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Randy Crawford Has Achieved Acclaim In States, Abroad

by Loretta Manago
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While Randy Crawford has made a name for herself in the entertainment industry of America, it is in Europe where she has achieved her most fame.

On the European continent, particularly in Britain, Miss Crawford has been a favorite of music lovers for years. Recently, she was honored with the British Phonographic Award, an equivalent of the Grammy award and the London, *Times* dubbed her "the most gifted soul singer to appear in many years. In her United Kingdom performances as well as those in France, Germany and the Benelux countries, her concerts are consistently sell-outs.

From continent to continent Randy Crawford proves herself to be an artist for all seasons. As much as the fans adore her distinct vocal style, so is it also shared by music makers. Crusader, Welton Felder ranks her in the same league as Billy Holliday and Rand Dinah Washington. Miss Crawford's association with the famous Crusaders resulted in the crossover smash, "Street Life."

Like most black entertainers Randy Crawford came from a musical family. Both her parents sang in the church and from that institution's rich historical roots was where Miss Crawford got her start. Even at an early age Miss Crawford was singing the lead in the congregational choir.

Miss Crawford's musical talent was soon to spread beyond the confines of the church's walls. And, at the age of 15 she began working in local clubs. Her first gig was at Playboy's Bar in Cincinnati, Ohio, where her family lived and members of her band included Bootsie Collins and his brother Phelps.

As time passed and Miss Crawford grew in experience she later joined a local jazz trio. With this group Miss Crawford was to learn more than notes and lyrics. At the encouragement of the pianist who played in the jazz trio, Miss Crawford began to study piano and acquire some basic musical knowledge.

While Miss Crawford was learning the fundamentals of her craft, she was still making a living by playing in a club in St. Tropes in Southern France. Shortly after her return to Cincinnati, Miss Crawford was working on a local television show spotted by a talent scout and recommended to a major Los Angeles booking agency.

Although Miss Crawford was quite known throughout Cincinnati, it was time that the country was introduced to this woman of incredible talent. In 1972, Randy Crawford performed for the first time in New York where she shared the bill at a month long stand with jazz guitarist-vocalist George Benson.



RANDY CRAWFORD

...Internationally famous

Miss Crawford later settled in Los Angeles and thus began the rounds of ses-

sion work, songwriting demos and occasional club dates. And when it seemed like it would never happen, she got her first big break.

The year was 1975 and the event was the World Jazz Association's first gala concert. The event touted such reputations as Quincy Jones, Stan Getz, Jimmy Smith, Bob James and George Benson. Among all those big names was the name of one person who was virtually unknown. That was Randy Crawford. Her performance at that concert led one man to offer her a recording contract. Bob Krasnow, vice president of talent at Warner Bros. was so impressed by what he heard that he went backstage to offer Miss Crawford a chance to launch her singing career, nationwide and later, throughout the world.

Her first lp for Warner Bros., "Everything Must Change," included two live tracks of material from Cannonball Adderly's "Big Man" album. A year later she released "Miss Randy Crawford," revealing a decidedly less jazzy side of her repertoire. With her third release, "Raw Silk," there was a distinct change of pace from the prevailing disco trends of that year and it brought her a great deal of critical attention. "Now We May Begin," Miss Crawford's fourth album was produced by the Crusaders and featured the international hit, "One Day I'll Fly Away." But it is her latest production which has been called "the most exciting, intriguing and wholly satisfying album in her musical career." "Nightline" contains the music of that special singer that lingers long after the needle has left the groove.

Young Democrats

The North Carolina Young Democrats' State Convention will be held March 22-23 at the Winston-Salem Plaza in Winston-Salem. Activities begin Friday night, with the Mecklenburg County Young Democrats hosting a Mexican Festival. Elections and other state business will be conducted Saturday morning. A banquet will be held Saturday evening. Banquet tickets are \$18.00 and may be purchased from any board member. A fleet of YDMC cars will be leaving Charlotte on Friday evening and again on Saturday morning. For more information, call Lecil Henderson at 847-2483.

Other YDMC activities coming up this month include a general meeting on the 19th at 7:30 p.m. at the downtown public library (election of board members and presentation by Ed Turlington, State Executive Director).