

BLACK MUSIC MONTH

Rhythm & Blues Foundation Announces 1994 Pioneer Awards

Little Richard Honored For Lifetime Achievement

The Rhythm and Blues Foundation, dedicated to the celebration and preservation of one of America's most important art forms, is pleased to announce the recipients of the Fifth Annual Pioneer Awards. An official part of Grammy week, the Foundation's March 2nd award ceremony will present awards totalling \$190,000 to ten seminal vocalists and instrumentalists, and two performance groups at the Roseland Ballroom in New York City. In addition, the Foundation will bestow its Ray Charles Lifetime Achievement Award on one of the most irreplaceable talents of all-time, Little Richard. Through the Pioneer Awards the Foundation honors the women and men who created an art form that is a wellspring for contemporary popular music and is deeply reflective of American life and culture. The Foundation has previously recognized the work of such diverse and brilliant artists as Ruth Brown, Aretha Franklin, James Brown, Hank Ballard, Bobby "Blue" Bland, Nellie Lutcher, Doc Pomus,



Bill "Honky Tonk" Doggett

Jerry Butler - Known as the "Ice-man," Butler gained prominence as a member of the Chicago-based vocal

group, The Impressions with the 1958 hit, "For Your Precious Love." A dominant solo artist in the 60s and 70s, Butler charted with "Make it Easy on Yourself," "Mr. Dream Merchant," and "Hey Western Union Man."

represents the nexus of jazz and rhythm and blues music. In the 30s and 40s, Doggett worked with Lucky

achieved a major crossover hit with "Patches."

Don Covay -- Singer, songwriter Covay's approach draws liberally from the black Baptist gospel tradition. He wrote "See Saw" and "Chain of Fools" - both big hits for Aretha Franklin in the 60s. Covay himself charted with "Pony Time," "Mercy, Mercy," and "I Was Checkin' Out She Was Checkin' In."

Bill Doggett - Doggett's career as a pianist, organist, and arranger



The Shirelles

Gordy, Jr. on Tamla and was the lead singer for the Raelettes.

Ben E. King -- Among King's career achievements are his work as the lead singer for the legendary Drifters ("There Goes My Baby," "This Magic Moment," and "Save the Last Dance for Me." As a solo artist, King became a true giant of rhythm and blues music with the charted works "Spanish Harlem," "Stand By Me," and "Don't Play That Song."

Jonny Otis -- A major force in the Los Angeles musical cauldron of the 40s and 50s. Otis commands a dizzying and multifaceted career as a drummer, band leader, talent scout, composer, music publisher, writer and historian, recording executive and more. His successes as a performer include "Double Crossing Blues," "Harlem Nocturne," and most of all, "Willie and the Hand Jive." He was instrumental in the careers of Mel Walker, Little Ester Phillips, and Etta James among others.

Earl Palmer -- As much as anyone, New Orleans-bred drummer Palmer is responsible for the rhythm in Rhythm & Blues and the roll in Rock & Roll. His Crescent City back beats, bass drum accents and snare drum spice have provided vigor to hundreds of recordings in the great Dave Bartholomew Band he was the power behind Fats Domino, and his other associations include Lloyd Price, Little Richard, Larry Williams, Professor Longhair, and Shirley & Lee.

Irma Thomas -- Having earned the consensus title of the "Soul Queen of New Orleans," Thomas has a vocal style noted for its soul-searing nuance and earth-shaking power. Thomas

made "Pain in My Heart" before Otis Redding and "Time Is On My Side" before the Rolling Stones. Her hits also include "Don't Mess With My Man" "Good to Me."

The Coasters/Robins -- With impish humor, topical content, first-class musicianship and quality production values, the repertoire of the Coasters/Robins is without precedent or equal. Their work set an enviable standard with hits like "Yakety Yak," "Charlie Brown," "Poison Ivy," as well as "Riot in Cell Block #9," and "Bad Blood."

The Shirelles -- Both the prototypical "girl group" and one of the most durable, The Shirelles have the distinction of being one of the few such groups to write their own material. "I Met Him On A Sunday" reached the top 50 in 1958 and is credited in most quarters with initiating the "girl group" genre. The Shirelles' other hits include "Tonight's the Night" and "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow" as well covers by the Beatles on "Baby It's You" and "Boys."

Little Richard Penniman - Ray Charles Lifetime Achievement Awardee - After Little Richard was formed the mold must have been

thrown away. There was no one like him before he came on the scene, and there has been nothing like him to emerge since. In terms of his dress, performance style, and the content of his material--outrageous is a supreme understatement. Flailing away at the



Clarence Carter

piano-but playing just the right settings for his music. Whooping and hollering--but providing just the right reading of his lyrics. Little Richard is genius sui generis...oh, his hits include "Tuti Frutti," "Long Tall Sally," "Slippin' and Slidin' (Peepin' and Hidin')," "Ready Teddy," "All Around The World," and "Lucille." Rhythm and Blues was never quite the same after him. And for sure, there would have been no Rock & Roll without him.



The Coasters

Hadda Brooks, Martha & The Vandellas, Little Anthony & The Imperials and Jimmy Scott.

The recipients of the 1994 Rhythm and Blues Foundation Pioneer Awards are:

Otis Blackwell -- Influential, yet obscure, Blackwell contributed significantly to the last 40 years of American music as a songwriter and pianist. His works fueled the careers of artists Little Willie John, "Fever," "Dee Clark/Hey Little Girl," Jerry Lee Lewis, "Great Balls of Fire," and Elvis Presley, "Don't Be Cruel," "All Shook Up," "Return to Sender."

Clarence Carter -- Carter has long been noted for his soulful song styling and story-telling as well as for a deep, old-time blues feeling which infuses all of his recordings. His hits read like admonishments to lovers and the lovelorn, "Slip Away," "Too Weak to Fight," and "Making Love (At the Dark End of the Street) and

Millinder, Lionel Hampton, Count Basie, The Ink spots, Louis Armstrong, and Louis Jordan among others. Doggett became a major R&B instrumentalist in the 50s with "Honky Tonk (Parts 1 & 2)" and "Ram-Bunk-Shush."

Mable John -- Like her more famous brother, Little Willie John, John's first musical inspiration came through Christian sing-a-longs led by her mother. A vocalist of resonant sensuality, John's solo work is featured on "Your Good Thing (Is About to Come to an End)" and "Able Mable." Before joining Stax Records as a soloist, John recorded for Berry

group, The Impressions with the 1958 hit, "For Your Precious Love." A dominant solo artist in the 60s and 70s, Butler charted with "Make it Easy on Yourself," "Mr. Dream Merchant," and "Hey Western Union Man."

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Miki Howard

Miki Sings Billie: A Tribute To Billie Holiday

With firm gospel roots and a most impressive track record in the urban arena (including six Top-5 R&B hits and the recent No. 1 single, "Ain't Nobody Like You"), Miki Howard felt ready to broaden her musical horizons and explore her roots by interpreting music popularized by the jazz legend she grew up idolizing-Billie Holiday.

Holiday has been acknowledged as the preeminent female jazz vocalist of all time-a singer who used her voice as an instrument and won the

precious to us-more influential and more revered-than at any point in her lifetime. Few would now dispute that she is one of the essential artists of our century."

No stranger to the Holiday repertoire (Howard was cast as Holiday singing "I Cover The Waterfront" in Spike Lee's Malcolm X), Miki has made a study of Holiday's genius since she discovered a dog-eared copy of Lady In Satin in her parents' record collection at an early age. As an impressionable youngster, Miki was awestruck by lady Day's beauty as well as "how different her voice sounded than anything else in my parents' library. Although Lady Day's range was limited, she brought lyrics to life in a way no other singer could. Lady always approached her songs on an emotional level, and people say I do too!"

Miki brings to this project a respect for Lady Day and a voice capable of igniting the Holiday songbook with charisma, conviction, vibrant phrasing,

and strong lyrical impact. Passion shines through in any lyric Miki explores. Her molten energy is imbued with gleeful elegance and wit.

Even in her teens, Miki's radiant

voice drew accolades from her peers. Miki's singing captured the attention of established jazz figures including Roy Ayers and Ronnie Laws. Early session work with masters such as Chico Hamilton, Stanley Turrentine, and Billy Cobham deepened Miki's understanding of the jazz genre.

Producers Lemel Humes and David Foster wisely paired Miki with veteran arrangers Johnny Mandel and H.B. Barnum, thereby ensuring arrangements that would embrace Miki's passionate vocal innovations.

After sifting through all of the Holiday classics, Miki came up with ten evergreens which she felt would best display her love for Billie, while simultaneously allowing her to bring her sense of originality to the musical equation. Mandel's exemplary arrangement of "What A Little Moonlight Can Do" fits Miki's radiant voice like a glove. Johnny shows both an awareness of Billie's classic '35 recording with Teddy Wilson as well as the acumen to frame Miki's voice in a more contemporary context. "I love the lyrics to this tune, "enthuses Miki. "To me, moonlight is a metaphor, symbolic of anything that can enhance a relationship and make the magic happen!"

Miki's infectious, soulful lyricism again shines on the smoky, haunting reading of "I'm A Fool To Want You. On "My Man," Mandel's lush signature strings embrace Miki's sensual interpretation.

Jazz radio will surely welcome Miki's styling of Duke Ellington's "In My Solitude." Howard's emotionally moving reading displays her awareness of both Holiday's and Jimmy Scott's ways with a phrase. When Miki beckons "Dear Lord



Billie Holiday

Above," you know she's learned how to bring the lyrics alive from the best.

Miki brings the blues alive on "now or Never" and swings hard with dramatic flair on "T' Aint Nobody's Business." Barnum's unmistakable arrangement of "yesterdays" recalls the classic "Soulful" sessions he arranged and conducted for Lou Rawls some 30 years ago. Miki opens "Don't Explain" with a seductive monologue, prefacing a phenomenal reading, again featuring a Barnum arrangement.

Billie Holiday closed all of her sets at Cafe Society with "Strange Fruit," Lewis Allen's anti-lynching protest song. It became Holiday's signature song, signifying her intolerance toward racism and oppression. "Billie approached all her songs on an emotional level, but especially 'Strange Fruit,'" says Miki. "I

wanted the arrangement to bring the scenario alive visually - almost in a "Peter And The Wolf" manner. many have suffered and we should never forget."

Miki's collection closes with "Your Mother's Son-In-Law, a light hearted remembrance of Billie's first recording with Benny Goodman in 1933. The period arrangement is the perfect setting for Miki's timeless wit, joy, and charm. Swing, swing, swing!

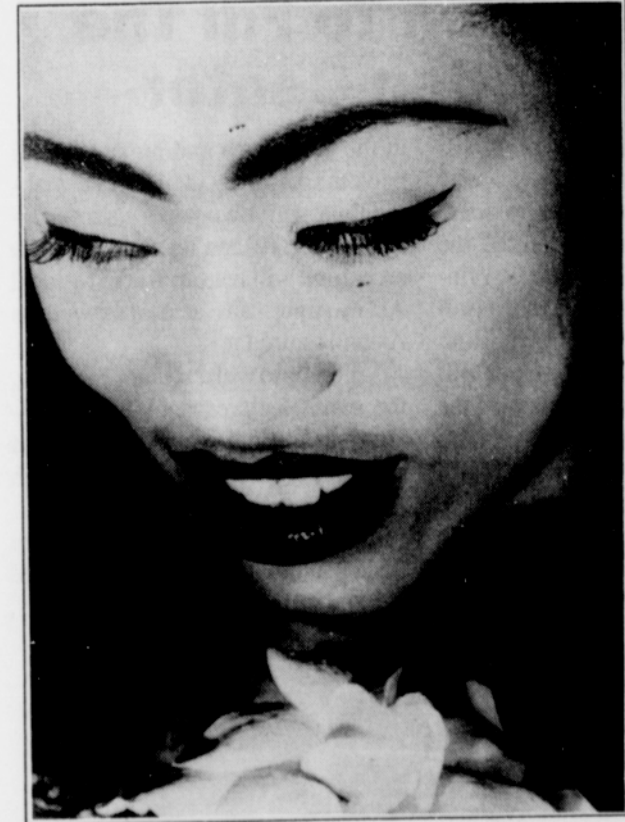
With the release of Miki Sings Billie, Miki Howard affirms her status as a world class singer. It's obvious Miki's not trying to recreate or mimic Billie on this collection. "I've got way too much respect for Lady Day as a cultural icon," says Miki. "I just wanted to pay her tribute with my gifts as a vocalist and hope that my efforts will bring both awareness and joy to those who listen."

Smoothie Syk Destined To Follow In Footsteps Of Legendary Duo Performers

Triple B Records is gearing up for the release of "one of the hottest new duo acts to appear on the music scene in over 10 years" according to CEO, Bobby Brown. Triple B recording artist Smoothie Syk will officially debut when they perform at "Bobby Brown's Birthday Bash" on Friday, February 4th in New York City. The group will perform four songs in honor of Brown's 25th Birthday.

Smoothie Syk is an Atlanta-based duo that has been performing together for the past year. Their plan is to follow in the tradition of legendary duo artists Ashford & Simpson, Rene & Angela and Peaches & Herb by recording and performing music that epitomize the glamour elegance and sophistication of these music legends. Their exhilarating performance at the Jack The Rapper convention last year attracted a legion of music industry executives, recording artist and radio programmers with their unique blend of vocal styling and harmonies. Triple B/MCA records plans to maximize the talent of Smoothie Syk by heavily promoting and publicizing their debut release, Just When. Label President Nate Smith hopes that, "Smoothe Syk will be accepted by people who listen to all types of music since their debut album has something for everyone-a little r&b, a little pop and a whole lot of love songs."

Smoothie Syk's first single, "Slow," will be released in early March with their debut album, Just When, following in May.



Miki Howard

respect and camaraderie of jazz legends such as Lester Young, Teddy Wilson, and Benny Carter. Joel E. Siegel recently wrote, "Three decades after her death, her music is more