

The Martins Biography...

The Martins' vocal and musical talents speak for themselves. Their impact on the Christian music industry has been widely unique and accepted, yet the industry has been unable to appropriately identify their style. Rather than resting in a single niche among the numerous Christian music genres, The Martins have rummaged freely through a stack of style books, grabbing whatever interests them. Sometimes the different elements are unaltered and traditional, but more often they are tossed into the trio's musical blender so that a new -- and exceedingly tasty -- mixture emerges. The result has been labeled simply as Martin Music .

While each of the vocalists grew up firmly and proudly planted in the Southern Gospel tradition, it is not surprising that as they have matured, a broad range of influences have entered their musical mix. **Billboard Magazine** describes The Martins as, breaking down walls and blurring the lines that separate Southern Gospel from Inspiration, Adult Contemporary, and other popular Christian music formats. The trio is now touring in support of their latest Spring Hill Music release, *Decade*. This project showcases the trademark harmonies that The Martins have become known for and offers a satisfying taste for every musical palate, ranging from innovative and refashioned hymn arrangements to contemporary songs of praise & worship. There is a lot of variety in our repertoire now, says Joyce. But it's still very recognizably us.

After many years of music ministry, and traveling down some of life's toughest paths, The Martins have garnered six Dove awards and a Grammy nomination to become one of Christian music's most critically acclaimed and best-selling vocal groups. These artists have showcased their stunning and distinctive harmonies before a vast array of audiences, ranging from Bill Gaither's award-winning Homecoming Video and Concert Series to the White House for a televised concert with President and First Lady Bush, called Celebrating America's Musical Heritage. But, perhaps one of their biggest accomplishments is the fact that regardless of their environment, whether performing at historic venues like Carnegie Hall in New York or sharing the platform at crusades with a hero like Billy Graham, The Martins can be seen portraying their usual persona of being identifiable and approachable in a word, *real*. Regardless of their circumstances, they haven't forgotten from where they have come, and are still trusting God to take them where He wants them to go.

Who wouldn't want to have been a fly on the wall when Leonardo da Vinci unveiled the Mona Lisa for the first time in the early 1500s? Surely those hearing about Thomas Edison's work in 1879 began to turn on their lights in a whole new way. No doubt, the folks living in Kitty Hawk, NC, in 1903, found new meaning to the word "transportation" as the first airplane from the Wrights left the ground.

In the ups and downs of daily life, we all have life-changing moments...moments that become landmark experiences. For Christian music fans of the early 90s, the memories of three siblings from Hamburg, Ark., entering the music industry are fond, and the concerts and recordings that came as a result will forever be considered landmarks as a "new form" of music began-"Martin music."

If someone had told The Martins-siblings Joyce, Jonathan and Judy-when they first began singing harmonies around their mother's piano bench around the ages of nine, seven and six that they would one day grace the halls of the White House, perhaps even they would not have believed it.

DECADE, a collection of hits over ten years from this award-winning trio, is a walk down memory lane for some...for others it is a recording of classic moments in time that changed their lives. DECADE certainly captures a landmark experience from a trend-setting group whose music and ministry have become inspiring foundations for future generations.

Growing up in an humble home with no electricity, where they could actually see the dogs, cats

and chickens under the house, the Martin children found meaning in the things of beauty that surrounded them-their loving and nurturing parents, friends at their small, wooded Louisiana church, time with each other around the fireplace to stay warm...and music.

"I remember the first time I felt the magical vibrations of the harmony that is created when I sing with my brother and my sister," recalls Joyce. "I was 10 when I first discovered harmony. I would sit beside our mother at our little church and sing the songs from that 'brown book' hymnal. She sang the alto and my young ear naturally pulled my voice there. How I loved the sound that rang off of those white window-lined walls when that small congregation would sing in four parts!"

"We didn't have a lot," she continues with a smile. "But we had each other and Mama helped ignite in us our love of music. She'd teach us the parts after church and then make us practice and practice. Of course, we practiced acapella as we had no piano at home."

Eventually, the Martin children sold a family car to pay for their own recording-an old LP that brings smiles of remembrance to their faces today. They sang for anyone who would listen and traveled full-time throughout Arkansas, Missouri, Texas and Louisiana; and the musical chemistry between Joyce, Jonathan and Judy continued to solidify.

In an industry filled with demos, lead sheets and chord charts-too many to hear, there is nothing like an actual jaw-dropping performance by an overwhelmingly talented artist to garner attention. And there are no "rules" as to where that can take place.... When Christian music icon Michael English heard these siblings, he knew there was something special to share. One evening, prior to a Homecoming event hosted by Bill and Gloria Gaither, English and comedian/singer/songwriter Mark Lowry pulled Gloria into a restroom so that she could hear The Martins sing.

That a cappella performance of the hymn "He Leadeth Me" began a chain of events that took The Martins to national success-new recordings with their label Spring Hill Music Group, consistent hit singles and a busy concert calendar of 200 dates annually. The Martins quickly became known for their unique musical styling, which continues unbound by genre definitions. They have achieved success at southern Gospel, inspirational and adult contemporary radio formats; and for many, they re-defined the description of southern Gospel music, adding hints of country and pop to their arrangements.

Their self-titled debut and the follow-up recording *Live in His Presence* showcased their signature blend and placed them on prestigious platforms nationwide. In 1996, the group released *A Cappella Hymns Collection*, a classic recording that contained their hair-raising performance of "The Doxology" which they have performed regularly to standing ovations.

The *Wherever You Are* recording turned industry heads, and soon fans and music professionals alike were defining this unique sound as "the Martins' style of music." *Light of the World* garnered The Martins their first GRAMMY nomination; *Dream Big* solidified the trio's ability to appeal to even broader audiences and the group maintained its ministry focus while their popularity blossomed, garnering runs of DOVE Awards and GRAMMY nods.

Windows found the group continuing to thrive on musical diversity from the country strains of "Don't Wanna Miss a Thing" to the praise and worship hints of "Mighty God," and their stage presence offered a contagious combination of life-changing ministry with captivating entertainment. The siblings found themselves working alongside three different producers on their *Glorify Edify Testify* release, which featured many of the group's favorite hymns from their childhood combined with modern-day worship songs and church standards.

From "The Grand Ole Opry," the Gaither concert stage and national television to the DOVE Awards, concert halls nationwide and a visit to the White House, The Martins have shared their love for their Father in bigger ways than they ever dreamed back home around that fireplace.

Their precedent-setting musical influence continues today and is often heard in the works of other artists inspired by them, and their desire to share the message of the Gospel has impacted countless lives.

"...there has always been something special about the moments when I sing with Jonathan and Judy," states Joyce with a smile. "Maybe it's a genetic thing, but definitely it is a God thing. Even from an early age, it has always been deeply spiritual to me. I also know that it is one of my favorite things in the world."

DECADE, compiled by the Martins and Phil Johnson, brings to light, on one recording, some of the most memorable moments of The Martins' career up to this point. It also features "Be Still My Soul" and "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho," songs previously unreleased on the group's recordings.

"Ten years...wow!" exclaims Jonathan. "When I was listening to this list of songs, my thoughts were about how blessed we have been to have the privilege of singing such inspired music. Each song has memories of ministry attached to it-testimonies of people, including myself, who have been touched by the lyrics and melodies we were given the responsibility to share. I feel that any friend of The Martins will enjoy this recording and remember moments in time that we all hold dear."