

"Free Willy"

By Eric Island

On Wednesday, July 8th, Warner Brothers filmed pieces of a new action-filled comedy about a young boy and his family's desire to help free a whale named Willy from poachers. The car wash on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Fargo was selected the site for this scene. In this scene the family and the whale are being chased by poachers. Willy needs water to stay alive; which sets up the need for the car wash.

On occasions movies have been shot in all parts of Portland; but what qualifies this particular car wash in Northeast Portland to be honored by Warner Brothers? This car wash meets our needs for this movie.

We looked for a location with a main street and easy access. We look for construction such as the lighting, size, and the condition of the site, etc. We all agreed that this was the right place, said Mike Fantasia, liaison and location manager.

In the midst of an economic recession, I asked Jim Stinson, the owner of the car wash, how do movies like Free Willy help our economy? This film puts a lot into the community through exposure and jobs. It is a positive effort on the behalf of Warner Brothers and I to help the community as best we can. Very true, in creating this movie scene, 30-35 people have been hired to take an active part in this endeavor along with various electricians. Local businesses, mostly restaurants, are reaping the benefits of this movie because lots of meal orders are bought, which equals no business and no money!

Free Willy an action-filled comedy will keep us laughing at the box office and hopefully give our community the type of positive exposure long overdue.



Brian McKnight

Tinkling the ivories of his black baby grand, Brian McKnight evokes of a young Nat King Cole. Exuding wisdom well beyond his years, the extraordinarily talented vocalist/composer/producer stretches his athletic 6'4" frame and, with an air best described as confident and self-assured, says, I think if you believe in what you're doing and do it to the best of your abilities, the results will always be fine.

In the truest sense, McKnight's words have their deepest meaning after listening to his stunning self-titled debut disc, Brian McKnight, on Mercury Records. Daring to be different in an age of fast and rigid trends, this self-produced effort is a musical maturation an amalgam of styles that results in a bold step forward...particularly for a 22 year old. My music, he explains, is R & B on the jazz tip. I didn't want to do just another formula album. There's enough of that out there already. Besides, being true to myself and my musical sensibilities wouldn't allow it.

Born into an unusually gifted musical family McKnight, who began singing at the age of 4, has never compromised those sensibilities. With a musical legacy spanning two generations (his grandfather got the ball rolling singing in church), Brian McKnight hopes to blaze trails much like his oldest brother Claude has done in the Grammy Award winning jazz/pop/gospel group Take 6.

Clearly, there is a standard to maintain on the McKnight family tree. There's so much talent, it pushed us to really explore beyond the accepted boundaries. Just being good wasn't really good enough. Don't get me wrong. It wasn't a pressure situation...just a family pride that fostered the desire to be the best we could.

That pride and desire led McKnight, a native of Buffalo, New York (now residing in the San Diego, California area), to pass on a recent offer to sing alongside Claude in Take 6. I can't say it wasn't tempting, he grins. But then again, not really. I was flattered, but I felt the group is already successful. They're making their statement quite well without me. So what would I really add to Take 6? I did think about it but, in the final analysis, I've got to try this for myself. I have things inside that need to come out my way.

And on Brian McKnight, this extremely talented musician/vocalist does just that, painting a revealing and sensual rainbow of emotions, resulting from having written all the material, handling all lead and background vocal chores and playing virtually all the instruments (including keyboards, drums, acoustic guitar and bass).

On The Way Love Goes, the disc's lead single, he serves up a seductive groove under passionate lyrics that belie his youth. Stay The Night is another ear pleaser that finds McKnight boldly integrating R & B/Pop attitudes with jazzed up melodies and harmonies. Not at all insecure, McKnight exhibits extraordinary depth on Is The Feeling Gone? by further showcasing his versatility with seriously jazz-tinged, smoke-filled, piano bar solo.

Goodbye My Love borrows liberally from hip-hop expressionism while staying in tune with the album's overall feel and One Last Cry is a musical meeting of the minds between James Ingram and Bobby Caldwell, both of whom McKnight cites as major influences along with Stevie Wonder, Michael McDonald and, of course, Take 6. That's why I really resist categorizing what I do, he says. I grew up listening to lots of different artists and styles and it's all reflected in the music. An what a statement he's made! Brian McKnight is unequivocally and indisputably saying this is a uniquely talented and gifted young man who will be an important and influential artist for years to come. Yes, perhaps even unforgettable.



The Persuasions

By Derek Rasheed

On Wednesday July 22 the Persuasions was part of a fabulous program put on by the Washington Park Zoos 1992 Summer Concert Series. They dazzled the audience with inspiring harmonies with songs like, Be Good To Me Baby, Good Times, When I Live Them Prison Walls, Amen, and many many more.

After the show I spoke with the Persuasions and told them that there are still a lot of young and older blacks who are not aware of their music. I asked them why? They said, One of the main reasons is that black radio stations don't give them any degree of air time, and disc jockeys are not playing their records. However, The Persuasions say they are in the process of changing that.

The Persuasions have been together for thirty years, all of them are original members since the group was started. They share their thirty year original group member title with greats such as The Dells, and The Four Tops. When asked, what have kept them together for so long, after working city after city, club after club, and never reaching the financial status and recognition they deserve?

They replied, That if you base our destiny

on the physical things that we have or have not received we believe that professionally it probably should have been a lot better, but the love and respect we have for each other and our work with the belief that our group was put together by Almighty God have kept us together for so long. They went on to say that, Though the road has not been easy, we advise any upcoming groups to be patience, practice, and have a genuine, sincere love and respect for what you do and the people you work with. Along with a blessing from God you will have a good chance of making it. The lead singer is Jerry, Jimmy on bass, Joe is 1st tenor, and Jay is 2d tenor. Another member by the name of Tooboo died in Davis California in 1988. The Persuasions have several great harmonizing albums on market today.

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