

RELIGION

Greg O'Quin 'N Joyful Noyze



Greg O'Quin 'n Joyful Noyze, Try'n 2 Make U See!!

Many great men and women--athletes, doctors, musicians--have risen from the struggles of the mean streets of inner-city America to achieve great things. And the common denominator has always been faith: faith that through hard work, perseverance and trust in God that something better lay ahead.

Born and raised in Dallas, Texas, Gospel producer, songwriter, keyboardist and arranger Greg O'Quin knows all about faith and staying focused on a vision. His journey from a six-year-old soloist in a small Dallas Baptist Church to the leader of the 15-voice ensemble Joyful Noyze, -- one of Gospel's most cutting-edge groups--is a testament to just such faith, and is powerfully chronicled on Greg's debut album, *Tryin 2 Make U See*.

Totally contemporary in his approach and instincts, it's clear Greg has been profoundly influenced by a number of today's great producer/writers, including Babyface, Michael Jackson, Teddy Riley and David Foster. In fact, Greg's music stands next to the best of the best, in both R&B and the church, and with up-to-the-minute, irresistible grooves, and an uplifting Gospel message, he brings to the table something uniquely his own.

"A lot of the kids in my neighborhood have gone to church and Sunday School with their parents, but have drifted away from that," says Greg. "What catches their attention now is the groove in the music, and we've tried to use that as a tool to get their attention, and then drop in some messages. The title song is just what it says it is: trying to make people see who Jesus is, and once they've seen who He is, to see how good He is."

Though a singer himself, Greg felt so strongly about the vocal talent he had assembled in Joyful Noyze, that he remained out of the spotlight for *Tryin 2 Make U See*, turning lead vocals over to various members of his ensemble while he pro-

grammed and played keyboards, and wrote and produced the album's songs.

The selections run the gamut from house-shaking, hip-hop work-outs to reverential ballads. Special stand-outs to Greg are all songs that have

strong stories behind them. The stirring ballad, "Special stand-outs to Greg are all songs that have strong stories behind them."

The stirring ballad, "Homeland for the soul: Where I Belong" arose from a real-life episode in Greg's

life. "I had a friend who died suddenly, and I was deeply troubled," Greg remembers. "But my mother, to comfort me, reminded me there's a homeland for the soul. That really hit me and I immediately sat down

and wrote the song. The song is about death, but I wanted to show that death doesn't have to be a bad or a very sad thing. If you have a relationship with Christ, death is just a graduation."

The moving anthem, "We Shall Prevail," has a feel and a message of brotherhood reminiscent of "We Are The World," only related specifically to the rash of church burnings in recent times.

"I want to make it clear that this is not a racial issue," says Greg. "When you burn a church, you're burning God's church. It's a song that I hope will bring all Christians together to say that if God be for us, no power can be against us, because we shall prevail. It's a song of Christian unity."

The Jazzy "That's the Way I Love You" on the surface could be a touching, romantic love song, but a closer listen reveals a deeper meaning.

"There are several types of love," explains Greg, "and the song is talking about the intimacy I have for Christ which should be the most special love of all. He requires that we put Him first, and because of all the things He's done for me I love Him with an everlasting love. That's the way I love Him."

Greg grew up in Dallas's Cornerstone Baptist Church of Christ, where his mother was and remains the minister of music, singing, playing piano and conducting the choir. In addition to his mother, who mentored and encouraged Greg in his own musical talents, the late James Cleveland was the preeminent influence throughout his childhood. As he grew to adolescence, Gospel luminaries Andrae Crouch and the Hawkins Family impacted him as well.

The Sinfonia Concertante Orchestra

The Sinfonia Concertante Orchestra (SCO) performs works by Puccini, Rodrigo, Beethoven and Mozart for its final 1997 concert held at 3 pm on Sunday, May 18, at Portland's Hillsdale Community Church located at 694 SW Capitol Highway.

Established in 1990 by Stefan Minde, former director and conductor of the Portland, Opera, SCO consists of professional musicians of the highest caliber and fills the gap between symphony orchestras and chamber ensembles and performs works from all eras of classical and modern music composed expressly for chamber orchestras.

A rare musical delicacy--Giacomo Puccini's "Elegy (Crisantemi)"--opens this concert. Puccini is known most widely for outstanding operatic works like *Madama Butterfly*, *La Boheme* and *Turandot*, to name but a few. But, as any concertgoer will quickly discover upon hearing "Elegy," Puccini also produced surprising chamber music scores and excelled in this genre as well.

Joaquin Rodrigo, blind from childhood and still the least known among this concert's composers, has provided our century

with a choice collection of music possessing a palpable Spanish flare. SCO's performance of his "Tres Viejos Aires de Danze" charmingly illustrates how easily Rodrigo's works fall among the company of western civilization's most illustrious composers.

SCO concert master, Karen Bryan, will perform the all-time audience favorite, "Romance for Violin and Orchestra" by the highly revered Ludwig van Beethoven.

And, as SCO closes its season with the performance one of the two Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart G Minor symphonies--the "Great G Minor Symphony, his Symphony No 40 in G Minor, K550--it also announces the opening of this 1997-98 season with a full-length performance of its popular, traditional holiday performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's Christmas Oratorio.

SCO is a non-profit organization offering the following spring concert ticket prices: Front row seats/preferred seating \$19; adults \$16; senior and students \$12; and children ages 12 and under \$4. Tickets are available at Fred Meyer Fastixx (503) 224-8499 and at the door.

FGBMFI Regional Convention Scheduled

Members of the Oregon and southwest Washington Chapters of the non-denominational full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International have combined efforts to sponsor the 34th Annual Pacific Northwest Regional Convention to be held May 1 through May 3, 1997. The three-day event, which is open to the public, will be held at the Holiday Inn located near Interstate 205 at 8439 NE Columbia Blvd in Portland.

This year's theme centers on the Scripture text (psalm 30:2): "I called to you for help and you healed me." The convention will include testi-

monies, teachings, ministry, music, praise and prayer.

Many widely-acclaimed speakers and musicians are scheduled to present testimonies and give ministry of hope and healing. Included are award-winning Gospel soloist, Willa Dorsey, and the musical team of Ray and Ada Tellis. Thursday evening program (no meal) will feature Rev. Jerry Barnard and will include special prayers in connection with the annual observance of the National Day of Prayer.

Scott and Esther Patterson will present their personal testimonies and his dramatic conversion at the

Friday luncheon, May 2.

The Friday evening program (no meal) will honor clergy and will feature Rev. Jerry Barnard, who will lead and will invite all clergy that are present to assist in the ministry of healing.

Saturday begins at 7:30am with a gathering of the people led by Rev. Don Kennedy followed by a Breakfast at 8:30am to honor Chapter leadership. The featured speaker at the breakfast will be DeCarol Williamson, a successful businessman from North Carolina and an International Director of FGBMFI.

Willa Dorsey, globally recognized for her Gospel singing, will lead an old-time Gospel Sing-along Camp meeting at 2:00pm Saturday. The Convention will close with a Victory Banquet at 6:00pm Saturday night at which Rev. Dean Scovell will deliver a stirring message and lead in ministry of hope and healing for all.

The Convention is nondenominational and open to the public. In addition to meal charges, there is a nominal registration fee. For additional information or a brochure, contact Peter Reding, Co-chair at 503 292-2161.

Islamic preacher on trial

A preacher close to the Islamist Welfare Party of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan went on trial in a Turkish security court on Monday, charged with fostering religious separatism and hatred, Anatolian news agency said.

Ali Kucuker, imam of the mosque at the Welfare headquarters in Ankara, faces up to three years in jail if found guilty, Anatolian said.

The start of his trial followed high-profile police raids on illegal Islamic education centres, widely seen as a warning to Erbakan not to stall on an anti-Islamist crackdown demanded by the secularist armed forces.

The prosecution told the court that, in a speech on February 14,

Kucuker had said: "Those in favor of sharia (Islamic law), those who are not in favour of sharia, secularists, non-secularists...People are shamelessly announcing their lack of religion by hiding behind such underhand words."

The indictment said such a speech in a mosque was against the law and had a disruptive effect on society by talking about secularists as separate from devout people.

Kucuker said he used the word "sharia" in a religious and not a political sense. The army, guards of Turkey's official secularism, two months ago demanded Erbakan's coalition with the conservatives crack down on Islamist zeal.

Turkey army piles pressure on Islamic Erbakan

Turkey's anti-Islamist army on Tuesday rolled up its sleeves in a fight with the government over religion and Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan said he was ready for early elections.

Erbakan held talks with military chief Ismail Hakki Karadayi after a senior general warned that the military's struggle against Islamism was vital to the very survival of officially secularist Turkey.

"Destroying fundamentalism is of life or death importance," General Kenan Deniz, head of internal security, told a briefing for journalists designed to raise the army's political profile.

But Erbakan played down the conflict with the influential army.

"As will be seen, the top ranks of the state are one, they are together.

Our president, our government and our army are one body," he told reporters after talks Karadayi.

He did not say what was discussed at the meeting. Karadayi, a nondescript career soldier, made no comment to reporters.

Erbakan, the first Islamist to rule Turkey in modern times, challenged his parliamentary opponents to elections any time to gauge support for his bid to bring religion into public life.

"Tuesday at any moment, whoever wants it, we are ready for elections," Erbakan told a meeting of his Welfare Party MPs.

Analysts say deputies from all parties are unwilling to risk their seats, and parliamentary privileges, at snap polls.

Two pro-Western ministers quit at the weekend in sympathy with

army frustration over Erbakan's reluctance to carry out an army-inspired crackdown on Islamists.

The generals, who have staged three coups since 1960, have led a chorus of secularist uproar against attempts by Erbakan to relax strict restrictions on the role of Islam.

They fear Welfare is planning to turn NATO-member Turkey into an Islamic state like neighbouring Iran but are unwilling to use force against the government for fear of jeopardising Turkey's prized ties to the West.

General Deniz blasted Tehran, with whom Erbakan has made a special effort to patch up strained ties. He accused Iran of seeking to undermine Turkey by sponsoring separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) guerrillas active in southeast

Turkey. "Iran...is continuing with its efforts to destroy the regime in the Turkish republic," said Deniz, a leader in the security forces' fight with the PKK. "It is known to have directed terrorist actions in Turkey."

Ankara's bid to get closer to the European Union received a further blow on Tuesday when traditional rival Greece said it would not unblock EU aid worth 375 million Ecus (\$424 million) due to Turkey.

Istanbul shares closed slightly down as investors largely kept to the sidelines amid the domestic uncertainty. The main index was 0.42 percent lower at 1,435.

The crisis has sent some political leaders scrambling to find a new government formula excluding Erbakan.

Dalai Lami visits America

The featured pastor in the towering Gothic cathedral wore saffron robes, spoke in hesitant English and prayed with the chants of a monk from the high Himalayas.

Smiling from the pulpit high above a packed assemblage from a variety of faiths, Buddhism's Dalai Lama drew cheers and applause with a rare appearance in Washington's National Cathedral.

Be tolerant of each other's beliefs and accentuate the positive in your daily lives, said the Tibetan spiritual leader and recipient of the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize.

Shortly afterward, Tenzin Gyatso, who fled Chinese rule over his homeland in 1959, flew off to France to continue another part of his life's

work: pleading internationally for the cultural survival in peace and harmony of the 6 million Tibetans.

The slender Buddhist monk received two standing ovations, each lasting more than a minute, from a near-capacity throng of 3,050 at an interfaith celebration of religious freedom held in his honor.

Noting the diversity of races, family backgrounds, clothing and hairstyles in his audience, the Dalai Lama said, "Basically we are all the same human beings (with) the same potential to be a good human being or a bad human being ..."

"The important thing is to realize the positive side and try to increase that; realize the negative side and try to reduce. That's the way."

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