

# Midnight Star: Thrilling Int'l Audiences

Some groups are so consistently good that they can truly be conspicuous by their absence, even if that absence is temporary. **Midnight Star**, who has had its share of hit records through the years, hasn't had an album out since 1986's *Headlines*. But with the recent release of "Midnight Star," it's obvious that the Cincinnati-based team is back with a vengeance. The first single from the LP, "Don't Rock The Boat," the funky mix of rap-and-song that features Ecstasy (of the rap group Whodini) has put **Midnight Star** back on top and the group's latest release "Snake In The Grass" looks like it's following suit.

But then, such chart success and international acclaim are no strangers for the group whose 1983 album, "No Parking On The Dance Floor," became one of the first LPs by a black music group to sell over two million copies, establishing **Midnight Star** as musical pioneers. "Our first two albums did o.k.," says Belinda Lipscomb, the group's sizzling female lead vocalist, who remembers before they began recording in 1980, the multi-talented group played jazz as well as R&B and Pop. "But we did some serious woodshedding before 'No Parking' came out -- we went to clubs to check out what was happening. We did our homework and we must have come up with a few hundred songs before we made the final selection for what turned out to be a major hit project for us."

**Midnight Star** may have built a loyal following through albums like "No Parking" and their current record both at home and abroad, but even some of their most devoted fans are unaware that the group literally gave birth to two of the hottest production teams in music today -- L.A. Reid & Babyface and Reggie



Bo Watson Belinda Lipscomb Melvin Gentry

& Vincent Calloway. As members of the group The Deele, L.A. and Babyface -- 1989 Grammy nominees who have hit the charts with their production work with Bobby Brown, Pebbles, Karyn White and Sheena Easton -- got their first record deal through **Midnight Star**. Bo Watson, one of the group's lead vocalists and keyboardists re-

members: "We were actually responsible for getting a record deal for the group. We used to play at a club in Indianapolis and we'd run into a band there called Essence, members of whom later became The Deele. We put Kenny 'Babyface' Edmonds together with the group (whose lineup included Antonio 'L.A.' Reid) and we produced

'Street Beat,' their first album, whilst we were preparing material for the 'No Parking' LP. The Deele was actually signed to our production company and we introduced them to Solar Records."

Reggie and Vincent Calloway, two of the original members of **Midnight Star**, left in 1986 to pursue their production activities and enjoyed hits with Gladys Knight & The Pips, Levert and Natalie Cole. At the same time **Midnight Star** began its successful run as writers and producers of other artists. Around 1984 Vincent and Bo produced hits by Klymaxx ("Meeting In The Ladies Room") and The Whispers ("Contagious"). Bo also wrote "Rock Steady" for the group. "We don't know if people realize just how much production work we've done," says Belinda. "Apart from these acts we mentioned, we also produced all of our own albums except the very first two."

**Midnight Star**, whose "live" stage show has always brought them rave reviews, are on their way back to Japan, just a couple of months after performing 18 incredible sold-out shows there. Here in the states, their new album continues its chart climb. The group is now looking forward to applying their production skills to other artists once again. "It's great to know that **Midnight Star** has provided the launching pad for such talented producers as L. A. & Babyface and Reggie & Vincent and we're very happy for the success they've had," Belinda and Bo agree. According to Bo, "We do not intend to stay out of the public eye and ear -- it's all about hard work and giving people the very best music we can deliver."

In April, **Midnight Star** embarks on a European tour which includes Germany and England.



Charlottean Meets King Of Comedy

Dr. Talmadge C. Tillman, a Charlotte native, met comedian Bob Hope during the Big Ten Dinner Show at the Rose Bowl in Southern California. Tillman was program chairperson for the Big Ten Club. Rita Coolidge, Zsa Zsa Gabor and Caesar Romero were a few of the other celebrities who participated in the event.

## B.E.E. Line

Continued from page 10A.

10th Anniversary Celebration, fund raising event at the Marriott City Center, Sat. Apr. 1, 1 p.m. Tickets \$10, gen. adm.: \$7 students and senior citizens; \$5, youth under 12. Call (704) 374-1565.

### SOCIALS

FIRST FRIDAY/ Bloom in April Friday, April 7, 6 p.m. at the Radisson Plaza Hotel, Trade and Tryon Streets. Adm.: \$5.

## Anything Rolls For St. Pat's Day

"Anything rolls" in Uptown Charlotte on Saturday, March 18, noon, as the 1989 St. Patrick's Day Parade rolls its way down Tryon Street from Stone-wall Street to 9th Street.

"Anything rolls" is the theme of this year's parade. Observers can expect to see high-rollers on anything from skateboards to wheelbarrows! The Caledonian Pipe Band will bring up the last wheel of the parade and lead the way to Cityfair for the awards ceremony and festivities immediately following the parade.

Leading the parade procession as Grand Marshal this year is Doug Robarchek, "OutFront" columnist of *The Charlotte Observer*. Ray Gooding of WBT-AM will emcee our awards ceremony at Cityfair.

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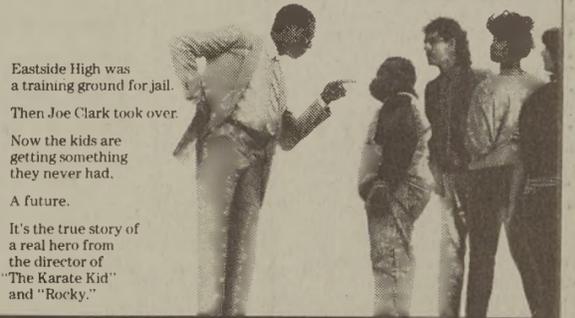
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