



4 THE RECORD

A Great Lakes Vocal Band

The face of modern a cappella music and the emergence of the vocal band

4 THE RECORD refers to them selves as a Great Lakes vocal band, but what does that mean to the average non- a cappella head, who has yet to immerse themselves into this unique and growing music style?

The word a cappella translates from Italian to, “from the chapel or choir.” In the early days of the church, musical instruments were forbidden to be part of many worship services. Obviously that has changed and so has the face of modern a cappella.

In the truest sense, today’s a cappella or vocal music is simply put, “singing without instrumental accompaniment,” but there is much more to the story. Modern a cappella often refers to an all-vocal performance of any style, both live and in studio performances. As a main stream genre, a cappella is often thought to be the exclusive bailiwick of barbershop, doo wop, and choral, but that couldn’t be farther from the truth. Modern a cappella music encompasses a diverse variety of genres: pop, rock, alternative, hip hop, rap, rhythm & blues, hip hop, rap, folk, jazz Christian, Jewish, and much more.

Collegiate a cappella has had a large hand in fueling the resurgence of modern a cappella. 4 THE RECORD traces its roots to the collegiate a cappella music scene at The Ohio State University. Some larger universities now have a dozen groups or more and the total number of college groups grew from 250 circa 1990 to over 1,000 today.

In addition to the growth of college a cappella, semi-professional groups and professional groups are cropping up throughout the United States, performing in genres from neighborhood coffee shops to the world famous Madison Square Garden, and even opening ceremonies of the Olympics.

Today’s a cappella includes many groups referred to as vocal bands, who add vocal percussion or beat boxing to create a pop/rock sound, in some cases very similar to bands with instruments. Arrangements of popular music ensembles typically include one voice singing the lead melody, one singing a rhythmic bass line (emulating the strings of a bass guitar or upright bass), and the remaining voices contributing chordal or polyphonic accompaniment. An array of nonsensical words string together unique consonants and vowel sounds that are projected through the world’s most complex instrument, the human voice. The soloist, series of harmonic vowel sounds, bass riffs, and percussion beats blend together to create a special musical style with a long and rich history.

“No instruments, no gimmicks, just the human voice.”

4 THE RECORD, 131 River’s Edge Lane, Upper Sandusky, Ohio 43351

phone: 740-360-4351; email: booking@4therecordmusic.com; web: <http://4therecordmusic.com>