

1998 TMOTTGOGO AWARD WINNERS INSIDE

TMOTTGOGO

Take Me Out To The Go-Go

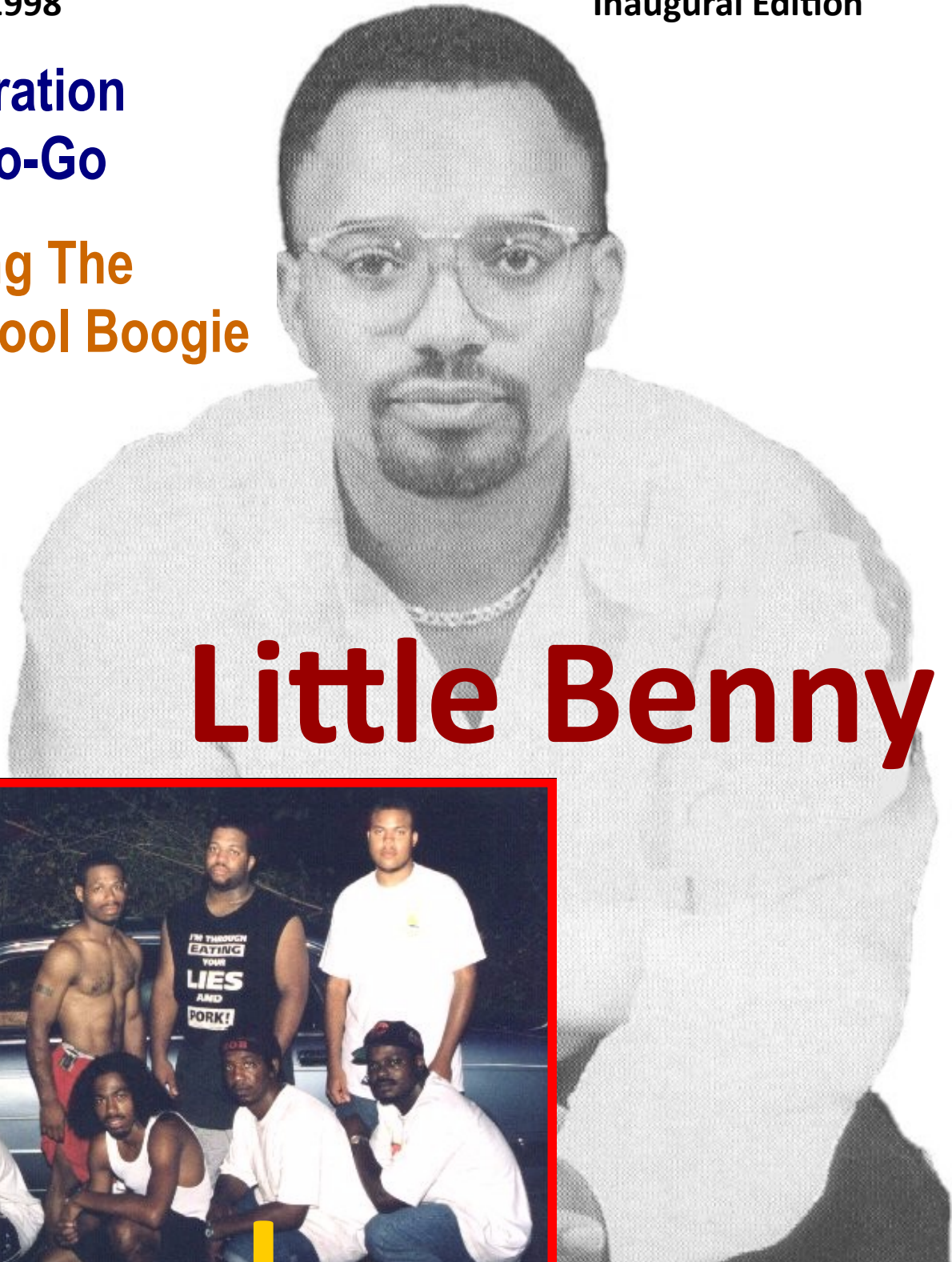
September 1998

Inaugural Edition

A New Generation
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Remembering The
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Go-Go On
MTV



Little Benny



J-

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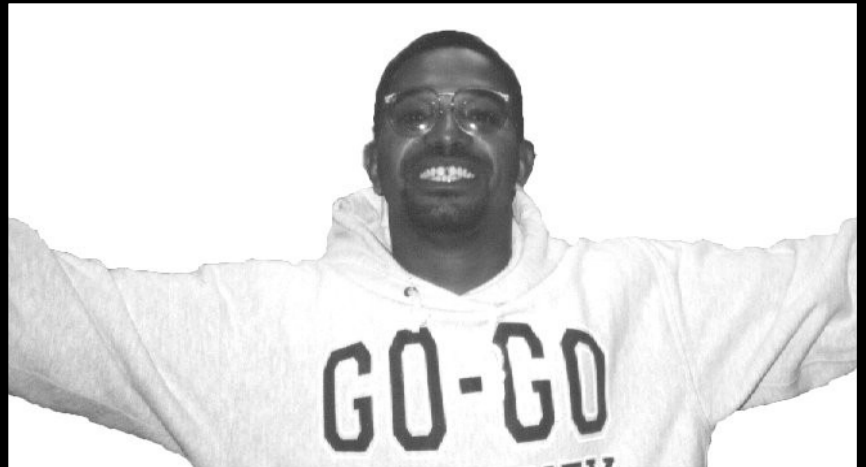
TMOTTGoGo
Take Me Out To the Go-Go

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The Publisher's Voice



Welcome to the second phase of this expedition. For over two years, TMOTTGoGo has been broadcasting our voice across the nation, as well as over seas due to the communicative authority of the internet. In those two years, we have integrated e-mail newsletters, produced and surveyed several opinion polls, and magnified stronger viewpoints all for the purpose of the sustentation and atonement of this culture. Now, with one foot secured in cyber space, we have developed the collateral to take the other and land it onto solid ground. This begins the second phase of this mission.

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 historicals 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.

Go-Go On

Whoever thought that Go-Go would be on MTV so soon? Our true believers that's who. I'm proud to say that our (when I say our I mean everyone in our go-go community) national status has been greatly boosted with only five minutes of airtime on one of mainstream media's greatest outlets – MTV.

Getting us on MTV can be summed up in two words: Difficult and Frustrating (but it was a whole lot of fun!). Selling what is perceived by many as strictly a local buzz to an internationally recognized medium for mainstream entertainment wasn't by any means easy, but with a lot of politicking, hard work, setbacks, and help from a few friends in very influential positions, our dream had come true: *Go-Go on MTV*. It was short, but it was sweet. I liked the

final product (with the exception of its length), and I'm proud to say that we are finally a *real* buzz on a national level.

What most people don't know is that I sent MTV more than seven hours of interviews and shows but they chose to only air five minutes of what *they* considered highlights. I had no say in the editing process; however, I'm glad to say that they could only show what I gave them. Though I tried my best, there was nothing I could do to increase the little airtime that we were eventually given.

I've been asked why was Junkyard the only band that was put on. The answer is simple. I couldn't get in touch with Groovers or Backyard, and even though I did get in touch with RE, it eventually fell through (much love to y'all!!). Junk was very open to help me with my work and I was especially blessed to get an interview with the entire band (thanks Moe!). However, MTV chose not to air it.

Through a couple of friends I got in

touch with, Scott Gorman (a producer at MTV), who was a great guy to work with and he helped us more than a little bit (especially when they tried to cancel our airtime), and with Footz and Heavy One looking on, I got the blessing to begin work.

I want to formally thank Kato, TMOTTGoGo, Clifton "Doc" Fenwick, Go-Go Rudy, Felicia Muhammad and her very supportive husband, Maurice Shorter, PA Palace, and my sister Tastee (for helping me out and putting up with my attitudes). Without their help and support, I couldn't have gotten where I needed to be to make this project a reality. It isn't easy to be an unknown and to get the faith and access I was blessed with, and I am forever thankful for their assistance.

Rashid Mahdi aka ROC

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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 way can we bring you clear and unbiased coverage.

Bits & Pieces

DJ RICO Outreaches With WPGC



DJ RICO SIGNS AND MINGLES
WITH THE CROWD

For the past several summers, 95.5 WPGC has adopted the neighborhood communities delivering such acts as Intimate Groove, Big Chewy-The Don, Optymystic Tribe and the newly female group Amari. But, the acts aren't the only things being transmitted to the community. They have been throwing a totally free party – Alcohol Free – Drug Free – Violence Free, as well as Free advancement to the mind.

DJ Rico simply states it as “the perfect cost.” “I’m not just doing this for WPGC. I’m doing this for the aspect of my people. When I say my people, I mean black, white, hispanic - I don’t care. There’s a youth and there’s a cause. The youth is the cause for my trying to keep the violence obtained to a low - a minimum. I’m trying to help decrease on funeral cost. The man is getting rich on funeral costs. Every time you hear something about a black youth or black adult, it’s mostly about murder. It’s about a care jacking. It’s about somebody doing this - somebody doing that. Something negative - never the positive. The only positive notions you hear about it is if the government is involved. I’m involved. But I’m just an individual doing my part looking out for the youngsters and letting them know what it’s about in life. Instead of giving them a bunch of BS, I tell the TS – True Story. If you don’t give them the true story, they[re gonna go for the bullshit. We’re just trying to keep everything on the positive note.”

Icebox Get Raided

Ken “Icy Ice” Moore has done everything by the book in an effort to keep his club, the **Icebox** out of trouble. This has been increasingly difficult in light of last years cop killing at the **Ibex**, which marked the beginning of an all out war against Go-Go carried out by local police departments.

Despite his efforts, the **Rare Essence/Backyard** Out of School Jam was canceled due to a little known technicality. The **Icebox** did not have enough parking spaces to support a show that would attract several hundred. Clearly, someone was working overtime to find that little detail. After a day in court word has it that

the club was re-opened for business.

Any speculation that the **Taj Mahael** snitched on the **Icebox** was quickly put to rest when **J-Mob** lead rapper, and **Taj** assistant manager, **Buggs** refused to admit disappointed party goers from the **Icebox** because they were not properly dressed. Apparently, **Buggs** is trying to turn Monday’s at the **Taj** into an upscale club night. No jeans, sneakers, or athletic gear. Although he could have capitalized on the **Icebox’s** misfortunes, he stood by his principles and turned away several hundred people.

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LETTERS

WE'RE READING YOUR MAIL

My suggestion is to have all the places and dates of where each go-go band will be playing for the month that the magazine would be out. It would be nice if you could have fashion part in the magazine, like a fashion police, latest styles, and whats new. I'm liking the interviews with the go-go bands because we get to know the scoop from there side of the stores. Every now and then there should be something positive about our black history or even our people of the 90's. I'm feeling this magazine, It's all about keeping it real.

-Tynisa Quarles

I live in Richmond, and have been recently exposed to go go through my weekly travels to D.C. I surf the radio stations and found WKYS. I've been attracted to the music that I've heard. Through further explorations using the internet, I've been learning what go go music is all about. From what I have found, the best way to enjoy go go music is to see a live show. I would love to do this, but I have a bit of concern--I'm a white guy. I'm really a white guy. I accept all cultures and freedom of expression, but I realize that, unfortunately, this is not the case with everyone. Can anyone clue me in to a good venue where I can witness this type of music but not be jeopardizing my safety and where I can feel comfortable?

-Doug

Now You Have Even More Ways To Speak Your Mind — Write or E-mail Us.

We need to hear your thoughts, opinions and suggestions, so drop us a line. If you have comments on any of TMOTTGoGo's contents, or ideas for stories, subjects or people you'd like to see covered, let us know. Write to TMOTTGoGo Letters, PO Box 1296 Leesburg, VA 20176. E-mail: letters@tmottgogo.com. Please include your name and address, and specify if your letter is not for publication. You can also visit our World Wide Web site at <http://www.tmottgogo.com>



POSTER PAGE



DigDug of NEG

© TMOTTGoGo Magazine - September 1998

It's Only An Hour Away!

By Tahira Mahdi

"All Go-Go music sound the same", "That Go-Go stuff is not real music, it sounds like they're beating on trash cans." The people of D.C. know that's bull, but that is what's being said about Go-Go in other cities up and down the East Coast.

A few years ago, I was a student at Morgan State University in Baltimore. Put yourself in my Nikes and imagine this scene:

You and your crew are at one of those notorious two-dollar college parties, among various other crews from New York, Baltimore, Jersey, and Philly. The DJ, most likely from the Bronx, has been spinning hip-hop all night. Then, in the middle of your journey in the desert of rap music, he throws your thirsty butt a drink, but just a taste. He plays Flexxx's "Water Dance". The hip-hop heads make their way to the sidelines while a few desperate Go-Go fiends fight their way to the floor. Of course "gettin' in the water" didn't quite quench your thirst, but that's when the DJ hits you up with "Ruff It Off". Anyone in the room from D.C. or P.G. is on the floor, bouncing back and forth off of all the others who have waited all night for this moment. While that out-of-touch DJ plays the other Go-Go records in his collection (only about five or six songs), you and your crew shout with the rest of the home team "AWWW D.C.!!" or "AWWW P.G.!!" You don't even notice the Puff Daddy fans standing around with their grills all twisted because once again, D.C. represented.

College students from D.C. suffer at parties all year and get relief only when bands are allowed to play somewhere near the college campus. What is it that outsiders don't understand about the Go-Go culture? We party harder than anyone else, only rivaled by the booty-shakers in Miami. The hardest thing to understand is why Go-Go isn't blowing up in Baltimore which is only an hour away. How can two cities so close to one another develop two totally different worlds or culture? Yeah, we all say that Baltimore is just a bunch of bamas with gold teeth and chicks with wildly colored weaves. Well, they think we are a bunch of country bums who dance funny to odd sounding music.

At Morgan, I had a roommate from Baltimore. I showed off my top-notch D.C. area status' like D.C. was the center of the universe. I introduced her to my cool D.C. friends, flaunted a bunch of DDTP

shirts, rocked some gray sweat pants, and of course, played the hell out my Junkyard P.A. tapes. She was not impressed. I even tried to teach her how to dance to Go-Go, but I figured after years of club dancing, she just couldn't move right.

In October of that year, Homecoming was on at Morgan State, and the biggest party was advertised for all New York and D.C. students to get together at the same spot. In one room, there was to be Funk Master Flex on the wheels for hip-hop junkies. In the other room, there was to be none other than Rare Essence cranking for the Go-Go masses. My roommate and I planned to go represent (in different rooms, of course). But at the party, it was whole 'nother story! There were about ten people in the hip-hop room and a rack of folks from D.C. and New York fighting for space and fresh air in the Essence room. In the midst of those 200 or more bodies was my roommate, dancing and sweating out her hair-do. After that, she started playing my Junkyard tapes for her friends when I wasn't around.

I used to hate club music, which is the favorite in Baltimore. That is until my cousin and her red hair weave-havin' friends took me to some of their favorite Baltimore clubs. To keep from feeling left-out, I danced to that strange club beat. After a while, I found that I was almost good at it. I enjoyed going to clubs with those B-More bad girls just as much as when I went out with the 320 Honies to local Go-Go's.

These experiences made me realize that no matter where you are from, you can't judge 'other people's music and culture until you party with them. We should want to go other places and try a new way to dance. I feel I can dance to just about anything now, besides country, but then again you may catch me on the line-dancing circuit soon. Music is supposed to be universal. Even though I like it all, I still gotta say "Take me out to the GO-GO!" ▼



Now... isn't she lovely!

Anaiya Joy Hawkins
Temple Hills, Md

By Kevin Hammond



Anthony Harley, better known to the Go-Go community as

Little Benny, is one of the few pioneers who still remain in the game after over twenty years. While growing up in southeast Washington, DC, Little Benny developed a passion for music. This passion was influenced by the musical creativity of his father, the late Frank Ford Harley. Mr. Harley bought both of his sons (Anthony and Frank Jr.) at a very early age their first guitars. At this time Little Benny and his brother were encouraged by their father to pursue their musical talents. Although Frank's guitar stayed in the closet, most of the time, Little Benny's thirst for music was just beginning.

During his early years as a child Little Benny would watch his father's singing group rehearse at his home. That group, Frank Harley and the Bell Chords were his first introduction to the music he would learn to love. At times Little Benny would join his father's group and sing along using a carrot as a microphone. His mother also noticing her son's interest in the music field purchased him his first horn. This is modest beginning has given the area one

of its true musical icons. On the hot Thursday evening when Mark Ward and I caught up with “The Master’s” front man, he was between meetings, as well as resting up for a function at Tacoma Station with Maiesha and the Hiphuggers later on evening. Little Benny gave us some insight on what it is to be one of Go Go’s pioneers.

IN THE BEGINNING

KATO: Who were some of your musical influences?

LITTLE BENNY: Well... my father of course. As I got older, I listened to a lot of Chuck Brown. Gregory (Sugar Bear) Elliott and (Experience Unlimited). Then, back in the Rare(RE) Essence days we did a lot of listening to Earth, Wind & Fire, and Frankie Beverly and Maze. That got me. Just listening to the old groups.

MARK WARD: How old were you when you got into music?

LITTLE BENNY: I was about twelve years old when I really started getting serious about music. I used to just trip off of people carrying instrument cases in their hands. I saw this guy playing a horn in the parking lot and told him, ‘Let me see that thing. How do you play this?’ He said, “Just do like this (*pressing his lips together*), and play like this.” I pulled that joint out and just blew. He was like, “Man, why don’t you come and go with me?” He took me up to the Baptist Center where I started taking lessons from this a gentleman named Mr. Harrington. We would go up to Walter Reed (Army Medical Center), where I used to play with little jazz band called Mr. Harrington’s Little Giants of Jazz. I played the top (*which is similar to soprano notes for vocalists*). While I was there I learned how to play everything from flute to drums to sax to bass, but Mr. Harrington kept me on trumpet.

KATO: Is that where you developed you skill of playing two horns at the same time?

LITTLE BENNY: I learned that from Tillery, Chuck Brown’s old trumpet player.

KATO: When did you start playing with Rare Essence?

BENNY: In 1974, I hooked up with Rare Essence. They were called the Young Dynamos back then. We practiced in Andre (Whiteboy) Johnson’s living room. Then we went around Quinten (Footz) Davidson’s house and he changed the name of the band to Rare Essence taken from Rare type of perfume.

MARK WARD: So, they were already a band before

you started practicing with them?

LITTLE BENNY: Yea. I was coming from practicing at the Baptist Center one day, when I heard them playing. I knew how to play, so I told a friend of mine, “knock on that door and tell them to let me play this horn and show them something.” So, I went in there and played “Hollywood Swingin’”. They were amazed. (John) Big Horn said, “Play that again?” You see, I was trying to get with them because they had a cabaret coming up at the center. So, I just said to myself, “Let me get up in that thing right quick.”

MARK WARD: So, tunes like “Hollywood Swingin’” was the kind of music that they started off playing?

LITTLE BENNY: Yea, that’s what we played before the go-go thing – top 40s. Actually, James (Jas. Funk) Thomas is the one that got us into playing go-go during the time when he was the DJ for Chuck (Brown). He basically worked that style.

KATO: Okay, I can tell you the first time I saw Rare Essence, I was about 14 years old. You guys were playing outside of Prince George’s Community College. Do you remember that show?

LITTLE BENNY: You’re talking about the one when we were playing up high on that platform.

KATO: Yes... that’s the one I’m talking about. I can remember during that time Funk was up on the front line leading and I faintly remember the rest of you all. I also remember some of the slick things you used to say on your microphone. Although during that time it was evident, because your presence was so dominant, how did it grow to where you began taking over as lead?

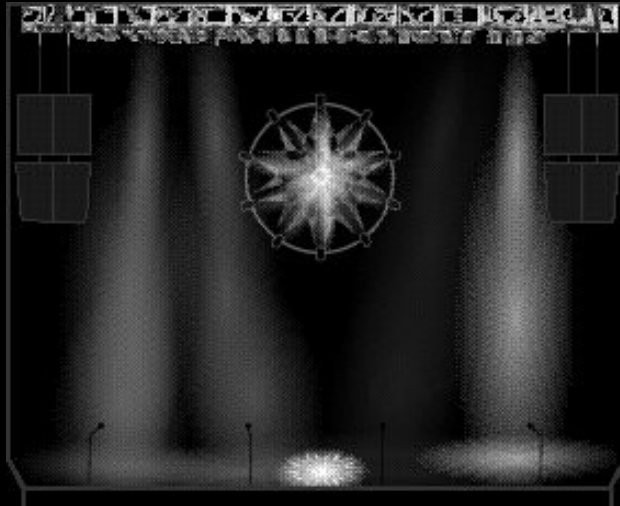
LITTLE BENNY: As far as doing that outside leading?

KATO: Yes.

LITTLE BENNY: Basically, it was when we really started the style of vamping tunes before going all the way into the songs. I always had this way where I would just say little things to flow with the music. We became so used to it that they would build off of it. That’s the way we began setting off the grooves. Funk would just talk and I would groove it. Then, when it came down to the horn parts, Mark (the Godfava) Lawson, Rory (DC) Felton, Bighorn and I would just work them out with steps that I would create and teach to them. So, basically that whole cycle started making it more stronger in showmanship for Rare Essence. And, that’s how that came about for me as far as being more in the front.

(Continued on page 17)

**Congratulations to the winners
of the
1998 TMOTTGoGo Awards**



Backyard Band

**Tightest Pocket
Tightest Lead Rapper
Go-Go Single (Drop The Unibomber)
Go-Go Album
Go-Go Band of the Year**

Northeast Groovers

**Tightest Rhythm Section
Tightest Vocal Harmony**

Optymystic Tribe

Up & Coming Band

The Icebox

Best Go-Go Club

This has been a community's choice decision & in no way have the staff of TMOTTGoGo influenced any of the votes. We would like to thank all who submitted their votes for their assistance in this process.

(Continued from page 15)

KATO: So, although Whiteboy was the one calling the songs, you were more like the person who coached it on.

LITTLE BENNY: Right!

KATO: So, that was the something that evolved into the style you guys created and became so potent that other bands began coming out sounding like either you or Funk during that time.

LITTLE BENNY: Right. I guess many of them just decided which style they wanted to use, Funk's or mine.

MARK WARD: Were bands like EU already playing go-go back then?

LITTLE BENNY: Nah. That was around the time when I taught Sugar Bear how to rap to their stuff. They were more into the rock style of the music.

MARK WARD: Were you guys the first go-go band after Chuck?

LITTLE BENNY: Well... basically yes. Chuck used to let us open up for him. Sugar Bear started doing it during the time EU were playing at the Las Vegas 5000. Trouble Funk was really already out there, but they used to come around and snatch. But, hey... somebody had to take from and to somewhere, just like we listened to Chuck and got that style. It all worked, though.

MARK WARD: Didn't Redds *(of Redds and the Boys)* play with you all in the beginning?

LITTLE BENNY: No. Actually, Redds came in when Michael (Funky Ned) Neil broke his neck. He had a bad accident one day and was in a cast from chest to head.

MARK WARD: So, Redds played bass then?

LITTLE BENNY: Redds played bass and lead guitar. When Whiteboy went to Mississippi for his summer vacation, Redds would sit in on the guitar. Yea, that's when Mississippi was a bull frog for about two summers, I think. But, Whiteboy was the original guitar player.

KATO: Back then I used to really study Rare Essence. I think someone may have told you about this, but I was a Rare Essence/Little Benny fanatic. I mean, if you read my high school yearbook caption, it gives the rap to "If you've been thinking about leaving home and going to Hollywood..."

MARK WARD: Yeah... he even carried around a Rare Essence notebook that he made.

BENNY: *(Laughs)*

KATO: I'm saying that to say that I would to analyze it. And, what I noticed was how you all could just take anything and build on to it so much that it would finally become a complete body. There were a lot of tunes, and I never really understood why they were not recorded, and if they were recorded, why they were never released. But I guess now would be too late. We're talking about almost 20 years.

BENNY: It could still be released. All they would have to do is doctor it, swing it and update the old hooks. All that stuff from "Don't Stop - Don't Stop" to "Spotlight" to "Funky Stuff", there is so much of that stuff. That's why Rare Essence is really picking off of it now, such as the tune, "On and On." I was surprised when they called me to come and record with them. I said, "What song are you doing?" They said, "Jungle-Boogie, but we're calling it "On and On." So, I said, "Okay." I guess they wanted the squeals, shakes and break stopping the way we used to hit it back in the day.

MARK WARD: Do you have a favorite groove from back in the day?

BENNY: "Roll Call." "Shake-It, But Don't Break-It." "He Big Fun." I used to like all of them. That's why I can just take a rack of them and just go for a long period of time with them.

MARK WARD: We've heard all types of rumors, but I want to clear the air. Tell us about the story of where the title "Get On The Wagon" came from.

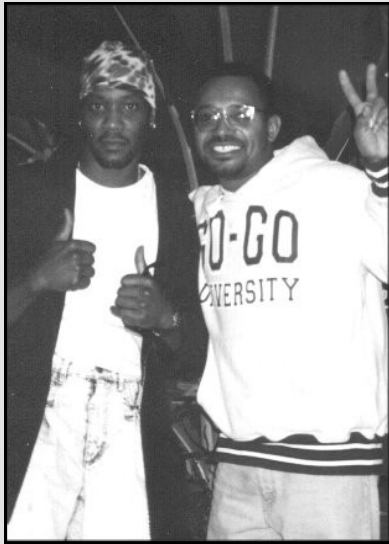
BENNY: Well... we used to hang up posters from the back of the truck. We called it the dick wagon. Funk would be driving and yelling, "There goes a pole - There goes a pole! Whom ever has got the staple gun here goes the posters." We used to tell the girls to get on the wagon and giddy-up.

MARK WARD: You were always saying, "Tell 'em 'bout the One On One." Okay, tell me. What is the "One On One" about? How did you come about the name? Is there a story behind that?

BENNY: Nah. Actually, I think we probably named it the "One On One" because of the rolls that Footz did to bring us into the groove. Funk would hold up one finger on each hand, and we knew to play "One On One." Basically, we were just naming stuff back then.

KATO: What about "He Big Fun?" Who is "He Big Fun?"

BENNY: Oh, this real big girl. We used to hang out



Ju-Ju & Little Benny in Japan 1995

with a bunch girls at this house and just kick it. "He Big Fun's" name was Jennifer.

KATO: Was she 'sysed' to have a groove named after her?

BENNY: Yeah... she probably was. As a matter of fact, I was up at the radio station recently, and she called and said, "This is Jennifer." I said, "Who?" She said, "He Big Fun." I said, "What's Up, Girl!" I mean she was pretty big. When we saw her coming, we would play the Jaws theme in the groove. Then we would take it on down to the 'freaky-deak' part, singing, "That's what we're talking about - That's what we've come to do, y'all!" But basically, that's what we did. Just vibed off of the people. That's how we did it. Like "Don't Stop." We would feed off of the crowd and then decide to put some horn parts to it. Just vibing.

KATO: When did you finally realize that you guys definitely had something that the people were digging on?

BENNY: In 1983 when we played with New Edition and Trouble Funk at the Capital Center. We did good on that show, because New Edition called our manager the next day and asked her if we could open up for them on the road. But, I think she was asleep at the time. So, she told them to call her back. And, I said, "Oh my God! I've got to get out of here!" That was around the time my head starting going, "This ain't going nowhere." I mean, we had a beautiful show that night. We rocked with that joint.

THE BREAK UP:

MARK WARD: I noticed during one of the many RE transitions when Funk began to step down, Lawrence (The Maniac) West began to get on the microphone.

BENNY: Well... Funk used to just go in and out with the band, so basically we said we're going to go ahead and try to do it ourselves. So, they brought Lawrence in as a singer and he began to rap also. He used to rap for Peace Makers. So, we just worked it out like that.

KATO: In 1985 I left to go into the Army. However, a little while before I left I did notice some things just didn't seem to click the same on that stage. The night before I left I went to see you all play at Crystal Skate. A few months later, I came home on leave and you were no longer with Rare Essence. You formed a band called Little Benny & The Masters. What happened?

BENNY: Yeah... right around that time, I basically began to get fed up with things. I just said whatever, you know. This ain't my band. This is your band. This is a corporation now. I had that hit record over in London (*Who Comes To Boogie*). Then, they went over there for a month. During that time, Rare Essence played at the Panorama Room every Tuesday. Things started getting crazy around that time, I was just about ready to get up out of that camp. Basically, I didn't even tell them that I was going overseas. My brother went up there and told them I had left town. So frankly, I just figured what they were paying wasn't worth all that trouble. So, that's what made me say, I'll just go get my band and make exactly the same thing.

KATO: So, that's when you started Little Benny & The Masters?

BENNY: No. Actually, Ayre Rayde called me and asked me to play with them. (John) Cabalu started playing with Rare Essence. We even played on the same show with them, which we gave them a little whipping that night.

MARK WARD: So, how was your relationship with them after you left the band?

BENNY: I wasn't dealing with them. I didn't have anything to say to them. Basically all the pictures I had of them, I gave away to my friends. I just didn't want to be bothered with them anymore. Then, we got into the legal things of it, and just ended up settling out of court.

KATO: You were about how old during that time?

BENNY: I was pretty young – about 21 years old then.

MARK WARD: So, you were pretty tight with some of the guys in the band that left with you?

BENNY: Yeah.

MARK WARD: Did they have the same problems? Is that why they left?

BENNY: Yeah. They were like, “we could go with you and play with you for real. We could make just as much with you paying us.” The whole thing is when you turn a group into a corporation without everybody agreeing to it... you know, back then they used to say I was 10 guys to 1 in their group. “He won’t never sign no contracts. He won’t never do this. He won’t never do that.” Whiteboy was right behind me following every move I did. So, if I wouldn’t sign a contract, Whiteboy wouldn’t sign a contract. Then they would call my mother and say, “Benny won’t sign the contract.” And, my mother would say, “Well, I gave him advice on what he should do, but it’s up to him. If he chooses not to sign a contract, that’s up to him.”

KATO: So, then came Little Benny & The Masters. I guess I could say that you went through some stuff in that camp too.

BENNY: Yeah. You’re always going to go through some stuff with groups. The switching of drummers – I always had a different drummer. I kept having to change up congo players. Actually the whole band.

KATO: Well, okay. That must have been during the time you called me. I guess some of them were doing the Groove Masters thing.

BENNY: Yea. That was during the time David Rudd wanted to do his slick thing. I was letting him set up some little things, you know. I guess one night, he just called himself to go out and do his thing calling themselves the Groove Masters.

KATO: Actually, he was calling them Little Benny & The Masters. I had seen them playing somewhere thinking I was going to see Little Benny & The Masters. But when they got on stage, there was some of the Masters, but no Little Benny. Then Lawrence (The Maniac) would get on the microphone, and they would say that Benny wouldn’t be able to make it.

BENNY: *(A surprised look on his face)*

KATO: Yeah. That happened a couple of times. It wasn’t until I got the call from you that it started to click that he was doing shows behind your back.

BENNY: What did they sound like?

KATO: Basically, they were playing that stuff that the Masters were playing back then, but with Lawrence talking. That’s what threw people off. See, I think that has always been the thing with Little Benny & The Masters. The main focus was on you. And, with the Masters it really didn’t matter. When people came, they basically came to see Little Benny and the Masters, not Lawrence (the Maniac) and the Masters. And, that’s what it sounded like. It sounded like it sounded when Rare Essence played with just Lawrence on the microphone. No Benny.

BENNY: Yeah. That was something with David Rudd learning how to pay his rent being sneaky. That’s probably why he didn’t last too long in the go-go thing.

MARK WARD: How did the Proper Utensils thing come about?

BENNY: I had Funk come down the Metro Club and check us out when Little Benny & The Masters was playing. He would come through, and I would say, “Get him on stage.” He had already assembled Proper Utensils. Then, see I was getting tired of the Masters -- people not coming to practice and stuff like that. I basically asked Funk to come on and join the group and we’ll work out whatever - whatever. Then Mike Hughes talked Funk into calling me and asking me to join them. I was like, “Yeah, tell him to call me. I’ll come and play.” Funk was like, “Well, you know I want you to play all them horn parts.” I said, “Man, I’ll play any horn part as long as there’s a part to learn.” So, I just went to his practice and went from there. He had some tight cats, like Roy Battle and Brian Mills. Funk likes playing a lot of swing horn parts and big horn sounds. Basically they’d write my parts down and I’d learn them. During that time, Funk had Herald Little playing with them, and was basically trying to decide which horn player he was going to keep. So, he just told Herald that he was going to just use me for a while until he found out what’s what. I knew he was going to do it anyway, because it was like Herald versus me. I knew that I would serve four parts in the band, play the horn, play the tambourine, rap and dance. He had to weigh it like a scale. No doubt, Herald sounded damn good playing that horn, on solo too. And, that’s one thing I wasn’t doing was soloing. From there, we just came out and did the “Rump Shaker” down at the Down Under Club. Then, they put it on the air and we just went on from there. Then we went and did another CD. And, we just finished another CD under Charlie Fenwick’s label called, “That’s Enough.”

KATO: That leads me to the question of how you hooked up with Chuck Brown? It’s ironic that one of

(Continued on page 30)

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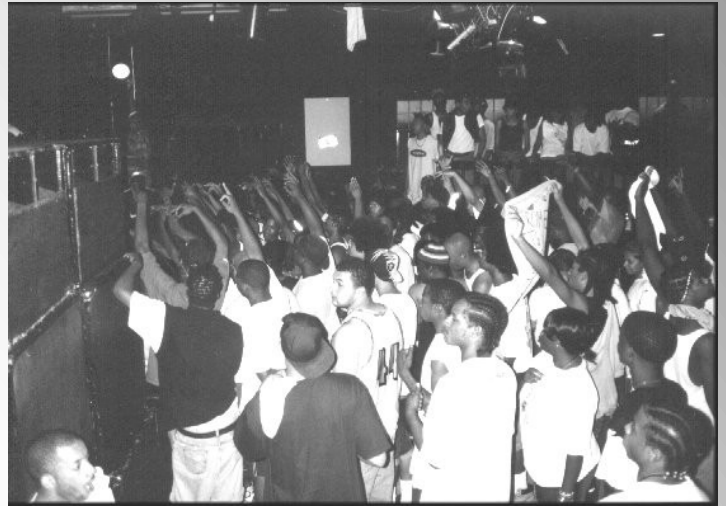
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TMESSAGE ABOUT THE RUMORS:

Bottom line, it was a business move. Something that all adults go through as far as more measures in your life in making a difference. Growing up. Everybody wants what they want, so it came to a point where everybody was feeling, "I can do this. I can do that." And that's how musicians deal. You're gonna have to deal with things where one minute you've got plenty of money to pay the bills and sometimes you've got no money. There was no beef or nothing like that. It was just something that was ripe to be done. So, don't expect for the man to stop the music that breed in him just because somebody decides to move on to another project.

How can we beef with our brothers. You are looking at a long term relationship. We have spent long term private times with the brothers from JY Band. We set down and cried together, ate together and prayed together. We did it all. So, we aren't going to let business come between love and family. Outside of the stage, you are my brother. That goes for all of them. We play the same music.

But, you've got to expect the rumors, because for one, you've got two of the same band in here. In general, we aren't playing the same show, but we are playing the same material. You've got the same group that split apart, and in less than a month became two different bands. So, everybody's thinking, "Damn, they must be beefing" or "Such in such don't like such in such." We're always JYB. When I say that, I'm saying that when ever you see us you see them. When ever you see them, you see us. We're both representing each other.

Bottom line, a personal relationship shouldn't have anything to do with business. Business is business, and that's how it's carried. If you can't respect that, then stay out of the business world and get into the crazy world. Of course, we're going to be playing the same material right now. We are all from the same band. Basically, what we are waiting for is for the music to speak for itself. And, may the best man win. It's a challenge and we can't run from that. They are playing this music and we are playing the same thing. One day it's going to hit head to head. Then you're going to have the crowd saying, "I think Buggs and Black Poo should be playing this song" or "They should stop and let T-Bob, Wink and them play that particular song." We ain't creeping, so, may the best man win. That's all the fun of the business.

MESSAGE TO THE INDUSTRY:

I don't care what anyone says, none of us better than the other. We need to stick together and make it all work. Everybody wants to be better than this band. You want to challenge that band. Instead, let's challenge the man with the power. Grab his attention and tell him, "Look, we've got something that's worth what Luther Vandross is giving you. We've got something that's worth what



Whitney Houston is giving you." We got so much to offer him. But until we stick together, we aren't going to have anything. That's why we name ourselves J-Mob. That's our motto. We're mob'n like that. In order to be in a mob, you present yourself and say this is what I want to do. You're in it. Ain't no getting out. We aren't going anywhere until we get too old to do this. We're going to take the faith and make it work. It's about getting out here and having them want to catch up with us, instead of us trying to catch up with them.

See, the solution is not whether this band is going to get along with that band. That's where we often get disillusioned. What we all need to be focusing on is sticking together, marketing our music, and getting out of this rut of allowing it to be handled in a way of just being put into the studios by someone who pays a little money on some DAT time and throwing out a CD. What we all need to wake up to is realizing that manner is not bringing any money in to us. Stop being satisfied with just our faces on CDs in the stores and being noticed. Therefore, we need to be saying, "We're going to stick together and polish things up. Everybody put their brains together and identify what we need to do." Then we can go. Nobody's going to take this project until it's all together. Nobody wants to just take Junkyard and then got to hear them talk bad about Backyard, and Backyard is playing go-go. You don't hear Redman talking trash about Method Man. If they do, then they're executing their promotion exercises. That's a money maker.

MESSAGE ABOUT J-MOB:

J-Mob have got some dynamite players for you. We've got some guys that just simply ain't having it. In other

(Continued on page 24)

J-MOB

(Continued from page 23)

words, bring the noise. We're saying it just like we were telling them when we were with Junkyard, "Bring it to the stage." We aren't going to argue with you. We aren't going to beef with you. We aren't fussing. We will see you when you bring it to that stage and bring that noise. That's what we like. We love it when the champs are in trouble. We're never the champs in trouble. See, the President is scared of Buggs, and the Mayor is scared of Black Poo – so, who runs the country? It doesn't take any money. It takes time and effort. We have seen bands come from nothing, and Junkyard is one of them. Junkyard said, "We don't have any instruments, Dog, but we're going to make some noise." So, don't tell us, just because a man has a million dollars, he's got a fortune. We have a fortune out there waiting for us, but we've just got to obtain it. When J-Mob rises -- when the Taj Mahal rises -- when our PA Man finishes the construction of these booming systems, that's how we're going to come at you.

It was everybody's choice to come up with another name. We've got two band out here and both of them can't be named Junkyard. It's one thing when you're battling on stage, but it's another thing when you're battling stupidity.

Junkyard is one chapter of all of our lives, but the times have come and we have moved on. You're always going to have to make moves to climb higher. We think it's a step better, although some people don't. That's because they are so use to familiar faces. But, some of the biggest artist have even switched up, Prince and the Revelution, the New Power Generation, the Artist. As long as you've got Roger Nelson up there, you've to Prince. Just the same, as long as you've got Buggs, you've got Junk. We're never scared, until we're dead. Just bring the noise.

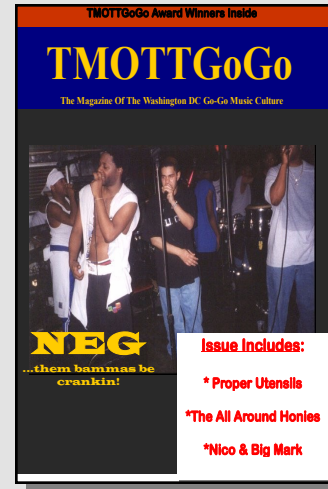
We're waiting to be with our brothers to show them that we both can do this. We want to hear the people in the public say that we both are what's happening.

MESSAGE FROM BLACK POO:

There is a reason why I stuck with Buggs. I've watched him give so many guys opportunities. He taught a lot of people. Never underestimate him. He's kind of like a Jas. Funk. He grew up under Jas. Funk. In other words, Jas. Funk will be with you for one minute, the next minute he's like, "Hey... I'm gonna go ahead and chill for a minute." But it's always in him. Anytime he hears *One On One*, he's ready to start doing something. The same goes for

(Continued on page 32)

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A New Generation Of Gospel Go-Go

By Kevin Hammond

Ever since the infiltration of this genres gospel music exploded onto the commercial charts and radio stations with groups such as Kirk Franklin & the Family, God's Property, The Commissioned, Fred Hammond, Ron Canoli and Sounds of Blackness, there has become a wider audience basically tuning in to God's word through their particular taste of music. Moreover, for the past two months WPGC 95.5 FM has been pushing their own Sunday morning gospel program hosted by William Becton, which spotlights a host of national as well as local groups. Listen to that program on any Sunday morning and it's almost a sure bet that you are going to stumble across some gospel in the pattern of go-go.

Go-Go music has taken it's step into gospel since 1991 with bands such as Joshua Generation and Isaiah coming through the scene spreading messages about the Lord through their percussion dominated, bass drum driven representations.

With even more of these groups materializing throughout the city, we decided to spotlight on a club that caters to their congregation. Club Jesus (*Club meaning, Christ Loves Believers & Un-Believers*) is located in New Carrollton Mall.

This spirited filled venue, owned by Yolanda Gary initially opened on March 7, 2998, as a "God given gift" to "offer an alternative for the youth – to get them off of the streets." "We are an outreach program with a very simple rule of no tight shirts or mini skirts," explained Ms. Gary.

On Saturday nights, the club offers open mic night, where youth can express themselves in poem or song. The Friday nights have been given to the go-go fans, showcasing such bands as P.O.C. and Submission Band. Gospel sounds in go-go, however, is not necessarily as new as many may think. In fact, the godfather of go-go, Chuck Brown, himself has even won two 1985 Washington Area Music Association (WAMA) Awards in the category of Gospel Inspiration Male Vocalist.

Submission Band explains their purpose for this hybrid music as, "an opportunity to play the favored style of music while praising God with the gift given."

There are some who feel that this "is not the type of venue that God has in mind for the spreading of his word – the job should be done in and only in the sanctuary."

I don't know. But I will say that Jesus himself didn't

just keep it (worship) in the sanctuary. He went out and took his message to the people. He was also criticized for his work.

"We're more like a bridge," explains Ms. Gary. "Our goal is to offer an alternative to our youth – to take back what Satan has stolen. We simply take the regular Go-Go music and do it the gospel way to let them know that they can have fun for the Lord. Once they come here, get saved, we're hoping to send them to the churches."

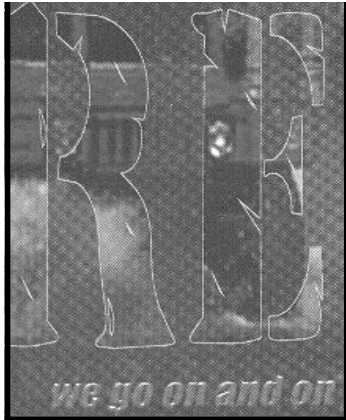
"In essence," explains Submission manager, Mr. Thompson, "we understand that it's the Word of God that saves people, not the music. And, we want to use this as a tool to open doors for the gospel to go forward and save people and help them come to know Jesus Christ." ▼



*Submission
Gospel Go-Go Band*

The CD Reviews

By DeLano McRavin -aka- *The Highly Educated One*



RARE ESSENCE

We Go On And On



Rating: 3 1/2 conga smacks out of 5

When I received this assignment, I must admit I thought it was a joke. "You want me to do a *Rare Essence* review?" I am still suffering from this recent Junkyard break up, but nonetheless I am a true solider and I do as I am instructed. So as I popped in the latest release from the *Inner City Groovers*, "We Go on and On" they pleasantly surprised me. Immediately as I began to nod my head to the energetic "Player Haters" (the catch phrase of 98), I knew this couldn't be all bad. "Player Haters" features a pulsating bass guitar line courtesy of Michael "Funky Ned" Neal and some of Milton "Go Go Mickey" Freeman's finest work on congas, after listening to this a second time I was ready to get back "On the Wagon." This 16-track collection of studio tracks wrapped around live cuts and a few amusing skits, made *Rare Essences'* journey back into the retail market most satisfying.

With a few guest appearances from some of DC's finest talent, *RE* does not disappoint its loyal fans. *RE's* second cut gives us the socially conscious tune "What would you do for the money?" this song tells the story of the sordid lifestyle of the drug game. This track along with B-side selection "Watch out now!" which feature the lyrical talents of Nonchalant, does its best to enlighten the Go Go community. "Watch out now!" give us a smooth

mellow groove that allows Nonchalant and Donnell Floyd pleasingly to exchange their own special brand of lyrical lingo. "Overnight Scenario" which details' life after the party, is extremely radio friendly and will be very popular with mainstream fans. This cut will have *RE* in the daily radio rotation for months to come. Next, *RE* digs into the crates and resurrects two Whodini favorites. The rap classics "Freaks Come Out at Night" featuring DJ Flexx and "Friends" restructured to become the *RE* tune "Freaks" both are refreshing live covers with some of *RE's* own special flava.

On the song "Stars Be Partying" this tune displays the verbal workings of area rap icons (the Rigged Raw One) Stinky Dink and Hechinger Mall Kidd. These two rap artists drop by the studio to remember the party spots past and present. This track is a head-bobber and these two artists' styles compliment each other very well. Stinky Dink and the Hechinger Mall Kidd may want to consider combining their talents and visiting the studio again? . The true gem on this album marks the return of three former *RE* members. Anthony "Little Benny" Harley, John "JB" Buchanan and Byron "BJ" Jackson makes their return to the band *Rare Essence* a memorable one. The tune is the albums' title track "We Go On and On" and is a wild ride into the past on the *RE Express*. The track better known to older *RE* fans as Kool and the Gang's/ *RE's* "Jungle Boogie" features these two Go-Go All-stars and DC's own DJ Kool. This tune brings back memories of the "One on One" and "Body Moves" and when they decide to "Back it up" I felt something I have not felt in quite sometime . . . I felt "The Wagon" move.

The final entry on this CD is a somber tribute to Quentin "Foots" Davidson and others that have passed on. The song reminds one of Pete Rock and CL Smooth's (T.R.O.Y) "They Reminisce Over You" and tells of the joy and pain that come with the loss of a loved one. This was a compassionate way to wrap up a truly pleasant ride on the *RE Express*. ▼

The TMOTTGoGo Family would like to take this moment to send our continued prayers to the family and friends of Miss Mattie Mack The Godmother of Go-Go

Radio Waves

People in the music business will be the first to tell you that **D.C.** is one of the worst places to work. The rivalry between **WPGC** and **WKYS** just gets uglier and uglier, with record labels and artist often caught in the middle. Ever noticed how both stations place **drops** (that voice in the middle of songs) that says this is an exclusive, with the stations call letters? Believe it or not, it is not uncommon for stations to convince labels to give them a certain song while keeping it from the competition. When this happens, the other station must find creative ways to get that song. It gets even more interesting, so follow me closely.

On of the ways that a station gets a song that has been given exclusively to its competition is by recording it off the radio. No kidding!!! Both **WPGC** and **WKYS** have been known to do this. For this reason we, as the listener, have to put up with those repeated **drops**. Anyway, it all makes for ugly competition. On many occasions employees of both radio stations have almost come to blows at clubs, concerts, and other promotional events where both were involved. In the immortal words of the great **Rodney King**, "Can we all get along?"

Is the **Superfunk Regulata DJ Celso** on his way back to **WKYS**? It seems that every 6 months **Celso** gets tired of his location and moves to the competition. Can anyone keep count of how many times the city's #1 DJ has changed stations? This summer he once again parted ways with **WPGC**. Many expected to find him back at **WKYS**, but as of now **Celso** is still a free agent.

Craig Black, best known for his overnight shift at **WPGC** is now with **WKYS**. **Black** as he is referred to by friends, fiends, and fans, apparently wanted more money. **Jay Stevens**, the penny pinching Program Director for **WPGC** wasn't giving an inch, let alone a few extra dollars per pay check. By now I'm sure **Black** is working overnights and weekends for **WKYS**. Also missing in action from **WPGC** is **DJ Tracy**. For those of you who slept on **Tracy** she is considered to be among the best club DJ's in the country. And who said white girls can't spin? Word has it that she is getting paid in Miami.

While we're still talking about **WPGC**, congratulations on beating out **WKYS** on the last arbitron ratings. But it was a bittersweet victory. They had to share their #1 ranking with **WHUR**. Looks like all that fighting between the two younger

Reported
by Shaniqua Black
The Radio Bandit



urban stations helped the **Adult Mix** slip into the top spot. **WKYS**, after claiming the #1 spot a year ago has fallen to #4.

Anyone noticed that **Donny Simpson's** morning show is a lot tighter than it has been in recent years? I credit this to the fact that he stopped taking those week long vacations on a monthly basis. Am I the only one who noticed that it seemed like **Donny** was always on vacation? Well, word is that under his previous contract he was. Now that **Donny** has stopped that nonsense his loyal listeners are tuning back to him. We have also heard that **Donny** almost ended up at **WHUR**. To keep **Donny** on the payroll **WPGC** had to agree to a contract that rivals Michael Jordan's. Way to go **Donny!**

As for the Go-Go mix shows has anyone told **DJ M&M** from **WPGC** that **Northeast Groovers**, **Backyard** and **Rare Essence** are not the only Go-Go Bands. It's called a mix show for a reason. You're supposed to be mixing. Most of the time it seems that **M&M** just pops in a P.A. tape and goes to sleep for 20 minutes. Will someone please introduce **DJ Iran** from **WKYS** to a P.A. tape? Talk to someone who really knows Go-Go and let them help you out. I think that a warning label should be placed on all Go-Go records and tapes. "Keep out of reach of radio DJ's" cuz yall is messin' up.

That brings me to the craziest man on radio, **Go-Go Rudy** from **WKYS**. Although I must question this man's sanity he is without doubt the most entertaining personality on local radio. And his Go-Go show with **DJ Big John** crank – Word to your mutha!!! It's a shame that his show airs only once a week, and from the un-godly hours of 2AM to 3AM Saturday morning/Friday night. For the real Go-Go heads this is the mix show to catch. It's just so hard to stay awake that late. ▼



Remembering The

By Richard O'Connor

It's back to school time again as area youngsters turn their attention from hanging out and summers jobs to homework and cutting classes. Back in the early eighties, summer was never officially over until the end of the biggest concert event of the summer – The Back to School Boogie.

Before Go-Go was banned from all of the major venues, the Capital Center (now U.S. Airways Arena) hosted the years phattest Hip-Hop and Go-Go show. The 1982 show starring Grand Master Flash & the Furious Five, Trouble Funk, EU, The Sugarhill Gang, and Cameo was particularly memorable.

Peep the style. Looking like a thug and a ho' was not in. Everybody was into the preppie look. For guys this meant Polo or Izod shirts, khaki walking shorts, polo sox – white sox if you were a bama, docksiders if you were from the suburbs, and Pro Keds High Tops if you were from the city. For the ladies (no one dared call them bi**hes) this meant tight designer jeans by Jordache, Bonjour, Sergio Valente, or Calvin Klein, and tube tops that tastefully revealed some young cleavage and small waists. Back then fat girls knew that they were fat and never wore outfits that were five sizes too small.

Remember the shag haircut? Well it was losing popularity thanks to a new haircut that came to us by way of Philadelphia. Appropriately, it was called a Philie. For those of you who don't know this was the original fade. The Jherri Curl was never popular in D.C., but it was not uncommon to see a bama or two walking around with the drip drip wet look. I am embarrassed to say that at the time I was one of them.

Before that awful looking asymmetric came into style in the mid eighties, one of the more typical hairstyles to see among the young ladies was the flip. You know, the one where you ladies had to either keep a curling iron handy or sleep with big rollers so that you could have that continuous curl encircling your head. It was sho' nuff cute.

From the end of July through the entire month of August you would hear non stop advertisements for the Back to School Boogie on WKYS, WOL and OK 100. WPGC was a Rock station. No one played Go-Go on the radio. It would be another year before WOL's Doc Arnold made Go-Go a regular part of his show at 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

Peep the vibe. Go-Go and Hip-Hop shows back then were all General Admission. Go where you want. Sit where you want. Stand where you want. Party where you want. No one had to worry about getting shot. That was "punk shit". But don't be mis-lead. Youngins' knew how to rumble. There still existed a sense of honor in being able to defend yourself one on one. As a result there was much less tension in the air. People came to party. The show begin with Grand Master Flash & the Furious Five. This was the summer in which they escaped the shadows of the Sugarhill Gang who, up until this point, were the leaders of the young rap scene. *The Message* was the #1 song of the summer and further changed Rap music and Hip-Hop culture for years to come.

Don't be fooled by today's MC's who can't put on a good live show. Back in the day The Furious Five ruled the stage with pure raw energy. Their choreography was the tightest I have seen to this day. A spectacular light show, early B-boy steps, and tight sound combined to create a thoroughly

captivating set.

No where in there transition from songs such as The Birthday Party – “Beep Beep, You and the Crew, Hold it!!!” To jams such as Flash to the Beat did they once lose the crowd. By the time they hit the Message, Melle Mel had the audience of 12,000 in the palm of his hand. Even young Go-Go heads who doubted that a New York City rap act could move them were partying in the aisles. I don’t know what happened to the rappers of the nineties but they don’t put on shows like that.

EU was up next. Throughout the eighties Trouble Funk, EU, and Rare Essence were the indisputable leaders of Go-Go. For some reason you could never get all of them to play at the same show, but you could always get Trouble and EU together. EU was the funky rock band of Go-Go. They had a high end sound thanks to electric guitar of Valentino Jackson, and the Larry Graham inspired electric bass of Greg “Sugarbear” Elliot.

They were also the most musical band. Often “Sugarbear” would shut up and just let the band groove. There were few pockets and sockets as we currently know them. Percussion, back in the day, laid behind the music, and with three main horn sections there was lots of music being offered. There were no roto-tom grooves. Instead, roto-toms and timbales were used primarily for climactic drum rolls which came often and hit you hard. I liked EU, but they always seemed to rush through their set. After Bear hit a few bars of *Ooh La La La, Roll Call, Somebody’s Ringing That Doorbell,* and *Don’t Blame It On The 8-0-0* the set was over.

Trouble Funk was releasing new 12 inch records on a monthly basis. Their hits quickly attracted the attention of producers and record industry people in New York and led to a deal with Sugarhill Records. Some considered them to be the best Go-Go Band. Rare Essence fans, however, begged to differ. RE just suffered from a lack of publicity outside of the city. Trouble, on the other hand, reached into New York, Europe, and Asia with their numerous releases. Although they played third on this five act card, they were the band that people really came to see. Hits at this time included, *Hey Fellas, Let’s Get Small,* and *So Early In The Morning.*

Led by the front line duo of “Big” Tony Fisher and Robert “Dyke” Reid, Trouble Funk were the geniuses of crowd participation. The highlight of their set was when they had a contest between the Ladies and Fellas to see who was the loudest. Dyke had all the young ladies yelling “Owe,” while Big Tony had the fellas yelling “Freak-a-Deak.” This was typical Go-Go eighties style. If you weren’t participating then you had no business at the show.

The mood of the show went downhill after

Trouble’s set. Some already started heading for the doors, but most waited around for the Sugarhill Gang. But by this time in their brief career, hits such as *Apache,* and *8th Wonder* were behind them, and the trio was on the decline.

Showdown, their most current hit, was a friendly battle rhyme between them and The Furious Five. In the end, the single launched the Furious Five to stardom but did little for the Sugarhill Gang. Many argued that the Furious Five won the showdown although the collaboration was done in a way that there was no winner. After all, they shared the same record label. But times were changing and The Furious Five, fresh off the success of The Message, were viewed as the more “hardcore” rappers of the time. To that early Hip-Hop generation they were Wu Tang Clan, DMX, and Master P all wrapped up in one package. Oh you didn’t know? Go ask somebody.

Still, most of us stuck around hoping that the Sugarhill Gang still knew how to rock a crowd. Despite coming out with a live band, they just couldn’t follow Trouble’s energy level. Most in the crowd took a seat and contemplated leaving or sticking around for Cameo. Many, including myself, rolled out.

What stands out about the Back to School Boogie was the innocence of the times compared with today. To us “Love Boat” was the drug that was tearing up the streets and herpes was the incurable disease that no one wanted to catch. Who could have imagined that a new drug would come along that would make “Love Boat” look like baby aspirin? Who could have imagined that a sexually transmitted disease would enter our culture that would make you relieved if you only caught herpes?

Thanks to the violence that became everyday in the late eighties, Go-Go shows were banned from the Capital Center. The Back to School Boogie and its winter counterpart, The New Years Eve Party with the stars Jam, became memories of an earlier Go-Go generation. Efforts to promote similar shows in local clubs like the Icebox and Taj Mahael just don’t create the same hype. Nothing compares to seeing your favorite band on the same stage graced by Michael Jackson, Prince, James Brown and Parliament. ▼

Little Benny

(Continued from page 19)

your musical influences is now one of your peers.

BENNY: Actually, what happened with Chuck was that I got a beep from Liaison Records, who asked me if I would like to go to Japan. I said, "Sure." They said, "Well, Chuck wants you to go with him." Keith (Horn Man) Holmes told me that everywhere they went in Japan they were playing my stuff all over the place. So, I went on over there with him and found that they really were playing my records all over the place. I got there and they had "Cat In The Hat" albums holding it them up in the air. They knew that I was coming with Chuck. They really liked the "JuJu Dada" better. That's why I went back into the studio and did some of that stuff over. They don't play those songs in this area that much. Except when I did "Do Re Me," they waited two years later and started playing the heck out of the joint.

MARK WARD: Is Chuck Brown's style the go-go style of music you like to play?

BENNY: That's the style I like. I like playing with Chuck. I like playing with Funk too. Chuck would do his thing, then turn it over to me. Then, I would do my thing for a while. Then, he'd come back up and do his thing. He was like I'm going to do mine and you handle your own. Whereas, Funk would basically say to me do that particular song. I would do it, and Funk would move on to what he wanted to do next.

KATO: Since you've been in that camp, is there a lot more you've learn about the business?

BENNY: Nah. It ain't nothing new. I've been in this for a long time.

GO-GO IN THE 90S:

MARK WARD: What do you think about the go-go of today in comparison to the go-go of back in the day?

BENNY: I like the back in the day style better. I mean the style of today with the open hi-hats and all is cool,

but the kids of today don't really know of the yesterday. Only what you throw at them.

MARK WARD: Most of the nationally successful Go-Go songs originated from a more mature style than today's. Do you think that there is anything the bands can do to be more mature musically?

BENNY: Well... Backyard does play a little more music, I hear that in their style. Rare Essence has the capabilities to do it, but they're kind of on the bang-bang right now. That's why I say Backyard is a little more mature, while still maintaining their "go-go" flavor.

MARK WARD: Well... I always thought that the kids tend to follow what ever the bands played. They are strongly influenced by these bands, and the bands say that they are playing what the fans like. But, they have the ability to change their style to be more creative.

BENNY: Right. And, add the new school flavor with the old school, and make it funky again. That way, you won't let the go-go seem like it ain't going nowhere. Because, right now musically, where can you go from "Rowwl-Rowwl" and just a percussion? I mean, what else can you do to it? If you ain't flavoring the joint up and putting anything to it, you're still going to be at the same place.

KATO: So, why do you think go-go isn't getting the national attention that it deserves?

BENNY: Not working together as far as making commercial records, first of all. Groups are not working together. I mean, you look at New York. Those guys be working with each other or doing something to keep hip-hop alive. They ain't knocking each other. They might have their little publicity beefs, but still they're keeping it there and keeping people in what the heck is going on with them. See, they know what they are doing. They're working it. Even in that, they are saying, "Man, let's just go at it like that and see what drama we can draw up, how much attention we can get and how much money we can make." But they've got record companies that's backing them. That's like back during the old go-go days after Chuck Brown made "Bustin Loose" and came back, they should have took the four band, Chuck Brown, Trouble Funk, EU and Rare Essence and try to move that market. If they would have done that, it would have



Proper Utensils 1993

Top row: Bojack, Jauque, Jock, Chaz, Scott, Roy, Brian

Second row: Mike Hughes, Little Benny

Third row: Kato, Jimmy Jam, Jas. Funk

Bottom row: Michael Muse

paved the way. See, now after Chuck's "Bustin Loose" then years later, EU comes out with "Da Butt." But see, if we would have caught it right after "Bustin Loose" like Max Kidd tried to do. But, see that comes into robbing people. I don't know who was robbing who, but I was watching it all. That's how it went. Max Kidd had the movie "Good To Go" out. The movement. Which made the ugliest movie out. So, it like poisoned the go-go.

MARK WARD: Rare Essence didn't have anything to do with the movie?

BENNY: I don't know what really went on with that. But, I know Max Kidd had Chuck, Sugar Bear, Redds & The Boys and Trouble Funk.

MARK WARD: It seems like back then, a lot of people were really starting to know about go-go, but it's back to square one today. I mean, I run into a lot of people here who are not from here and know absolutely nothing about it.

KATO: So, the point is, is to get it back focused in the right direction.

BENNY: Right. It's like, who in the heck are going to give you a contract sounding like the way it's sounding now? Then again, you might get one. I'm not the judge of it. But what I'm hearing, I don't see nobody making a record company want to invest no money in it. But, it might be.

KATO: So, what's going on with the group you have in the workshop called The Legends?

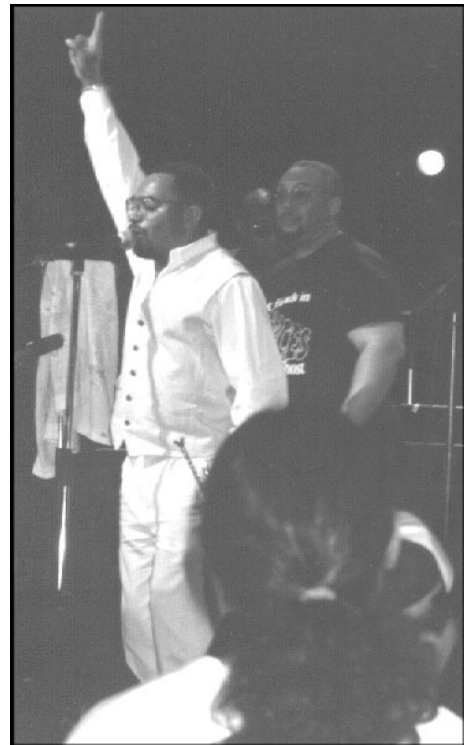
BENNY: Basically, The Legends consist of The Godfava, Rick (Sugar Foot Ricky) Wellman, Milton(Go-Go Mickey) Freeman, (John) Bighorn, Tyrone (Jungle Boogie) Williams and myself. Actually, I'm going to bring them all out, Markell (Markey) Owens, Michael Muse, DC and the rest. Sugar Bear and myself, along with this project, are getting ready to do a Little Benny - EU - Rare Essence reunion. The mission is to get all those guys together.

KATO: Okay. I want to end with this question. How important is family to you?

BENNY: It's all that I have. It's the most important thing in my life. I mean, if I had to choose between family and Go-Go, I would choose family.

KATO: Do any of them play music?

BENNY: Well... Benny and Brian are more into



Little Benny receiving & showing love in Japan

basketball. But, Brandon is more into singing and stepping. He likes to watch the videos and learn the steps. He's pretty much with all that. He usually writes down the lyrics to tunes for me and let's me know when I'm doing them wrong. Yeah... he just sits me down with the little tape recorder when I basically had to learn two or three songs in a night. And, he won't go to bed until, I have a couple of the verses down.

KATO: Thank you for your time. I appreciate it. ♣

Little Benny

J-MOB

(Continued from page 24)

Buggs anytime he hears that sound that Heavy-One threw in his head – that Junkyard sound. See, that's something Heavy-One told him to do – don't stop. These were the guys that were playing on buckets and having the big bands saying, "Man, you gonna let them youngins take over like that?" They earned their respect.

MESSAGE TO JY BAND:

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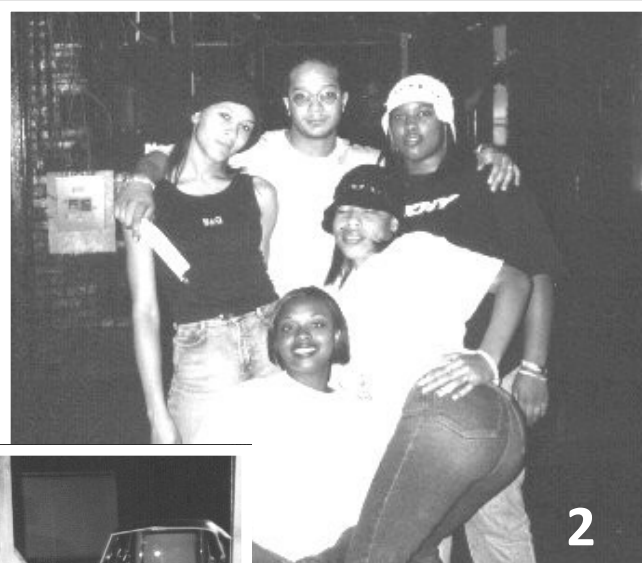
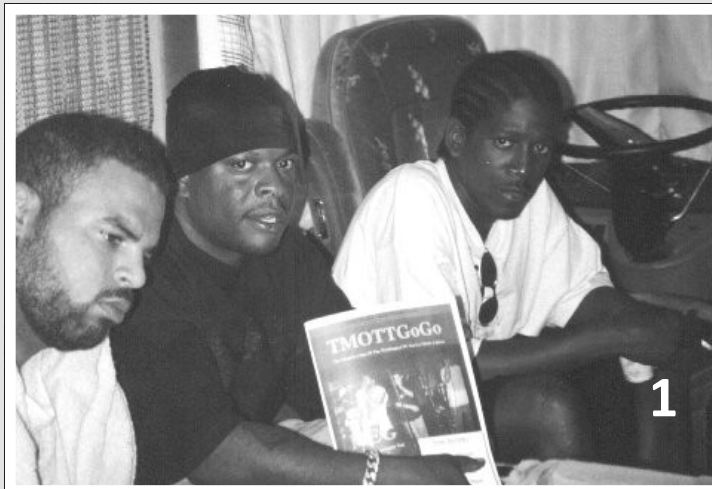


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The Flicks



1. On the set with One Man Gain, Po & Midnight of the Section 8 Mob.
2. Brother Ish of Icy-Ice setting himself lovely.
3. Big G of the Backyard Band setting to wind it up for another night.
4. Queen Pen sneaking in a scene during the filming of the latest Section 8 Mob video.
5. DJ Too Hott posing in the studios of the 93.9 WKYS Radio One dj booth.
6. Morgran Freeman along with son-n-law to be Po and the rest of Section 8 Mob.

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