

1B ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

City set to greet Summerfest

By Winfred B. Cross
THE CHARLOTTE POST

How do you top getting 23,000

people screaming to the beat of 20 nationally-known musical acts performing on one stage?

You get 28,000 fans screaming to the beat of 18 nationally-known acts performing on one stage.

At least that's the number WPEG/WBAV officials hope will cram Memorial Stadium



Goddie Mob

Saturday for the second annual Summerfest.

It looks like they could get their wish.

"Our ticket sales are increasing daily," said Robb Ferguson, marketing and promotions director for WPEG. "We're ahead of ticket sales from this time last year. We're looking to take the stadium to capacity."

It could happen. Last year's acts, which included Jody Watley, Hammer, D'Angelo and Mad Lion, drew nearly 23,000. This year's acts include super hot rappers Outkast, The Goodie Mob and soul crooners Horace

Brown, Men of Vizion and Donell Jones.

Old school lovers have found a lot to be happy with the lineup. The Ohio Players, ConFunkShun, The Gap Band and Cameo will also perform.

WPEG also increased its promotions. McDonald's was added as a sponsor, which allowed customers to register for free tickets on special tray liners. Coca-Cola, Red Dog beer and Chevrolet returned as sponsors.

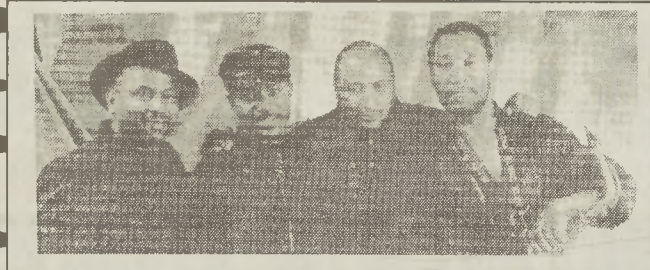
The event opens at 3 p.m. with Atlantic recording artists The Braxtons (sisters of Grammy Award-winning Toni Braxton) and closes at 11 p.m. with old school funk band The Ohio Players.

"The lineup is a joint effort between the promotions staff and program director Andre Carson," Ferguson said. "He did a good job in finding artists that will have the broadest appeal to the listening audience. I think it's a wonderful variety of old school and new school."

Ferguson is also crediting low ticket prices for the festival's popularity.

"No where else can you find this much talent on stage for \$10," Ferguson. "I'm from the

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ConFunkShun

Fly jock Joyner to 'get my party on' at weekend music festival in Memorial Stadium

By Winfred B. Cross
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Morning drive radio host Tom Joyner loves to party about as much as he loves to fly.

He'll do both this weekend as he travels from Dallas to party with Summerfest concert-goers in Charlotte.

He'll be a guest, not a host. "I'm coming to get my party on," Joyner said Wednesday by phone from Dallas. "I heard it was going to be a party and I'm going to be there. That's right, old school will be in."

Joyner, host of "The Tom Joyner Morning Show," heard each weekday on WBAV 101.9 FM, has been doing a lot of old school visiting lately. He recently took in Sinbad's '70s Music Festival in Jamaica, did the Essence thing down in New Orleans and was in Miami for its 100th birthday celebration. All featured old school music.

"That's my favorite era in music," said the Tuskegee Institute graduate. "They don't make music like that any more. Well, they do, but they call it sampling."

This is Joyner's second visit to the city. He was here in 1994 for the NCAA Men's Final Four.

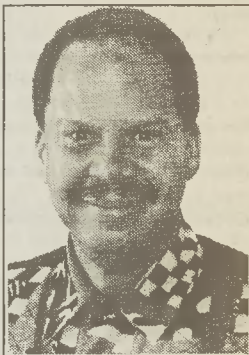
"I really like the city," Joyner said. "It was so clean. Everything just looked so fresh. And you've got some fine women."

Joyner's morning radio show is syndicated in 72 markets across the country. It features music, news and a hilariously funny soap opera called "It's Your World."

"Everybody always asks me about that show," Joyner said. "I've been working with that cast of crazies for a while and there's no telling what they'll come up with."

Until about a year and a half ago, Joyner flew from Dallas to Chicago each weekday to do a morning show in Texas and an afternoon drive show in Illinois. He got tagged "the fly jock," racking up 7 million miles in the air. You wanna talk frequent flyer miles?

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Joyner

SOUNDS

By Winfred B. Cross

Group gets its musical vision across without going the raunchy route with lyrics

By Winfred B. Cross
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Desmond Greggs is trying to juggle the phone while ironing a shirt he's going to wear on Radio City Music Hall's stage later in the evening.

Can't a member of a group with a Top 20 r&b hit get a little housekeeping help?

"It ain't like that yet, man," Greggs said chuckling. "Maybe one day soon."

Maybe it's just as well. Greggs' group Men of Vizion, which includes Corley Randolph, Brian Dermus, Pranthan 'Spanky' Williams and George Spencer III, is climbing the charts with a single appropriately titled "House Keeper." The group brings its silky sound to Memorial Stadium Saturday as part of the WPEG/WBAV Summerfest.

Greggs took time recently in a phone interview to talk about the group's tour, hit single and new CD titled *Personal* (☆☆☆☆).

"We've been blessed so far," Greggs said. "Sometimes I don't even believe it because it happened so fast."

The group formed four years ago at LaGuardia High School of Music in New York. Greggs, Spencer, Randolph and Dermus had begun singing together but wanted another member. Along

comes Williams with a piercing tenor voice to complete the group.

"George knew of Spanky but had never met him," Greggs said. "He'd heard Spanky sing in church but didn't know if he was interested in singing r&b."

Turns out Williams was interested and can sing secular music with nearly the same fervor he uses in gospel.

"He's got a real strong voice," Greggs said. "He surprises us every show. He changes up without telling anyone."

All group members can sing lead, again coming from training in the church, Greggs said. They even auditioned for some record executives with gospel songs.

"We sang a lot of Commissioned and Take 6 songs," Greggs said. "We even got the privilege to meet Commissioned in Detroit. They came to see us. That blew us away."

"We even considered putting a gospel number on the first CD," Greggs said. "But we didn't want to confuse the public."

Greggs said the transition from church to secular wasn't that hard.

"It just depends on your surroundings," he said. "If you feel strongly in doing some-

thing, and you have support from your family, it's not going to be hard."

The group's sound is straight-up r&b. Though its music can be considered sexy, Greggs said they avoid being raunchy. "House Keeper" even reverses traditional male/female rolls, placing the men in the a less macho position.

"There are so many songs out there that are (too explicit)," he said. "We're not knocking those songs, but we didn't want to be like other groups. We want to make songs that young kids can listen to. We feel we can get the same message across in a different way."

So how does Greggs feel about touring with R. Kelly, known for his steamy ballads and sexually suggestive concerts?

"Well, I love the tour and I love all the artists on the tour,"



The group returned the favor by doing a smooth remake of "Show You The Way To Go," a minor Top 40 hit for the Jacksons in the mid '70s. "Hey, it's Michael's label, so we thought it would be a nice touch," he said. "Plus, we all liked the song."

he said. "It's a privilege for our first tour to be with platinum acts."

Greggs said the group also felt privileged to work with super producer Teddy Riley.

"That's amazing," he said. "Our manager knew him so he introduced him to us. He inspired us to write and pro-

duce." Riley also convinced the group to move from New York to the more tranquil setting of Virginia Beach, Va. They all live in the same house, which helped them focus on the CD.

Riley took a copy of the group's demo tape to buddy Michael Jackson, who was so impressed he signed them to his 550 label, distributed by Sony.

"The MJJ staff has given us a lot of love and support," he said.



men of Vizion