

A Cappella Gospel on June 9th By Men Standing For Christ

By Tom Hanchett

CPCC's Sloan-Morgan Building will ring with the sound of a *cappella* African American gospel when the Charlotte Folk Society gathers on the evening of Friday, June 9. Please join us at 7:30 PM.

For half a century, the group **Men Standing For Christ** has been carrying on the tradition of black quartet singing. Voices rise in rich four-part harmony, accompanied from time to time by keyboard.



Men Standing For Christ

Original member David Thompson, now in his 70s but still singing strong, recalls when the group first formed at Mount Carmel Baptist Church, then located next to the campus of Johnson C. Smith University on Charlotte's west side. "Reverend Leon Riddick wanted a men's group to sing for Father's Day. He contacted Deacon G. G. Glenn, who said he'd put something together, but he didn't want to do all that work for just one day per year," says Thompson. The minister agreed to schedule the singers for four church services annually – but soon they were performing twice

a month on Communion Sundays.

The initial five members included Johnson C. Smith University athletic coach Moses Sharp (baritone), Elijah Kitchens (second tenor and lead), Sam Douglas (tenor), Andrew Bryant (bass), alongside David Thompson (tenor

and baritone). Thompson's uncle was Beachy Thompson, nationally known singer with the famed **Dixie**

Hummingbirds from 1943 to 1992 (If you recall pop star Paul Simon's 1974 hit **Loves Me Like a Rock**, those were the **Dixie Hummingbirds** behind him). Uncle Beachy tried to get young David to join the **'Birds** on the road. But with a new baby at home, that didn't seem the right decision. "I decided to give my talent to the Lord," he says simply.

Today, **Men Standing for Christ** numbers twenty singers, ranging in age from mid-twenties to mid-seventies. The group's special calling is singing in prisons. Reverend Tyrone Scott, a retired
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Plan Now: 18th Annual CFS Old Time Music Jam Virginia Weekend

By Wanda Hubicki

In December 2005, Tom Phlegar received the Charlotte Folk Society Heritage Award in recognition of his many contributions to preserving and passing on our musical heritage. The greatest legacy that Tom and his wife, Barbara, have given the old time music community is their hosting a three-day jam session on the Phlegar family farm in Virginia every summer since 1989. Each year they graciously invite all Folk Society members to join them in sharing this special experience. All are welcomed – new members and charter members of the Folk Society – musicians and appreciative non-musicians, alike.

I encourage you to mark your calendars now: set aside the weekend of July 28-30 to travel to Pearisburg, Virginia for the CFS Jam Weekend. You will find there excellent music in a beautiful setting. You'll also discover the old-fashioned pleasure of creating community through the sharing of music, dance, and food. There's rough camping available on the farm (running water and Porta-Jons provided) and there are motels nearby.

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(*Men Standing For Christ, continued from page 1.*)

chaplain, books most of the visits. "He can get us into any prison in the Carolinas – and more importantly, he can get us out!" quips director Gary Carter.

Most performances start with Carter leading the theme **It's Another Day's Journey (I'm So Glad to Be Alive)**. Songs range from age-old to very new -- standards such as **Traveling Shoes**, call-and-response pieces including **Any Way You Bless Me Lord (I'll Be Satisfied)**, and recent compositions like **The Potter and the Clay**. Sharp-eared listeners will hear the roots of doo-wop when Charles Armoid breaks into falsetto, and influences from the **Soul Stirrers** in smooth-voiced Charles Glenn, Jr. Every member sings lead on at least one or two songs; explains director Carter, "Everybody's got testimony."

"What carries this group are our harmonies. We pride ourselves on our harmony," says William Summers. Above all, the message is the reason for singing. "We didn't come for show or fame," says the mission statement of **Men Standing for Christ**, "but we came to help you along this Christian Journey."

The free and family-friendly program begins at 7:30 PM on Friday, June 9, in the Sloan-Morgan Building, 1220 Elizabeth Avenue, on the Central CPCC Campus. Donations, which benefit the performers, are appreciated. Refreshments, both slow and fast jam sessions, and a song circle follow the hour-long concert. Free parking is available in the Faculty-Staff-Theater parking deck on 4th Street, between Independence Boulevard and Kings Drive. For details, call 704-377-5257 or visit www.folksociety.org.

(*Phlegar Farm Jam, continued from page 1.*)

You'll want to bring something to sit on and your instruments, of course.

The Saturday evening potluck has become a tradition, so please bring a covered dish to share. **"Mr. Pig" is star of the potluck; please let Tom know by July 15th if you are coming and how many folks will be with you in order that enough barbecue can be provided.** Everyone attending is asked to make a small donation to cover the expenses of Mr. Pig, paper products, Porta-Jon rentals, etc.



Pickin' on Phlegar's Farm

The Old Time Music Jam Weekend is a family event. The Phlegar Farm is a setting where children can freely enjoy themselves. To these ends, folks are asked to leave distilled spirits at home.

The weekend has evolved through the years: today it draws not only CFS folks, but also local Giles County pickers and players, and occasional long-distance musicians who have heard via the grapevine that this gathering offers a rich experience of swapping and sharing. From Friday to Sunday, 500 or so people come and go, with attendance peaking Saturday evening at around 350. MapQuest estimates a drive time of under three hours. **To accept the hospitality of Tom and Barbara Phlegar, simply call 704-535-2154.**

Jam With CFS In June

Jam sessions will follow the CFS Gathering concert on Friday, June 9, in the Sloan-Morgan Building on the Central CPCC Campus. Players may choose between a fast jam and a slow jam. The slow jam, led by Krista Murphy and John Divine, is designed to offer novice musicians or those just picking up new instruments the opportunity to learn new songs and to develop confidence in a comfortable group setting.

The Folk Society also hosts a monthly Acoustic Old Time Music Jam at the Charlotte Museum of History at 3500 Shamrock Drive in Charlotte. **The next session will take place on Sunday, June 18, from 2-4 PM.** Museum admission is free on Sundays and museum hours are 1-5 PM. The jam is free and open to the public. Contact Ruth Helms, Jam Coordinator, at 704-537-1055 if you have questions. Visit www.charlottemuseum.org for directions.

The Charlotte Museum of History has invited CFS to hold a jam session on Thursday, June 22, as part of their "Museum by Moonlight" series. The museum is open 5-9 PM on these special evenings; normal admission fees apply. The jam session will take place 6-8 PM. Jammers will not pay admission. The museum's featured exhibit is **A Focus on Sports**. The Hezekiah Alexander Homesite will be open for tours from 6 to 8 PM. Refreshments will be served; a cash bar will be open. Contact Ruth Helms, Jam Coordinator, at 704-537-1055 for details.