

4B ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Voices of Faith CD worth listen



By Winfred B. Cross
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Rev. C.L. Fairchild and the Voices of Greater Faith
Is Your All On The Altar?
Rev. C.L. Fairchild, producer
Atlanta International Records (Gospel)

☆☆☆

Today's gospel music is much like any other genre: it's performance driven. It doesn't matter if you don't have much to say, just say it as stylishly as you can. Sincerity be forgotten.

That's why Rev. C.L. Fairchild's *Voices of Greater Faith* are so refreshing. You can hear the commitment beam from this CD. There are no gimmicks, no vocal acrobatics, just good, strong singing from the heart, not the head.

The CD has it all. It's steeped in traditional gospel but isn't dated or stodgy. Listen to the title song. It's a combination sermon-testimony that will move you to the depths of your soul. Fairchild delivers the sermon while the choir and soloist Crystal Payne-Bonner deliver the song. All three are excellent. The choir shows wonderful harmony on "The Praise Song." It's one of the few times an African American choir has done a song like this without sounding like the Oral Roberts singers. There's nothing wrong with sounding like the Oral Roberts singers, if that's what you like. I don't.

There's some contemporary flavor as well - "Born Again," "Lord Take Control," "Be Still And Know" - but even those songs don't stray far from traditional roots. The choir does let you know it can get funky, however. The reprise of "Take Control Lord" could put some r&b songs to shame. But that's not what the choir wants to be its hallmark. These folks can sing.

Imprompt2
Can't Get Enough
Imprompt2, Oji Pierce, Wendell Wellman, Big Bub, Jimmy Varner and Eddie F., producers
MoJazz/Motown Records

☆☆☆

Imprompt2 slipped on the music scene a few years ago with a CD filled with slick r&b songs with a tasty jazz influence. It almost went unnoticed because there was virtually no radio format to play the duo.

Still, they did well enough to release a second CD. I'm glad because Johnny Britt (trumpet and vocals) and rapper Sean E. Mac are talented guys who have a unique sound. Their second CD *Can't Get Enough* moves them away from the jazzy sound to more of the slick r&b stuff. That's good in a way. This CD may get a little more air play at black radio, but do miss Britt's Miles Davis-inspired trumpet. It's almost an afterthought now.

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Seals makes 'Big Plays' on and off field

By Mark Pendergrass
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Carolina Panther Ray Seals doesn't have to travel far to his second job.

This fall he'll be roaming around Charlotte and other NFL cities looking for opposing quarterbacks as a member of the Panthers' defensive line.

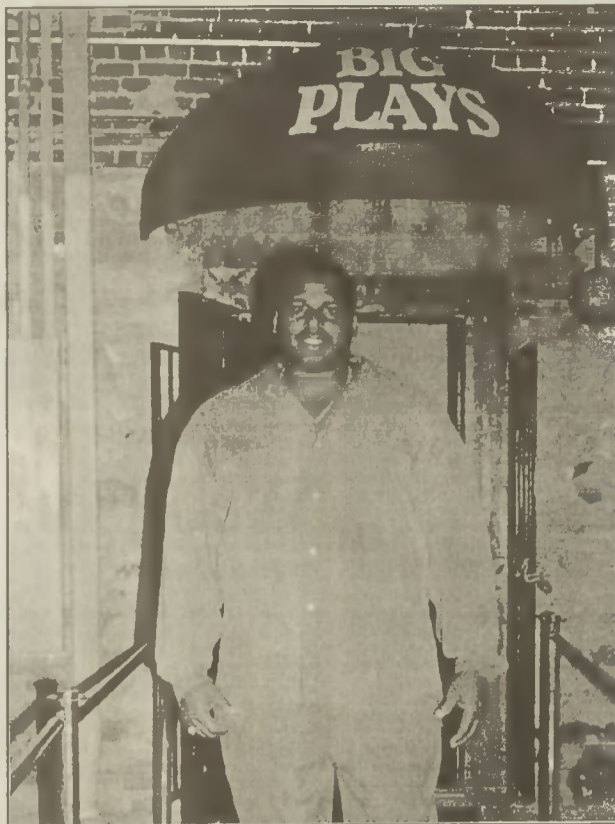
But after games, he'll shed the thick pads for a business suit. His business.

Seals owns Big Plays, the latest hot spot in Charlotte's growing night life, located on Cedar Street behind Ericsson Stadium.

Seals opened his upscale sports bar/nightclub only two weeks after completing a deal to acquire the club. That was only a trial run to test the potential support from Charlotteans. The grand opening kicked off with food, drink and live entertainment.

"From the looks of it, Ray's opening night is a success," said Panther Andre Royal. "I just came out to support my fellow teammate to ensure he is a success in Charlotte."

The festivities lasted throughout the evening and



Seals

highlighted the talents of Deep Pockets, featuring electric violinist Rodney McCoy. Hosting the event were V101.9 Morning Show host Janine Davis and WPEG Power 98 DJ EZ Ice.

The interior was set with a cabaret atmosphere. Every table was occupied and most sections of the club were standing room only. Several of Seals' teammates, as well as business associates, showed up to support his venture.

Although Seals signed a two-year contract with the Panthers, he agreed to a four-year lease, confirming his plans for a career after football.

"After 10 years in the NFL, you have to start thinking about life after football," Seals said. "Coming to Charlotte to play for my former Pittsburgh coach (Don Capers) was a great, great opportunity and owning this club next to the stadium is just as wonderful."

Seals friend Mike Howze of Premier Properties in Charlotte was instrumental in making the deal. Dave L. James Jr., a vice president at NationsBank, was influential in supporting the financial acquisition.

"Ray has made a good busi-

ness decision and I am glad to have the opportunity to work with him," James said during the grand opening festivities. "He is a good guy and is interested in doing positive things in Charlotte. Ray is a first class type of guy."

According to patrons, Seals' hard work paid off.

Big Plays is ideally located for Panthers fans to enjoy pre-game and/or post game festivities. Formally known as Harrison's, Seals did not have to do any major interior decorating before the grand opening. As training camp approaches, Seals' time at the club will be limited, but he has a staff of managers to ensure his business venture maintains success.

Seals has participated in other business ventures in other NFL cities. While playing in Tampa, Fla., Seals was the co-owner and manager of a fitness center and night club. While in Pittsburgh, Seals created and marketed the logo "60 Minute Men" on athletic apparel for Steelers teammates and fans. The concept developed in the Steelers' locker room and

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Death penalty is not an option in Cosby murder case

By Linda Deutsch
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES - Mikail Markhasev murmured "Thank you" to his lawyers as prosecutors announced Friday they will not seek a death sentence for the teen-age immigrant accused of killing Bill Cosby's only son.

"He was quite happy and I remember the words, 'Thank you,' coming out of his lips," said Deputy Public Defender Henry Hall, who stood beside Markhasev during a hearing which lasted only a few seconds.

The lanky 18-year-old defendant wore a blue jail uniform and had a newly cropped jail haircut.

"We have decided not to pursue the death penalty," Deputy District Attorney Anne Ingalls announced in a soft voice.

She didn't give any reasons, and district attorney's spokeswoman Sandi Gibbons said there would be no statement about the factors that led to the decision to spare Markhasev's life if he is convicted.

The defendant's age was believed to be a major consideration as well as concerns about persuading a jury to execute Markhasev if he is convicted in a case known to have evidence flaws.

Cosby spokesman David Brokaw issued a statement on behalf of Cosby and his wife, Camille, saying, "We support

the district attorney's decision. Now, onward to jurisprudence."

Superior Court Judge John Reid, the supervising judge of the criminal division, immediately transferred the matter to Santa Monica Superior Court where it will be tried. No trial date was set, but a hearing was scheduled for June 12.

Hall told a mass of reporters the greatest challenge will be finding a jury untainted by pre-trial publicity.

"This is a case that could take a month to put on evidence and six months to choose a jury," he said, acknowledging that Bill Cosby's status as a beloved American entertainer will impact on jury selection.

Ennis Cosby, 27, was found

dead beside his father's convertible Jan. 16 along a dark road where he apparently had stopped to change a tire.

Markhasev, a Ukrainian immigrant who has been in the United States for eight years, was arrested March 12 after an acquaintance implicated him. The acquaintance led police to an area where a knit cap and gun were found.

The indictment, which was unsealed May 13, accused Markhasev of one count of murder with the special circumstance of robbery or attempted robbery, and one count of attempted robbery. The grand jury transcripts remain sealed. "Special circumstances" are aggravating factors to a murder that make it a potential capital case under California law.

An indictment allows the case to go straight to Superior Court without a Municipal Court preliminary hearing.

Markhasev has been in custody since his arrest. He has been described by some as a quiet and polite honor student and by others as a juvenile delinquent with a violent reputation.

At the time of his death, Ennis Cosby was pursuing a doctorate in education from Columbia University's Teachers College in New York. Earlier this month, the school posthumously awarded him a master's degree.

Blues Society holds its contest Sunday

By Winfred B. Cross
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Singing the blues sometimes releases a lot of frustration. This weekend it will send some lucky group to Memphis, Tenn.

The lucky group will be the winner of The Charlotte Blues Society's third annual blues contest to be held 8 p.m. Sunday at the Double Door Inn. The first place winner will go to Memphis in October to participate in the Blues Foundation's international competition. The winner also gets recording time at Reflections Studio and a photo shoot.

More than 15 participants have signed up for Sunday's competition. Each participant will share the same equipment. "They'll each get 10 minutes," said Bob Paolino, president of the Charlotte Blues Society. "It's up to them. They can do three three-minute songs, two five-minute songs or one long one. What ever the band or singer wants."

The contest does have other guidelines, which are the same as the international competition.

"We've geared ours as close to the national's as possible, even in terms of how we score," Paolino said.

The contest was open to any band or singer which submitted an application. Ironically, few entrants are black and none are from Charlotte.



"Probably every blues band from Charlotte has entered already," Paolino said.

He was a little more concerned with the lack of black participation in the contest and the society.

"It seems as if it's been a piece of the past that (some African Americans) would like to forget," he said. "Our philosophy is that this wonderfully rich blues legacy is something to be extremely proud of. It's influenced every aspect of music today. It gave birth to rock & roll and its elements can be found in jazz."

Paolino is six months into a two-year presidency. "Lately we've seen more and more people of color coming to our meetings," he said.

He attributes some of the rekindled interest to new blues artists such as Keb Mo.

"He has great crossover appeal. I think that will really help bring more young people of color to blues," he said.

Doors open at 2 p.m. with

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Sweet as brown suga'



PHOTO/DONNA BISE

Trenton Witherspoon (left), Shon Wilson and Michael Moore get ready for a rollicking good time in Theatre Charlotte's production of "Bubbling Brown Sugar."

The Tony-nominated musical features the music of Fats Waller, Billie Holiday, Eubie Blake and Duke Ellington. It's a high Blake romp through Harlem's glorious days of the '20s and '30s.

The musical opens tonight, running Thursdays - Sundays until June 22. Tickets are \$10 on Thursdays and Sundays, \$15 Friday and Saturday.

Showtime is 8 p.m.; 2:30 p.m. June 22.

-Winfred B. Cross

