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Rip_Chord among the top in national competition

Lauren Ramsdell
Arts and Entertainment Editor

Ask anyone around Elon University with a pair of working ears who Rip_Chord is, and they will probably look at you like you've sprouted a second head.

Who is Rip_Chord? they will ask, looking you up and down. How can you not have heard of Rip_Chord?

The all-male a cappella group is popular on campus, making appearances at events like Midnight Meals and performing regular concerts. However, they are not as well known around the United States. President Christopher Kilgore wants to change that.

"We're looking to expand the Rip_Chord name," he said, "And put our name out there at the national level."

To that end, the group participated in their first national competition during the summer. Rip_Chord tried out for The Sing-Off, an American Idol-esque show that features a cappella groups rather than soloists. Due to potential breach of contract with NBC, the show's producer, Kilgore was not allowed to say their final slot in the auditions. He was allowed to say that they did well.

"We made it pretty far in the audition process," he said. "We were in it right up until the end."

But though they didn't make it to the show, Kilgore said he believes that Rip_Chord did an exceptional thing by just making it to the auditions.

"We don't see not making the show as a bad thing," he said. "We see it as how far we've come. Because we were able to do it, and do it well, we want to pursue things like that more."

Those other things include potentially trying out for more TV shows and expanding their competition out of the Southeast and onto a more national scale. They are also in the production stages of their newest CD.



Rip_Chord placed among the top in their first national competition. The group tried out for The Sing-Off, an American Idol-esque show for a cappella groups this summer. FILE PHOTO

After two long weekends in the McEwen studios - the first weekend totaled 24 and a half hours of recording - Rip_Chord's second CD has been successfully recorded. They are currently auditioning producers to give the album a bit of shine.

Senior Jacob Daniely was with them through the recording process and, according to Kilgore, was very patient with the group.

"I don't know how he put up with us," Kilgore said. "He is a saint."

The new CD, name withheld in lieu of pending album art and just a little bit of suspense, features more current Rip_Chord material than did the previous CD.

"The last CD featured a mix of new and retired songs," Kilgore said. "This one, all of our fans will know the

songs."

Kilgore says the main aim of the CD is to reach fans with Rip_Chord's more familiar songs, like the ever-popular Disney Medley. But, the other goal is to further spread the Rip_Chord name. The men plan to send some tracks to BOCA, or the Best Of College A cappella, to feature on a compilation CD.

"Sweet Signatures frequently gets on the CD," said Kilgore. "We're looking for that kind of national recognition."

The CD will likely be released at Rip_Chord's fall concert in either late October or early November. Between now and then, the group is looking for new talent. Last year they lost seven members to a combination of graduation, schoolwork and study abroad.

"It's going to be very hard to fill

those spots," said Kilgore. "The people who just graduated are the people who basically started the group."

He seems optimistic, though, about the incoming freshman class and hopes to recruit heavily from their numbers. Among Rip_Chord's concerts this year is an appearance at Catch the Fire, the freshman greeting event, though they will only be nine guys on stage.

"There is a lot of space to fill," said Kilgore.

Despite what some may see as a setback, having to find so much new talent, Kilgore and the other men of Rip_Chord relentlessly look to the future and breaking in to the national a cappella pantheon of stars. With the notoriety they already have on campus, it may not be that difficult to garner fans.