

Alabama scores with Ag

by Rebeca Zimmermann
Entertainment Editor

Members of Alabama say they weren't sure if Texas A&M liked them last year. Friday night they had no problem interpreting Aggie whoops.

Being called back for two lengthy encores definitely means Texas A&M likes Alabama.

Alabama, named the 1982 "Vocal Group of the Year," "Instrumental Group of the Year" and "Entertainer of the Year" by the Country Music Association, is labeled a country and western band.

"What we write and record is us," lead singer Randy Owen said at a press conference before the performance, "and if that's country, that's Alabama."

But the group puts on a performance that even a rock 'n' roll fan can enjoy.

Opening with the always popular "Love in the First Degree," Alabama pleased the Aggie audience from the start. Owen and bass guitarist Teddy Gentry came onstage wearing Aggie T-shirts, but that was only part of the crowd pleasing.

Owen got the crowd going with many references to Texas A&M and College Station. All the members horsed around onstage and obviously enjoyed performing. They made you think they wanted to play all night. As it turned out, they played for almost two hours.

Country singer Janie Fricke and the Heart City Band opened the concert with a 45-minute set, warming up the crowd even before Alabama took the stage.

Fricke is very personable onstage and she had no trouble getting the crowd to clap along with her hits "Don't Worry 'Bout Me

Baby," "Tell Me a Lie" and "It Ain't Easy Bein' Easy."

Fricke, named "Female Vocalist of 1982" by the Country Music Association, has a breathy but pleasant singing style and showed it off well on "Tell Me a Lie." She worked well with her band, but the band's singer Benny Wilson — who has a good singing voice despite sounding a lot like Willie Nelson — had a rather obnoxious stage presence sometimes.

review

The most enjoyable number was "Fox on the Run," which Fricke called "Tennessee dancin' music — cloggin' music." By the end of the number, she and Wilson were performing the dance step to it and the crowd was appreciative of the song and dance.

But the audience obviously was there to see Alabama. When green, yellow, blue and purple smoke started rising from Alabama drummer Mark Herndon's drum set, people jumped to their feet and started screaming.

Despite some sound equipment problems early in the concert, including persistent hissing sounds that marred some of the a cappella harmonizing by the group, the atmosphere of fun lasted throughout the concert.

Lead guitarist Jeff Cook frequently hollered, "Ain't we havin' fun?"

On one song, amid a lot of horseplay, Cook, Owen and bass guitarist Teddy Gentry leaned in various contortions and played each other's guitars — quite well. And it was hysterical.

A great thing about this group is its sincerity, warmth and feeling in vocals and playing. You know band members are having a great time, but you also sense the sincerity behind such songs as "My Home's in Alabama," "She's a Lady" and "Close Enough to Perfect." Those songs also are the ones with the most a cappella harmonizing and these singers can carry it off — even in G. Rollie White Coliseum.

The last three songs in the concert set were calculated to end the performance on a high note. Three favorite hits, "Feels So Right," "Old Flame" and the popular-for-fast-polka-dancing "Mountain Music," closed the concert with reverberations of clapping, stompin', whoopin' and hollerin' good times resounding throughout G. Rollie.

The crowd also was treated to a preview of some new music to be released on a new album in February, and those songs were quite good.

One in particular that was played in the first encore, "I'm Not That Way Anymore," has some of the best lyrics I've heard in a long time. Lines such as "A child of the 60s in '74 / but I'm not that way anymore," and the refrain, "Time's closin' yesterdays door / I'm just as happy as I was before / 'cause I'm not that way anymore," hint at this song's probable success.

The first encore also included "Gonna Have a Party" and the group's anthem, "My Home's in Alabama." Owen changed the refrain in the last chorus to "But tonight we're all Aggies / No matter where we lay our heads / Tonight we're all Aggies / Southern born and Southern bred." He had the crowd eating out of his hand with that song.

By the time the group came back to play the second encore, most of its big hits had been played. So the second encore turned into more of a jam session.

"We always like to please the crowd," Gentry said at the press conference.

And Alabama did just exactly that.

MSC travel offers more student trips

by Tracie L. Holub
Battalion Reporter

Picture yourself skiing in Colorado, strolling down the Great Wall of China or partying on Bourbon Street.

Trips to New York City, New Orleans, the Dominican Republic and Winter Park, Colo., are planned for students this year, said D. Searcy, primary adviser of MSC Travel Committee.

"We plan these trips to give people different experiences at a price that they can afford," Searcy said. "Our first two trips are ski trips to Colorado during Christmas break. The one to Winter Park will be from Jan. 7-14 and the one to Crested Butte will be from Jan. 6-14."

The trip to Winter Park will cost from \$405 to \$425 depending on room accommodations. The cost of the trip to Crested Butte will be \$335. This fee includes bus transportation, lodging and ski lift tickets.

The students will stay at Timber House Lodge in Winter Park and Mountain Edge Condominiums in Crested Butte.

Searcy said the trip to Winter Park will be more expensive because two meals are included each day. She said other expenses will include additional meals and ski rental at \$30 to \$35 for 5 days.

Sign-ups for the Winter Park trip began Sept. 19 and it is already half full, Searcy said. Sign up will begin Monday for the Crested Butte trip in 216 MSC. Students must bring a \$150 deposit when they come, she said.

Searcy said Christmas break is not the only time trips are offered.

"We plan to offer trips to New York City, to Disneyworld and two more ski trips during spring break," Searcy said. "We will also have the Mardi Gras weekend this year. It went over pretty well last year; everyone seemed to have a good time."

The committee also is planning a trip to Disneyworld in the spring. Searcy said she got the idea for the trip when she heard how well it went over at Louisiana State University.

"We think the students will enjoy this trip," Searcy said. "L.S.U. had a great turnout on this trip and we're hoping the same happens for us."

"We are also investigating the possibility of offering a ski Austria trip," she said. "Those

are both in the planning stage though."

The committee also sponsor three international trips this summer. Students can travel to Europe, China and the Dominican Republic.

"We don't have everything set up on those trips yet," Searcy said. "The international trips usually begin about the end of the spring semester and last a few weeks. Students will have to provide their own transportation to L.A. for the China trip, though."

The European, and Dominican Republic trips will cost over \$1,000, and the trip to China will cost about \$2,000, Searcy said.

To help cover the cost of the overseas trips, the committee offers interest-free loans to students. Applications for the loans will be available this semester.

Loans are granted to students based on the amount of money needed, the kind of quest submitted and the number of people applying for loans.

"We have all kinds of experiences that people can part in," Searcy said. "Students go on trips if they find a good deal. The trips offer let people open up to experience different lifestyles."

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Workshop aims at improving teaching

by Mitch Clendening
Battalion Reporter

Some Texas A&M faculty members will be on the other side of the lectern for three nights beginning Tuesday.

Dr. Glenn Ross Johnson, coordinator of the University Center for Teaching Excellence, will host a workshop for teachers aimed at improving teaching techniques.

The workshop will begin with demonstrations of poor teaching techniques. Johnson then will suggest effective alternatives. The series will end with a demonstration lecture utilizing the techniques he has recommended.

Johnson said there are several lecture techniques he wants to see disappear. Some of them include the lecturer who reads a pre-written text or who speaks in a monotone voice. These are the targets for improvement in the workshop.

Johnson also will suggest techniques for increasing the accuracy of testing students' progress in a course.

The multiple-choice test question often has much room for improvement he said. To improve them, answer options should be similar, and should be kept on the same page as the question, he said. Teachers also should provide students with an opportunity to justify their answers, he said.

Its surprising how many teachers do not learn correct testing procedures, he said. Johnson also will talk about methods for motivating students. Because students only learn what they want to learn, he said, teachers must concentrate on improving the teaching environment. Educators should provide positive reinforcement or reward for good performance, he said.

Johnson said regularly scheduled quizzes are good student motivators. He said he personally prefers using scheduled quizzes, with a few "pop," or unscheduled, quizzes.

Johnson said teachers should let students know what type of questions will be on a test. Different types of questions

different methods of testing said. He also recommended providing students with a syllabus at the beginning of a course.

Johnson has been coordinating the workshop at Texas A&M since 1971. He said it began as a program for teaching assistants. The program grew, he said, as requests to conduct a workshop. Since 1973, Johnson has presented the workshop to both faculty and teaching assistants.

In January of this year, he separated the groups and does four workshops a year. Johnson said response to the program has been good. The best indicator of its success has been the continued interest in the workshop.

The workshop will be held from 7-9 p.m. each evening through Thursday. It is limited to 100 people. Reservations can be made by calling 8392 before 5 p.m. today.

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