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THE BIG BAND GOSPEL PROJECT PREMIERES IN TORONTO THIS FEBRUARY!

The Big Band Gospel Project unveils its Toronto premiere this February, in the heart of downtown. Featuring the Toronto Jazz Orchestra and the Toronto Mass Choir, the Big Band Gospel Project combines the two distinct styles of gospel and big band into an musical experience that cannot be found anywhere else!

After the celebrated sold-out run of Big Band Tap Revue this past November, The Toronto Jazz Orchestra returns with another amazing collaboration. Under the leadership of Toronto Jazz Orchestra Artistic Director Josh Grossman and Toronto Mass Choir Director Karen Burke, the Big Band Gospel Project explores the sounds of gospel and big band music with the 18-piece band and the 40+ person choir. Both ensembles will perform separately and together, with arrangements created specifically for the Project by acclaimed composer/producer Shelly Berger.

"Jazz has its roots in spirituals and Gospel music, so in many ways it makes perfect sense to have a big band and a gospel choir on the same stage. Gospel music can still be heard in so much of jazz; it's an honour to be working with one of Canada's top gospel choirs on this project," says Josh Grossman, Artistic Director of the Toronto Jazz Orchestra. *"Karen's work with TMC - and the fact that the choir regularly performs original compositions by Karen and her colleagues in Canada - is a testament to the vitality of Gospel music today."*

Adds Toronto Mass Choir Director Karen Burke, "Gospel music and jazz music both had their 'golden age' during the same period - approximately 1940-1955 - when both were readily found in the mainstream. Cultural barriers, however, prevented these genres ever being found on the same stage with very few exceptions. The coming together of Big band and Gospel choir, not only sharing the same stage but actually performing arrangements specifically designed for their pairing, is very rare. Only in Canada you say? Probably. The Toronto Mass Choir is so excited to reprise this unique collaboration with the TJO for our home based audience."

This unique collaboration has only performed publicly once before, and this marks its Toronto debut. The Big Band Gospel Project runs one night only February 6, 2016 at the historic Bloor Street United Church.

The Big Band Gospel Project
February 6, 2016, 7:30 pm
Bloor Street United Church
300 Bloor Street West
\$25 advance general admission (\$30 at the door)
\$20 advance students/seniors (\$25 at the door)
Featuring: The Toronto Jazz Orchestra, The Toronto Mass Choir

Tickets and information available at www.thetjo.com/bigbandgospel
www.thetjo.com
(416) 899-5299
thetjo@mnsi.net
<https://www.facebook.com/torontojazzorchestra>
Click here for promotional video! https://youtu.be/1TCj_5u8-qE

Formed in 1998, the 18-piece Toronto Jazz Orchestra is one of Toronto's most exciting big bands. Created to perform music by some of the most important composers in jazz (including Thad Jones, Bob Brookmeyer, Phil Nimmons, Rob McConnell and more), their repertoire now includes compositions and

arrangements ranging from classic swing tunes to the leading edge of contemporary jazz. The Toronto Jazz Orchestra seeks to educate, entertain, and increase the public's understanding and appreciation of big band jazz.

The Toronto Mass Choir (TMC) continues to be on the cutting edge of the Canadian gospel music scene bringing their distinct gospel sound to the world stage. Toronto Mass Choir's music incorporates contemporary gospel, traditional gospel and Caribbean music influences. In particular, TMC's combination of gospel lyrics with a variety of musical styles has resulted in a style unique in Canada.