

THE CHARLOTTE POST

DOES A COMBO OF SHOW GLITZ AND BUSINESS SAVVY HAVE LEGS? YES!

RHYTHM & BUSINESS

A JOURNAL OF FIDUCIARY FUNK

By William James Brock
Post Entertainment Editor

Magazine publishing has always been a dicey game. True, there are phenomenal success stories--such as that of Malcolm Forbes. But for every Forbes magazine, there is also a Look. It's a game in which an investment can be here today, gone tonight. Still, that doesn't deter some publishers from taking the plunge.

Stanley Bethel is just such a publisher. He took the plunge to the tune of a \$60,000 capital investment to publish *Rhythm & Business*.

"It is a fantastic publication. All of us need to know as much as possible about what we are doing in the music business."

"Rockin' Ray" Gooding



"Rockin' Ray" Gooding



January 1988 Cover RHYTHM & BUSINESS



Maurice Williams

"I had \$20,000 that I could lay my hands on fairly quickly," Bethel said from his office in Los Angeles. "I borrowed another \$40,000 from the bank. But I am the sole owner--there are no other stockholders. Sure, publishing is risky. Every business venture entails a certain amount of risk. There is no guarantee that any business will automatically succeed. You have to have a good product and manage wisely in any enterprise. I think we're doing that."

Just what is it that Bethel is doing? What is *Rhythm & Business*? Aren't there enough glossy showbiz fanzines being printed already? And who will read Bethel's new magazine?

"We draw our readership from the music business itself," Bethel said. "Initially, we planned on being a trade publication that would inform people in the

industry about trends, events and happenings on the business end of show business. The critics are right--there are already plenty of publications that deal with the show end of it. However, our magazine proved to be so popular that we are going to news stand sales before the end of the year."

Imagine a magazine like *Business Week* devoted primarily to Rock'n'Roll, Pop and Rhythm & Blues--and that's what *Rhythm & Business* is all about. With a smattering of political analysis thrown in for seasoning and flavor.

First off, it is a slick publication. Printed on the same quality stock as, say, *Playboy*--or any of the upscale magazines aimed at affluent readers. And it is filled with insightful and informative articles; many of them illustrated with beautiful four-



Tina Turner in RHYTHM & BUSINESS art by JASON

"The industry has long needed a fine magazine such as this. I wish Stan and his people a lot of success."

Maurice Williams

color photography.

The magazine's typography is crisp and modern--but never resorts to the cliché *avant garde* mannerisms that mark the typical *belles arts/lettres* tome. This publication communicates very well.

Business & Rhythm's January 1988 issue was chosen for this article, primarily because of a timely story about Jesse Jackson's efforts to enlist black radio stations to help get out his voter registration message. There is also an editorial along the same lines in the issue. Publisher Bethel gave his permission to *The Charlotte Post* to reprint the editorial as a part of this article.

The editorial content of *Rhythm & Business* is equally impressive. The January 1988 issue begins with a vignette on R&B legend Ray Charles, as an

attention-grabber. It goes from there to a front story on CBS Records Black Music Division chief Ruben Rodriguez, who has helped the label garner a hefty share of the record market over the last two years.

The cover story is on beautiful Meli'sa Morgan, the multi-talented singer/composer and businesswoman. The story layout and color shot of Meli'sa is almost worth the cover price of the magazine. The hot graphics are primarily due to the talents of Tony Raymond, Art Director on the magazine.

"We're generating contemporary graphics," Raymond said. "We began the magazine with a certain graphic concept--and it has paid off. We contemplate making only a few typographic changes in upcoming issues. Stan has stood back and let our creative people have their heads. It's working well."

Stanley Bethel began *Rhythm & Business* in January 1987, opening offices in Los Angeles. The first issue of the publication came out in March of that same year. By the end of 1988, the publisher projects a circulation of more than 250,000 magazines distributed nationwide. That figure includes projected news stand copies in print. See RHYTHM & BLUES / P. 8



Spotlight

OVERNIGHT SENSATION



BARBARA NAIL

By William James Brock
Post Entertainment Editor

You know the story. A bright kid gets out of college, crisp new degree in Communications in hand, and immediately lands a job doing the weather spot or something on the radio. A year or so later the bright kid is Program Director, Music Coordinator--or some other upscale title. And the rest is history.

It happens that way in the movies. The real world is somewhat different. It took Barbara Nail nine years to become an overnight sensation on the radio. And most of those she worked without getting paid.

"I started out in radio as a volunteer with WFAE-FM," Nail said. "That was in 1979. That shows you how hard people will work for something they really want. And I really wanted it."

Before her radio days Barbara Nail had been a tailor. She had learned needlecraft from her grandmother as a young girl. Being creative, and needing to earn a living after high school in the 1960s, she gravitated toward working in the retail clothing business.

"It was a time when the country was in turmoil," she said. "And there wasn't much opportunity for black people--even those who could afford to go to college. My dad worked in the mill and mom worked in a laundry. They never made much money--and there were myself, a sister and two brothers to raise. But my parents taught me to work hard and tough it out."

Tough it out she did. Nail married fairly young, but it lasted only a few years. After her divorce she and her five-year-old son John moved to Winston-Salem. The first job she got was in a clothing store that had separate restrooms marked "white" and "colored."

"I worked one day and quit," she said. "John and I really needed the money--but I just could not work there faced with that sort of overt prejudice."

Nail returned to Charlotte, where she had to work several jobs at a time to make ends meet. Many days she would have to take young John to work with her--because she could not afford to pay a babysitter.

"It was tough," she said. "But we had no choice. I had to provide for John and myself."

Finally, she got a fairly good job as a tailor at Wilson's Mens Store at Eastland Mall. She remained there until she became a paid member of the WFAE staff in March 1987.

"In 1976 I decided that the tailoring craft was not creative enough for me anymore," Nail said. "I had always listened to the radio a lot--so it struck me I might like to get into that. I had always been very shy, so I also hoped it would help me out with that also."

She made the rounds of Charlotte radio stations. It was the old Catch-22. She couldn't get a job without experience--and

she couldn't get any experience unless she could learn on the job. It looked hopeless.

"I had learned from my grandmother that nothing is ever really hopeless," she said. "She was a very strong woman."

Her break came in 1979, when she heard a WFAE spot that offered radio training in exchange for volunteer work at the public radio facility. Nail applied and was accepted.

She did every job imaginable at the station, while keeping her tailor's job and attending CPCC classes in voice. After a while she became an on-the-air announcer. She did blues, jazz, folk music--anything that would help her learn her craft.

"I'm a perfectionist," Nail said. "I never stop trying to make my show a little better."

Her main show is the overnight shift--midnight to six a.m.--where she spins jazz and talks with her listeners. Nail has another ace up her sleeve. She recently became the pro-

See BARBARA NAIL / P. 5B

BLACK MUSIC JOURNAL

Even as a young girl she was an overwhelming singer. Parishioners in the black churches of Philadelphia in the early 1900s began a "Fund For Marian Anderson's Future." She had the voice and spirit of a true artist even in her youth.

Her astounding contralto transported Marian Anderson to the heights of musical acclaim. She dramatized the fulfillment of black dreams. When she sang Verdi, as the first black to perform with the Met, blacks and whites in the audience wept openly.

She also loved the sad spiritual songs of the black people. Her rich range and power transformed even these into art truly her own. And she triumphed over prejudice through the glory of song.

In 1939 the DAR barred Anderson from performing at Constitution Hall because she was black. In outrage, the U.S. government invited her to hold her concert at the Lincoln Memorial instead. More than 75,000 people came to hear her mighty voice. The DAR concert, which featured a white soprano, attracted only about 1,500 people.

Marian Anderson revealed her greatness later in her comments to news reporters. She chose not to castigate the DAR for its action. "When you are all right on the inside," the diva said, "you don't need to worry about outside things like that. I love music - I have no hatred for anything or anybody in the world."