



Wonder's New Look

Singer Stevie Wonder announces at a news conference recently, plans for a January 15, 1981 march in Washington to support efforts to make Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday a national holiday. UPI Photo

Roberta & Bryson Musical Marriage A Perfect Blend

Usually it's said that ideal marriages are made in Heaven, but Roberta Flack and Peabo Bryson are an example of a perfect blend of beautiful music made in a recording studio.

Not since she was teamed with the late Donny Hathaway has Roberta established a flawless singing rapport with another male vocalist. And with the release recently of their two record album on Atlantic records, "Live And More," critics and fans expect it to be one of the year's best-sellers.

The consummate artist-supreme singer, songwriter, musician, producer and arranger, Flack's musical stature has approached the peak of

her career.

Going into the studio in 1969 to record her first LP, "First Time," she's since been the recipient of thirteen gold records, the last being "Roberta Flack Featuring Donny Hathaway."

When Bryson appeared on her concert tour early this year as a feature artist, audiences gave them standing ovations when they performed as a duo. The success of their "togetherness" resulted in the demand for their present LP.

On the album they collaborated on "Only Heaven Can Wait," "You Are My Heaven," "Make The World Stand Still," "Back Together Again" and three others. Roberta solos on three tunes

and Peabo on four of his own compositions.

Described as a laid back singer, Roberta brings an electrifying excitement to her audiences. Sitting quietly at the Steinway, or standing at the mike, she gives a unique interpretation to lyrics that few vocalists have mastered.

Now enjoying a super reputation, Flack's musical interest gripped her when she took up piano lessons at the age of nine. Enrolled in Howard University at fifteen on a music scholarship, she later upon graduation became a teacher in a small Farmville N.C. schoolhouse.

Returning to the nation's capital in 1963, she gravitated to the nightclub circuit, all the

while building a name for herself as a performer worth listening to. Her stardom really started to rise when Les McCann entered the club one night and was mesmerized by her artistry at the piano and with the words that poured from her lips.

Brought to the attention of officials at Atlantic Records, she turned up for an audition prepared to sing 600 songs she learned. Finally the session was narrowed to 35 songs, out of which eight were chosen for her first album. Of these the big hit was "First Time I Saw Your Face."

Probably the only artist to be honored twice in Washington, D.C. with a day in her honor, she also garnered

awards from women's organizations for her involvement in causes dedicated to the improvement of life for the less fortunate.

Past the stage of being merely a singer, Roberta is a musical conveyer of joy, sadness and beauty. Her songs are memories that listeners treasure long after she's left the stage.

History in time will measure the true greatness of this one time schoolmarm. Just as there can never be a painting to rival the Mona Lisa nor a baseball player to duplicate Jackie Robinson's feat on the baseball diamond, future historians will no doubt say that Roberta Flack stands unequalled in her art.