

Salt Lake Choral Artists will let it be

Concert » Many choirs, many voices will harmonize for Beatlemania concert.

By Catherine Reese Newton

The Salt Lake Tribune

Salt Lake Tribune

Updated:02/13/2010 11:32:42 AM MST

Forget the iconic haircuts, the Nehru jackets, the zany movies and the frenzied fans.

The Beatles' continued cachet, even 40 years after breaking up, boils down to one thing: "Far more than anything, it's just quality," said Dave Jorgensen, whose five-piece band, Get Back, will join the Salt Lake Choral Artists in concerts of the Fab Four's music this week. "Those four guys had so much talent, and the music has such depth. They made so many albums that you can play today and they still sound current and fresh."

The concert spans the Beatles' eight-year recording career, from early hits such as "I Want to Hold Your Hand" and "She Loves You" to the late-period "Here Comes the Sun" and "Let It Be." SLCA artistic director Brady Allred said the challenge in putting together the "Beatlemania" program was keeping the evening within the standard two-hour running time.

Allred said he welcomed the chance to spotlight several groups within his 160-voice ensemble, including the Women's Choir, the Men's Choir and the Chamber Choir, and to introduce the Young Choral Artists, a children's choir that he said is part of his long-term vision for the organization.

Get Back, a cover band that focuses on Beatle music, and the *a cappella* ensemble T Minus 5 will perform on their own and with the choirs. There also will be some audience participation, "whether they want to or not," Allred joked.

Allred is particularly excited about the Young Choral Artists' contribution. This concert was intended to gauge interest in such a group, and seeing about 70 children sign up for the first performance was a happy surprise. The high interest level reflects the Beatles' cross-generational appeal, he said, noting the success of last year's "The Beatles: Rock Band" video game as further evidence of the group's enduring

popularity.

The extreme familiarity of the Beatles' catalog presented another challenge. "Everybody knows how the original arrangements sounded," said Allred, a child of the '70s and '80s who grew up listening to the Beatles, though he acknowledged he was more of a Carpenters guy back then.

Some musical subtleties are difficult to translate from a rock quartet to a large choir, and though most of the SLCA singers have at least some knowledge of the originals, the musical idiom is decidedly different from their usual repertoire. "It's been fun to teach them new things," such as appropriate tone colors, Allred said.

"Beatlemania" is already a box-office hit, by SLCA standards. Saturday evening's concert sold out weeks in advance. "We've never sold out this early," Allred said, though his choir routinely sings to standing-room audiences in Libby Gardner Concert Hall. So for the first time, the group will offer a matinee performance.

cnewton@sltrib.com

All together now

Brady Allred leads the Salt Lake Choral Artists in "Beatlemania."

With » Get Back; T Minus 5; conductors Jane Fjeldsted, Aimee Frederick and Jessica Lee; and the debut of Young Choral Artists

Where » Libby Gardner Concert Hall, University of Utah

When » Feb. 20, 2 and 7:30 p.m.

Tickets » The evening performance is sold out; tickets to the matinee are \$15 at www.saltlakechoralartists.org or at the door.