

## Spiritual Fest 2010: African-American Spirituals Festival in Prague

Press release of the event on 18 & 19 September, 2010

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On 18 and 19 September, 2010 Prague became the City of the First International Festival of African-American Spirituals. At this already traditional local festival organized annually from 2003 each September, this year participated choirs and musical groups from six European countries.

During the event we received official greetings from Clyde Wright, the 82 years old member of well-known Golden Gate Quartet, who has been singing African-American Spirituals with its spiritual message all around the world for 55 years. He mentioned that "at that time no one in the countries that are participating today (at Spiritual Fest) was singing Negro Spirituals and Gospel songs there. We, The GGQ sang in all of these countries with lots of success. The People were wonderful."

During the two days the audience experienced beautiful atmosphere of Spirituals, original songs of African slaves, Gospels, songs expressing personal feeling of the contemporary believers and Christian African Ethno Songs, traditional and contemporary African folk songs. All these three styles are considered to be relative and have the same roots in Biblical tradition. There is no any similarity to Gospel workshops which are supposed to be participants training for the final common concert and are strictly monotematic. Spiritual Fest is large-scale event flourishing by different arrangements and varieties of genres.



There were over 400 singers and musicians. On Saturday there were especially Czech traditional choirs (Cantarina, YMCA Jakoubek, Columbella, KoKos, Hradecke komorni tucteto), ethno group Mysaci, folk duo T'N'T, folk group Mosny, acappella group DNA and organizing acappella choir Geshem, then German gospel group Gospel & Friends, Slovak choir Caecilia Chorus and excellent USA singer living in Prague Lee Andrew Davison. The final performance was given by TF Gospel Singers from Paris who gave the first day really worhipful finale.



Lee A. Davison (USA)  
( by Martin Myslivec)



On Sunday afternoon TF Gospel Singers had opened the second festival day before they left for the airport. Then Czech Country group Grandis, Gospel Swingers from Germany, Czech Brno

Gospel Choir, Frater Choir from Hungary, Prague ethno group Nsango Malamu, organizing Geshem group and at the end: excellent closure by high-tension stream of enthusiasm of Sopron Gospel from Hungary.

Spiritual Fest 2010 was more colourful and energizing than all previous years. Not only by variety of styles but also by specific individual arrangements of each participating group or choir.



Gospel Swingers (Germany) (picture by Martin Myslivec)



Caecilia Chorus (Slovakia)  
(by Martin Myslivec)



Sopron Gospel (Hungary) (picture by Martin Myslivec)

(Photographs of all groups will be at the Spiritual Fest web page [www.festival.spiritualy.cz](http://www.festival.spiritualy.cz)).

Keith Lancaster, the founder and leader of Acappella Group USA addressed the auditorium and all participants via his message by his confirmation that he is with all of us in his spirit and wishing so that "Spiritual Fest would be a musical, social and emotional mountain top experience." "There is indeed nothing like the experience of singing praises to God with fellow singers. The heart language that is activated cannot be fully defined nor described. This is never more obvious than when singing the priceless spiritual songs that seem to reach into the very depths of the human heart."

International social and spiritual content of Spiritual Fest 2010 was emphasised by partnership and support by another subjects. Festival was under the auspices of Mr. Joel Ruml, General Secretary of Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Czech Republic. Many thanks for financial and organizational support belong to St. Procopius Community Centre, City District Prague 13, Club Mlejn, Psalterium, Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, Zivot umelce Foundation and to dozens of volunteers helping with promotion and smooth running of the event. Promotion of the festival was supported by TV Noe, Broadcast stations Proglas and Countryradio, Folk union of the Czech Republic, Czech Radio, YMCA, ICEJ - International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, Choirs Union of the Czech Republic, Alliance Business Centers Network, internet pages [www.christianpost.cz](http://www.christianpost.cz), [www.ifolk.cz](http://www.ifolk.cz), [www.signaly.cz](http://www.signaly.cz) and others.

### **Invitation to Spiritual Fest 2011:**

Another event - Spiritual Fest 2011 - will be in Prague on 17 and 18 September 2011. Not only the previous participants are invited but all musical groups, choirs and musicians performing African-American Spirituals, Gospels and Christian African Ethno Songs especially from all Europe are welcome to register. During Sunday morning there would be Spirituals Workshop under the leadership of the Golden Gate Quartet singer and TF Gospel Singers conductor from France, Terry Francois.

We would be happy to hear from you and give you the right place in the next Spiritual Fest program.

On behalf of the organizing vocal acappella group Geshem wishing you a lot of joy from music.

Marek Šlechta

[www.geshem.cz](http://www.geshem.cz)

[www.festival.spiritualy.cz](http://www.festival.spiritualy.cz)

[www.afroamericanspirituals.org](http://www.afroamericanspirituals.org)