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Singer Donna Summer Finds Key To "True Happiness"

By Loretta Manago
Post Staff Writer

With a string of number one tunes trailing her, Donna Summer, in some circles, has been called the "Queen of Disco."

Songs like "Love To Love You Baby," "Last Dance," "On The Radio," and "Love Is In Control," helped to propel a career that was destined for stardom.

Like many black entertainers, Ms. Summer made her singing debut in the church choir. She later taught herself how to play the piano so that she could write her own songs.

Whereas music was indeed an area where Ms. Summer was talented, there were other talents of Ms. Summers' to emerge and take precedence over a singing career. That area was a career in the theatre.

At the age of 19, Ms. Summer launched her professional performing career in New York, when she landed a major role in the Munich, Germany, production of "Hair." For eight years, Ms. Summer was featured in German productions of "Godspell" and "The Me Nobody Knows" and as a member of the Vienna Folk Opera in their productions of "Porgy And Bess" and "Showboat."

With such a formalized training, Ms. Summer returned to the States and thus began to blend the soul of R&B, the rhythm of pop with a "fine European veneer and created what is known as the Summer Sound."

That sound produced a string of hit singles and albums that achieved gold, platinum, double and even triple platinum status. Even with the tag "Disco Queen," Donna Summer proved through her "consummate vocal skills" that there was more to her and her music than just a good beat.



SINGER DONNA SUMMER

...Internationally famous

She has been able to make such strides because of the universality in her songs. "I think my popularity and success around the world has been due to the fact that people are able to understand my songs, whether or not they are performed in their own language," Ms. Summer confirmed.

Looking beyond the material success that Ms. Summer certainly possesses, the songstress also has found the key to true happiness. A few years ago, despite the accolades and artis-

tic and commercial successes she has garnered, Ms. Summer discovered that fame, fans and finances had not brought her the happiness that she had once expected.

"I had achieved what I set out to achieve and I was miserable. I had become very unhappy and after a while, I just figured that there's got to be a better way than this. Finally, I just surrendered to God and literally from that day on, my life was changed," affirmed Ms. Summer.

Responding to her own personal spiritual needs and making God first in her life has made Ms. Summer a winner in both of her worlds. She is continually growing and displaying diversification as an artist. But with the new extension that she has made she never lost the ability to do one thing and that is set to music the common thoughts and feelings shared by millions of people around the world.

Christmas Carol

Charlotte, NC - Spirit Square and the North Carolina Shakespeare Festival will present a family holiday special, "A Christmas Carol," on Wednesday, December 19, and Thursday, December 20, at 8:15 p.m. The December 20 performance will be interpreted for the hearing impaired, through a grant from the Grassroots Arts Program of the North Carolina Arts Council.

Tickets are \$9 and are available at the Spirit Square Box Office, 318 N. Tryon St., Charlotte, N.C. 28202. Hours are 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Tickets can be ordered in person, by mail or by phone. Phone orders will be held for five days without payment. All major credit cards are accepted. For more information or to order tickets, call the Box Office at 704-376-8883.

Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" has been a holiday favorite ever since it was first published in England in 1843. The North Carolina Shakespeare Festival, based in High Point, will present its own adaptation of this Dickens classic with the assistance of senior students from the Drama Department at the North Carolina School of the Arts. This tale of Ebenezer Scrooge and Tiny Tim stresses Dickens' belief in the brotherhood of man.