

Gospel Concert tickets now available

By Monica Wood

Tickets go on sale Feb. 1 for the 2013 "United as One" Concert Tour, an uplifting evening of praise presented by Fort Sill Family and MWR, Feb. 26 at the Sheridan Theater.

This must-see Gospel Music ensemble of talent features gospel recording artists James Fortune & FIYA, Vashawn Mitchell, Kierra Sheard and Zacardi Cortez and is hosted by Shucky Ducky.

James Fortune & FIYA's highly anticipated debut CD "You Survived" was released in September 2004. Fortune was honored at the 19th Annual ASCAP Rhythm and Soul Music Awards for his hit single "You Survived" off the same album. The song also peaked as the #2 most played Gospel song in the country. Fortune received a 2006 ASCAP Writers Award and his FIYA singers have been nominated four years in a row for the Texas Gospel Youth & Young Adult Choir of the Year. FIYA has opened for artists such as Kim Burrell, Stevie Wonder, Albertina Walker and many others.

Fortune hails from Texas where he is the choir director at Higher Dimension Church in SW Houston. Membership has grown from 29 members in 1999 to more than 12,000 with 10 operative lead ministries and a host of sub-ministries that cater to the needs of children, youth, men, women, couples and singles.

Vashawn Mitchell is a six-time Stellar Award-winner and Grammy Award-nominated recording artist who knows what he was created to do. He soared to the top of the Gospel & Urban Music charts with his megahit single "Nobody Greater," from his hit album Triumphant.

In 2011, Mitchell received numerous award nominations and was named Billboard Magazine's #1 Gospel Radio Artist of the year and had the #1 Most Played Gospel song of the year.

Mitchell recently released his highly anticipated second album on EMI Gospel, "Created 4 This," a signature contemporary style of praise and worship with a message to empower, uplift and inspire people with the message of God's love.

Kierra Sheard released her latest CD, "Free," on her family label, Karew Records. The daughter of Karen Clark Sheard (of the legendary Clark Sisters) and Bishop J. Drew Sheard of Detroit, Mich., Sheard spent her formative years in Detroit surrounded by family, faith and music. She sang in the choir as a girl in the church where her father preached and at the age of nine appeared on the hit single "The Safest

Place," a duet with her mother from the successful "Finally Karen."

She began her solo career in 2004 at the age of 17 when she released her debut album "I Owe You," combining the worlds of gospel, hip-hop and soul in contemporary sound that is reverent and forward-thinking. Her previous hits include "You Don't Know," "Love Like Crazy," "Praise Him Now," and "Invisible."

Standout songs on her latest CD include the first single "Mighty" and "You Are" as well as "Free," which Sheard says "talks about the mind being a battlefield."

"My hope for this CD is that it rebrands me as an artist," she said. "I want people to see from this record that I am a servant of the kingdom and I want it to bless and change lives."

Cortez began his career singing with his family, The Cortez Singers, in his native Houston, Texas, but is best known for his strong vocals with James Fortune's FIYA singers. His solo album "Zacardi Cortez: The Introduction" debuted in May 2012. The single "I Believe," featuring Cortez, Shawn McLemore and James Fortune & FIYA, remained #1 on Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs chart for 14 weeks. You Tube videos of "The Blood" have racked up more than one million views and made the song one of Cortez's most requested. When not recording he tours with Fortune and Gospel music guru Earnest Pugh.

Shucky Ducky is the stage name of comedian Cecil Armstrong, a native of Dallas, Texas. He has appeared on "Def Comedy Jam" and as the ringmaster of UniverSoul Circus. He is known for his catchphrase, "Shucky Ducky, quack, quack," which he describes as meaning disappointment or excitement.

The concert is produced by Army Entertainment and sponsored locally by Perry Broadcasting Company and IHG Army Hotels.

Doors for the show open at 6 p.m. and the show begins at 7. The event is open to the public. Seating is limited and ticket cost is \$10 for ages 3 and older. Get your tickets at an Adventure Travel office, at the Welcome Center, 4700 Mow-Way Road, or at the Central Mall in Lawton. For more information, call Adventure Travel at (580) 250-4040.