

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Collegiate A Cappella Concert

On March 1, 2008, the Latchis Theatre on Main Street in Brattleboro, Vermont will once again host the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Collegiate A Cappella Concert beginning at 7:30 p.m., to benefit the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center and other teen music and art programs in Windham County. The concert features performances from some of the best a cappella college groups in the United States.

Tickets are \$25 for front orchestra, \$18 for rear orchestra, and \$12 for balcony. Tickets are available online at [www.brattleborotix.com](http://www.brattleborotix.com), at Brattleboro Museum & Art Center through February 22 by calling 802-257-0124 x0, and at the following walk-in ticket outlets: Book Cellar and Latchis Hotel in Brattleboro, Heartstone Books in Putney, and Sweeties' Market & Deli in Marlboro.

Each performing group has in it an alumnus/a from one of the area high schools, which is what makes this performance so personal; though fans of a cappella music don't need the personal connection and may not even be aware of it. According to concert producer Dede Cummings, "there is one singer from each group who grew up around Southern Vermont and went to school here . . . it is kind of a nice touch, I think, and makes the concert unique."

This year's college lineup includes Tufts University's *Beelzebubs*, featuring Penn Rosen, (Brattleboro Union High School '07); Brown University's *Jabberwocks*, featuring George Conklin, (Northfield Mount Hermon '06); Smith College's *Vibes*, featuring Aislinn Smith (Leland & Gray High School '04); Boston College's *Heightsmen*, featuring Andrew Jenzer (BUHS '06); Hofstra University's *Sigma'cappella*, featuring Brittany Pollard (BUHS '04); Ithaca College *Voicestream*, (featuring Nick Bombicino, BUHS '05); University of Vermont *Cat's Meow*, featuring Sarah Seekins, (BUHS '07); with special guest and master of ceremonies (and former *Beelzebub* a cappellite) Danny Lichtenfeld, the new director of the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center.

The Collegiate A Cappella Concert, launched in 2004, was the brainchild of then-BUHS-junior Carolyn Wesley, with a little help from concert producers Dede Cummings and Kevin Ryan—all of whom were related to original "hometown singers" in the collegiate groups.

"I immediately started brainstorming," Cummings said, "with Dummerston resident Kevin Ryan (father of Sean Ryan, one of the original singers), of ways to get this kind of concert up to Southern Vermont. So, you see, the concert has humble beginnings and now is this totally fun event that sells out each year."

Concerning the concert's origins, Cummings states, "We hope that this show will continue to carry on a musical tradition in the famous old theater and serve as a great example of the opportunities to keep the arts in downtown Brattleboro lively and growing."

Cummings said her son, Sam Carmichael (BUHS '03), went to Brown University and joined the legendary all-male group, the *Jabberwocks*, and fellow BUHS alums John Wesley (BUHS '02)

and Sean Ryan (BUHS '03) matriculated and headlined the co-ed groups *Quasimodal* from Wesleyan University, and the *Amalgamates* from Tufts University, respectively.

Opening this year's concert will be **Boston College's *Heightsmen***, a highly acclaimed all male a cappella group. BC is known for being located "on the Heights" outside of Boston, hence the name. Started in 1990 and growing ever since, the group focuses on singing, academia, and, of course, socializing. Being a member of the group grants many privileges, from working closely with faculty advisor and BC president Father William Leahy, to performing all across the Northeast, with such high points as the Boston Celtics' games and Fenway Park. Last year, the *Heightsmen* wowed the Brattleboro audience with their tight repertoire and explosive sound. This year, the *Heightsmen* are composed of 15 men, ranging from freshmen (including recent '06 BUHS graduate Andrew Jenzer) to seniors. As serious as the *Heightsmen* take their singing, they assert that their friendship takes precedent over everything and is what makes them such a dynamic group on the Boston College campus. Their latest CD, *Major Domo Sings the Hits*, is available to purchase at the concert.

Andrew Jenzer is a 2006 graduate of BUHS. He is now attending Boston College where he is majoring in Biology with a premedical focus. He plays tenor saxophone in BC Marching Band, sings with the *Heightsmen*, and is doing Reserved Officer Training Core with the Army. In his free time he enjoys competing in intramural soccer and hockey and being on the Rifle Drill Team.

Local audiences will also recognize recent high school and secondary school graduates who are members of the visiting college groups. This year, we are thrilled to welcome back Lauren Bruenig (BUHS '05) and her spectacular **Mt. Holyoke V-8s**. The V-8s (or Victory Eights) were founded in 1942 and took their name from the famous "V for Victory" slogan. They have been singing together ever since, making them the longest continuing female collegiate a cappella group in the nation. Their repertoire ranges from the jazzy standards the group sang in its early years to arrangements of contemporary popular music, including songs by artists such as John Legend, Norah Jones, and Gnarles Barkely. They are excited to sing in Brattleboro for a third year! More information about the V-8s is available at their website, [www.mtholyoke.edu/org/v8s](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/org/v8s).

Lauren Breunig grew up surrounded by music and has pursued it in many forms. In her time at BUHS, she was an active member of band and chorus and participated in several musicals. During the summer, she sang with the Vermont-based Village Harmony camp, which developed her love of world music. She has sung with the V-8s since her first year and has been business manager, Web-mistress, and now, co-director of the group. She is very excited to sing for the hometown crowd one last time before graduating, as she will spend the coming fall touring in Europe with Northern Harmony, a professional world music ensemble affiliated with Village Harmony camp. Her major at Mt. Holyoke is Critical Social Thought, with a focus on education and social change.

The **Brown University *Jabberwocks*** have received numerous awards, with tracks published on the *Best of Collegiate A Cappella* albums (BOCA), and have been honored in the CARA awards. Their latest *Inter-Collegiate Championship of A Cappella* (ICCA) stint placed the 'Wocks in the top 16 groups in the country, and netted them awards for best choreography and best arrangement for "Blackbird" by Brattleboro's own, Sam Carmichael. The *Jabberwocks* release a new CD every two years and are constantly recording. Their latest album, *Listening Session*, is

out and can be purchased at the coming concert. The *Jabberwocks'* long-standing tradition of excellence and cutting-edge a cappella remains strong after more than 55 years.

In 1949, four Brown University students broke away from the traditional Men's Glee Club to form their own independent singing group. The name *Jabberwocks* comes from the Lewis Carroll poem, "Jabberwocky." One night back in '49, one of the founding members began reciting the poem, because, well, that's what you did for fun in 1949. They decided to use the name, and it stuck. The quartet quickly rose to on-campus fame, offering a new and exciting form of music to the students. Now, more than 55 years later, the *Jabberwocks* remain a fixture of student life at Brown and they are the oldest a cappella group at the university.

Aside from regular appearances at Brown and other various college campuses across the country, the *Jabberwocks* have sung to a wide variety of audiences. Recent concert tours include serenading the Brown Alumni Clubs of the mid-Atlantic, singing under the Eiffel tower and Arch de Triumph in Paris, and wowing audiences to sold-out shows in Hong Kong. With powerful music performances augmented by choreography and humorous skits, the *Jabberwocks* remain committed to pushing the envelope of a cappella excellence. This year's groups features our first Northfield Mt. Hermon School alumnus, George Conklin, who hails from neighboring New Hampshire has been singing since he was nine years old. At various intervals in his musical life he has played the piano, violin, flute, and piccolo. George is, to say the least, "very passionate" about a cappella music. He was one of the original members of Hogappella, the first a cappella group at Northfield Mount Hermon, where George studied alongside many students from Brattleboro. This is his second year singing with the *Jabberwocks* at Brown University. George is a history concentrator.

The **Smith College *Vibes*** are one of the five Smith a cappella groups. They are twelve years old this year and love to sing pop songs as well as traditional a cappella. The *Vibes* rehearse three times a week, and try to find as many fun gigs as they can. This is their third year performing at the Brattleboro event, and they are all excited to come back for Townshend native Aislinn Smith's last year. According to Aislinn, "We love singing to such an amazingly receptive group of people!"

Aislinn Smith is a senior at Smith, and has been a part of the *Vibes* for four years. She graduated from Leland & Gray in 2004 and is majoring in Theatre and Exercise and Sports Studies at Smith. She is the very proud forwards captain on SMITH RUGBY and is excited to lead her team in another amazing season this spring. She is looking forward to graduation, and will probably be working as a high school soccer coach next year. She is happy to be returning to Brattleboro to sing for her friends one last time

Returning for their second year, after a standout performance last year, is the **Hofstra University *Sigma'cappella***, which was founded in 1998 by student Jason Schoenberger. *Sigma'cappella* was Hofstra's first official a cappella group. It originated as a small all-male group, but has grown into an 18 member co-ed organization, appearing onstage locally on Long Island and across the Northeast. *Sigma'cappella* performs a creative and diverse set of songs and medleys, all of which are arranged by members of the group.

Brittany Pollard graduated from Brattleboro Union High School in 2004. She is currently a senior at Hofstra University in Hempstead, NY, majoring Music Merchandising. Brittany is the *Sigma'cappella* secretary and sings alto. She is also a member of the University Choir and the

Vocal Jazz Ensemble. Brittany is on the executive board for the Music and Entertainment Industry Student Association at Hofstra. Her career goal is to become an artist development representative for a major record label.

New this year is **Ithaca College *VoiceStream***, Ithaca's premier co-ed a cappella group. They perform a repertoire of strictly contemporary music. Ever adapting to new trends and styles, *VoiceStream* strives to keep their repertoire fresh and exciting. *VoiceStream* was conceived in the fall of 2002 and have been going strong ever since, with a wide following of fans on campus and abroad. Nick Bombicino, a Dummerston native, is so happy to be returning to this festival. The last time he was here, it was as one of the founding members of a local non-high-school affiliated group, Shoulder Narrows, and he's thrilled to hear that they are still singing together 4 years later. Since going to Ithaca College, a cappella has been Nick's main extracurricular activity, and this is his third year singing with *VoiceStream*. He was very pleased that this year as musical director he was finally able to bring them here. When not singing a cappella at IC, Nick spends his time working on his majors Italian Studies and Drama and trying to get people to come visit him in Vermont.

Also new this year is our own Vermont-based group. The **University of Vermont *Cat's Meow*** is the only all-female a cappella group at UVM, founded in 1981. In the a cappella community, their genre is called "contemporary" (as opposed to, say, "barbershop" or "jazz"). *Cat's Meow's* repertoire consists of pop, folk, the '80s, and a few oldies. About half of the arrangements they sing are written by *Cat's Meow* members. UVM Admissions Viewbook lists *Cat's Meow* as one of the "Top Ten" clubs & organizations on campus. Local singer Sarah Seekins graduated from BUHS in 2007. Sarah went to Putney Central School and has performed and sung in the BUHS band and chorus, as well as performing as a BUHS Madrigal and in the school's musicals. The producers are excited to have Sarah join the concert this year!

Founded in the fall of 1962, the **Tufts *Beelzebubs*** are celebrating their 45th year of "Fun Through Song." They have performed all over the world, from the Major League Baseball All-Star Game at Fenway, to the American Embassy in Paris, to the Late Show with David Letterman. To date, the Beelzebubs have recorded 26 studio and 3 live albums, with tracks from the last 6 studio albums featured on the Best of College A Cappella compilation CD. In the past 5 years, the *Bubs* have traveled to Hong Kong, Tokyo, Mexico, Istanbul, Athens, Hawaii, and London, as well as numerous schools and colleges across the country. The *Bubs* would like to thank everyone here in Brattleboro for inviting them to perform at the concert.

*Beelzebub* hometown singer Penn Rosen was born and raised in Brattleboro, where he learned to sing "by mimicking the cows outside my window." He sparked his love of music at a young age by performing at Teddy Bear Picnics with his dad, nationally known children's singer/songwriter Gary Rosen, and sisters Lela and Eliza. His local high school, BUHS, was rife with musical possibilities, and he was lucky enough to refine his skills with a wide range of vocal and instrumental groups. Now at Tufts, Penn is finished mooing, and is eager to sleep until noon, gain the freshman fifteen, and, of course, sing with the *Bubs* at the Latchis on March 1<sup>st</sup>—returning to his hometown stage.

BMAC box office opens in the lobby of the Latchis at 6:00 for patrons picking up prepaid tickets or getting on the wait list for tickets. Theater doors open at 6:45, and the concert begins at 7:30 pm. Seating is by general admission within sections. The concert is expected to sell out, so patrons are advised to come early to get the best selection of seating. The concert lasts for about

two+ hours, including an intermission. CDs are for sale in the lobby during admission and after the concert.

The concert is sponsored by C&S Wholesale Grocers, Prentiss Smith & Company, Windham Foundation, Mary Meyer Corporation, Downs Rachlin & Martin, and Business & Tax Consultants.

For more concert information, visit Brattleboro Museum & Art Center website at [www.brattleboromuseum.org](http://www.brattleboromuseum.org), or call 802-257-0124.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Annual High School A Cappella "Warm-Up" Concert**

**Friday, February 29, 2008**

**7:30 p.m.**

**\$5 admission**

**Brattleboro Museum & Art Center**

Produced by Dede Cummings to benefit In-Sight Photography Project

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual High School A Cappella "Warm-up" Concert to benefit The In-Sight Photography Project will take place at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, Friday, February 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. Top-notch high school vocal groups from area schools will perform a spirited concert. Featuring BUHS *Madrigals*, *Shoulder Narrows*, and Putney School *Madrigals*. The event will be held in the main gallery of the Museum. Admission is \$5. For information, visit In-Sight Photography's website at [www.insight-photography.org](http://www.insight-photography.org) or call 802-251-9960.