

# Bennett Loves Charlotte

Continued From 1B

knew it was only a matter of time before that happened. It was meant to be."

Bennett's band broke up and all went in different directions. He went to Jamaica.

"I lived in Jamaica for a number of years and played reggae. My father owned a nightclub there. The music is so simple in its format, but it's really a groove and a lot of feeling as opposed to being structured. It wasn't the type of reggae you hear on the radio now, not the dance hall stuff. I'm of course opposed to that because of the lyrics."

Lyrics mean a lot to Bennett. He enjoys writing and producing as much as playing. He has his own 16-track MIDI (musical instrument digital interface) recording

studio in his home.

"That's my forte. I do a lot more of that than playing in a bar," Bennett says. "MIDI has grown so much in the last 10 years. You've got to be involved in it because it's ever-changing."

Bennett's current project is a demo for a singer he's working with named Shay Best. "She has kind of an Anita Baker sound."

"I like working in the studio because I like creating. I have a lot of stuff in my head as for writing. I like to sit at the keyboard and start creating."

Despite his classical training, Bennett mostly writes r&b love ballads.

"I once heard the definition of an artist is a person who is able to reflect the world he's in through his work. That's definitely what I do. I've had

a lot of experience playing lots of music, that's why I'm able to write what's in me. I guess the classical part was a foundation, but now I've moved past that."

Bennett shops a good number of his songs to record labels and publishing companies.

"When I'm not doing that I'm out gigging with different bands. But I'm trying to get away from the Top 40 band on the road thing. The money is really made in doing your own material. It's not easy getting that initial deal, it's just being persistent until that deal comes through."

So will he write a song for his buddy Downing?

"That's highly likely. I can just about guarantee there'll be something on there. All it takes is one to get you started."

# Shiver Hopes To Expand

Continued From 1B

ful his organization has gotten support from the Charlotte community. "I'm very appreciative. Without the community's support, there'd be no L.A. Inc.," Shiver says. So, he plans to get more involved with community activities. Shiver has already made donations to the Michael Jordan Foundation, the Ronald McDonald House, United Negro College Fund, Charlotte's Pro-Am College Bound program and the Charlotte Civic League through its 1993 Bachelor's Auction which benefitted Save The Seed.

Shiver describes himself as "pretty much an easy-going, fun-loving person who enjoys life." That's a lot different from when he was an industrial relations and economics student at UNC-Chapel Hill. To those who knew him then, Shiver was a bit of a roughneck. As late as two years ago, he and buddy Charles Oakley of the New

York Knicks were arrested for brawling in an Atlanta nightclub. Though he doesn't like to talk about that, Shiver does admit he's changed a lot.

"As you get older you mature," he says. "You have to know how to conduct yourself in a professional manner."

It was also at UNC where Shiver continued his friendship with soon-to-be NBA superstar Jordan. The two met at a park in Wilmington, N.C. and have been friends since. They played basketball together in high school. The two even pledged the same fraternity (Omega Psi Phi) together. Some might think being friends with such a well-known figure is hard, but Shiver says it's no problem.

"I see him as just being my best friend. There's no putting him on a pedestal."

Sometimes being Jordan's friend puts Shiver on the de-

fensive. During the initial stages of the James Jordan disappearance and murder, Shiver received almost 100 calls from friends and reporters trying to get information.

"Without a doubt, sometimes I have to be a shield. A lot of people know if they can't get to him, they can get to me. You have to watch your guard."

Through his association with Jordan, Shiver has been seen in magazines like Jet, Newsweek and has appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show.

"But I like staying in the background. I've got a lot of connections, but I don't like using them. I'm the type of person who has no problem with doing something for you if you need it. But I don't like asking people for things. I have a hard time doing that."

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