

WATCH: ‘Carriers of the Presence of God’ Will Blow You Away With Message of Spiritual Inheritance

Contemporary a cappella music is having a moment right now, thanks to recent breakout acts such as Pentatonix, high-profile prime-time television talent competitions, and attention-grabbing viral videos. The six members of Levitical Rise, a new vocal group from Orlando, Florida, are using the genre and their skilled harmonies to deliver a message of hope, purpose and identity to listeners.

The group, which gets its name from the Tribe of Levi who were the “carriers of the presence of God,” recently released its debut album, a blend of contemporary worship, Christian pop tunes and even a jazzed-up cover of FFH’s “Big Fish.” It delivers the songs in a lively multimedia stage show that includes behind the scenes thoughts, encouragement, and inspiration.

Founder and group leader Lester Rector said the time is right for contemporary a cappella to offer the same sounds to Christian concertgoers that are enjoying the genre’s resurgence on shows such as NBC’s *The Sing Off*.

“There isn’t anything in the Christian market right now that (listeners) could pinpoint,” he said. “We feel that we’re on the tip of the spear, so to speak, for something creative and new.”

Rector and his wife, Holly, are two members of Levitical Rise, which also includes three more men and another woman, all of whom have the connection of being professional singers at popular Orlando theme parks. Additional members include Jackie

Stressman, John Gibson, Sean Gerrity and Troy Dolendo.

Being a longtime singer and getting his start in Lee University's famous ensemble, Voices of Lee (which also had a huge a cappella viral hit recently with a cover of Hillsong's "What a Beautiful Name"), Rector had the vision for three-phase plan to complete the group's mission, which will continue with a feature film and eventually conferences.

"We launched the music first," Rector said. "I call this the *Footloose* effect. When the movie *Footloose* opened, they say what made it so popular was that music had been released a month before and everyone became familiar with the songs. The movie was a huge success in part because of the music."

The film will feature the story of a comedian and will be produced independently and shot in Central Florida. Rector said some of the details have been finalized, including some key players whose names could not be announced as of yet. The final conference phase will blend the music and elements of the film in an experience unified under the group's main message of spiritual inheritance and responsibility.

"This is a movement, of sorts, to get people to realize who they are and that God calls us spiritual sons and daughters and as a result we carry the presence of God and we are blessed to have God as our inheritance," he said. "Everything we need for living this life will be ours by way of who God says we are—sons and daughters."

For more information about the group, visit .

DEWAYNE HAMBY is a communications specialist and longtime journalist covering faith-based music, entertainment, books and the retail industry. He is also the editor of the White Wing Messenger, director of communications for the Church of God of Prophecy, and author of the book Gratitude Adjustment. Connect with him at or on twitter: @dewaynehamby.