

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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s o u l s u p p o r



Group lives and performs by faith in God

By Matt Woody
Senior Editor

Wayne Boesiger, Todd Boesiger, Brian Quade, Nathan Nelson and Jon Matthews are five guys who sing together as Soul Support.

But they credit all of their talent and success to a sixth, unseen member of the group — Jesus Christ.

"Without all of the Lord's guidance and what he does for us, there would be no Soul Support today," Matthews said.

The group, which performs original a cappella Christian music, has come a long way since it was formed in 1990 as an extension of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Men's Glee Club.

Michael Nuss, at that time the director of the UNL ensemble, approached Wayne Boesiger to form a small ensemble that would showcase other types of music at Glee concerts, Boesiger said.

Later, the group became independent of UNL, and about two years ago, selected its current name before a performance at Holland Reformed Church, south of Lincoln.

"It kind of fit the songs we were singing at the time," Quade said.

Todd Boesiger, who sings lead tenor, added, "It kind of fit us, too. A bit cheesy, but ... there's more to it."

Yes, the five members of Soul Support are not your ordinary college-age guys.

"Most people's first impression or stereotype is not of five young guys out there singing for the Lord," Quade said.

But that's exactly what Soul Support is.

All five agree that being in the group lets them do the Lord's work, and they couldn't be happier about it.

"We're just grateful that in this way, we'll take a stand for Jesus Christ," Todd Boesiger said.



Damon Lee/DN

Soul Support is five guys "out there singing for the Lord": from left, Jon Matthews, Wayne Boesiger, Nathan Nelson, Todd Boesiger and Brian Quade.

Busy schedule

The group's composition evolved slowly until it took its present form in 1993 with the addition of Matthews, a baritone.

"We rent Jon," Quade joked, "with an option to buy."

After Matthews joined last October, the group began to perform on a regular basis. Some churches had heard Soul Support,

and wanted it to perform during services. Service performances gave way to full-length concerts, and now the group is busy with gigs on the gospel circuit.

"We're pretty much booked until March of next year," Matthews said.

But only on weekends. Soul Support's five members, all current or former UNL students, are busy working during the week.

Each has either a full- or part-time job.

These other demands keep Soul Support in the Midwest. The group's five members have performed in Colorado, Illinois and all places in between. But they have received offers to sing in states as far away as California and Connecticut. Their next concert in

See SOUL SUPPORT on 10

Opera company hits high note

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

Fortune, music and love of art turned Opera Omaha's 35th anniversary season into a record-breaking fiscal year.

Performances of Beethoven's "Fidelio," Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Pirates of Penzance" and the world premiere of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Requiem Variations," plus a grant from Peter Kiewit and Sons, resulted in the largest financial surplus in the company's history.

Jane Hill, Opera Omaha's managing director, said last season put the company financially "around the corner but not out of the woods yet."

"If this year is a healthy season, it will mean more progress in getting ourselves financially solvent and stable," she said.

Opera Omaha hopes for an encore performance of last year's success as it opens its 36th season on Sept. 14 with Lehar's "The Merry Widow."

"The Merry Widow" is the comic-romantic tale of an early-1900s love affair between a young

Viennese widow, Anna Glawari, and her former lover, Count Danilo Danilovitch.

When the two first meet, Anna is a poor farm girl and is forbidden to marry Danilo. They part.

The ambassador of her native country of Pontevedro, Baron Mirko Zeta, marries Anna off to a millionaire. This husband dies, and she is left a wealthy widow.

The plot focuses on Anna's enduring efforts to entice her former lover back into her arms forever, while Danilo is too proud to admit he still loves her.

And the trials of forbidden love prevail.

Wes Clowers, who starred in "Requiem Variations" last year, will take a different role in "The Merry Widow," fulfilling the duties of technical director.

Clowers said "The Merry Widow" was an unusual operetta because it was entirely in English.

"For something that is a light and entertaining piece, it's good to do it in English, so the audience has a chance of getting the jokes."

Great dramatic opera pieces rely on the fluency and movement of words and melodies, Clowers said.

Quik Facts

Show: "The Merry Widow"

At: Orpheum Theater, Omaha

Times: Today and Friday at 7:30 p.m., Sunday at 2 p.m.

Tickets: Range from \$10 to \$50. Available from STUBS in Omaha

and it is almost impossible to find an English translation that will do justice.

"(The Merry Widow) is not so much about the poetry of language as about its entertaining nature and nature of plot and story."

Clowers said an operetta rested between a classic opera and a musical comedy, and it usually appealed to a broader audience.

"An operetta is a light night out," he said. "It's a Neil Simon kind of opera. It has the comic plot together with beautiful music. It's a very seriously touching love affair."

Diane Alexander and James

See OPERA on 10

MUSIC REVIEW

"Cracked Rear View"
Hootie and the Blowfish
Atlantic Records
Grade: B-

There must be some competition out there for the band with the most eccentric name. Hootie and the Blowfish have been looking at the world lately through their "Cracked Rear View."

This mellow alternative group just released its debut album on Atlantic Records. The record starts off strong but tapers down to mediocrity.

The compact disc's first release, "Let Her Cry," is a great tune that accentuates the unique vocals of Darius Rucker, the band's lead singer. Rucker's commanding voice is the only strength present in all of the songs.

Another strong track, "Hold My Hand," features supporting vocals by David Crosby. The band calls this tune its "save the world song" because of its simplistic

message, telling listeners to stop whining about how bad things are and do something.

"Only Wanna Be With You" is a faster-paced song with a catchy refrain. The band shows that it can make some great music but without much diversity.

About the only song that shows any change is "Running From an Angel," a backwoods tune with some heavy hillbilly instrumentation.

The second half of the album is mundane. The standout songs are "Drowning," a heavier tune, and the final track, "Goodbye," a mellow piece with some sweet piano instrumentation that makes a great finale.

"Cracked Rear View" is not a fantastic work of art, but it does have some songs that are worth lending an ear toward, and it makes for a commendable debut effort.

— Joel Strauch