

ENTERTAINMENT

Gospel singer shares songs of praise at Cashman Theater

*By Dwana Broussard
Special to Sentinel-Voice*
Backed by 15 local singers, hand-picked and directed by maestro David Blakely, Karen Clark-Sheard kept the crowd cheering during most of her June 16 performance at Cashman Theater.

The Church of God in Christ Nevada State Youth Department's Mass Choir opened with song, dance and drill team ministries, followed by other acts who then yielded the stage to the rising gospel recording artist.

Cathy Jackson, chairwoman of the youth department and friend of Clark-Sheard's, organized the event.

The traditional songs, "Have Thine Own Way, Lord" and "Be Still My Soul," segued into lilting songs from her best-selling debut CD,



Sentinel-Voice photo by John Broussard
Buoyed by her faith, gospel singer Karen Clarke-Sheard enchanted fans during her performance last week at the Cashman Field Theatre.

"Finally Karen." Tunes like "Heaven" and "Balm in Gilead" resonated with the crowd.

Her 10-year-old daughter,

Kierra, proved a strong vocalist, accompanying her mother on several numbers.

The daughter of gospel music icon Dr. Mattie Moss

Clark and a member of the renowned Clark Sisters, Karen Clark-Sheard hedged, at first, on embarking on a solo career, despite clamoring from her fans to do so.

However, once she signed with a record company, and the concept for "Finally Karen" was born, she said she realized a higher power controlled her fate.

Dynamic and delightful on and off stage, Clark-Sheard credits her mother with her personality, inspiration and strong faith — she began learning about God's blessings and music as a very young child.

Thrilled about debuting on the gospel charts, the songstress says she is floored by her CD's commercial appeal. Billboard Magazine, among others, has taken notice.

The Clark sisters remain a potent musical force. They still perform reunion concerts and can be heard on her CD and seen on the "Finally Karen" video. Clark-Sheard's sisters are active in their own music ministries: Twinkie, an organist, songwriter and gospel diva, is still recording and touring.

"Wherever you go, whatever you do, don't allow outside influences to diminish your anointing. You've got to know where to draw the line."

— Karen Clark-Sheard

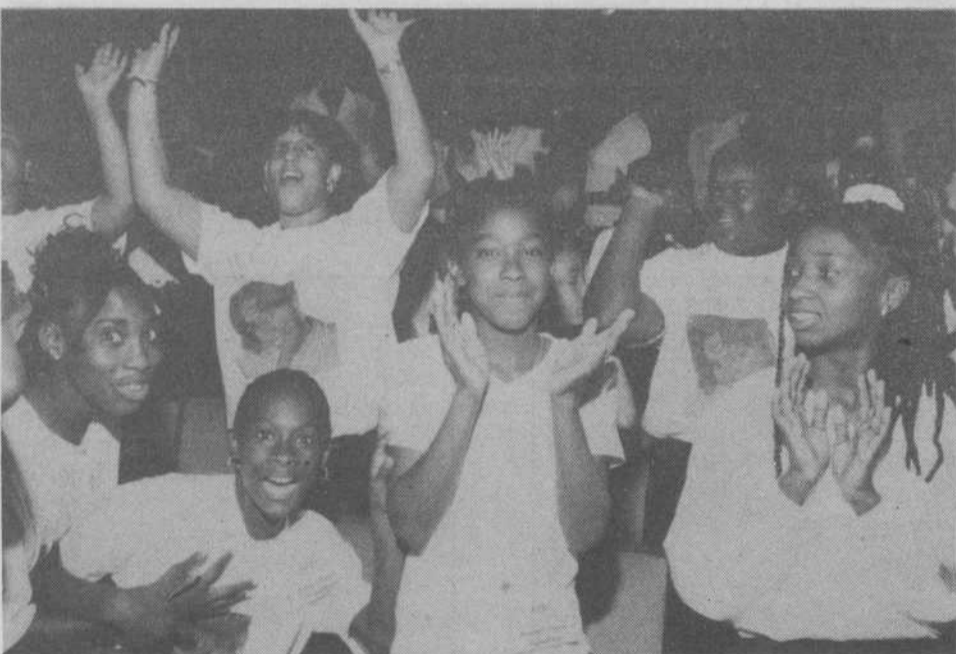
Dorinda can be heard and seen on John P. Kee's latest project, "Strength." Dorinda and Jackie run the Clark Conservatory of Music, the school started by their mother in Detroit.

Clark-Sheard and her daughter, who plans to become a gospel singer like her mom, studied at the conservatory.

Clark-Sheard is as busy as ever. She recently completed a sweep of the West Coast — Washington, Oregon and California — and will be in concert in Detroit this week. Besides her musical career, she is a mother of two, with an 8-year old son joining Kierra.

Clark-Sheard offers this advice to aspiring gospel singers: "Put God first. He'll open doors for you, and he'll bless you with the right connections. Also, get a good education. Singing is a wonderful ministry, but education is a true necessity," she said.

And as her mother told her, "Wherever you go, whatever you do, don't allow outside influences to diminish your anointing. You've got to know where to draw the line."



Sentinel-Voice photo by John Broussard
Nicole Fruga, right, performed a praise dance during the concert presented by the Nevada State Youth Department last week at the Cashman Field Theatre. Young fans, above, enjoy the show.

Washington sings successful tune

*By Janice Malone
Special to Sentinel-Voice*
"When I start a record, my aim is to make a total statement. I approach each song as a self-contained short story," said Grover Washington Jr., an acclaimed master of the jazz saxophone. "Soulful Strut," his current CD, is Grover at his mellow best. The CD is a welcome return to the territory Grover first pioneered "back in the day."

"Soulful Strut," the title cut was originally released in 1968 but Grover has given it a fresh 90's appeal. "The era when the song was originally done was a beautiful time in my life," Grover said, "I was a sideman burning with energy and ideas. The music of the day, from Stan Getz to Sly Stone to Stevie Wonder, was inspiring to me."

The Scoop: Your current CD 'Soulful Strut' is a remake of the original song of the same title. Why did you choose to re-make this tune?

Grover: The song has several meanings for me personally, besides being a great tune. It was originally done in 1968, the same year my son


was born. I've always loved the song because it seems to have an all-inclusive sound of celebration. It's as if people are marching down the middle of Main Street, anywhere in America, and are saying c'mon join the band, let's go celebrate and strut our stuff.

The Scoop: What are some of the best memories of that era when "Soulful Strut" was first released?

Grover: I remember listening to really long cuts on the radio during that time. Back in the 60s you could listen to just one station and hear everything from country western to jazz. But now radio is so polarized and categorized. I enjoyed radio then because it clearly displayed the similarities in all music, rather than the differences.

The Scoop: I love the cover photo of the CD with you wearing that bold-colored outfit.

Grover: (He laughs) This is the most brightly colored outfit that I've ever worn for an album cover. In the past, I've worn suits for covers with more muted colors. But this time, this is a
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