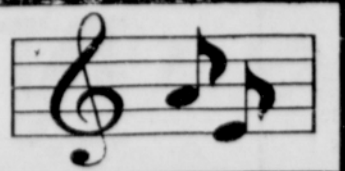




ENTERTAINMENT



C . A . L . L . O . W . A . Y

Few songs in the history of contemporary music have been able to capture the attitude of an entire decade. But CALLOWAY's block-buster hit, "I Wanna Be Rich," singularly exemplified our country's obsession with money and material goods in the '80s. With it, the Cincinnati-based brother duo of Reggie and Cino Calloway successfully launched an exciting new phase in an artistic career that already encompasses a wealth of hitmaking as one of the premier songwriting and producing teams in contemporary music. Now the Calloways look to add to their treasure chest of hits with their new Solar/Epic album, LET'S GET SMOOTH.

Along with a contingent of young Midwesterners such as L.A. & Babyface (who the Calloways helped to introduce through their production work for The Deele) and Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, Reggie & Cino Calloway have become a dominant force in the evolution of R&B/pop music over the past two decades. What has distinguished the Calloways from their contemporaries is their uncanny ability to reflect and personify the changing moods of our culture, and to separate their own artistry from their creativity as prolific songwriter/producers.

As founders of the pioneering techno-funk band Midnight Star, the Calloways racked up a string of Top 20 R & B hits including the #1 "Operator," along with two gold LPs and one double platinum album. During this incarnation, Reggie and Cino also wrote and produced hits for other artists, including Klymaxx's signature song, "Meeting In The Ladies Room," and several tracks for the Whispers' Feel So Good. Following their departure from Midnight Star, Calloway went on to create four gold or platinum Grammy-nominated recordings: Gladys Knight's Grammy-winning hit "Love Over



Board" (#1 R&B/#13 Pop), Teddy Pendergrass' "Joy" (#1 R&B), Levert's debut smash "Casanova" (#1 R&B/5 Pop), and Natalie Cole's single "Jump Start My Heart" (2 R&B/#13 Pop). "Casanova" also earned writer Reggie Calloway a Grammy nomination for "Song Of The Year."

"We don't try to weight an artist down with our style," says Reggie Calloway. "We want to bring out their own colors and textures. We're not concerned with the ego satisfaction of people saying 'That's a Calloway song' like they can with some other producers."

"That's why we're recording artists," adds Cino. "We have our own ideas that we put on our own records-- we don't have to project our creativity as artists on the artists we produce."

The common denominator has always been great songs. "Music is music, and we should be able to play and produced anything we can write," says Reggie. "Lennon & McCartney wrote

and played rock, pop and R&B music. As African-American artists, songwriters and producers, we'd like to be able to do the same."

The title track (the premier single and video from LET'S GET SMOOTH) sums up this sentiment, and the ballads that follow--"I Desire You," "Feel Like A Woman," "Forever Yours"--strengthen that emotion. "Set The Table" is the ultimate in red-carpet treatment for women, and reinforces Calloway's ideas about sharing in love.

Growing up (and still based) in Cincinnati, Reggie and Cino were exposed at an early age to music through their family. Both brothers are proficient on a number of instruments: Reggie on trumpet, flute and keyboards; Cino on trumpet, trombone, flugelhorn and keyboards. "I Wanna Be Rich" gave a great start to our career as a recording duo," offers Cino, "but some of the songs on LET'S GET SMOOTH have the potential to be even bigger. This record is going to hit you from all sides!"

Nikesha Breeze Hunter



It's been nearly a year since Nikeska was named Miss National Young Miss America (1991-92). It's been a very busy but productive year for her. She's doing an outstanding job representing Oregon. The Portland Observer would like to commend Nikesha. God bless you.

Volunteers Wanted

The Coalition for Responsive Government, sponsor of a Multnomah County ballot measure, is looking for volunteer help on its grass roots campaign for the May election.

If passed, Ballot Measure 26-6 would create a Citizens' Convention to examine and recommend changes for local government services within Multnomah County.

M.C. BRAINS



He's just given the term "Oochie Coochie" a new definition. An age old slang for doin', shall we say, The Wild Thang, it now also means smash. "Oochie Coochie," is the debut Motown/Biv Entertainment Inc. single from new Michael Bivins discovery, 17-year old rapper-writer M.C. Brains. If the early reception of this fresh slice of "Ghetto Swing" is any indication, then rapdom's about to witness the rise of another major star.

It's not enough that "Oochie Coochie," written by Brains along with producer Ricco (another talent from the BEI roost) and Executive Producer Michael Bivins, is some seriously swagging groovetime, both musically and verse-wise; during it's B-section, Brains jumps into a hip-hop-meets-reggae flow that is as funky as it is inventive, the kind of move that separates Brains from the rest.

"I like to describe my style as 'rap meets R&B,'" says the handsome M.C., whose name is actually an acronym for Bringing Raps And Instrumentals Non-Stop. "A lot of rappers fake the R&B tip. The rap is cool, and the R&B is there, but it doesn't fit, doesn't feel natural. I like to think I'm versatile in that way."

Brains, born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio, got into rap in Junior high school. "I enjoyed backing up rappers as the human beat box," he

remembers, "...until I realized the girls paid more attention to the rappers instead of me. I had to change that right away."

The discovery of Brains by New Edition-Bell, Biv, DeVoe member and music impresario Michael Bivins is the stuff of which, well, record company bios are made. They met when Bell, Biv, DeVoe blew into Cleveland. Late after the Superfest show, a friend called Brains and informed him that Bivins and entourage were at a local restaurant. It was Brains' mom -- with her husband, she used to manage the Dazz Band -- who persuaded Brains to seize the moment. "She got up out of bed at three in the morning and we went down to the restaurant. When we got there, Bivins was just leaving, but mom went over and introduced herself and grabbed him by the arm. His bodyguard moved in, but mom wouldn't let go. I guess Bivins said to himself, 'The only way I'm gonna get out of here is to listen to this guy rap.'"

Nevertheless, Brains is already looking well past his debut and into the future, and his goals are formidable. "I'd like to be known as a rapper who crosses all audience barriers," he says. "I'd like to hear people say, 'I didn't really care for rap -- until I heard M.C. Brains.'" Such a goal is a challenge for any artist, but as Brains well knows, dreams do come true.

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Jack & Jill Spring Fundraiser

The Portland Chapter of Jack & Jill of America, Inc. will have a Spring fundraising event on Saturday, April 11, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, 5340 N. Interstate Avenue.

Join them at 6:00 p.m. for the reception and 7:00 p.m. for a performance of the Colin Thomas play, "One Thousand Cranes," that will be directed by Julie Akers. The production company will have a question and answer series following the performance. The cost is \$10.00, and includes the reception and play. The designated charity for this fundraiser will be "Christian Women Against Crime."

The Christian Women Against Crime program consists of a dedicated group of women who are providing a multitude of resources and positive al-

ternatives for youth. If you want to become involved in this program, contact Mrs. Alberta Phillips, 120 N.E. Ivy, 282-1316.

Jack & Jill of America members selected this play for our fundraising event because it provides cultural awareness through the eyes of children. Jack & Jill kids have made Origami crane decorations for this performance. The children attended classes that were taught by Toshimi Tanaka who is of Japanese descent.

Jack & Jill of America, Inc., is a national non-profit minority parenting organization whose main focus areas are education, recreation, social and cultural well being of minority children.

Please join the Portland chapter in the fundraising benefit for "Christian Women Against Crime."

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