

THE BULLETIN

January 20, 1997

Belting it Out

ARTICLES

Only two years old, U of T Gospel



Choir is already on the road

It's about faith: Members of the U of T Gospel Choir

Hallelujah, it's the weekend!

While many faculty, staff and students can't wait to leave the university on Friday afternoons, a group of students looks forward to spending another two hours on campus.

The University of Toronto Gospel Choir, which meets at the St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel in the Newman

Centre, was formed during Black History month in February 1995. Recently the 65-member choir was recognized by the Students' Administrative Council as an official student organization.

"As soon as you open the door and walk into practice, you feel good," says 22-year-old Trinity College student, Natascha Green.

The weekly practice is reminiscent of a late-night infomercial for motivational seminars. The session starts with all singers lining up, turning to their right and massaging the person in front of them.

They laugh, they get comfortable and then they get serious.

"You find yourself down during the week and then you go to choir and for those two hours it's a complete renewal," says Faith Holder, a 21-year-old Victoria College student and a National Scholar. "We're not here to gossip, we're here to sing the Gospel."

The choir has been busy. Just six weeks after the group formed, the singers sold out Gospelfest '95 at Hart House Theatre, their first major performance.

The choir also accompanied big-name recording artists Roberta Flack, James Ingram, Peabo Bryson and Melissa Manchester in the Colours of Christmas program at Massey Hall in November 1995.

In May of last year the choir was the only group to represent Canada in the international gospel festival, Gospelfest '96, in Barbados. The group has also performed in front of numerous conventions and community groups.

The choir is planning an ambitious concert at Convocation Hall on April 12 to help pay for travel costs and for new robes, estimated to cost \$14,000. Members also plan to funnel a certain portion of funds raised back to the university.

"We're planning to use proceeds from that concert to set up a scholarship via the seat sale to give bursaries or scholarships to incoming students," says Eva Nelson, president of the choir.

The group is made up mostly of U of T students but a handful of members are former students now attending Ryerson Polytechnic and York universities.

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