

ENTERTAINMENT

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Miki Howard
...A new talent

Miki Howard: R&B's Latest Arrival

By Loretta Manago
Post Staff Writer

If you listen closely, for a split second you might mistake Miki Howard for Melba Moore. The singing styles are similar, but make no mistake, Miki Howard has a style of her own.

Formally, she made her debut on the entertaining set with a dazzling tune, "Come Share My Love", but if the truth is to be told Miki Howard has been around for awhile.

No novice made, Come Share My Love sizzle. In this debut album, Miki worked with producer LeMel Humes who was also significantly responsible for the success of Whitney Houston's premiere production. What the listening ear hears while tuning in to Come Share My Love is a singer so versatile that from song to song, the range and depth of Miki Howard alters.

"She sounds silky smooth and contemplative one minute...raw, gritty and passionate the next. Equally at ease singing sentimental ballads, such as

"My Friend" and "Come Share My Love" or such high-energy dance numbers as "You Better Be Ready To Love Me" and "I Can't Wait To See You Alone", Miki Howard displays amazing versatility."

Displaying versatility, tremendous ease with any genre of music, comes to no surprise to anyone who is familiar with Miki Howard's background. Surrounded by music since birth, Miki Howard grew up in a household

feasted on gospel and rhythm and blues. Both of her parents were gospel singing—Mom sang with The Caravan and Dad sang with the Temple Jubilees. And while Miki's parents were sing-

ing gospel, Miki, remembers that as a toddler, her sisters were listening to Aretha Franklin, Diana Ross and the Supremes, Lena Horne, Dinah Washington, Shirley Bassey, Morgana King and Little Jimmy Scott.

In no time, Miki Howard was singing professionally. She was only eight when she began singing with Rev. James Cleveland's choir. By the time she was 16, Miki had joined forces with the band Side Effect, best known for the hit, "Always There." For nine years, Miki was the group's lead vocalist.

"It was a great time for a black female singer," responded Miki Howard.

Between touring and recording, Miki managed to find time to do sessions with a wide variety of artists. Esther Phillips, Roy Ayers, Billy Cobham, Stanley Turrentine, The Gap Band, Philip Bailey, Dolly Parton are but a few of the names that she worked with, in the recording studio or on stage.

Eventually the strains and pressures of touring, performing got to Side Effect. The band disbanded.

For Miki, this was a turning point in her career. From her

viewpoint, it was an ideal time to step out on her own. Tina Turner had made her comeback. Whitney Houston had taken the industry by storm. And Patti LaBelle was riding high. "It was a great time for a black, female singer,"

responded Miki Howard. She knew the climate was right. One thing led to another and soon Miki Howard was an Atlantic Record Artist.



The Boys Choir of Harlem, under the direction of Dr. Walter Turnbull provides a positive creative alternative for inner city children in New York City.

Boys Choir Of Harlem To Perform

Special To The Post

The sounds of the Boys Choir of Harlem have garnered critical acclaim from across the country. *The New York Daily News* wrote "This choir, expertly guided by director Walter J. Turnbull, is one of the finest of its kind, splendidly disciplined in tone quality, precision, balance and intonation."

Ebony Magazine penned, "Whether doing Vivaldi's 'Gloria,' a Bach Cantata, Pergolesi's Magnificent, Benjamin Britten's 'Rejoice in the Lamb,' Billy Taylor's 'I Wish I Knew How it Would Feel to be Free,' Thomas

Dorsey's 'Precious Lord' or Lee Cooper and Linda Twine's 'We Are Heroes,' the Choir shows over and over why music lovers across the country flock to its concerts."

On Sunday, May 10 at Ovens Auditorium at 4 p.m. the Boys Choir of Harlem will be in concert. This group of boys ranging in ages of nine to seventeen had its origin in the choir stands of Ephesus Church in central Harlem, growing from a small church choir to a major performing arts institution of international reputation.

While the Boys Choir of Harlem concentrates on singing contemporary songs, gospels and spirituals, there is more to the singing group than music. Co-founder and director, Dr. Walter Turnbull, sees as its mission the preparation of its members for productive lives. "Tutoring, in subjects ranging from English and mathematics to music theory is provided to choir members six days a week. Choir members

must maintain a "B" average in school. During the summer,

choir members attend a day camp in New York City and live-away camp in the Connecticut countryside. A Staff of full-time counselors provide year-round career, family and adolescent counseling."

Such a rigid routine yields an abundant crop. Past choir members have gone on to pursue careers in music at such places as the Westminster Choir College and Eastman and Manhattan Schools of Music.

Unique to many choirs, the Boys Choir of Harlem does not use only treble voices. But by continuing to train the boys as their voices develop, the Choir is able to perform works for mature voices, using the baritone and bass voice of the older boys. "Special emphasis is given to the work of

Black musicians which is encouraged by commissions to young Black composers. In addition,

the heritage of spirituals and early American music plays a vital and necessary part in the members' educative growth. Popular music is given equal billing, however, and favorites like "Mr. Bojangles" and "I Believe In Music" help to round out the creative experience." Lastly, the Boys Choir of Harlem has a girl choir, which was founded in 1979.

World renowned, the Boys Choir of Harlem, founded in 1968, incorporated in 1979 has performed in concert halls, schools and churches. It has sung at the White House and the opening session of the United Nations General Assembly. It has travelled extensively throughout the United States and has made three European tours.

Tickets to the concert are \$16.50. Group and family discounts are available. For more information call Premiere Productions 338-9786.

Gigante, Brown Win "Jest Of The West"

By Russell Clark
Post Staff Writer

A couple months ago, Mike Gigante and Calvin Brown Jr. began mixing their talents for the "Jest Of The West" comedy contest locally sponsored by WPEG (FM 98) and Camelot Music.

Recently, the competition unfolded at Mister Pees Night Club and the good-humored duo escalated to a brighter career path. As winners, they will be representing Charlotte from May 15-20 in Hollywood Cal. at the National "Jest Of The West" Showdown.

The winning act featured a musical comedy to a popular disco hit that vacuumed the attention of the crowd. The song Popeye is a take-off from Cameo's "Word Up," reflects Brown, a 1981 graduate of West Charlotte High School. "While driving home after a rehearsal at WGIV, I heard 'Word Up' on the radio and it made me think of Mike's Popeye voice. We later co-wrote the song together and we will definitely be using it once we get out to Hollywood."

Gigante is a native of New Jersey and an English major at UNC-Charlotte. As a stand-up comic for four years, Gigante plans to make a career in the entertainment business. Brown is a former radio/tv/motion pictures major at UNC-Chapel Hill and has been a stand up comedian for more than a year. The aspiring entertainer aims to become a writer for a television situation comedy. They met last September while performing at the late

Laugh-A-Lot Comedy Club on Central Avenue.

"They were the funniest comedians we had in the contest and I



Mike Gigante



Calvin Brown Jr.

congratulate them on winning the trip," voices Marsha Burton, director of promotions at both WPEG and WGIV radio stations.

"If they win the national

contest, they'll get a chance to perform on the Joan Rivers Show but if they don't, they'll still get to watch the show live."

Another Power 98 contest winner, Rob and Dana, recently won the Regional Budweiser Showdown competition and will also be competing nationally according to Burton. "We just got word that they were selected over groups from Atlanta, Greensboro, Miami and Washington, D.C. and they will also be competing in California soon."

Although both Gigante and Brown are natural stand-up comics, they are committed to the "Popeye Rapp."

"We will both get three minutes a piece but we will come out together for the song that lasts about

four minutes," asserts Brown who has appeared on Amateur Night at the Apollo Theater in New York.

Both agree that this is the highlight of their entertainment careers and they plan to mix business with pleasure while competing.

"Hopefully, we'll win the contest and make some good contacts," Brown continues. "If I make people laugh, then that will be personally gratifying be-

cause it lets me know that I hung with some guys who are in the business full-time. Although I plan to make some contacts, I'm also going to see if I can get on the Sale Of The Century Game Show to win some big bucks."

"Death Of The Heart"

Elizabeth Bowen's story of innocent adolescent love and its betrayal debuts on "Masterpiece Theatre" at 9 p.m. on Sunday, May 3, and encores at 11 a.m. on Sunday, May 10. The two-hour dramatization of "The Death of the Heart" airs over the 10 channels of The University of North Carolina Center for Public Television.

Newcomer Jojo Cole stars as Portia, the young orphan who falls helplessly in love with a scheming philanderer, portrayed by Daniel Chatto. The stellar cast of "The Death of the Heart" includes several familiar faces.

Nigel Havers plays Portia's stepbrother, Thomas Quayne, and Patricia Hodge plays his wife, Anna, the coolly elegant couple with which Portia lives after returning from a nomadic childhood

in Europe. Robert Hardy portrays the lonely Mayor Brutt and Dame Wendy Hiller plays the faithful family retainer who's the only one who can help Portia mend a broken heart. Other cast members include Phyllis Calvert, Miranda Richardson and Jonathan Hyde.

Set in London in the late '30s, Bowen's "The Death of the Heart" was first published in 1938 and is considered the Irish author's finest work. The Regent's Park House where much of the story takes place reflects the house in which

she lived for 17 years. Bowen, who began writing when she was 20, was born in Dublin in 1889 and died in 1973. Her other works include the novels "The Hotel," "Friends and Relations" and "To the North" and several volumes of short stories.