

Bus Operator and Soul Singer, Hank Dixon, to Perform in England

By AMY HOWELL



- East Valley Division 15 operator Hank Dixon is tenor vocalist, and an original member, of The Originals, a soul vocal group that formed in the late 1960s and is still going strong today.

(May 22, 2002) East Valley Division 15 Bus Operator Hank Dixon soon will be packing his bags for England.

He's not going as a vacationer, though. He's going as an Original.

Dixon is one-fourth of The Originals, a soul vocal group with roots that date back to 1969 when their hit song, "Baby, I'm for Real," topped the R&B charts.

The Originals will be headlining at the Ritz in Manchester, England May 30 to June 4.

"It'll be our first time in England," said Dixon, who serves as the group's tenor vocalist. "I hear we're quite popular over there, so it's quite a thrill to be going."

The Originals got their start on the road to stardom at Motown Records. "We just started doing all the background vocals for Motown until Marvin Gaye heard us," said Dixon. "He penned our hit."

"As soon as the radio stations started playing it, it just busted wide open," Dixon said. "It was the first hit we had."

The Originals' scored their second hit in 1970 with "The Bells."

Toured with Temptations, Diana Ross

In those years, the group toured with such notable acts as the Temptations, Diana Ross and the Supremes and Bobby Taylor and the Vancouvers.

Currently, The Originals work with Alan Beck, promoter of the Slow Jam concert series. The group also recently appeared on PBS's Oldies But Goodies show, which aired April 29 through May 2.



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Today's lineup of The Originals includes, from left: Walter Gaines, Freddy Gorman, Terrie Dixon and Hank Dixon. Below, the original "Originals."



The Originals soul group, as shown on an early album cover, are, from left: Freddy Gorman, Walter Gaines, C.P. Spencer and the MTA's Hank Dixon.

You can find more information about [The Originals](http://www.cdnow.com) online at www.cdnow.com

The other members of The Originals include original members Freddy Gorman and Walter Gaines, as well as Dixon's daughter, Terrie, who joined the group after original member C.P. Spencer retired.

"She just fell right in," said Dixon, of his daughter. "The audience has been really accepting of her."

Dixon himself joined the group after serving in the Army for eight years. "I got in touch with my old buddies and they were looking for another singer," he said. "So I got the job. It was like perfect timing."

Background vocalists

Before his stint in the Army, Dixon actually had already joined forces with Gorman, Gaines and Spencer—first, as The Five Stars, and later, as The Voicemasters. In both cases, they served as background vocalists for Motown Records' recording artists.

When Dixon returned from his military duties, The Voicemasters were still around, but the group soon evolved into The Originals.

Currently a resident of Palmdale, it was Motown that brought Dixon to Southern California. When Motown moved its offices from Detroit to Los Angeles, Dixon went, too. He said he was "trying to be a star" by "following the brass ring."

In addition to daughter and group mate Terrie, Dixon also is father to daughter Tammy and son Anthony. He has been married to his wife, Ella, for 43 years.

The Originals have just recently started to experience greater success. This works in his favor, since Dixon, an operator for just over 21 years, plans to retire in 2003.

"If we keep our health and strength, that's all we need. I think everything else will work out fine."

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