

Sports & Entertainment

# The Oak Ridge Boys announce historic American Made: Farewell Tour, celebrating 50th Anniversary milestone

*“Rooted in gospel...Positive in perspective...Bringing joy...Bringing excitement...And, whether singing songs of faith, love songs, or the national anthem at hundreds of sporting events or the giddy-ups that precede the oom papas and the mow-mows....Bringing harmony...To a world that’s rife with dissonance” - Jody Williams at Induction of The Oak Ridge Boys into the Country Music Hall of Fame, October 25, 2015*



**Oak Ridge Boys from L-R: Richard Sterban, Duane Allen, William Lee Golden, and Joe Bonsall. (Photo by Brandon Wood / Indie Blink Studios)**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - GRAMMY Award-winning and Country Music Hall of Fame members, The Oak Ridge Boys are officially celebrating their 50th Anniversary this October. With this celebration, The Oak Ridge Boys are announcing their American Made: Farewell Tour! The group, Duane Allen (1966), Joe Bonsall (1973), William Lee Golden (1965), and Richard Sterban (1972) are excited to celebrate both milestones with fans with the announcement of this tour.

“We are doing a farewell tour because we owe it to our fans to say goodbye,” shares William Lee Golden. “They have always been there for us through the good times and the bad. I will always be thankful to every person who came out to a show, bought a t-shirt, played our music, and overall, loved us enough to spend their hard-earned money whenever they could. This tour is for you!”

“I want to thank God for 50 years of singing with three of my best friends and for the fans who have been there for us,” shares

Richard Sterban. “This is a celebration and we hope to see you there.”

Designated as America’s national anthem singers by the MENC (National Association for Music Educators), The Oak Ridge Boys released their #1 hit single, “American Made” in February 1983. Their love for God and country remains true to this day, and with this being the 40th Anniversary of the single, it seemed fitting to incorporate “American Made” into their farewell.

The Oak Ridge Boys have received four Academy of Country Music, two American Music, five Billboard, four Country Music Association, five

Grammy, and twelve Gospel Music Association Dove awards, just to name a few. They are members of the Grand Ole Opry, the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, the Vocal Group Hall of Fame, and the Country Music Hall of Fame. They have achieved seventeen #1 hits including “Leaving Louisiana In The Broad Daylight,” “Bobbie Sue,” “Trying To Love Two Women,” “(I’m Settin’) Fancy Free,” “American Made,” and the unforgettable “Elvira.” With an astounding thirty-seven Top 20 country hits, with two gold, three platinum, and one double-platinum album, The Oak Ridge Boys have made their mark in every facet of the gospel, pop, and country music

industry.

“For all of my career I have always been a planner, sometimes planning 2 or 3 years in advance, what we will do, where we will go, and when we record,” expresses Duane Allen. “As we celebrate 50 years of being together, just as you see us, we will, also, begin our American Made: Farewell Tour. I don’t know how long the tour will last, but we hope to return to as many parts of the country as we can. Thank you so much for these 50 years. For me, it’s 57 1/2 years. I have given you the best part of my life and you have rewarded me with a wonderful career. Thank you, our dear fans. Thanks to God for His divine guidance.

Thank you to our wonderful organization. Thank you to all the supporting companies who represent us. And thank you to our families.”

In the early seventies, The Oak Ridge Boys continued to expand their cutting-edge style. After the addition of Richard Sterban in 1972 and Joe Bonsall in 1973, the Oaks were forever changed with a new direction, a new sound, and a new path. Their career stands alone with its legacy, its style, and its continued contributions to gospel and country music.

“I was 25 years old in 1973 when I joined The Oak Ridge Boys,” shares Joe Bonsall. “I am 75 years old in 2023 and I am STILL an Oak Ridge Boy. It has been and still IS an amazing ride.”

- OCT 01 - Deadwood Mountain Grand / Deadwood, S.D.
- OCT 04 - The Mansion Theatre for the Performing Arts / Branson, Mo.
- OCT 05 - The Mansion Theatre for the Performing Arts / Branson, Mo.
- OCT 06 - Ameristar Casino Hotel Kansas City / Kansas City, Mo.
- OCT 07 - Richard Drake’s Party Barn / Powderly, Texas
- OCT 11 - The Mansion Theatre for the Performing Arts / Branson, Mo.
- OCT 12 - The Mansion Theatre for the Performing Arts / Branson, Mo.
- OCT 13 - Arlington Music Hall / Arlington, Texas
- OCT 14 - Arlington Music Hall / Arlington, Texas
- OCT 18 - The Mansion Theatre

for the Performing Arts / Branson, Mo.

OCT 19 - The Mansion Theatre for the Performing Arts / Branson, Mo.

OCT 21 - Rome City Auditorium / Rome, Ga.

OCT 26 - The Mansion Theatre for the Performing Arts / Branson, Mo.

OCT 27 - The Mansion Theatre for the Performing Arts / Branson, Mo.

OCT 28 - Neewollah Celebration - Jim Halsey Auditorium / Independence, Kan.

NOV 01 - The Mansion Theatre for the Performing Arts / Branson, Mo.

NOV 02 - The Mansion Theatre for the Performing Arts / Branson, Mo.

NOV 03 - Brown County Music Center / Nashville, Ind.

NOV 04 - Crossroads Arena / Corinth, Miss.

NOV 08 - The Mansion Theatre for the Performing Arts / Branson, Mo.

NOV 09 - The Mansion Theatre for the Performing Arts / Branson, Mo.

NOV 11 - Grand Ole Opry / Nashville, Tenn.

NOV 15 - The Mansion Theatre for the Performing Arts / Branson, Mo.

NOV 16 - The Mansion Theatre for the Performing Arts / Branson, Mo.

NOV 21 - Vern Riffe Center for the Arts / Portsmouth, Ohio

NOV 24 - Honeywell Center / Wabash, Ind.

NOV 25 - Paramount Theatre / Anderson, Ind.

For full schedule, visit oakridge-boys.com

## McDonald's 17th Annual Inspiration Celebration Gospel Tour returns with showstopping music experiences in six U.S. cities

*The free concert series celebrates gospel culture and is powered by renowned artists who push the envelope in gospel music and beyond*

CHICAGO, /PRNewswire/ -- McDonald's 17th annual Inspiration Celebration Gospel Tour (ICGT) will once again unite Black culture through its inter-generational celebration of Black faith, joy, music and more. The tour was launched in September during Gospel Music Heritage Month. Hosted by Stellar award-winning recording artist & radio personality Lonnie Hunter, the highly anticipated six-city tour bridges the gap between inter-

generational gospel artists, including Anthony Brown & Group TherAPy, Bishop Hezekiah Walker, Bri Babineaux, DOE, Mike Teezy, Sir the Baptist, The Walls Group, Tim Bowman Jr., and DJ CANVAS.

Like years past, legendary singer, songwriter, and producer Donald Lawrence will resume his role as music supervisor. Journalist and Founder of Black Star Network, Roland Martin will also lend his media network, Black Star Network and its social channels to amplify the concert series through sharing exclusive interviews with the artists. Fans can access free tickets at

www.blackandpositively-golden.com.

"This celebration of faith not only brings together the powerful harmonies of gospel music but also unites community and family, touching hearts across the nation," said Grammy Award Winner Bishop Hezekiah Walker. "I am honored to be back performing live on the Inspiration Celebration Gospel Tour, alongside some of gospel's brightest stars. But it's not just about the music – it's about the impact, as we celebrate faith to spread joy, compassion, and a message of hope to thousands of fans across the nation."

As with previous years, the tour will celebrate McDonald's continued commitment to Ronald McDonald House Charities® (RMHC®). At each concert stop, attendees will have the opportunity to donate to their local RMHC chapter to benefit families served by the organization. "It's an honor that for 17 years, McDonald's Inspiration Celebration Gospel Tour has inspired communities to lead change and push the envelope in their lives, just as this year's artists are doing in their careers," said Harry Smith, Indiana McDonald's Owner/Operator and Chair of the Inspiration Celebration Gospel

Tour. "In partnership with our crew members and through our ongoing support of RMHC, we are proud we are able to continue uniting communities that we serve through music to further drive impact."

McDonald's Inspiration Celebration Gospel Tour is one of the many company initiatives that feed and foster the community and inspire excellence. For more information on the 2023 concert series, including tour stops and how to garner free tickets, visit us online at www.blackandpositivelygolden.com or on Instagram @WeAreGolden. **Fox Theatre -October 6 – Phil-**

**adelphia, PA**

**TD Pavilion at the Mann Center-October 20 – Atlanta, GA**

**New Birth Missionary Baptist Church - November 11 – Jackson, MS**

**Jackson Convention Complex Date TBD**

**Dallas, TX - Venue TBD (Holiday Show)**

McDonald's USA, LLC, serves a variety of menu options made with quality ingredients to millions of customers every day. Ninety-five percent of McDonald's approximately 13,500 U.S. restaurants are owned and operated by independent business owners.

## Mississippi Arts Commission announces 2024 Governor's Arts Awards recipients... from sports-Ent. page 5

active as a vocalist, guitarist, and songwriter for work that both honored local traditions and broke new ground musically. He is the recipient of multiple Blues Music Awards and Living Blues Awards. His album, I Be Trying (2021), won a GRAMMY for Best Traditional Blues Album. In 2021 Burnside was named a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) National Heritage Fellow. Shortly after receiving the NEA National Heritage Fellowship, he began appearing in the touring musical Voices of Mississippi, based on the fieldwork of folklorist William Ferris. The musical, staged at Lincoln Center in early 2022, celebrates Burnside's and other younger artists' deep roots in Hill Country traditions.

**BRENT FUNDERBURK** (of Charlotte, NC, currently resides in Starkville, MS) Brent Funderburk is a William L. Giles Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Mississippi State University, where he served as Art Department head and taught for 36 years. He has been recognized with the University's highest academic, teaching, and research honors, including the

Southeastern Conference Faculty Excellence Award (2016), the John Grisham Teaching Award, the Ralph E. Powe Faculty Research Award, and the Burlington Northern Faculty Excellence Award, among others. An artist known for his exuberantly-hued watermedia paintings as well as energetic teaching and lectures, Brent Funderburk is a Charlotte, North Carolina native who has worked as a teacher/administrator for three universities in three states over 40 years. From a robust life of art practice and travel, Funderburk has researched, produced, exhibited, and lectured passionately, working from life and in the studio in Starkville, Mississippi. He has presented 34 one-person exhibitions across the U.S. He has been represented by galleries in Jackson, Atlanta, Charlotte, New Orleans, and Memphis (etc.), with work in public and private collections across the U.S and abroad, such as the Mississippi Museum of Art, Ogden Museum of Southern Art, and Memphis-Brooks Museum of Art.

**PETER ZAPLETAL** (of former Czechoslovakia, cur-

rently resides in Jackson, MS) Peter Zapletal is the Artistic Director for Puppet Arts Theatre, a professional touring theatre company offering various programs that introduce children of all ages to classical music, theatre, and puppetry. Zapletal grew up in former Czechoslovakia, recognized as the world center of modern puppetry. After graduating with a master's in Puppetry from the Academy of the Performing Arts in Prague, he joined the professional puppet theatre in Zilina, Slovakia. Soon afterward, he and his family emigrated to New York, where he and his wife, Jarmila, immediately started to produce puppet performances. Zapletal moved to Mississippi in 1970 and worked for Mississippi Public Broadcasting for 32 years, where he produced numerous programs that were broadcast by PBS stations. Zapletal garnered more than 50 national awards, among them five Emmy Awards for Ticktock Minutes, the Silver Circle Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for 25 years of excellence in television puppetry, and the Puppeteers of America Award for high standards and continued

excellence in puppetry. In addition to his television work, he and his wife, Jarmila, also produced many shows that Puppet Arts Theatre tours throughout the Southeast, offering magical and exciting theatrical experiences.

### 100 MEN HALL

(Bay St. Louis, MS) The 100 Men Hall was built by and for the African American community of Bay Saint Louis, MS. Until the 1960s, the African American population in Mississippi and other places in the South were denied access to burial and medical insurance. However, 12 civic-minded African American men in Bay Saint Louis came together to form a benevolent society (1894) to care for their community. From the nonprofit organization grew a desire for a place to gather and celebrate all life events, and the 100 Men Hall was built (1922). The Hall became the epicenter of Black life and culture for the Mississippi Gulf Coast, allowing talented artists and musicians excluded from other venues an exhibition space while supporting cooperative economics. Over the

decades, the Hall has attracted legendary musicians such as James Brown, Etta James, and Ray Charles as a stop on the "Chitlin' Circuit." Significantly, it is one of the few physical landmarks still standing on the Mississippi Blues Trail, a rare African American landmark in the South, and today operates as a living museum and testament to its past, present, and future. The 100 Men Hall is now owned by Rachel Dangermond, who has kept the spirit of the Hall alive by providing a space to celebrate cultural diversity through performances on its historic stage.

### About the Governor's Arts Awards

The Governor's Arts Awards is an annual ceremony that recognizes individuals and organizations that have made noteworthy contributions to the arts in the state of Mississippi. Schools, businesses, organizations, arts initiatives, and events are eligible to receive Governor's Arts Awards, in addition to individual artists and supporters of the arts. Notable past recipients include John Grisham, Bobby Rush, Thalia Mara, the Crafts-

men's Guild of Mississippi, and Malaco Records.

Award recipients are nominated by members of the public and selected by a committee of community arts leaders and industry peers. Recipients are not required to be Mississippi residents but must have significant ties to the state through some years of residency.

The Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) is a state agency serving more than two million people through grants and special initiatives that enhance communities, assist artists and arts organizations, promote arts education, and celebrate Mississippi's cultural heritage. MAC is funded by the Mississippi Legislature, the National Endowment for the Arts, and other private sources. For more information, visit www.arts.ms.gov.

Watch for The Mid-South Tribune's Education & Economics Special Edition. Education is colorless.