



As promised, here's the second part of www.soulandjazzandfunk.com's interview with Californian songbird, CHANTE MOORE.

I wonder if we could talk about your background. I believe you're from San Francisco originally.

I am. San Francisco City actually. I was born in San Francisco Children's Hospital and I lived right in the city: Haight-Ashbury and different little places. I guess we moved around a little bit in the area but basically I'm from San Francisco proper.

What was it like growing up there?

It was good. My father is a minister so we were at church and happy and my mother was singing in church and I was listening, more than really singing, but I had a really good time. My parents did a great job making of me happy (laughs).

At what age did you start singing in public?

Not till I was about 16. I did a stage production called 'The Wiz' when I was 16. I really couldn't figure out why they asked me to be in it because my sister was always the one who was singing - she was well-known for that. She would always kill people when she sang. She was just really, really good. So when they asked me to do the role of Dorothy in 'The Wiz', I was like "oh no, you must be mixing me up" 'cos people would always confuse us. So that was the first time ever my family said I could sing because before that they were like "oh-oh, don't sing! You should never ever sing." They would tell me to shut up but I loved to sing so much that I would just do it anyway because I loved music. I would sing in my room to myself and my mum actually gave

Written by Charles Waring
Saturday, 18 October 2008 09:46

me a tape recorder so that I could hear how badly I sounded - that's what she said, but she didn't mean it maliciously.

Who were your early influences when you started to sing?

Well, my father is a minister, a preacher, so we weren't allowed to listen to any other music except gospel in my home as we were growing up. So Andrae Crouch, Edwin Hawkins, Tramaine Hawkins and The Imperials and a whole lot of gospel artists were my influences. Then later I listened to people that I fell in love with - like Chaka (Khan), Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye and so many others. But I didn't listen to them until after I was 16 - that's when I really started branching out into music.

So how did you get to sign with MCA back in 1992?

I asked a friend of mine how I could find a good manager 'cos I needed to find somebody who could help me find a good deal. He said, "I'll manage you" and I said "Oh, OK." So we started sending out demo tapes to different record companies and we got a call back from MCA Records. We had a meeting with Louil Silas (an MCA executive), who's now passed on. He was just as excited about me as I was about him, so it worked out really well and we had a great relationship and a great partnership at that point.

So how did you feel when some of your records, like 'Love's Taken Over,' started taking off?

It was just a dream come true. You know we all dream our dreams but mine was for real, actually. It was more than I thought it would be but still exactly what I thought it would be in so many ways. So it was great. It was really a dream come true for me.

You did some great records in that period but I remember reading somewhere that you worked as a model before you became a singer. Is that true?

CHATTING WITH CHANTE Part Two

Written by Charles Waring
Saturday, 18 October 2008 09:46

Yes, I did. I modelled around the San Diego area. I did a lot of modelling but then I realised I wasn't going to do it anymore, being a lowly 5'4." I didn't really see it as a serious career choice. It wasn't very wise. I didn't really give up on it but it was just something that was very local so I did a lot of taking pictures in a lot of different clubs and different things like that before I was even 18. I was modelling around a lot but my passion was for singing.

Is your family musical? I know you said your sister was a singer but were your parents musical?

My father is a pianist - a very good pianist actually - and a writer and a preacher. He's not like a singer but he sings. My mother, who has passed on, was a very good singer. She was very emotional and a very strong singer. My sister, LaTendre, got herself playing the piano and the guitar. She writes and she paints and she's more talented than any of us. My brother's a great drummer and he plays the keyboard and sings. Music was all around me always. It was just always a part of my family. We'd sing at the drop of a hat in the house, in the car, in the kitchen, cooking, whatever. We were always singing.

Do you yourself play any musical instruments?

I play a little bit of flute and a little bit of piano but not enough to be the one to show anybody anything (laughs). I'm more of a writer - a writer and a melody girl.

In the past you wrote quite a few songs but on this new album you don't do as much songwriting. Why is that?

I didn't do as much. I just found some really great songs. There were a lot of people who wanted to work on my project seeing that there had been large span of time between my last solo album and this one. A lot of my musician friends were like: "oh my God, when you start the new album start calling me." They had some great songs for me. And a great song is a great song. I don't have to be the writer on my albums - I just have to agree with what my collaborators are doing.

Last year you starred in a stage play with Dave Hollister.

Oh, Dave Hollister - yes, uh-huh, we were in a play called 'By Any Means Necessary' and it actually starred Tisha Campbell-Martin, Dave Hollister, Guy Torry and myself. It was a gospel play with music and acting. It was a lot of acting actually, more than I'd done any time before. It was so much fun. Tisha Campbell is such a professional person. I learned a lot working with her so closely as we were in just about every scene together. I really, really enjoyed it and learned a lot. It was very comedic, which I loved because I love being funny and being goofy and not what people expect to see compared with who they think I am. So we had a great, great time.

Do you think you'll be doing anything else like that in the future?

If the right thing happens I might take it. I'm not going to foresee it this very second but if it comes to me, yeah, I'd do it (laughs).

What's been the highlight of your career to date?

Oh, there's too many to narrow it down. I've been fortunate. What I like is that my career's been pretty consistent so I don't feel it as highs and lows. From the first time that I was on 'Showtime At The Apollo,' that was a highlight. But that was my first album so those things just stand out. But having a career that is still lasting and being able to do what I do for a living with the knowledge that there are so many people who came out at the same time who are now not able to do this sort of thing, that's a highlight. The fact that the Lord has sustained me for such a long time and I do not have to compensate by having other jobs on the side has been the real highlight. It hasn't been a lot of high highs or a number one this and number one that, but it's been consistent and I've enjoyed my life - so the highlight has been doing what I love.

What little known fact about you would surprise your fans?

I used to like to crochet but I don't do that much now. I like to roller skate. I'm a homebody: I love old movies. I love eating popcorn and fattening food and sitting there having fun watching old movies with Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn in and things like that. I guess I'm a little bit

CHATTING WITH CHANTE Part Two

Written by Charles Waring
Saturday, 18 October 2008 09:46

adventurous but most of the time I'm just a homebody because I have to travel so much. I just enjoy being at home with my kids.

What's it like being in the music industry and having to bring up a family as well? Is that very difficult?

It's a challenge but I find because I know what is most important - my family - it's not as challenging as it could be. If you're chasing being a star and you have a family I think you can lose sight of what is most important, which is your family. My children want their mother and I'm a big star as far as they are concerned just being 'Mommy.' So to raise children who are cognitive of the world and also aware of themselves and confident, that's the most important thing to me - making sure that they are happy and that they know they're loved and they're not secondary is all that matters.

Do you have any unfulfilled ambitions?

I'm an inventor. There are things that I've created that I want to get patented.

Such as? What sort of things?

Well I can't tell you! (laughs).

I know you can't tell me but can't you drop a hint or something?

No, but it will be coming out soon (Laughs).

Well, let me put it like this: are you an inventor of things for the home, things for the environment or things related to music?

Written by Charles Waring
Saturday, 18 October 2008 09:46

It's not for music. It's more for the things for everyday use. It will very much be for the average person and not entertainment.

So we can look forward to seeing those things sometime in the near future can we?

You absolutely will (laughs).

What's your all-time favourite record? I know that seems like a ridiculous question but is there a record that you keep going back to and never tire of?

Well, I'm so much of a music lover that it's so hard: it's like saying which one is your favourite kid? At a certain time in my life there were so many different songs. I could name Prince - he definitely has a lot of my favourite songs; I love Prince. There's also a song by (saxophonist) David Sanborn, which is called 'Love Will Come Someday.' Michael Sembello sings it and it's such a beautiful song - that's one of my favourite songs in the world for sure. There are so many wonderful songs. I remember the first time I ever heard a Chaka Khan song. It stopped me dead in my tracks when I heard 'Hollywood.' That was the very first time I heard her voice. I was walking through the park during my church's picnic. I walked through somebody else's camp on my way to the playground and I heard her voice and it just paralysed me right there - I had to listen to the rest of the song. It was awesome.

Was it a life-changing experience for you?

It was just such an awakening. I just thought: 'who is that?' It was just so beautiful (starts singing the riff to 'Hollywood' by Rufus and Chaka Khan). She just had such a unique way and it was so beautiful. I had never heard her voice before and I remember that moment distinctively.

Have you ever met Chaka and told her about your experience?

CHATTING WITH CHANTE Part Two

Written by Charles Waring
Saturday, 18 October 2008 09:46

I don't think I did tell her that story but I've met and sang with her. Perhaps I should tell her she stopped me dead in my tracks (laughs).

Are there any other artists around at the moment who you would like to make a record with?

There are so many talented artists. Actually, Gladys Knight would be somebody I would love to work with. Although she's not a young artist, I love her music. I think Alicia Keyes is extremely talented and Rihanna I like - except the style: I'm not sure we'd work together. There are so many good people. That's just off the top of my head.

You mentioned some contemporary artists there. What's your view of contemporary R&B? Has it declined in standard in recent years?

You know, R&B right now is a little too sexual instead of really concentrating on what real music is about. Some of the songs that are on the radio right now have lyrics that my daughter would be in trouble if she ever sang in front of me. I don't like the way things are going but maybe that's me getting older and because I have children. Maybe if I was 18 I wouldn't think it was that bad but I do think the content's pretty awful sometimes, because we're losing the focus on what real life is about. Love is not sex. Sex is not what it's about. Sex is great when you're in love but just sex for sex is not what it's about. People are looking for love and having sex and I don't think they know the difference and are caught up in thinking lust is love. I don't want them to miss out but that's just part of what love is. A relationship is about love, not lust.

Finally, the music industry since you started your career has changed an awful lot. What's your view of the current state of the music business?

It's been difficult because it used to be about the artist and about the album but now it's about politics and about a single or marketing and things that have little to do with artistry and music. There's so much more diversity than what I hear on the radio. We've given that power to the record company and given that the power to the program directors, rather than the DJs. It used to be that if you got a record to the DJ he would get so excited he'd play your music: he'd play the songs that are not singles and all that stuff but now only one song gets played and nothing else gets a look in. I'm not a singles kind of artist: I'm an album artist. A single's just one side

CHATTING WITH CHANTE Part Two

Written by Charles Waring
Saturday, 18 October 2008 09:46

and there are a whole lot of different sides and different layers to me. I think that makes me a brave artist because there's more than just one dimension of my music and my expression of myself.

(as told to Charles Waring)

'Love The Woman' is out now on Peak Records.