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Holiday Hop

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THE CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS
Governors State University
fifteenth anniversary season

presents

HOLIDAY HOP

Cornell Gunter's
COASTERS

THE PLATTERS &
THE MARVELETTES

Saturday, December 5, 2009
This year marks the 35th anniversary since the formation of Cornell Gunter's Coasters out of the ashes of the surprising breakup of the original Coaster group several months earlier. Few people recall anymore the historical significance of Gunter's decision to "fly in the face of the wind." He thought he could form a new group to overcome the sudden drop of public interest in The Coasters' and 1950's music in general. He believed in a new and unique way to present 1950's music. And clearly a new approach was needed because the early 1960's brought about a stunning and sudden change in American musical tastes. The Beatles and psychedelic music arrived, and almost overnight The Coasters, along with most other purveyors of the oldies group sound (The Drifters, The Shirelles, The Platters, to name a few), went from living as stars in the spotlight to being unable to get new songs played on the radio. Looking back, given the current popularity of their type of music, it is hard to believe that it could have fallen into disfavor so rapidly, joining such other fads as disco, calypso, big band and swing, all of which disappeared from the American music scene. Like aging football players or silent film stars, the 1950's groups all seemed headed for new lives out of the limelight.

Enter Cornell Gunter. Cornell believed that The Coasters could be reborn. In fact, he believed that all of the groups from that era could thrive as live performing groups, and ultimately he led the way to what became known as "the rock revival". What was needed was to give the old original music a modern theatrical presentation. And slowly but surely the fans returned. So unique was Cornell's approach to The Coasters' and 1950's music that soon Cornell Gunter's Coasters were headlining in Vegas six months a year. Other 1950's groups following Cornell's lead soon reconstituted as live acts with their own unique stylings. 1969 saw the first oldies shows and stations that still fascinate America today. By the early 1970's, all of the original Coasters had formed their own individual Coasters groups and were touring extensively, even on certain occasions together, all because of Cornell's "crazy idea". Today, Cornell Gunter's Coasters are as much a comedy act as a singing group. It's been described as "The Coasters' music through the eyes of Salvador Dali" and is definitely not your mother's music.

It has been nearly thirty years since the last original member left The Platters and still the group remains one of the most popular in rock and roll history, continuing their popularity by becoming one of the most sought after performing groups in the country. Over the years the greatest of care has been taken to assure that each new member of The Platters carries on the tradition and maintains the skills that were associated with the original group.

The group has appeared all over the world, including President Clinton's inauguration and the 1953 coronation of the Queen of England, as well as on a good will exchange tour at the Great Wall for the Chinese government. Additionally they've appeared at such stellar American venues as Foxwoods Hotel and Casino, Westbury Music Fair, Madison Square Garden, The Houston Astrodome, The Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas and Trump Castle in Atlantic City. The group has appeared on such television shows as The Today Show, Good Morning America, and Saturday Night Live. They are currently promoting their recent CD "The Platters Live in Las Vegas". Check the lobby for this and other great merchandise sales tonight!
The Marvelettes

The Marvelettes occupy an esteemed place in the history of American popular music as the group that caused Motown, and most notably Berry Gordy, to change the label's focus from single bluesy soul artists (previously Barret Strong's *Money* had been the label's biggest seller) to a smooth orchestrated harmonic sound that transcended the prior racial limits of rhythm and blues. After their first record *Please Mr. Postman* hit the top spot on the charts and sold three million records in a crossover market, Motown began to concentrate on The Marvelettes, The Supremes, The Temptations, The Four Tops, and Martha and the Vandellas to create a new group pop-soul sound that totally dominated the music charts until the advent of The Beatles four years later.

During their reign at the top of the charts the girls were to turn out over a dozen hits, eight of which went Top Ten. Although the group at times had more than three members, the originators were Wanda Rogers, Gladys Horton, and Katherine Shaffner. In the early years of the group, family ties forced all three to leave the act at various times (although Wanda and Gladys continued to make frequent "guest appearances") but carefully chosen and highly talented replacements kept the act at the top of the charts even with changed personnel.

This is a patented mark of the Motown success story - the ability to change personnel in acts like The Supremes, Temptations and Marvelettes and still keep the act at the top of the charts and in demand for personal appearances.

In fact it is in person where the current lineup really excels. Offering an act that features their big hits, interspersed with their versions of other great standards, the girls are still in the smooth Motown vein, a highly choreographed, polished, very good looking and humorous night club act as well as a major draw.