



RYAN HERMENS

The Amherst College Zumbies perform at the Silver Chord Bowl Sunday, the first of the Northampton Arts Council's Four Sundays in February series.

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## A cappella groups give audience a super treat

By KIMBERLY ASHTON  
Staff Writer

**NORTHAMPTON** — Before that other bowl Sunday, some of the Northeast's most talented college singers treated hundreds to a collection of songs that ranged from velvety smooth to punchy and lively.

Seven college a cappella groups sang to a nearly full house at Smith College's John M. Greene Hall as part of the 21st Silver Chord Bowl, which kicks off this year's Four Sundays in February series, presented by The Northampton Arts Council.

The multi-generational audience, though not filling the house to capacity as it has in past years, was appreciative and enthusiastic, filled with families and groups of friends.

The Mount Holyoke 13-member V8's (for The Victory-Eight) opened the concert, setting the bar high with an strong version of "Goodbye," led by Cherie Hannouch's smooth, powerful voice.

They were followed by the impressive Cornell University Chordials. The coed group placed third in last year's Championship of Collegiate A Cappella finals and it's easy to see why. They were fun to watch and sang some songs so lively and catchy it was hard to stay in your seat. And they busted some moves that would've done any boy band proud.

The Chordials slowed down for their version of Mariah Carey and Boyz II Men's R&B song "One Sweet Day"

and kept the audience rapt with Tori Amos' edgy "Precious Things."

Also somewhat eyebrow-arching was Smith College Smiffenpoofs' nifty choice of the Red Hot Chili Pepper's "Californication," considering that the phrase "hard-core soft porn" doesn't turn up in a cappella very often.

The Smiffenpoofs rounded out the day's concerts with imaginatively stylized versions of recent pop songs, like Dido's "All You Want" and Seal's "Crazy."

But it was their confident, excellent "Lady Marmalade" that drew the big applause.

That song received a reaction almost as enthusiastic as the one that erupted after the stunning Dartmouth College Aires sang a transfixing version of the doo-wop ballad "In The Still of the Night," featuring a solo by madly talented Jarrett Cato.

"Every year there's a moment, and I think this year, that was the moment," said Bob Cilman, executive director of the Northampton Arts Council. He called the song that is "a quintessential a cappella song."

Though the house was not sold out as it has been in years past, Cilman said, "We were happy that such a large crowd showed upon such a beautiful day."

The Dartmouth group, dressed in consciously idiosyncratic mismatched plaids, also delivered a laugh-out-loud, playful performance of "Just a Friend," punctuated by a spirited rap interlude.

Sporting a similar style, if a bit

wackier in silly hats and the odd banana suit, were the all-male Amherst College Zumbies, who kicked off their set with the anthem-rock "More Than A Feeling" by Boston.

As the fifth act to take stage to an audience already thoroughly spoiled, the Zumbies kept the crowd's attention using physical energy, humor and good singing.

After delivering a classic a cappella "Down By The Sally Gardens," they rounded out their set with a solidly entertaining version of Wham's "Jitterbug," using choreographed group dance moves.

The only group to sing all classical choral arrangements was the tuxedo-clad Yale University Russian Chorus.

Third on stage — and their first time at the Silver Chord Bowl — these singers treated the crowd to traditional Russian and Slavic folk songs. The deep-voiced coed ensemble had a few women, tenors who held their own while belting out songs from the Russian Army and Navy.

Centrally conducted, the group sang as one and glided over Slavic syllables with what seemed to be remarkable ease.

And turning in a respectable and often fun performance were the Tufts University Amalgamates, whose Erin Bergin sang a lively, foot-tapping version of The Jackson 5's "I Want You Back."

Also entertaining was the group's skit "Bake a Cake," tamed Beastie-



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Olivia Rother, 5, and her grandmother Dot Walsh enjoy the show at the Silver Chord Bowl Sunday.

Boys style rap about, well, baking a cake.

Next Sunday, dubbed Sunday Funny Sunday, will feature the British comedian Shazia Mirza. All proceeds from the Four Sundays benefit the Northampton Arts Council's endeavors.

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