

ENTERTAINMENT

Legendary jazz saxophonist George Howard dies

"I dream of white sand, flowing rivers, of peace, of a home far away." — George Howard

By Lanier

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Grammy-nominated jazz artist George Howard, who honed his signature sound on the soprano saxophone died at age 41 from cancer on Sunday, March 22, at Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta. He is survived by his two sisters, Mary Howard and Doris Beverly; a niece, Nakia Beverly and his daughter Jade.

At the time of his death, George was surrounded by the love and support from family and close friends. Minutes before dying, George raised his hands as though he were going to touch his face. Instead, his fingers motioned as though he were playing his saxophone.

George, who was born in Philadelphia and lived in Los Angeles for eight years before settling in Atlanta in 1992, came from a musical family. His mother, sisters and cousins all played some instrument or another from piano to cello.

At age six, George began classical music training on clarinet, but then changed to bassoon and other woodwinds before finally switching to soprano sax.

When he was 15, he began



GEORGE HOWARD

touring in Philadelphia-based R&B soul groups such as Blue Magic, First Choice and Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes. He went on to do sessions for Philly giants Kenny Gamble, Leon Huff and Dexter Wansel.

A major turning point came when he worked with saxophone legend Grover Washington, Jr., in 1979. Soon thereafter he was inspired to

embark on a solo career, one that enabled him to remain at the musical forefront ever since.

The multi-faceted musician, who released more than a dozen albums, was the recipient of many recognition's and awards. In 1988 he received a Grammy Award nomination for Best R&B Instrumental Performance for

the album "Reflections," and in 1992 he was nominated again in the same category for the track "Just The Way I Feel," from the album, "Do I Ever Cross Your Mind."

The sound from his easy, sensuous soprano sax received enormous air play and recognition on all radio formats and graced the top of the nation's jazz charts. In addition, his music was featured on the soundtrack of the Jane Fonda/Jeff Bridges film, "The Morning After."

On his 1996 release, "Attitude Adjustment," Howard wrote that the previous year introduced him to life's true law, which he affectionately named Murphy "... who not only introduced himself, he moved right into my house, wrecking havoc on all fronts of my life. Yet and still, many things were put to rest, others restored themselves, and many remained eternally unanswered. I no longer wish to know. Gone is the notion of control because by his Grace I still remain ... I survived."

Funeral services were held for George Howard at Zion Hill Baptist Church in Philadelphia on Friday, March 27.

Tinseltown Talk and Topics

"ER" star Eriq LaSalle will be joining Lynn Whitfield and Vivica A. Fox in New York on April 10 to co-host the 1998 Essence Awards. LaSalle has also signed a deal with ABC to star in the television picture "Mind Prey" written by John



VIVICA FOX

Sanford, which his company Humble Journey Films will executive produce.

The outstanding six-CD set "Miles Davis Quintet 1965-68" containing 56 cuts including 13- previously unreleased tracks from Miles Davis' legendary quintet (saxman Wayne Shorter, pianist Herbie Hancock, bassist Ron Carter and the late drummer Tony Williams), is the current talk of the record buying music world.

Melba Moore who will be doing her critically acclaimed *One Woman Show* at the West Angeles Christian Arts Center in Tinseltown, April 14-19, will also be featured as both a speaker and entertainer during the six-city 1998 National Empowerment Conference Tour sponsored by the Professional Women In Business Organization. The theme for this year's conference tour is "Succeeding Against All Odds in the Next Millennium."



MELBA MOORE

Cities and dates are: Los Angeles, June 5-6; San Francisco, July 10-11; Atlanta, Aug. 7-8; Houston, Aug. 28-29; Chicago, Sept. 25-26 and Miami, Oct. 23-24. American Airlines, Avon, Farmers Insurance and United States Postal Service are some of the co-sponsoring companies.

The 26th Annual AABAGA Scholarship Award Dinner will take place Friday, June 19, at the Los Angeles Airport Hilton Hotel & Towers.

This year's "Humanitarian Honoree" will be Ray Harris whose recording industry career is legendary. He's held posts as senior vice president for RCA Records, Warner Bros. Records, MCA Records and Solar Records.

He is also the founder and chairman of the "Living Legends Foundation," a music industry organization that annually honors those in the industry whose legendary careers paved the way for others to follow.



Sentinel-Voice photo by John Broussard

The 50-member choir of Tuskegee University excited the audience with selections that earned them second place honors for the second annual Vocal Extravaganza in Black.

Choir

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buzzed about the Vocal Extravaganza.

"In my experience, this program is the broadest, most extensive in the country," he said. "It encompasses all of the idioms in the choral vein. The opportunity to perform, not just Black music, but all music makes us all aware of the importance of attention to small details."

Chosen as the competition's top vocalist, and also a student from Kentucky State student, Vincent Davis, a senior majoring in music education, viewed the event in practical

terms.

"To me, this is a chance to perform and be critiqued by professional judges," the Memphis, Tenn., native said. "The written evaluations we receive from them serve as guides to us as we seek to hone our skills."

"This is a wonderful experience for me ... to see such a program supported by the community," said Faye Robinson, an international opera star who came in from New York to judge. "It is worthwhile and quite unique. We've learned as much as the students, I'm sure."

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