

**By Jan Schultz**

***The Imperial Republican***

If the excitement of the director is any indication, Sunday's community chorus performance of George Frideric Handel's "Messiah" is going to be great.

Joel Grosbach, a 2008 college graduate who's returned to the family farm in the Enders area, is directing Sunday's production at the Imperial Zion Lutheran Church.

Grosbach said he's very impressed with the chorus of 27 singers, who hail from the Imperial, Wauneta, Champion and Enders communities.

"They are all very willing to sing, and their enthusiasm is greatly appreciated," he said.

"It's certainly a credit to their talent and ability."

He noted no one complained when asked to stay a little longer for their weekly rehearsal over Thanksgiving weekend.

The size of the chorus, at 27 people, is ideal for this production, Grosbach said.

Grosbach majored in ag management at McPherson College in Kansas, but minored in music with an emphasis in pipe organ. He was very involved in the music departments at Chase County Schools throughout his four years here, before graduating in 2004.

While he did direct individual pieces of music while in college, Sunday's "Messiah" will be his first to have complete responsibility on the directing side of the music stand, he said.

That also involves study of the score, planning for rehearsals and building the chorus to a performance-ready ensemble.

He and the chorus have been rehearsing each Sunday since mid-September for about two hours each week.

Sunday's performance will highlight only part of the full "Messiah," pulling the choruses from the prophecy and Christmas portions of Handel's world famous score.

If the entire three-part "Messiah" was to be sung, it would take three hours, Grosbach noted. Sunday's performance in Imperial will be about an hour and 15 minutes.

The entire "Messiah" tells the story of Christ, starting from the Old Testament prophecies up to Christ's birth, through parts of His life on earth, His death and resurrection and ending with His return in glory, as described by Grosbach.

The "Hallelujah!" is probably the most famous chorus within "Messiah," and will be the concluding part of Sunday's performance.

In addition to Grosbach, two other Chase County High School graduates, highly trained singers Lacey Beemer Franzen and Stephanie Spady Varilek, are involved in the performance as part of the chorus and will be among the soloists.

Other soloists include Charlotte Wine, Arlan Wine, Rev. David Kahle and Vicar Matthew Makela.

Written in 1741, "Messiah" wasn't performed until a year later in Dublin. It actually is an "oratorio," or an opera without the staging, costumes and acting, Grosbach said.

Although Handel was born in Germany, he also worked in Italy, but his most noteworthy time was spent in London, Grosbach said, where he perfected the concept of the English oratorio. "Messiah" was written in English.

Handel was not known as a writer of church music, but rather wrote for his wealthy patrons and for such events as coronations.

However, his "Messiah" is largely well-known because of its singing in religious productions

during the Christmas and Easter seasons.

Sunday's program will begin at 2:30 p.m. for those who want to come early and hear the preservice music from organist Jean Farrer. "Messiah" will start at 3 p.m.

A reception will follow the performance.

### □ Who's involved

**CHORUS MEMBERS FOR 'MESSIAH'**—Jeanette Munger, Mindy Castle, Tapainga Kahle, Marisa Kunnemann, Jean Farrer, Sharon Walgren, Wilva Harchelroad, Doreen Mohr, Jacqueline Greene, \*Lacey Beemer Franzen, \*Stephanie Spady Varilek, Tina Grosbach, Laura Gaschler, \*Charlotte Wine, Carol Thompson, Ruth Speicher, \*Arlan Wine, Harold Nordhausen, Rod Beemer, Daniel Marshall, \*Rev. David Kahle, Ryan Leibhart, Mark Gaschler, Paul Gaschler, \*Vicar Matthew Makela, Dana Spady, Emily Spady.

\*Denotes soloists.

Joel Grosbach, Director and Dr. J. Gordon Christensen, accompanist.

**SELECTED CHORUSES**—"And the Glory of the Lord," "And He Shall Purify," "O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings To Zion," "For Unto Us a Child Is Born," "Glory to God," "Lift Up Your Heads, O Ye Gates" and "Hallelujah!"

**SELECTED SOLOS (partial list)**—"Comfort Ye My People," "Every Valley Shall Be Exalted," "O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings To Zion," "The Trumpet Shall Sound," "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth" and "Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion."