ Thon!

EOJAS would like to congratulate the Essence of Joy Thon team for raising \$8269.46 for the 2011 Penn State Dance Marathon, also known as THON ([www.thon.org](http://www.thon.org)). THON 2011 raised an amazing \$9.56 million for the Four Diamonds Fund at Penn State's Hershey Medical Center. Since 1977, THON has raised more than \$78 million for the fight against pediatric cancer.

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## PSAA Award

EOJAS was pleased to be recognized by the Penn State Alumni Association with an award for Membership Growth. Representatives from the EOJAS Board plan to attend an award ceremony at Penn State this Fall. This recognition is all the more notable considering that EOJAS was formally accepted as an Alumni Interest Group only in Spring of 2010.



## Life Membership in PSU Alumni Association?

Are you interested in joining the Penn State Alumni Association as a Life Member? If so, please visit (<https://www.lionlink.psu.edu/member.nsf/4Life>), tick the box for Alumni Interest Groups, and scroll down to the Essence of Joy Alumni Singers (code ICB). For every new Life Member, the Alumni Association will make a donation to EOJAS. This donation is not retroactive and applies only to new lifetime members. Thank you for your support!

## Next Issue?

Look for the next issue of The Joy in your email mailboxes and on the EOJAS Website in December, 2011.

## Contact Us

Essence of Joy Alumni Singers, W356 Olmsted Building, PSU Harrisburg, 777 W. Harrisburg Pike, Middletown, PA 17057. Phone: 717-546-4195 Email: [info@ejas.org](mailto:info@ejas.org)

## Supporting EOJAS



EOJAS would love your support. Below are some ideas on how you can support EOJAS in our mission to learn, present, and promote African and African-American sacred and secular music in an effort to entertain, inspire, affirm and unify the worldwide community.

### Support EOJAS Financially

- The choir would greatly appreciate any financial support you are able to provide. EOJAS members are not compensated financially and we rely heavily on donations to grow as an organization. EOJAS is a tax-exempt organization as defined in Section 501(c)(3) of the Federal Tax Code. All appropriate donations, contributions, bequests, transfers, devices, or gifts made to EOJAS on or after March 22, 2010 under sections 170, 2055, 2106, or 2522 of the Internal Revenue Code are fully deductible against federal income tax for U.S. residents and corporations registered in the U.S. While the choir prefers donations via check or money order, we gladly accept credit card or bank transfer donations via PayPal™, using the link below. If you have a question regarding donations to EOJAS, please contact our Vice President of Development and Fundraising at [vpdf@ejas.org](mailto:vpdf@ejas.org).

### Come See About Us

- Most EOJAS performances are open to the public. Our events are often ticketed, with tickets available for purchase at the door. Aside from subscribing to 'The Joy,' you can also check the News section on [ejas.org](http://ejas.org) for information about future performances.

### Follow EOJAS Online

- EOJAS is online at Facebook and Twitter.
- You can become a Fan of EOJAS on Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/EssenceofJoyAlumniSingers>
- You can follow our Tweets at [www.twitter.com/EOJAlumni](http://www.twitter.com/EOJAlumni)

### Tell Your Friends

- If you enjoyed your EOJAS performance, please invite your friends and family to join you for a future performance. We'd love to hear from them too. Please encourage them to become a Friend of EOJAS by going to [www.ejas.org](http://www.ejas.org) and entering their email address on our mailing list.

### Support EOJAS With Your Time

- EOJAS is always eager for pro bono assistance. If you have skills in a particular field that you feel could be of assistance to the choir on a pro bono basis, please email [info@ejas.org](mailto:info@ejas.org). If you are a lawyer who can assist with 501 (c) 3 issues, contracts, etc. we can use your help! If you are a graphic designer who can assist with marketing materials, we would like to hear from you. Do you have skills in grant writing or fundraising? We need that help too! Professional photographer or videographer with some extra film? Accountants and tax lawyers are always in need. Instrumentalists? We'd like to hear from you too. Thanks!

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## Thanks!

Special thanks to Joshua Edwards, Brian Victor, and Channie Waites for your service on the EOJAS Board. Josh served as the second President of EOJAS, from 2007-2011. Brian served as the second EOJAS Secretary, from 2009-2011. Brian will continue to serve as the EOJAS Webmaster and will remain an official Advisor to the EOJAS Board for all technology issues. Channie served as the first Treasurer of EOJAS, from 2007-2011. On behalf of The Joy we thank you all for your wonderful support of the choir over the years.



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## Website Updates

### **Audio Clips Section ([www.eojas.org/audio](http://www.eojas.org/audio))**

Have you visited the new Media Section on the EOJAS Website? The choir is working now to compile recent recordings into our first CD project, expected later in 2011. For information on how you can contribute to this project, please see [www.eojas.org/support.htm](http://www.eojas.org/support.htm). We still have to raise a little more before we can produce a full album, but this work is well underway.

### **Education Initiative ([www.eojas.org/education](http://www.eojas.org/education))**

The mission of the Essence of Joy Alumni Singers is to learn, present, and promote music of the African and African-American Tradition. The choir views educational outreach as a key aspect of that mission. We are particularly interested in developing skills in schools and houses of worship through workshop and residency programs. Please take a moment to visit the new section of our website that describes our educational offerings. The Education Committee is working now to develop new workshop materials and an Educational Resource Packet for our future programs. Please feel free to comment on the site and reach out to [vpampr@eojas.org](mailto:vpampr@eojas.org) if you would like to contribute to this new project.

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Look for the Next Issue of  
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