

Grammy winning artist taking reigns of career

Catisha Marsh
Sentinel-Voice

Finally, it seems more and more artists are taking control of their own destinies.

Grammy award winning songwriter and saxophonist Gary Bias is doing just that.

He recently began an independent record label, Thunderbop Records, over which he resides as CEO and president, is releasing a new cd and is currently touring with the legendary group Earth, Wind and Fire.

"I was working for Joe Bete, one of the biggest publishing companies out there," Bias said in an interview with *the Sentinel-Voice*.

"The problem is that you have to relinquish all publishing rights when you write a song and work for someone. So even if you write a hit, you don't get paid necessarily. I was starving though and it offered a regular

salary."

After co-penning Anita Baker's smash single "Sweet Love" in 1986 while working with Joe Bete, but not getting the publishing rights, Bias decided he had had enough.

"It's really a lot of work," he said about running his own record label, but stressed the satisfaction of owning the rights to your own music.

Born in South Central Los Angeles, Bias started playing the saxophone at age 11. He went to school with Gerald Albright, Patrice Rushen and Ray Brown, among others, and pursued a degree in music at California State University. After graduation, Bias toured with the Quincy Jones Orchestra, played with Latin jazz artist Willie Bobo and then toured with the Duke Ellington Orchestra. For two years, Bias backed up Whitney Houston and the list of credits goes on.

He released a debut album



GARY BIAS

called "East 101" in 1981. His latest gig with Earth, Wind and Fire started back in 1987.

"No band is as fun as this one," he said about touring with them. "What really makes it great is the guys are really good people. They're warm and professional."

Bias' new album is entitled, "2 B Free" and features smooth melodies, obvious horn-playing skills and even a cover tune of D'Angelo's "Lady".

He describes his music as "urban contemporary jazz" and hopes that through his label, he can create a strong bond with urban communities.

"With hip hop lately, several artists have been sampling jazz," said Bias.

"With my music, I used some of the concepts hip hop producers use and fused the production and styles. ... People are really digging it."

When asked what the difference is between writing music and playing it, Bias said, "It's a whole different

creative process. When you write, if you're not already a pianist, you have to become one and understand basic harmony. When you play, you have to study and play the instrument."

Bias admits that he's a better composer than a lyricist but encouraged artists to explore their ideas.

"Artists now tend to want to be creators. That's good though, because a lot of artists who did have the creative energy were discouraged by record companies," he said.

Perhaps the most fulfilling aspect of the talented musician's/composer's/lyricist's life is not just the music, but family.

While surviving as a musician, Bias married his wife Christine 13 years ago, and has two children, Rashad, who is 11 and a 7-year-old daughter named Imani.

"They are my three best friends," he said.

Green delivers soul-stirring performance

Catisha Marsh
Sentinel-Voice

Resplendant in an all-white suit, the Rev. Al Green took us to church at the House of Blues at Mandalay Bay in his performance last month.

This time, no panties were thrown up on stage to attract the attention of the man whose soul-stirring voice has wooed millions of fans, but Green, the ultimate gentleman, did hand out long-stem red roses to the delight of the lovely ladies clamoring at the front of the stage just to touch him.

The nine-time Grammy Award winner, inductee into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, two platinum album, four gold album, and eight gold singles maker sang a host of tunes while everyone sang along.

Now, remember Green's roots are in gospel. Born April 13, 1946 in Forrest City Arkansas, he began touring at the tender age of nine with his father and brothers in the quartet The Greene Brothers. It wasn't until high school that Green formed his first secular group that sang R&B,



Sentinel-Voice photo by John Broussard

Al Green hits the high note at the House of Blues.

Al Green and The Creations. He later recorded his first hit, "Back Up Train" with his group Al Green and The Soul Mates in 1968.

Over thirty years later, Green still has a certain magic and power. His flat, yet rich voice caresses your ears softly and opens your heart to the possibilities of love that he sings about. He is the consummate crooner. Green

Love," which borrows the melody of the Righteous Brother's "Unchained Melody."

Of course, though, the audience was most responsive when Green let loose with a continuous serenade of his most unforgettable songs: He sang, "Tired of Being Alone," "Call Me," "How Can You Mend A Broken Heart" (the remake of the Bee Gees pop song that Al Green made all his own), "Love and Happiness," and "Let's Stay Together."

Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of this concert was the audience. You all know how much I love to observe audiences; after all, it is the audience and fans who make the performer.

Green's fans and audience were by far the best I've experienced in Las Vegas. They were of all races, creeds (See Green, Page 14)

Sam

(Continued from Page 8)

head into, punching, and painting demonic messages on the walls of his apartment, shouting gibberish at the top of his lungs, threatening neighbors and firing his rifle at a dog. This guy would've been fingered and questioned the first day. The real life Berkowitz was a smooth operator who held a job by day and went hunting for humans by night. This was why the case was so hard to crack.

The movie pretty much ignores the case and focuses on a mix of pretty disgusting characters, all Italian. I would be surprised if the anti-defamation league isn't up in arms over this one. Each character is worse than the next. Wife-beater Vinny (Mr. Leguizamo) cheats on his wife with her cousin and his boss. Ritchie (Adrien Brody) cheats on his girlfriend while moonlighting as a gay prostitute/stripper/porn star.

Callous Mafia boss Luigi (Ben Gazzara) is unwilling (See Sam, Page 16)

53rd Annual Session
of the

Pride of the West District Association

Reverend Johnnie E. Richardson, Moderator

Convenes

July 12 - 16, 1999

Classes* Nightly 6:00 PM

Bible Classes, Workshops & Seminars

for Adults & Children

*COPP Credit Available

Auxiliary Activities 8:00 PM

Monday - Laymen

Tuesday - Ushers

Wednesday - Youth

Thursday - Women

Friday - Parent Body Musical

Business Sessions 9:00 AM

Thursday - Women's Auxiliary

Friday - Parent Body

Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church

1240 West Adams • Las Vegas, Nevada
Reverend McKinley Hardmon, Host Pastor

Davis & Sons, Inc.

Door, Trim & Hardware

Remodel Specials

French Doors, Entry
Doors, Base & Case.
Everything in Stock

30% Discount.

Senior Discount

Mon. - Fri. 8am to 5pm
Saturday 8am to 12 noon

383-9088



EARL SANDERS
Vice President



Glamour Hair Extensions
• NO GLUING • NO SEWING
• NO BRAIDING
"Do-It-Yourself"
Add-on Hair
Longer, Fuller Hair
in Minutes!

Call for a Personal Consultation
(702) 312-3657

Yolanda Diamond
Country Singer