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Attendees fill Zoellner Arts Center on Oct. 29 to see Home Free, a country a capella band perform as its last stop on the Road Sweet Road tour. Home Free gained popularity through the now canceled NBC singing competition show in 2013, "The Sing-Off". (Stephanie Kasulka/B&W Staff)

## Viral a capella band Home Free ends tour at Zoellner

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BY STEPHANIE KASULKA — ; PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 2, 2022, 10:00 PM

LIFESTYLE, TOP STORIES

The a capella country band, Home Free, made their way to Lehigh as the last stop on their Road Sweet Road tour. Baker Hall in Zoellner Arts Center was packed on Oct. 29 as the group performed a variety of all-vocal songs ranging from country classics to pop.

Home Free first gained popularity when it won the now-canceled NBC singing competition show "The Sing-Off" in 2013. The group won \$100,000 in prize money and a Sony Music recording contract.

"Home Free is my absolute favorite band," Artie Hatfield, '26, said. "When I first got here on campus, I toured the building and saw that they were performing and I lost my mind."

Originally from Austin, Texas, Hatfield said he has always been a fan of country music, but had never been able to see the group perform.

The group has gone on to use its television exposure to build a significant following. Home Free has 1.57 million subscribers on Youtube and are frequently on tour, playing venues across the country.

Easton resident and concert attendee John Price said he subscribes to Home Free on Youtube.

"I saw they were on 'The Sing-Off,'" Price said. "Now I watch their covers of a lot of songs we like on Youtube. I liked the Keith Urban songs they did."

Throughout the performance, the group was interactive with the audience and encouraged people to stand up on their feet and sing, dance or clap along as they performed. In between songs, the performers spoke directly to the crowd, asking questions and making jokes.

Some of Home Free's fans were frustrated by the audience not being enthusiastic enough.

"I loved the show but the people around here need to learn how to show a little more love at a country concert," Hellertown resident Greta Salvaggio said.

Salvaggio and her daughter Shelbie Salvaggio, whom she attended the concert with, said they are both "Homefries," the group's name for its fans.

The pair first heard of the group after seeing them on "The Sing-Off," but did not keep up with their success. Last Christmas, Greta Salvaggio found a video of them on Youtube, which reignited her fondness for their music.

"There's not a bad song that they do, ever," Greta Salvaggio said. "Whether it's with the group or on their own it's amazing."

Shelbie Salvaggio said she bought tickets to the concert for her mother's birthday.

"She loves them so much that I think the whole neighborhood could hear her scream when they announced they were coming here," Shelbie Salvaggio said.

The Salvaggios said Home Free has something to offer everyone, since they cover genres from rock, to pop to country.

Will Angus, '26, said he first saw the group perform with his mom in Westchester, New York, three years ago. He was particularly impressed by their voices, and that they could replicate the sound of instruments without using them.

Angus said he enjoyed his experience at his first Home Free concert so much that he wanted to come to see them again, even without his mom.

"She texted me saying that Home Free was going to be at Lehigh, so I knew I was absolutely gonna go," Angus said.

Mark Wilson, director of Zoellner Arts Center, said he was very pleased with the turnout at the concert.

"I knew that they would be able to bring a new audience to our center," Wilson said. "I love the fact that the students who came were so excited that Home Free was here."