

An Interview with Tracy Crouch

We have a special treat today; Dixie Echoes bass Tracy Crouch agreed to be interviewed for this blog. He sang bass with the Florida's Diplomat Quartet from 1997 through 2000. He attended Southern Nazarene University in Bethany, Oklahoma studying for a B.S. degree in Music Ministry. He joined the Dixie Echoes in September 2004, singing his first concert with them on September 20, 2004 at the Suwanee River Jubilee. He has a blog of his own, cajunbass.blogspot.com.



1. Tell us a bit about yourself. What is your background?

I grew up in the small town of Iota which is in southwest Louisiana. Iota is located in the heart of "Acadiana", or "Cajun Country" so I grew up eating ALOT of crawfish, (which for ya'll that don't know, it is 'crawfish' NOT 'crayfish', or 'crawdads'!!) jambalaya, etouffee (a-too-fay), gumbo, cracklins, and all that other great food that the cajun's are known for. So naturally I have a great appreciation for authentic cajun food and the culture surrounding it. Something we didn't have a lot of was southern gospel music. Due to the large influence of Catholicism it just wasn't a hot spot for quartet singing. But thanks to my dad's love for southern gospel that's all I remember hearing growing up. Dad always had plenty of records by the Speer Family, Gaither Trio, Statesmen, Blackwood Brothers, Doug Oldham, Danny Gaither, Tennessee Ernie Ford, and many others.

2. Do you play any musical instruments?

Yes. I started in junior high school on the french horn and eventually moved to the baritone/euphonium, trumpet, and finally to the tuba where I've been ever since. I played the tuba all through my collegiate career and really enjoyed it. It's a fun instrument!

3. What are your hobbies?

Really singing has been my hobby. It was what I always did for fun. Now I just get paid to do it! I really don't have anything else that I just love to do on the side. I would enjoy playing in a small brass ensemble or community orchestra but our schedule just doesn't lend itself to that.

4. Who are your favorite groups and your favorite singers?

Really too many to list but here are some of my favorites: Speer Family, Gaither Trio, Dixie Echoes, Florida Boys, Goodmans, Palmetto State, Gold City, Booth Brothers, Hoppers, Rebels with Jim Hamill and London Parris, and really many, many more. As far as individual singers I enjoy George Younce, Tennessee Ernie Ford, JD Sumner, George Beverly Shea, Danny Gaither, Larry Ford, Ronnie Booth II, London Parris, Tim Riley, Guy Penrod, and again many, many more.

5. Other than singing bass, what are your responsibilities on the road?

Driving the bus, washing the bus, setting up and tearing down equipment.

6. After concerts, people sometimes walk up to singers and say, "You sound just like..." If someone wanted to give you a high compliment, who would they compare your singing to?

I've had this happen several times. The ones I hear the most are George Younce and Billy Todd. I take both of those as very high compliments.

7. On the same topic, what is the most unusual comparison someone has made with your voice?

I really haven't had an unusual vocal comparison, but someone told me not too long ago that I looked like Theodore Roosevelt. That took me by surprise!

8. What is the funniest thing a fan has said to you or a member of your group after a concert?

Right after the new King Kong movie came out I had a gentleman speaking with me at the table before the concert. He started talking about that movie and informed me that this new movie was "all fake", but the original "was real". He went on to tell me about the giant ape that escaped and how much trouble he caused. He was as serious as could be! At first I thought he was just kidding but as he continued it was pretty obvious he was a believer!!

9. What are your favorite and least favorite things about spending so much time on the road?

I really enjoy traveling and seeing many interesting places (and people). I hate having to miss family gatherings and now that I'm married I really miss spending time with my wife.

10. If you could not sing bass, what part would you want to sing?

Probably tenor. I know, I know...every tenor wants to be a bass, and every bass wants to be a tenor. But you have to admit these are pretty fun parts.

11. What is the lowest note you have ever hit? What is the lowest note you can predictably hit?

I think I've hit a low G a few times, Probably more A flats trying to hit the G's LOL. Consistently I can do a low C-Bb. You really don't need more than that. I'd rather spend time singing than growling.

12. If you could assemble an all-time all-star quartet, who would you select for the various positions?

That's a tough question, I know its been hashed over and over again on the message boards. It very possibly could change next week but this week I feel like Larry Ford-Tenor, Dale Shelnut-Lead, Mark Trammell-Baritone, Jim Wetherington-Bass, Hovie Lister-Piano

13. Suppose that you were looking for a bass job in a quartet. One day your phone rings, and it's Martin Cook offering you the job of singing bass for the Inspirations. Right after you hang up, Ernie Haase calls you and offers you the job of singing bass for Signature Sound. Which would you choose?

Well I'm not a real fan of mountains, I'm a flat lander, so I don't think Bryson City would work for me. So if I had to make a choice between these two groups I'd go with an easier elevation in Ohio. But...well...I know I could never get my hair to look like that and I'd have to improve my cardio to keep up with the rest of them.

Thank you, Tracy!