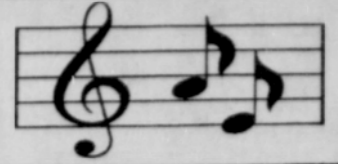




# ENTERTAINMENT



## HOWARD HEWITT: In The name of Family, Caring, and for the Love of God.

□ A strong family started Hewitt off well, and he hasn't fumbled since

by Tony Washington

There is an old southern tradition that gives credit for a strong family unity to the family's closeness to the church. Our parents often tell us that "the more we pray together, the longer we stay together". For Howard Hewitt, long time lead vocalist with Shalamar and more lately appearing solo with the

top R & B group Shalamar. He auditioned on a Saturday morning, singing "Feel the Fire" and was on a plane later that evening to perform with the group on television.



For the next six years, Hewitt led Shalamar through an unbroken chain of hits, including the certified-gold albums Big Fun, Three For Love, Friends, and others that propelled the group into the top ten of the R & B charts.

By 1983, original Shalamar members Jeffery Daniels and Jody Watley had left the group. "Instead of just going out on my own," Howard recalls, "I felt there was still something I needed to do with Shalamar." With Howard at the Helm, a re-formed Shalamar recorded the group's final album Heartbreak and the single "Dancing in the Sheets" which wound up in the multi-platinum Footloose soundtrack. In 1985, Howard picked up a Grammy for "Don't Get

Stopped in Beverly Hills", from the Beverly Hills Cop soundtrack.

His first solo album in 1986, I Commit to Love, which featured "Say Amen", signaled a return to his deeply felt gospel roots.

Howard speaks warmly of his relationship with the group Shalamar. "It was like family", he states. "We

**F**or the next six years, Hewitt led Shalamar through an unbroken chain of hits...that propelled the group into the top ten of the R & B charts.

had a lot of fun together." He speaks even more warmly of his reliance on outside production...From Barry Eastmond, Terry Coffey, Jon Nettlesby, Matthew Wilder, Zane Byles, and Leon Sylvers...which gave him "more freedom as an artist." Part of the freedom revolved around the first song to be recorded on the album I Commit to Love, "Jesus." Howard produced "Jesus" himself and says "for me, "Jesus is a very important song. The whole album says, 'Lets get real with each other'." "There's the question and then the solution."

**Foot note:** The interview with The Observer and Mr. Hewitt was one of the better interviews conducted with entertainers in recent memory. He comes across as a person of true sincerity deeply devoted to his family, his fans, those who work with him and most of all, to Jesus Christ.

We extend congratulations to Howard Hewitt, and wish him a world of success in his endeavors.

Just as the controversy behind the raunchy 2 Live Crew is winding down, the release of N.W.A.'s latest "100 Miles and Running" is likely to heat things up all over again. One music reviewer wrote "Just Don't Bite It" (the lead single) might have the most demeaning lyrics about women ever written. According to Barry White, music reflects the society and the time of the day. "The majority of the women today," White said, "dress like saloon women. They not only look like them, but they disrespect themselves like them. Why does a woman wear a dress so short that it looks like it's her panties?" he says, leaning towards my tape recorder. "Let me warn you ladies, there are some men out there who can't control their nature." And while the state of today's youth is a matter of concern to White, the devoted father of eight, it is not his favorite subject. "I'm still talking about love", says White, whose worldwide album sales approach the 100 million mark. And if the popularity of "Secret Garden" a smash hit collaboration of Quincy Jones featuring White) or his own "Wanna Do It Good To Ya" are any indication, people are still listening. "If people weren't making love, I wouldn't be making music about it." Fact is, White has been most successful making music about it. The title of his latest album, "The Man Is Back", however

might be a little misleading, as White insists he's never gone anywhere. Fact is, at least in Los Angeles, for a while it seemed White was getting more press for his efforts to end gang violence. Whatever the case, with all he has to say, let's hope he's back to stay.

**On The Home Front:** A lawyer for Sammy Davis' widow, said reports that Altovise and son, Manny, were broke and near having their home confiscated by the IRS, couldn't be further from the truth, pointing out that Davis left an estate worth \$6-8 million. As to Altovise,--well, she is quite busy mulling over prospective book, movie and documentary offers about her life with the late, great Sammy Davis...Actress Debbie Morgan (of "All My Children" and now "Generations" fame) has said she will end her marriage to actor Charles Dutton, currently appearing on Broadway in "The Piano Lesson". The two were wed last New Year's Eve...Congratulations to actor Keith David, who ties the knot with 25-year old Margit Edwards next week in New York. David is presently co-starring in "Men At Work". His next film, "Marked For Death" (starring Steven Seagal) is slated for release on October 5, about the time he's due back from his honeymoon.

Things are now looking up for Mary Wells: News of her

throat cancer and money problems have prompted contributions from throughout the entertainment industry. Diana Ross donated \$15,000; Rod Stewart--\$10,000; Bruce Springsteen--\$10,000; and the Temptations--\$5,000. Additionally, Berry Gordy has now pledged his support. That's aside from the contributions coming in from those of you across the nation. At present, Wells is mostly mouthing her words as she recuperates from a tracheotomy. In the meantime, former Supreme Mary Wilson is putting together a benefit concert. Already committed are Stevie Wonder and Dionne Warwick. The 47-year old singer now resides with her four-year old daughter (the product of a union between she and Curtis Womack, brother of Bobby Womack) in a hotel near the hospital. The two split when her throat went bad and finances soured. With all that has happened, Wilson finds herself on the front lines of the war against cigarette smoking (which doctors say is at the root of her illness) and pollution. Just recently, Wells (who sports a tube in her throat) started a six-week radiation treatment plan. If all goes well, she may be able to avoid having her larynx removed. So let's keep her in our prayers...**Short Take:** Sad to report the recent passing of actor Raymond St. Jacques. The official cause of death was cancer...Next week: Superfly makes a comeback.

**T**wo years after graduating from high school, Howard moved to Los Angeles, arriving at the L.A. airport with \$34.00 in his pockets. He chuckles when he recalls, "My only plan was to see what I could get into."

nations top R & B groups, close family ties are an everyday fact of life.

Born and raised in Akron, Ohio, Hewitt began his career as a pre-teen performing with his family gospel group, the Hewitt Singers. He later joined the gospel road circuit as a member of the Five Blind Boys, The Soul Stirners, Mighty Clouds of Joy, and The Staple Singers. At the age of 14, he began his shift toward the secular, learning the bass and performing with various Akron R & B bands, while still in high school.

In 1976, two years after graduating from high school, Howard moved to Los Angeles, arriving at the L.A. airport with \$34.00 in his pockets. He chuckles when he recalls, "My only plan was to see what I could get into." He joined a show group as lead vocalist, played California hot spots and touring Europe.

In 1979 Howard received an offer to the

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3	Merry Go Round Electra 64937	Keith Sweat
4	Misunderstanding WB 19590	A. B. Sure!
5	The Boom'n' System Def Jam 73457	L.L. Cool J
6	Tryme WB 19753	Jasmine Guy
7	BBD (I Thought It Was Me?) MCA 53897	Bell Biv DeVoe
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