

The Sound of Music

SINGING IN THE shower or crooning in your car is one thing. But belting out tunes without instrumental accompaniment in front of crowds of people, including Bill and Hillary Clinton, is quite another.



College a cappella groups across the nation are getting the opportunity to take their vocal talents out of their VWs, away from their shower suds and into the ears of students.

The Vassar College (N.Y.) Night Owls, one of the oldest collegiate female a cappella groups, sang during President Clinton's 1997 Inauguration.

"It was amazing," says senior Mikie Benedict. "We were singing in the east driveway of the White House. The Clintons walked by, and they were only 10 feet away."

Deke Sharon, a spokesperson for the Contemporary A Cappella Society of America (CASA), says there are almost 500 collegiate a cappella groups, and new groups are forming every semester.

Singing for the Clintons is just the icing on the cake. A cappella groups get to strut their stuff at local concerts, fundraisers and out-of-town gigs.

"We have sung everywhere from the Haight-Ashbury district in San Francisco, to Carnegie Hall, to the Great Western Forum in L.A.," says sophomore Insoo Suh, a member of the Spizzwinks(?), one of Yale U.'s a cappella groups. Yale is also

home of the Whiffenpoofs, the oldest collegiate male a cappella group, which was formed in 1905.

This month, six a cappella groups will be crooning for cash at the National Championship of College A Cappella. The national finalists compete at Carnegie Hall in

New York for a shot at \$2,000.

That may seem like a wad of cash, but \$2,000 isn't much because a cappella groups don't usually get financial support from their universities. Most groups foot their own expenses with fund-raisers, says Brock Harris, a senior at the U. of Southern California and member of the SoCal Vocals.

"For Valentine's Day, we did singing a cappellagrams for \$10," Harris says. The group has also been known to toss out a hat and do street performances for donations.

Other groups dig into their own pockets.

"I personally chipped in \$3,000 to make a CD," says Masi Oka, a senior from the Brown U. Bear Necessities.

Regardless of the money, a cappella singers do what they do because they love it, Suh says.

"Imagine being in a semicircle with 13 of your closest friends, making the most intricate of chords ring in perfect harmony and filling the room with its strength."



Hooked on harmonics with the SoCal VoCals.



Guest Expert:
Coolio

On a cappella:
"I love to hear people sing a cappella if they're good, like Boyz to Men."

On Coke curators:
"Coca-Cola's been chillin' us with their soda for 100 years. It's about time they give something back."

The feeling is indeed incredible."

By Joelle Babula, California State U., Chico / Photo courtesy of Geoff Leung, U. of Southern California



Art Smart

AS A REQUIREMENT for her scholarship at Spelman College, Ga., Adrienne Edwards had to perform some kind of volunteer work. But instead of donating candy stripes or doing time at a soup kitchen, she stepped over a museum's velvet ropes.



She fell in love with working at the museum and decided to pursue a career in the field. With the help of a four-year pilot program through the Atlanta History Center and the Coca-Cola Foundation, she continued her practical training outside the classroom.

"It was phenomenal, and it facilitated my career — the program is that thorough and dedicated," says Edwards, who is now working on her museum studies master's at Seton Hall U., N.J.

Edwards isn't the only one who has benefited from the program. In the past three years, 16 minority students from Georgia schools like Agnes Scott College, Emory U., Morris Brown College and Oglethorpe U. have completed the 12-month, hands-on fellowship. Interns receive academic credit and

a \$6,000 stipend provided by the Coca-Cola grant.

"We saw a great opportunity to support a program that was the first of its kind to introduce minorities to careers in the museum field, where [they] are underrepresented," says Coca-Cola's education director, Michael Bivens.

But that's changing, according to fellow Rachele Boucree. "It's a field that's growing for African-Americans, and the program is designed specifically to get them involved," the Spelman junior says.

The academic year focuses on basic museum functions, including exhibition, research and fund-raising. But center program director Billie Gaines says the core concern is breaking down barriers within the profession for young people.

"To see the results and work of the fellows fulfills every dream I ever had of what [minority students] can do if given half a chance," Gaines says.

The program requires fellows to intern at a U.S. museum for the summer and take a weeklong tour of famous U.S. museums, like the Smithsonian, to network with curators.

"Every meeting puts you in contact with people who actually do the work, as opposed to professors teaching out of books," says Clark Atlanta U. senior Rinaldo Murray. "It focuses on the practical versus the theoretical."

And the rest, as they say, is history.

By Amy Tamez, Illinois State U./
Illustration by Ellen Kelm, State U. of New York, Fredonia

• **Carlos Santana** — Got his start playing in strip joints in Tijuana. Wendy O. Williams of the Plasmatics, Courtney Love and Billy Ray Cyrus all spent time dancing in clubs.

• **Nirvana** — Played 4 Bands For A Buck at the U. of Washington Husky Union and ended the set by destroying the school's PA and inciting a small riot. They were banned for life from the venue.

• **Screamin' Jay Hawkins** — Owned 30 shocking pink suits and traveled in a zebra-skin station wagon followed by a hearse. He was also accidentally locked in a coffin during an Apollo Theater show and was so scared he peed his pants.

• **Chrissie Hynde** — Was in a band at Kent State U., Ohio, with future Devo man Mark Mothersbaugh. She went to Eng-

land to find her calling, almost marrying Sid Vicious and Johnny Rotten to obtain a visa.

• **Alice Cooper** — Original copies of his *School's Out* CD were wrapped in disposable panties. Thousands of pairs of the same underwear were dropped from a helicopter on his Hollywood Bowl concert.