

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## This Bennett's Heart Is In Music

By Winfred Cross  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

**T**ony Bennett and Clark Kent have a few things in common. Like the fictional Kent, Bennett has a fairly typical job during the day selling insurance. (Kent's a reporter).

But when duty calls (after hours, of course) Bennett takes on the persona of a super musician, playing in local clubs and writing music in his own studio at home.

"Insurance pays the bills right now," says the 31-year-old Bennett. "But my heart is (in music). That's what I've always done and love to do. I've gigged around town with a lot of different bands."

Bennett is a classically-trained pianist originally from Brooklyn. He's lived in Charlotte for six years, deciding to move here after a few visits.

"I fell in love with the city. I have two girls and I decided I didn't want to raise them in the New York environment. This was the ideal place. I've been loving it since. Charlotte is a good place with a lot of growing to do, but I'm enjoying it."

Bennett graduated from famed Erasmus Hall High School in Brooklyn. So did Barbara Streisand, Neil Diamond and Bennett's friend Will Downing.

"Will and I have known each other since 1979. We lived three or four blocks from each other. We used to practice at his house on Saturday mornings. I had to lug this heavy Fender Rhodes keyboard over there."

Bennett and Downing were in a band together with a group of other friends. It was through the band Downing got a solo deal with Island Records.

"It was so funny the way that deal came through," Bennett says smiling. "Island was looking for a solo artist. But I



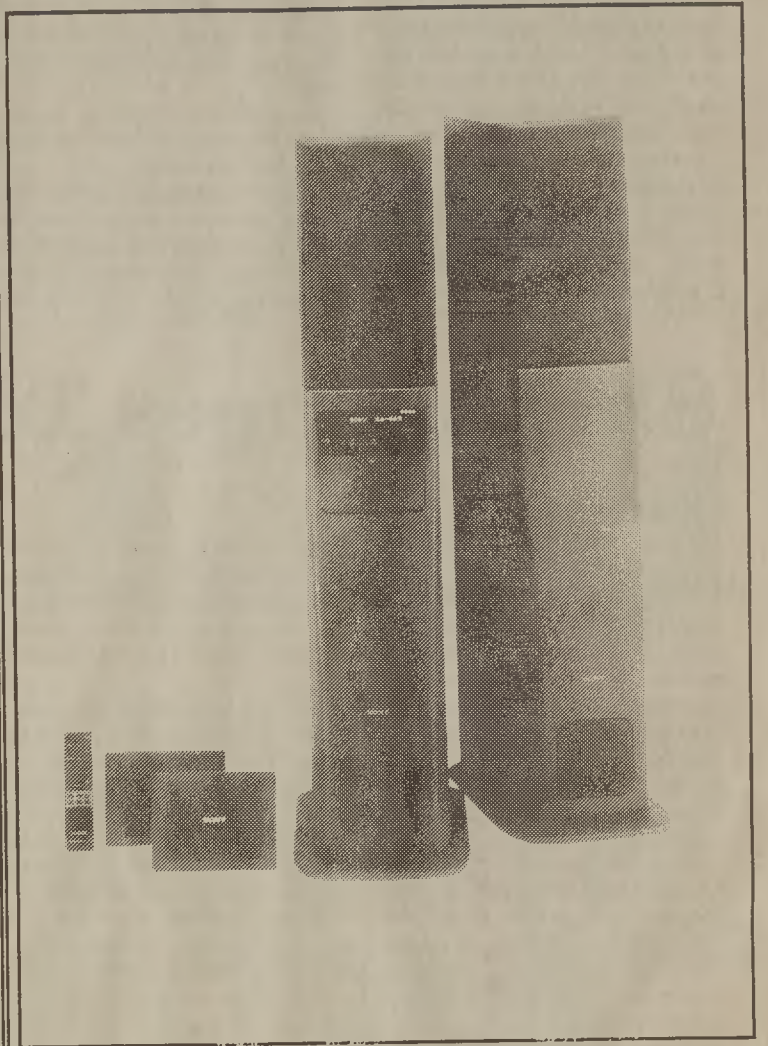
Tony Bennett at Reflections recording studio B.

Photo/Calvin Ferguson

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## The New Stuff

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SONY SA-VA3

Home theater is one of the fastest growing segments of the audio-video market.

Each manufacturer is scrambling to offer audio components that can reproduce theater-quality sound in the comfort of your own living room or den. Usually this means you need to have your stereo system located near your television to get such sound.

Sony has eliminated that problem with the SA-VA3 Home Theater Active Speaker System. It's easy to set up, relatively inexpensive and an aural delight.

The SA-VA3 is a self-contained home theater system. It consists of two "tall-boy" (almost 45 inches high) front speakers, two rear speakers, remote control and all the necessary cables for proper connection.

Each front speaker contains two tweeters - one each for front and center channel - a woofer for the front and center channel and an active super woofer. Each rear speaker contains one driver.

The left front speaker contains the amplifiers - seven of them to be exact - which sends power to each individual driver for a total of 170 watts. The amplifiers operate in Dolby Pro-Logic, Dolby Surround, Matrix and simulated modes, all of which can be accessed with the remote. The rear speakers and right speakers connect to the right speaker with provided cables. Sony says other rear-channel speakers will not operate with the system.

Once the standby system is on, the speakers turn themselves on when a sound source is present for 15 seconds or more. The system shuts off when the sound source ceases for three minutes.

Setting up the system can be confusing if you follow the manual (which seemed to have numerous errors), especially if your television does not have RCA-type jacks. Mine does not so I connected the the system to my hi-fi VCR, instead.

The system looks great, but looks win no awards in the home theater wars; sound does. The sound of the system belies its price and simplicity. None of the amplifiers are particularly powerful - 25 watts is the most powerful - but working together they really crank out sound. I used the films "Batman Returns" and "Lethal Weapon 3" to test the system. Both are digitally processed, encoded with Dolby Surround and have enough explosions to wake the dead. I didn't bother any of them but my neighbors wanted to know why they're windows were rattling. The bass of the system (used in small space) is powerfully deep. Highs are crisp and clean.

An external sub-woofer can be added to the system, but will only be necessary if you have a very large den or living area. Or if you in the mood to take your house through a structural integrity test.

It's easy to make sure all speakers are performing at the same level by using the test tone feature. Trail and error works just as well.

I did find the rear speakers to be lacking. I wanted a little more punch. This was the first time I've tested a surround system, so I'm not sure if all rear speakers work in the same manner. They seemed to work better with television commercials than with the movies.

Still, I can give this system nothing but praise. For about \$950 (list price, I've seen it around town for a lot less) Sony offers superb sound. There are surround amplifiers that cost more than this system and sound better. But you'll have to get rear speaker, a center-channel speaker and maybe a superwoofer which will cost you at least \$1,000 extra.

Save yourself the big bucks and get this system. If you need more sound than this you need to think seriously about purchasing a cinemaplex.

-Winfred B. Cross

Adolph Shiver

## Entrepreneur Looking To Expand

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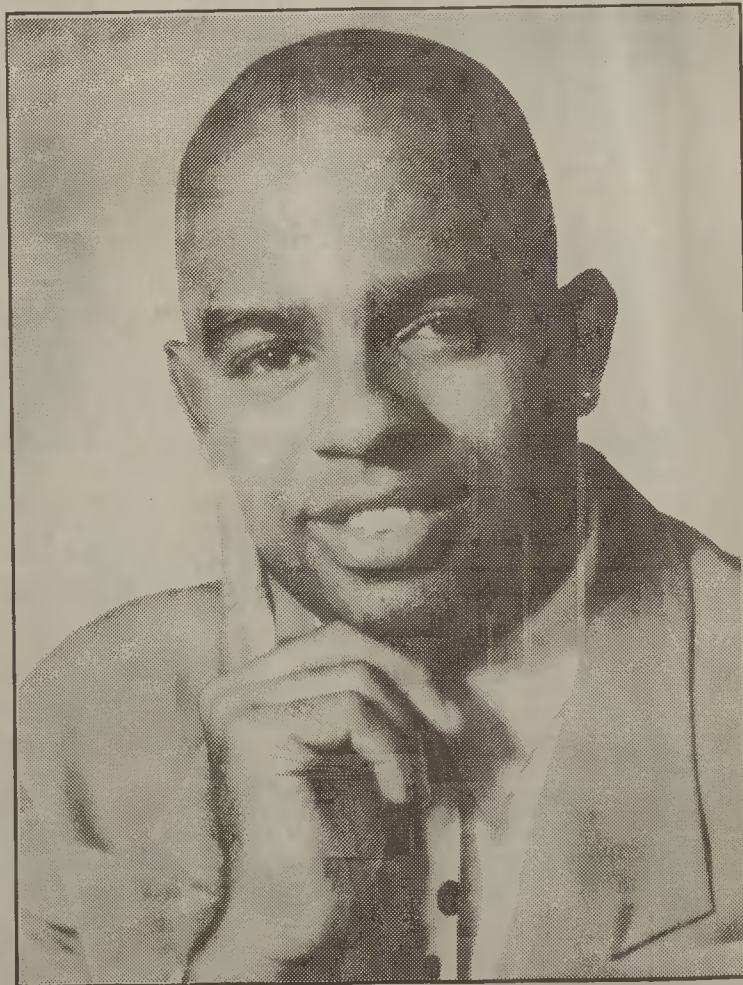
Anyone who's lived in Charlotte for the last three years knows L.A. Inc. knows how to throw a party.

After all, Adolph Shiver, L.A. Inc.'s founder, has lots of connections in the sports world. So throwing a first-rate shindig is as easy as picking up the phone and getting some famous folks to come to Charlotte.

Shiver is now interested in expanding his company. He still throws parties - the latest will be Friday at Miami's - but not necessarily with athletes.

"In the beginning we were into partying with athletes. That's fine because I'm friends with a lot of the NBA players. Now I've met a lot of entertainers like Kid 'N' Play, Christopher Williams and Salt-N-Pepa. So I'm expanding into other cities," Shiver said. "I've got some things coming up in the Chicago area. I've done some things in Raleigh and Greensboro."

Shiver also recently did after-parties for the Coca-Cola Summer Fest tour in several major cities. His first major event was in November 1992.



Shiver

Photo/Calvin Ferguson

an after-party for the Charlotte Hornets' season opener. His most successful ventures came during the 1991 NBA All-Star game in Charlotte. Both his after-party and birthday party for best-friend Michael Jordan were financially successful and well-attended.

Shiver will host singer Will Downing at Miami's in the Sheraton Airport Friday. Downing will be in town to promote his new album **Love's The Place To Be**.

L.A. Inc. will also host official after-parties with WPEG FM 98 for the Black Expo in mid-October.

Shiver is also getting into promotions and management. He's working with a comedian and has a couple of female singing groups that are interested in his help.

"I have people calling me all the time or giving me cards because they know I know folks. But management isn't something I foresee doing on a full-time basis. I'd like to find a couple of groups to develop. There's a lot of raw talent out there."

Shiver, 30, says he's thank-

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