

# THE SPIRIT OF NEW ORLEANS GOSPEL CHOIR



The Spirit of New Orleans Gospel Choir, is a conglomeration of members of the many world class gospel groups that are represented by the Jamalar Agency in New Orleans: JOYFUL, The Friendly Travelers, The Children of God, J.C. & Company, JOYFUL Gospel and N\*Harmone'. The Spirit of New Orleans Choir can be as small as 12 or as large as 100 members. This group also includes 4 musicians (piano, bass, guitar and drums). The show is always exciting and speaks to the culture of New Orleans.

This special choir became a reality while planning a tour for Italy during the Christmas season of 2005. The Agency put the Spirit of New Orleans Choir together using artists from the gospel groups already booked for that tour. The Spirit of New Orleans Choir was booked for special fund raising concerts to help struggling New Orleans musicians and their families in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. This group has been so successful that Jamalar Agency continues to book it to this day.

The nucleus of the Spirit of New Orleans Choir includes: Jan Randolph, Ramona Adams, Chandra Banks Grayson, Wanda Joseph, Floyd Turner, Alfred Caston, Albert Mickel and Jessie Veal.

Jan Randolph, the group leader has been singing since the age of 3; you could say she was born into a family of gospel singers. Jan Randolph, was 5 years when her father formed a family group called The Randolph Brothers and Sisters. By the mid -1970s, her Uncle formed a group with all the girls in the family called "The Marionettes Gospel Singers;" this was Jan's first job as a "leader." Her first recording experience came when The Marionettes Gospel Singers recorded and released a 45 rpm entitled "Soon I Will Be Done With The Trouble Of This World." There were other recording sessions with The Randolph Brothers and Sisters and in 2002, she recorded and performed with her brother's group J. C. & Company, for Jamalar's Rampart Street Music label which led to opportunities to also record with the world famous JOYFUL!. She was invited to tour several years, but it wasn't until after Hurricane Katrina that Jan decided to join the JOYFUL Gospel Singers on a tour to Italy, Spain and Germany. In 2002 she started to work part-time with the Jamalar Agency and by 2008 Jan became a full-fledged member of JOYFUL!.

Ramona Adams, has been working with Jamalar Agency and the JOYFUL Music Group since 1992. Her music career expands more than 40 years as she first started singing in different churches and community choirs in the New Orleans area. By age 19, Ramona and four of her sisters formed a family group called The Adams Sisters. The group eventually disbanded as the girls grew up, married and started families of their own. Remona, joined the JOYFUL Gospel Singers, in 1992, which marks the beginning of a very fruitful vocal career. In 1997 she also joined another of Jamalar's groups, Ebone'. This traditional vocal group toured with the Jamalar Agency for five years and also recorded a CD together. There was no question when it came time to form The Spirit Of New Orleans Choir that Ramona Adams would be a key member.

Chandra Banks Grayson, moved to the New Orleans area from Jackson, Mississippi in 2004. She started singing in the second grade where she became very active with her school music departments through graduating from high school. While living in Jackson, MS Chandra met and sang with many singers from the famed Mississippi Mass Choir. Upon moving to New Orleans, she became a member of the Nineveh Baptist Church where she later joined their Mass Choir, and recorded on their CD project "Worship" that was released in November 2007. Her charming personality coupled with her beautiful voice earned her invitations to return to JOYFUL's stage as a regular performer. Chandra, joined the Spirit of New Orleans Choir for the December 2008 tour to Italy.

Wanda Joseph, is a self-taught musician and background singer. In 1978 Wanda started performing with the pop music group "Cosimo's" then later joined Joe Francoise' oldies' group. It wasn't until 1989 that she started working with noted reggae group, The Sheppard Band who was often hired to open for such national acts as Steele Pulse and the Wailers. While working as a side-woman in various other reggae groups, Wanda has shared the stage with such reggae artists as Lucky Dube, Burning Spear, Joseph Hill & Culture and Tanya Stevens, just to name a few. In the late 90s, Floyd Turner, leader of world famous Friendly Travelers pursued Wanda's talent because he was in need of a bass player for an upcoming tour to Italy. Wanda became an official member of the Friendly Travelers by the summer of 2000. It was only natural that in 2005 Wanda Joseph was included as an original member of the Spirit of New Orleans Choir