

Chamber Singers alumni, After Jack trio, Alfred Volunteer Choir ready concert

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On June 12, approximately 30 Alfred University (AU) Chamber Singers alumni will return to campus to raise their voices in song once more. The singers will rehearse music they have chosen to reprise for a concert in the Miller Theater on campus Saturday, June 13 at 3 p.m. during the University's annual Reunion Weekend activity.

The singers will be joined by the Alfred Volunteer Choir Company and After Jack, a trio of female singer/songwriters including AU alumna Emily Blankenship-Tucker, Class of 2003. The concert is free and the community is invited and encouraged to attend.

The AU Chamber Singers was formed by director Dr. Luanne Crosby, AU professor of voice and chorus, in 1995, when a number of students from the University Chorus requested a smaller, more challenging choral experience. (The first group actually met in 1994, rehearsing in Crosby's home, but made it onto the books as a course in '95). Since then the group has toured internationally to Sweden and Finland, Peru, Greece and Bulgaria, Italy, and China and has provided numerous musical events for Alfred and the surrounding community.

The current alumni group spans graduates from the late '90s to just this past May. Members have chosen to perform "Shenandoah" by James Erb, "Elijah Rock" by Moses Hogan, "Sure on this Shining Night" by Morton Lauridsen, "Country Dances" by Ward Swingle, and the spiritual "Live a Humble."

Emily Blankenship-Tucker brings her group After Jack to add to the reunion program. After Jack is a musical celebration of togetherness. Named 2014 Americana Vocal Group of the Year by the Appalachian Cultural Music Association, the trio couples a modern sensibility with distinctly old-time energy to blend bluegrass, gospel and folk elements. Combine your most beloved musical memories with a foot-stomping string band and top it off with harmonies that spring straight from the soul of the mountains, and you've got After Jack.

Emily, Mary Allison, and Rachel Blankenship-Tucker met while working as performers in a professional theater company. In forming the band, they realized they were merging three unique musical perspectives. Though often labeled "Americana," their sound, ability to reach the heart of an audience, and the incredible joy that they bring to the stage cannot be adequately captured by one word.

After Jack's first full-length album, "Echo," released on Travianna Records, was produced by Aaron Ramsey of Mountain Heart, and is receiving international airplay. The album's title is a notion that describes the band's songwriting a collection of stories to be shared and experiences that can only be lived. It's also an invitation, to all who encounter it, to share those moments. With an ambitious touring schedule, the trio can be heard at major festivals and venues all along the East Coast.