

Tapestry

A Saga of Unanticipated Friendships And Music

The narrative of this saga attempts to tell the story of the musical group named, "Tapestry, " Whose origins begin with what could be termed "sleight of hand" or a two-phase or dub-step process. The first part starting in the summer of 1968, when Gene and I met through a mutual friend, Charles Wright. Gene and I immediately became attached by means of learning each other moves or energy as we know it to be. Audio waves, black gold to the black community where we were we where educated. Using this as a tool to gain confidence though attention and be respected and our ideas would take shape and be nourished . Gene and I were full speed ahead with his ideas of fashion the group would come make on the local scene. And mine with chordal interrelations, string vibrations, and waves t car would lead to opportunities towards composition, production ands song writing ideas, et cetera. The group would soon become contenders on the local scene. Just two young men on the cusp of becoming full and musicians Daryl Dade, my very close high school friend, joined the band temporarily as a conga player and vocalist, also Russell Joell, a dear high school and neighborhood friend, who was our drummer in the regaled cabaret music band, the Cavaliers.

Leonard (Butch) Davis, was a well respected vocalist and a big brother to gene and later on myself as well. He joined a group called "The Mystics." After a few rehearsals and the a new name would "The United Image" would emerge. We performed at Billy Devine's Bar/lounge, a local entrepreneur and creatated a following and after several gigs at his bar, and with the insistence of Gene, Darnell and Leonard, Billy Devine agreed to becoming our manager. Our headquarters would be forty-ninth & Woodland Ave. in southwest Philadelphia. We rehearsed upstairs, over the lounge, Just what we needed, a home. A place to rehearse and someone who cared. We could now move forward, grow and develop as a unit.

The band, Tapestry, starts to take shape it's final dimensions with Clarence (Bones) Burchett, a spirited young man who tries to see the best in everyone and everything, was to join as the bands first drummer, but along with that phenomenal intuitive ability he would just play along. Going anyplace that was needed. No resistance a loose kind of jazzy style and offering no direction of his own. He was very transparent drummer. Daryl Torrence was our second drummer, happy to be there drummer with a big smile. Great guy and friend. And finally, "Big George Thompson." Well it was a so phenomenal. He seemed power packed. Also, along with George came a young guitarist named Kenny Dockins. He was from a talented family, a somewhat child prodigy. The band became complete with the addition of Algeron Cooper on Hammond B3 organ. George would often tell the story of when himself and Kenny saw Gene and I perform at a show he know they needed to stop everything else they were doing and join with us as soon as possible. We were on fire! We were being nourished with the power of love, but still not yet "Tapestry."

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After much local success in and around the Philadelphia and Tri-State area, the vocalist decided to seek other opportunities rather than remain with Billy Devine and the Bry-wek organization.

And now because there were some disparaging comments made during this period about, bands come a dime a dozen. Questioning our value to the organization. We quickly understood that the group Tapestry would be better off remaining with Billy Devine as manager and the Bry-wek organization. On that most infamous day Gene and I learned that there could be political consequences connected to words and everything is not necessary to be spoken without extreme examination of your outcome and remembering that part of the game of success as a group is to remain together. Having a keen understanding that in business politics, words have power and meaningful consequences.

That phrase, "bands come a dime a dozen" reverberated in our heads, but in a uniquely counterintuitive way. We were granted, the idea of purpose. And to honor those who have suffered insensitive remarks, gestures and other indignities.

Well, we wished our brothers farewell. And with that, the departure became official. The seeds of fate had been planted and nourished in circumstances that allowed tapestry to go forward and really began to grow and find their roots, their style, and their spirit. This would be the same energy we delivered to our audiences. Tapestry recorded two songs. Good, but not good enough for commercial radio at that time.

As fate would have it, Tapestry would fall prey to a lack of experience among management. Billy Devine our manager and would also make some crude accusations towards members of Tapestry that cause a departure and soon the disintegration of the original group.

George continued the duties and obligations of band leader and his reward was that he was able to lead many successful franchises all called "Tapestry." George hosted many young and very talented vocalist & musicians, that would later go on to support many other already established acts.

George enlisted some outstanding vocalist such as Ursula Herring, James (Jimmy) Carmichael and Leon Lee.

There were and congas that would perform with the band and other various ancillary instrumentalist, Butch & Dave Harper (Horns.) Charles Flowers & Wayne Morris handled the bass duties.

George was growing by leaps and bounds and becoming an excellent band leader. His talent coordinating abilities would lead him to become a platform for others to polish those same skills of organization and education that would encourage young musicians like ourselves to become self assured, and that they too could achieve goals and dreams and they also can be manifested reality. It would allow George a rich tapestry of rhythm and joy to cherish th

Gene and I salute our brother George. Just recently we, George, Gene & Darnell came back to start a version of tapestry to support the groups, The First Choice and Double Exposure, our sister and brother group from the New York based Salsoul label here in Philadelphia.

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Special Recognition:

Angela Davis, Candy Ray, Leo Donal, Zip, Jr Mack, Bobby Goodwine, Jimmy Macall, Michael and Ursula Herring, and Mark.

In 1986, Tapestry was the first all black band to performed in Atlantic City with Janice McClain, Brian Williams, Rudy Gay, Freddie McClain and Cliff Parasol.

George and Wayne were the last of the old members.

Yeah, Yeah Yeah Girl

Big Fool

Life Is What You Make It

Eddie Franklynn, Larry A. Dixon & Christopher W. Johnson

By Darnell Jordan, DJ Publishing