

A quartet of five: also catch them in Vegas

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NEW ULM — If you miss the Heidelberg Quartett's performance at New Ulm's Heritagefest this year, don't worry. You can catch their act all September in Las Vegas.

The Heidelberg Quartett began a U.S. tour at Heritagefest this month. The tour will take them to Milwaukee's Germanfest, and to a week's booking at the Bräuhaus in Chicago. Its back to France for a festival, then off to Las Vegas, where they will entertain at the Hofbräuhaus, a restaurant that re-creates the look and atmosphere of the famous Munich Hofbräuhaus.

It's all in a days work for the band, which performs about 200 nights a year.

The Quartett was organized

about 20 years ago by Andy Paul, the leader of the band and the reed player. Other members include Rolf Wind, the horn player, Peter Nemecek, the bass player, drummer Lars Vollmer, and Christoph Stadler, who doubles as the band's translator.

Yes, that's five members in the quartet, but Stadler explains that sometimes only four members are able to show up for a performance. Four members or five, the audiences don't quibble when the band starts playing. They love it.

The group specializes in traditional German and Bohemian waltzes, polkas and folk songs, and popular German music as well.

The Quartett's members are all professional musicians or music teachers, and they work hard to make it look easy on stage.

This is the band's first visit to

New Ulm, but Paul, the band-leader, performed at Heritagefest two years ago with another band, the Melody Sextett.

Stadler said the band had a chance to tour New Ulm Friday, and said it didn't meet their typical expectations of an American city. "We are amazed by its beauty," he said. "It's a very tidy place, with lots of green."

And the band is "amazed by the enormous hospitality of the people we are staying with," said Stadler.

The band is being hosted by Dave and Karen Christiansen. Charley and Elaine Neitzel, Florence Arbus and Bernd Lehrke, and they want to thank their host families for their hospitality.

The group will be playing Saturday in the Bayerwald Tent, and Sunday at the Rosen Tent during the rest of Heritagefest.



Staff photo by Steve Muscatello

Members of the Heidelberg Quartett perform on the Fest Halle stage Friday at Heritagefest.