

PRESS RELEASE

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“Rock My Soul” to Perform Gospel Concert with Special Guest Lillian Buckley

Portsmouth, NH — April 18, 2005 — The interfaith, nonprofit gospel choir **Rock My Soul**, a new local favorite among seacoast gospel fans, will hold a Spring Concert on Saturday, May 14 at 7 PM. The concert will be held at First Parish Federated Church, Corner of Main & Academy Streets, South Berwick, ME. Refreshments will be served during a brief intermission.

Rock My Soul, part of the Diversified Faith Gospel Project, performs music from a variety of American gospel traditions, including black gospel, white southern gospel, and spirituals. Led by Cheryl Stromski – the musical director at Prescott Park for many years – the choir specializes in old-fashioned, raise-the-rafters gospel tunes. Numbers range from rousing arrangements of traditional favorites like “This Little Light Of Mine” to the less familiar but no less rollicking, “I’m Tired,” a spirited song not frequently heard since the Davis Sisters recorded it in the late 1940s. In contrast to the high-energy gospel sound are such numbers as soloist Dawn Boyer’s prayerful and powerful “Amazing Grace,” and modern classics like Kathryn Thompson’s moving rendition of “Let It Be.”

“This is perhaps the most high-energy, dedicated group of singers I’ve ever worked with,” says Stromski. “They’ve only been together for a year or so, but they sound as if they’ve been doing this for years. Their quality and spirit is amazing.”

“I think that the sense of fellowship and commitment this group has is what makes it so exceptional,” adds Boyer, president of the DFGP. “Knowing that we’re performing this terrific, upbeat music for a purpose — to help audiences feel connected to something positive and joyful, to teach them a bit about the origins and meaning behind gospel music, and to celebrate the strength of the human spirit — gives us all a sense that we’re helping to make things better, one song at a time.”

Rev. Lillian Buckley, a native of the seacoast area, will be appearing as a special guest soloist. Rev. Buckley has been singing gospel music all her life and has recently released a new CD, “Utterance.” “We are honored and very excited to share the stage with Rev. Buckley,” says Boyer. “She’s a gifted performer with a wonderful voice and depth of soul. Audiences love her, and for good reason.” Rock My Soul soloists Boyer, Chester Buckley (Rev. Buckley’s brother), Mike Cooper, Mary Kull, and Kathryn Thompson will also be singing. A full band, including Stromski on keyboards, Brett Hartenbach on guitar, and John Dillon on bass, will accompany the choir.

Tickets for the concert are \$12 in advance or \$15 at the door; advance purchase is strongly recommended. Tickets may be purchased online at www.dfgp.org/tickets.htm or reserved by calling 207-384-8318 or emailing tickets@dfgp.org. Further discounts are available for seniors over 65, children, and groups of ten or more. A portion of the concert’s proceeds will be donated to First Parish Federated’s music program.

The Diversified Faith Gospel Project is a nonprofit, nondenominational, interfaith umbrella organization dedicated to raising awareness of and educating audiences about American gospel music and its positive impact on our history and culture. In performing the songs and describing the history behind them, the DFGP hopes to lift hearts, open minds, and bring people closer together to understand the meaning of peace, equality, respect, unity, and justice.