

MADRIGAL SINGE FEASTE

Young voices to bring touch of royalty to Christmas

By Lauchlin Fields
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For Warren Central High School senior and Madrigal singer Johnny Gibson, practicing every day at school and two or three nights a week — often spending more time with his fellow singers than his own family — is all worth it.

“It’s entertainment — a chance to show other people what Warren Central — our choral program — is about,” he said.

Johnny and 21 other Madrigal singers have been preparing for the Warren Central High School Madrigal Singe Feaste, which was revived last year by Madrigal director Chris Haygood. The group is planning for an even larger turnout this year for the performance which will be Dec. 1-3 at the Southern Cultural Heritage Complex on Adams Street.

“It was special last year because it was new,” Haygood said. “This year, they know they have built up a reputation for themselves. And, this is a very competitive group. They want to either uphold or surpass how they did last year.”

Madrigal performances feature four to eight voice parts. Haygood said the Madrigal singers — one of five vocal groups at Warren Cen-



IF YOU GO

The Warren Central High School Madrigal Singe Feaste will be Dec. 1-3 at 7 p.m. at the Southern Cultural Heritage Complex, 1302 Adams St. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased by calling 601-631-2916.

tral — is the most advanced choral group at the school.

For the group, “learning just a couple of pieces a year is not enough of a challenge,” Haygood said. “It’s also a different performing experience. It’s totally different doing Renaissance — trying to learn a British accent.”

The reason for bringing back the Madrigal Singe Feaste, which was performed 10 years prior to last year’s comeback, was two-fold.

“I was a Madrigal in high school, and it was the most important thing we did,” Haygood said. “For the community — that’s another reason.”

Having it in December, as people are preparing for the Christmas season, is the most fitting time of year to have the performance, Haygood said. He hopes it can become Vicksburg’s holiday season kickoff.

“The majority of the music is Christmas in nature,” Haygood said. “That goes back to the Renaissance when the king invited

the lords to a feast.”

Johnny will play the part of the king, and senior Roxy Ditto will play the queen. Roxy has performed with the group three times.

“We’ve been working a lot harder this year. It’s going to be a lot better,” she said. “I’ve realized how much you have to work for it, but it’s fun.”

Haygood is hoping this year’s feast will be as well received as last year. Because the event was sold out both nights, they decided to add a third night.

“We set the seating at 140 each night,” he said. “More will fit than that, but we want to keep the setting intimate.”

The Madrigals perform at local events and compete in statewide and national competitions.

On Nov. 5, they received superior ratings at the Riverland Invitational Choral Festival at Pearl High School.

Earlier this year, the group received a number of awards at the New York Heritage Choral Competition.

In March, they will head to Chicago for the Festival of Gold National Invitational Choral Festival. Proceeds from the Singe Feaste will help fund the trip.



Roxy Ditto rehearses for the Warren Central High School Madrigal choir’s upcoming Singe Feaste performance.