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Oak Ridge Boys bring Christmas show to Embassy Theatre

By James Grant of The News-Sentinel
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When you hear an Oak Ridge Boys song on the radio, there's no mistaking the groups unique vocal blend.

The Oak Ridge Boys trademark four-part harmonies, especially on their signature song 'Elvira', have earned them over three decades of hit songs as well as 12 gold albums, a Grammy award and a legion of loyal fans.

Next Tuesday, The Oak Ridge Boys bring their Christmas show to the Embassy Theatre, and fans can expect to hear all of their hits as well as a lot of traditional and countrified Christmas music as well.

"You get a bonus really, you get two shows in one," Richard Sterban of The Oak Ridge Boys said in a telephone interview. "At the very beginning, you have our regular music, you have the hits including 'Elvira'. You (also) have some new music from our Cracker Barrel CD.

"This year's Christmas tour is being sponsored partly by Cracker Barrel, so it's going to have a down home country flavor to it.

"After we do our regular music, then we take an intermission. And then, after intermission, we come back and we do a complete Christmas show. We cover every aspect of Christmas.

"We find a nice balance of the traditional songs and some newer songs," Sterban added. "It's a great night of good, good, family entertainment."

The Oak Ridge Boys, originally formed in the 1940s as a gospel and country music quartet, have experienced numerous changes not only with group members over the years but within the music industry itself.

While a lot of veteran performers are finding it difficult to sell CDs, The Oak Ridge Boys have teamed up with the Cracker Barrel Old Country Store and Restaurant to release the group's latest CD ("It's Only Natural"), and Sterban says this teaming has worked well for the group.

"The Oak Ridge Boys and Cracker Barrel, putting the two brand names together has been a great thing for us," Sterban said. "They're (Cracker Barrel) moving a lot of product for us. It's kind of like a new model for how to sell product in this day and age.

"Things have changed in the music business," Sterban noted. "It's much more difficult now to actually go out and physically buy a CD anywhere. Cracker Barrel has done a great job. Not only are they a great restaurant, but they've made music a big part of what they do now, country music especially."

Even though The Oak Ridge Boys are on the road a good part of the Christmas season, Sterban says that, when the group does make it home for the holidays, they make spending quality time with their families their top priority.

"Christmastime, as much as any time of the year, is a time for families to be together ... when I am home I try to spend time with my daughters and have some quality family time.

"I think that's another thing that's great about this Christmas show of ours," Sterban added. "This Christmas show is a great way for families to spend time together at Christmastime."

Looking back, he is proud of The Oak Ridge Boys' achievements and, as long as their health remains good, he sees many more years of Oak Ridge Boys music ahead.

"I feel we're an act that's left its mark on the music business," Sterban said. "I think we've recorded a lot of great music and made a lot of people happy.

"We still love doing this, we're still having fun doing this," he said. "We very optimistic about our future and looking forward to many more years of singing together as The Oak Ridge Boys."



More Information

Christmas with The Oaks

What: The Oak Ridge Boys Christmas Show

When: 7:30 p.m. Tuesday

Where: Embassy Theatre, 121 W. Jefferson Blvd.

Cost: \$29.75, \$38.75 and \$46.25. Tickets available at the Embassy box office, Ticketmaster outlets, www.ticketmaster.com or 1-800-745-3000. For more information call the Embassy box office at 424-5665.

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To hear audio excerpts from our interview with Richard Sterban of The Oak Ridge Boys, go to www.news-sentinel.com. Click on the "Entertainment" link and then on this story.