

Southern Gospel Legacy Comes to Lawn Chair Theater

If you can be moved by the sound of a song, you'll surely be lifted by the effervescent voices of Palmetto State Quartet's (PSQ) Southern Gospel. The Leipers Fork Community Association (LFCA) presents *Gospel in the Fork* on July 25th at Lawn Chair Theater featuring the gifted singers in their first public appearance in Leiper's Fork.

PSQ member Larry Strickland assures, "It will not only be entertaining, but spiritual as well." The quartet is known for an exciting presentation of dynamic singing and time-honored worship songs creating an enjoyable performance for the whole family.

Originating in South Carolina in 1946, the Palmetto State Quartet has retained its name with a revolving cast of members. The four harmonizing singers consist of Robert Fulton (tenor), second generation members Kerry Beatty (lead) and Brian Beatty (baritone), and Larry Strickland (bass vocal), accompanied by multi-talented Casey Martin on keyboard. Strickland, husband to Naomi Judd and Leiper's Fork resident, also leads as manager since joining the group in 2007. Each member carries an impressive resume of awards and accolades and a long history with Southern Gospel music. PSQ makes just under a dozen appearances per month,



Anthony Scarlati captured Southern Gospel bass vocalist Larry Strickland on the stage of the Lawn Chair Theater where he'll perform this month with Palmetto State Quartet.

though, in the past, it's performed up to 200 dates a year at churches and theaters throughout the US and Canada.

A closer look at Strickland reveals his Christian calling. "I'd be listening to gospel and singing every day after school until my parents got home," he states. The Raleigh, North Carolina native grew up under the influence of his preacher father, attending gospel singings and

spending most of his time learning the southern tradition. Hard work transpired into performing with quartets in and around his home state beginning when he was a teenager. Strickland attests, "You can tell a true artist or musician where that's all he does—when it takes precedence in his life, he's destined to be an artist."

The call of a lifetime came for him in 1974 when he was asked to join The Stamps Quartet,

Elvis Presley's back-up group. Three years later, Strickland recalls getting the news the day Elvis died while waiting in the Nashville airport on his way to a show. The Stamps sang two of Elvis's favorite gospel songs, "Sweet, Sweet Spirit" and "How Great Thou Art" at the funeral. "He loved gospel music," Strickland remembers.

This month's event in Leiper's Fork will offer an impressive display of harmonizing voices making special music. "People may be surprised at what they hear," says Strickland. "The human voice is an amazing instrument." He adds, "What we do is a combination of entertainment and spirituality and worship. We hope to lift spirits."

Gospel in the Fork is an opportunity to experience the value of entertainment with the divine purpose of touching people by a mere word or song. The free performance begins at 6:30 p.m. is sponsored by local residents Charlie and Shannon Martin. Visitors are reminded to bring their own seating; pets and alcohol are prohibited. Concessions will be available. For more information, please call 615.715.1995. 🌸

Becky Bauer lives in rural Williamson County. A songwriter, poet and equestrian with interests in graphic and Web site design, her various talents make her a multi-faceted contributor to this publication.

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