

## "HOLY GHOST PARTY!" JUNE 4 AT THE PARAMOUNT THEATRE

### **A special night for Ruthie Foster, Jones Family Singers, Endurance, James Hand and the St. James Baptist Church Choir**

There's nothing like being in the same room with passionate, soul stirring music that harks back to the golden age of gospel. It's an even more special experience when that room is the Paramount Theatre.

On June 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm, the historic downtown venue is proud to host an incredibly diverse and fast-moving night of praise songs, a "Holy Ghost Party!" that brings together **Ruthie Foster** revisiting her church roots with a full-band gospel set, Bay City's **Jones Family Singers**, who had critics at South By Southwest scrambling for new adjectives for "amazing," Houston's top quartet **Endurance**, plus 53-year-old rising star of country, **James Hand**, who's also adept at writing spiritual material. To warm things up, **Seth Walker** will be performing in front of the theatre at 6:00pm, where pre-show refreshments will also be available.

Igniting the Hallelujah fire will be the 100-strong **St. James Baptist Church Choir**, under the direction of Claudia Williams. St. James was once led by pastor E.M. Franklin, who was a member of legendary Austin gospel act the Paramount Singers until he chose the pulpit full time in 1939. The Paramount Singers took their name from the majestic theatre on Congress Avenue, which they were forbidden to enter in that era of segregation. E.M.'s brother A.C. Franklin, a co-founder of the Paramount Singers, related in a 1987 interview that the group members would stare up at the Paramount marquee and envision their name up there. Then the police would come and shoo them away. The Paramount Singers never got to play their namesake theatre, but they'll be there in spirit June 4. The evening's emcee **Bill "the Mailman" Martin**, a longtime gospel announcer was married to E.M.'s daughter Evelyn, who passed away early this year, so the memories and the music should combine for a magical evening.

And the entire event will be recorded by Music & Entertainment Television, which plans to use the footage as the maiden episodes of a new Sunday morning gospel program on Time Warner channel 15.

Reserved seating tickets are \$12.50 and go on sale Tuesday April 25th through Gettix at [www.gettix.net](http://www.gettix.net), or at the Paramount Box Office at 713 Congress Avenue. A limited number of premium seats are available for \$32.50. Inquiries into tax-deductible sponsorship opportunities for this historic event should be directed to Charity Partners of Austin at [aluecke@sbcglobal.net](mailto:aluecke@sbcglobal.net)

Proceeds from the event will benefit The Sickle Cell Association of Austin, Marc Thomas Chapter.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The event is being produced in a collaboration with **Marsha Milam of Milam and Company**, along with support from **Charity Partners of Austin**. **Milam and Company** specializes in public relations, promotion, consultation, strategy, and special events production and has produced many music events and series in Austin, including the renowned 'Unplugged at the Grove' series at Shady Grove. **Charity Partners of Austin** [www.charitypartnersofaustin.org](http://www.charitypartnersofaustin.org) is a local philanthropy group that supports local kids and families through the production of music and arts fundraising events.

**The Marc Thomas Chapter of the Sickle Cell Association of Austin** provides advocacy and support for individuals and families in a continuing effort to enhance and preserve the quality of life for Sickle Cell patients and their families. "This is such an important event for us," said Linda Thomas, the Executive Director of the group. "Not only are the funds critical to our mission, but the spirit that will be present at the event from the community will be so special to us and our families." <http://www.marcthomas.org/>

### **About the Paramount Theatre**

Built as the Majestic Theatre, the **Paramount** opened its doors as a commercial vaudeville house in 1915 and began a legacy of bringing world-class entertainment to Central Texas. From vaudeville, silent movies and "talkies" decades ago to more contemporary entertainment such as dance, live music and theatre, The Paramount has established itself as a non-profit focused on providing legendary entertainment to the Austin community. The Paramount Theatre is visually more appealing, acoustically superior and historically more significant than any other performing arts center in Austin and is vital to the economic and cultural development of the city.

### **Ruthie Foster**

Whether she's singing folk, blues or the gospel standards she grew up on in Gause (near Hearne), Foster infuses her material with unbridled spirituality. "Woke Up This Morning," from her 2001 breakout album "Runaway Soul" is an example of the hallelujah fire at her disposal. Like her idols Sam Cooke and Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Ruthie Foster has the talent to easily glide from the secular to the spiritual. The June 4 show at the Paramount, Foster's first all-gospel show, will be a special night in her steadily rising career. Backed by a Hammond B-3 fueled band, Ruthie makes a full circle return to her roots as a young church singer whose favorite vocalist was her deeply religious mother Shirley.

### **Jones Family Singers**

This powerful and playful group from Bay City conjured the Jazz Fest gospel tent during last year's Austin City Limits Music Festival and earned unanimous raves at SXSW in March. The Jones Family Singers - five sisters, their father, a brother, a grandson and a husband - perform with a joyous intensity born from their Pentecostal beliefs. Family patriarch Fred A. Jones, soon to be made a Bishop in the Church Of God In Christ, raised his family in music: although she's only 29, the volcanic voiced Alexis Jones Roberts has been the group's lead singer for 17 years.

### **Endurance**

This Houston quartet has been called the Temptations of gospel because of their showmanship, but as evidenced by the spiritually uplifting lyrics of their two albums, "A Few More Miles" and "He'll Make a Way" (featuring the hit single "New Way"), they're strictly of the church, with a commitment to their ministry foremost in their minds. This is a group that knows firsthand just how much a deep relationship with Jesus can help one through hard times. When singer Mike Robertson lost his 24-year-old son in the Iraq war in October, it was his faith, his music, that pulled him through.

### **James Hand**

Willie Nelson's favorite living honky tonker, currently earning praise for his new Rounder release "The Truth Will Set You Free," Hand has also been writing gospel songs for years and hopes to one day record an entire album of spiritual material. He's certainly got the passion-dripping voice to endorse the existence of a higher power.

**St. James Baptist Church Choir**

Twenty years ago, St. James' legendary pastor E.M. Franklin tapped 16-year-old Claudia Williams to direct his choir. She's still at the helm, leading as many as 102 voices in a mix of classic spirituals with more contemporary material. St. James Choir is recognized as one of the best in the state and Sister Claudia has also received acclaim with her Voices of Christ side project.