

Clarence Fountain and the Blind Boys of Alabama will perform at UCSD on Feb.11

January 26, 1993

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CLARENCE FOUNTAIN AND THE BLIND BOYS OF ALABAMA

WILL PERFORM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO ON FEB. 11

The elder statesmen of American gospel music, Clarence Fountain and the Blind Boys of Alabama, will perform a wide range of songs from the gospel genre, including the a capella harmonies of "jubilee singing," to the modern funk-beat interpretation of gospel sound, at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11, in the Mandeville Auditorium of the University of California, San Diego.

Tickets for this event are \$10/\$12 for general admission and \$6/\$8 for students, and may be purchased at the UCSD Price Center Box Office and from TicketMaster outlets.

The group members are Fountain, Jimmy Carter, John Fields, George Scott and Bobby Butler, who sings vocals and also plays bass guitar. The singers will be backed by Butler, Eric McKennie on drums and Curtis foster on rhythm guitar. Johnny Fields performs on lead guitar.

Fountain, who is the leader and founder of the Five Blind Boys of Alabama, started gospel singing professionally in the late 1930s. He formed The Happy Land Jubilee Singers as a student at the Taladega Institute for the Blind. The group started touring in the 1940s and recorded classic "roots music" for Savoy and Specialty record labels--along with label mates Little Richard and Jimmy Reed.

Over time the group picked up the name Five Blind Boys of Alabama as they became more well known within the gospel touring circuit. In the current ensemble, four of the performers, including Fountain, are sightless.

In 1954 the group recorded, among other hit tunes, "Stand By Me," for Specialty Records, and in 1957 they recorded "I'll Never Walk Alone" for VeeJay Records. The Five Blind Boys of Alabama performed for predominately black audiences until 1962, when they played to a sold-out, racially mixed audience in Vancouver, B.C. Gospel music fell out of popularity for many years, and from 1969 to '75, Fountain worked a solo act.

In 1978, the group re-formed, cutting a record. Their big comeback took place when the ensemble performed an American Pentecostal operatic version of "Oedipus at Colonus." The play aired on "Great Performances," wound up on Broadway, and garnered the group an international tour. Last year "Blind Boys" signed a two-year contract with Elektra Records, and they will sing with Bonnie Raitt on an album to be cut later this year.

This event is brought to San Diego by UCSD's University Events Office. Parking permits are required on the UCSD campus and may be purchased at the information pavilions on Gilman Drive and Northview Drive. For additional information call 534-4090.

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