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TMOTTGoGo Award Winners Inside

TMOTTGoGo

The Magazine Of The Washington DC Go-Go Music Culture



NEG

**...them bammmas be
crankin!**

Issue Includes:

- * Proper Utensils**
- *The All Around Honies**
- *Nico & Big Mark**

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Having grown up in this community, I take pride to have been a recipient, as well as contributor in the achievements that has been accomplished throughout the many years.

This is a very historical community that has furnished such historic as the Black Rep, The Howard Theatre, Dig-It, Rap Inc., Lorton, Duke Ellington School of the Arts, Washington Redskins, Washington Wizards, Marshall Hall, The Wilson Line, The Shrimp Boat, Haines Point, Malcolm X Park, The Senator Theatre (and its all night movies), The Uptown Theatre, Annacostia, Shaw, The Metro Club, The Club Lebaron, Northwest Gardens, RSVP, Chapter's II & III, Triples, Ibex, Panarama Room, The Atlas Theatre, The Washington Coliseum, Moonlight Inn, Tip-Top Club, The Room, The Maverick Room, The Black Hole, The Classics, Eastside, The Chateau, Dance Connection, WOL, The Soul Papa, Moon Man, Petey Green (remember in 1973 when he said that if the Redskins go to the Super Bowl he would ride a tricycle up East Capitol Street? -- the rest was history), Street Theatre, The Show Mobile, Rock Creek Park,

Georgia Avenue, Vender's Market, Children's Hospital, Walter Reed, UDC, Howard University, Children's Museum, Stuff, Newsbag, Galludet, Columbia Hospital For Women, Southeast House, Job Corp, etc. I mean, the list goes on and on.

And lets not forget about the music that has paved our way, such as, Duke Ellington, Roberta Flack, Marvin Gaye, The Ambassadors, Simba, The Soul Searchers, Experience Unlimited, Fate's Destiny, The Stratocasters, as well as others.

Go-Go is a music that has been contrived from all of the above. Therefore, it's more than just music -- a lot more. It's part of a culture. That's why it's so spiritual. There is no other music like it on earth.

I, myself, have been able to participate in many of the community activities over the years. As a child, I performed with the company CUE (Children's Urban Arts Ensemble). I have danced with companies, such as The Bren-Carr Dancers and The TNT Poppers. I have played in such bands as Pure Elegance, Little Benny & The Masters and Proper Utensils. I have even written a play, at the age of 17, about the Go-Go Community that was not only performed here at the Market Gallery, but also won an award for the late Joseph Papp's "Young Playwrights Festival" and performed on Off-Broadway New York.

Basically, let me just say

that the Go-Go Community is an essential part of my life, and I am blessed to have been/be a part of it. That's the purpose of TMOTTGoGo -- to educate, uplift and promote our culture with the positiveness that it deserves.

The bottom line is, I don't care what you are doing in life -- whether you've moved away and are doing well with movies, such as "What's Love Got To Do With It" or television programs, such as "In The Heat Of The Night" -- whether you're performing on shows On Broadway, Las Vegas and across the world -- or whether you're performing on tour with such acts as, Maxwell, Gloria Estifan, Carlos Santana, Rashawn Patterson, Boys To Men, Jean Carn or Roberta Flack, if you're from this culture, you're from the Go-Go Community. Bottom Line!

Just as if you were from the New Orleans culture, you would be from the Jazz Community. That's why it bothers me to have other cultures dumped down my throat, while my own culture gets disrespected. You would not go to Jamaica and dump Country music down their throats while disrespecting Reggae. You would not go to Nashville and dump Reggae music while disrespecting Country.

TMOTTGoGo is here to be a part of that body into making the community a whole. That's our purpose.

One Love,
Kato

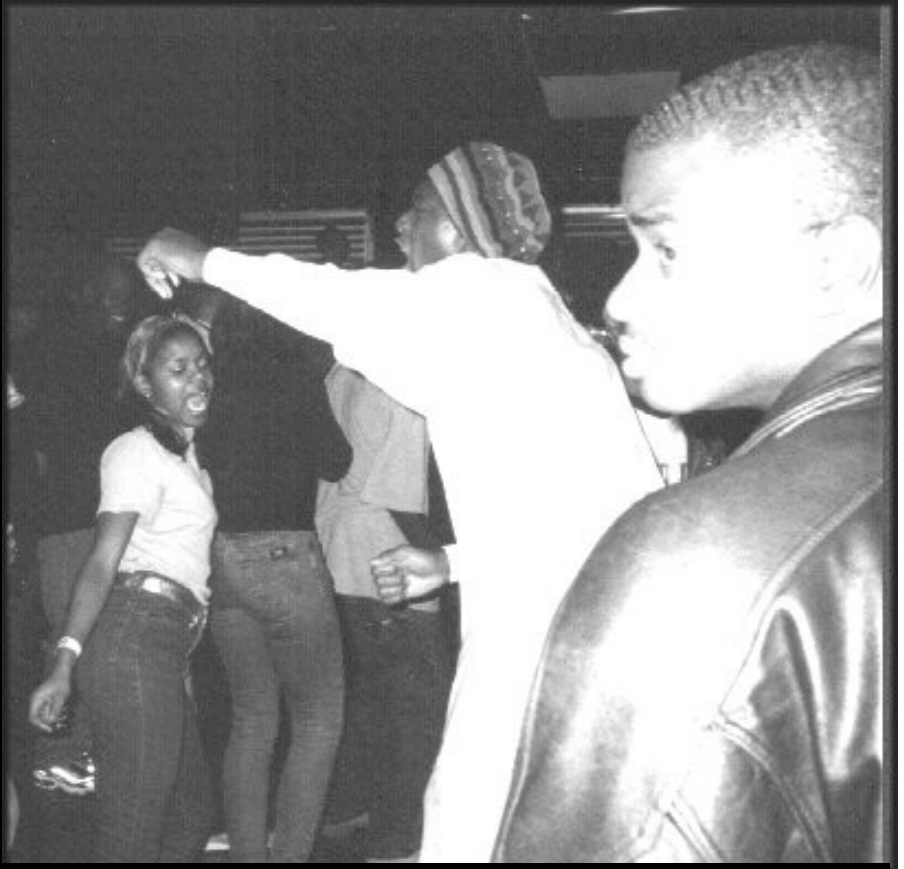
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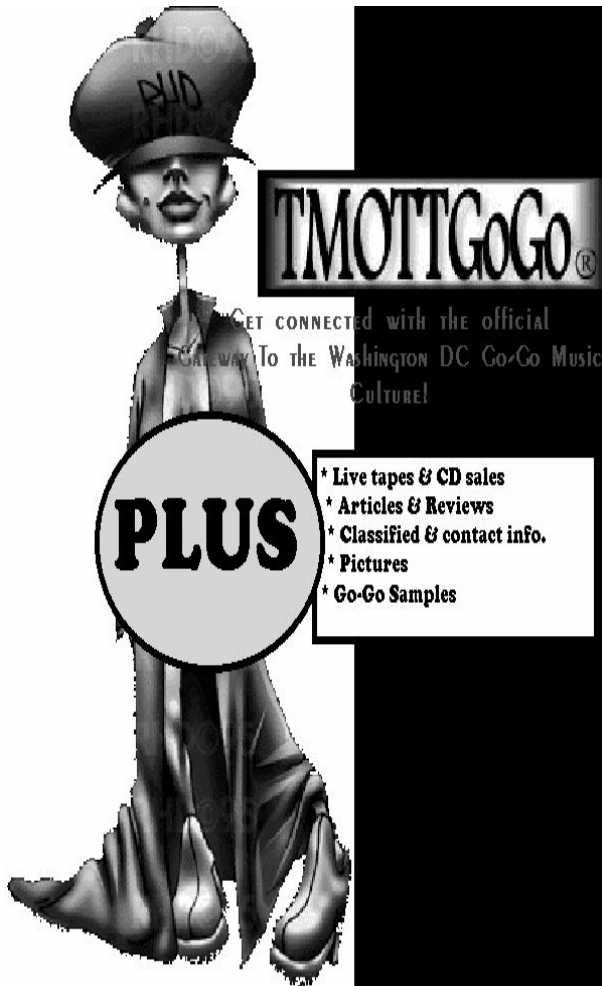
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We at TMOTTGoGo take earnestly the challenge of being a voice for the Washington DC Go-Go culture, and strive hard at bringing comprehensive and unprejudiced representation to the reader. We feel that it is important for our readers to be mindful of the constitution of our association within the Go-Go Community. We engage in business transactions with companies that are part of the Go-Go music culture on many levels, and accept advertising from such companies to support in the promotion of their product outside the direct channels of the magazine. Therefore, we feel it a responsibility to always strictly patrol the integrity of our editorial content. Only in this

Interview With Nico & Big Mark By David Smith

Saturday, December 13th, 1997. 2:45 p.m. The hawk was out that day, and as I rolled up to the corner of 12th & F St. NW, I wasn't surprised to see that familiar blue van with the white Nico's Tape sign on the door. Big Mark and Nico are at work, which is no surprise, because rain or shine, hot or cold, they do their thing. The world doesn't stop for nothing, and they know this. That's why whatever it is you feel you need, I guarantee you that 99.99% of the time, they've got it on The Table. Go Go tapes from two days ago back to 1979. Rare Essence, Chuck Brown & the Soul Searchers, Ayre Rayde, Chance Band, Trouble Funk, E.U., Proper Utensils, Northeast Groovers, Junkyard, Backyard, and some more. Video tapes, from live shows at the Ibox to home movies. The Smell Good, from all kinds of incense to a rack of oils for him and her. CD's, from the Publicity Band to Rakim's "18th Letter". Mix tapes, from reggae to the latest DJ Clue. You ashy? They got lotion for you. Need to get to the Convention Center and you have no clue if you in uptown, downtown, southeast or northeast? "Directions are a killer...", and they have those too. This particular day, Big Mark is fired up about the Washington Redskins getting punished by the New York Giants. So the only thing that was different than today was that there was no Go Go pumping from Nico's sound system built into The Table. Today on the radio was the football game. Folks walked by, checked out the table, and exchanged comments on ol' Norv Turner's crew. I was preparing to get these brothers on tape, so that I can share with the rest of you all what makes them different from your ordinary street vendor trying to get a hustle. The difference? No hustle. Why? Find out. First, I had to buy some batteries for the tape recorder. Oh yeah, they have them too. As the interview got under way, Nico was still jumping out of the van from time to time to do what he is out there for, to give the people what they want. After the game, he throws on the 12/7/97 Northeast Groovers tape, the show from the second Sunday at the Del Rio, which you can thank these two for. In

the meantime, Big Mark and I were in the van kickin' it...

A Little Background about Nico's Tapes

Das: When did you get started, and what got you started in selling tapes?

Nico: Basically what happened, I started collecting tapes, and after a while I saw a lot of other people who were not only collecting them, but also selling them on the street. So my thing was, I wanted to be able to buy a tape without having to worry about the quality, or any of the cutting up of the tape, or remaking them like that, so after a while, after I started getting tapes and was taking care of mine, I thought it was a good idea for me to go ahead and do the same thing, but with my own twist to it.

Das: Like with writing the songs down?

Nico: Yeah, because I like to know what's on the tape. You know, just listening to the tape and being able to tell the person what's actually happening with the show, instead of selling a product I know nothing about. Because that was my whole idea, how can you buy something from someone, and the person that's selling doesn't know what they are selling?

Das: When was all this though? Because I remember the first time I seen you out here was in '93, you had like the one little case out there and you were standing right by the escalators, and it was raining outside.

BigMark: Basically, Nico, before he started, he asked me if he really had a good chance selling tapes and would I think about it. I said that if you are going to sell tapes, what is it that is going to make someone buy your tape? I said Quality. So if you are going to do it, be the best at it. So we sat down and started working on it, that's when he came home (from the military), I'd say around '90, '91, we started talking about it. I think officially he started doing it around '92. Basically he

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was out here by his self, just hanging out, trying to do his thing, then he would come back to the crib, holler at me and let me know what's happening. I was like shorty, keep up the good, you know, you're struggling now, and there's no reason for me to jive like struggle with you. I said it's a one man show right now. So back in '92, he would come out here with the one bag, the little tape recorder, whatever, and he would build the clientele slowly but surely. So when I came on the scene in '95, what happened was, in '94, I came and checked him out a little bit, but '95, I knew he had something special, and the type of career I had, you know I had my own cleaning business, so I just took a "leave of absence", you know, I'm not going to clean anymore, I'm going to dedicate a little time with my partner, to see what I can help him with. Plus I had a little money in the bank, so I wasn't hungry, you know, pressed. So, you know, I started bringing the old heads as far as back in '80, '81, even '79, a little '78, when the go go years were for me. So I would bring some of that experience to the table. Nico would find a tape that I might had went to, and I'd be like, 'man, Nico man, there'd be so many women that come in the joint...' you know, just give him that flavor! So basically, all I'm doing is being a sidekick. So I told Nico the number one thing he has to do is to develop the ear. I know what sounds good (performance wise), but clearing a tape up, I might can't clear it up as good as Nico. He knows the qualities of music, as far as how it should sound, the midrange, the lows and all that. See that's the technicalities that he had, I didn't have. All I could do, I could go to a go go and say, 'man they slummin, shorty.' But why are they slummin'? You know, they got the high hat openin' up, they not doing this with the horns, they should be doin' this with the bass, you know, such and such like that. And, you know, it's too high, it's too loud, you know, certain shit like that. I would give that to Nico, man, he would take it and run with it. So, since then, shorty been built! So, '92, '93', '94, '95 was a new stand, and everybody just started checking him out.

Das: Yeah, because I know there used to be people all up and down F St. (selling tapes).

BigMark: Exactly. Now the guys down the street wasn't giving up quality. It's just like you take McDonalds, and Burger King. You got McDonald's

and Burger King, they battlin' each other, but one thing they givin' you, you can get something nice out of there. So I told Nico, everybody's gonna copy your tape, everybody's gonna try and sell it, but one thing they not gonna have is what we have, is the type of flavor, we customer oriented, you know as far as the customer's right, we want the customer to feel satisfied, if we gonna give hem incense, we gonna give them the best incense, oils, we get oils, we want the 100% oils. That way, a person will say, 'damn! I can just come here, and get something that's worth my money.' It ain't about hustlin', you know, if I get some oil, I know it ain't cut. So that's the whole thing about street vending. Keep the motherfuckin' shit real. Just don't hustle a person. And that's what we got over everybody. Now with the music, he's a hood rat, you know, he do his work, definitely, and he knows about marketing.

Das: So how did you know each other, before you started doing this?

BigMark: I knew Nico going back to about '84, '85. What it was, he knew my nephew, and they was partners. And this one particular day, he came by my little gig, I used to be a little manager up at the Amoco on Rockville Pike, and my nephew worked out there. He used to come to work, and on this particular day he brought Nico by. And, you know, Nico was kind of like a little raw onion, he didn't come in the joint scared. You know, he was talkin' shit a little bit. I kind of liked that in him, because when my nephew would come around, my nephew had a little bit of that quality in him, and you could automatically see it in Nico. So we just clicked right off the hand...so we've been friends way before we were selling the tapes.

Das: Then he went off and was in the military.

BigMark: Yeah, see what happened, see that's the first thing about the military. The day he signed up, I left to go out of town that weekend. See, I was staying with my brother, and his girlfriend, then what happened was I left a message, 'tell Nico I'll be back tomorrow. I'm just going out for one day, like one Friday night, I'll be back Sunday.' So, this particular weekend, shorty was making a decision on going into the service, he wanted to call his partner to see what's happening. So he calling

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around trying to find me, and my brother's girlfriend Necee didn't tell Nico I was going to be back Sunday. So, not to say he panicked, but he went on ahead and signed up for the Air Force. So I'm like, when I come back from the weekend, I'm like, 'what's up dude?' I'm all excited about the LL Cool J, Run DMC show, right? He like, 'shorty man, where the fuck you been?' I'm like, 'what man?' 'Shorty, I done signed up.' I'm like, 'awww, you motherfucker!'

Das: So you would have talked him out of it?

BigMark: Yeah! I would have told him the pros and the cons. I said 'shorty, why you leavin'? You know, what's the rush?' So, he was backed into the wall, so he left to go on his little world tour and shit. We just kept in touch through the letters....he left like that. He would call me and shit, write me, come in town, you know. So we got a little bond and shit.

Das: So going back, like you said, your number one priority is not to hustle, you know what I'm sayin'? Because with you two, you have something in common besides just the tapes.

BigMark: Exactly. See, I used to be out there a little bit, as far as running around, making a little hustle on the street...see the thing about business, it can be selling apples, it can be selling buildings. It's all the same, it's just how you go about the game. So by me being out there a little bit, I can bring the game to Nico, to help sell it. Now the quality is easy. If you got good quality, then the work ain't hard. But if you got bad quality, you got to be like, 'man, c'mon shorty, gimme three dollars.' You'll be undercutting yourself. So actually, as long as we got good quality, it ain't hard work. It's hard work to keep the quality, it's not hard work to sell.

Plans for the Future, including Uniq 360 Entertainment, Nico and Big Mark's Organization That Brought the Backyard Band to LuLu's and the Northeast Groovers to the Del Rio

Das: I know you talk about '98, you'll have a new

Table, but as far as the Del Rio, and LuLu's, and the party you had back in the summer at the Pump Room, what other projects you got?

BigMark: Basically, what will really make it good is we'll have an entertainment thing. As far as producing shows, have shows, being behind the scenes. You know, selling the tape, you behind the scenes but you the small end of the pie. If you controlling the show, and you getting the tape, that's a double header. Right now, we working at it, I feel it can grow, but you got a lot of player haters in this business. At the time, Washington DC is a hot town for like nightclubs, different types of theatrical shows, and the MCI Center is jumpin, you know, it's money in this city, it's just what idea is sellin'. Right now, the go go is slummin'. And if we can take a dead man and bring life to him, you know, we can gain something. So '98 we gonna try to do more shows. Right now, with Del Rio, I think that's a good move, I just wish we could of have had Northeast Groovers at the Virginia site (LuLu's in Springfield, 7/14 to 9/15). Because the way they perform, and come to work, they are business. ... when you business oriented, you got to take it like this your last day. You gotta be, 'man, I gotta do this right, cuz I might can't work tomorrow.' ... Groovers more like, they know they not working tomorrow, they like, 'shit, we gonna make this our best show.' Even though they might got a show two or three days down the line, but that night, they would crank for you. That's what I like about them.

The D.C. Mentality and the Signs of the Times: A Twenty Year Review

Das: Now as far as what you was talking about, we was talking about this last week, you know, as far as you producing shows and other things, you said there's a lot of player haters. Do you believe, in what some people call the DC Mentality? Whereas if you got it, and I can't have it, then fuck you, you shouldn't have it either, you know what I'm saying? Not where they go out and just wreck a person's business and all, but you know, people really don't want to help you out if they see you got something that they don't got.

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BigMark: Yeah, and I think that's true here. And see, what I really think, in that way it's like this. This a melting pot, right now, ain't nothing to melt. Alright, we gotta get something in the pot. Years ago, everybody was hustlin'. Far as the go go scene, you got Chuck Brown and the Soul Searchers playin' one night, you got Rare Essence playin' the next night, you got Experience Unlimited playin' the next night, and then everybody off but Trouble Funk on a Sunday night, but everybody going from Chuck, Essence, E.U., going to see Trouble. Dig what I'm sayin'? They like, 'damn! Pump it Big Tony!' It's a love thing. But now the little boys, they seen that, they like 'okay, but damn. Peacemakers, you know, Petworth, all these types of bands, Ayre Rayde, they see that, they say 'well shit, we gotta work hard just to get them to come see us, to get on that marquis, to let them know hey we listening to what y'all doing, we doin' the same thing, let's work.' So now the three dollar go go, is a good go go. So everybody's in the melting pot. Everybody's trying to get in that pot. That's when the money's good. Now you ain't got but two or three motherfuckers making money, alright. Essence, they the long head, okay, the old head, the longevity. Alright, now Backyard, say Junkyard, Northeast, was bands like Ayre Rayde, Petworth, Peacemakers. Now they done got up to the top of the shelf, but ain't no old heads up there but Essence! You dig what I'm sayin'? So it's not enough old head up there to say 'hey young boy, this how you do it.' So now the youngin's taking over they territory, they say, 'look we gonna do it this way, and this is how go should be.'

Nico: Not only that, Essence done went to the young. Because they getting outweighed! They getting outweighed. There's nobody up there to tell Essence 'look here man, just keep pullin'. Let's do this way, you do that way. Fuck them youngin's, cuz we gonna show them youngin's how to make it.' So now it's follow the leader. You dig what I'm sayin'? Instead of back in the days, the youngin's followed our lead, now the old heads followin' they lead. Because when an old head, like say Proper Utensils, or Junk do a show, they hopin' on them youngin's to come, cuz that's where the money's at. But they gotta play their music.

Das: And it don't really fit.

BigMark: It don't fit, yeah. Their mentality they like 'damn, once we start crankin' that little shit they want to hear, the youngin's start loosening up...' Soon as they try to get into something else, it's a fight. Dig what I'm sayin'? The time you be like, 'damn, why they fightin' now?!' They gettin' ready to crank!' Because the youngin's can't handle the shit, you see what I'm sayin'? They can't handle it. Back in the day you could wait an hour to see Essence. Because you knew, they was gonna hit that groove. You'll stand in the rain, man! Walk from the Howard Theatre up the Silver Spring line. I'm tellin' you! Because the bus ain't started yet, you might walk to the bus stop, the bus ain't starting till about six thirty. The Howard let out at five thirty, what you gonna do?

Nico: You walkin' in a group anyways.

BigMark: Thank you! You say well fuck it man, it was worth it. Because we knew, they hit that groove. So now with the youngin's to me, Groovers, I see Groovers can be a band from the old days. Because, they workin' shorty.

Das: In the business aspect of the whole thing.

BigMark: Right, that's all I'm sayin'. I wasn't a Groovers fan, but the more I sit back and watch them, and see how they do they shit, see how they handle they shit, and see how they changed from, they used to have the scandal shit with the buttnaked tapes and all that, changed over, that's business. I said 'man, you got to give them the nod.' Now, other bands, like say Essence, they know they so popular they can just, 'alright, we gonna take a week off.' Soon as they take a week off, they can say 'okay, we at a new spot,' they announce that shit one time, it's standing room only. You dig what I'm sayin'? Because they know they got it shorty! You know? They know they got it. That's why I hope, dealing with Nico's Tapes, you know, the business, we can give 'em good quality music, and give 'em a nice show. Showing them what they need to know. Because the lifespan of go go, once you get, what, seventeen? Okay, say you go go at sixteen. Hopefully by the time you get to twenty one, you done. But back in the day, you couldn't get out there that early. You be lucky to see a go go band at sixteen. You almost had to wait till you was high school level.

Das: Yeah, I know I ain't see jack, until I was what,

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seventeen or eighteen?

BigMark: See what I'm sayin'? Seventeen or eighteen. Then you go goin' till you about twenty four, twenty five. But if you start at sixteen now, you lucky to get to twenty one. Because the way the turmoil is. The lifespan is short in go go, you know, it's short.

Das: It ain't even that, you know, it's brothers now, everybody actin' so knuckleheaded.

BigMark: It's the mentality of others. Go Go was something, it was like a rec center. You looked at go go, you'd say 'okay we getting together a lot of people to listen to some music. Okay, it's just like you puttin' a needle on a record, and you jammin'. The difference is it's live entertainment. You got people standing around, some girls wearing the tight stuff, you got a few guys in there for the girls, you had the sodas, you had the potato chips, you had a little garage spot, you know. Nobody could really be there but the go go scene. It wasn't like it was at the Theatre, it was like an alley spot, you had to find it. And once you got there it was family. You had the Northwest Gardens, then you had the Howard Theatre. So it was different atmospheres that draws you to that. And that's what it was about, just having fun. Now, it turns into where, yeah, it's a business, but you stickin' me up at the door, you not giving me a venue, I'm going to the same Blackhole, I ain't got nowhere to sit down, I gotta go through armor truck security, you see what I'm sayin'? You know, then what else is happening that night? Well, nobody else is playing. Then what choice I got?

Das: Back then you had a choice.

BigMark: I had a choice. I go see E.U. over here, or I go see Essence over there. I go see Trouble over here, or I gotta stay in that night. Certain things you had to do. Now, it's like it's one choice. Right now you should have a band in Southeast, on a Friday night.

Das: Nobody playin' out there.

BigMark: Thank you, you know why? Because, they done killed all the venues. See, all the venues is on this side, or the high schools. Southeast, is like, they scared of southeast. But that's where the turmoil come in at... You got a go go band crankin'

in northwest. Okay, look at northwest. They tryin' to say that's Back's territory... You ain't gonna see JY play up on that motherfuckin' strip too much. Maybe that Sunday night thing at the Ibex (prior to 2/4/97). But that's Sunday night. Too much of it's territorial, man.

Street Wise Business Sense

Das: I was going to ask you, as far as the store. What are you trying to do with that? Because right here (referring to Polly Esther's on 12th and F), you might not even need a space that big, but there are alot of spots around here.

Nico: Well, my opinion is that right now, we tryin' to build up our identity, our crowd so that when we open up our store, all our clientele will already know where we gonna be at. We might not be able to be right down here, due to the fact that the MCI Center is comin' now, and Abe Pollin's got a lot of say on what's stores to put up there.

BigMark: It's highest bidder.

Nico: There it is. With that in hand, unless I can get some kind of business loan, I would basically have to sit back and settle for some other type of situation where I could I just maybe franchise my tapes out. The service may not be there all the time until we set up a little spot, but people will know they can get good quality Nico's tapes there, because the way it's situated right now, we don't know what our future is going to be on the street. Because the white man right now is making a power move in DC. So, they want to know who, where, what and when, and that's taking the street vendor to where they know what's happening. They gonna be regulating money with what the street vendor's bringin' in now. That's how they trying to carry it as far as, they gonna put out there who they want out there.

DS: So it ain't like you can just go get a spot, like some people might think.

Nico: Nah. It's like I'ma have to bring a pistol out here to get keep this spot sometimes.

BigMark: We've been very fortunate that there hasn't been too much an argument over this spot.

Nico: And a lot of it's been old reputation, a lot of

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Proper Utensils



The Best Kept Secret

By Kevin Hammond

When the entertainer Jas. Funk said that Proper Utensils was one of the "best kept secrets in town" and that "the only way you can know where we play is basically by knowing somebody in the band" he was not just making idol conversation. Proper Utensils is one of the best kept secrets in the city—if not the best kept.

I, myself, can vouch for this fact, since I was one of the members who started with the group back when they took their second stake into the community in 1992. Even then, nobody had any idea that PU had been in the workshop for almost a year accumulating their musical game plan for the industry. Jas. Funk and the Godfava were still "locking-it" with Rare Essence. Little Benny, Michael Muse and I were still "Cat-N and Hat-N" it with The Masters. Roy Battle and Jimmy Jam were still wiggling the bodies over on the Hot-Cold-Sweat part of town. Scott was

still "Bedrocking-it" with the Pump Blenders. And, Mike Hughes and Big Al were still tightening their sounds with Chuck Brown and Backyard.

Even when radio disc jockey Gary Drew slipped PU's go-go version of Teddy Railey's "Rump Shaker" during one of his programs, the masses actually thought they were listening to Little Benny & The Masters. This tape slip would forever change the course of PU's road, not to mention the pleasure it brought people to see Funk and Benny back together on the same stage.

Now, in the year of Ninety-eight, the only things that have changed in that camp are some of the players. At any given time, these cats can be found any and every where in the city, yet Proper Utensils still remains one of the best kept secrets in town. One minute they are "letting the dogs loose" at the Crossroads. But don't blink too long, because you just may have missed them at Rolands. And just when you think you've gotten

their schedule down, they're sneaking right behind you tearing the roof at The Club.

As their proclaim to fame continues to linger on, Proper Utensils remains in the driver's seat with their go-go flavored rendition of Toto's "Georgy-Porgy." This tune not only expresses the progressive definition created by Toto, but also captivates that go-go ear with a string of horn melodies and strong percussion interludes.

Also, be on the lookout for these brothers to be slipping more grooves your way under the name of Legends. But shhh...don't tell anybody. It's another one of those secrets I mentioned earlier.

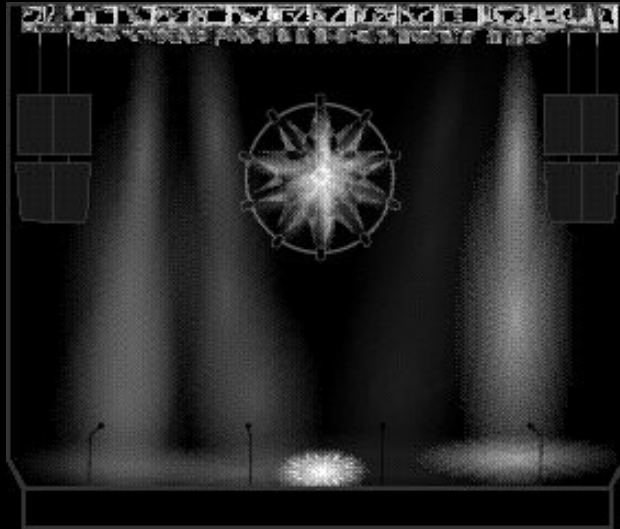
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Maiesha & The Hip-huggers

Hip-Hugging at Baileys

by Kevin Hammond

What would you get if you were to put together on one stage, the go-go flavor and excitement of Experience Unlimited, the funky rhythmic pockets of Chuck Brown's Soul Searchers, blended behind the blazing sounds of sultry female vocalist, Maiesha Rashad, with a potent vocabulary of music history? Maiesha & The Hip-Huggers.

Saturday, October 11, after having our share of the "Taste of DC," we took a ride up Georgia Avenue to a club called Bailey's Café & Grill. Word had been circulating throughout the community that Maiesha & The Hip-Huggers had been performing there every Saturday night for the past year.

We had already heard the scoop on this go-go flavored 70s retro act, such as, how not only do they perform the hits we all know and love from the 70s but how they actually dress in 70s gear and set a total 70s mood. Still, we had no idea just how much we would enjoy ourselves – that is until they took the stage.

Let me paint the scene a little here.

Bailey's (formally TJ Remington's) is a black-owned, upscale restaurant/club located at 1100 Wayne Avenue, directly across from the Silver Spring metro station. Stepping into the club, we were immediately snagged by the artistic clique, as the band were already swinging in old school soul jams that captured the raw elements of go-go (which in essence actually modifies the raw essence of the old school soul jams).

At this point, the Hip-Huggers were basically drifting in first gear of their show which was



led being led by Gregory 'Sugar Bear' Elloit. Mostly known for his band EU and the hit single "Doing The Butt," Sugar Bear directed the group through a string of "oldies but goodies" arousing people at the bar to stroll towards the dance floor, while at the same time enticing the ones dining to settle their meals. The main course was unmistakably on the stage. The grooves began to glide into our bones, as the band took us back down memory lane refining our souls with hits like, "Before I Let Go," "Slippin' Into Darkness" and "Fly Like An Eagle." The Hip-Huggers ultimately gained the assurance of everybody's attention – that was when she stepped on the stage. With class and a smile -- from head to toe in

70s style, Maiesha grabbed the mike and shifted into second gear as the band followed her lead into party hits, such as, the Jackson Five's, "I Want You Back," the Chaka Khan's "Tell Me Something Good," and Chery Lynn's "To Be Real." That did it! The moment her vocals poured out the speakers and waltzed into our ears, we knew right then and there that the best was yet to come.

By this time, everybody was on the floor. Some people were singing along with her, while others simply kept their mouths hushed and let their feet do the talking. Regardless of how each person decided react, it was obvious that to stand in one spot wasn't the option. However, that wasn't enough. After pouring out her heart and soul with (my favorite) "Baby Love" by Mother's Finest, Maiesha shifted into the third gear – the slow jams. Just as we have grown up in this community hearing a string of slow jams run, Maisha

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started things off with Smokey Robinson's "Quiet Storm." Then, she slid into "Betcha' Bye Golly Wow," Now, that tune there was a 'smoker'. Maiesha's seductive voice range soothed gently into the atmosphere and reminded us all of the special gift we had in Phyllis Hyman. "That was my girl," said Maiesha, who has been likened to the late great singer. "She was my favorite singer. I studied her style while in high school."

Maiesha Rashad, the multi-talented, singer, writer and producer who has been singing since the age of 7 and writing at age 14, started this flamboyant group just one and a half years ago when she decided to do a one-time 70s show at Takoma Station. "People enjoyed the show so much," says Maiesha, "that I just continued the 70s theme for future gigs."

With such an all-star cast, how could it go wrong? The fact that she has some of the greatest musicians to come out of the go-go community, how can it not be tight? She met drummer Ju-Ju House (EU, presently on tour with Roberta Flack) who sat in one night and "after playing so phenomenally" became a regular drummer when not on tour. Shortly thereafter, the band's original bass player had to leave the group. That's when Ju-Ju introduced Maiesha to Sugar Bear, whose personality, style and professionalism immediately won her heart. Ju-Ju also introduced Maiesha to vocalist, Juney (EU) while doing a gig at the Republic Gardens. "Juney is a tremendous asset to the Hip-Huggers," said Maiesha. "He not only sings lead and background, but plays congas as well." (Must be the go-go in him.)

While Ju-Ju is not presently 'kickin' the drums for Maiesha at the moment, that didn't stop the strong force of go-go to come across her path. Soon as Ju-Ju stepped off, in came drummer "extraordinaire" 'Sugar Foot' Ricky Wellman. Maiesha had heard about Ricky through her singer friend, Sylver Logan Sharp. "Ricky, whom everyone knows has played for Chuck Brown and Miles Davis, recently returned from a tour with Carlos Santana," explained Maiesha. "He has been playing with me for almost a year now."

So, between Ju-Ju and Ricky, the Hip-Huggers have two of the best drummers to come out of the community. Other members of the Hip-

Huggers are guitarist Tony Cothran and keyboardist Cherie Mitchell. Tony, who is definitely an attention grabber with his dynamic riffs and chord progressions, has played with Melba Moore, Stephanie Mills and Lloyd Price to name a few.

"He and I hooked up five years ago," said Maiesha. "That was during the time we played Manhattan's in Georgetown as a duo. He also toured Europe with me in the winter of '95." Cherie, who also plays keyboards with Maiesha's other all-female jazz-fusion group, Maiesha Rashad with Lavender Rain, graduated from Howard University in '94 and has

also played with Jean Carn and Tonya Blount. "Cherie and I have been working together since 1994 when we performed as a duo at Takoma Station," explained Maiesha. "She's absolutely 'killin' on keys!" explained Maiesha.

With such an all-star cast feeling up one stage, there was no way I going to let it end there.

We went went the following Saturday, then, the Saturday after that. Not once were we disappointed. In fact, when there was someone missing on stage, they were still covered.

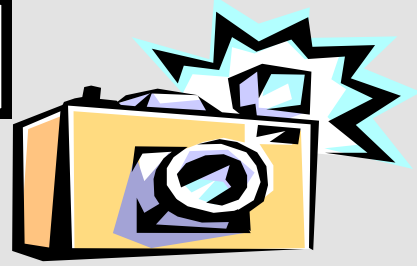
"We are a self contained group," says Maiesha. "The quality of musicianship is so professional that one of our musicians could be absent from the stage and the group would still carry on."

Maiesha adds, "Other musicians who we have had the pleasure of sharing the stage with are leader guitarist Tino (EU, Gloria Estefan) who fills in for Tony, Ivan Goff (EU) who fills in for Cherie, and on congas, Mo (Chuck Brown, Little Benny) and Little Beats (Redds & The Boys) and, on Sugar Bears birthday, we had Little Benny and the Godfather himself, Chuck Brown come on stage with us! That was a thrilling experience!"

I might also add that when we entered the club last week, I spotted keyboardist Louie Oxley (Chuck Brown, Bits & Pieces).

Man! I can't wait to see what's ahead for next week's show.

TMOTTGoGo Picture Files







<http://www.uptoparr.com/html/oliviafox.html>

The Ladies Of Go-Go

By Chante Cunningham



It's Wednesday night, and as usual me and my "All Around Honeys" are getting in gear for our weekly girls night out.

Being single mothers and balancing a career is tough, so we look forward to the one night when we can all go out and unwind. To Some people "unwinding" is sitting

at home in a hot tub with a book. Don't get me wrong, there are times we do that to, however, being born and raised on Go-Go music, there is no other place we'd rather be than surrounded by "Northeast Sounds" at The Met.

Being a female and

attending the Go-Go on a regular basis brings along a lot of negative connotations, and unwanted attention. Just because my nickname is "Lil Kim" doesn't mean that I want to go home with you. Just because I have on a short skirt doesn't mean I want you to touch me. If I was anywhere outside of the Go-Go you would not approach me in an offensive manner, however, something about being in the Go-Go makes some young men feel it's open season, and every young lady in there is to be preyed upon. What is logic to this?

I can't speak for every female in attendance, but the majority of ladies I have spoken with agree. We are tired of being disrespected. The All Around Honeys have been in the Go-Go family for 10 years. We are not new to the "Politics of Go-Go". Basically, what we get out of Go-Go, is what everyone else gets out of it. We want to straight party, we want to dance, we want to mingle with the regulars. But, a lot of males take for granted these ideas. They feel that we are there for them. SORRY- not the case.

Over the past couple of months I have gotten into at least 5 heated arguments at the Go-Go. All of them were with males. Most of them almost proceeded into fist fights, because I refuse to

(Continued on page 24)

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(Continued from page 23)

looked upon in a negative light. If you truly are interested in me, approach me correctly.

Don't start your sentence with "A....", or "A.....Girl". The truth is I am probably old enough to be your mother. And by all means DO NOT TOUCH ME. What makes these young men think that any female wants your hands on them? We don't know you from no where!!!

And then, why do you get upset, when Ladies tell you straight up, "Please don't touch me". You might be the man of my dreams, but once you cross that line, I have no

convo for ya ! The one man that approached me correctly In the last 6 years, did it very simply. He tapped me on the shoulder, and merely said, "excuse me, could I possibly talk to you for a second?". He and I were together for 5 years.

In closing, please remember that every female you come in contact with at a club is not a "freak". Think of us as your friends and treat us as such. Keep in mind that we are not always there to find a man, and realize that that's okay. Try and keep your hands to yourself, and if you see that special someone, treat her

like a lady and the touching will come later. If you ask a girl for her name and/or number and she does not want to comply, don't get upset, don't call her out of her name, and don't disrespect her. Go on to the next young lady. "She ain't mad at ya".

There are too many stereo-typical ideas that people outside of the Go-Go already have associated with "Go-Go as a way of Life". Don't add to the confusion. Keep it real. And allow young ladies and young men to come together, and party together, and be real together.

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David Powell -- Brainchild of Pure Elegance

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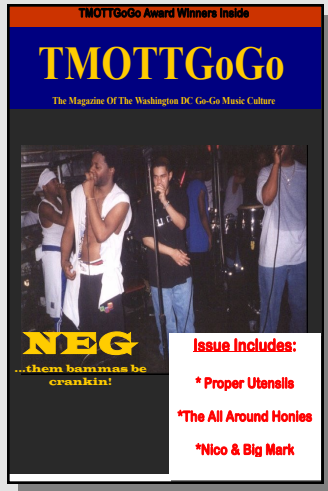
For all who don't know, David Powell, who recently lost his life was the original creator and Lead Rapper of the original Pure Elegance. Starting back in 1985, David (of Village Green in Landover, Md) took his band and merged with some of us from Seat Pleasant. As a result of the merge, David came up with the name Pure Elegance. That was his baby.

Through the years, David has lead and steered PE through many different obstacles (including work with Rapper Kwame) while building a strong name with dominating grooves such as "The Record Machine," "You Look So Good To Me," & "At The Show-Show." Through David's influence Pure Elegance name grow even stronger with the making of two LPs; "Too Hype" & "Still Gettin Hype."

In 1992, after a year and a half of opening up for Little Benny & The Masters at the Metro Club, David decided to give up the band and turn to his second love -- Boxing, where he had begun to make a name for himself as a heavy-weight contender.

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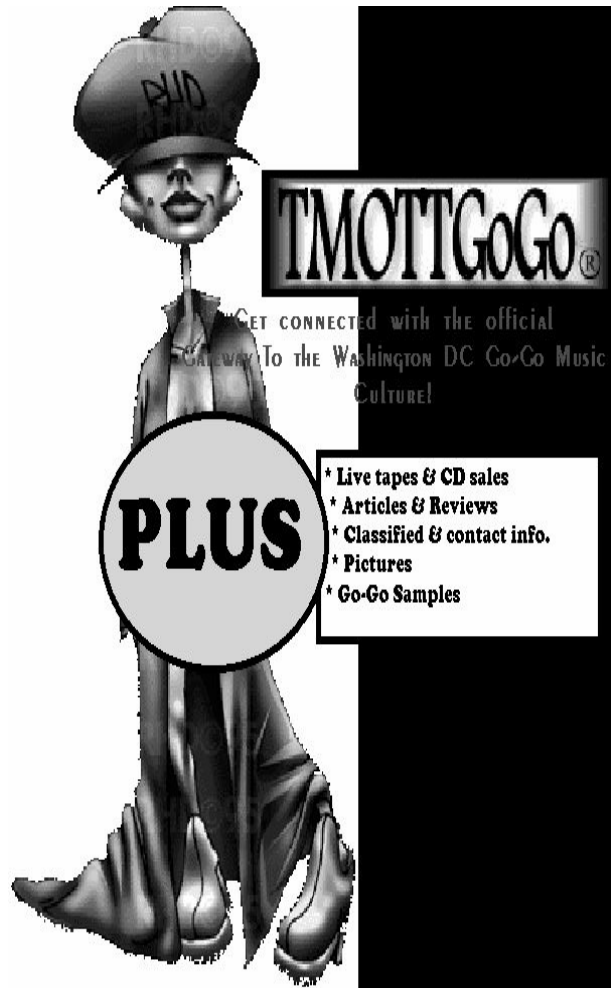
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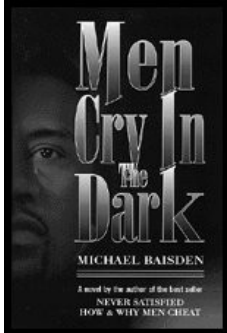
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African-American Book Review

By Trina Jackson



MEN CRY IN THE DARK

By Michael Baisden

Derrick is a handsome bachelor with no kids, no commitments, and no drama. After seven years of working at IBM, he quit to pursue his dream of becoming a magazine publisher. He had all the

makings of a winner too: good

looks, charming personality, and charisma. But what he didn't have was a strong woman who was secure enough within herself to handle his arrogant persona and one who had both the intelligence and spice to be an asset to him professionally. That was until Angela came along and rocked his world. She had all the qualities he desired in a woman: provocative demeanor, intellectual stimulation, and street smarts. Her passion and principles would help guide his career and elevate his understanding of what a real woman and true love were all about.

Tony is a ladies' man turned single parent. His daughter Erikah means more to him than life itself. Now after years of running the streets he's ready to settle down, marry his fiancée, Tracie, and live happily ever after. But Erikah's mother, Valarie, has other plans, plans to make Tony's life a living hell. Although she admitted to trapping him by getting pregnant, she's not satisfied with the \$2500 a month she receives in child support. What she wants is revenge for not being the woman Tony chose to spend his life with. But Tracie is a southern girl from the old school who vows to stand by her man, no matter what! She is determined to be the positive role model that Erikah deserves and the strong support Tony needs to make the most of their lives together.

Benjamin, or Big Ben as he is affectionately known, is a sensitive man looking for love in all the wrong places. For some strange reason he always seems to attract vamps and gold diggers. His friends try to advise him to settle down with a mature woman

who will respect and appreciate his generosity, but Ben is hard-headed. He likes his women young, under 25 to be exact. And this preference has cost him dearly, because most of these young women are uneducated and financially dependent. As the most successful florist in Chicago, Ben is often an easy target for manipulating young women looking for a Sugar Daddy.

Last but not least, there's Mark. A bitter young man who dates every race of women under the sun except black women. While he was growing up, black girls never gave him the time of day. But now that he has grown into an attractive and successful businessman, they are sweating him left and right. But Mark has never let go of the pain he experienced from being rejected.



FLYY GIRL

By Omar Tyree

"Don't give them nothin' unless they got something to give you what you do is get a nice looking nut dude with some money and romance his ass. If you can get somethin' without doing anything with him, then do it. but if you can't then make sure you play with

his mind real good before you do."

From a fresh new voice with talent to burn comes this brash, bittersweet novel about Tracy Ellison, a young, middle class teen coming of age in Philadelphia's ostentatious eighties. Tracy is willing to go

much further than any of her girlfriends as she sets out to lure the most popular boys in her neighborhood. spoiled by her relatives and too much for her mother to handle, Tracy uses her personal brand of intimidating flattery to conquer one guy after another-until she meets her match in Victor

(Continued on page 31)

Hinson, her Mr. Everything.

Too grown and too fast for her own good, Tracy races through her sixteenth year collecting designer clothing, jewelry, and street-smart boys with wild abandon. While Tracy pursue her adventurous, fast paced lifestyle, Raheema, Tray's girlfriend and neighbor, follows a very different course-struggling to maintain good grades ins school and to avoid the powerful pressures to stray from the path she's chosen. slowly Tracy begins to examine her life, her goals, and her sexuality- as she evolves from "fly girl" into a woman.



GOOD HAIR

By Benilde Little

When a Newark girl meets an upper-crust Boston boy, sparks fly, backgrounds clash, and readers enter the rarely observed world of the Black elite -- a.k.a. the "Talented Tenth" -- in this glamorous, poignant, funny debut novel by Benilde Little,

the former arts and entertainment editor at Essence. Alice Andrews is living in Manhattan, working as a reporter in Newark, and spending her free time desperately trying to forget her most recent relationship, with Miles, the smooth-talking investment banker she had mistakenly anointed Mr. Right. Then, on an airplane, she meets handsome Jack Russworm, a third-generation Harvard-educated doctor. With his perfect teeth and good luggage, he shows all the potential for being the real thing.

The new romance seems to be going well, but the issue of their different backgrounds keeps popping up. Clair, Jack's mother, seems frosty to Alice. Jack's ex-girlfriend, Sherry Steptoe, the poster girl for Black American Princess-dom, is a constant reminder of all that Alice is not. Amid the bougie clubbiness it is difficult for Alice to reveal who she really is, while Jack appears oblivious to it all. Or is he?

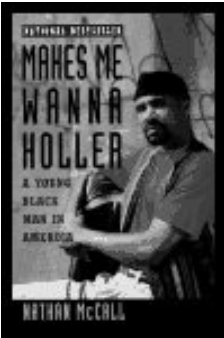
Benilde Little offers us a delicious, closely observed, eye-opening look at the world of upper-class Black Manhattan in this novel that is alternately humorous and touching, sexy and bold.

MAKE ME WANNA HOLLER

By Nathan McCall

When NATHAN MCCALL was ten, he played childhood games with neighborhood kids at fourteen, the games had changed to gang fights, gang bangs, and petty theft. When he graduated high school, he was a sometime mugger and a twenty for armed robbery, he had already shot a man and

gotten involved with drugs. why did a smart kid from a caring family in a suburban lack working-class neighborhood go so horribly wrong? In this shattering and unflinchingly honest autobiography, McCall shows that the easy answers -poverty, terrible home life, lack of education-don't always apply. "the problems among us," he writes of acquaintances who ended up addicted, imprisoned, or dead, "are more complex than something we can throw jobs, recreation centers, social programs, or more policemen at." In recounting his story, McCall makes brilliantly clear how young black men, feeling they have no options in a society that devalues them, try to maintain self-respect by going against everything the white "system" strands for, adopting the pose of the outlaw and a code of macho violence.



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(Continued from page 13)

it's been false reputation.

BigMark: And alot of it is what you sellin'. See the thing that gets me with street vendin' like I was telling Nico, I say, 'when you got style and charisma on the street, people get to looking at you a little bit. They might say 'aw, well, look at them fools out there in the cold. They out there in the rain.'

Das: But that's all like a cultural type thing.

BigMark: Right. But when the sun is shining, and it's nice and beautiful, everybody sayin' 'oh wow, you got the beautiful job.' But see, that's because you building something. You got a lot of naysayers, you know, I get a lot of grief from like my family members. Because they look at it like, see I'ma tell you about when you making money. When a person not really help you get your job, or help you with your education, or help you with your apartment, sometimes family members, they say, 'well I ain't got nothin' to do with it, I'm hands off.' There's no support. Then when it come out and you do good, and you start doing the things they want you to do, now they come out like 'oh man, I knew you could do it.' It's like I tell Nico, we looked down upon because they look at it to be a demeaning job. I say, 'oh we ain't just sellin' anything. We selling music.'

Das: And it's a music that's part of DC.

BM: A part of DC. And this thing has been around a long time and the fact is, once we do get the store, and start opening up to different things, like you say the internet, you got fax machines jumpin', you got people who can get in contact with you through the business world, you say, 'damn, who is this?' Might change the name up a little bit to throw 'em off, then they be like 'oh, well, you Nico's Tapes? Well you changed the name. Why you this? Why you that? Because a lot of times you got to change up, just to get noticed. Nico's Tapes is good, but when you start getting bigger, you don't want to be an individual name, you want to have a corporation name. That way somebody can say, 'well I got stock in them.' You dig what I'm sayin'? It's like Steven Spielberg, he's a director, but he has his own backers. What he call his little production company...DreamWorks. Okay, that's him, but he got people puttin' money out behind him.

Das: So you think in terms of not just 'we gonna get a store, we gonna be inside all the time.', but you brought up a good point about people investing money, especially in this area, a lot of people, young business men, entrepreneurs, who get in to that kind of game. They know what's going on right here. I mean you might not have people out in Japan investing money, but you got a whole lot of people right here that's down, and any way you look at it, in the whole investment game, I mean you basically going to come out on top anyways. You got a large percentage of people right here that could invest in it.

BigMark: Invest in it, okay, say you got young kids, young adults, and maybe some old heads, you could say 'hey I helped this corporation out.' It could be like say, Olsson's (Bookstore at Metro Center). You got a little space now, you be like 'they doing alright now, they in a nice building, they paying the rent. They got a good selection of music, the selection is wider. You know, we not just selling go go. I mean go go built the pie, but you can't just eat pie. Now you want some ice cream. Dig what I'm sayin'? You might want some whipped cream on that joint. You might want something else, besides this pie. And go go, we gonna have to keep the pie now, don't get me wrong, but you need something else on that counter. And that's what we doing, we got CD's, mix tapes, you know I can go get a little "smell good" (incense and oils). It's an urban stock, you know. When you on the street, you want to pick up a little thing besides just a hat and a scarf. You know, say damn, I can get a little incense, got some oils, what else you got? You know, we got lucky and we came across some Georgetown Hoyas tickets, you know, what else you need? And the go go sittin' up front. Batteries, lotion, lot of guys come up to us and ask do we got the walkmans and the headphones, just because we associated with music. So you not just selling a tape, you know...and directions are a killer. But Nico, I think me sitting back and watching Nico the last two years, you know, and going on three, he got a good ear, alright, and he knows what he wants to hear. See, what hurts him, he's not in that picture, he's not in that melting pot. See if he was in that melting pot, alot of things would change.

We stepped out of the van to see this brother

(Continued on page 33)

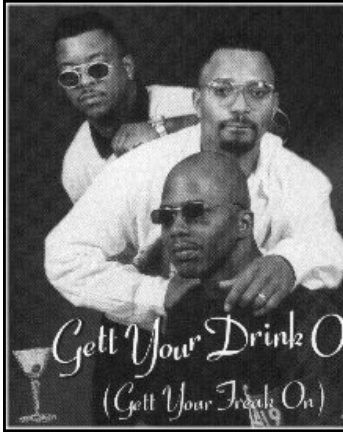
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(Continued from page 32)

jumpin' up and down over the 12/7/97 NEG tape. He's asking who it is, what tape does Nico think cranks the most, and Nico simply replies, "it's all in what you want to hear." With over a thousand tapes, it's hard to pick just one. I picked up a copy of a JYB tape from '89, at the Safari Club, and we just kind of laughed as the brother walked off, empty handed, being pressured by the rest of his family to come on. Maybe they just didn't understand. They will one day. I thanked these two brothers for sharing a moment out of their day to let me in on how they see things, and what they want to see in the future. Then I started thinking about it all. What they want to see is the same thing we all want to see...success in this Chocolate City. Everybody in the Go Go Community is on the same team, and we know who our opponents are. We just have to "Play the Game", and play to win. Catch Nico and Big Mark downtown, Monday through Saturday, around two p.m. until about six or so in the evening, and you can catch them with the Uniq 360 Entertainment at the Del Rio, University Blvd. in Langley Park on Sunday nights with the Northeast Groovers. As far as 1998, I've been told that you will a lot more of them, so look out. For more information, call Nico's tapes at (301) 454-3277.

The Reviews

When Little Benny explained to me the wide list of



musicians who gathered together for this project, I developed a strong appetite to get a copy of this CD and review it myself.

That's why, the moment he handed me the copy, I rushed straight home and threw it in my system.

I mean, to have in my collection a

project that consisted of some of the originals, as well as, icons in the history of go-go was something I was willing to sink my teeth in.

With the style of go-go ever so much changing towards a more frenzied rage consisting of percussion instruments that practically dominate the entire realm, it is refreshing to see the original "Soul Man of Go-Go," Little Benny, go against the grain and land his groove back to the basics. Although "Get Your Drink On -- Get Your Freak On"

delivers the energy of the new style go-go, its essence flavors on the classic early 80s that was actually created by the same musicians appearing on the CD. Even still, this CD gives a comes at you with two different flavors, the "Jammin Party" side and the "Get Your Groove On" side. The Jammin Party side consist of members; Little Benny (Rare Essence, Little Benny & The Masters, Proper Utensils), William "Ju-Ju" House (EU, Chuck Brown, "Little" Benny Harley & The Masters, Bits & Pieces) on drums, Mark "The Godfather" Larson (Rare Essence, Little Benny & The Masters, Proper Utensils) on keyboards, James "Funk" Thomas (Rare Essence, Proper Utensils) on vocals, Brian "Luther" Roberts (Little Benny & The Masters) singing vocals, Milton "Go-Go Mickey" Freeman (Rare Essence) on congas, Kent Woods (EU) on keyboards, Glen Ellis (Chuck Brown & the Souls Searchers, Bits & Pieces) on Bass, Stanley Cooper (Proper Utensils) on lead guitar, and Bennie "Scooter" Dancy (EU, Proper Utensils) rapping.

This side caters more (but not limited) to the

new school of go-go followers as it opens with a swift drum introduction that leads to a bass driven groove with Little Benny sending out "special dedications" through out the go-go community, then slipping into the lyrics of rap song "Man Cry," by Scarface. Along with the frequent splashes of Luther's melodic riffs, the gang shifts into melodies of old Rare Essence and Little Benny & The Masters tunes that's sure to send one drifting down memory lane. This side is concluded with a 97 version "Get On The Wagon" - a song highlighting impenetrable dynamics, which was originally recorded in 1980 by Rare Essence, but never released.

The Get Your Groove On side consist of members; Little Benny, Chuck Brown (Chuck Brown & The Soul Searchers) on lead guitar, "Sugar Foot" Ricky Wellman (EU, Chuck Brown & The Soul Searchers, Miles Davis, Bits & Pieces) on drums, Louie "The Doctor" Oxley (Chuck Brown & The Soul Searchers, Bits & Pieces) The Godfather, Kent Woods, Scooter, Go-Go Mickey, and Glen Ellis. This side, which caters to the older go-go heads that have grown to appreciate a more firm style, produces more of what you get when you mix Chuck Brown with Little Benny - laid back go-go jazz with some razzmatazz.

Beginning with a drum roll (that's become a well known trademark of Sugar Foot Ricky in the go-go community) the first voice heard is the deep, dark smoothness of Chuck Brown, as he sets the pace followed by Scooter and Little Benny with their rendition of Chuck Brown's "Bellow-Meso-Bardo." The rest of the cuts on this side produces the same flavor as the as the beginning, including the title track "Get Your Drink On - Get Your Freak On," that pushes a strikingly strong resemblance to Super Cat & Mary J. Blidge's "Don Dodda."

Finally ending with a re-make of Little Benny & The Masters "Walk," it became more apparent of Little Benny's growth in music, as he, Chuck Brown and The Godfather swiveled and swayed with a tight heart thumping melody that, in my opinion, goes into the Go-Go Hall of Fame of classics.

After the CD finished, I couldn't help but to let it run again. I then called Little Benny to thank him for giving us something to roll on, but he wasn't home. He was back in the studio.

This is a Demo Copy of TMOTTGoGo Magazine

For what seemed like an eternity came to an end on November 4, 1997. That was the official release date for the Backyard Band's latest release, Hood Related. After many months of anticipation, title changes (it was to be originally titled Full Court Press I believe) and who knows what else, the album hit the streets. I had heard various things about this CD, whether from Big G talking about on



stage, or from BYB fans and 'player haters' alike. I had to hear it for my self though. So when I got back to my office, I closed the door, threw on the headphones, and put it in the CD player. By the time I had reached the end of the final track, I can say that it is not your ordinary go go release. There was no new musical element of this CD that impressed me, because BYB has always been known to come through with full potential in concerns of musical ingenuity. What did set this apart from the majority of other go go releases was the positive outlook the band incorporates throughout Hood Related. From the very beginning, you are made aware of the concerns of the band, which are the same as any respectable Black man, woman and child throughout DC, MD, VA and beyond. Tracks such as "Ms. Poet," "Listen" and "Young, Black and Gifted" not only focus on the self-respecting, talented and intelligent aspect of ourselves that is often overlooked, but also does it in a way that keeps everything hood related, or what to many may seem like plain common sense. From young girls selling themselves for money and material things to the numbers of Black youth that have the ability to touch the sky if given the chance, Hood Related incorporates it somehow. The various "Gingus Live" tracks tell you what's going on as well, whether it be those brothers locked down in Lorton telling us that all the violence associated with go go is not how it was intended to be, or the excess of bad attitudes towards a group of young brothers trying to make it, and make a difference.

At the same time, Hood Related manages to keep it true to what go go was meant to be,

and that's fun. Tracks such as "Junk in the Trunk", which is as much the Backyard Band as the members, "Freestyle", featuring P.O.P and 1st St. Reek, and even a track featuring the Entertainer himself, Jas. Funk are just some of the tracks that made this CD what it is. They even let Lil Los do his thing with Bruce Bailey on "Hood Stars", which is more of a hip hop track, telling the story of Los and his upbringing on the streets uptown, with Bruce

backing him up over top of a very recognizable but fitting sample. And we cannot forget the infamous "John Salley", which also features the P.O.P and 1st St. Reek. Just like it tells you, there is a John Salley in every hood, and P.O.P's first verse introduces you to a John Salley you already know. But I can't tell you who it is, you have to see for yourself. "Reggae in the Yard" and "Rock 'n Roll" also exemplify how the Backyard Band is able to let you know how musically versatile they are, and still in the name of just having fun.

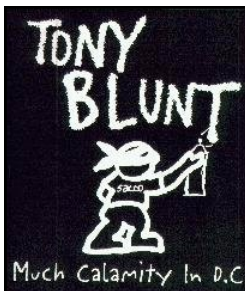
Hood Related consists of two CD's containing 27 tracks, and it's all good as the saying goes. I was, however, disappointed in one aspect, which I found most evident on two different tracks. First, seeing that there was already titled "Freestyle", I thought that it may have been better to have actually used written verses for "Big G. and Jas. Funk. It was actually kind of frustrating to listen to them both freestyle throughout the entire track, especially since Funk focused on the two raps that he is known for: "You've got style, you've got grace, if you didn't style you wouldn't have shown your face...Pretty ladies with their pretty smiles, all decked out in the latest styles...". Everyone's familiar with Funk's ability to rap, especially on tracks such as "Hard to Handle" with Chuck Brown and Little Benny. "Big G and Jas. Funk", however, doesn't seem to have as much of an impact as it could have, especially concerning the topic, that being the differences between the go go of today and yesterday, and what lies ahead for tomorrow. Also, the track "Slow Sh*t" seemed to be lacking lyrics, for Bruce sings the beginning of the song, which is tight, but Stephanie Rhodes, the guest vocalist for this particular groove only has one verse, and it doesn't really seem to fit with the music because of how short it is. If this is the same girl

that sang with the band back in March when they hit Eryka Badu's "Other Side of the Game", and if they would have let her shine like that on the CD like they did then, she could have gotten more than enough of the respect that she deserves for her

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voice. That was not the case, however. And although a lot of the tracks were just to have fun, there were a few that I felt could have been left off of the CD. "Rock 'n Roll" shows versatility, but I think they should have just left it to the live shows, when they used to hit that Meatloaf song (I Would Do Anything For Love, But I Won't Do That). Maybe that's not the title, but if you've heard them do it, you know what I mean. "Bob and Mike" is supposed to be a dialogue between two white guys, who are debating whether or not they should go check out the "black guys" who always bring the "big butt dark girls". They could have kept that. Also, "Pimptalk 2000", which is basically Los putting a rack of pickup lines on display...could have kept that one as well. But then again, I guess you could just skip those tracks if you want to. And this is what I really don't understand: why wasn't Los featured on "Freestyle"? Everybody knows he is one of, if not the top freestyle rapper out there right now as far as go go is concerned. And where is Wensey at vocally throughout the majority of the CD? Besides playing the cowbell on various tracks, he hardly sings anything. He does sing with Bruce on their cover of "Outstanding", which by the way is a groove that Backyard has always done like no other in the go go circuit.

Besides the Gap Band original, I haven't heard anybody do it to it like BYB does. But enough of what I think, go check it out for yourself if you haven't already...you just might learn a thing or two.



Calamity: Any great misfortune or cause of misery; -- generally applied to events or disasters which produce extensive evil, either to communities or individuals.

Hmmm...I think anyone can agree in saying that Tony Blunt's title for his new CD

is an appropriate one. And for real, Tony Blunt came through with a "rap style that be spitting like BB's, and sounds crystal clear like CDs."

Much Calamity in DC tells stories that are common to those out there trying to do their thing in the streets. At the same time, this release is an honest one. There's nothing on this CD that can be

labeled as "written to sell", it's all honest; "Plain & Simple" and "Well Put Together", just as the tracks say.

To start from the beginning, I played hooky from work to meet Tony Blunt in his Parkside neighborhood on November 20th. From first meeting him, I could tell he is not the brother to be out faking on being something he is not. He is real, confident, and has something to tell you. Whether it is through the versatility of his style in "Tony Blunt Came Round Na Way" and "Same Ol Same", or just kicking it about what goes on in his part of town with "Chilly & Cheese", the man delivers. What I also found with this CD, is that Tony Blunt is in it to win it. You can understand every word he delivers, and just like with the Wu-Tang formula, you can picture every word as well. His vocal style is raw, the production is raw, and it is all down to earth and straight to the point. It is not similar to other DC hip hop releases I can recall, like Section 8's "No Love" or the Flatlinerz, which featured Ronnie T., Hechinger Mall Kid, and Dirty Derek. They were anticipated, but once released, did not have the same effect as the first single released in Section 8's case, or the onstage freestyle performances with the RE band in the case of the Flatlinerz.

Tony Blunt's Much Calamity in DC is consistent in style throughout the whole album.

And speaking of freestyle, a lot of the verses on this CD you will recognize from his appearances with the Northeast Groovers, Backyard, Junkyard, and Rare Essence. If you did not realize his skills then, you better recognize on this release. He even has a remake of an old BDP classic, which he entitles "Down Wit Blunt".

Personally, it is one of my favorite joints on here, because of the vocal style and the way he tells you who is down wit Blunt. Smooth, to say the least. As a matter of fact, the way he approaches the microphone with the laid back style and clarity, first reminded me of Rakim. Not comparing him to Rakim, however, but Tony Blunt is top rank in the DC hip hop game. If Nonchalant was DC's Eve of the hip hop game, then Adam has got to be the man from the Land of the Congo (Down Wit Blunt).

Much Calamity in DC contains 12 tracks, and the only thing I could have asked for with this release, is more tracks. The joint is tight. It is the rawness of the whole CD that makes it for me. It shows versatility, not just talking about gats, guns, clothes and hoes, and it is something that anybody can relate to somehow. Of course, it has the infamous "Chilly & Cheese", talking about what

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goes on in Parkside at the Ice Cream Truck. Not talking about the same "Ketchup on my Hot Dog" type ordeal that Section 8 talked about on their album (if you haven't heard it, they are talking about having sex with girls on their period. Hmm...) "Chilly & Cheese" is funky, raw, and straight for funnin'. Oh yeah, Tony also told me that on December 15th, there is another project in the works, including a video shoot for the "Chilly & Cheese." Give you a hint on where it's gonna be at: Ask for your change and be sure to say please...ketchup and mustard on my chilly & cheese. Still don't know? Go get the CD.



Timeless. Something that lasts forever, and always remains enjoyable. Like your favorite movie, or your favorite song, childhood memories and your favorite pastimes - these things remain Timeless. Feelings you had for that special someone, feelings that only you may be able to understand - these feelings are timeless.

Chuck Brown's latest release, "Timeless: Classics of Jazz and Blues" is all of that. No matter what the age, no matter where you are from, if you take a moment to sit back and soak in the smooth grooves on this release, you cannot help getting caught up in every mood that this release sets. The morning I wrote this, I sat in traffic for three hours, and needless to say I was a little more than frustrated, especially with other things serving as a burden on my mind at the moment. This was the only musical selection I had with me besides the redundancy of the radio, and I listened to this CD three times in the car. I enjoyed all 180 minutes of it, and I almost wanted to sit in the car longer just to hear it again as it started its fourth rotation. The twelve tracks on this release are all renditions of classic jazz and blues releases of earlier days, and with Chuck's new band, The Second Chapter, these tunes become favorites, whether it's your first time or fiftieth hearing any of them. From the percussion laced "Caravan", to the

smooth, running bass line of "Nature Boy", Chuck Brown and the Second Chapter Band define talent on this release, and every song leaves you in a mood that you can feel today, tomorrow, and forever - Timeless. Chuck's rich and soulful voice on "Love Won't Let Me Wait" and "I Only Have Eyes For You" not only leave you craving for a taste of the original recording, but also leave you wanting to hear Chuck do them again and again - for Chuck Brown is Timeless.

This is Chuck Brown's first solo release in the genre of jazz, running in the same vein of "The Other Side", which featured the late, great Eva Cassidy (Timeless is a dedication to her). It features the musical masterminds of JuJu House, Lenny Robinson, Raice McLeod and Ralph Fisher on drums, Lenny Williams, and Benji Porecki on keyboards, Kent Wood on vibes, Keter Betts, Emory Diggs and Chris Biondo on bass, Robert Green on percussion, and Ron Holloway and Skip Pruitt on saxophone. Chuck Brown's voice is also Timeless, for this is honestly the best I've heard him sound. That is definitely a hard act to follow, seeing that I cannot complain whatsoever about his vocal prowess on any other release. Clear and flowing like the image of cool creeks in the summertime, and the feeling that overcomes you at

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