

## NORMAN HARRIS - THE HITMAKER

The man's well earned nickname is The Harris Machine. And that comes as no surprise because Norman Harris, the extremely versatile guitarist/composer/producer/arranger, has been churning out some of the major sounds of Philadelphia for over a decade now. So, once again, it comes as no surprise that *THE HARRIS MACHINE* just happens to be the title of his debut Philadelphia International album.

And anyone who doubts his fantastic reputation as one of the premiere sessionmen in the City of Brotherly Love need only listen to the quiet fury of his renditions of such well known hits as "Just Don't Want To Be Lonely," "Don't Leave Me This Way" and "You Make Me Feel Brand New" as well as some Norman Harris originals, all of which bear the special touch of his stellar production, arranging and playing skills.

Although Norman began playing guitar in 1962 and working on Philly International sessions in the late 60s, he considers 1973 to be the year "when it really began to happen. That was the year," he explains, "that I hit with the group Blue Magic. From that point on it's been uphill all the way."

When Norman (along with partners Bobby Eli, Vinnie Barrett and Alan Felder) produced and arranged the hits "Spell," "Sideshow," "Three Ring Circus" and "Welcome To The Club" for Blue Magic, the music world knew it had a bonafide talent to reckon with. In 1975 he continued that success by writing, producing and arranging for The Whispers. 1976-77 had him writing, producing and arranging hits for such renown stars as the Dells, Lolleatta Holloway ("Hit And Run"), ex-Temptation Eddie Kendricks ("Going Up In Smoke" and "He's A Friend Of Mine") and Double Exposure ("Ten Percent"). Since then Norman has loaned his considerable talents to The Temptations, The Four Tops, Linda Clifford, Curtis Mayfield, Ronnie Dyson, Jermaine Jackson, Gloria Gaynor, Margie Joseph, Love Committee and The Manhattans. How he's managed to do all that work while continuing to appear on numerous sessions is anybody's guess.



"And that's not even all of it," smiles Norman. "Let's move on to the really big stuff." And the really big stuff is indeed "really big." In 1972 Norman started his own Golden Fleece Records label which churned out -- under Norman's guidance, of course -- hit singles by The Trammps ("Hold Back The Night" "Where Do We Go From Here" and "Zing Went The Strings Of My Heart"), Robert Upchurch (who later became a lead singer of The Trammps) and Love Committee ("Good Luck" and "One Day Of Peace").

Those tunes, co-produced by the formidable team of Baker-Harris-Young, came right around the time Norman was working with The O'Jays ("Who Am I," "I Love Music," "You And Me," "Now That We Found Love" and "Family Reunion"), Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes ("Let Me Into Your World," "Be For Real" and "Satisfaction Guaranteed"), The Delfonics ("Walk Right Up To The Sun") and Dusty Springfield ("Joe").

With all of that experience behind him, those in the know were not at all surprised when, in 1973, Norman hit paydirt again with the group First Choice. Working almost exclusively with partner Alan Felder, Norman and First Choice came up with hit after hit. Starting with "Armed And Extremely Dangerous," the Harris Machine's winning streak continued with "Smarty Pants," "Newsy Neighbors," "The Player," "Dr. Love" and, most recently, "Double Cross."

Not one to rest on his laurels, Norman's machine continued in high gear via such hits as "Love Vibrations" (BY Joe Simon), "Tender Lovin' Care" (by MFSB and co-produced by Bobby Martin) and "Good Things Don't Last Forever" (by Ecstasy, Passion & Pain). And don't stop there because while all of this was happening Norman somehow found the time to be directly responsible for some of the biggest dance smashes of the decade.

Under Norman's guidance The Trammps began a string of hits that, even today, stands virtually unparalleled. "Disco Inferno" (which was a smash upon its release and then became a smash again when it was included on *The Saturday Night Fever* soundtrack), "Hooked For Life," "That's Where The Happy People Go," "Dark Side Of The Moon," "Where Were you (When The Lights Went Out)" and "Body Contact Contract" have all become part of the Norman Harris legacy.

First Choice, The Trammps, The O'Jays, The Delfonics, Blue Magic...all of these groups bear the distinguished trademark of Norman Harris. And now "La Machine" is cranked up and ready to smoke once again with his solo LP, *THE HARRIS MACHINE*, an album he describes as "easy to listen to and easy to dance to. Not to discoish and just the right touch of contemporary music." No doubt about it, *THE HARRIS MACHINE* has done it again.



## BROWN'S NEW WORLD RECORDS

Polydor Records recording artist James Brown is the number one rated Black performer in the category of singles sales, according to *Top Pop Artist and Singles 1955-1978*, a record book written by Joel Whitburn and published Records Research Inc., of Memomonee Falls, WI. On the over-all list of singles sales, Brown rates No. 4, behind Elvis Presley, the Beatles and Pat Boone.

In addition, the February, 1980 issue of *Ebony Magazine* carries a feature entitled "Top Record Sellers Of All Time," compiled by Joseph Murrells, that ranks James No. 3 in All-Time Record Sales for a Black artist. Brown is tied with the Supremes at 50 million units sold, preceded only by Nat King Cole's 75 million sold and Fats Domino's 65 million. On the combined list of units sold, Brown holds down the No. 19 position. Joseph Murrells, who researched the piece, has also written *The Book Of Golden Discs and The Records That Sold A Million*.

With the hit status of "Original Disco Man," "It's Too Funky In Here," and his new hit single, "Regrets," from the upcoming *Peoples* album, James Brown continue to break sales records.



Billy Taylor, host of JAZZ ALIVE, which is heard every Friday night on KBPS, will be interviewed by Homer Clark on an NPR "STAR" CALL TELEPHONE INTERVIEW at 8:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 29.

The interview is a highlight of JAZZ NIGHT, one of the special theme nights during the fourth annual KBPS SEEING SOUND PLEDGE WEEK.

## JAZZ ALIVE ON KBPS

Jazz Night on Friday, Feb. 29, is one of the special theme nights during the fourth annual KBPS SEEING SOUND PLEDGE WEEK, scheduled Feb. 24-March 1.

PLEDGE WEEK brings seven days of daily programming to raise under-writing funds for the on-the-air program service requested of KBPS by blind and handicapped persons. This special broadcast service is not supported by the station licensee, the Portland Public Schools.

Jazz Night will be on the air from 7 p.m. until midnight with hosts Homer Clark and Ray Horn. Nick Barnett of the KBPS Citizen Advisory Council for community listening is helping the co-hosts with "pitching for pledges" all evening. The Advisory Council is the sponsor of PLEDGE WEEK, and has set the

1980 goal at \$22,000.

A highlight of the evening will be an NPR "STAR" CALL interview with JAZZ ALIVE's Billy Taylor at 8:30. Homer Clark will talk with Taylor, who is a pianist, composer, recording artist, arranger, conductor, teacher, lecturer and radio and TV personality.

The JAZZ ALIVE host holds a doctorate in music from the University of Massachusetts and is an indefatigable jazz educator, holding school programs for elementary students as well as high school workshops, college seminars and special classes for university faculty members.

Jazz Night also includes appearances by Oregon Jazz Society members and performers, jazz critics and other guests.

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