



MEDIA ALERT

Date: Thursday, April 5
Time: 6 - 8 PM
Location: University of Texas, MRH 6.112 (across from the Stadium and LBJ Library)
Tickets: FREE
More Information: Cynthia Lucas 512-740-4412
Press Kit available at www.bozzies.com/press

The Boswell Sisters

Rediscovering Perfect Harmony

The University of Texas, School of Music is hosting **The Boswell Sisters, Rediscovering Perfect Harmony**, at 6:00 pm on Thursday, April 5, in the Music Building/ Recital Hall, MHR 6.112. This event will include a multi-media presentation, "Black and White and Reb All Over," from Dr Laurie Stras, University of Southampton, UK., a screening of independent film maker Randall Riley's short documentary "Connee Boswell - Life is a Song," and a panel discussion with Stras, Riley, Boswell biographer David McCain, and Bozzies.com director Cynthia Lucas. The presentation is co-sponsored by the Center for American Music, the Center for American History at UT and the Center for Women's and Gender Studies. The event is free and open to the public.

"The Boswell Sisters are one of America's often overlooked national treasures," said Andrew Dell 'Antonio, Head of the Musicology and Ethnomusicology program at UT. "We are fortunate to have assembled an exceptional group of experts for a presentation that not only focuses on their music and its social significance but provides a rich and entertaining story of three women who succeeded against the odds."

Connie, Martha and Helvetia (Vet) Boswell formed one of the most popular vocal acts of 1930s America. Backed by musicians like the Dorsey Brothers, Bunny Berrigan, Venuti and Lang, Glenn Miller, Artie Shaw and the orchestras of Victor Young and Jimmy Grier, the New Orleans sisters dominated the airwaves between 1931 and 1936. Beginning with their own national radio show in 1930 and later alternating with the Mills Brothers as guests on Bing Crosby's syndicated show, they became the sound to lighten the heart of the Depression.

Their influence was acknowledged by artists as diverse as Crosby himself, the Andrews Sisters, Frank Sinatra, Mel Torme, Harry Belafonte and Wynonna Judd.

Ella Fitzgerald always credited Connie Boswell as her inspiration and told an interviewer, "Who influenced me? There was only one singer who influenced me. I tried to sing like her all the time, because everything she did made sense musically, and that singer was Connie Boswell. When I was a girl, I listened to all the singers, white and black, and I know that Connie was doing things that no one else was doing at that time. You don't have to take my word for it, just check the recordings made at the time and hear for yourself."

Although influential and universally appealing, the Sisters were anything but middle of the road. Their vocal style, repertoire, even their personal circumstances were potential

stumbling blocks to success in a society that feared transgressions of gender roles, race, class and (for celebrities) physical perfection. The Boswell Sisters challenged norms with their musical knowledge, their arrangements, their choice of songs, and their performance of race and class. Connie's physical disability (polio-induced paralysis) made her an unlikely candidate for a career that included Broadway, Hollywood and Television. The sisters were heroes in a culture that was being forced through change, however uncomfortable it might have been.

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