

Big Hits No Easy Road To Riches

Although fame and fortune have attended many who reach the top of the recording business, those starting out should be aware that the money doesn't come in cascades with the first few hits.

"It's getting better," says Sharon Bryany of Atlantic Starr about their fourth A&M album, "Brilliance." "But we're not rich yet."

Because record companies invest major sums in launching acts, they have what are called 'recoupable' expenses in the contract. The acts must repay these from royalties before enjoying the cash flow. These days, it can take an act three or four hit albums to repay the record company before achieving financial independence.

Bryant and Jonathan Lewis, two of Starr's nine members, shared with me some of their experiences in reaching their current chart-topping and headline tour status.

"We literally lived together in the beginning," adds Sharon. "We left White Plains for Los Angeles in 1976 and spent the next three years trying to get our breaks. To survive, we all lived together like family. I think that has added a closeness that keeps us together now."

Lewis, who plays trombone, explains that all decisions are "Very democratic. We vote on everything. It keeps everyone's head level. We all grew up in the same town and went to the same high school." The group ranges in age from percussionist Joey Phillips, at 33 to sax player Koran Daniels and guitarist (and heart-throb) David Lewis at 23. The third Lewis brother, Wayne, is 25 and plays keyboards. David and

STROBE

by Tim Walter
Copyright © 1982. TSI Syndicate Features

Wayne write many of the group's tunes and, with Sharon, provide most of the group's lead vocals. David and Wayne wrote number one hit single, "Circles."

Lewis relates the group's pleasure at hooking up with producer James Carmichael. Carmichael had a finer in the success of both the Jacksons and the Commodores and nuances of both groups can be detected on "Brilliance."

"James is a genius at what he does," agrees Bryant and Lewis. "In the studio, there's a lot of give and take, we learn from each other."

Carmichael once related to me advice that he had given the Commodores about staying together, how adversity is adhesive and money and fame split the best of friends. Since then, Michael and Jermaine Jackson have established solo careers and Lionel Richie Jr. is well on his way with a solo album due from Motown this month. It's too early to predict how Atlantic Starr will manage at the top.

Lewis says the groups left New York because of pressures of other jobs and family ties prevented adequate closeness for development. "In L.A.," he says, "we didn't really know anybody. Without outside influences, we just

worked on our music and it paid off." After Herb Alpert (a co-owner of A&M Records) heard the group in 1977, it took him less than 20 minutes to decide to sign the group.

Atlantic Starr is now on tour for the summer; they broke in as headliners in Washington, D.C. with Motown's Jean Carn as an opening co-star. My assessment? Their stage show confirms what I hear in the recordings...a bright, talented "house band" that represents A&M's answer to the Jacksons and the Commodores...but they're not really cutting any new ground. Perhaps their creativity will be more apparent in the future; just now they're just product for the dealer's shelves.

Subscribe To

The Post

Today

Call 376-0496

Receive Your Charlotte Post

And Know Your Community's News

On Friday

—Call 376-0496

For Your Subscription Today!



By the way...

By Joe Black

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in an effort to uplift the morale of America's citizens during World War II, said: "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." But nothing stays the same and today those words have little meaning for many who are approaching the age for retirement.

Senior Citizens have many things to fear: insufficient funds, robbery, loneliness, poor housing, inadequate nutrition, and plain ol' indifference from society. But we should not let it be like that in these United States of America. Because through the years the older citizens have worked hard on many jobs; weathered the storm of bias and hatred; paid taxes to support this nation; fought in wars to preserve democracy; and endured the slams of bias as they struggled to open doors so that Blacks coming behind them could work at new and better jobs.

And yet many of us stand by silently and watch them struggle to live their remaining years with some dignity and pride. We can help by writing our political representatives and telling them that the Social Security laws must be amended so as to be relevant to today's economic requirements. We can alert the police about hoodlum elements that steal Social Security checks, snatch their purses, or break into their homes because they are old and defenseless. And we can take the time to extend the hand of friendship and a friendly hello, or an offer to run an errand.

The suggestions are simple, economical, and real, and my friends, don't ever forget that the hands of time continue to move, and soon they will be you.

Joe Black

Vice President
The Greyhound Corporation

Charlotte is Movin' with the Joyful Gospel Sounds

on

WQCC

1540 AM

Tune in Monday Thru Sunday, 6am-Sunset For The Best Gospel!

● Ministry Programs ● What's Cooking ● Contac

● Interviews & Reviews ● Q-15 Lunchtime Special

● Oldtime Gospel ● People's Choice

● Soulful Experience

'All Gospel-All The Time'