

**702-LAS VEGAS**

# WHAT LEGENDS ARE MADE OF . . . . . A CONVERSATION WITH GEORGE BENSON

*By Ramon Savoy*

Critics, jazz connoisseurs and fans believe that guitarist/vocalist George Benson is indeed a cut above all the rest as an individual and artist. Playing and performing for more than 4 decades, George Benson has just recently released his latest smash contribution to the music world, "Love Remembers".

Being a young man in my twenties, and dancing to The Trammp's "disco" music, I was turned on to the mature sound of George Benson's "Breezin'" by my cousin Vincent. And ever since then it's been smooth sailing with the Pittsburgh native.

Just before George was leaving the country to promote his latest project, I had the op-

portunity to speak with him and learn who he is, what kind of person he is and what he thinks about the music.

This is his first project in nearly four years, and it is already doing well on the charts and in the record stores. George explains that he didn't want to just throw something together and put it in the stores, understanding that several artists have become commercialized. He is a person with class and integrity and has a full appreciation for his listening audience, which is still growing rapidly. With an arsenal of songs that can heard daily on a variety of radio station formats, George Benson displays a knowledgeable sense for what the listeners want with-

out compromising his unlimited talent.

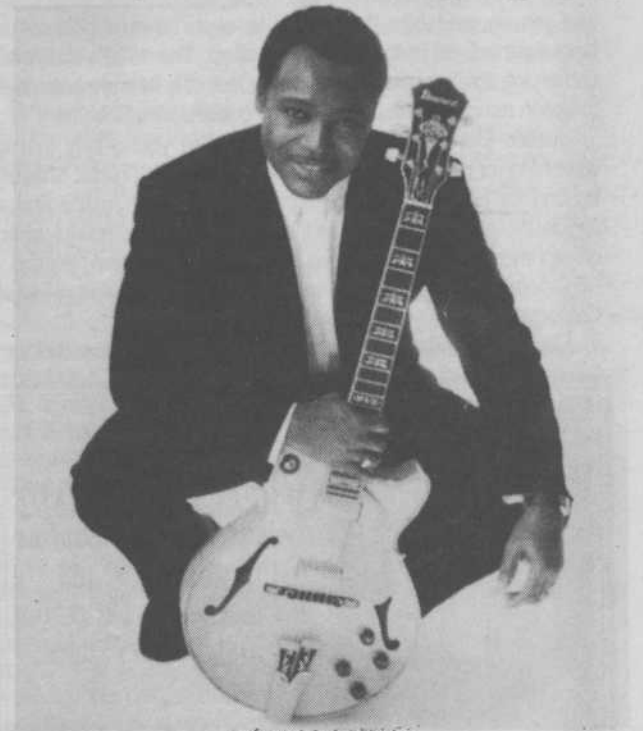
George, who also wrote and produced several cuts on "Love Remembers" collaborated with his son, keyboardist, Steven Benson on "Come Into My World". He finds it easy to put together a congenial pool of talent, such as Randy Becker, Bob James, Hubert Laws, Paulinho da Costa and Kirk Whalum, just to name a few, who are ready to put their best foot forward. With contributions from three highly respected and sort after producers, David Gamson ("I'll Be Good To You"), Stewart Levine ("Calling You") and Bob James ("Somewhere Island", "Willing To Fight", "Love Remembers", "My Heart Is Dancing"), it's not hard

to believe this soft spoken man is "hyped" about this CD.

Always the student, George, studied the styles and formats of such musical greats as, Wes Montgomery, Grant Green, Kenny Burrell and Jim Hall, as well as a host of others. Not yet feeling that he has reached his full GOD-given potential, George admits that, "music is bigger than all of us, jazz has grown and artists have been given the chance to venture out". He also feels that "what we do in music is what we do in our everyday life", so he continues to explore the world for new dimensions in his music.

The Benson sound consists of a variety of songs that deal with feelings and emotions that take place in everyday people's lives. In his melodies, he understands how his music touches the heart of the romanticist, the harmony of a happy person and the reflection of the positive side of life. George personally says he doesn't deal with anything negative. He even finds it humorous when he hears people say, "whenever you are in need of some uplifting, all you got to do is put on a George Benson song".

Playing the guitar since he



**GEORGE BENSON**

was 8, George has lifted himself up through years of hard work and dedication. He hasn't let mediocracy or ego enter into his spiritual/music aura, for which he gives all credit to GOD. He observes his surroundings and puts it into his music. "I look at what's going on around me and try to find out what people are into", George replies, "the juices of what they are into and what it

is that makes them like it". Whatever your musical appetite, jazz, adult contemporary, R & B, George will satisfy it with his repertoire of music. George Benson, the player and Benson the singer, delivers a finished product that was well worth waiting for. "Love Remembers" will get a stamp of approval by all because of it's versatility and it's uniqueness.

## 'AMERICA BETTER WAKE UP IF IT WANTS TO BE AMERICA MUCH LONGER,' DIRECTOR OF NEW MOVIE ABOUT THE VIOLENCE AMONG BLACK TEENS WARNS

New York "If America wants to be America for much longer, it better start waking up," stressed 21-year-old Allen Hughes, the highly acclaimed co-director of the powerful new movie, "Menace II Society," about Los Angeles gangs.

In an interview with this Sunday's PARADE magazine, Allen, who directed the movie with his twin brother Albert, said he hopes good will come from the cycle of violence demonstrated by the movie.

"You're supposed to get an understanding of how an environment can cause a perfectly good-hearted kid to become a criminal," Allen said, blaming the violence among black teenagers on neglect by the parents and society and the lack of jobs and education.

"I know life isn't fair," he commented. "But when life isn't fair to a group of people for 400 years...Look, we see ourselves as human beings, not as persons of a certain color. But when you walk down the street, you're reminded of who you are and what you are."

Explaining how he and his brother escaped from the cycle of violence around them growing up in "one of the worst parts of Detroit," Allen said, "We had things to do. We had a good

mother who gave us a strong sense of values. She gave us things to keep us busy — she gave us a video camera when we were 12, when she was two years out of the welfare program."

"People need to get together," he added. "I know it's our job to do something about it as well as everybody else's, but it's everybody's job to come to the table to understand how things started, the neglect, everything."



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