

## Alfred University alumnus leads choirs at Spring Concert

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Chaz Bruce '08 (at microphone) at the Alfred University Choirs Spring Concert.

ALFRED, NY – Diversity, community and respect were prevalent themes at the Alfred University Choirs Spring Concert, held May 4 in the Alfred Seventh Day Baptist Church. Alfred University alumnus Chaz Bruce '08, an accomplished musician and music educator, returned to his alma mater to lead the choirs in their performance of American gospel musician Kirk Franklin's "Down by the Riverside."

The choir's rendition of "Down by the Riverside" was inspiring, related Luanne Crosby, professor of voice and chorus at Alfred University, who directs the choirs. "The audience not only jumped to their feet, they joined in the singing," she said.

[Watch the video of Chaz Bruce leading the AU Choirs in "Down by the Riverside."](#)

Crosby chose a theme for the concert based upon diversity, community and respect. The repertoire featured folk songs from Venezuela and Argentina; songs by Billy Joel; and "Eli, Eli," a song based on the 1942 poem "A Walk to Caesarea" by Hungarian-Jewish resistance fighter Hannah Szenes. It also included a tribute to Matthew Shepard, the gay college student who was brutally murdered 20 years ago, and music representative of black lives.

Bruce was a member of the Alfred University Chorus when he was an undergraduate. Crosby, who described Bruce as having "a tenor voice like gold," learned of Bruce's interest in R&B and gospel music and asked him to teach a song to the choir. Bruce attended four rehearsals over the course of the spring 2019 semester, teaching the choir gospel style. He also agreed to play the role of Aretha Franklin in the choir's rendition of Franklin's hit song, "Respect."

"He was the natural choice to bring a different way of learning to the choir this semester," Crosby said of Bruce, who earned a bachelor's degree in theater from Alfred University in 2008 and is currently Western New York Director at New York Institute of Dance and Education.