



Valdosta State  
University®

**South Georgia Folklife Project  
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**HYMNS AND HOEDOWNS CONCERT TO FEATURE SOUTH GEORGIA'S MUSICAL ROOTS**

**INFORMATION: Laurie Sommers, 229-293-6310**

The South Georgia Folklife Project, part of the VSU College of the Arts, will present a special concert of South Georgia music on Thursday, April 7, 2005, 7:30 p.m., at First United Methodist Church, 220 N. Patterson Street, Valdosta. Admission is free, but donations will be accepted to benefit the preservation of the South Georgia Folklife Collection at the VSU Archives.

This program features some of South Georgia's most outstanding musical traditions and musicians. It also brings back individuals who have been featured in popular past programs of the South Georgia Folklife Project. These include the Hoboken Sacred Harp singing community (Tunes and Traditions concert, First United Methodist Church, 2000); Freedom Singer Rutha Harris (Oh Freedom joint program with the VSU African American Studies Program, 2001), and the Twin Fiddles of George Custer and Henry Rutland (Ballads and Breakdowns concert, 2003).

The program will open with members of the **Hoboken Sacred Harp singing community** who carry on a tradition of four-part unaccompanied religious singing which dates to at least the mid-1800s in South Georgia. Singing school teacher David Lee, along with his cousin Clarke Lee, is leading a revival of the local "Hoboken style" of Sacred Harp singing, also known as "shape note singing."

**Rutha Harris** of Albany, Georgia, originally came to national attention as a member of the SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) Freedom Singers during the 1960s Civil Rights Movement. This program features her repertoire as a freedom singer and a singer of gospel hymns.

The program will conclude with the twin fiddle team of cousins Henry Rutland of Thomasville and **George Custer** of Salt Springs, Florida, the latter a Florida Heritage Award winner born in South Georgia. The "twin fiddles" were the only fiddle duo featured at the 1982 Knoxville World's Fair. They perform together these days only by special request. They will be accompanied by their cousin, **Bert Rutland** of Lake Park, on bass, and guitarist **Paul Massey** of Cairo.

This concert is sponsored by the South Georgia Folklife Project of the Valdosta State University College of the Arts with support from First United Methodist Church and from the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art.