



Hear Us

Treasured Moments in Music

January 24, 2008

A Legacy of Durham Musicians

James K. Toomer, Trumpet

Durham has been a Mecca for musical entertainment by local artists who played “back-up” for a number of R&B and Gospel groups through the years. In the early 60’s & 70’s, recording artists such as Jerry Butler, “Spider Turner”, Clarence Carter, Ike & Tina Turner, Betty Wright, Curtis Mayfield, Johnny Taylor and a host of others used our local musicians to duplicate their recording sounds.

Unfortunately, this era was not documented to publicize a legacy and the wealth of musical talent generated from Durham, North Carolina. Our hope with this project is to showcase the music of the times and bring back the “Old School Live Music” which so many people enjoyed. Most of us (musicians) often hear people talking & bragging to “newcomers” about how the local “Durham Bands” back then were just as good as the original recording bands for performing artists.

It is amazing that all of us are still playing after 40+ years and still producing quality musical and vocal talent. Leroy Leon Pendarvis was one of the most versatile musicians and composers in the area. He became nationally known for his musicianship and composed for television programs such as Saturday Night Live and the David Letterman Show.

Johnny White has become a legend in his own right by continuing to give mixed audiences the flavor of “Old School Music”.

Now is the time to make our mark in Durham’s History. The Hip-Hop generation currently utilizes “instrumental samplings” from this era to mix and record some of their background music. We want the opportunity to enlighten the younger generation while bringing back prominence of “live music” to the older generation from talented musicians & vocalists from the Bull City.

Committee

William “Mac” McLaughlin, Jesse “Junie-Poonie” Suggs, James “Tweet” Toomer, Johnny White

Project Plan

- Proposed event date, October 2008
- Three day event featuring R&B, Jazz, Gospel
- Location: Hayti Heritage Center or Carolina Theatre in Durham, NC
- Developing biographies and panel discussions with audio/video depicting music events of the 60’s & 70’s.

We’re currently soliciting audience outreach in providing interviews, historical information or photos illustrating times at the Stallion Club.

If you would like additional information about this venture, contact James Toomer at james_Toomer@hotmail.com

Hayti Heritage Center

Ms. V. Dianne Pledger, President and CEO of St. Joseph’s Historical Foundation at Hayti Heritage Center met with James Toomer to discuss the proposed Durham Historical Jam Session event scheduled for this fall.

This is great timing to plan such an event since Dianne is currently embarking on a Pettigrew Street historical project. As most of you may remember, Pettigrew Street in Durham was the hub for black businesses and entertainment until segregation and the agenda for “reforming” certain neighborhoods transformed the area.

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Musicians Web Links

[Johnny White and The Elite Band Main Page](#)

<http://www.rockymountainjazz.com/>