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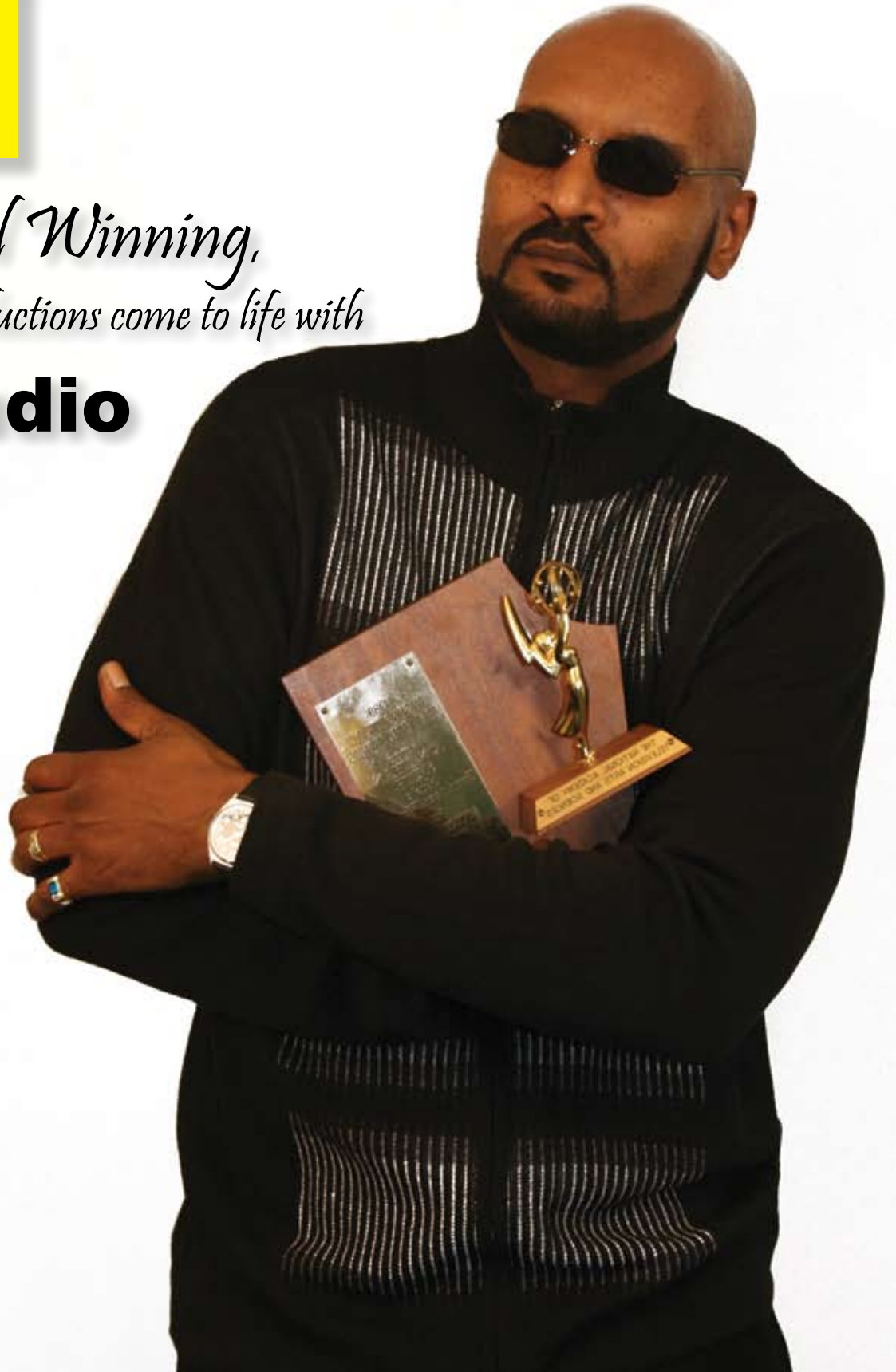
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The Man Behind USAudio

who makes *CREATIVE INSPIRATIONS* become *REALITY*

by Ruth Ward

At our first of the year GLC Editor's Meeting we knocked around a number of must do stories. We wondered what our readers would like more of. Out of this very spirited conversation emerged one solid consensus that everyone did agree on; our March 2006 story on USAudio, the EMMY Award Winning Music Production & Multimedia company. The USAudio story last year was a huge success and we thought it would be a fantastic idea to revisit USAudio, one year from the company's arrival to Gainesville. We wanted to check in on Jonathan Smith and see how things have been over the last twelve months.

For those readers who may not yet be as familiar with USAudio, here's a little encapsulated recap from some of the highlights from our first interview.

The collection of productions streaming out of USAudio include everything from Sound FX libraries to relaxation CDs, lush and vibrant voice over ads for Fortune 500 retail giants like Macys, hip-hop styled Kings Dominion promo spots for urban radio stations, corporate marketing presentations for local and multinational businesses to Public Service Announcements or major audio trailers for feature length movies, and much more. In fact, USAudio's relaxation CD was so popular and successful, it

was commissioned by both Miami Children's Hospital and Washington, DC's Children's National Medical Center as their first sanctioned therapeutic audio product distributed to the National Pediatrics Association as their tool of choice to lower their own doctors' stress levels.

After USAudio received personal testimonies of how the RELAX CD helped a young local Gainesville woman battling cancer and how their first of a kind relaxation product did so much to relive the stress of her family members, USAudio decided to give the product away FREE of Charge to ANYONE in need of a proven drug free relaxation aid.

Your product is amazing! I have been using it every night since my purchase a few weeks ago and have yet heard the ending. I fall deeply to sleep sometime during the middle!

Prior to my purchase, I had been having a great deal of difficulty falling asleep at night due to stress. When I heard about your CD, I was eager to try it but skeptical. I had previously bought a similar product advertised to promote relaxation and restful sleep only to find its contents so bizarre it was actually annoying. Yours, I am delighted to say, has far exceeded my expectations.

I have shared your product with my daughter who is presently going through radiation, after chemotherapy, for breast cancer. She is experiencing the same positive results.

In my estimation, your product should be prescribed as adjuvant therapy to all cancer patients, as well as anyone needing to let go of stress. I only wish I had found it sooner.

Sincerely yours, Carolyn Henegan, RN

During our first visit with USAudio's multitalented President and CEO, Jonathan R. Smith we were given some insight as to what the company hoped to bring to Gainesville's emerging music and multimedia industry: "The move has resulted in a whole new energy. In this smaller venue, I have the flexibility to work on extremely diverse projects each day" Jonathan said. "One day I can be mixing down and mastering a Pop or Rock album or working on a hot new dance track for a rising artist's industry package, and the next day I may be forensically filtering out background noise for a police investigation and later that same afternoon creating Audio Sounds FX for a game company's TV spots or editing audio for a bank, law firm or donut shop's radio commercial. Every day it's the same thing" he jokes, "It's always something different".



In a more recent visit with USAudio, we were able to get a little more background on how the company came about as well as what's been percolating in the high tech studios of USAudio, since last we caught up with "The Man Behind It All".

For this we had to delve into his roots to find out what made the verifiable musical genius tick. Smith, cousin to Florence Ballard (The Supremes), nephew of legendary Jazz organist Jimmy Smith and son of Alfretta Smith (the first Black solo female Opera Star to perform among stars of The World Renowned *Traer Opera*) was literally weaned between three very diverse worlds of musical disciplines; The MOTOWN sound, Big Band JAZZ and Classical.

By age 13 Smith was already living on his own and making a living as a star on his own local radio show sponsored by the University of New Mexico while opening for such (then emerging/now legendary groups) like **Kool & The Gang** and **Grand Funk Railroad**.

Smith began first working with an eclectic string of local and national hit making RAP, Go-Go & Hip-Hop stars from the urban streets of Washington, DC in the late eighties. Smith's first formalized production company, Square One Productions was contracted by Darrel Brooks and Carol Kerkendaul (owners of the internationally recognized concert promotion company G-Street Productions) to assist them with the development of talent and products for their new record label venture, I-Hear-Ya Records. One of the first groups to receive Smith's inspirational guidance was at that time a little known

all girl RAP group called **Salt -N -Pepa**. Smith suggested that the girls' first cover song should be "Shake Your Thang" which became the genesis of their international fame. [Smith is not shy to say: "I'm still looking for another Salt- N-Pepa".

Smith was then asked by record and film company executives to produce an audio presentation package of songs for another local Washington Go-Go group, **E.U. (Experience Unlimited)**. The package presented to now globally acclaimed **Spike Lee Productions** was a was a smashing success, and **E.U.** went on to perform their first international hit "Da' Butt" in Spike Lee's first hit movie 'School Daze'. And although things were going well in the studio, violence on the streets of DC hit an all time high (400 killed in one year) and the live events by the newly emerging stars honing their talents in the local venues were marred by news articles attempting to link the new Go-Go music to the DC rising crime rate. Smith's immediate response to the press' allegations that local music was somehow fueling or agitating DC's street violence was turned around by a novel and creatively innovative endeavor. His idea was to (through interviews) determine which of the rising talents and local Rap Artists were most popular with the rivaling gangs; and then create a first of its kind compilation (SONY Sponsored) album featuring those artists. The result was a compilation by 'The Godfather of Go-Go' Chuck Brown, E.U., Trouble Funk, Little Benny, The Masters & D.C. Scorpio) all together under one banner, making one unified statement "Stop The Violence". The song was titled "DC Don't Stand For Dodge City" and was immediately another huge success for I-Hear-Ya Records. And while the fire was still hot, Smith



quickly raised the local DC music scene to the next level with his formation of USAudio and the first ever digitally produced SONY recorded musical production of the EMMY Award Winning DC RAP music video proclamation “*Stone Cold Hustler*”.

With the major paradigm shift of audio from analog to digital Smith as a producer, musician and recording engineer stayed on the cutting edge of the new music’s evolving technology while others fell along the wayside. This brings us to USAudio’s headquarters here in North Central Florida. “The investment decisions were mind blowing” Smith recalls. “All monetary investments were trashed seemingly overnight. I had to make the investment to go Pure Digital and Gainesville was my choice testing ground and so far things are going fantastically well”.

To paraphrase a line from **Janet Jackson** (another artist very familiar with USAudio by way of her 1989 hit ‘Rhythm Nation’) we wanted to ask Jonathan, “So, What Have You Done For Us Lately?”

As we discovered, the list of accomplishments in USAudio’s first year to the Gainesville area are too vast to elaborate in this short article, but to skim the surface we can see it’s been quite a busy year. From constructing, recording and mastering TV commercials for RHINO Video Games, recording and mastering GRU Radio Commercials as well as Ben & Jerry’s, assisting with Web Audio for Gainesville’s 352MediaGroup, Internet Audio for Ipanema Restaurant’s, in Ocala, website. Writing, recording, producing and mastering new songs for established and up and coming recording artists

the like of Parliament Funkadelic’s Bernie Worrell, George Clinton, Jr., Scott Free of Monkeez Strikin Matchiz, NY Recording Artist Sharon Osborn and local recording artist Nikki Barber. Recording classical tracks for violist Stephen Fine and in collaborations with Jack Millman completing the Remixing & Mastering of GELLO’s Fruits of Knowledge, along with scores of new and revised music slated for Brunswick Records.

Jonathan also worked with the inspirational tag-team rap duo of Bishop & Eternal Soldier, the up and coming Hip-Hop lyrical poet, vocalist and songwriter Laletta Gerrett, the extraordinary voice-over talents of John Mathews & Mike Gillian, the outstanding multi-talented team of Karen Johnson, Tracy Mooring, the fantastic Jazz, Pop & Contemporary keyboardist and songwriter Garrett R. Hall, Gospel keyboard impresario and songwriter Michael Lamb, the amazingly talented Ken Beason & John Newsom of Dream Dimension Computer Animation Studios and the very promising music production & engineering student Patrick D. Millian. It is definitely an impressive list of accomplishments.

Jonathan pointed out that he loves to help his clients whether it is a single artist or a large corporation, “We’re no longer simply affordable to large budget corporate clients. With our recently expanded operations, our new Small Business Advertising Department and our EMMY Award Winning Audio & Multimedia Production Service Staff are here to assist you; the small and new business owner”. Jonathan said. USAudio is also an ASCAP Registered publishing company and is excited about assisting new local artists in establishing a good first impression in today’s competitive music industry.

To learn more about USAudio, visit their web site at USAudio.com or give them a call at (352) 333-7900. They are just four miles west from the Oaks Mall and they’d love to hear from you and help create your music productions and/or multimedia needs. Let USAudio bring your creative inspirations into reality!

Some of USAudio’s clients



Stephen T. Fine



Chuck Brown



DC Scorpio



George Clinton Jr.



ID Fine



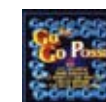
Jack Millman



Nikki B



Scott Free of
Monkeez Strikin
Matchiz



The Go Go Posse



Gello



Bernie Worrell