

Home Menu

Local News

Sports

Business

Classifieds

Search

Columnists

Entertainment

GuideLive

Health/Science

Nation | World

Opinion/Letters

Politics

Religion

Special Reports

Texas Living

Texas/Southwest

Travel

Weather

Marketplace



Auto Classifieds
Real Estate
Employment

- Newspaper ads

Sponsored sections

- Home Improvement
- My Specials Direct

Register

Account Info

- My-Cast
- **Make this your home page**

Religion

DallasNews.com

4Him doesn't want to be a copycat

02/02/2002

By SUSAN HOGAN/ALBACH / The Dallas Morning News

Because they sing to God, the group calls itself 4Him.

They're four Southern guys who sing sweet harmonies together. But that's it.

They don't dance in unison like 'N Sync. They don't spike or stripe their hair like O-Town. And they definitely don't hip up their wardrobe like the Backstreet Boys.

Even so, they've been around longer than any of those other bands, garnering nearly three dozen No. 1 hits and numerous awards. Evangelical Christians can't hear enough of them.

"We've always tried to stay current musically without changing who we are," said Kirk Sullivan of Mobile, Ala. "We don't do Backstreet moves. Then you're just copying everybody else. And Christian music has got to get beyond that reputation of copying the mainstream."

4Him carved a niche built on the lead vocals of Andy Chrisman and strong writing by singer Mark Harris – wedding tender pop melodies with lyrics about faith. Over the years, the lead vocalist has rotated, depending on the song, displaying the group's vocal depth.

The group first captivated evangelicals in 1990 with the single "Where There Is Faith."

"A woman who'd had a baby die once told us that song encouraged her through her difficult ordeal," Mr. Sullivan said. "We want our music to inspire people and strengthen them in their walk with God."

The aftermath of Sept. 11 has provided a poignant time for doing just that, said Marty Mageehee, who lives in Franklin, Tenn.

"There's a greater hunger to connect with God," he said. "There's almost a desperation within the hearts of unbelievers who are re-evaluating their lives. They're revisiting the doubts they had about God and all the rebellious walls they put up around the church."

Mr. Sullivan said the group doesn't preach, but encourages.

"We tell people to draw strength from one another and from God," he said. "Don't face your anxiety and fear and hurt by yourself. Surround yourself with people who love and support you. Surround yourself with the body of Christ."

The group's latest album, *Walk On*, is its ninth. Like the others, many of the songs chronicle the joys and struggles of faith. The first cut, "Psalm 112," pondered what it means to fear the Lord.

"The thing I can't stress enough about our music is transparency," Mr. Mageehee said. "We sing about the things that are relevant to the times we live in. Any sort of plastic, boxed-up, manufactured message is not going to reach people."

DETAILS: 4Him and the Katinas perform at 7 p.m. Feb. 15 at Hillcrest Church, 12123 Hillcrest Road, Dallas. Cost: \$15. Call 972-392-3992 ext. 104.