

20th Anniversary Season

Performing Arts Series

PARADIGM

presents

Naturally 7



**Saturday, November 20, 2010
Yardley Hall
Johnson County Community College**

Program

Song selections will be announced from the stage.

Tonight's performance will have a 15-minute intermission.

Following the performance, Naturally 7 will sign CDs in the lobby.

About NATURALLY 7

Today Naturally 7 are Roger Thomas (musical director, arranger, 1st baritone, rap), Warren Thomas (percussion, guitar, clarinet, 3rd tenor) Rod Eldridge (1st tenor, scratching, trumpet), Jamal Reed (4th tenor, electric guitar), Dwight Stewart (2nd baritone), Garfield Buckley (2nd tenor, harmonica) and "Hops" Hutton (bass). The origins of the group date back to New York City in 1999 when Roger Thomas started the group with his brother, Warren, and five other talented singers they had come to know over the years from singing around the city. Having been in and out of several traditional male groups, Roger developed an affinity for a cappella sounds and a unique ability to create distinct harmony arrangements. When invited to sing at a major a cappella competition in New York, they won the competition, moved onto the nationals and took away two more wins.

Riding the wave of this newfound success and still unable to decide if Naturally 7 was going to be an a cappella group or a traditional band, Roger had a novel idea: they could be both. He remembered as a child that his brother Warren always wanted a drum set, but their mother consistently said no, because it was just too noisy. To compensate for not having real drums to play, Warren learned to make true drum sounds, the kick, toms, snare, cymbals in very different ways—with sounds of his voice. Roger approached Warren with the idea from their childhood and asked if he could become the band's drummer, so to speak, to accompany Naturally 7 on up-tempo songs.

The idea evolved and the other band members found unique aspects of their own voices to determine which members would BE which instrument. After all, Roger thought, if the human voice truly was an instrument, it should not matter which instrument it needed to be. And for Naturally 7, it really didn't matter; "Vocal Play" was born. So, you might ask, "What is the difference between Vocal Play and a cappella?" A cappella is defined as singing without instruments. Vocal Play is singing AS instruments, and BECOMING the instrument with the voice.

What makes Naturally 7 special is that every instrument sound that they sing is created from the human voice. There are no actual drums, guitars, horns, flutes, or any other instrument that is heard when listening to them perform; it's the band members playing each of their vocal instruments.

For Naturally 7, the turning point came in the fall of 2007. From quiet success in Europe they have been propelled onto the world stage, performing before more than a million people. As the opening act for internationally acclaimed singer Michael Bublé, Naturally 7 was met with standing ovations nightly in Europe, the U.K., Canada, Australia and the U.S.!

The 2008 season was nothing short of remarkable. In May they made their national U.S. television debut on *Ellen* and joined Bublé for a guest appearance on the *Today Show*, were guests on *Tavis Smiley*, performed at NARM, helped celebrate Quincy Jones' 75th birthday in Montreux, and greeted a hometown crowd at Madison Square Garden. The highlight of the season was their engagement in London to play the renowned Royal Variety Performance show, capping the evening off by meeting His Royal Highness, Prince Charles.

In 2009, the group hit the ground running. In January they played to a packed house at London's Pigalle, which included a number of famous faces – Coldplay's Chris Martin, legendary musician and producer Brian Eno, and Natalie Imbruglia. The next day, by invitation, the group joined Coldplay and Eno in the studio. January also saw the group release a special album, *Wall of Sound*, exclusively for the U.K. and Ireland, to commemorate their participation at the Royal Variety Performance. The album contained known material from previous albums, as well as five brand-new tracks, and entered the British album charts in the first week after release at #29.

From the U.K., Naturally 7 traveled to California, where they performed at the prestigious TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) Conference, receiving a standing ovation. Daniel Sieberg of CBS News commented, "Perhaps the most memorable presentation involved Naturally 7, a group of seven musicians who practice something they call 'Vocal Play.' It's hard to describe their act other than saying each of them used their voices in unison to recreate a different musical instrument, from drums to brass instruments to guitars. They made beatboxing look like child's play. Their *Wall of Sound* song, earned them a standing ovation." The annual conference brings together the most fascinating thinkers and doers in the three disciplines.

In March they opened for Jay Leno in Las Vegas and performed on his *Tonight Show*. Then they appeared on *The Late Late Show* with Craig Ferguson, performing "Stardust" with Michael Bublé. In November, the group traveled to Bermuda, taking part in Quincy Jones' 2009 Bermuda Music Festival performing before an enthusiastic crowd! Since their stunning performance for Quincy's 75th birthday at the Montreux Jazz Festival, where they have been performing for the last three consecutive years, 'Q' tells the world what he thinks of Naturally 7: "Naturally 7 is poised to take a cappella to the next level! They're some of my favorite singers."

The band has now recorded six albums – *Non-Fiction* (2000), the aptly titled *What Is It* (2003), *Christmas ...It's a Love Story* (2004), *Ready II Fly* (2006), *Wall of Sound* (2009), and the latest *VocalPlay* (2010). *Ready II Fly* contains the YouTube hit “Feel It (In the Air Tonight).” Naturally 7’s now famous Paris subway performance of the song has received over five million hits on YouTube and the number of people discovering the group adds to that figure daily. The song turned into a Top 3 chart success in France, Belgium and South Africa, and made the single charts in other European countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Portugal.

2010 saw performances in New York at the famed BB King’s Blues Club and Grill, in Switzerland (Berne, Zurich and Lausanne) and a guest appearance at the Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver. March 2010 the group returned as special guests on Bubl e’s *Crazy Love Tour* around the world! Also that month, Naturally 7 released a new CD entitled *VocalPlay*. The package contains 14 new songs plus a 110-minute DVD, which features excerpts from their Madison Square Garden performance, original interviews and other exclusive footage as well as some of their videos. The CD features duets with Grammy-winner Michael Bubl e (“Relax Max”) and German superstar Xavier Naidoo (“Wild vor Wut”). In addition to their own recordings, Naturally 7 along with Ludacris and Rudy Currence can be heard on the single “Soul Bossa Nostra,” featured on Quincy’s new album of the same title.

With their rich harmonies, an unbelievable ability to replicate instruments and a stage presence that can be felt in every seat of the house, Naturally 7 is amazing and charming fans wherever they perform. Their phenomenal talent, coupled with a live show that many consider to be one of the best in the world, has Naturally 7 poised for a brilliant future.

For more information about Naturally 7, visit www.naturallyseven.com

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