

Getting To Know Joyce "Fenderella" Irby

You know Joyce Irby. You must not realize it.

She rose to familiarity as "Fenderella," a creative force, lead singer and bass player in the all-female band Klymaxx.

You know Fenderella's funky voice if you remember the Top 5 R&B hit, "The Men All Pause." She sang lead. You've heard Fenderella's sweet balladic voice if you recall the Top 10 "I Miss You," featuring her as lead singer. Klymaxx earned those hits in 1985. Need another reminder? Think back to 1987's "I'd Still Say Yes," a duet featuring Howard Hewett and, yes, Fenderella. So you see, it's very likely that you've heard Fenderella sing.

Besides a voice known by many, Fenderella has identifiable styles of song. She was one of the interior designers of the Klymaxx sound, a sound known for its soft chords, lullaby melodies, its edgy funk and catchy lyrics. You know Fenderella's production work if you remember the top 5 "Meeting in the Ladies Room," which she rearranged vocally.

Fenderella, a Floridian who always knew she wanted to sing and play, brings all this background to her latest achievement - her first solo statement, her debut album "Maximum Thrust" on Motown Records.

Some of her album continues the musical style introduced during her Klymaxx years. But much of the material turns in musical directions never explored by the group.

"Mr. D.J.," the first single, shows her Hip Hop half, featuring a rap by Doug E. Fresh. The record is supported by a hilarious, all-star video that pays homage to the world's spinners. Musically, the record shows more street savvy than any Klymaxx material ever did. But like much of her work, it's funny.

"I have a sense of humor that I've had all my life," Fenderella said. "That will always be in my music: humor, sarcasm -- some-



Irby

thing." This characteristic is obvious throughout Side One: One tune, "I'm Available," props the blunt proposition of its title on a funky groove and Hip Hop rhythm. "She's Not My Lover" includes an intentionally silly rap by a phony woman is not really his lover. At one point, the boyfriend tries to claim that the shirt with the incriminating lipstick on the collar really be-

longs to his "roommate Bernard -- with the real big ears."

While it's true that Fenderella is funny, also realize this: Fenderella sings. With equal facility, she conveys the images of love or sex. For instance, on Side Two, Fenderella sings "I'll Be There." (This is not the classic Jackson 5 tune, but an original composition written by Fenderella with Kenneth Wright and Reginald Jones.) The song is an

ideal example of a Fenderella ballad -- simply melody, a gentle progression of heartbreaking chords, and a lyric stating a fairy-tale love thought -- in this case, a pledge by parting lovers to be there for each other in case hard times visit. On the touching ballad "I Love You," a love song from a superwoman, Fenderella again sings of her plentiful devotion and affection. This song hearkens memories of her smashing performance on "I'll Miss You." In each case, after these moving ballads, Fenderella turns about face for the next cut on the album. She follows "I'll Be There" with "Go, Girl," a slam-bam dance jam. She follows "I Love You" with "Let's Do It," a chunk of funk seasoned with a little Salt and Pepa. Sample lyric of the latter:

*So, if you're ready, take my hand
and make three wishes,
The first should be for strength
'cause it's about to get vicious.*

The two remaining tracks on the album show the separate sides of Fenderella. Thus, they epitomize the album.

On the title track, Fenderella gives a new meaning to the term "Maximum Thrust." The tune is an example of an audaciously direct lyric, a riveting melody, an undeniable groove.

Doubtless, the recording that best demonstrates Fenderella's well-cultivated style is "Guardian Angel," a sincere mid-tempo statement by a woman who wants a man as a protector, a friend, a confidante, someone to count on. The interplay of the keyboards, the rhythms, the subtle rock guitar and sweet-harmonic vocals is adept and accurate without seeming calculated.

"Maximum Thrust" is an important introduction of a new artist worthy of attention and respect. The music deserves a listening and will command a following.

The Voice Of The Black Community
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AIDS Project To Have Its First Fundraiser June 3

CHARLOTTE - Metrolina AIDS Project (MAP) will sponsor its first fundraiser on Saturday, June 3, at 7:30 p.m., at Spirit Square. The event, a two-hour performance entitled "Springtime, A Celebration of Life," will feature nationally-known celebrities, local talent, and people involved personally and professionally with the cause.

Celebrities on hand will include Linda Bloodworth-Thomason and Harry Thomason, producers and writers of CBS's

"Designing Women," Roz Ryan, a lead in NBC's "Amen," and Faith Ford, who plays Corkey on CBS's "Murphy Brown." These artists have donated their talent for performance at the event and for public service announcements regarding AIDS awareness and promotion of the Charlotte fundraiser.

Other celebrities have confirmed their appearance at the event, including Gregory Harrison of "Trapper John, M.D.," Dan McVicar of the daytime serial "The Bold and the Beautiful," Arnetia.

Walker, lead in Broadway's "Dreamgirls" at "The Wiz," and John Scott Clough of "St. Elsewhere" and "Empty Nest."

"We have been extremely gratified that our first fundraising effort has been met with such enthusiastic support from these celebrities," said MAP Executive Director Les Kooyman. "But even more gratifying is the support we are seeing from local corporations and individuals."

Among the individuals and local organizations supporting the MAP fundraiser are Michael Marciano, Executive Director of the Arts and Sciences Council and Keith Martin, of Theatre Charlotte, who will direct the two-hour performance at Spirit Square. Dot Hodges of Hodges-Taylor Gallery has offered her gallery space to exhibit work from the Alliance for Artists, which has donated work for auction to benefit MAP. Other contributors include The Dunhill Hotel which will host a champagne reception for the celebrities following the performances, Eli's Catering, which will cater the reception and the Guest Quarters Suite Hotel, which is providing accommodations for the performers.

Marion Meginnis, President of MAP's Board of Directors, said the fundraiser will help MAP carry out its commitment to reach the community with services to people with AIDS and their families and to provide information and resources to the

community at large. "We operate each day as if it were an emergency, because it is," she said. "AIDS is not a respecter of any race or class of citizen and it won't wait for groups to get their act together. All of us have to respond now."

MAP is a non-profit, independent organization that seeks to promote community-wide understanding of AIDS and to support persons diagnosed HIV Positive, those with Aids Related Complex (ARC) or with AIDS and their friends and families.

Tickets for the performance are \$100 and \$250 per person. Seating is reserved in the 740-seat NCNB Performance Place. For ticket information, call MAP at 342-3874.



Walker

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Constance Alexander Houston is the Office Manager for WGSP Radio. She is a native of Charlotte, NC and a graduate of Independence High School, a member of Myers Tabernacle AME Church. She is married with one teenage daughter.

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